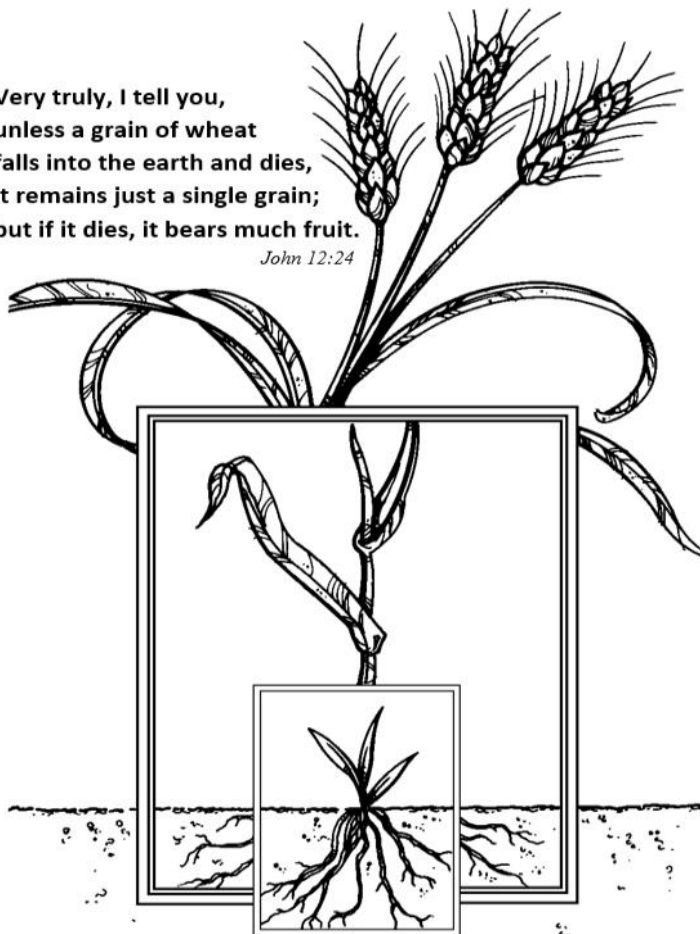


Welcome to *Amherst Presbyterian Church*. We are one of the visible churches for the invisible church that shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Christ that fills all in all.

You are so welcome to our worship every Sunday.

**Very truly, I tell you,
unless a grain of wheat
falls into the earth and dies,
it remains just a single grain;
but if it dies, it bears much fruit.**

John 12:24



5th Sunday in Lent

March 17, 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: Faith Mendelssohn

OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

*** INTROIT:** Glorify Thy Name # 2016 (*Sing the Faith*)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: The days are surely coming, says our God;
The day is here to affirm a new covenant.

People: **We call on God's steadfast love and mercy.**
We seek a strong and vital relationship with our God.

Liturgist: God's law will be written on our hearts.
Our Creator claims us and forgives our faithlessness.

People: **We are eager to know the God who loves us.**
We are ready to learn God's intention for us.

Liturgist: God offers us the joy of salvation.
Our brokenness can be healed and wholeness restored.

People: **We are open to the new and right spirit God offers.**
We seek guidance for our daily living.

ALL: **Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(in unison)

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity and cleanse us from our sin. We know more of our own transgression than we have been willing to admit, even to ourselves. We cannot escape from the sin that clings so closely. By our actions and our neglect, we have done what is evil in your sight. May your judgement help us to face the truth about ourselves. Then wash away the stain of our iniquity. Create in us clean hearts, and renew our spirits. We are ready for a new life. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

(in unison)

We are welcomed into God's redeeming presence. We are children of our Creator who loves us. We are brothers and sisters of Jesus, who was obedient to God and faithful to the law of love, even in the face of the cross. Through suffering, Christ became the source of eternal salvation for us, realized when we embrace the covenant in truth and faithfulness. The burden of our sin is lifted from us. New life is ours to enjoy.

PASSING OF PEACE

Pastor

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

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

* **HYMN:** My Song Is Love Unknown # 209 (purple)

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Liturgist

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

SECOND READING

John 12:20-33

Pastor

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into

(continued on next page)

the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷ “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“Life and Death”

Pastor

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

* **HYMN:** I Have Decided to Follow Jesus # 2129 (*Sing the Faith*)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Heidelberg Catechism, Q.1

Liturgist: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

ALL: That we are not our own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. Because we belong to him, Christ, by the Holy Spirit, assures us of eternal life and makes us wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for God.

SHARING OF JOYS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Pastor

THE LORD'S PRAYER (using debts/debtors)

(in unison)

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Liturgist

What are we ready to die for? How much of ourselves and our resources will we risk for the sake of the gospel? Jesus invites us to follow as disciples and servants, risking everything for the sake of God's love.

OFFERTORY: Prayer of St. Frances Temple

* **DOXOLOGY:** Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow # 606

* **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

(in unison)

We dedicate these offerings to the proclamation of your word, the teaching of your ways, and the living of your will for all humankind. We reach out with joy and gladness to offer your love to the world. May these gifts enable the sharing of your presence with many who have not experienced a sense of their own value as your children. As we keep covenant with you, we would also share its joys and obligations with our neighbors. Amen.

* **COMMISSION AND BLESSING**

Pastor: God has written the law of love within us.

We are empowered to live according to that law.

**People: We have experienced God's presence together.
That presence will sustain us as we scatter.**

Pastor: God's wisdom has been planted in our hearts.

It is different from the wisdom of this world.

**People: We dare to live as forgiven and forgiving sinners.
We risk showing love to those who seem unlovable.**

Pastor: We are people of God, accepted and loved.

We are followers of Christ, commissioned for service.

**People: Where Christ leads, we will follow.
Where our service is needed, we will 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: Amazing Love (Londonderry Air) Trad.

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 ***John 12:20-33.***

Questions for your meditation:

What in your congregation or community is in the process of dying and giving way? In what ways might this death, painful as it may be, bear fruit and lead to new life?

Do you agree that collective discipleship bears more fruit than individual discipleship? Is there a spiritual practice or mission effort you currently engage in alone that you can practice with a larger community?

APC CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — March 17, 2024

- Everyone is invited to Fellowship Hall after the service today for a Finger Foods Luncheon, hosted by our Deacons.
- Today is the last day to give your Easter Plant orders to Lois Potts. Choose from Daffodils, Hyacinths, Irises, and Tulips, each for \$9 per 6” potted plant or 3 for \$25. Please use the enclosed order/dedication form.
- There are still a few open slots on the communion sign-up sheet for Palm Sunday (3/24) and Easter (3/31).
- Every week this month we’re having “Undies Sundays” to collect new undergarments for Friends of the Night People, an organization that provides basic necessities to those experiencing hunger, poverty and homelessness in Buffalo, NY. See one of our Deacons, our newsletter, or the sign on the basket in the Narthex for details about sizes and styles of socks and underwear most needed.
- Don’t forget about our Lenten Challenge... everyone should invite a guest to our Easter service on March 31st. Please contact the church office if you would like an invitation letter for your guest; they are also available in the Narthex.
- Special envelopes and flyers are available in the Narthex throughout the month of March for the PCUSA’s One Great Hour of Sharing. Your gifts help support critical programs including Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and the Self-Development of People program.

Next week — ***Sunday, March 24*** — Palm Sunday
10:30 AM - Worship Service

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

Amherst Presbyterian Church

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Rev. Amir's Cell: 773-961-6977 / **Email:** APCpastor@verizon.net

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

Church website: <https://amherstpreshurch.com>

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