

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 First Sunday of Advent *Hope*

December 3, 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: My Heart Ever Faithful Bach

OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

*** INTROIT:** Advent Song # 2090 (*Sing the Faith*) - Sing Verse 1

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Awake, people of God, and stay alert for Christ's coming.
Grace to you and peace from God who sent Jesus to us.

People: **Make your ways known to us, O God.**
 Show us once more your awesome presence.

Liturgist: We are all God's people; no one is excluded.
Come together as God's family for worship and prayer.

People: **Let the mountains quake before you, mighty God.**
 Let the nations tremble in awe and reverence.

Liturgist: Praise the One who grants us the gift of life.
Give thanks for God's continuing faithfulness.

People: **Heaven and earth will pass away,**
 but the Word of God is true for all times and places.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH (see insert)

Huffaker Family

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(in unison)

Awesome God, we confess the sin of our separation from you. We have blamed you for hiding from us, rather than admitting we have failed to see you in the thousands of ways you are revealing yourself every day. We have not called on you, and we have not listened for your call to us. Without you, we have become tiny islands of self-concern. Our links with the rest of your chil-

(continued on next page)

dren are stretched and broken. O God, we long for that loving community in which your reign is acknowledged and your purposes are served. Move us to that place, we pray. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

(in unison)

God's grace has come to us in Jesus Christ. God restores us to a right relationship with the eternal, that we might rightfully value ourselves and all persons. Spiritual gifts are ours to claim. God is faithful and will strengthen us to face all circumstances. Praise God, the source of all things!

PASSING OF PEACE

Pastor

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

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

* **HYMN:** Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus # 82 (purple)

APC SINGERS: Prepare! Douglas

FIRST READING

Mark 13:24-31

Liturgist

²⁴ "But in those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,

²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶ Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. ²⁷ Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸ "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

SECOND READING

Mark 13:32-37

Pastor

³² “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵ Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“That Day or Hour”

Pastor

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

* **HYMN:** My Lord! What a Morning # 352 (purple)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(in unison)

From the Book of Common Worship

We believe there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus; for we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. We are convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Pastor

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(using debts/debtors)

(in unison)

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Liturgist

We have been enriched and strengthened in so many ways by the gifts of God. Now we have the privilege of sharing God's Word with the world. Our offerings enable our church's witness in this community and a caring outreach around the globe. Let us give as we have been blessed.

OFFERTORY: Advent Meditation Trad.

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

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

Gracious God, we give our best to you, not out of guilt or fear, but with gratitude and faith. You have been our support in times of need. Every breath we take is a gift from you. We would be awake and watchful for opportunities to make a difference, to help others be alert for your presence, to value life in all its fullness, and to learn to care. We dedicate these symbols of thankfulness and all the days of our lives to those purposes. Amen.

*** COMMISSION AND BLESSING**

Pastor: The time is coming when God will call us to account.
Be alert and watchful, serving faithfully day by day.

People: **We will look around us for signs of God's presence.**
We will open our eyes to ways to be helpful.

Pastor: Use the gifts you have been given to the glory of God.
Let the testimony of Christ strengthen you in every way.

People: **We will share our spiritual gifts in word and deed.**
We will seek to be shaped by the potter's hands.

Pastor: Grace to you and peace, from God and Jesus Christ.
Know that God is faithful and Christ walks with you.

People: **With hearts full of gladness, we will do what is right.**
With great joy, our lives will show forth our faith.

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: The King Is Coming! Gaither

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

Devotion of the Week

Let us read ***Mark 13:24-37.***

Questions for your meditation:

What do God's promises of redemption mean to you?

Where do you see evidence of God's promises today?

APC CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — December 3, 2023

- Today's flowers are from Mary Ellen Jerge, in memory of Edward Jerge Jr.
- The Deacons will have their monthly meeting today in Fellowship Hall at noon.
- The next Session Meeting will be on Monday, December 11 at 7:00 PM, via Zoom.
- On Monday, December 18 at 7:00 PM there will be a Budget meeting in Fellowship Hall.
- Our Deacons and Gateway Longview wish to extend a heart-felt thank you to everyone who adopted Angels this year. Your generous gifts were gratefully received in time to ensure the families have a blessed Christmas.
- Our Deacons would also like to let you know about a couple of items for this month. There will not be any coffee hours on December 24th or 31st, but everyone is invited to a "Festive Finger Foods" luncheon on Sunday, December 10.
- On Wednesday, December 6 at 10:00 AM Amherst Presbyterian Church will hold a Service of Witness to the Resurrection for William O'Leary, the brother of Donna Hoffman. The service and reception are open to anyone who would like to attend.
- We are collecting new hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves for local families until Sunday, December 10. Also being accepted are gently used, CLEAN winter jackets and coats. The donation box is in the Sunday School wing of Fellowship Hall.
- In order to reduce operating expenses, Amherst Presbyterian Church will no longer receive mail using a PO Box. Please use our street address for all postal correspondence: 151 S. Youngs Rd., Williamsville, NY 14221-7023.
- 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 10** — Second Sunday of Advent (Peace)

10:30 AM - Worship Service

12:00 PM - Festive Finger Foods

Amherst Presbyterian Church

151 S. Youngs Road

Williamsville, NY 14221



CONTACT INFORMATION

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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