

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



*"To get the full value of joy you must  
have someone to divide it with."*

—Mark Twain

# 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 14, 2025

Third 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

*Christmas Rejoicing*  
Bell Choir

Douglas E. Wagner

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 love and 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: Today we light the third candle, the candle of Joy.**

*(Two purple candles and one pink candle are lit.)*

One: This candle reminds us that God invites us to find joy in the beauty of Creation.

**Many: This candle reminds us that God invites us to find joy in one another.**

One: This candle reminds us that joy is found in the birth of a baby in a manger.

**Many: This candle reminds us that we spread that joy when we sing of God’s liberating love.**

**All: Let us worship and sing together with joy!**

\*HYMN

*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

No. 8

*Please rise in body or spirit.*

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION and THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)  
*The congregation may be seated.*

**Holy One, during this season of Advent  
we prepare the way for you to enter our world.  
Today we gaze into the hearts of Elizabeth and Mary.  
To experience the joy of anticipation and songs of liberation.  
To envision the promise you gifted us through Jesus.  
God of Advent, today we wait with joy.  
Be present with us, as we pray the words Jesus taught us:**

**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.**

ANTHEM

*Sleep Little King*  
Youth Choir  
Sue Werst, flute

Don Besig

MESSAGE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

ANTHEM

*Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day*  
Chancel Choir

arr. Michael Larkin

\*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 1:39-56

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

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And Mary said,  
“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.  
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name;  
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has come to the aid of his children,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

And Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home.

SERMON

“Mary’s Song”

\*HYMN

*My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise*

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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

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY MUSIC

*Improvisation on Ave Maria*

Franz Schubert/  
Charles Callahan

\*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)

**What a joy to give! What a delight to join our efforts to your purposes, amazing God! You inspire us to lift up the weak, to stand against injustice, to work for harmony among all. May our offerings spread the knowledge of your ways across this earth, widening the circle of inclusion to embrace all your children, in Jesus' name. 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

*Postlude on Hail, Holy Queen*

Charles Callahan

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



## **Christmas Eve Services** **Wednesday, 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 Junior and Senior Youth Groups 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.*

# 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  
Sara L. Phelps  
Michael Havay  
Sally Bowkett  
Sally Hooper, Sue Ruggiero  
The Boczenowski/Emmons Family  
Bruce and Susan Manchester  
Tim Wiegand

Ministers to the World  
Senior Pastor  
Associate Pastor  
Director of Music  
Organist/Accompanist  
Deacon in Charge  
Deacons  
Advent Candle Lighters  
Ushers  
Videographer

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## LEADING OUR CHURCH SCHOOL TODAY

Larissa Riley  
Sue Werst  
Kelly Isaacs  
Matt Emmons and Vicky Leknes  
Larissa Riley  
Gretchen Davis

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

**SHARE FOOD PANTRY** requests for December include toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorants, shampoo and conditioner, bar soap, feminine hygiene products, diapers, and wipes. Donations may be left in our SHARE collection containers found in the narthex, the church office, and outside the community room. Donations may also 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! 7

**DID YOU KNOW:** The **New Hampshire Center for Justice and Equity**, centered in Manchester, NH, is New Hampshire's North Star for elevating and empowering people of color in the state. The **NHCJE's** mission is to foster connections, change systems, and meet community needs to make a better Granite State where all belong. "We envision a New Hampshire that offers fair opportunities for all Granite Staters regardless of your age, gender, who you love, where you grew up, or the language of origin you speak," says Anthony Poore, President/CEO, NHCJE. For more information about **New Hampshire Center for Justice and Equity** see [nhcje.org](http://nhcje.org).

*Submitted by The CCA Racial Justice Team*

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

# CCA Worship Service Reflection

The theme of the service was...

I learned...

I did not understand or still wonder about...

Something that helped connect my faith to my everyday life was...

# Mary Visits Elizabeth





FAMILY  
*Christmas*  
CONCERT

SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 14, 2025  
4:00 PM

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sacred and Popular Christmas Songs  
Choral and Instrumental Classics  
Sing-A-Long Holiday Favorites

**CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

United Church of Christ  
11 CHURCH ST, AMHERST NH

SARA PHELPS, Music Director  
CHANCEL CHOIR  
HANDBELL CHOIR  
YOUTH CHOIR  
MICHAEL HAVAY, Piano/Organ  
SUE WERST, Flute

