

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



*The angel said to them: "Do not be afraid,  
for I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people:  
to you is born in the city of David a Savior,  
who is Christ the Lord."*

—Luke 2:10-11

# THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

December 24, 2020

Christmas Eve

5:00 p.m.

PRELUDE                      *Pastorale from the "Christmas Concerto," Op. 6, No. 8*                      Arcangelo Corelli

WELCOME and CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION                      Rev. Maureen Frescott

CALL TO WORSHIP                      Rev. Katherine Kennedy

One: We wait in the night

**Many: In the hush that only stars can hold**

One: We wait in the night

**Many: Filled with anticipation of what midnight shall bring**

One: We wait in the night

**Many: With our hearts beating in rhythm with the birth of hope**

One: We hold our collective breaths

**Many: With the angelic host as they clutch their restless alleluias**

One: For God is on the way:

**Many: the mother is laboring**

One: the father is pacing

**Many: the stable is readying**

One: the light is sliding

**Many: and the promise is breaking through**

One: We wait in the longing for midnight

**Many: in expectation of Good News**

One: We wait together

**Many: and find we have moved to the edge of our seats**

One: Our wait is now over!

**Many: for the Word has been born among us!**

HYMN

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;  
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!  
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!  
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

LIGHTING THE ADVENT and CHRIST CANDLES

Diane and Anne Christman

Over the last four Sundays of Advent we have lit four candles – for hope, for peace, for joy, for love. On this Christmas Eve we light all four again. With these candles we recognize the presence of God that surrounds and fills us at all times, and comes to us in a special way in the Christmas story.

Four candles, four promises offered to us by God, and all of them manifest in this one light that we light tonight: the Christ candle. In Christ we find hope and transformation, empowering us to make our own unique contributions to the world. In Christ we find light and life, and the courage to be like him, answering his call and following in his footsteps.

*(all five candles are lit)*

Let us pray:

Life giving God, on this Christmas Eve we hear your call ringing in our ears. We see the light of stars and candles, leading the way. We long for a sign, an experience, to know you face to face. We come, to be part of your story - of Love, of Hope, of Peace, of Joy. And we find all of this, in a tiny baby, lying in a manger.

We give thanks to you this night and pray as you taught us through Jesus:

**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.

**THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN LESSONS AND CAROLS**

IN THE BEGINNING John 1:1-5, 9

THE VISITATION TO MARY Luke 1:26-38

THE VISITATION TO JOSEPH Matthew 1:18-21

SPECIAL MUSIC *What Child is This?* Sondra K. Tucker  
Wendy Valeri, handbells  
Michael Havay, piano

THE BIRTH OF JESUS Luke 2:1-7

THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SHEPHERDS Luke 2:8-14

CAROL *Angels We Have Heard on High*

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains.  
And the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come adore on bended knee, Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE SHEPHERDS Luke 2:15-20

THE ARRIVAL OF THE MAGI Matthew 2:1-5, 7-11

CAROL

*Joy to the World!*

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns:  
Let us our songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness,  
And wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,  
And wonders, wonders of his love.

OUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Rev. Kate Kennedy

CAROL

*Silent Night*

Wendy Valeri, bells

Silent night, holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child,  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night  
Shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven a-far,  
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Rev. Maureen Frescott

BLESSING and BENEDICTION

Rev. Maureen Frescott

POSTLUDE

*The First Noel*

David Paxton



**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](mailto: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](http://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  
obtained from One License with license #A-731944.*

## **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

Wendy Valeri

Diane and Anne Christman

Lily Bjorgen, Bella D'Ambrosio, Lillian Handwerk,

Carolyn Horner, Emma Kennedy, Elise LeRoux,

Taylee Normandin, Izzy Warren, Amelia Wysor

Ministers to the World

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Director of Music

Organist/Accompanist

Bell Choir Director

Advent Wreath Lighters

Senior High Youth Group Members

### **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.

*Christmas Eve, December 24, 2020*