

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



***“Music expresses that which cannot be said and
on which it is impossible to be silent.”***

—Victor Hugo

THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

December 27, 2020

First Sunday after Christmas

10:00 a.m.

PRELUDE

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Richard S. Willis/
arr. Diane Bish
(©2013 Lorenz Publishing Co.)

GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

CALL TO WORSHIP and PRAYER OF INVOCATION and THE LORD'S PRAYER

adapted from Psalm 148

All dogs and cats, large and small:

Praise the Lord!

All rabbits, hamsters, and guinea pigs:

Praise the Lord!

All goldfish, guppies, and swimming creatures:

Praise the Lord!

All robins, wrens, and singing birds:

Praise the Lord!

All racoons, squirrels, and deer:

Praise the Lord!

All horses, cows, and sheep:

Praise the Lord!

All lizards, snakes and creeping things:

Praise the Lord!

All people, men, women, young and old:

Praise the Lord!

Everything around the world, every body in the sky, the sea, and the forest:

Praise the Lord!

For God is here, a little child born unto us, a savior come to live among the creation of the Lord.

Let us praise the Lord, let all creation praise the Lord.

God, we celebrate this day of hope, this day of peace, this day of joy, this day of love. For you saw a world in need of Hope, and you said "I will go to them." You saw a world in need of Peace, and you said, "I will go to them." You saw a world in need of Joy, and you said, "I will go to them." You saw a world in need of Love, and you said, "I will go to them." And because you came into our midst, we

are forever changed. So join us here this day. Join us in our kitchens and our living rooms and our home offices. Join us in our cars and on our walks and at the ironing board. Join us wherever we have chosen to praise you today, and may we be filled with your eternal grace because of this time set aside for worship.

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

Go, Tell it on the Mountain

verses 1, 2 and 3

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

SERMON

"How Can I Keep From Singing?"

ANTHEM

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

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, we offer our gifts because we have been blessed by the ultimate gift of your abiding presence—because we feel so steeped in your grace and mercy that we can't help but live in the abundance of your love. And so take these gifts that we give today, and use them to fill the world with just that—with grace, mercy and love. Amen.

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World!

G. F. Handel/
arr. Ruth Elaine Schram
(©2009 Alfred Music Publishing)

The Lectionary texts for the next two weeks are:

January 1: Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
New Year's Day Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 25:31-46

January 3: Jeremiah 31:7-14
Psalm 147:12-20
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:(1-9), 10-18

January 6: Isaiah 60:1-6
Epiphany Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

January 10: Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11





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. 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

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PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Members and Friends of The Congregational Church
 Rev. Katherine R. Kennedy
 Sara L. Phelps
 Michael Havay
 Kate Thompson

Ministers to the World
 Associate Pastor
 Director of Music
 Organist/Accompanist
 Liturgist

THE FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR are given by Chris and Vern Trudo, in grateful thanks for God's great gift of love through Jesus, and in memory of our parents who taught us to love.

THE WREATHS ON THE FRONT of our church have been provided by the Jackson Fund, established many years ago by Robert Jackson to honor his mother's tradition of providing Christmas wreaths for our church. Elizabeth Darling Jackson began this family's tradition of providing the wreaths on the advice of her mother, Louella Darling.

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE December 30, 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. Go to ww.redcrossblood.org to sign up.

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!

Our Church Calendar

December 27—January 2, 2021

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 6:00 p.m. Senior High Youth Group |
| Monday | 10:00 a.m. Woman's Association 7:00 p.m. World Service Team |
| Tuesday | 9:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship |
| Wednesday | 12:00 p.m. Red Cross Blood Drive |
| Thursday | 2:30 p.m. Prayerful Playgroup |

Financial Summary

(as of November 30, 2020)

| | YTD <u>Actual</u> | YTD <u>Budget</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
|------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Income | \$222,622 | \$197,413 | \$ 25,209 |
| Expenses | \$181,139 | \$196,563 | \$(15,424) |
| Net Income | \$ 41,483 | \$ 850 | \$ 40,633 |

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).

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>

Sunday, December 27, 2020