

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.



When Best Efforts Yield Nothing

***3rd Sunday in Lent***

**March 23, 2025 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:** Prelude in G Linley

**OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Liturgist*

\* **INTROIT:** As the Deer # 626 (purple) - Sing twice

\* **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Liturgist: Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters.  
You who have no money, come, buy, and eat!

**People:** **Our souls thirst for God in a dry and weary land.  
We seek God's power and glory in the sanctuary.**

Liturgist: Listen carefully to God and eat what is good;  
delight yourselves in the rich food God provides.

**People:** **Here our souls are satisfied as with a rich feast.  
Together our mouths praise God with joyful lips.**

Liturgist: God offers us steadfast love and a covenant relationship.  
We are called to be faithful witnesses and leaders.

**People:** **We have come to meditate on the living God.  
We seek inspiration and empowerment to do what God asks.**

\* **RESPONSE:** Holy, Holy, Holy # 595 (purple)

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

*(in unison)*

We have been tempted, loving God, to go our own way without reference to eternal truths. We seek our own gratification rather than the well-being of all your children. We compare ourselves to others and find their failures but seldom discover our own shortcomings. We seek to build our lives by our own limited design rather than by your larger purposes. We engage in immorality in the name of freedom and become enslaved by our selfish ambitions. The ground

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on which we stand is crumbling under our feet. O God, forgive us and grant us a firmer foundation. Amen.

## **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

*(in unison)*

God grants us strength to overcome temptation and offers us a second chance to produce the fruits of repentance. Receive these gifts from God who is faithful, in covenant with us and all people. Open yourselves to the continued guidance of the Holy One, for God's steadfast love is better than life. God's mercy is abundant; God's provision for us is extravagant. God's ways are higher than our own. Praise God with joyful lips.

## **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**

Isaiah 55:6-9

*Liturgist*

<sup>6</sup> Seek the Lord while he may be found,  
call upon him while he is near;  
<sup>7</sup> let the wicked forsake their way,  
and the unrighteous their thoughts;  
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  
<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.  
<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

## **SECOND READING**

Luke 13:1-9

*Pastor*

<sup>1</sup> At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> He asked them, "Do you

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think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? <sup>3</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. <sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

<sup>6</sup> Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ <sup>8</sup> He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. <sup>9</sup> If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’ ”

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**

**“When Best Efforts Yield Nothing!”**

*Pastor*

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

\* **HYMN:** Be Thou My Vision # 450 (purple)

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

From the Confession of 1967

*(in unison)*

God’s sovereign love is a mystery beyond the reach of the human mind. Human thought ascribes to God superlatives of power, wisdom, and goodness. But God reveals divine love in Jesus Christ by showing power in the form of a servant, wisdom in the folly of the cross, and goodness in receiving sinful men and women. The power of God’s love in Christ to transform the world discloses that the Redeemer is the Lord and Creator who made all things to serve the purpose of God’s love.

God has created the world of space and time to be the sphere of God’s dealings with humankind. In its beauty and vastness, sublimity and awfulness, order and disorder, the world reflects to the eye of faith the majesty and mystery of its Creator.

## 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*

Why do we use our money for things that do not satisfy, or invest our time in activities without meaning or purpose? God offers us a way of life that satisfies. What we cannot buy, God freely gives us. Our offerings are one way of expressing our thanks.

**OFFERTORY:** Jesus Lover of My Soul Wesley

\* **DOXOLOGY:** Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow # 606 (purple)

### \* OFFERTORY PRAYER

*(in unison)*

All that we present to you now, O God, we have received from your hand. We give so the hungry may eat and the thirsty may receive pure water. We share to send the good news of your Word to those who have not heard. We invest in just causes, that your mercy may be known among all people. Most of all, we give because passing on your gifts in generous response is necessary to life. Amen.

### \* COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Pastor: God sends us out as witnesses to good news.

May our lips praise God as long as we live.

**People: God's steadfast love is better than life;  
God's mercy and pardon break through life's clouds.**

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Pastor: Call on God in the midst of each day's tasks;  
meditate on God's presence through the night.

**People: God is our help in all times and places;  
we will call on God's name wherever we are.**

Pastor: God will grant us strength to resist temptation  
and vision to labor for what truly satisfies.

**People: Praise God, whose waters quench our thirst.  
Thank God for the bread of life that feeds our souls.**

**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: Festival Postlude Zipoli**

Today's Worship Team

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

**PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS**

Our friends and family in care facilities and at home, including:  
May Chou, Andy Chou, Joan Hambleton, Betty Knowl, Lois McMillan, Gail Trankle

## APC CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — March 23, 2025

- The Dominos Game Group will meet in Fellowship Hall on Friday, March 28, at 2pm. If you don't know how to play, we'll teach you. Come join the fun!
- Easter plants are available for purchase until the end of March. Please see your bulletin insert or Lois Potts for full details.
- We need your input regarding the Rummage Sale. Please take the brief survey in our weekly newsletter or complete a printed copy from the table in the narthex.
- Through the PCUSA's One Great Hour of Sharing, you can help provide relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed. Special giving envelopes and informational flyers will be available until Easter.

Next week — **Sunday, March 30** — Worship Service at 10:30 AM

### **Devotion of the Week**

Let us read **Isaiah 55:6-9** and **Luke 13:1-9**.

#### **Questions for your meditation:**

Have you ever been disappointed when a good idea didn't bear fruit? How did you react? Did you give it another shot? Another year? Were you able to move on to another pursuit?

When tragedies happen, they do sometimes cause us to engage in self-reflection, to honestly assess our lives and what we might want—or need—to change. What are other ways to respond to tragedies that may be beyond our control?

# Amherst Presbyterian Church

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## 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:** [www.amherstpreshurch.com](http://www.amherstpreshurch.com)

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