

The Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
Amherst, New Hampshire



*"The house lights go off and the footlights come on. In the orchestra pit, the violin bows are poised. The conductor has raised the baton. You hold your breath to listen. The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment."*

— Frederick Buechner

# THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

The Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
Amherst, New Hampshire

*"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here."*

December 1, 2024

First Sunday of Advent

10:00 a.m.

GATHERING CHIMES

*Let us be gathered in silence so that we may prepare to worship.*

GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

PRELUDE

*Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending*

Richard Warner

INTROIT

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

*The congregation may remain seated.*

One: We light candles for the four weeks leading to Christmas  
in anticipation of the inbreaking of God's love and light in Jesus.

**Many: Christ is coming. Christ is always coming,  
always entering our lives and our hearts.**

*(The first candle of Advent is lit.)*

One: Today we light the first candle of Advent, the candle of Hope.

**Many: We light this candle in hope that God's light will show us the way.**

One: We light this candle in hope that God's peace will calm our fears.

**Many: We light this candle in hope that God's joy will lift us out of despair.**

One: We light this candle in hope that God's love will fill our hearts.

**All: We light this candle in hope that God's light will shine through us -  
as we carry love, peace, and joy into our world.**

\*HYMN

*O Lord, How Shall I Meet You?*

No. 11

*Please rise in body or spirit.*

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION and THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)  
*The congregation may be seated.*

**Holy One, during this season of Advent  
you will shake the heavens and the earth,  
you will cry out in the wilderness,  
you will leap in the womb in anticipation,  
you will sing songs of liberation and hope.  
Today we invite you to turn our world upside down.  
To shake us out of our comfort and complacency.  
To inspire us to tear down the barriers that separate us.  
God of Advent, today we wait with hope.  
Be present with us, as we pray the words Jesus taught us:**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we  
forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is  
the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

\*SONG OF PRAISE

*Gloria*

**Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

MESSAGE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

ANTHEM

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*  
Chancel Choir

arr. Alice Parker

\*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of God be with you. **AND ALSO WITH YOU.**

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 21:25-36

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

*continued page 4*

“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place and to stand before the Son of Man.”

SERMON

“Anticipation”

\*HYMN

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

No. 2

JOYS AND CONCERNS and PASTORAL PRAYER

*If you have a prayer to share, fill out a prayer card in your pew. Cards will be collected by one of the pastors during the hymn after the sermon, and will be shared during Joys and Concerns.*

CHORAL RESPONSE

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY MUSIC

*The King Shall Come*

Richard Farrant/  
Edward Broughton

\*DOXOLOGY (Tune: *From All That Dwell Below the Skies*)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below. Alleluia, Alleluia.  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost.  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Amen.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

**God who makes all things new, we believe in the power of hope to dispel our fear, to heal our despair, to change our world for the better. We offer these gifts with faith that a new day is coming. May our offerings be used to bring about your hope for justice and peace throughout creation. Amen.**

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*We welcome all people to join in receiving this sacrament. Children may participate at the discretion of their parents.*

CALL TO COMMUNION

One: God be with you.

**Many: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**Many: We lift them to God.**

One: Let us give thanks to God most high.

**Many: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION and CONSECRATING PRAYER

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP

*Communion at CCA is open to anyone who would like to partake. When you receive the bread, eat at your own pace, symbolizing our individual relationship with God. When you receive the juice, drink with the whole congregation, symbolizing our communion as the Body of Christ. The bread is gluten, egg, and dairy free and the juice is non-alcoholic, so that there may be no barriers to Christ's table.*

ORGAN MEDITATION

*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

Robert Lau

*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

Mark Roberts

COMMUNION PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (unison)

**We give thanks, loving God, for feeding us at this table. Send us out into the world as conduits of your love – full of courage, compassion, and commitment, and eager to be Christ's church in the world. Amen.**

\*HYMN

*We Hail You God's Anointed*

insert

\*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

\*COMMISSION AND BLESSING

\*CHORAL RESPONSE

\*POSTLUDE

*Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying*

Philipp Nicolai/  
Gilbert M. Martin

*(\*Please rise in body or spirit.)*

*Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service  
obtained from One License with license #A-731944.*

# THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AMHERST, NH, UCC



## A Welcoming, Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



**“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,  
you are welcome here.”**

*We, the members of The Congregational Church of Amherst, New Hampshire, United Church of Christ, believe God’s Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ call us to love all our neighbors as we would want to be loved. We are called to be as one body, seeking to walk together in the full life and ministry of our church.*

*We welcome each individual as a child of God. As covenant members of Christ’s church, we celebrate God’s love for people of all races and ethnic backgrounds, all mental and physical abilities, all socioeconomic backgrounds, all sexual orientations, all gender identities and gender expressions, and all of the other diverse attributes woven into the fabric of humankind.*

*With God’s grace, we invite all to share in the life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship and sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of our church.*

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us. Our membership is open to all those who choose to walk with us in our witness. Please speak with any of our deacons or pastors should you have any questions regarding our church or our membership.

### Worship Notes:

- Church school is available for children Pre-K through grade 7.
- Our church nursery is staffed and available for parents with young children.
- Joys and Concerns may be written on the cards found in the pews. You are also welcome to submit your prayer request through our website in advance of the worship service.
- Please remember to wear your nametag each Sunday, so that we may all greet our neighbors. If you do not have a permanent nametag, temporary nametags may be found inside the friendship registers. If you are in need of a new, permanent nametag, please see one of the deacons.
- Please join us in the community room for a time of fellowship after the worship service. Coffee and beverages are offered.
- In the event of an emergency, please remain seated until instructions have been given. An emergency plan is in place for the children in the church school.

The church office is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 to 1:00 p.m., and available Monday through Friday by telephone 673-3231 and by email [info@ccamherst.org](mailto:info@ccamherst.org). Please feel free to leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can. Visit our church’s website at [www.ccamherst.org](http://www.ccamherst.org), and follow us on Facebook.com/ccamherst and Instagram.com/ccamherstnh.

***Grounded in God’s Love—Serving Neighbors Near and Far—Welcoming to All***

## PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE

Members and Friends of The Congregational Church  
Rev. Maureen R. Frescott  
Rev. Charlotte E. Y. Bell  
Shellie Brook  
Sara L. Phelps  
Michael Havay  
Sally Hooper  
Russ Demarest, Roger Hooper, John Swanson, Doug Topliffe  
Paul Schellenberg

Ministers to the World  
Senior Pastor  
Associate Pastor  
Student Pastor  
Director of Music  
Organist/Accompanist  
Deacon in Charge  
Deacons  
Videographer

\*\*\*\*\*

## LEADING OUR CHURCH SCHOOL TODAY

Larissa Riley  
Kelly Isaacs  
Larissa Riley  
Vicky Leknes  
Jessica Bortolotto, Sheryl Gottwald, Sue Werst  
Melissa Lewis

Director of Youth Ministries  
Teacher, Preschool /Kindergarten  
Teacher, Grades 1 to 4  
Teacher, Grades 5 to 7  
Assistant Teachers  
Nursery Attendant

**SOS FOR HOUSE TOUR—PLEASE HELP!** In less than four weeks our church is hosting the Christmas in Amherst Village House Tour on December 14. We can only do this with a little help from our friends—that's you! We are looking for:

\*\*Docents for a 2 1/2 hour shift in one of the homes or in our Sanctuary

\*\*Drivers to drive visitors from Wilkins School parking lot and around the village

\*\*Ticket sales help in the church

Please contact Sally Hooper 603-321-1143 or [sallyhoop@comcast.net](mailto:sallyhoop@comcast.net)

**BREAKFAST WITH SANTA FOOD DONATIONS:** We are excited for our annual "Breakfast With Santa" event. As in the past, we rely on our church family for food donations to make this event a success.

Please use our SignUp Genius Link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4DA8AB23A3F4C43-53558362-breakfast> and choose the donation that work best for you. *Thank you for your generosity!*

### *Three Wonderful Opportunities*



'Tis the Season to purchase gifts for friends, family, and yourself!

- ❖ **Tickets for the Christmas in Amherst Village House Tour** on Sat. Dec. 14 (\$40/\$45 on day of tour)
- ❖ Hand-poured, hand-painted **Ornaments** depicting our church (\$25). These ornaments haven't been available since 2013!
- ❖ A copy of **The Church in the Village: Stories About Its People and Its History** (\$20).



Previous printings sold out!

## Advent Vespers Service

December 11 7:00 p.m.



In the busy weeks that lead up to Christmas we can sometimes lose sight of “the reason for the season” of Advent. Advent is meant to be a peaceful time of anticipation and preparation, a time of joy and hope. Advent is also a time for those who aren’t feeling joyous to find a space for their uncertainty, apprehension, and grief. Advent gives us permission to honor the part of ourselves that is longing to slow down, to take a breath, to *be* instead of *do*. It also provides us an opportunity to find comfort in the darkness.

Join us for a time of quiet prayer, reflective readings, candle lighting, and meditative music. Come experience Advent and take a break from the busyness of Christmas. Come as you are and just be.

**THE CHRISTMAS FUND** for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a unique special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that allows us to recognize and honor those who serve our beloved church. One of the special aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds do not support programs, make grants to institutions, or fund advocacy programs, but rather, they provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay employees. Thank you for your generosity and support.

**CAREGIVER’S CIRCLE:** Are you providing caregiving to a family member, an adult child, in your home, living away or long distance? Would you be interested in being participating in a Caregivers Circle Support Group with others who are on a similar journey as you? Being a caregiver brings many emotional, physical, and financial tolls on the most loving person. If you or someone you know might be interested in attending a monthly Caregivers Circle Support Group here at the Congregational Church of Amherst, please contact Pastor Charlotte.

**SHARE FOOD PANTRY** requests for December include condiments, cooking sauces and seasonings, cooking oil, pasta sauce, tomato sauce, tomato paste, diced tomatoes. Donations should be brought directly to the SHARE Center in Milford; if you are unsure where, please call their office at 673-9898. Many thanks for your continuing support!

## Our Church Calendar

December 1—7, 2024

Some events are taking place virtually. Links are sent out directly by email, and a list of recurring meetings with their links can be found in the member section of our website.

|           |            |                          |
|-----------|------------|--------------------------|
| Today     | 10:00 a.m. | Worship                  |
|           | 11:15 a.m. | Fellowship               |
|           | 11:30 a.m. | Small Group Ministry     |
| Tuesday   | 1:30 p.m.  | Small Group Ministry     |
|           | 4:30 p.m.  | Church Council           |
|           | 7:00 p.m.  | Trustees of the Facility |
| Wednesday | 10:00 a.m. | Wednesday AM Adult Ed    |
| Thursday  | 6:00 p.m.  | Bell Choir               |
|           | 6:30 p.m.  | Confirmation Class       |
|           | 7:30 p.m.  | Chancel Choir            |
| Saturday  | 9:00 a.m.  | Breakfast with Santa     |



## Celebrate the Season of Giving

The Christmas season is just around the corner and the World Service team is partnering with 3 organizations to help ensure that all in our community experience the joy of the holidays. As you can see below, there is a way for everyone to participate, and a wide variety of those to support.



We will again be signing up online, using SignUp Genius. The stars on the "Giving Tree" will again have instructions on how to use the signup tool. We will have members of the team available after in-person worship on November 24 and December 1, 8 to answer questions and help those that may need assistance.

### Important Dates:

- Nov 24<sup>th</sup> – Dec 12<sup>th</sup>: Dates to sign up for gifts
- Nov 24, Dec 1, 8: Members of World Service Team available to help, after in-person worship
- Dec 15<sup>th</sup>: Deadline to Drop off gifts to church

**Crestwood Nursing Home:** We will continue our annual tradition of purchasing gifts for each resident from their specific wish lists. You will be able to view the wish lists and choose a resident that speaks to your heart.

**Family Promise of Southern NH:** Each child has at least one special item on their Christmas list. Santa, Mrs. Claus, and members of the World Service team will deliver these gifts in person on December 18<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to join in this activity please contact Terri Behm, [terri.behm@gmail.com](mailto:terri.behm@gmail.com)

**Venezuelan Family Seeking Asylum:** We are partnering with the Messiah Lutheran Church to ensure this family has a Christmas filled with love and joy. More information on gifts for the family will be available soon.

### **All gifts are due back to the church no later than end of worship Sunday Dec 15<sup>th</sup>**

Crestwood gifts should be returned unwrapped in a gift bag, with the name of the resident clearly visible on the bag, and gift wrap included.

Family Promise gifts should be wrapped and returned with a tag with the name/age of the child.

Venezuelan Family: we will let you know one this is finalized.

For more information please visit our <https://www.ccamherst.org/christmasgifts/>



# *Family* CHRISTMAS *Concert*

CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH OF AMHERST  
United Church of Christ

SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 15, 2024  
4:00 PM

SARA PHELPS, Music Director  
CHANCEL CHOIR  
HANDBELL CHOIR  
YOUTH CHOIR  
MICHAEL HAVAY, Piano/Organ  
SUE WERST, Flute

FREE AND OPEN TO  
THE PUBLIC

11 CHURCH STREET  
AMHERST, NH



Sacred and Popular Christmas Songs  
Choral and Instrumental Classics  
Sing-A-Long Holiday Favorites

# Advent



*Sunday, December 1, 2024*



## **Saturday, December 7**

Come have breakfast with Santa! All children, parents, grandparents, friends and neighbors are invited to join in the fun. Admission includes a hot breakfast, games, crafts and a visit with Santa. Each child will receive an age appropriate book. A professional photographer will not be on site so be sure to bring your phone/camera to take those special Santa photos!

There are two seatings:  
Seating #1: 9:00 am-10:30 am.  
Seating #2: 10:30 am-12:00 pm.

Seating is limited and sells out quickly every year so register today!

***DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS DECEMBER 1.***

*Please note: Santa comes regardless of weather and admission fees are non-refundable.*

Admission fees:  
\$12 14 years old and over  
\$10 under 14 years old  
Free for 12 months and under

To register for the event, <https://www.ccamherst.org/bws/>. Please make sure to put in the comment box the ages of the children so we can provide an age-appropriate book. Thank you.