

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



*“Pilgrimage: not always a route to a destination,
but a way of becoming.”*

— Christine Valters Paintner

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.”*

July 13, 2025

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

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

*Prelude on “Evan”
(All Praise to Him Who Reigns Above)*

William H. Havergal/
Gerald Peterson

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Please rise in body or spirit.

One: Come, not because the path is clear, but because the Spirit calls.

Many: We come with questions, with stories half-written and hopes unspoken.

One: God meets us in the wandering, the wondering, the wilderness road.

Many: We come to listen. We come to follow. We come to be surprised by grace.

One: We come to follow Jesus on the paths where compassion comes alive —

All: In the Way of welcome and witness, justice and joy.

*HYMN

Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

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RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF INVOCATION and THE LORD’S PRAYER (unison)

The congregation may be seated.

One: God of wilderness roads and whispered invitations,

Many: we confess we crave clarity— clear maps for the paths we journey.

One: Yet so often, your Spirit nudges us off-script, off-course:

Many: to people we did not expect,

One: to questions we cannot answer,

Many: to paths we would never choose.

One: Forgive us when we resist the detour.

Many: Forgive us when we treat interruptions as obstacles

One: instead of opportunities for love.

Many: Teach us to trust the wilderness road,
One: to walk beside the seeking,
Many: to be transformed by the liberating power of God's redeeming grace,
One: and Love that meets us and journeys with us always.
Many: As we pray the words Jesus taught us 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.

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

SPECIAL MUSIC

Holy, Holy, Holy
Hannah Brook, violin
Rebecca Brook, piano

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Acts 8: 4-8, 26-40

So the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. The crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs that he did, for unclean spirits, crying with loud shrieks, came out of many who were possessed; and many others who were paralysed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

*'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.*

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.'

The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed

to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?' He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

SERMON "Sacred Detours and Side Questing"

*HYMN *Just as I Am, Without One Plea* No. 370

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.

ORGAN RESPONSE

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY MUSIC *Aubade* James Mansfield

*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)

**God of the wilderness road, take these gifts—
our time, our trust, our treasure—
and use them in places we did not expect,
among people we have yet to meet.
May this offering follow your Spirit,
May we BE the love and light of Christ—
bringing joy even to the desert, wilderness roads we travel. Amen.**

*HYMN *Arise, Your Light Is Come!* No. 411

*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

*ORGAN RESPONSE

*POSTLUDE *Trumpet Voluntary in G* David Lasky

(*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 on break for the summer, and resumes on Rally Day, September 7, 2025.
- Our church nursery is open, but not staffed during the summer months. It 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 memorial garden for a time of fellowship after the worship service. Lemonade and other refreshments are offered. In the case of inclement weather, we will gather in the community room.
- In the event of an emergency, please remain seated until instructions have been given.

The church office is open for visitors 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. Charlotte E. Y. Bell
Shellie Brook
Michael Havay
Sally Hooper
Sally Bowkett, Gail Wiegand
Don and Carol Lyon
Doug Topliffe

Ministers to the World
Associate Pastor
Student Pastor
Organist/Accompanist
Deacon in Charge
Deacons
Ushers
Videographer

Rev. Maureen R. Frescott
Sara L. Phelps
Larissa Riley
Melissa Lewis

Senior Pastor
Director of Music
Director of Youth Ministries
Nursery Attendant

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL is going to Alaska this summer! In order to transform our sanctuary into the Alaskan Wilderness, we are looking to borrow artificial Christmas trees for the week of VBS. All trees will be carefully labeled and returned at the conclusion of our fun-filled week. If you are able to drop a tree off, please put your name on the box and leave it on the stage in the Community room by July 20.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Larissa Riley at churchschool@ccamherst.org.

SHARE FOOD PANTRY requests for July include canned ham, canned meats/tuna/chicken, mac and cheese, pasta (all sorts), Progresso and Chunky soups . Donations may be left in our new SHARE collection container in the vestry. Many thanks for your continuing support!

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

WOMAN'S ASSOCIATION SUMMER WORKSHOP: On Monday, July 14 WA members and friends will meet in the church vestry from 10:00 a.m. until noon for an informal gathering. Participants can bring their own craft projects to work on, or just join in the fellowship. A snack and beverages will be provided. Anyone interested in learning more about the Woman's Association is welcome to attend. No RSVP is needed.

Contact Adrienne at abtopleftfe@gmail.com with any questions.

FLOOR CLEANING: The vestry will be closed from July 24 thru July 28 due to our annual floor waxing. Because of this, there will be no access to the nursery on Sunday, July 27. The community room will be closed the following week while that floor is being waxed.

The Trustees of the Facility are asking for help On July 20th , 27th and August 3rd to move furniture in and out of these rooms for this floor waxing. Work will begin immediately after worship

Sunday, July 13, 2025