

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

## ***The Stories of Our Faith***



*“You belong among the wildflowers; You belong somewhere close to me;  
Far away from your trouble and worry; You belong somewhere you feel free.”*

- *Wildflowers*, by The Wailing Jennys

# THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

November 19, 2023

Creative Worship

10:00 a.m.

## *Abraham and Sarah*

### GATHERING CHIMES

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

### GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

### PRELUDE

*Nocturne*

John Field/Franz Liszt

### INTROIT

### \*GATHERING OUR COMMUNITY

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

One: We are met in the presence of God

**Many: And we do not meet alone.**

One: With the angels in the highest heaven

**Many: We gather to worship the Lord.**

One: With Abraham and Sarah

**Many: We gather to worship the Lord.**

One: With the saints of every age

**Many: We gather to worship the Lord.**

One: We embark on our own journey of faith

**Many: God's Holy name be praised.**

One: God makes of us a great people

**Many: God's Holy name be praised.**

**All: We journey in the presence of God.**

**And we do not journey alone.**

WELCOMING GOD'S PRESENCE and THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

*The congregation may be seated.*

**God of promise,**

**You call us out of our comfort zones to new places and spaces,  
You lead us on our journeys through the wilderness.**

**You make us a great people,  
And call us together as a family of faith.**

**Remind us of your promise today,  
Whisper to our hearts the assurance of your loving kindness.**

**Let your presence linger here,  
As we call out the words that you taught us to pray saying...**

**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.**

MESSAGE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

ANTHEM

*As Rain from the Clouds*  
Chancel Choir and Voices of Creation  
Sue Werst, flute

arr. Thomas Keesecker

\*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH

Genesis 12-18

Then God said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

*Continued next page.*

Some time later, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.” But the word of the Lord came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.” He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” And he believed the Lord, and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land.”

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you and will make you exceedingly numerous.”... God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her and also give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” And Abraham said to God, “O that Ishmael might live in your sight!” God said, “No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.”

They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I be fruitful?” The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.” But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. He said, “Yes, you did laugh.”

## REFLECTING ON THE STORY

## “A People of Promise”

### PERSONAL REFLECTION

*All are invited to make their way to the walls and remove a star. In this time of reflection, think about the ways that God has been faithful to God's promise, and how God may be faithful in the future. Write down, a word, a phrase, or a sentence that reminds you of God's Promise to you and take it with you as a reminder of God's faithfulness. If you have an additional prayer of joy or concern to share, you may place your Prayer Card in one of the baskets in the corners of our sanctuary.*

### MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

*Rondeau on “Royal Oak”*

Michael Helman

### 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

\*HYMN

*Great Is Your Faithfulness*

inside back pages

\*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

\*BLESSING OUR COMMUNITY

\*CHORAL RESPONSE

\*POSTLUDE

*Postlude on "St. George's Windsor"*

George J. Elvey/  
Jason D. Payne

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

*Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service  
obtained from One License with license #A-731944.*

# 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 staffed and available for parents with young children.
- 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](mailto: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](http://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. Prescott  
Kevin G. S. Marsh  
Sara L. Phelps  
Michael Havay  
Adelia Curtis, Mariellah Dart, Maya Gascoyne, Mya Stewart,  
Heather Stone, Sophia Stone, Stella Theriault  
Gail Wiegand  
Don and Susan Holden  
Paul Schellenberg

Ministers to the World  
Senior Pastor  
Acting Associate Pastor  
Director of Music  
Organist/Accompanist  
Voices of Creation  
  
Deacon in Charge  
Ushers  
Videographer

\*\*\*\*\*

## LEADING OUR CHURCH SCHOOL TODAY

Larissa Riley  
Sue Werst  
Dave Hagerstrom  
Gretchen Davis

Church School Coordinator  
Teacher, Preschool to Elementary  
Teacher, Grades 5 to 7  
Nursery Attendant

## BREAKFAST WITH SANTA FOOD

**DONATIONS:** We are excited for our annual "Breakfast With Santa" event. As in the past, we rely on our church family for food donations to make this event a success. Please choose the donation that work best for you, and please deliver all items to the church on Saturday, December 2 between 8:00-8:30 a.m. If you need to make other arrangements please contact [Vicky Leknes](#). *Thank you for your generosity!*

**A CLASSIC ORNAMENT RETURNS!** This ornament, featuring the Brick School, our Church Steeple, and the Amherst Town Library, is bound to become one of your Christmas treasures. First offered 15 years ago by the Christmas in Amherst Village team, this classic is available this season for \$20. Ornaments can be purchased in the community room after worship starting today, on Sundays in November and December, or by stopping by the church office during office hours (Mon., Wed., Fri. 10-3). All proceeds benefit our church!

## Financial Summary

(as of October 31, 2023)

	YTD	YTD	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$178,298	\$184,943	\$ (6,645)
Expenses	\$162,991	\$173,298	\$(10,307)
Net Income	\$ 15,307	\$ 11,645	\$ 3,663

*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: Ken Bell, Don Lyon, Paul Spiess (Treasurer), Doug Topliffe, and Todd Whitney (Chair).*

**HOLIDAY FUNDRAISER:** Kick off your holidays with fun, food, and festive company! **HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS** is a unique event at one of Amherst's historic houses, Journey Cake Farm (226 Route 101), decorated for the season. On Sunday, Dec. 17, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., enjoy hot and cold hors d'oeuvres catered by *Celebrations* of Nashua, music by two local pianists, and a scavenger hunt within the sprawling 1841 home. There will be a cash bar and a 50/50 raffle. Reservations are \$75/pp and must be made at <https://www.ccamherst.org/holidays>.

The venue is graciously provided by Laura and Bill Ferry and **all proceeds benefit our church**. We expect this event to sell out quickly; reservations are limited to 60 guests, so sign up today!

Please note there is **NO PARKING** ONSITE. All attendees must take the complimentary shuttle to the venue from the Meeting House Plaza, 199 Route 101, Amherst.

## Our Church Calendar

### November 19—25, 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
Monday	10:00 a.m.	WA Workshop
Tuesday	10:00 a.m.	ONA Next Steps Group
Wednesday	9:30 a.m.	Staff Meeting



## Celebrate the Season of Giving

The Christmas season is just around the corner and the World Service team is again partnering with two organizations to help ensure that all in our community experience the joy of the holidays. As you can see below, there is a way for everyone to participate, and a wide variety of those to support.

We will again be signing up online, using SignUp Genius. There will still be a "Giving Tree" at the church, but this year, the stars will have instructions on how to use the signup tool.

### Important Dates:

- Nov. 19 – Dec. 3: Dates to sign up for gifts – information will be sent out by email.
- Nov. 19, 26, Dec. 3: Members of World Service Team available to help, after in-person worship.
- Dec. 10: Deadline to drop off gifts to church.

**Crestwood Nursing Home:** We will continue our annual tradition of purchasing gifts for each resident from their specific wish lists. You will be able to view the wish lists and choose a resident that speaks to your heart. Crestwood gifts should be returned unwrapped in a gift bag, with the name of the resident clearly visible on the bag, and gift wrap included.

**Family Promise of Southern NH** (formerly Anne-Marie House): They have moved to a larger facility and are now housing approximately 40 children and their families. Each child has at least one special item on their Christmas list. Family Promise gifts should be wrapped and returned with a tag with the name/age of the child. Santa, Mrs. Claus, and members of the World Service team will deliver these gifts in person on December 18.

**All gifts are due back to the church no later than end of worship Sunday, Dec 10.**

For more information please visit our [2023 Christmas Gift Drives Website](https://www.ccamherst.org/holidays)







**CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH OF AMHERST**  
United Church of Christ

**SUNDAY**  
**December 10, 2023**  
**4:00 pm**  
**11 Church Street, Amherst NH**  
**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**SARA PHELPS, MUSIC DIRECTOR**  
**CHANCEL CHOIR**  
**HANDBELL CHOIR**  
**MICHAEL HAVAY, ORGAN/PIANO**  
**SUE WERST, FLUTE/PICCOLO**

Enjoy beautiful sacred choral and handbell selections, along with much-loved popular favorites of the season. Everyone gets to participate in the merry singalong songs!

# *Family* *Christmas* *Concert*



# HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS



*Gather at Journey Cake Farm*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH

3:00-6:00 PM

## KICK-OFF YOUR HOLIDAYS

### WITH FUN, FOOD, AND FESTIVE COMPANY!

Enjoy a unique event at one of Amherst's historic houses, decorated for the season.

- Savor hot and cold hors d'oeuvres catered by *Celebrations* of Nashua
- Enjoy music by two local pianists
- Join in a scavenger hunt within the sprawling 1841 home
- Cash bar and a 50/50 raffle

## RESERVATIONS \$75/PP AT

[HTTPS://WWW.CCAMHERST.ORG/HOLIDAYS](https://www.ccamherst.org/holidays)



*more info*



JOURNEY CAKE FARM

226 STATE ROUTE 101, AMHERST, NH

All proceeds benefit

The Congregational Church of Amherst,  
NH UCC

VENUE GRACIOUSLY PROVIDED BY LAURA AND BILL FERRY