

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



"If you live in the dark a long time and the sun comes out, you do not cross into it whistling. There's an initial uprush of relief at first, then--for me, anyway--a profound dislocation. My old assumptions about how the world works are buried, yet my new ones aren't yet operational. There's been a death of sorts, but without a few days in hell, no resurrection is possible."

— Mary Karr, poet and novelist

THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

March 26, 2023

Fifth Sunday in Lent

10:00 a.m.

GATHERING CHIMES

Let us be gathered in silence so that we may prepare to worship.

GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

PRELUDE

On Jordan's Stormy Banks

Lyndell Leatherman

INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

One: For those of us filled with uncertainty.

Many: May the God of healing restore us.

One: For those of us led by fear.

Many: May the God of healing restore us.

One: For those of us consumed with worry.

Many: May the God of healing restore us.

One: For those of us broken by pain.

Many: May the God of healing restore us.

One: For all of us seeking wholeness.

Many: May the God of healing restore us.

One: May the God of healing
gently touch our lives and our worship

Many: **Bringing wholeness and restoration,
into the spaces where we are gathered,
into our hearts, our minds, and our souls.**

*HYMN

O Grant Us, God, a Little Space

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UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION and THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

The congregation may be seated.

Merciful God, the season of Lent is coming to a close,
yet in many ways we don't yet see a way out of the wilderness.

The places where you make yourself known to us
at times feel so far away, and yet also feel so close at hand.

We come to you now, wanting to understand
what it means to lose our lives for the life you offer,
seeking the wisdom of our brother Jesus,
hoping to be blown open by the Spirit.

Bring us fully into your presence in this hour,
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 LITANY OF CONFESSION and WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Creator God,

You have set before us the path,

**Many: but we have wandered on our own
to try to find our way.**

One: Sometimes we are like toddlers

and we hear your call and return to you.

**Many: Other times, we are children testing boundaries,
ignoring your call until fear finally makes us look back.**

One: And still other times we are full of youthful rebellion,
demanding to be cut loose and set free,

**Many: not knowing how much we still need
to seek your wisdom and guidance.**

One: But most of all, too often we think we are fully grown,

**Many: and have figured it all out and know our own way,
only to stumble and stray so far.**

One: Remind us, Mother and Father God,

**Many: that we are always your children,
that we always have much to learn.**

One: Help us to seek you every day,

**Many: to acknowledge that we need your wisdom and guidance,
and help us to return to the path and walk with you.**

Continued next page.

One: People of God, hear this good news.
God rolls away everything that stands in our way –
our past, our pain, our hesitation,
and reshapes us into new people living in the new creation.

Many: **Broken, we are made whole;
Lost, we are brought home;
Empty, we are filled with grace.
We rejoice and give thanks to God. Amen.**

*GLORIA PATRI

Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and Holy Spirit, One;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

ANTHEM

His Eye is On the Sparrow
Chancel Choir

arr. Mark Hayes

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act," says the Lord.

SERMON

“Breathe”

*HYMN

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

No. 316

JOYS AND CONCERNS and PASTORAL PRAYER

If you have a prayer to share, fill out a prayer card in your pew. Cards will be collected by one of the pastors during the hymn after the sermon, and will be shared during Joys and Concerns.

CHORAL RESPONSE

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Open My Eyes, That I May See

Clara H. Scott/
Michael A. Johnson

*DOXOLOGY (Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH, No. 592)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

All that we present to you now, O God, we have received from your hand. We give so the hungry may eat, the thirsty may drink, and the broken may be healed. We share to send the good news of your love to those who are in need of hearing it. We invest in just causes, that your mercy may be known among all people. We give because passing on your gifts is what makes us happy, and whole, and renewed. Amen.

*HYMN

Lead On, O Cloud of Presence

inside back pages

*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

*COMMISSION AND BLESSING

*CHORAL RESPONSE

*POSTLUDE

Lauda Anima

John Goss/Kevin Norris

*(*Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.)*

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THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AMHERST, NH, UCC



**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.

Worship Notes:

- Church school is available for children Pre-K through grade 7.
- Our church nursery is open, but not currently staffed, and is available when parents with young children feel the need for a quiet, safe space to go to during worship. A monitor is available to watch and listen to the service.
- Joys and Concerns may be written on the cards found in the pews. You are also welcome to submit your prayer request through our website in advance of the worship service.
- Please remember to wear your nametag each Sunday, so that we may all greet our neighbors. If you do not have a permanent nametag, temporary nametags may be found inside the friendship registers. If you are in need of a new, permanent nametag, please see one of the deacons.
- Please join us in the community room for a time of fellowship after the worship service. Coffee and beverages are offered.
- In the event of an emergency, please remain seated until instructions have been given. An emergency plan is in place for the children in the church school.

The church office is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 to 1:00 p.m., and available Monday through Friday by telephone 673-3231 and by email info@ccamherst.org. 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.com/ccamherst and Instagram.com/ccamherstnh.

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

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE

Members and Friends of The Congregational Church
Rev. Maureen R. Frescott
Rev. Katherine R. Kennedy
Sara L. Phelps
Michael Havay
Russ Demarest
Charlie Vars
Nathan, Jessica, Evan and Julia Greer
Avis Moller, Bill Swift
Tim Wiegand

Ministers to the World
Senior Pastor
Associate Pastor
Director of Music
Organist/Accompanist
Deacon in Charge
Liturgist
Greeters
Ushers
Videographer

LEADING OUR CHURCH SCHOOL TODAY

Larissa Riley
Lyndsay Curtis, Sarah Merrigan
Dave Hagerstrom

Church School Coordinator
Teachers, Preschool to Elementary
Teacher, Grades 5 to 7

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2023: Online registration is now open!! Registration information is available at: www.ccamherst.org/church-school.

Gretchen Davis and Larissa Riley will be available during fellowship today if you have any questions or would like to sign up to volunteer.

BELL CHOIR NEWS: Wendy Valeri will be stepping down as our Bell Choir Director at the end of May. Her dedication, talent and commitment to this ministry will be missed. Our Bell Choir has grown under her leadership and we are so grateful. It has been so wonderful to have her on the music staff these past several years. **Thank you Wendy!**

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!

ANNUAL REPORTS are due to the church office April 15.

DEACON'S FRIENDSHIP BASKETS: On behalf of the congregation, your Diaconate is planning to deliver grocery gift cards to families in our community who need a little help putting food on the table for the Easter holiday. We will be passing our Friendship Baskets during the services on March 19 and 26 to gather donations to support the gift card purchases. If you would like to help, but are participating in the service from home, you can also donate through the church website, and direct your donation to the Friendship Basket collection. If you'd like to help out by purchasing grocery gift cards which we can use, you may also do that on your own. Gift cards should be identified to be used for the Easter gifts and either placed in the Friendship Baskets or dropped off in the office. Thank you very much for your generosity!

BLANKETS FOR BRUCE: Hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, homelessness and poverty are always with us. When difficult times happen, a kind and loving response can make all the difference. That's why the **CWS Blankets+** program was created—to give a loving and tangible response to someone facing a difficult time, reminding them that they are not alone.

This program was very near and dear to Bruce Beckley's heart. As a congregation, our heart for mission remains strong. This is an opportunity to help make a difference, change lives, and honor Bruce's passion for mission work.

As a church family, let's join together as we take up a **Blankets for Bruce** offering. You can donate using the Blankets pew envelopes, mail a check to the church office with 'blankets' in the memo line, or donate online at our custom CWS Blankets secure donation page:

<https://cwsblankets.org/virtual/ccamherst/>

Our Church Calendar

March 26—April 1, 2023

Some 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
	11:15 a.m.	Fellowship
	11:15 a.m.	Youth Choir
	4:00 p.m.	Senior High Youth Group
Monday	10:00 a.m.	WA Workshop
	7:00 p.m.	World Service
Tuesday	5:30 p.m.	Community Supper
Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Lenten Study Series
Thursday	6:00 p.m.	Bell Choir
	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir
Friday	12:00 p.m.	Racial Justice Group



Palm/Passion Sunday, April 2, 10:00 a.m.

We begin with the traditional waving of the palms and end with a new interactive presentation of the Passion story.

Maundy Thursday, April 6, 7:00 p.m.

A prayerful reflective service with Communion and Tenebrae—a commemoration of Jesus' last night with his disciples

Easter Sunday, April 9

7:00 a.m. Sunrise service on the Amherst village green. Celebrate the Resurrection at daybreak followed by coffee and donuts on the green.

10:00 a.m. Easter celebration service in our sanctuary with our Chancel and Bell Choirs. Join us as we praise God with a joyful noise!

All services will be in-person and available to watch online (except for the Easter Sunrise Service).

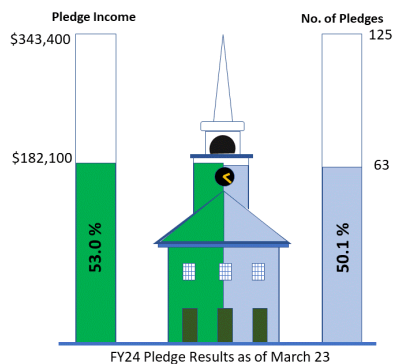
COMMUNITY SUPPER—ALL ARE WELCOME!

We are THRILLED to announce that we are again hosting a Community Supper, for the first time since COVID! Our Community Spaghetti Supper will take place at our church on Tuesday, **March 28** from **5:30 to 6:30 p.m.** Our mission is to provide healthy food and friendship for all in the local community. Meet new friends and enjoy a tasty meal! Fun, food, and fellowship are guaranteed!

For more information contact [Anita Swanson](#)

Early Results of Our Faith Promise Stewardship Campaign

Our 2023-2024 fiscal year **Stewardship Campaign** is underway. Thank you 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/>.



Mark & Fran Baddeley

Alison Batey

Steve & Deb Boczenowski

Patricia Bodan

Sally Bowkett

Jack & Pat Buben

Carole Byatt

Claire Choiniere

Colleen Cushing

Camille Davis

Tyler & Gretchen Davis

Russell & Sandra Demarest

Cynthia Dokmo

William & Joan Dunn

Stephen Egbertson

Joan Egbertson

Alvin & Heidi Fortune

Maureen Frescott

Andre & Nancy Gagnon

Edith Gambee

Sheryl Gottwald

Patricia Harris

Michael Havay

Leona Hendrickson

John & Linda Herrin

Scott & Sally Hewett

Roger & Sally Hooper

Kathy Johnson

Rosmarie Krosch

Peter & Irene Labombarde

Keith & Gail Lammers

Linda Lannin

Arthur & Victoria Leknes

Elizabeth Levesque

Donald & Carol Lyon

Elizabeth MacMillan &

Hamilton Stewart

Ingrid Michaelis

Gail Miller and Lee Bowley

Howell Mitchell

Avis Moller

Mary Moore

Judy Peterson

David & Sara Phelps

David & Joan Poltack

Nancy & Daniel Protzmann

Chris & Gretchen Pyles

Craig & Katherine Richardson

Anne Riehl

Travis & Larissa Riley

Carol St. Jean

Paul & Maggie Schellenberg

Kelly & Casey Schmidt

Beth Secor

Emil & Kathryn Skoglund

Paul & Susan Spiess

Sean & Ann Stevenson

Richard & Susan Stout

Audrey & Marshall Strickland

John & Anita Swanson

Holly Tonnesen

Jean Tonnesen

Douglas & Adrienne Topliffe

Charles & Rolinda Vars

Martha Warren

Thomas & Susan Werst

Todd & Jennifer Whitney

Tim & Gail Wiegand

Alicia Wight

Ken & Barbara Wolfe