

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



“Hear, Lord, not my words, not even my best words, not even my most prayerful words. Listen to my life. Let my actions speak. Awkward as I may be, let me act out of love, wary of boasting and jealousy, content to speak humbly of my gratitude for you. Amen.”

—adapted from John Kirvan

THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

March 4, 2018

Third Sunday in Lent

10:00 AM

*Let us be gathered in silence so that we and those who enter with us
may pause, pray and prepare to worship God.*

PRELUDE

Choral and Fuga from Sonata No. 6

Felix Mendelssohn

GREETING AND WELCOME

Members and visitors are asked to sign the Friendship Register and to use a nametag.

NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

INTROIT

Chancel Choir

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We gather this day to worship our God, whose words and ways challenge us.

People: God invites us to lose our selfishness to find ourselves.

Leader: God calls us to be fools in the world to show forth the wisdom of Christ.

People: God urges us to empty ourselves to discover life's fullness.

Leader: God bids us to be obedient to a divine will so we might know true freedom.

People: We come to worship our Creator, seeking to have our faith challenged into growth.

**ALL: We root our faith in worship seeking to find nourishment for our spirits in this
unfolding season of Lent.**

*HYMN

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

No. 276

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION and THE LORD'S PRAYER (in unison)

Most holy God, we come to you with awe and wonder, aware of the mystery of life, reverent before your holy love and power. Sharpen our awareness of the sacred; startle us with the joy of discipleship; strengthen us to accept the cost of following Jesus; and help us to honor our blessed covenants with you and with one another for we are your church. In Christ's name we pray: **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.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Eternal and Almighty God, you have long sought us and we have fled. You have offered us an easy yoke, and we have tied ourselves down with cares and burdens. You have forgiven us, and we have complained against our sisters and brothers. Give us a conversion that turns us around to face the light; teach us a repentance that lives in works of love; lead us into the narrow path; guide us through the valley of the shadow of death. Call us to follow Jesus Christ and in his way to live and suffer, to die and rise again.

SILENT PRAYER... In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*SONG OF ASCRIPTION (Tune: ANGEL'S STORY)

O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you
That where you are in glory your servant shall be, too;
And, Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
O give me grace to follow my Savior and my Friend!

CHILDREN'S TIME

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

ANTHEM

The Road Not Taken from *Frostiana*
Chancel Choir

Randall Thompson

THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Jeremiah 31:31-34
Mark 14:22-25

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COMMUNION MEDITATION

"Learning Faith By Heart"

*HYMN

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian
verses 1, 2 & 4 only

No. 372

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and PASTORAL PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE

Chancel Choir

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Along with our offering collected this morning, we dedicate the generous contributions of those who give monthly or electronically. All of our offerings support the work and witness of Jesus Christ here in this place and in the wider world. Each is given to the glory of God in faithful appreciation for many received blessings. Thanks be to God!

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Larghetto

Robert Wilkinson

*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 (in unison)

O Gracious God, bless our offering that it may reach and touch those who hunger, who hurt, who seek new hope. As co-inhabitants of this earth, we care about all of our sisters and brothers. We pray for justice and world peace, for liberty to those oppressed, for joy to those who are weary. In honor of our Sovereign God. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

*HYMN OF PREPARATION

Let Us Break Bread Together

No. 513

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

We welcome all people to join in receiving this sacrament. Children may participate at the discretion of their parents. The cup contains grape juice. For those who wish to receive gluten, wheat and dairy-free communion bread, it can be found in the bowl on the communion plate.

CALL TO COMMUNION

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to God.

Leader: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

COMMUNION PRAYER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION and CONSECRATING PRAYER

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP

In the tradition of our church, let us partake of the bread as it is served, remembering our individual uniqueness in the eyes of God and our diversity within the Body of Christ. Let us hold the cup until all have been served, remembering our oneness with God and our unity in the Body of Christ.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (in unison)

We give thanks, O God, because in your own free gift of love you have reached out to us. You have refreshed us at your table, touched our deepest needs, and called us to a shared memory and hope. Send us forth with courage and joy in the name of Jesus Christ, that we, too, might become bread and life for one another and the world. Amen.

*HYMN

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

No. 281

*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

Chancel Choir

*POSTLUDE

Toccatina

G. Lardelli

(*Indicates that those who are able may stand.)

Portions of today's liturgy are adapted from Touch Holiness, edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi.

Our Church Calendar

March 4—10, 2018

Today	10:00 a.m. Worship 11:10 a.m. Fellowship—Community Room 6:00 p.m. Senior High Youth Group—Youth Room
Monday	9:30 a.m. WA Workshop—Vestry
Tuesday	8:30 a.m. Men's Fellowship—Youth Room 1:30 p.m. Small Group Ministry—Parlor 7:00 p.m. Church Council—Vestry
Wednesday	10:00 a.m. Animate: Faith Study Group—Parlor
Thursday	9:15 a.m. Congregational Care—Parlor 5:30 p.m. Community Supper—Community Room 6:00 p.m. Handbell Choir—Sanctuary 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir—Vestry 7:30 p.m. Pastoral Relations Committee— Pastor Dick's Office



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AMHERST
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 this morning. 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:

- **Nursery Care** is provided for children ages two and under at the beginning of worship.
- **Church School** is available for children in preschool through grade 4 immediately following Children’s Time.
- **Joys and Concerns** may be written on the cards found in the pew racks. Cards will be collected by one of the pastors during the middle hymn and shared during the Prayers of the People.
- **Nametags** – 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.
- **Fellowship** – Please join us in the community room following worship to welcome visitors and friends.
- **Emergencies** – 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 nursery and in the church school.

The church office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Here’s how to reach us: by telephone 673-3231, or by email andrea@ccamherst.org. If we are unavailable by phone, please feel free to leave a message using the personal directory, 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 at Facebook.com/ccamherst.

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

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Members and Friends of The Congregational Church

Richard G. Leavitt
 Maureen R. Frescott
 Sara L. Phelps
 Michael Havay
 Carol Lyon
 Jessica, Jack and Julia Bortolotto
 Marilyn Gibson
 Laura Green
 Liz and Hamilton Stewart

Wendy Valeri

Ministers to the World

Senior Pastor
 Associate Pastor
 Director of Music
 Organist/Accompanist
 Deacon In Charge
 Greeters
 Church School Coordinator
 Nursery Coordinator
 Fellowship Hosts

Handbell Choir Director

PLEDGE THANK YOU! We would like to thank the following people for expressing their commitment to the church through their pledge during our annual Stewardship campaign. As of Friday, March 2, we have received 21 pledges for a total of \$61,964. Your pledge is greatly appreciated and helps our church reach its goals for 2018-2019: *Gail and David Agans, Bruce and Sharon Beckley, David and Crystal Chen, Russ and Sandy Demarest, Scott and Sally Hewett, Roger and Sally Hooper, Tedd and Carol Landon, Elizabeth and Paul Levesque, Bruce and Susan Manchester, Avis Moller, Ed and Nadine Obermiller, David and Joan Poltack, Nancy and Dan Protzmann, Chris and Gretchen Pyles, Jean Stockfleth, John and Anita Swanson, Susan Bagnara Thornton, Doug and Adrienne Topliffe, Vern and Chris Trudo, Tom and Sue Werst, Jodi Woroski.*

CHURCH SCHOOL: Keep yourself up to date with church school news by logging into www.ccamherst.org. Here you will find the upcoming lessons posted as well as events. What should you bring to church school this week? What will be the lesson? What is our mission for the term? To find the answers log into ccamherst.org.

DIACONATE EASTER BASKETS: Once again, the Diaconate will be delivering Easter Food Baskets to families in our community who need a little help. We want to assist them by providing the ingredients necessary to prepare a complete, wholesome Easter meal. We will be passing the Friendship Baskets today during worship for monetary collections. Any donations that you can make will help with the purchase of items for these Easter meals. Thank you very much for your generosity.

The Lectionary texts for the next two weeks are:

March 11: Numbers 21:4-9
 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
 Ephesians 2:1-10
 John 3:14-21

March 18: Jeremiah 31:31-34
 Psalm 51:1-12 or
 Psalm 119:9-16
 Hebrews 5:5-10
 John 12:20-33

Sunday, March 4, 2018

Slaves, A Ship, and Us

*The revelation of God is whole
and pulls our lives together.*

*The signposts of God are clear
and point out the right road.*

– Psalm 19

Today the United Church of Christ recognizes one of its founding events: The sailing of the Amistad with its passengers and the events that followed.

In 1839, a group of enslaved Africans broke free while being transported around the island of Cuba aboard the coasting schooner Amistad. They attempted to sail the small vessel back to Africa, but were captured by the US Revenue Brig Washington off the coast of Long Island, charged with mutiny, and threatened with return to slavery.

Connecticut Congregationalists formed the Amistad Committee, which organized a legal defense, eased the captives' confinement during the lengthy court case, and eventually funded their return to Africa after winning a favorable decision from the US Supreme Court.

The Amistad Committee became a seed for wider advocacy for the abolition of slavery in the United States. In 1846, Lewis Tappan, an Amistad Committee leader, founded the American Missionary Association, the first abolitionist organization with integrated leadership. After the Civil War, the AMA went on to found schools, churches, libraries and universities for the newly freed African Americans of the South.