

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



"None are so old as those who have outlived enthusiasm."

—Henry David Thoreau

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 31, 2023

First Sunday after Christmas

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

Love Came Down at Christmas, Op. 101, No. 5 Charles Villiers Stanford

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

One: For God so loved the world;

Many: The mountains, the oceans, the trees, the sparrows, and the people.

One: For God so loved the world;

Many: In success and failure, in sickness and in health, in peace and in turmoil.

One: For God so loved the world;

Many: Enough to become one of us, enough to suffer along with us, enough to offer new life for us.

One: For God so loved the world;

All: Let us rejoice and worship God!

*HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful

No. 41

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

The congregation may be seated.

One: Creating God, you make all things new.

Many: You are recreating us, always.

One: We come to you on the threshold of a new year with new desires and old fears,

Many: with new dreams and old regrets.

One: Because you are a God of hope,
Many: we know that you create all the possibilities of the future.
One: Because you are a God of love,
Many: we know that you accept all the mistakes of the past.
One: Because you are the God of our faith,
**Many: we come into your presence with gratitude and joy,
to serve and bless you, Amen.**

*SONG OF PRAISE

Gloria
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

SCRIPTURE STORY TELLING

Luke 2:22-40

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

ANTHEM

Christmas Traditions

arr. Marcia Wells

MESSAGE

"Forever Young"

*HYMN

What Child Is This

No. 53

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 the pastor during the hymn after the sermon, and will be shared during Joys and Concerns.

PRAYER RESPONSE (unison)

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.

ORGAN RESPONSE

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Meditation on "See, Amid the Winter's Snow"

John Goss/
John G. Barr

*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

As with Gladness Men of Old

No. 63, verse 3

As they offered gifts most rare, at the manger plain and bare,
So may we with holy joy, give our best for God's employ,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you from whom they spring.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

As we offer our gifts to you, Holy One, may they join all creation in blessing and serving your people. Called to be your people, may we notice those who are forgotten and offer our lives and hearts to them. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

*HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

No. 31

*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

*BENEDICTION

*ORGAN RESPONSE

*POSTLUDE

Sound the Bells on Christmas Day

James Mansfield

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

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

*The anthem, "Christmas Traditions,"
is arranged by Marcia Wells,
maricawellspiano.com,
www.pianogirlpublishing.com.*

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 on break this week and will resume next Sunday, January 7. Church school is available for children Pre-K through grade 7.
- Our church nursery is open, but not staffed this week, and is available for parents with young children when they feel the need for a quiet, safe space to go 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.

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
 Michael Havay
 Russ Demarest
 Art and Vicky Leknes
 Andrea Cyr

Ministers to the World
 Senior Pastor
 Organist/Accompanist
 Deacon in Charge
 Ushers
 Videographer

Kevin G. S. Marsh
 Sara L. Phelps
 Larissa Riley

Acting Associate Pastor
 Director of Music
 Church School Coordinator

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.

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 31—January 6, 2024

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. 11:15 a.m.	Worship Fellowship
Tuesday	1:30 p.m. 4:30 p.m.	Small Group Ministry Church Council
Thursday	6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Bell Choir Confirmation Class Chancel Choir

Simeon and Anna Welcome Jesus



Sunday, December 31, 2023