

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



*“Love of God is pure when joy and suffering
inspire an equal degree of gratitude.”*

— Simone Weil

THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

February 21, 2021

Creative Worship

10:00 a.m.

Love God

PRELUDE

Beach Spring
(Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service) section II

Wayne L. Wold

GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are on a journey.

A journey of learning how to love and be loved.

On this journey, we discover love in our comfort-zone and in the wilderness,

In the darkness and in the light.

We come today to be reminded of God's love for us.

No matter who we are,

Or where we are on life's journey,

We welcome an awakening of God's love in our lives.

In this time of reflection and repentance and renewal,

We affirm our identity as beloved of God.

In this time of healing and yearning and growing,

We wait to see what God has in store for us on this journey.

God, as we enter this season of lent, we are longing for reassurance that the wilderness does not last forever, that new discoveries and new life are just around the corner. But in the meantime, let us rest in our love for you. May we use this hour, this day, this month to explore the depths of love for you and from you, so that we have a new foundation of hope and healing by Resurrection Day. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION and THE LORD'S PRAYER

One: On this first Sunday of Lent
we pause and look within
to examine our consciousness.

Many: **Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.**

One: Where we have neglected prayer,
found reasons to avoid generosity,
or lacked compassion:

**Many: Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.**

One: Where we have colluded
in the oppression of those
who become invisible in their suffering:

**Many: Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.**

One: Where anxiety has eroded the gift of Your peace,
and where we have cared too much
about what others think:

**Many: Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.**

Let us pray the words that Jesus taught us...

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.

CHILDREN'S TIME

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

HYMN

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Mark 1:9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

SERMON

"Life Beloved"

ANTHEM

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Wendy Valeri, handbells

Michael Havay, piano

Roland Prichard/

arr. Mitchell & Sandra Eithun

JOYS AND CONCERNS and PASTORAL PRAYER

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

God, there are so many different ways we show our love for you. We show our love when we worship in song and prayer. We show our love when we care for our family and neighbors and friends. And we show our love when we give our resources to support the missions of our church. Bless these and all of our offerings of love today. May they be a beacon of your love to others. Amen.

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

POSTLUDE

Recessional on "Deo Gracias" (O Love, How Deep)

Douglas E. Wagner

The Lectionary texts for the next two weeks are:



February 28:
Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
Psalm 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25
Mark 8:31-38 **or Mark 9:2-9**

March 7:
Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 20:1-17
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 1:18-25
John 2:13-22



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

*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

Wendy Valeri

Gail Agans

Ministers to the World

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Director of Music

Organist/Accompanist

Bell Choir Director

Liturgist

FEELING CONNECTED?? Join us for a Zoom forum! There is much to be celebrated about 2020 and early 2021, despite the challenges of COVID-19! As detailed in the recent Good News letter from Stewardship, "we pivoted... extended our reach...kept going....[and] we are THE CHURCH in the World!"

All this is due to the energy, dedication, and creativity of our staff, our church volunteers, and of course your financial support. As we plan for our next fiscal year which starts June 1, we need your input and continued support. Stewardship is sponsoring informal discussions via Zoom. These small groups of 15 will allow us to hear about programming plans, updates on the capital campaign, to ask questions and offer input to the team, and most importantly, to be connected!

Sign up using this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040e48a8ac2aa4ff2-feeling>.

Here are the dates and times: Sunday, Feb. 28 at 11:30 a.m., Thursday, Mar. 4 at 7:00 p.m., Sunday, Mar. 7 at 11:30 a.m., and Thursday, Mar. 11 at 7:00 p.m.

WE'RE ON INSTAGRAM! We have opened a page there, so do come and check it out! You'll need to create an Instagram account of your own first, on your smartphone by downloading the app, or on your PC. Then you can "follow" our page: **ccamherstnh**. You'll find some familiar faces, and its a great way to stay in touch with what's going on.

Our Church Calendar

February 21—27, 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 in 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
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	Men's Fellowship
	7:00 p.m.	World Service
Wednesday	9:00 a.m.	Staff Meeting
	6:30 p.m.	Lenten Book Series
Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Memorial Service for Connie Spargo

CHURCH SCHOOL: *Forgive Often*—Joseph and his family is a story of forgiveness. Reading it from Joseph’s point of view brings understanding of how forgiveness works for the victim. The brothers receive forgiveness and the kindness Joseph delivers is a process of reconciliation. The brothers must apologize (offering to be Joseph’s slaves), and Joseph must accept the apology (kindness). Without forgiveness, there cannot be reconciliation, nor love.

Lent for church school—Lent is 40 days that began with Ash Wednesday. The March ***Spire*** will hold Lenten activities that can be completed at home.

BLANKETS FOR BRUCE: These are uncertain times for many of us, and for our neighbors around the world. But as we come together, people in shelters, those visiting food banks and many others have received Church World Service (CWS) Blankets, Hygiene Kits and more. Even during the coronavirus pandemic and following emergencies, such as Hurricane Laura.

The Church World Service Blankets+ program was one very near and dear to Bruce Beckley’s heart. As a congregation, our heart for mission remains strong. It is our opportunity to honor Bruce, help make a difference, and change lives.

As a church family, let’s join together as we take up a ‘Blankets for Bruce’ offering online. Please visit our church SOS page for more information:

<https://www.ccamherst.org/sos/>

SHARE FOOD PANTRY requests for February include canned fruit, flour, boxed cake mixes, baking supplies, sugar, coffee, tea, juice and granola. 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!

LENTEN BOOK SERIES: For five Wednesday evenings during Lent we will gather virtually to discuss writer **Anne Lamott’s** wonderful book: ***Almost Everything: Notes on Hope***. With Lamott’s engaging wit and insight as our guide, we’ll set off in search of hope, even if uncertainty seems to surround us: in the news, in our families, and in ourselves. Divided into short, easy-to-read chapters, the book explores topics like aging, grief, unplugging from the world, the names and nature of God, and how we might learn to live with and love those who think, believe, and vote so differently than we do.

Pastor Maureen and Pastor Kate will alternate as facilitators of the sessions. The book is available for purchase for \$15 on Amazon. Each session will focus on three chapters of the book beginning with the Prelude. If you’re unable to read the book join us anyway! We’ll pull out quotes and passages to seed our discussion and all are welcome to participate!

RSVP to pastormaureen@ccamherst.org to receive the Zoom link, or find it on our church website in the member’s section.

Financial Summary
(as of January 31, 2021)

	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$292,322	\$256,551	\$ 35,770
Expenses	\$244,099	\$261,808	\$(17,709)
Net Income	\$ 48,222	\$(5,257)	\$ 53,479

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).

Sunday, February 21, 2021