

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



*“It may be that when we no longer know what to do,  
we have come to our real work  
and when we no longer know which way to go,  
we have begun our real journey.*

*The mind that is not baffled is not employed.  
The impeded stream is the one that sings.”*

—Wendell Berry, author

# THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

December 2, 2018

First Sunday of Advent

10:00 AM

GATHERING CHIMES

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

GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

PRELUDE

INTROIT

*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

Anne Krantz, French horn

CANDLE LITURGY OF HOPE

Gene Heighton and Joan Lyons

Opening Sentences

Leader: The Gospel of John speaks of Christ as the true light coming into the world. In commemoration of that coming, we light candles for the four weeks leading to Christmas and reflect on the coming of Christ. It is significant that the church has always used that language-the coming of Christ-because it speaks to a deep truth. Christ is coming. Christ is always coming, always entering a troubled world, a wounded heart. And so we light the first candle, the candle of hope, and dare to express our longing for peace, for healing, and the well-being of all creation.

*The candle of hope is lit.*

\*Responsive Call

Leader: We take the time, in the busyness of this season, for quiet reflection – for the light of God's love can be seen everywhere.

**People: We will let ourselves be surprised by wonder, and set aside time to offer quiet thanks.**

Leader: The good news of Advent is this: Christ is coming. Christ is always coming.

**People: We will welcome Christ in our hearts. We will let ourselves be guided by his ministry. We will go forth from this place in hope.**

\*HYMN

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

No. 2

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION and THE LORD'S PRAYER

O God, come, travel with us through Advent. Give us courage to spread hope in the world. This Advent season calls us to watch, wait, and hope for new things. Helps us to notice the signs of your presence and of your coming to be, that we might be surprised and renewed and know that you are with us. We pray as Jesus taught us, saying: **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.**

\*GLORIA

*Gloria*

Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

CHILDREN'S TIME

\*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

ANTHEM

*E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come*

Paul Manz

Chancel Choir

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 21:25-36

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SERMON

"Faithful Waiting"

\*HYMN

*Return, My People*

inside back page

*You are invited to write your joys and concerns on the prayer cards in the pews, and pass to the minister to be lifted in prayer at this time.*

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

\*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)

**Almighty God, it is with hope that we offer our money to the work of the church. You call us to be your light in the darkness, your voice in the wilderness, your hope for the hopeless. May every effort we make, every gift we give, every prayer we pray further Your vision of wholeness and peace. Amen.**

#### THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

ORGAN MEDITATION

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

*Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

No. 22

\*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

\*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

\*CHORAL RESPONSE

Chancel Choir

\*POSTLUDE

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

*The Lectionary texts for the next two weeks are:*

December 9: Malachi 3:1-4  
Luke 1:68-79  
Philippians 1:3-11  
Luke 3:1-6

December 16: Zephaniah 3:14-20  
Isaiah 12:2-6  
Philippians 4:4-7  
Luke 3:7-18



**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 Pre-K through grade 7 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](mailto: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](http://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

Maureen R. Frescott

Katherine Rogers

Sara L. Phelps

Sandra LaBarge-Neumann

Judi Simpson

Marilyn Gibson

Laura Green

Wilene Knight

Michael Havay

Wendy Valeri

Ministers to the World

Acting Senior Pastor

Acting Associate Pastor

Director of Music

Guest Organist

Deacon In Charge

Church School Coordinator

Nursery Coordinator

Fellowship Host

\*\*\*\*\*

Organist/Accompanist

Handbell Choir Director

**THE FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR** are given in celebration of the lives of John and Veronica Dmyterko Varanka, and Allyn and Edith Lucchini Chabot, from Mike, Sally, Sasha & Scott, and Cassie Varanka.

**WA CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON:** All women are invited to attend the annual WA luncheon on Monday, **December 3** to celebrate the successful Holiday Fair and the arrival of the Christmas season. We will gather for coffee at 10:00 a.m., followed by an old-fashioned Yankee Swap. Bring a wrapped gift: found, hand-crafted, created or new (no more than \$5.00). Also bring food: main dish casserole, salad, mini-croissants, or dessert. Sign-up for a dish by calling Anne Riehl, 213-6058. We will end the luncheon with a carol sing led by Sara Phelps.

**SHARE FOOD PANTRY** requests for December include toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner, bar soap, feminine hygiene products, diapers and wipes. Donations can be left in the SHARE cupboard in the narthex or in the container by the community room entrance. Many thanks for your continuing support!

**LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY:** Ever wonder where the pastors come up with the scripture readings for Sunday morning? Ever wish you knew a little more about the text before you head into worship?

Join us for Lectionary Bible Study with Pastor Kate! Come talk about the text for the upcoming worship, learn about the history and culture of the Bible, and grow deeper in your faith and Biblical literacy while you're at it! All are welcome to come take a dive into our preaching text for the week.

We offer two choices for Bible study; join us on Sunday mornings at 8:50, or on the second and fourth Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. (our next Wednesday meeting is Dec. 12).

**SUCCESSFUL HOLIDAY SHOPPING:** SUCCESS has something for everyone on your list! Gift cards will be available for purchase or ordering after church every Sunday through December 16, also the last day to order. We have cards you can buy today from Amazon, Shaw's, Dunkin Donuts, Starbucks, Uno's, Longhorn, CVS, Panera and more, but quantities are limited, so come early for best selection!

**CHURCH SCHOOL:** Today is Communion Sunday and the first Sunday in Advent! The church school children are to be in the Bean Room with Mrs. Phelps practicing for our Christmas pageant. Children will return to their class after practice to complete their lesson.

The traditional Christmas pageant will be presented during our Worship for All Ages service on December 16. The opportunity is available for you to take a part in delivering the message God gave to send a savior, [Scriptures: Isaiah 53:1-12](#). If you have not already notified Marilyn Gibson as to your desire to participate, children and adults, please do so as soon as possible. (Further information is in the December parent letter.)

Christmas Eve delivers the message of God serving humanity when keeping His promise. Church school children also keep their promise to serve neighbors near and far as they donate new stuffed animals to children in need. When you attend the 5:00 p.m. service donate new stuffed animals.

**PRAYERFUL PLAYGROUP:** Calling all parents and guardians! Join us every first and third Friday of the month for fellowship and faith formation. Your child can play in the nursery while we explore questions of life and belief together through study, discussion, and shared experiences.

All are welcome to join this bi-weekly group of young parents seeking to form deeper relationships in faith—whether you go to this church, or any church, or not at all! In the UCC we say, “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

**BAKERS NEEDED:** At this time, because we are co-hosting the **community supper** with the Amherst Lions Club, our needs are baked goods. Please leave desserts in the church office with your name and a note indicating it is for the **December 7** supper. Questions? Contact Bob Miskelly at 554-8789 or Bob Gibson at 672-7244. Thank you!

**ADVENT VESPER SERVICE:** Join us on Wednesday, **December 12** at 7:30 p.m. for an intimate time of worship, readings, reflection and meditation in preparation for Christmas. This service is for all of us who need to breathe deeply during the bustle of Advent and who long for a Savior and space to prepare him room in our hearts. All are welcome!

**BEWARE OF FALLING SNOW:** It is that time of year when we want to remind folks that snow and ice may fall from our roof at any time. Please use caution in our driveway and do not walk too close to the building.

**SAVE THE DATE:** A Red Cross blood drive will be held in our community room on December 28, from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. hosted by SAU #39. Sign up at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org).

**SOS NEEDS:**

- ✓ **Nursery Volunteers**—We are looking for extra hands in the nursery. If you can help on a Sunday from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. it would be greatly appreciated! Please contact Marilyn Gibson at 673-3231, ext. 20.
- ✓ **Breakfast with Santa** still needs some food donations of eggs, juice, milk and cut up fruit (grapes, melons, etc.) We could also use monetary donations to purchase supplies. Contact Anita Swanson at 673-7612 or [neetoswanson@comcast.net](mailto:neetoswanson@comcast.net).
- ✓ **Coordinator for Cookies/Coffee/Cocoa:** We would like to have a presence in the church during the Amherst Town Band Concert on Sunday, December 9. We are looking for someone to organize cookies/cocoa/coffee. This is a perfect opportunity if you have limited time but would like to help! Please contact Nancy Protzmann at [uvmcats84@gmail.com](mailto:uvmcats84@gmail.com) if you are interested. Thank you.

**BREAKFAST WITH SANTA:** This event is an Amherst tradition going back to the 1980's. It is a special opportunity for your family to enjoy a quiet moment with Santa. You can take your own photos, but you will also get one from a professional to take home. Other activities include a hot homemade breakfast, and age appropriate games and crafts.

Tickets are on sale now at <http://www.ccamherst.org/bws/>. Tickets are limited and are on a first come basis: \$10 per person; 12 months & younger free. The date is Saturday, December 15 and there will be two sittings: 9-10:30am and 10:30-noon. Questions? Contact Marti Warren [martiwarren@comcast.net](mailto:martiwarren@comcast.net).

**ANOTHER STEP FORWARD:** You, as members of the congregation, have truly believed that now is *Our Time, Our Turn* to make the necessary updates and improvements to our meetinghouse and parsonage. Many of you have committed to and donated to the Capital Campaign, and we THANK YOU! To date, we have raised more than \$500,000!

We continue to welcome pledges and gifts from the congregation. Every gift of every size is important; not only will it help us reach our overall goal of \$850,000, but the level of participation is also an important factor when asking for outside contributions. We are very grateful to the Amherst Community Foundation (ACF), who has partnered with us and is the fiscal agent for the community campaign. The Historical Society of Amherst has also noted their strong endorsement in their December newsletter.

Travis Warren, ACF treasurer, and Paul Spiess are spearheading the community campaign. Barbara Williams is chairing the Grants committee. In their fundraising efforts, all three emphasize the historic and cultural importance of the meetinghouse and parsonage to the community, and its architectural beauty on our town common.

**POINSETTIA ORDERS:** Help decorate the church for the Christmas services. Donate a poinsettia plant in celebration of Christmas or in memory of a loved one. Names along with your message will be printed in the bulletins. You may take the plant after the last service on Christmas Eve or donate it to someone in need of some holiday cheer. Orders will be taken after church in the community room on Sundays, December 2, 9 and 16; or place your order with Andrea in the church office. Orders close on Monday, December 17.

### Our Church Calendar December 2—8, 2018

Today	8:50 a.m. Bible Study— Meeting Room/Library
	10:00 a.m. Worship
	11:10 a.m. Fellowship— Community Room
	6:00 p.m. Senior High Youth Group— Youth Room
Monday	10:00 a.m. WA Christmas Luncheon— Vestry
	6:00 p.m. Capital Campaign Team— Parlor
Tuesday	8:30 a.m. Men's Fellowship— Youth Room
	9:30 a.m. WA Board—Parlor
	1:30 p.m. Small Group Ministry— Parlor
	7:00 p.m. Church Council—Vestry
Wednesday	10:00 a.m. Study Group—Parlor
	2:00 p.m. Staff Meeting—Parlor
Thursday	9:00 a.m. Congregational Care— Parlor
	6:00 p.m. Handbell Choir—Sanctuary
	7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir—Vestry
Friday	9:00 a.m. Prayerful Playgroup— Nursery
	6:30 p.m. Community Supper— Community Room

## *Share the Christmas Joy*

Please visit our “Christmas Joy” tree in the community room after worship. There you will find brown tags for SHARE children and families, white tags for Crestwood nursing home, and gift cards for purchase for children that find themselves in emergency foster care over the holidays. Please chat with us if you are picking SHARE tags as it is a little different this year.



Whether you can provide for an individual child, teen, senior or a whole family, there is a way for everyone to participate. Sign ups for gift giving will continue on Sunday, December 2.

***Gift return information:*** If your gifts include any gift cards, we encourage you to buy those from our SUCCESS program – this benefits the gift recipient AND CCA. If you can get gift receipts, please include those in an envelope with your returned item(s).

- ✓ CRESTWOOD gifts should be returned unwrapped in a gift bag with the original tag attached to the bag.
- ✓ SHARE Children’s Gifts should be unwrapped but with wrapping paper or gift bag included and original tag included.
- ✓ SHARE Family Gifts should be wrapped and have the original label and inventory of item(s) attached. Family gift cards can be placed in an envelope with the family number on the outside of the envelope.



*Joel 2:12-22; Isa. 11:1-12**James F. D. Martin, 1981; alt.*

1 Re - turn, my peo - ple, Is - ra - el, with pen - i - ten - tial tear;  
 2 Fear not, be - lov - ed, hear - ken now: our God has done great things!  
 3 Then to the faith - ful of the earth the call of God rings clear;

just as the proph - et did fore - tell the ad - vent of Em - man - u - el,  
 Your vin - di - ca - tion shall pour down like rain up - on the bar - ren ground,  
 "Re - turn, my peo - ple, claim your worth, pre - par - ing for your Sav - ior's birth;

God's reign on earth is near! God's reign on earth is near!  
 glad tid - ings to you bring, glad tid - ings to you bring.  
 my reign on earth is near. My reign on earth is near."

*This new Advent text by United Church of Christ minister James Martin is set to a tune by British composer Charles Hubert Hastings Parry, who is also known for his symphonies, organ works, and oratorios.*

Tune: REPTON 8.6.8.8.6.6.  
 C. Hubert H. Parry, 1858  
 Alternate name: REST

*Sunday, December 2, 2018*

## ***Come, Lord Jesus, Come***

Revelation 22:20

The coming of Jesus' Lordship is not an inviting concept for many people. It portends the exclusion and condemnation of non-Christians for some people. And for some others, the coming of Jesus' Lordship brings to mind a rigid state of theocracy in which diversity is forbidden.

But the Biblical context from which we lift the phrase 'Come Lord Jesus' is not really what many people imagine. That context – Revelation 22—speaks of a pristine river of life that emanates from one Source and flows through the central street of a city that is illuminated. The river nourishes the roots of a tree that gives life – not to a select few, but to people from every nation and culture.

The only thing that might exclude anyone from this city is a refusal to recognize the oneness of humanity. Because every person, from every nation, must eat the leaves from the same tree of life, that's nourished by the same river of life, that emanates from the one Source of life. In this city, there is no life that is severed from community.

'Come Lord Jesus' is nothing short of a plea for the renewal of humanity. It is the corrective to a society ravaged by gun violence and mass shootings. And it's an indictment of those who elevate the relative distinctions of nation and tribe to the status of ultimate allegiance.

If you long for a world that overflows with God's love and life, join in praying this Advent: "**Come, Lord Jesus.**"

This page adapted from the introduction to the UCC Advent devotional book ***Come, Lord Jesus.***