

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



*"Joy does not simply happen to us.  
We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day."*

— Henri Nouwen

# 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 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent

10:00 a.m.

**Creative Worship—*Mary and Joseph***

GATHERING CHIMES

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

GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

PRELUDE

*Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine*

Mark Hayes/  
Douglas E. Wagner

INTROIT

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Nathan, Jessica, Evan and Julia Greer

*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: In this season of waiting, we listen.

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

One: Now, on this third Sunday, we watch.

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

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

One: Soon, 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

*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

No. 8

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

WELCOMING GOD'S PRESENCE (unison)

*The congregation may be seated.*

**Holy One, during this season of Advent**

**we prepare the way for you to enter our world.**

**Today we gaze into the hearts of Joseph and Mary.**

**To experience nighttime visitations and songs of liberation.**

**To watch for the signs and sightings that indicate your presence.**

**God of Advent, today we wait with joy.**

**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.**

CHURCH SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

*Away in a Manger*

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

**Hark! The heralds angels sing, "Glory to the new born king.  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;  
With the angelic host proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem!  
Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the new born King!**

*Joy to the World!*

**Joy to the World! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
And Heaven and nature sing, and Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.**

ANTHEM

*The Shepherd's Pipe Carol*  
Chancel Choir  
Sue Werst, piccolo

\*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

SHARING OUR PRAYERS

*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 passing of the peace.*

CHORAL RESPONSE

REFLECTING ON THE STORY "Joseph's Dream and Mary's Song"

SHARING OUR GIFTS

MUSICAL OFFERING

*As Joseph Was A-Walking*

Robert J. Powell

\*BLESSING OUR GIFTS (Tune: *As with Gladness Those of Old*)

**As they offered gifts most rare,  
at the manger plain and bare,  
So may we with holy joy,  
pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ to you from whom they spring.**

SPOKEN BLESSING

\*HYMN

*My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise*

inside back page

\*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

\*SENDING

One: The God who makes everything whole,  
**Many: sends us forth  
to bring healing to the broken-hearted  
to comfort those who grieve.**

One: The Christ who comes to be with us,  
**Many: sends us forth  
to stand with the oppressed,  
to feed those who hunger in body and soul.**

One: The Spirit who calls us to action,  
**Many: sends us forth  
to live the gospel  
to walk in love, peace,  
hope, and joy. Amen!**

\*POSTLUDE

*People, Look East*

Robert Lau

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



## Christmas Eve Services

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

Join us at **10:00 a.m. on Christmas Eve** for our Sunday morning worship as we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent – the Sunday of Love – as we anticipate the arrival of the Christ Child! Our Chancel Choir will sing. No Church School.

### Christmas Eve—5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Our **5:00 p.m. Family Service** is tailored for families with young children and for the young at heart. Come hear the Christmas story as told by our youth groups and confirmands in our traditional Christmas pageant. We'll raise our child-friendly glow stick "candles" as we sing *Silent Night* and *Joy to the World* together!

Our **8:00 p.m. Candlelight Service** tells the Christmas story through lessons and carols with music from our Bell and Chancel Choirs. As the sanctuary gradually fills with candlelight and the singing of *Silent Night*, we proclaim the birth of Jesus, the light of the world!

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

# 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  
Bruce and Susan Manchester  
Tim Wiegand

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 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.

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

### WAYS TO ENHANCE YOUR ANNUAL GIVING:

December offers a unique opportunity to "tax advantage" your annual pledge to the church by transferring appreciated stock from your investment portfolio to fulfill your annual commitment. It is quite simple and the stock can be transferred in a day, but don't wait beyond mid-December due to year end activity! Contact Andrea Cyr in the church office for details.

**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!

## Our Church Calendar

**December 17—23, 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.	Christian Ed
	3:00 p.m.	Home for the Holidays
Wednesday	10:00 a.m.	Wednesday AM Study Group
Thursday	6:00 p.m.	Bell Choir
	6:30 p.m.	Confirmation Class
	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir

# THE SYMBOLISM OF OUR CHRISMON TREE

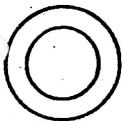
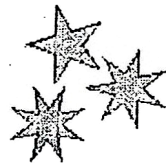
Chrismons proclaim our Lord Jesus Christ through the use of symbols. These symbols are interdenominational and the heritage of all Christians. They tell the story of God's plan for our salvation that, through faith in Jesus Christ, we might be restored to God in a community of love, the Christian Church.

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.

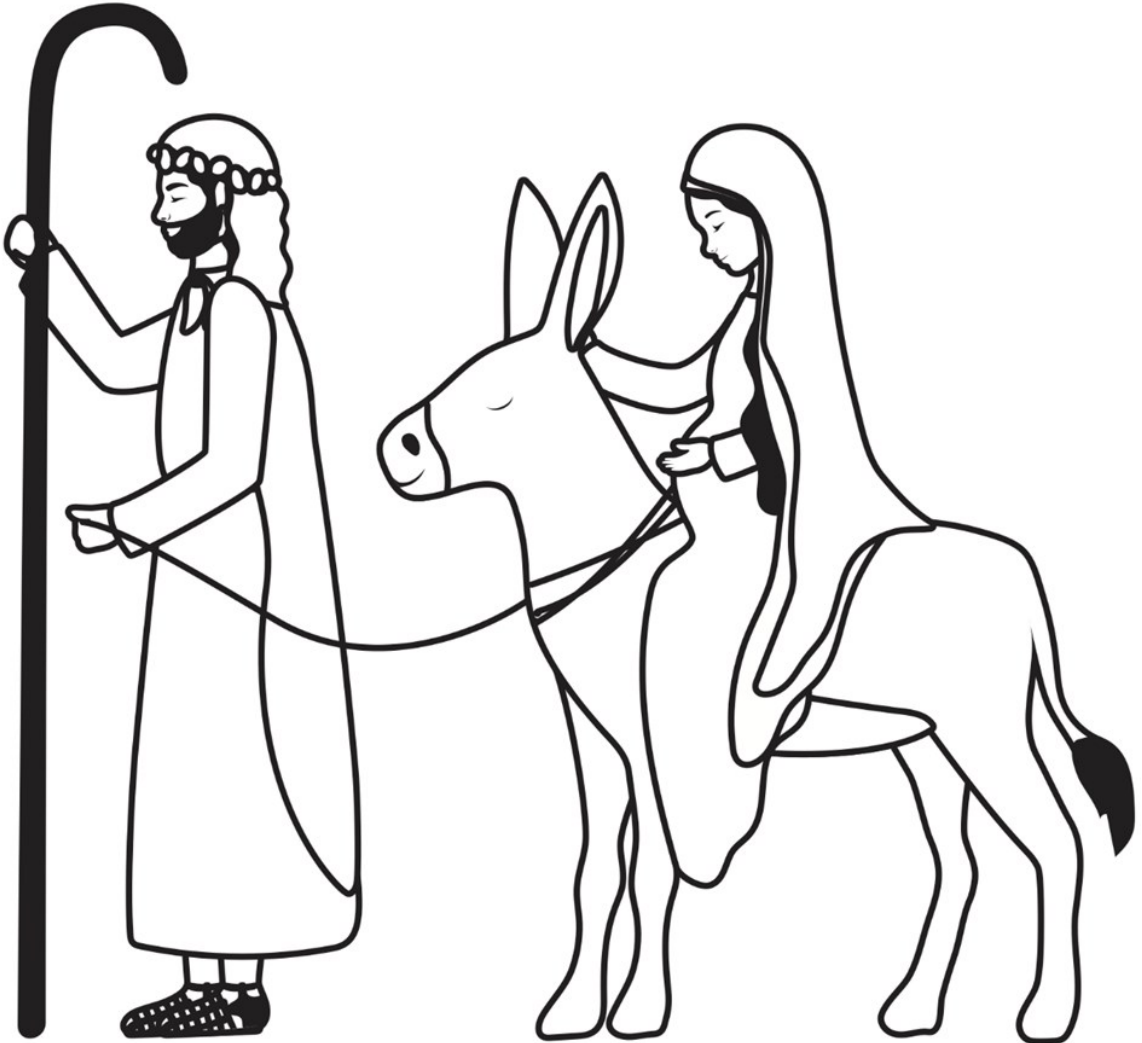


**Latin Cross with Alpha and Omega** – While no one today knows the shape of the cross on which our Lord died, the church uses this form, the Latin Cross, most widely. Early Christians often combined the Alpha and Omega with the cross to declare the Savior's divinity.

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



# Mary and Joseph



*Sunday, December 17, 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.

