

The Stories of Our Faith



Peter the Rock

“If Peter is the rock upon which the church is built, then there is hope for all of us, because he is one of us, because he remains God’s chosen rock whether he is acting like a cornerstone or a stumbling block, and because he shows us that blessedness is less about perfectness than about willingness—that what counts is to risk our own answers, to go ahead and try, to get up one more time than we fall.”

—Barbara Brown Taylor

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."*

June 16, 2024

Creative Worship

10:00 a.m.

"Peter the Rock"

GATHERING CHIMES

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

GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

PRELUDE

*Gott sei gelobet und gebenedeiet
(God be praised and glorified)*

Heinrich Scheidemann

*GATHERING OUR COMMUNITY

Please rise in body or spirit.

One: Just as Peter dropped his fishing net to follow Jesus...

Many: We come here today with a desire to walk in Jesus' footsteps.

One: Just as Peter thought he knew who Jesus was and where he was leading...

Many: We too carry our own expectations, perceptions, and longings.

One: Just as Peter believed that he too was expected to walk on water ...

Many: We often believe that we need to measure up to Jesus' standard.

One: Just as Peter cried out for help when his faith failed to keep him afloat...

Many: We too need to hear that we are not alone in our uncertainty.

One: Just as Peter's fear kept him from following Jesus into difficult and dangerous places...

Many: We too hesitate and deny that we're disciples when it gets too hard.

One: Just as Peter became the rock upon which Jesus built the church...

Many: **We too bring our whole selves –
our believing, doubting, hesitating, and committing selves,
as builders of God’s church in the world.**

One: Let us worship the God, who meets us wherever we are...

Many: **Let us walk with Peter, as fellow followers of Christ!**

*HYMN

Christ is Made the Sure Foundation

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

The congregation may be seated.

God of life-giving stories,

Peter’s story is so similar to many of our own.

He followed Jesus with the spontaneity and passion

of one who felt called to walk in love,

to live justly and humbly, and to care for the least among us.

He also struggled with doubt, denial, and despair.

His story is our story.

May we too trust that we are good enough, deserving enough,

and faithful enough, to respond to your call.

We lift up this prayer in the name of the one who 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.

ANTHEM

In the Sweet By-and-By
Bell Choir

Joseph Webster/
arr. Buddy McElroy

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

TELLING PETER’S STORY

Matthew 4:18-22

As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Matthew 14:25-31

Early in the morning Jesus came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him, they were terrified and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Matthew 16:13:19

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church."

Matthew 16:21-23

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Matthew 26:31-35

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you."

Matthew 26:57-75

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to the high priest. Peter was following at a distance. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." Another servant-girl saw him, and she said, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." After a while the bystanders said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to curse, and he swore, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

John 21:14-19

This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time Jesus said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." Jesus said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he had asked him a third time, "Do you love me?" And Peter said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." After this he said to him, "Follow me."

REFLECTING ON PETER'S STORY

"Peter the Rock"

OFFERING OUR GIFTS and PRAYERS

All invited to place their offerings and prayer cards in the plates as they're passed.

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

I've Got Peace Like a River
Bell Choir

arr. Buddy McElroy

SHARING OUR COMMUNAL PRAYERS

*HYMN

O Lord, You Called Your Friends Out
TUNE: AURELIA ("The Church's One Foundation")

O Lord, you sent your friends out upon the sea one day,
then you went up a mountain to be alone and pray.
But soon their boat was shaken by mighty winds and waves.
They fought the storm that threatened and prayed to God who saves.

Soon, early in the morning, they saw you on the sea.
They thought a ghost was with them and cried out fearfully.
"Don't be afraid," you told them, "for it is I," you said.
You stayed with them and helped them when they were filled with dread.

"If it is you," said Peter, "Just give me your command
and I'll walk on the water as if it were dry land."
He bravely went to meet you, but soon he sank in fear.
He found it hard to trust you when danger was so near.

You reached your hand to Peter and then you stilled the storm.
They worshiped you in wonder as wind and waves grew calm.
May we your church have courage to trust in you alone.
In you we find safe passage and you will bring us home.

*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

*BLESSING OUR COMMUNITY

One: People of God, we are called to be like Peter,
and walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Many: Loving kindness, acting justly, walking humbly with our God.

One: In the midst of a broken world,

Many: May we proclaim the God of Healing.

One: In the midst of despair,

Many: May we proclaim the God of Hope.

One: In the midst of indifference and apathy,

Many: May we proclaim the God of Love and Compassion.

*POSTLUDE

Fanfare

Henry Farmer

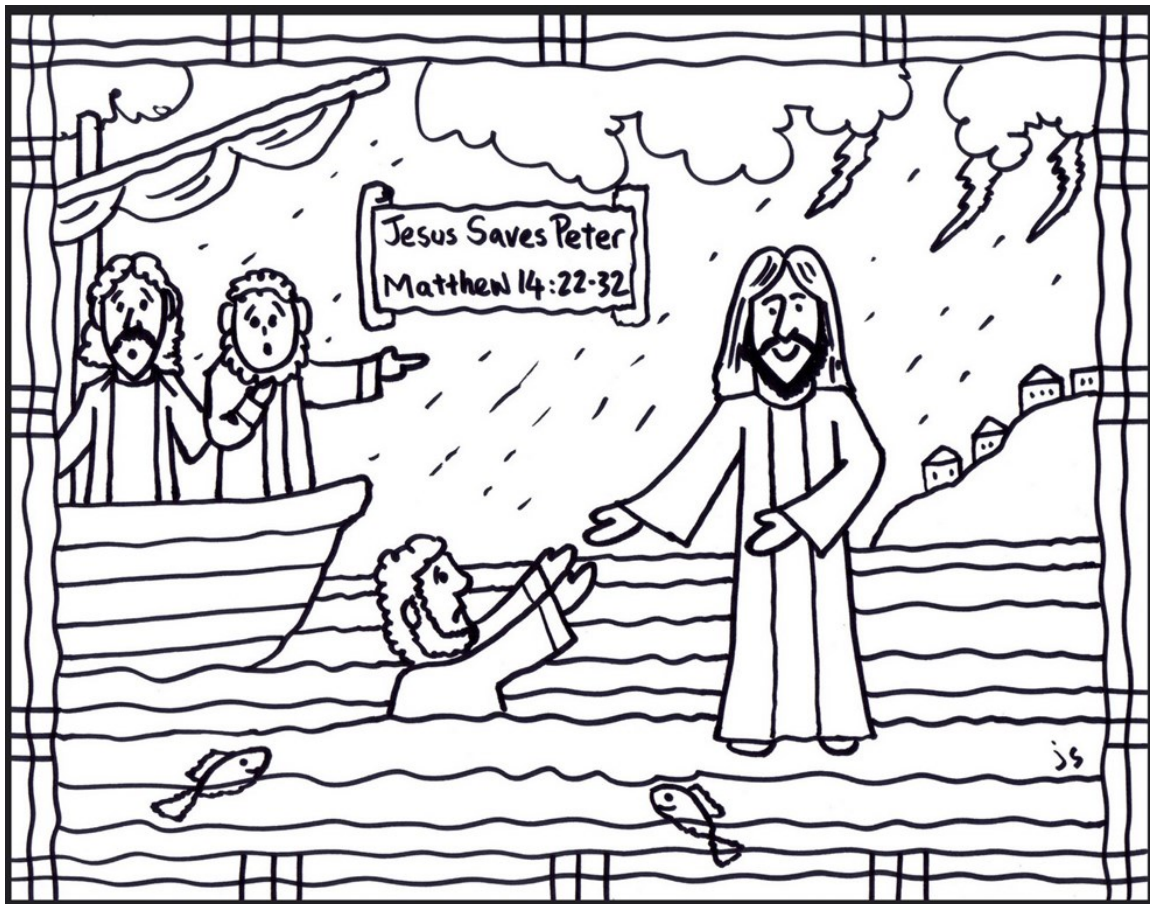
*(*Please rise in body or spirit.)*

*Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service
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Cover art: Jesus washing Peter's feet, by Sister Marie Boniface

*Hymn: O Lord You Called Your Friends Out
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Sunday, June 16, 2024



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 for the summer, and will resume on Rally Day, September 8, 2024.
- 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.

The church office is open 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

Kevin G. S. Marsh

Michael Havay

Sally Hooper

Kathleen Bouchard, John Swanson

Doug Topliffe

Ministers to the World

Senior Pastor

Acting Associate Pastor

Organist/Accompanist

Deacon in Charge

Deacons

Videographer

JULY 4 HELP WANTED: The Fellowship Team is looking for volunteers to donate unfrosted cookies, 2 per baggie. We especially need volunteers on July 4, 9:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. to pass out cookies and brochures on the village green during the town activities. Please email Carol Landon at carollandon@gmail.com for more information or to sign up to help.

SCUBA Vacation Bible School 2024 will be held August 12-16 from 9:00 a.m. to noon. **Registration is now open** for children and/or youth volunteers at www.ccamherst.org/church-school. Contact Larissa Riley or Gretchen Davis with any questions.

Art Prep Days: We will be making decorations for VBS in the community room on July 16 & 17 from 10-2. All are welcome to help us make coral reefs, jellyfish, and more.

Seeking Supplies: We have created an Amazon wish list with supplies that are needed for VBS. Check it out at: <https://a.co/9vXGSgG>

SHARE FOOD PANTRY requests for June include canned ham, canned meats/tuna/chicken, mac and cheese, pasta (all sorts), Progresso and Chunky soups. 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!

SAVE THE DATE: Our annual end of summer Baboosic Lake BBQ Event, hosted by the Dart family, will be Sunday, August 18. More details coming soon.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH! Each day, visions and dreams are created in the hearts of many in the United Church of Christ. Through the Strengthen the Church offering, they can become a reality. As God calls our congregations to be "church" in new ways, your gift will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Because of this offering, many more will hear the good news that "God is still speaking." Your offerings are directed to your church's Conference, and Local Church Ministries.

GARDEN FLOWERS: Fresh cut garden flowers are lovely for simple altar arrangements during the summer. If you can provide a bouquet of cut flowers, or can simply contribute flowers for a bouquet, please contact Sue Stout or Andrea in the church office to schedule a Sunday. Thank you for sharing your flower gardens!