

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



*“Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all.”*

– Emily Dickinson

THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

November 29, 2020

First Sunday of Advent

10:00 a.m.

PRELUDE

Wake, Awake for Night is Flying

Philipp Nicolai/
arr. Gilbert M. Martin
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GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The Dart Family

The Gospel of John speaks of Jesus as the true light coming into the world.
We light candles for the four weeks leading to Christmas in anticipation of the coming of the light of Christ.
Today we light the first candle of Advent, the candle of Hope.
We light this candle in hope that God's light will show us the way.
We light this candle in hope that God's peace will calm our fears.
We light this candle in hope that God's joy will lift us out of sadness.
We light this candle in hope that God's love will fill our hearts.
We light this candle in hope that God's light will shine through us – as we bring hope, peace, joy, and love to our world.

(Light one purple candle)

Please join us as we pray the words that Jesus taught us in The Lord's Prayer:

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.

CHILDREN'S TIME

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

HYMN

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Mark 13:24-37

“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

SERMON

“Keep Awake”

ANTHEM

E'en So Lord Jesus Quickly Come

Sara Phelps, soprano
Michael Havay, piano

JOYS AND CONCERNS and PASTORAL PRAYER

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

God who makes all things new, we believe in the power of hope to dispel the darkness, to uplift the downtrodden, and to change the world. We give this offering with faith that a new day is coming. May it be used to bring about your hope for wholeness and peace throughout creation. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

POSTLUDE

People, Look East

James Mansfield
(©2016 Lorenz Publishing Co.)



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.

Here’s how to reach us: by telephone 673-3231, or by email info@ccamherst.org. If we are unavailable by phone, 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 at Facebook.com/ccamherst.

Current Reopening Information: Are you wondering where things stand? Through the members section on our website, we have a page dedicated to communicating with our church family on both current policies and procedures for use of the building during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the progress of our ad hoc Reopening Team. Documents will be posted as they are made available. If you have any questions or concerns about any of this information, please reach out to any member of the team: Pastor Maureen Frescott, Jessica Greer, Pastor Kate Kennedy, Keith Lammers, Susan Manchester, Kathy Skoglund, Paul Spiess, Kate Thompson, Doug Topliffe, Sue Werst, Tom Werst.

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

*Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service
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PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Members and Friends of The Congregational Church Rev. Maureen R. Frescott Rev. Katherine R. Kennedy Sara L. Phelps Michael Havay Chancel Choir Members Marilyn Gibson Obadiah, Meredith, Oriannah, Mariellah and Netaniah Dart	Ministers to the World Senior Pastor Associate Pastor Director of Music Organist/Accompanist Musicians Church School Coordinator Advent Candle Lighting
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CHRISTMAS GIFT DRIVES CONTINUE: While we aren't gathering in person, we are still thankful to be hosting Christmas Gift drives for several organizations, using online signups. Think of it as picking 'virtual stars' off the tree! These are gifts you will shop for either online or at the stores of your choice. **Signup deadline is December 4.** Details for all of our gift drives can be found on our Christmas Gift Drive webpage: <https://www.ccamherst.org/christmasgifts/>

A huge thank you to all who supported our SHARE Christmas Gift Card Drive. Your generosity is greatly appreciated! The gift cards are now with SHARE, who will distribute them to the families.

FIRST CHURCH RECITAL: Our organist, Michael Havay, will be featured on the "Fridays at First" recital series at First Church in Nashua (1 Concord Street) on Friday, December 4. The free, 30-minute concerts start at 12:15 pm and feature the church's historic 1926 Austin pipe organ of 60 ranks and over 4000 pipes. The program will include works of Couperin, J.S. Bach, Buxtehude, Sowerby, and Mendelssohn. COVID protocols are in place at the church including the wearing of masks, seating restricted for social distancing, and limited audience size.

SHARE FOOD PANTRY requests for December include toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorants, shampoo and conditioner, bar soap, feminine hygiene products, diapers and wipes. 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!

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE: Save the date—December 30, 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Financial Summary (as of October 31, 2020)

	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$195,678	\$167,844	\$ 27,834
Expenses	\$150,101	\$163,648	\$(13,547)
Net Income	\$ 45,577	\$ 4,197	\$ 41,381

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: Keith Lammers, Paul Spiess, Doug Topliffe, Todd Whitney and Tim Wiegand (Treasurer).



LAST CALL!

The Congregational Church of Amherst
Woman's Association
Online Auction
ENDS AT 8:00 PM
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30

LAST CALL!

Auction Site: 32auctions.com/waauction

Bid on over 90 items:

Art—Themed Gift Baskets—Crafts—Jewelry
Toys and Games—Antiques—Holiday Décor
Golf Outing—Scenic Helicopter Ride

The Lectionary texts for the next two weeks are:



December 6: Isaiah 40:1-11
Second Sunday of Advent Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

December 13: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Third Sunday of Advent Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

CHURCH SCHOOL: *“Take heed, watch, and pray; for you do not know when the time will come.”* (Mark 13:33) Each Sunday in Advent is significantly recognized as Christians coming towards Christmas. Therefore, Church School is inviting families and children to create their own Advent wreath. **Follow the path to Christmas** by picking up a plastic bag containing necessary materials, to prepare the way towards Christmas. Plastic bags are in the bin outside the church entrance marked Advent Wreath. Visit <https://www.looktohimandberadiant.com/2014/11/kids-advent-wreath-free-printables.html?m=1> if you prefer to visit the site and go on your own.

Church School Winter session calendar is being posted to our church website.

Be the Church—Teach: Church School invites our congregants to participate in church school. Teachers create a Brown Bag Lesson – rooted in our *Children Spark Digital* online resource. Faith foundation is nourished through many. Interested? contact Marilyn Gibson at mgibson@ccamherst.com, any time.

WEDNESDAY MORNING ADULT ED continues the series *A New Look at the Old Testament*. Is the Old Testament still relevant today? Who wrote it and why? We’ll take a NEW look at the OLD Testament through this video lecture series produced by the Great Courses.

We gather on Zoom to watch the lectures together and have a group discussion afterward facilitated by Pastor Maureen. All are welcome! Please RSVP to pastormaureen@ccamherst.org to receive the Zoom link, or access the link on our church website in the Members Section under “Wednesday Adult Ed.”

Light a Candle for Christmas Eve!



We’re hoping to LIGHT UP our virtual Christmas Eve service with images of all of you holding up your lighted candles just as we traditionally do in our sanctuary on Christmas Eve. Send us a photo or short video of yourself or your family either holding a lit candle, or lighting each other’s candles. Send to pastormaureen@ccamherst.org by December 20 and we’ll include you in our candle lighting montage as we sing “Silent Night” during our online Christmas Eve service. If you prefer, we can also record you or your family lighting your candles in our sanctuary in front of our Chrismon Tree. Reach out to Pastor Maureen to schedule a recording time, anytime before Dec. 20!

Our Church Calendar

November 29—December 5, 2020

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

Today	10:00 a.m.	Worship
	11:00 a.m.	Fellowship
Monday	10:00 a.m.	Woman’s Association
	7:00 p.m.	World Service Team
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	Men’s Fellowship
	1:30 p.m.	Small Group Ministry
	6:00 p.m.	Church Council
Wednesday	10:00 a.m.	Wednesday Morning Adult Ed
Thursday	9:00 a.m.	Staff Meeting
	2:30 p.m.	Prayerful Playgroup
	5:00 p.m.	Reopening Team
	7:00 p.m.	Saying Their Names

Sunday, November 29, 2020

The Christmas Fund

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 affords us an opportunity to recognize and honor those who serve our beloved church. One of the special aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay employees. Here are some examples from the 2019 drive:

- **\$260,500 in Christmas Thank You Checks** to 521 retired UCC clergy/lay employees. Retirees with limited financial resources receive a gift at Christmas time as a way of saying “thank you” for years of service to the United Church of Christ.
- **\$1,347,419 in Pension Supplementation** to 350 lower-income retired UCC clergy/lay employees. Retirees with limited financial resources receive monthly payments to bring their household income up to a minimum level so that they can afford basic needs such as food, utilities or medical expenses.
- **\$374,577 in Health Benefits Supplementation** to 144 lower-income retired UCC clergy/lay employees. Retirees with limited financial resources receive assistance to pay their UCC Medicare Supplement Plan premiums.
- **\$123,727 in Emergency Grants** to 69 active/retired UCC clergy/lay employees. Sometimes those who serve the Church face unforeseen circumstances that create financial need. Our help and emergency funds are available to assist in covering those costs.

Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.

Please consider contributing to this special fund. You can donate online at any time at <https://www.ccamherst.org/> - please go to the **Donate** page under the **Giving** menu and make sure to put ‘Christmas Fund Appeal’ in the ‘other’ line. Prefer not to donate online? Please You send in a check to the church, 11 Church St., Amherst, NH 03031 and put ‘Christmas Fund’ in the memo line.

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