

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



"I have forgiven most people who have hurt me or behaved atrociously to those I love, although there is one family member who (I'm positive) makes Jesus sick to His stomach. Yet from time to time I forgive myself for being a bad forgiver. Each full act of forgiveness and even each partial act is not only a miracle, but a prize of redemption, as with books off S&H Green Stamps. But instead of a toaster you get a unit of peace."

— Anne Lamott, *Dusk, Night, Dawn*

THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

March 21, 2021

Creative Worship

10:00 a.m.

Forgive Often

PRELUDE

Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive

setting by Robert A. Hobby

GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

CALL TO WORSHIP and THE LORD'S PRAYER

One: In the gathering of God's community,
Many: **We are all connected.**

One: In the depths of our despair,
Many: **We are all connected.**

One: In the daylight of our resentment,
Many: **We are all connected.**

One: In the nighttime of our grief,
Many: **We are all connected.**

One: In the midst of the storm and after the hurt has subsided,
Many: **We are all connected.**

One: As we look towards the dawn of forgiveness,
Many: **We are all connected to one another.**

All: **Let us worship our God who connects and loves us all,
as we 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.

LENTEN PRAYER OF CONFESSION and WORDS OF ASSURANCE (unison)

Loving God, you invite us in
in the best and worst times.
When things are good,
we sometimes forget to include you in our lives.
When times are tough,
we may turn to you, looking for someone to blame.
We blame you,
for punishing us, for being absent, for not making things right.
We blame others, when the responsibility lies with ourselves.
We blame ourselves, when the responsibility lies with others.

We get so caught up in the blame game,
that we place forgiveness on the back burner
because forgiveness is hard, and complicated,
and in some cases unfathomable.
We hold on to anger and resentment
and resist reconciliation where it is possible,
because it's easier than doing the work of restoration.

And where reconciliation and restoration are not possible,
we put undue pressure on ourselves,
and others,
to take on the responsibility of forgiveness,
as a burden that you did not intend for us to carry.

Gracious God, we hear your invitation to explore the path of forgiveness,
as we accept the forgiveness that you offer to us,
learn to forgive others, when it is so hard for us to do.
and extend forgiveness to ourselves
knowing that your grace has already been given, freely, to us all.
Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

HYMN

In the Cross of Christ I Glory
verses 1, 2 & 4

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON Matthew 18:21-33—*NRSV/The Message*

Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?”

Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.”

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’”

SERMON

“Forgive Often”

ANTHEM

Lament
Wendy Valeri, bells
Michael Havay, piano

Jason W. Krug

JOYS AND CONCERNS and PASTORAL PRAYER

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

Creating God, you have gifted us with the ability to give in so many ways. Let us embrace every opportunity to be the church: to forgive often, to build community, to care for our neighbors, and to be the hands and feet of Christ. Through these offerings of treasures as well as our gifts of time and talent, we build the Church. May we use these gifts in ways that will spread your love far and wide. Amen.

COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

POSTLUDE

If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee, BWV 642

J. S. Bach



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. Maureen R. Frescott

Rev. Katherine R. Kennedy

Sara L. Phelps

Michael Havay

Wendy Valeri

Lora Philp

Ministers to the World

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Director of Music

Organist/Accompanist

Bell Choir Director

Liturgist

EASTER OUTREACH: Each year the Diaconate passes a basket during worship to collect donations for gift cards/food baskets for families in our community to help provide a holiday meal and ongoing food support. We are "passing our Easter basket" virtually this year and the need is high for many during these stressful times. If you know of anyone within our community who may need support, please encourage them to contact Pastor Maureen or Pastor Kate. Serving our neighbors is a vital part of our ministry, and the pastors are there to help with the strictest of confidence.

Donate to the deacon's Easter outreach through our website or by sending a check to the church with 'Easter Outreach' in the memo line.

SHARE FOOD PANTRY requests for March include pancake mix and syrup, condiments, cooking sauces and seasonings, cooking oils, jelly, and cold cereal. 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!

MAUNDY THURSDAY: Worship with us virtually on April 1 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.

Financial Summary

(as of February 28, 2021)

	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$318,228	\$286,120	\$ 32,108
Expenses	\$275,408	\$294,138	\$(18,730)
Net Income	\$ 42,820	\$(8,018)	\$ 50,838

Numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole dollar; as such, some columns may not appear to total correctly.

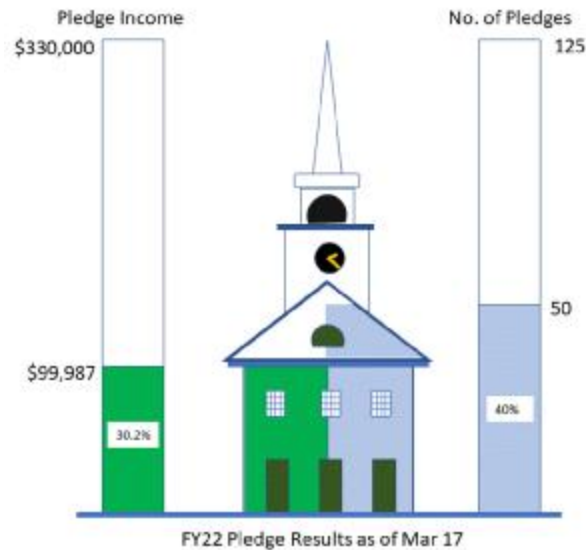
We hope you are finding this information helpful. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to anyone on the Finance Team: Keith Lammers, Paul Spiess, Doug Topliffe, Todd Whitney and Tim Wiegand (Treasurer).

CHURCH SCHOOL: Forgive Often—“*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*” (Ephesians 4:32) **Teaching children to forgive** can be difficult. A child might be upset when a friend does not play nicely, then needs guidance to forgive. God will always forgive when asked.

Brown Bag Lessons: Register on SignUpGenius to receive lessons prepared by our team of teachers related to our monthly church theme (March–Forgive Often; April–Protect the Environment; May–Live Life):

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4caea62ea1f8c25-church1>

FAITH PROMISE: Our new fiscal year **Stewardship Campaign** is ongoing. As of Friday, March 19, we have received pledges from 51 families, totaling \$109,060. Thanks to all that have responded so far. To those who are still considering your pledge, you can email your intents to Andrea at andrea@ccamherst.org, mail in your pledge intentions, call Andrea (673-3231) or go to the church website <https://www.ccamherst.org/stewardship-pledge/>.



EASTER LILY PLANTS will be arranged at the base of the altar, as has been our tradition for many years, even though this year’s service will be virtual. About a dozen double lily plants are needed.

If you would like to donate a plant, please contact Andrea in the church office. Your Easter or memorial message will be listed in the bulletin, and the plants will be yours to take home after the service is recorded.

Plants are \$12 each and orders are due Palm Sunday, March 28. Please make your check payable to the Congregational Church of Amherst, with Easter lily noted on the memo line.

Our Church Calendar

March 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
	1:00 p.m.	Middle High Youth Group
	4:00 p.m.	Senior High Youth Group
	Monday	10:00 a.m.
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	Men’s Fellowship
	6:00 p.m.	Pastoral Relations Team
Wednesday	9:00 a.m.	Staff Meeting
	6:30 p.m.	Lenten Book Series

Sunday, March 21, 2021



on Palm Sunday
March 28 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

After church on Palm Sunday, BOTH of our church's youth groups will be holding a food drive for End 68 Hours of Hunger.

In honor of the SHYG's traditional Palm Sunday Cookie Walk, we are calling this event CANS FOR COOKIES.

When you give food for End 68 Hours of Hunger, you get a package of cookies made special for you by our church's youth!

What to bring:

- Peanut Butter – 18 oz plastic
- Saltines / Graham Crackers**
- Canned Beef Stew
- Canned Pasta – Beefaroni, Ravioli**
- Canned Soup – 12-20 oz size
- Hormel Complete Meals
- Macaroni and Cheese
- Fruit Cups – 4 pack
- Granola Bars/Nutrition Bars
- Instant Flavored Rice or Noodles
- Instant Flavored Potatoes
- Tuna or Chicken or Pulled Pork – 10 oz or smaller cans
- Instant Oatmeal individual packets**
- pudding Cups – 4 pack

What not to bring:

- Anything in glass
- Anything over 1lb

End 68 Hours of Hunger is a state-wide organization with locations close to us in Nashua, Hollis, and Manchester. Established in NH in 2011, End 68 Hours of Hunger is a public not-for-profit effort to confront the approximately 68 hours of hunger that some school children experience between the free lunch they receive at school on Friday afternoon and the free breakfast they receive at school on Monday morning. Come on Sunday, March 28 to help the youth of our church give back to the youth in our community!

Questions? Ideas? Contact Pastor Kate at pastorkate@ccamherst.org.