

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



*"The day the power of love overrules the love of power,  
the world will know peace."*

— Mahatma Gandhi

# THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

*"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here."*

December 10, 2023

Second Sunday of Advent

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

*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

Gregg Sewell

INTROIT

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Alexis Baker, Callan and Whitley Roy

*The congregation may remain seated.*

One: We light candles for the four weeks leading to Christmas in anticipation of the inbreaking of God's love and light in Jesus.

One: In this season of Advent, we wait.

**Many: For the inbreaking God is coming to us.**

One: Now, on this second Sunday, we listen.

**Many: For the inbreaking Word brings us good news!**

*(The first and second candles of Advent are lit)*

One: In the coming weeks, as we wait and listen, we will keep watch.

**Many: For the inbreaking Spirit is moving among us.**

One: In the waiting, listening, and watching, we will say, "Yes!"

**Many: For the inbreaking God, Word, and Spirit will be born once again in our hearts and in our world!**

\*HYMN

*Comfort, Comfort You My People*

No. 3

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

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION and THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)  
*The congregation may be seated.*

**Holy One, during this season of Advent  
you will shake the heavens and the earth,  
you will cry out in the wilderness,  
you will dream dreams and sing songs of hope,  
you will leap in the womb in anticipation.  
Today we prick up our ears to hear your call.  
We stand in the river with the baptist prophet,  
as he points to the one who comes in your name.  
May we too be your messengers, bearers of Good News.**

**God of Advent, today we wait in peace.  
Be present with us, as we pray the words 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.**

\*SONG OF PRAISE *Gloria*  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

TIME FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

ANTHEM *Whisper! Whisper!* Jay Althouse  
Chancel Choir

\*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE  
The peace of God be with you. **AND ALSO WITH YOU.**

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.  
As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,  
"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;  
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,'"

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John

was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

SERMON

"Crying Out"

\*HYMN

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

No. 2

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

*He Comes in Peace*

Lani Smith

\*DOXOLOGY (Tune: *From All That Dwell Below the Skies*)

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

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

**Peaceful and ever-present God, your wondrous deeds cause hope and joy to abound, and your steadfast love and encouragement help us to live in harmony with one another. Open our spirits to receive your gracious gifts, even as we bring our offerings to share with you, so peace may flourish within and among us. Amen.**

\*HYMN

*Now Bless the God of Israel*

side page

\*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

\*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

\*CHORAL RESPONSE

\*POSTLUDE

*Nun komm der Heiden Heiland  
(Savior of the Nations, Come)*

Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau

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

# 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. Frescott  
Kevin G. S. Marsh  
Sara L. Phelps  
Michael Havay  
Russ Demarest  
Don and Carol Lyon  
Paul Schellenberg

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

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## 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

**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 today and next week, or by stopping by the church office during office hours (Mon., Wed., Fri. 10-1). Don't wait, supplies are limited. All proceeds benefit our church!

**SHARE FOOD PANTRY** requests for December 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!

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

**A RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE** will be held on Friday, December 29 from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. in our community room. All blood types are needed. To schedule an appointment, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter sponsor code ACCNH.



## Christmas Eve Services

Sunday, December 24

**Fourth Sunday of Advent—10:00 a.m.**

**Christmas Eve—5:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.**

Our **5:00 p.m. Family Service** is tailored for families with young children and for the young at heart.

Our **8:00 p.m. Candlelight Service** tells the Christmas story through lessons and carols with music from our Bell and Chancel Choirs.

Both services will be livestreamed on Facebook and will be available on our website after 9:30 p.m.



## Advent Vespers Service

Wednesday, December 13

7:00 p.m.

In the busy weeks that lead up to Christmas we can sometimes lose sight of “the reason for the season” of Advent. Advent is meant to be a peaceful time of anticipation and preparation, a time of joy and hope. Advent is also a time for those who aren’t feeling joyous to find a space for their uncertainty, apprehension, and grief. Advent gives us permission

to honor the part of ourselves that is longing to slow down, to take a breath, to *be* instead of *do*. It also provides us an opportunity to find comfort in the darkness.

Join us for a time of quiet prayer, reflective readings, candle lighting, and meditative music. Come experience Advent and take a break from the busyness of Christmas. Come as you are and just be.

**HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS:** 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<sup>th</sup>, from 3:00-6:00 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>.

**Tickets are limited and selling quickly!**

**Deadline for purchase is December 10.**

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

December 10—16, 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
	11:30 a.m.	Racial Justice Group
	2:00 p.m.	Senior High Youth Group
	4:00 p.m.	Family Christmas Concert
Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	Diaconate
	7:00 p.m.	Trustees of the Facility
Wednesday	9:30 a.m.	Staff Meeting
	6:00 p.m.	Budget & Finance Team
	7:00 p.m.	Advent Vespers Service
Thursday	9:30 a.m.	Congregational Care
	6:00 p.m.	Bell Choir
	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir

# Advent Stories







**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**

*Sunday, December 10, 2023*

## **The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund**

***“Grace upon Grace.” John 1:16***

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a unique special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that allows us to recognize and honor those who serve our beloved church. One of the special aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds do not support programs, make grants to institutions, or fund advocacy programs, but rather, they provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay employees.

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!

This appeal will run for the month of December. To donate, visit our online giving page (in the Missions text box please type Christmas Fund) or send a check to the church office (11 Church St. Amherst NH 03031) with The Christmas Fund in the memo line.



# THE SYMBOLISM OF OUR CHRISMON TREE

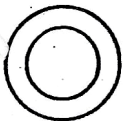
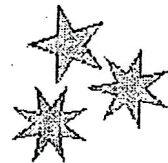
Chrismons proclaim our Lord Jesus Christ through the use of symbols. These symbols are interdenominational and the heritage of all Christians. They tell the story of God's plan for our salvation that, through faith in Jesus Christ, we might be restored to God in a community of love, the Christian Church.

All of the Chrismons used to decorate the tree are in white and gold to symbolize the purity, perfection, majesty and glory of the Son of God, and the pearls symbolize the Word of God. The tiny white lights that adorn the tree represent Christ, the light of the world.



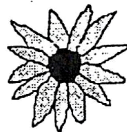
**The Cross** – A reminder of our Lord's redeeming work for the salvation of humankind. Different forms of the cross point to various aspects of our Savior's work.

**Stars** – Five points, Epiphany; seven points, Gifts of the Spirit; eight points, Holy Baptism.



**The Circle** – Eternity, the eternal love of God and eternal life in God's kingdom.

**Daisy** – The innocence of the Christ Child.



**The Fish** – An ancient symbol for the Christ. The letters of the Greek word for fish, IXOYC, are the initials for, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."





**Greek Cross** – All parts of equal length. The balanced form, more adaptable in design, was widely used by early Greeks.

**Rose** – The Nativity of our Lord, His human birth, our Lord's human mother.



**Iota Chi** – The first two letters of the Greek name *Jesus* in Greek.

**The Triangle** – The Triune God.



**Shepherd's Crook with Alpha and Omega** – The Alpha and Omega, first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, refer to the beginning and the end, or the eternity of our Lord. The shepherd's staff is the symbol for Jesus the Good Shepherd, and the figure of the cross can also be seen.

**The Butterfly** – Our Lord's resurrection.



**Latin Cross with Alpha and Omega** – While no one today knows the shape of the cross on which our Lord died, the church uses this form, the Latin Cross, most widely. Early Christians often combined the Alpha and Omega with the cross to declare the Savior's divinity.

**Crown** – King of kings and Lord of lords.

