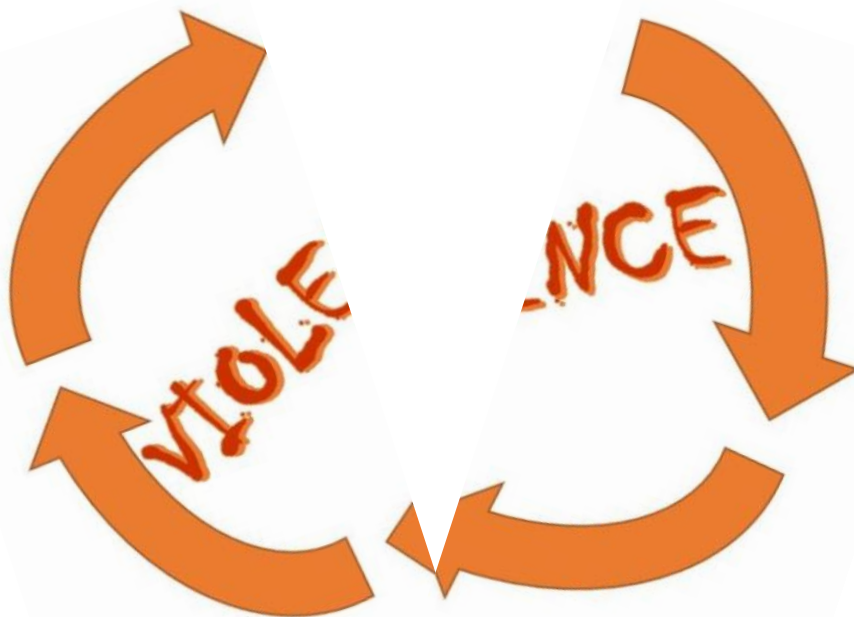


Welcome to *Amherst Presbyterian Church*. We are one of the visible churches for the invisible church that shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Christ that fills all in all.

You are so welcome to our worship every Sunday.



Breaking Cycles of Violence

19th Sunday after Pentecost

September 29, 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: Take Time To Be Holy Longstaff

OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

* **INTROIT:** He Is Exalted # 2070 (*Sing the Faith*) - Sing twice

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Come one and all to meet God here.

Let all who are suffering find hope in this place.

People: **We have come that God might raise us up.
Our only hope is in the Maker of heaven and earth.**

Liturgist: Come, all who are weary and oppressed.

God offers relief and enlists our mutual helpfulness.

People: **God hears our prayers and answers us.
God equips us to be helpful to one another.**

Liturgist: Come together to sing songs of praise to God.

Give thanks for God's wondrous deeds.

People: **God's glory abides in this place of worship.
God's presence and help are real.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(in unison)

All-powerful God, we confess our devious ways. Even when prayers for others are on our lips, we seek ways to secure our own advantages. We put our trust in things we can accumulate rather than aligning ourselves with your will and way. Our behavior creates enemies and multiplies divisions among your people. Then we want you on our side against those who are different from us. We confuse our preferences with your intentions. O God, we need healing, but we are afraid to lose the illusions of control that are so much a part of us. We fear the very changes that would give us integrity. Help us, gracious God.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

(in unison)

The snares that entrap us are broken. Our help is in the name of God, who made heaven and earth. Prayers of faith make a difference. They are powerful and effective. We are changed in the hands of a loving God. We have much to give, beginning with the simplest of gifts, like a cup of cold water offered to one who is thirsty. Praise God, who is transforming us.

PASSING OF PEACE

Pastor

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

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

* HYMN: Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah # 65 (purple)

FIRST READING

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10

Liturgist

¹ So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. ² On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." ³ Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request. ⁴ For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king."

⁵ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" ⁶ Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

⁹ Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." ¹⁰ So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

SECOND READING

Esther 9:20-22

Pastor

²⁰ Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, ²¹ enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, ²² as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON**“God’s absence!”***Pastor*

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

* **HYMN:** His Eye Is on the Sparrow # 2146 (*Sing the Faith*)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH*(in unison)***Barmen Declaration**

As Jesus Christ is God’s assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins,
so in the same way and with the same seriousness
is he also God’s mighty claim upon our whole life.
Through him befalls us joyful deliverance
from the godless fetters of this world
for a free, grateful service to God’s Creatures.
We reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life
in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ,
but to other lords – areas in which we
would not need justification or sanctification through him.

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

Like salt that enhances the flavor of food, Christians are called to share the joy and gladness we are discovering in our relationship with Jesus Christ. The good news is extended through our support of the church and its ministries.

OFFERTORY: He Touched Me Gaither

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

*** OFFERTORY PRAYER**

(in unison)

We dedicate ourselves and our offerings to the work of your church. For those who are sick, who are suffering, who are grieving, who are lost, we have words of hope and acts of caring. We stand with all who face discrimination, oppression, and confusion, seeking to work with them for justice and a meaningful existence. As you have accepted us, we reach out to include all your children in the family of mutuality, self-revelation, and growing in love. Amen.

*** COMMISSION AND BLESSING**

Pastor: God sends us out with courage to face life's evils.
We have insight to name the enemies we encounter.

**People: Sometimes we are our own worst enemies.
Sometimes perceived enemies can become friends.**

Pastor: We are called to care in an uncaring world.
We are commissioned to love amidst a sea of indifference.

(continued on next page)

People: **As Christians, we cannot be apathetic.**
 The people we encounter are brothers and sisters.

Pastor: God is our helper, and Christ is our teacher.
 Our prayers and our efforts will make a difference.

People: **God is with us wherever we go.**
 The maker of heaven and earth cares for 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: God Reigns! Let Earth Rejoice Messiter

Today's Worship Team

Ministers: The People and Rev. Amir Tawadrous
Music Director: Dr. Donna Lorenzo
Liturgist: Sue Shipps
Vocalists: The 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 — September 29, 2024

- Today's flowers are from Pastor Amir, in celebration of his and Martha's 4th wedding anniversary.
- APC's Bible Study group will meet at church on Sunday, October 6, at 9:30 AM.
- The next Deacons' meeting will be in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, October 6 at noon
- If you forget to sign up to help with Communion while you're at church, you can call or email the church office to be added to the list.
- The Peace & Global Witness offering is being collected from September 8 through October 6. Gifts to this PCUSA special offering are used locally, regionally, and globally to address systems of injustice and to advocate for peace and reconciliation. Informational flyers and special envelopes are on the table in the narthex.
- The PCUSA is offering a daily devotional text or email for the Season of Peace. Subscribe to these or download the entire devotional guide from their website: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/season-peace/>

Next week — **Sunday, October 6** — World Communion Sunday

9:30 AM - Bible Study

10:30 AM - Worship Service

12:00 PM - Deacons' Meeting

Devotion of the Week

Let us read ***Esther*** chapters **7-10**.

Questions for your meditation:

Though God is not named in name in this text, is God really absent? Is God present in the breaking of the cycles of violence and retribution that have plagued human beings for millennia? How can we partner with God in breaking these cycles? How might God's silence speak volumes?

How might we imagine God's presence if Esther had ended with her saving her people, and not her exacting a hellish revenge upon her enemies?

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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