

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.



First Sunday in Lent

February 26, 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: Lenten Meditation by O' Donnell

OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

*** INTROIT:** Change My Heart, O God # 2152 (*Sing the Faith*) - Sing Twice

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: We have entered into the season of Lent.
Sundays, however, are not a part of Lent.

People: We have entered a wilderness time.
Yet this day of worship is an oasis in the desert.

Liturgist: We are here to worship the God of all creation.
We gather to remember God's revelation in Jesus.

People: Today we revisit the garden of Eden.
We remember God's overflowing generosity.

Liturgist: We worship God, who gives us choices and limits.
Are we open to God's counsel and instruction?

People: Today we remember the temptations Jesus faced.
We want to learn to make good choices.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(in unison)

Holy God, we confess our transgressions before you. We resent limits on our freedom to follow the impulses of the moment. We want life to revolve around us. We want other people to fit into the patterns that serve us best. Like a horse or a mule, we resent the bit and bridle that make us useful participants in the community you seek to create. We have tried to live apart from you. We sense that something is missing from our lives. Will you walk with us in this season and help us become all we are created to be?

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

(in unison)

God's grace comes to us as a gift. We cannot earn it, but we can reject it. When we are responsive to God's leading, when we open our lives to God in prayer, when we turn from our relentless pursuit of personal gain, when we embrace the obedience of Christ, we may recognize the abiding gifts of the Spirit. Happy are those who accept God's forgiveness!

PASSING OF PEACE

Pastor

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

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

* HYMN: Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days # 81

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 4:1-11

Pastor: Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.

Liturgist: The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.'

Pastor: But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."'

Liturgist: 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."'

Pastor: Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."'

Liturgist: Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.'

(continued on next page)

Pastor: 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.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON “Spiritual Fast--Journey with Jesus”

Pastor

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

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

STATEMENT OF FAITH

(in unison)

The Epistle to the Colossians 1:15-20

¹⁵ Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;
¹⁶ for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

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

As with Adam and Eve, our greed and pretensions are exposed before God. It is so tempting to want more of everything for ourselves. Yet, it is strangely true that only in generous sharing do we finally realize that we have enough, that God has blessed us richly beyond anything we could ever deserve. We give with gladness.

OFFERTORY: Medley of Praise (*Traditional*)

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

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

By your surprising grace, O God, our eyes are opened, our ears unstopped, our hearts attuned to the needs of others. We give so more people may know your acceptance and forgiveness. We support the ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing among us and through the outreach of the church. Expand our horizons, we pray, and tear down the limits of our caring. Amen.

*** COMMISSION AND BLESSING**

Pastor: Let the worship of God be a part of all you do.
Serve with praise and joy every day this week.

**People: God alone is the one we will worship.
We will not put our God to the test.**

Pastor: Know that it is not easy to keep our focus on God.
Many distractions will vie for our attention.

**People: We pray that God will be present amid temptations.
We seek strength and courage to be faithful.**

Pastor: Be open each day to God's counsel and instruction.
Learn from Christ to make difficult choices.

**People: God sends us out into the wilderness.
But we know the oasis is here to refresh us.**

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: Allegro by Young

Today's Worship Team

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

Devotion of the Week

Let us read ***Matthew 4:1-11***.

Questions for your meditation:

What thoughts, feelings, ideas or images arise as you read this passage of Jesus in the wilderness?

Have you ever practiced a spiritual fast where you abstain from a worldly comfort to help you focus on your faith in God? What did you learn from the experience? Or, what are your hesitations about trying this spiritual practice?

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 — February 26, 2023

- Included with your bulletin today (and each week until Easter) is a Lenten Devotional that encourages us to think about how we relate to and care for the earth as stewards of this planet and the environment that God created for us.
- We are looking for a few more people to help us sing and play instruments in the church service. It's a wonderful and enjoyable way for you to serve God, our church family, and our community. Please see Donna after church by the piano.
- Thank you to the singers from Amherst, North, and Clarence Presbyterian Churches who participated in our Ash Wednesday service. It was a beautiful service.
- Please join us at 9:00 AM on Saturday, March 4 for the Breakfast Speaker presentation by Bob Poczik entitled "Wonders of the Vatican." To help us plan food and seating, **please RSVP** by notifying the church office or by using the signup sheet on the bulletin board closest to the nursery.
- The Deacons will hold their next meeting on Sunday, March 5 at Noon.
- Everyone is invited to the Evensong Service on Sunday, March 5 at 4:00 PM at Clarence Presbyterian Church. Please see the flyer on the Courtyard bulletin board for more information.
- Amherst Presbyterian Church is blessed to participate in the PC(USA)'s One Great Hour of Sharing offering that will be collected from February 22 through April 9. In this season of Lent, we follow Jesus' example, walking alongside the most vulnerable to partner in repairing harms inflicted upon them. We are the Church--Together, and we are there with those who need us. Flyers and special envelopes are available on the table in the Narthex.

Next week — Sunday, March 5

9:30 AM - Bible Study

10:30 AM - Worship Service with communion

12:00 PM - Deacons' Meeting

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: <https://amherstpreshurch.com>

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