

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 Second Sunday of Advent
Peace

December 10, 2023 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: Comfort Ye, My People Handel

OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

*** INTROIT:** People, Look East # 12 (blue) - Sing verses 1 and 5

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: The day of God is coming; lift up your voices.
Cry out with the strength God provides.

People: **We await God's coming day with anticipation.**
 We seek the peace and patience God provides.

Liturgist: Comfort, comfort my people, says our God.
Speak tenderly to my suffering people.

People: **We will prepare the way for One who is coming.**
 We look forward to baptism in the Spirit.

Liturgist: God will feed us like a shepherd.
God will gather us in gentle, caring arms.

People: **God's hand is upon us in blessing;**
 We are welcomed by God's steadfast love.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH (see insert)

Potts Family

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(in unison)

God of glory, we confess that we have not recognized you in our midst nor listened for your voice. Our faith is fragile, and our iniquity goes unrecognized amid our massive self-concern. We have lived as if we have no need to account for the life we have been given. Our church is focused more on our own survival than on its mission in the world. We come to you today with sincere repentance for our neglect. We have failed to prepare the way for Christ's entry into our everyday environment. Pardon and change us, we pray. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

(in unison)

God speaks tenderly to us and assures us that our debt has been paid, our sins forgiven, our paths made straight. God's glory is waiting to burst into the midst of all who accept the good news. Surely our salvation is at hand. Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. Enjoy the baptism of the Holy Spirit!

PASSING OF PEACE

Pastor

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

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

* HYMN: Prepare the Way # 13 (blue)

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:1-5

Liturgist

- ¹ Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
- ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.
- ³ A voice cries out:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
- ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
- ⁵ Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

SECOND READING

Isaiah 40:6-11

Pastor

- ⁶ A voice says, "Cry out!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
- ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
- ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.
- ⁹ Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"
- ¹⁰ See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
- ¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

"Comfort, Comfort My People"

Pastor

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

* **HYMN:** Lord Christ, When First You Came to Earth # 7 (blue)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

(in unison)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.
Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Pastor

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(using debts/debtors)

(in unison)

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Liturgist

One way we prepare for Christ's appearance is to support the church's mission in our community and beyond. Our church's programs share good news, our outreach provides comfort and practical help, and our goals are nothing less than newness of life for all God's children. May our gifts reflect God's generosity.

OFFERTORY:

Arioso Bach

*** DOXOLOGY:**

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

*** OFFERTORY PRAYER**

(in unison)

While we are waiting and preparing for Christ to appear, we are seeking, O God, to act as faithful followers. May our offerings extend the promise of salvation to people whose lives are broken by neglect, abuse, bad choices, and sinful ways. May these gifts offer hope to all whose suffering and loss seem too heavy to bear. May our church be a listening, caring presence for all its members, and through us for all those we meet in our work and leisure. Amen.

*** COMMISSION AND BLESSING**

Pastor: Announce the good news of Jesus Christ;
Prepare the way for Christ's witness to be heard.

**People: Christ brings hope for true peace to all people.
God is patiently waiting for us to claim this gift.**

Pastor: Lead lives of holiness and godliness;
Enjoy treasures of heaven and earth that God offers.

**People: God's Word brings us both comfort and challenge.
We are accepted by God and commissioned for duty.**

Pastor: You will be fed and blessed on life's way.
The baptism of the Holy Spirit will empower you.

**People: We turn our hearts and minds toward God.
We rejoice that we can be servants in Christ's name.**

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: Song of Zechariah arr. Vaughan-Williams

Today's Worship Team

Ministers:	The People and Rev. Amir Tawadrous
Music Director:	Donna Lorenzo
Liturgist:	Tom Potts
Vocalists:	APC Singers

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 10, 2023

- After the service today, everyone is invited to Fellowship Hall where our Deacons will host a Festive Finger Foods Luncheon.
- Today is also the last day to place warm winter gear for local families in the donation box in the Sunday School wing of Fellowship Hall.
- The next Session Meeting will be on Monday, December 11 at 7:00 PM, via Zoom.
- On Monday, Dec. 18 at 7:00 PM there will be a Budget meeting in Fellowship Hall.
- Please note that there will be no coffee hour after worship on Dec. 24th & 31st.
- Amherst Presbyterian Church has a long-standing tradition of decorating our sanctuary Christmas tree with Chrismons, which are symbols of Christ. Booklets containing the history and meaning behind these symbols can be found in the narthex and throughout the sanctuary.
- The Christmas Joy Offering will be received on behalf of the PCUSA through Sunday, December 24. Your gifts assist church workers and their families, as well as students in Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. Flyers and envelopes are on the table in the narthex.

Next week — ***Sunday, December 17*** — Third Sunday of Advent, Joy
9:30 AM - Bible Study
10:30 AM - Worship Service

Devotion of the Week

Let us read ***Isaiah 40:1-11***.

Questions for your meditation:

When despair for our world threatens to overcome you, where do you find hope?

What world does God imagine for us? Can you describe what you think it will look or feel like?

Amherst Presbyterian Church

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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(scheduling your visit is recommended)

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

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