

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



“The Christian life is not about pleasing God the finger-shaker and judge. It is not about believing now or being good now for the sake of heaven later. It is about entering a relationship in the present that begins to change everything now. Spirituality is about this process: the opening of the heart to the God who is already here.”

– Marcus J. Borg

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 8, 2024

Second 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

Prepare Thyself, Zion (from Christmas Oratorio)

J.S. Bach/
H. Robert James

INTROIT

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING (unison)

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: The first candle reflects the hope we feel as we wait for that light.

One: Today we light the second candle of Advent, the candle of Peace.

(The first and second candles of Advent are lit.)

One: This candle reminds us that Jesus came into the world as the Prince of Peace.

**Many: This candle reminds us of our dreams for peace
in our nations, neighborhoods, and families.**

One: This candle reminds us that to have peace in the world,
we must have peace in our hearts.

**Many: This candle reminds us that when we offer each other the sign of peace,
we offer the presence of Christ.**

All: Let us worship our God of peace together!

*HYMN

Comfort, Comfort You My People

No. 3

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 invite us to listen for the voice crying out in the wilderness.
Today we step forward to hear your call.
We stand in the river with the prophet, John,
as he points to the one who comes in your name.
May we too be your messengers, bearers of Good News.
Be present with us, now, O God of Advent,
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

Of the Father's Love Begotten
Chancel Choir

Molly James

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 3:1-18

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;

make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth,

and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

Continued page 4

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What, then, should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people.

SERMON

"The Times They Are A-Changin'"

*HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

back page 15

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

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Rowland Prichard/
Gregory Hamilton

*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)

Peaceful and ever-present God, your wondrous deeds cause hope and joy to abound. Open our spirits to receive your gracious gifts as we bring our offerings to share with you, so peace may flourish within and among us. May our gifts bring your Good News to our world. Amen.

*HYMN

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

No. 10

*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

*POSTLUDE

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Franklin Ritter

*(*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. 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, 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
 Kathleen Bouchard, Roger Hooper, Gail Wiegand
 Kelly, Fiona and Keira Schmidt
 Linda Lannin, Kate Thompson
 Matt, Laura, Abby and Nick Endres
 Doug Topliffe

Ministers to the World
 Senior Pastor
 Associate Pastor
 Student Pastor
 Director of Music
 Organist/Accompanist
 Deacon in Charge
 Deacons
 Advent Candle Lighters
 Ushers
 Greeters
 Videographer

LEADING OUR CHURCH SCHOOL TODAY

Larissa Riley
 Sue Werst
 Larissa Riley
 Dave Hagerstrom
 Deb Boczenowski
 Melissa Lewis

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

THANK YOU: Through our Thanksgiving Friendship Basket collections, we were able to provide 11 grocery gift cards to families throughout our community. Thank you for your generous donations, which surely brightened the holidays for so many in need of assistance!

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.

Financial Summary

(as of November 30, 2024)

	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$232,763	\$230,781	\$ 1,982
Expenses	\$205,598	\$209,113	\$(3,514)
Net Income	\$ 27,165	\$ 21,668	\$ 5,496

Numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole dollar; as such, some columns may not appear to total correctly.

We hope you are finding this information helpful. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to anyone on the Finance Team: Ken Bell (Treasurer), Don Lyon, Paul Spiess, Doug Topliffe, and Todd Whitney.

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.

STORM WEATHER CANCELLATIONS: As many know heading into the winter season, New England weather is ever changing and at times can be quite unpredictable. In the case of bad weather and the need to cancel an in-person worship service, we will post announcements on WMUR Channel 9 television, and on our website and Facebook pages. Of course, that doesn’t mean you will miss out on Sunday morning worship. Our live streamed service will still be available for folks to tune to at 10:00 a.m. on our Facebook page, and we will continue to upload the recorded service to our website by noon.

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.

DID YOU KNOW... Once again the Black Heritage Trail recently honored Harriet Wilson, the first African American to publish a novel in English. Her book, “*Our Nig; or Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*” was published in 1859 and is the first novel to be published by a Black woman in the world! The marker can be found alongside the statue of Harriet Wilson contained in the Bicentennial Park in Milford, NH. Please take a moment to visit this important part of our New Hampshire history! *Submitted by the CCA Racial Justice Group*

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!

BEWARE OF FALLING SNOW AND ICE: During the winter months, we want to remind everyone that snow and ice may fall from our roof at any time. Please use caution when in our driveway, and do not walk too close to the building.

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 24th – Dec 12th: Dates to sign up for gifts

Nov 24, Dec 1, 8: Members of World Service Team available to help, after in-person worship

Dec 15th: 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 18th. If you would like to join in this activity please contact Terri Behm, 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 15th

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/>

THE SYMBOLISM OF OUR CHRISMON TREE

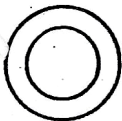
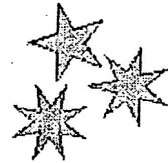
Chrismons proclaim our Lord Jesus Christ through the use of symbols. These symbols are interdenominational and the heritage of all Christians. They tell the story of God's plan for our salvation that, through faith in Jesus Christ, we might be restored to God in a community of love, the Christian Church.

All of the Chrismons used to decorate the tree are in white and gold to symbolize the purity, perfection, majesty and glory of the Son of God, and the pearls symbolize the Word of God. The tiny white lights that adorn the tree represent Christ, the light of the world.



The Cross – A reminder of our Lord's redeeming work for the salvation of humankind. Different forms of the cross point to various aspects of our Savior's work.

Stars – Five points, Epiphany; seven points, Gifts of the Spirit; eight points, Holy Baptism.



The Circle – Eternity, the eternal love of God and eternal life in God's kingdom.

Daisy – The innocence of the Christ Child.



The Fish – An ancient symbol for the Christ. The letters of the Greek word for fish, IXOYC, are the initials for, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."



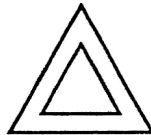
Greek Cross – All parts of equal length. The balanced form, more adaptable in design, was widely used by early Greeks.

Rose – The Nativity of our Lord, His human birth, our Lord’s human mother.



Iota Chi – The first two letters of the Greek name *Jesus* in Greek.

The Triangle – The Triune God.



Shepherd’s Crook with Alpha and Omega – The Alpha and Omega, first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, refer to the beginning and the end, or the eternity of our Lord. The shepherd’s staff is the symbol for Jesus the Good Shepherd, and the figure of the cross can also be seen.

The Butterfly – Our Lord’s resurrection.

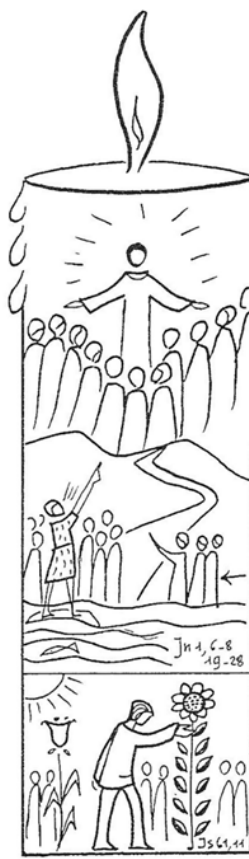
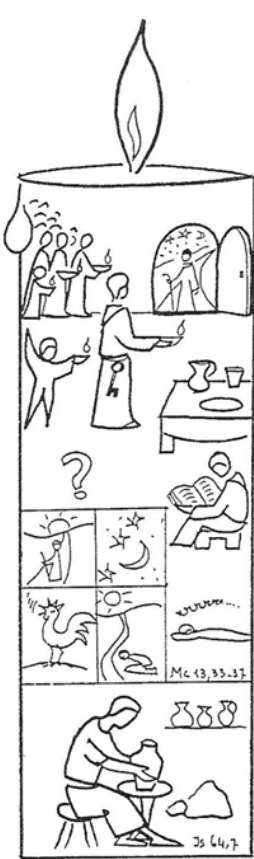


Latin Cross with Alpha and Omega – While no one today knows the shape of the cross on which our Lord died, the church uses this form, the Latin Cross, most widely. Early Christians often combined the Alpha and Omega with the cross to declare the Savior’s divinity.

Crown – King of kings and Lord of lords.



Advent Stories



Our Church Calendar

December 8—14, 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
	11:15 a.m.	Youth Choir
	11:30 a.m.	Racial Justice Group
	6:00 p.m.	Senior Youth Group
Monday	10:00 a.m.	WA Christmas Luncheon
Tuesday	10:00 a.m.	WA Board
	7:00 p.m.	Diaconate
Wednesday	9:30 a.m.	Staff Meeting
	6:00 p.m.	Budget & Finance Team
	7:00 p.m.	Advent Vespers Service
Thursday	10:00 a.m.	Congregational Care
	6:00 p.m.	Bell Choir
	6:30 p.m.	Confirmation Class
	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir
Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Christmas in Amherst Village



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

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Alt. Kate Layzer. Dec. 2016

1.0 come, O come Em - man - u - el, and with thy cap - tive
2.0 come, Thou Day - spring, come and cheer our spi - rits by thine
3.0 come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, and or - der all things,
4.0 come, De - sire of na - tions, bind all peo - ples in one

5
peo - ple dwell; who mourn in lone - ly ex - ile here, Un -
ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, and
far and nigh; to us the path of know - ledge show, and
heart and mind; bid en - vy, strife and quar - rels cease; fill

10
til the Child of God ap - pear. Re - joi - ce! Re - joi - ce! Em -
death's dark sha - dows put to flight. Re - joi - ce! Re - joi - ce! Em -
cause us in her ways to go. Re - joi - ce! Re - joi - ce! Em -
the whole world with heav - en's peace. Re - joi - ce! Re - joi - ce! Em -

15
man - u - el shall come to us, in peace to dwell.
man - u - el shall come to us, in peace to dwell.
man - u - el shall come to us, in peace to dwell.
man - u - el shall come to us, in peace to dwell.

Sunday, December 8, 2024