

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.



“Barriers-breaking Ministry”

1st Sunday in Lent

February 18, 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: The Glory of These Forty Days Bach

OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

* INTROIT: Sanctuary # 2164 (*Sing the Faith*)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Welcome to the time of covenant renewal.
The God of our salvation greets us here.

**People: We are reminded of God's promises to us;
 We remember the promises we have made.**

Liturgist: Sense the Spirit descending on us now.
Hear God's welcoming voice.

**People: Surely God is with us.
 We can hear God calling our names.**

Liturgist: See the rainbow in the sky.
Wonder at God's steadfast love.

**People: All creation proclaims the wonders of God.
 We come together to learn what God wants to teach us.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(in unison)

Have mercy on your church, O God, for we forget the covenant into which you call us. We muddle along in our self-serving schemes rather than waiting on your word. We follow the path of least resistance without seeking your higher way. We forget our baptism into a faith community built on trust and forgiveness. We turn from the vision of heaven to the treacherous hell of competing egos. O God, we turn to you to lead us to a new day. According to your steadfast love, forgive us, we pray. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

(in unison)

God is faithful to the covenant, even when we forget. In mercy and steadfast love, God lifts us above the sins of our youth and the transgressions of today. Christ brings us to God that we might receive a new spirit and a good conscience. We are God's beloved children who are welcomed into God's realm right here, right now, in the midst of life.

PASSING OF PEACE

Pastor

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

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

* **HYMN:** This Is My Father's World # 370 (purple)

FIRST READING

Genesis 9:8-17

Liturgist

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹ "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹² God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³ I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

¹⁷ God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

SECOND READING

Mark 1:9-15

Pastor

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John

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in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." ¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

"Barriers-breaking Ministry"

Pastor

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

* **HYMN:** O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go # 833 (purple)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(in unison)

From a Brief Statement of Faith (27-51)

We trust in God,

whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

In sovereign love God created the world good

and makes everyone equally in God's image,

male and female, of every race and people,

to live as one community.

But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.

Ignoring God's commandments,

we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,

accept lies as truth,

exploit neighbor and nature,

and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.

We deserve God's condemnation.

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Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.
In everlasting love,
the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people
to bless all families of the earth.
Hearing their cry,
God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.
Loving us still,
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
God is faithful still.

SHARING OF JOYS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Pastor

THE LORD'S PRAYER (using debts/debtors)

(in unison)

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Liturgist

We dare to believe that the Power holding together the infinite reaches of time and space has entered into a covenant relationship with people on this tiny planet, that God gives us responsibility to be co-creators in the covenant community which is intended for all humanity. Our giving is dedicated to that end.

OFFERTORY: Andante Cantabile Vivaldi

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

* **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

(in unison)

Thank you, God, for the signs and wonders that reveal your presence. Thank you for the covenant fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We want to do our part to share your love with the world. Use our offerings and our lives to bring a realization of your reign among us. Extend your realm by re-creating the church as a true representation of Jesus Christ. May we be humble, teachable, and faithful as we seek to lead others into covenant community. Amen.

*** COMMISSION AND BLESSING**

Pastor: The time is fulfilled; God's reign is now.
Hear and believe the good news Christ offers.

**People: We are children of God, beloved and blessed.
We are a covenant community with a mission.**

Pastor: Be open to all God wants to teach you this week.
Seek God's leading every day through Lent.

**People: This is a season for renewal and recommitment.
We will turn to God in prayer every day.**

Pastor: God will teach you and lead you in truth.
God's mercy and steadfast love will surround you.

**People: We will live as people of the promise.
We go out rejoicing in our baptism, in Christ.**

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 Praise Arr.

Today's Worship Team

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

APC CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — February 18, 2024

- Today's flowers are from Lois Potts and Tom Potts, in memory of Mel Palmer.
- We received many compliments on both the pancake dinner and evening service on Ash Wednesday. For a large, well-attended dual-event to be so well received, there surely are many people who deserve our gratitude. A few of those people are Pastor Amir, Donna Lorenzo, Nancy Lorenzo-Deleys, Tom Potts, and Jim Price. Many thanks to everyone who worked so hard to nourish the souls and tummies of the dozens of guests who joined us on the 14th.
- A beautiful variety of Easter Plants are available this year. Please see the enclosed order form or Lois Potts for more details.

Next week — ***Sunday, February 25*** — Worship Service at 10:30 AM

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 ***Genesis 9:8-17*** and ***Mark 1:9-15***.

Questions for your meditation:

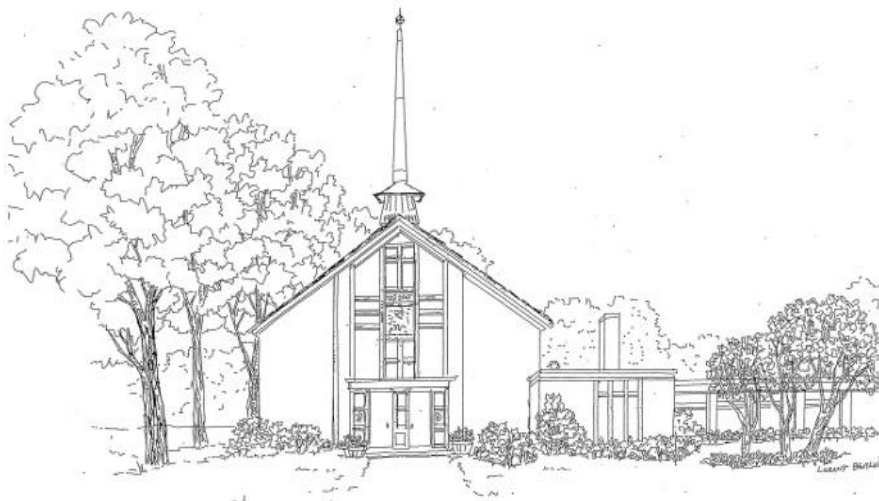
What thoughts, images, feelings or ideas came to your mind as you read these passages?

What walls (metaphoric walls or literal) have you built in your life? What purpose do they serve? What are you walling in or walling out?

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(scheduling your visit is recommended)

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

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