

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



*"No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another,  
God lives in us and God's love is made complete in us."*

- 1 John 4:12

# 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 22, 2024

Fourth 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

*Now is Born the Divine Christ Child*

Lani Smith

### INTROIT

### ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

*The congregation may remain seated.*

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

**Many: The first candle reflects the hope we feel as we wait for that light.**

One: The second candle reflects our dreams for Peace.

**Many: The third candle reflects our longing for Joy.**

One: Today we light the fourth candle, the candle of Love.

*All four Advent candles are lit.*

One: This candle reminds us of the love that God has for all of us.

**Many: This candle reminds us of the strength and courage we find in that love.**

One: This candle reminds us that God calls us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

**Many: This candle reminds us to lean into love, always.**

**All: Let us worship together in Love!**

### \*HYMN

*Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn*

inside pages 10 & 11

*Please rise in body or spirit.*

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

*The congregation may be seated.*

**Holy One, as we stand on the threshold of Christmas,  
we light our last Advent candle in anticipation of your arrival.**

**Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you.**

**Show us the creative power of hope.**

**Shower us with the peace we long to feel.**

**Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained.**

**Magnify your love within us,**

**and teach us to walk in the light of Jesus. 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.**

\*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

ANTHEM

*I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*  
Chancel Choir

John B. Calvin/  
arr. Ryan O'Connell

## SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

### THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Micah 5:2-5a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

### SERMON

“Are We There Yet?”

### INVITATION TO SHARE OUR OFFERINGS AND PRAYERS

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

### OFFERTORY MUSIC

Meditation on “See, Amid the Winter’s Snow”

John Goss/  
John G. Barr

## SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

### PRAYER RESPONSE—THE LORD’S PRAYER (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.**

### \*HYMN

*With Joy Draw Water*

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### \*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

### \*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

### \*CHORAL RESPONSE

### \*POSTLUDE

*“Praise Ye the Lord of Hosts”*  
from Christmas Oratorio

Camille Saint-Saëns/  
Diane Bish

*(\*Please rise 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

Rev. Charlotte E. Y. Bell

Shellie Brook

Sara L. Phelps

Michael Havay

Sally Hooper

Steve Boczenowski, Kathleen Bouchard

Confirmants: Xander Batey, Hannah Grace,

Madeline Houle, Quinn Tremblay

Sally Bowkett, Liz MacMillan

Patricia Bodan

Ministers to the World

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Student Pastor

Director of Music

Organist/Accompanist

Deacon in Charge

Deacons

Advent Candle Lighting

Ushers

Videographer

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## LEADING OUR CHURCH SCHOOL TODAY

Larissa Riley

Sue Werst

Larissa Riley

Dave Hagerstrom

Sheryl Gottwald, Linda Lannin

Melissa Lewis

Director of Youth Ministries

Teacher, Preschool /Kindergarten

Teacher, Grades 1 to 4

Teacher, Grades 5 to 7

Assistant Teachers

Nursery Attendant

**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. Thank you for your generosity and support.

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

## Financial Summary

(as of November 30, 2024)

	YTD	YTD	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$232,763	\$230,781	\$ 1,982
Expenses	\$205,598	\$209,113	\$(3,514)
Net Income	\$ 27,165	\$ 21,668	\$ 5,496

*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 (Treasurer), Don Lyon, Paul Spiess, Doug Topliffe, and Todd Whitney.*

**DID YOU KNOW?** Long before the Europeans came ashore to settle in New England, the Native American Tribes in Southern New Hampshire were decimated by diseases brought ashore by fisherman. As their numbers dwindled, several tribes (the Souhegan, Nashua, Naticook, and Amoskeag Tribes) banded together with the Penacook Tribe to form a Confederacy. This new confederation was governed by a Chief named Passaconaway, who resided in what is now known as Concord, NH. This leader was reported to have many exceptional skills related to hunting and athleticism, so much so that his people believed his skills were magical! When Passaconaway realized the he would not be able to conquer the English settlers, he became a peacemaker, sharing parcels of land and skills that the Indigenous Peoples had honed over centuries. Passaconaway was eventually converted to Christianity and reportedly was a ...”sincere believer and never wavered from his faith”. For more information about this famous Chieftain, please consult A History of the New Hampshire Abenaki by Bruce Heald.

*Submitted by the Racial Justice Group*

**CAREGIVER’S CIRCLE:** Are you providing caregiving to a family member, an adult child, in your home, living away or long distance? Would you be interested in being participating in a Caregivers Circle Support Group with others who are on a similar journey as you? Being a caregiver brings many emotional, physical, and financial tolls on the most loving person. If you or someone you know might be interested in attending a monthly Caregivers Circle Support Group here at the Congregational Church of Amherst, please contact Pastor Charlotte.

**SHARE FOOD PANTRY** requests for December include condiments, cooking sauces and seasonings, cooking oil, pasta sauce, tomato sauce, tomato paste, diced tomatoes. 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!

**BEWARE OF FALLING SNOW AND ICE:** During the winter months, we want to remind everyone that snow and ice may fall from our roof at any time. Please use caution when in our driveway, and do not walk too close to the building.

**STORM WEATHER CANCELLATIONS:** As many know heading into the winter season, New England weather is ever changing and at times can be quite unpredictable. In the case of bad weather and the need to cancel an in-person worship service, we will post announcements on WMUR Channel 9 television, and on our website and Facebook pages. Of course, that doesn’t mean you will miss out on Sunday morning worship. Our live streamed service will still be available for folks to tune to at 10:00 a.m. on our Facebook page, and we will continue to upload the recorded service to our website by noon.

## Our Church Calendar

### December 22—28, 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.	Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Fellowship
Tuesday	5:00 p.m.	Family Service
	8:00 p.m.	Candlelight Service

# Journey to Bethlehem





*Sunday, December 22, 2024*



# Christmas Eve Services

**Tuesday, December 24  
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 Confirmants 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.