

Welcome to *Amherst Presbyterian Church*. We are one of the visible churches for the invisible church that shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Christ that fills all in all.
You are so welcome to our worship every Sunday.



The Third Sunday of Advent
Joy

December 15, 2024 at 10:30 AM

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24

AMHERST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
The Presbyterian Church in the USA
All Are Welcome

*** We invite you to please stand, as you are able, for items preceded by an asterisk.**

PRELUDE: Of the Father's Love Begotten (13th century chant) Emmanuel McGee

OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

*** INTROIT:** The King of Glory Comes # 2091 (*Sing the Faith*)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Rejoice, give thanks; call on God's name;
the Holy One is in our midst.

People: How good it is to come home to God's house!
How good it is to gather in Christ's presence!

Liturgist: Sing aloud! Exult with all your heart;
the Sovereign One has done glorious things.

People: We offer up our anxieties, seeking God's peace.
We face our plenty, eager to share.

Liturgist: Shout your praise! Express your joy!
The God of our salvation welcomes us.

People: God's love is renewing us in these moments;
God's strength is becoming our song!

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH (see insert)

Sue Shipps

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(in unison)

What shall we do, O God? We can never do enough to deserve your love. We confess that we are not always truthful. We have defaced the purity of your love for us. We have embraced ugliness and oppression rather than loveliness and grace. We have distorted your cries for justice in order to benefit ourselves. We have given less than our best to others and to you. Forgive us, we pray. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

(in unison)

God has taken away the judgments against us. The evil we have feared cannot triumph. The enemies we have harbored in our own souls will no longer oppress us. Disasters we have experienced are not the last word. God restores us to the family, welcomes us with open arms, and strengthens us for each day's challenges. Praise God, give thanks, and let the world know of God's marvelous deeds.

PASSING OF PEACE

Pastor

Pastor: "The Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you..."

People: "....and also with you."

* **HYMN:** Good Christian Friends, Rejoice # 28 (blue)

APC SINGERS: Born in Bethlehem! Edwards

FIRST READING

Luke 3:7-14

Liturgist

⁷ John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" ⁸ Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹ In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³ He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

SECOND READING

Luke 3:15-18

Pastor

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their

(continued on next page)

hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” ¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Pastor: The Word of God, to all people of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“Third Sunday of Advent”

Pastor

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION ~ *Please observe this time of silence.*

* **HYMN:** In the Bleak Midwinter # 36 (blue)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

From the Confession of 1967

(in unison)

Out of Israel, God in due time raised up Jesus. His faith and obedience were the response of the perfect child of God. He was the fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation, and the pioneer of the new humanity. He gave history its meaning and direction and called the church to be his servant for the reconciliation of the world.

SHARING OF JOYS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Pastor

THE LORD’S PRAYER

(in 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.

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Liturgist

Whether we face plenty or hunger, abundance or want, we are in debt to God for all we have and all we are. In these moments of thankfulness, we remember how God has blessed us. We give with joy because we trust the God of our salvation.

OFFERTORY: Away in a Manger Murray

*** DOXOLOGY:** Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow # 592 (blue)

*** OFFERTORY PRAYER** *(in unison)*

We rejoice, O God of peace, in the privilege of giving without fear. You come to us daily with blessings too numerous to count. You are the Holy One whose presence relieves our anxieties, feeds our hungers, and stirs our compassion. Through our offerings, we express our gratitude. As we give of ourselves, we respond to your call to bear fruit and to make your name known among the nations. Thank you for accepting all we offer. Amen.

*** COMMISSION AND BLESSING**

Pastor: The whole universe is God's dwelling place.
Find your home with God wherever you go.

People: **Surely God is our salvation;
we will trust and not be afraid.**

Pastor: Rejoice, for Christ has come and is coming,
whose presence brings peace to our hearts and minds.

People: **We can do all things in Christ, who strengthens us.
We have much to share with the world.**

Pastor: God, who has blessed you, commissions you for service.
Shout and sing for joy; praise God in all you do.

People: **God has renewed and refreshed us this day.
God's strength will be our song wherever we go.**

ALL: **Amen.**

*** HYMN:** Go Now In Peace

Go now in peace, never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know He will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can
see. God will be there watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

POSTLUDE: Go Tell It On the Mountain Work

Today's Worship Team

Ministers:	The People and Rev. Amir Tawadrous
Music Director:	Dr. Donna Lorenzo
Liturgist:	Leslie Palermo
Vocalists:	The APC Singers

Devotion of the Week

Let us read ***Luke 3:7-18***.

Questions for your meditation:

How do you understand John's role in the Advent story? How does his message prepare the way for Jesus?

How does the ethical content of John's message sound in the context of our holiday celebrations?

The text says that John's preaching fills the people with expectation. What are your expectations for this season?

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

Our friends and family in care facilities and at home, including:

Tom & May Chou, Doreen Connolly, Joan Hambleton,
John Kelley Jr., Betty Knowl, Lois McMillan, Gail Trankle

APC CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — December 15, 2024

- Everyone is invited to Fellowship Hall after the service today for a photo presentation of Leslie Palermo's trip to Italy.
- After the service next Sunday, Dec. 22nd we will have a Christmas sing-along during the coffee hour in Fellowship Hall. We'll sing carols and other popular Christmas songs. Come and have fun singing all your favorite songs of the season!
- Mark your calendar for our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, which will be at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, Dec. 24th. Everyone is encouraged to invite their family and friends to join us for this special evening when we will remember Christ's birth in Word and song. If you would like to participate in the service to assist with readings or communion, please see Pastor Amir or contact the church office.
- Special giving envelopes and informational flyers will be available on the table in the narthex until Dec. 22nd for the PCUSA's Christmas Joy offering. It is used to provide assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and also to develop our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools.

Next week — ***Sunday, December 22***

10:30 AM - Worship Service

12:00 PM - Christmas Sing-Along

Amherst Presbyterian Church

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Rev. Amir's hours: 9:00am—12:30pm, Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri, and by appointment
(scheduling your visit is recommended)

Church website: www.amherstpreshurch.com

Facebook: Amherst Presbyterian Church—closed group; ask to be invited