

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



*"O Lord, make this Lenten season different from the other ones.
Let me find you again. Amen."*

- Henri Nouwen

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."*

February 22, 2026

First Sunday in Lent

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

Largo (Symphony 9)

Dvorak

INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP and PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Please rise in body or spirit.

One: Today, we follow Jesus into the wilderness, full of isolation, fatigue, hunger, thirst, and temptation.

Many: We follow, trusting in God's mercy.

One: We witness Jesus resist the siren calls of sensationalism, notoriety, and misuse of power for selfish gain.

Many: We recognize God's mercy at work in the face of temptation.

One: We notice the angels who tend Jesus, messengers of care in a harsh and lonely place.

Many: We pay attention to God's merciful presence that did not abandon Jesus and does not abandon us.

ALL: We come to the wilderness together, clinging to the truth that we are not alone – God is with us. We gather to worship God, whose unfailing mercy journeys with us into the wildernesses of our lives. Thanks be to God!

*HYMN

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

No. 276

LENTEN LITANY OF CONFESSION

The congregation may be seated.

One: Gracious and merciful God, we confess to you our reluctance to enter wilderness places where we are confronted with our true selves. The places where we are tempted to put worldly values before our desire for you, and when our hunger for power and wealth is greater than our hunger for seeking and doing your will:

Many: Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

One: When we are tempted to use the gifts you give us to benefit ourselves at the expense of serving others:

Many: Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

One: When we are tempted to use sensational means to increase people's faith, rather than being guided by the humility of Christ, who become invisible in their suffering:

Many: Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

One: When we are tempted to use bribery to influence and control people:

Many: Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

One: When we are tempted to manipulate you, O God, to satisfy our own needs:

Many: Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

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.

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

ANTHEM

Precious Lord, Take My Hand
Chancel Choir

arr. Roy Ringwald

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

SERMON

"Mercy on the Wilderness Journey"

*HYMN

Be Still, My Soul

pages 10 and 11

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

Trio

Francois Couperin

*DOXOLOGY (Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH, No. 592)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

Surprising God of Mercy, you meet us in wilderness places and walk beside us through trial and temptation. Even when we feel alone, your grace is never far, your presence never absent. In this moment of giving, we offer not just our resources, but our trust that you are already at work, shaping us through challenge, strengthening us through sacrifice, and surrounding us with unseen angels. Use these gifts to bring hope where there is hunger, healing where there is pain, and light where there is despair. May what we give reflect our desire to walk more closely with you, even in the hard places. Amen.

*HYMN

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

No. 81

*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

*POSTLUDE

Dialogue sur les grands jeux

Couperin

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

*Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service
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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 this week for school vacation and will resume next Sunday.
- 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.

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
 Rev. Charlotte E. Y. Bell
 Sara L. Phelps
 Peter Labombarde
 Sue Ruggiero
 Liz MacMillan, John Swanson
 Jean Tonnesen, Holly Tonnesen
 Doug Topliffe
 Melissa Lewis

Ministers to the World
 Senior Pastor
 Associate Pastor
 Director of Music
 Guest Organist/Accompanist
 Deacon in Charge
 Deacons
 Ushers
 Videographer
 Nursery Attendant

Michael Havay
 Larissa Riley

Organist/Accompanist
 Director of Youth Ministries

BLANKETS FOR BRUCE: Hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, homelessness and poverty are always with us. When difficult times happen, a kind and loving response can make all the difference. That's why the Church World Service Blankets program was created—to give a loving and tangible response to someone facing a difficult time, reminding them that they are not alone.

This program was very near and dear to former longtime member Bruce Beckley's heart. As a church family, let's join together as we take up a 'Blankets for Bruce' offering. You can donate by placing a check in the offering or mailing it to the church office with 'blankets' on the memo line, or donate online through CWS: <https://cwsblankets.org/virtual/ccamherst/>

Through the generosity of CWS partner organizations, congregations, and individual supporters, our most vulnerable neighbors around the world can feel safe and keep warm with fresh linens and clean sleeping quarters.

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.

Financial Summary

(as of January 31, 2026)

	YTD	YTD	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$328,624	\$311,819	\$16,805
Expenses	\$307,122	\$306,678	\$ 444
Net Income	\$ 21,503	\$ 5,141	\$16,362

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), Paul Spiess, Doug Topliffe, and Todd Whitney.

144 ENVELOPES FUNDRAISER: This month, the Senior Youth Group will be kicking off the *144 Envelopes Fundraiser* to help offset the cost of the 2026 Mission Trip to Savannah, GA. After worship each Sunday, be sure to visit the bulletin board in the Community Room to learn about the SYG and check out the numbered envelopes decorated by the teens. It's easy to participate: just choose an envelope and make a donation in the amount of the number on the envelope. No amount is too small! We need every envelope from 1 to 144 to be selected in order to reach our goal of \$10,000.

DID YOU KNOW: The Abenaki People who lived for centuries in parts of Eastern New England, including New Hampshire, spoke dialects of the Algonquian language. Although few people of indigenous descent speak the Abenaki dialect fluently today, many of the words we use in English are those shared with us from the Abenaki people. Words such as chipmunk (*chitmo*), moccasin (*mahkesen*), moose (*moz*), raccoon (*arahkun*), and squash (*askitasquash*) come directly from the Abenaki language. Likewise names for places such as *Massachusetts* and *Connecticut* were location names used by Algonquian language users. Other Abenaki words we use include *Merrimack* (referring to “*deep water*”), *Nashua* (meaning “*between rivers*”) and *Amoskeag* (“*fishing place*”). Lake Winnepesaukee is an almost sound-for-sound translation (*Winninbesaki*) and the name refers to “*the lake between or around land and islands.*”

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

The Senior Youth Group's
Spaghetti Supper & Variety Show
Saturday, March 21

Join the SYG teens for an evening of dinner and entertainment for all ages. If you would like to be part of the show, reach out to Larissa Riley.



We are looking for participants young and old to sing, dance, tell jokes, do a silly skit, share unique talents, etc. We are looking forward to bringing back this fun tradition!

Our Church Calendar
February 22—28, 2026

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
Monday	10:00 a.m.	WA Workshop
	7:00 p.m.	World Service Team
Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	WOW Team
Wednesday	10:00 a.m.	Staff Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Adult Confirmation
Thursday	6:00 p.m.	Bell Choir
	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir



Preparing for the Future— End of Life Planning

Saturday, March 14, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
in the Community Room

Have you ever thought, “I really should get my end-of-life stuff sorted...” and then promptly put it in the too-hard basket? Or realize you don’t know where to start?

You are not alone. Plan on starting by attending this no-cost workshop to learn more about End-of-Life Planning from local professionals. An attorney, along with medical and funeral home representatives will discuss documents and decisions, and assisting people in their time of need every day. You’ll come away with information on where to begin, and in a way that feels calm, empowering and uplifting. Let’s get it done, so you can focus on living!

For additional questions or inquiries contact the Rev. Charlotte Bell, pastorcharlotte@ccamherst.org or leave a message to 603-3231 x14.

Safety-Related Educational/Training Opportunities

All are welcome!

If you are interested in participating in one or both opportunities, use this link to sign up: <https://www.ccamherst.org/safety/> or contact Andrea in the church office.

ALICE Training Webinar

Alert Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate

This training webinar is presented via Zoom on Monday, March 23 at 9:00 a.m. It is a 3-hour presentation meant to provide an overview of ALICE, an active shooter response training program delivered with a trauma-informed approach. It helps prepares people to survive the unimaginable and is used extensively by our school system to help keep students and teaching staff prepared.

CPR / AED / First Aid Training

Led by staff from the Amherst Fire Department, this is an informational training program that is intended to provide participants with a general knowledge of the current practices and procedures associated with CPR, AED equipment usage, and general first aid. It will most likely be a mix of on-line training and a hands-on session on a Saturday morning. It is not a certification program.

Once we have a level of interest established, we will be able to schedule this program.

Sunday, February 22, 2026

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...

