

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



*“Peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise,
trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all
those things and still be calm in your heart.”*

—Unknown

THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

December 8, 2019

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

The Lord Will Come and Not Be Slow

Richard Warner

INTROIT

Chancel Choir

CANDLE LITURGY OF PEACE

Michael Havay and Richard Affolter

One: Last Sunday we lit the first candle – the candle of Hope. Today we light the second candle, the candle of peace. We light it knowing full well that peace is elusive, and in some parts of the world it is almost completely absent. Yet in this season of Advent, we trust that God is never absent from us. God is always preparing something new. And even when there is war and discord, whether between countries, within families, or in our own hearts, God is present, gently leading us to new possibilities.

Two candles are lit – the candles of hope and peace.

*Responsive Call

One: From the flurry of holiday busyness, we come longing for peace.

Many: Yearning for lasting joy, hoping to find rest in God.

One: From full calendars and hectic schedules, we come to sing the songs of Advent hope.

Many: From the worry of our days we come to be set free and to be made new.

One: We come to follow the Prince of Peace,

Many: The joy of every longing heart.

*HYMN

We Hail You God's Anointed

inside back page

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

Loving God, in this time of preparation and planning, we thank you for the hope and peace you unfailingly offer us. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ. And hear us as we pray the words 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

I Saw Three Ships

Lloyd Larson

Chancel Choir
Sue Werst, flute

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 3:1-12

Page 836

SERMON

"God's Unfinished Work"

*HYMN

Comfort, Comfort You My People

No. 3

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 and PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER RESPONSE (Tune: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*)

O Come, O Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show, and help us in that way to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel! Amen.

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

Mary's Little Boy Child
Chancel Choir

Jester Hairston

*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)

Peaceful and ever-present God, your wonderous deeds cause hope and joy to abound, and your steadfast love and encouragement help us to live in harmony with one another. Open our spirits to receive your gracious gifts, even as we bring our offerings to share with you, so peace may flourish within and among us. Amen.

*HYMN

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

No. 38

*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

*COMMISSION AND BLESSING

*CHORAL RESPONSE

Chancel Choir

*POSTLUDE

People, Look East

James Mansfield

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



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 673-6848, 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](https://www.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 R. Kennedy

Sara L. Phelps

Michael Havay

Gail Wiegand

Mary Moore

Carol Landon, David and Karen Stowe

Marilyn Gibson

Heather Stone

Wendy Valeri

Ministers to the World

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Director of Music

Organist/Accompanist

Deacon In Charge

Greeter

Ushers

Church School Coordinator

Nursery Coordinator

Bell Choir Director

THE FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR are given to the glory of the music of the season, from Kathy and Skip Skoglund.

WA CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON: The Woman's Association cordially invites all church women to our festive Christmas program followed by our always delicious pot-luck luncheon. Guests welcome. We will gather on Monday, **December 9** at 10:00 a.m. for coffee, followed by a fun Yankee Swap. Please bring a wrapped gift to swap: a gift that you forgot to give, something that was given to you but not your thing, size, etc., a collectible you no longer collect, a craft or gift item you created, something tacky, something silly, something tasty, something FUN! Please limit your shopping to \$5.

The always delicious potluck luncheon of holiday favorites will be served at noon. After the sumptuous desserts, Sara Phelps will lead us in our rousing Christmas carol sing.

Contact Anne Krantz (673-9684) to sign-up for a dish to bring, or to help with food set-up or clean-up.

SUCCESS FOR THE HOLIDAYS: 'Tis the season for shopping and gift giving. Why not let the SUCCESS gift card program help? Cards will be available for immediate purchase and orders for additional cards taken after church in the Community Room every Sunday through December 8. Orders arrive in a week. Thank you for supporting the SUCCESS program.

The Lectionary texts for the next two weeks are:

December 15: Isaiah 35:1-10
Third Sunday of Advent Psalm 146:5-10 or
 Luke 1:46b-55
 James 5:7-10
 Matthew 11:2-11

December 22: Isaiah 7:10-16
Fourth Sunday of Advent Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
 Romans 1:1-7
 Matthew 1:18-25

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 8 and 15; or place your order with Andrea in the church office. Orders close on Monday, December 16.

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!

UCC CHRISTMAS FUND APPEAL: You have the opportunity to be a part of the ministry that cares for the active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ through your participation in this year's Christmas Fund Offering. Your gift to the Christmas Fund will not only assist pastors, but also provide for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks next December to lower-income retirees.

For more information visit <https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home/how-the-funds-are-used>.

Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 8

At 3:00 p.m.



Featuring the Chancel Choir
and the Bell Choir

Sara L. Phelps, *Director of Music*
Michael Havay, *Organist/Accompanist*
Wendy Valeri, *Bell Choir Director*

Our Church Calendar

December 8—14, 2019

Today	10:00 a.m. Worship 11:10 a.m. Fellowship—Community Room 3:00 p.m. Christmas Concert—Sanctuary 6:00 p.m. Senior High Youth Group— Youth Room
Monday	10:00 a.m. WA Luncheon—Vestry
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. Tuesday Team Time
Wednesday	9:00 a.m. Staff Meeting—Parlor 7:00 p.m. Budget & Finance Team— Meeting Room 7:30 p.m. Advent Vespers Service
Thursday	6:00 p.m. Bell Choir—Sanctuary 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir—Vestry

Advent Vesper Service

Wednesday, December 11

7:30 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 gives us permission to honor the part of ourselves that is longing to slow down, to take a breath, to *be* instead of *do*. 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.

WINTER WEATHER CANCELLATIONS: As we all know, New England weather is ever changing and at times quite unpredictable. In case of bad weather and the need to cancel a worship service, we will do our best to get the word out. Tune in to WMUR Channel 9 television, WZID 95.7 FM radio, WMLL 96.5 FM radio, or WFEA 1370 AM radio to check for a cancellation notice. We will also leave a recorded message on the church answering system (673-3231), and will post a notice on our website and our Facebook page.

ALL GIFTS FROM THE CHRISTMAS GIFT DRIVE are due back to the church **TODAY at the end of worship**. If you have 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.

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.

Financial Summary

(as of October 31, 2019)

	YTD	YTD	
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$176,968	\$170,598	\$ 6,370
Expenses	\$158,132	\$167,651	\$(9,519)
Net Income	\$ 18,836	\$ 2,947	\$15,889

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: Gail Agans (chair), Paul Spiess, Doug Topliffe, Todd Whitney and Tim Wiegand (Treasurer).

CALLING ALL KIDS GRADES 5-7! On Sunday, December 15 the **MIDDLE HIGH YOUTH GROUP** is gathering after church for lunch and a trip to the Altitude, a trampoline park in Merrimack, NH. Join us for this great opportunity to wear your comfy clothes to church, and have fun together outside of church school! For more information, email Pastor Kate at pastorkate@ccamherst.org.

YEAR END GIVING: As we approach the busy season from Thanksgiving through Christmas and the New Year, now is a good time to think about how we will handle our year end charitable giving. One option that you may want to consider is donating appreciated stocks in lieu of funds from your checking or savings account.

Those of us who own stocks have experienced significant appreciation in their value over the past several years. If those stocks are sold, the gain is subject to a capital gains tax depending on how long you have held them. Transferring the stock(s) to the church avoids the capital gains tax.

It is quite easy to accomplish by giving explicit instructions to your broker or trustee to transfer the shares to the church account. Forms are readily available in the church office or by contacting Andrea Cyr at 673-3231. You will get a full deduction for the value of the stock on the date it is received. You benefit, the church benefits and we strengthen the financial strength of both our programs and our facilities.

CHRISTMAS EVE STUFFED ANIMAL COLLECTION: This year, CHaD Hospital of Lebanon will be accepting our traditional donation of new stuffed animals from our Christmas Eve service. For health and safety concerns, they have specifically requested that our donated animals be packaged and with tags attached.

Join Us for Worship on Christmas Eve



Children's Service 5:00 p.m.

This is a service tailored for families with young children and for the young at heart. In keeping with our annual tradition, children are invited to bring a new packaged stuffed animal for a special offering.

Candlelight & Starlight Service 7:00 p.m.

This spirit-filled, candle-lit worship will feature traditional carols, special music and readings from our Senior High Youth Group, and a Christmas Message by Pastor Kate. Come experience the magic of Jesus' birth in word and song.

Traditional Candlelight Service 9:00 p.m.

Our traditional candlelight service with lessons and carols, featuring music from the bell and chancel choirs. As the sanctuary gradually fills with candlelight and the sounds of Silent Night, we proclaim the birth of Jesus, the light of the world! O Come, All Ye Faithful!

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.



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

Rose—The nativity of our Lord, his human birth, our Lord's human mother.

Daisy—The innocence of the Christ Child.

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

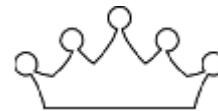


Cross— A reminder of our Lord's redeeming work for the salvation of humankind. Different forms of the cross point to various aspects of our Savior's work.

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."

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.

Triangle—The Triune God.

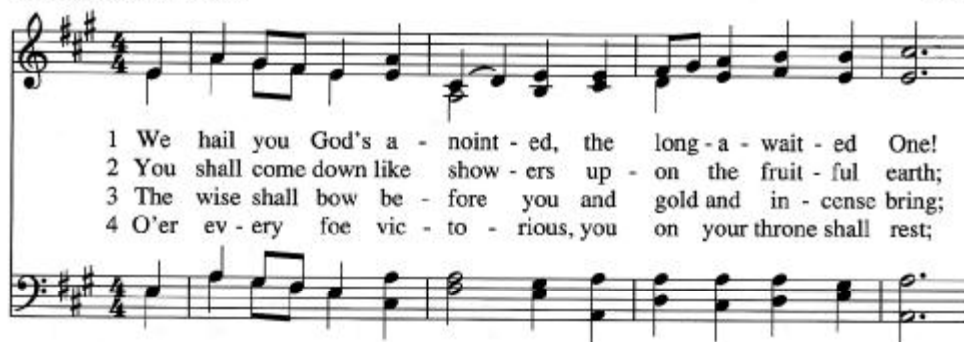


Crown—King of kings and Lord of lords.

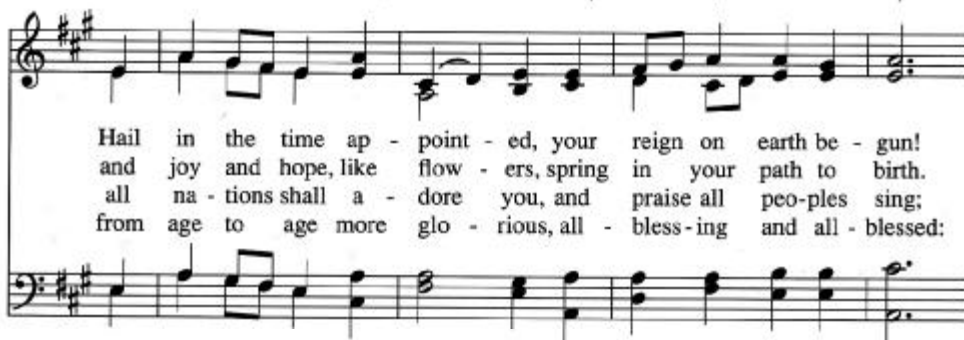
Latin Cross with Alpha and Omega—While no one today knows the shape of the cross on which our Lord died, the church uses this form, the Latin cross, most widely. Early Christians often combined the Alpha and Omega with the cross to declare the Savior's divinity.

We Hail You God's Anointed

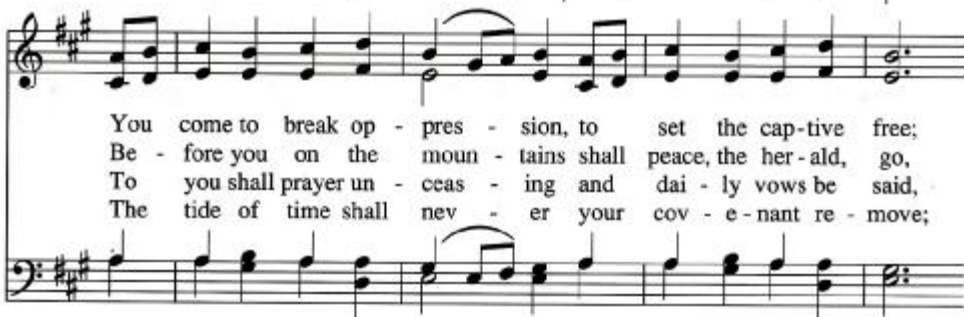
104

*James Montgomery, 1821; alt.**Ps. 72*

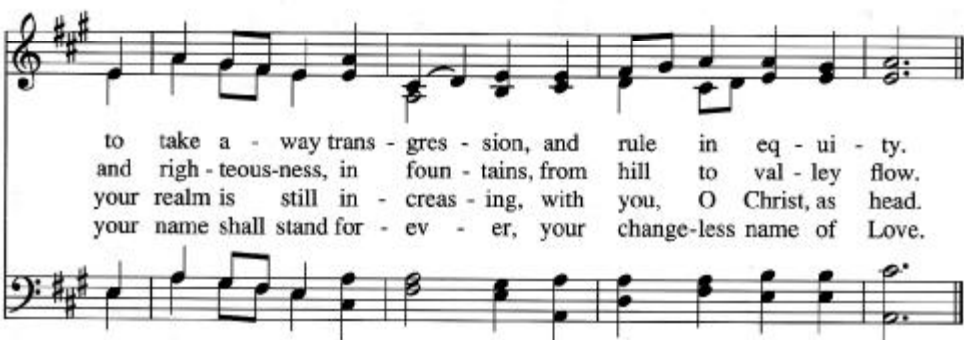
1 We hail you God's a - noint - ed, the long - a - wait - ed One!
2 You shall come down like show - ers up - on the fruit - ful earth;
3 The wise shall bow be - fore you and gold and in - cense bring;
4 O'er ev - ery foe vic - to - rious, you on your throne shall rest;



Hail in the time ap - point - ed, your reign on earth be - gun!
and joy and hope, like flow - ers, spring in your path to birth.
all na - tions shall a - dore you, and praise all peo - ples sing;
from age to age more glo - rious, all - bless - ing and all - blessed:



You come to break op - pres - sion, to set the cap - tive free;
Be - fore you on the moun - tains shall peace, the her - ald, go,
To you shall prayer un - ceas - ing and dai - ly vows be said,
The tide of time shall nev - er your cov - e - nant re - move;



to take a - way trans - gres - sion, and rule in eq - ui - ty.
and righ - teous - ness, in foun - tains, from hill to val - ley flow.
your realm is still in - creas - ing, with you, O Christ, as head.
your name shall stand for - ev - er, your change-less name of Love.

Written as a Christmas hymn for the Moravian settlement in Yorkshire, England, this hymn has enjoyed widespread popularity from the beginning. It is characteristic of Montgomery's deep faith and passion for social justice.

Tune: ELLACOMBE C.M.D.
Gesangbuch der herzoglichen Wirttembergischen katholischen Hofkapelle, 1784

Sunday, December 8, 2019

Two Good Laws

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God. The Word went on to be carved on stone tablets given to Moses up on a mountaintop outside Jerusalem. We call these words the Ten Commandments. They are memorialized in Exodus Chapter 20.

Three-thousand years later, Lord Baden-Powell inaugurated the Boy Scout movement. All the Scouts since then have been given the twelve-point Scout Law to emblazon in their minds and living. The Scout Law begins "A Scout is..." and goes on to state:

Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent.

Two good laws - from Mt. Sinai to Mt. Washington and for all the homes, houses, palaces, and dachas in between.

