

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



"Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy."

—Abraham Joshua Heschel

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."*

January 5, 2025

Epiphany Sunday

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

The Old Year Has Passed Away

Wilbur Held

INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Please rise in body or spirit.

One: We come because God invites us —

Many: to experience awe and wonder.

One: We come because God is with us —

Many: to guide our feet onto the path of peace.

One: We come with hope and trust

Many: that God will strengthen us for the journey.

One: We come with joy for the Light of the World

Many: breaks through the darkness with Love.

All: Arise!! Your light has come!!

Shine!! Rejoice and sing!!

*HYMN

Arise, Your Light Has Come

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UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION and THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

The congregation may be seated.

May the wonder of Your love inspire us to shine and share the light. Teach us to be interrupters of injustice, champions of compassion and blessing bringers as we follow You.

May the Light of Your Love remain the Star that guides us as we journey. May we know deep and abiding joy as we keep our eyes fixed on the horizon and our hearts open to embody the hope we find in You.

Renew us, O God, through the presence of Your Spirit with and within us, and in the name of Jesus Christ who makes us one as we pray together 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.

*SONG OF PRAISE

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

MESSAGE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

ANTHEM

What Star is This, With Beams So Bright?
Chancel Choir

Howard Helvey

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

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When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SERMON

“Guided By Starlight”

*HYMN

Take My Life and Let It Be

No. 391

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

SHARING OUR OFFERINGS and RECEIVING OUR STAR GIFTS

All are invited to take a Star Gift from the basket as the offering plates are passed.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

In the Bleak Mid-Winter

Gustav Holst/Charity Boyles

*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)

Gracious God, whose light guides our steps, we worship you with the gifts we bring, the songs we sing, the lives we live dedicated to love. As we journey into this new year, let our hearts remain focused on your presence and our hands open to your service. In the name of Christ, our guiding star, we pray. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

INVITATION and CALL TO COMMUNION

We welcome all people to join in receiving this sacrament. Children may participate at the discretion of their parents.

One: On this holy day of Epiphany, we celebrate the light of Christ revealed to the world. Guided by a star, strangers from distant lands came seeking a child who would bring hope, peace, and love.

Many: **We, too, come seeking Christ, who is made known to us in this bread and cup, in one another, and in the light of God’s presence.**

One: Come to this table, not because you must, but because you may. Come, not because you are strong, but because you seek strength. Come, not because you have all the answers, but because you seek the mystery of God's love revealed in Christ.

Many: We come, for all are welcome here.

One: We give you thanks, O God, for the light of the star that led seekers to the Christ child, for the courage of those who journeyed far, and for the love revealed in the child they found. In Christ, you bring hope to the hopeless, peace to the restless, and joy to all creation.

One: And so, with angels and shepherds, with sages and seekers, and with all the company of heaven, we join the unending hymn of praise:

**Many: Holy, holy, holy God, heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Glory to God in the highest!**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION and CONSECRATING PRAYER

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP

Communion at CCA is open to anyone who would like to partake. When you receive the bread, eat at your own pace, symbolizing our individual relationship with God. When you receive the juice, drink with the whole congregation, symbolizing our communion as the Body of Christ. The bread is gluten, egg, and dairy free and the juice is non-alcoholic, so that there may be no barriers to Christ's table.

ORGAN MEDITATION

O Word of God Incarnate

Matt Limbaugh

What Strangers Are These?

trad. Scottish/Michael Ryan

COMMUNION PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (unison)

We give thanks to You for all the gifts we have received, for Your grace made known in this meal shared in covenant community. Center us in the renewed promise of this Good News that we are invited to journey together with the holy knowing we are blessed & beloved of God. May we live with deeper intention and greater attention. May we worship with joy, give with gratitude and follow in the way of Jesus, our Light. Amen.

*HYMN

Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

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*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

*POSTLUDE

Festive Flight

Gilbert M. Martin

*(*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. 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
Shellie Brook
Sara L. Phelps
Michael Havay
Gail Wiegand
Russ Demarest, Roger Hooper, John Swanson, Doug Topliffe
Tim Wiegand

Ministers to the World
Senior Pastor
Student Pastor
Director of Music
Organist/Accompanist
Deacon in Charge
Deacons
Videographer

LEADING OUR CHURCH SCHOOL TODAY

Larissa Riley
Sue Werst
Larissa Riley
Dave Hagerstrom
Matt Emmons
Melissa Lewis

Director of Youth Ministries
Teacher, Preschool /Kindergarten
Teacher, Grades 1 to 4
Teacher, Grades 5 to 7
Assistant Teacher
Nursery Attendant

CAREGIVERS CIRCLE is a support group for individuals providing caregiving to a family member, in your home, living away, or long distance. Caregiving can be a lonely role that is demanding and physically exhausting. The meeting enables the caregiver to receive support, and access resources that may help you to navigate the journey.

The first Caregivers Circle meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 10:00 am - 11:30 am in the church parlor, on the second floor, accessible by the elevator or stairs. Light refreshments will be provided. The group will be facilitated by Rev. Charlotte Bell MDIV, MSW, and will be capped at 8-10 participants. You do not need to be a member of this church to attend. If you are interested in attending the meeting, kindly contact Pastor Charlotte by email revcbell20@gmail.com, or phone her office phone 603-673-3231 x14 and leave a message.

DID YOU KNOW: The Abenaki People, the Native Americans who inhabited the land on which our church was built, traditionally celebrated a New Year ceremony. This celebration typically took place on the first new moon after the winter solstice. It was a time for renewal and reflection as the New Year began. This New Year ceremony often involved symbolic acts such as dropping scraps of wood into a fire to represent letting go of the old year.

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.

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

DONATED ALTAR FLOWERS WELCOME:
 Flowers can be given to remember a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion. The donor arranges with a local florist to have their chosen flowers delivered, or can create their own arrangement and bring it on Sunday. After the service they may take the flowers home or donate them to someone in need of some cheer. There are many openings in the coming months. Contact Sue Stout, or Andrea in the church office, to schedule a Sunday.

SHARE FOOD PANTRY requests for January include toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorants, shampoo, conditioner, bar soap, feminine hygiene products, diapers, wipes. 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

January 5—11, 2025

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
	11:15 a.m.	Youth Choir
	11:30 a.m.	Junior Youth Group
	11:30 a.m.	Small Group Ministry
Monday	10:00 a.m.	WA Workshop
	7:00 p.m.	World Service
Tuesday	1:30 p.m.	Small Group Ministry
	4:30 p.m.	Church Council
	7:00 p.m.	Trustees of the Facility
Wednesday	9:30 a.m.	Staff Meeting
Thursday	10:00 a.m.	Congregational Care
	6:00 p.m.	Bell Choir
	6:30 p.m.	Confirmation Class
	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir



Sunday, January 5, 2025