

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.



*He taught them as one having authority*

Mark 1:22

***4th Sunday after Epiphany***

**January 28, 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: Largo Handel

**OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Liturgist*

\* **INTROIT:** Bless His Holy Name # 2015 (*Sing the Faith*)

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Liturgist: Great are the works of God, and greatly to be praised.  
God's righteousness endures forever.

**People:** **We come together as a congregation of believers.**  
**We give thanks to God with whole hearts.**

Liturgist: God is gracious and merciful and trustworthy.  
At all times, God is mindful of the covenant.

**People:** **The works of God's hands are established among us.**  
**We can count on God's righteousness and faithfulness.**

Liturgist: Awe before God is the beginning of wisdom.  
All who approach God in fear have good understanding.

**People:** **Holy and awesome is God's name.**  
**We call on God to empower our worship.**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

*(in unison)*

Faithful God, we have claimed to have more knowledge than we really possess. We have presumed to judge others on the basis of our limited understanding. We have grasped for freedom without taking full responsibility for our actions. Our witness is weak, and is directed primarily toward those with whom we prefer to associate. By our actions, some of our sisters and brothers are excluded, some are misled, and some are unjustly accused. If we have violated another's conscience, if we have caused someone to fall, we are deeply sorry. For failing to do all Christ expects of the church, we repent and seek your forgiveness. Amen.

## **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

*(in unison)*

All who love God are known by God, whose intention is that we live by eternal values, in loving relationship with one another. God applauds our efforts to rid our lives of pseudo-gods we create, habits that destroy, and prejudices that divide. We count on God to understand us, to free us from our bondage to sin, and to dwell among us, transforming our lives. Praise God forever and ever!

## **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 # 281 (blue)

## **FIRST READING**

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

*Liturgist*

<sup>15</sup> The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. <sup>16</sup> This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." <sup>17</sup> Then the Lord replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. <sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. <sup>19</sup> Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. <sup>20</sup> But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die."

## **SECOND READING**

Mark 1:21-28

*Pastor*

<sup>21</sup> They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup> They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup> Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, <sup>24</sup> and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." <sup>25</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and

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come out of him!"<sup>26</sup> And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.<sup>27</sup> They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."<sup>28</sup> At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**

**"The Power of Words"**

*Pastor*

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

\* **HYMN:** Be Thou My Vision # 339 (blue)

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

*(in unison)*

From Colossians 1:15-20

"Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,<sup>20</sup> 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

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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*

An important way to give thanks to God is through sharing the bounty we have been honored to receive. We can never do enough to earn God's generous blessings. We can only express our gratitude by passing on our gifts. It is a privilege to be able to give.

**OFFERTORY:** Jesus is Lord of All / Wherever He Leads I'll Go Gaither

\* **DOXOLOGY:** Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow # 592 (blue)

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

By giving away some of the wealth we cherish so much, we keep ourselves focused on who you are, gracious God, and on what you expect of us. As the body of Christ, we seek to be a healing force in our world. May the offerings we present be used in ways that encourage healthful behaviors among us in the church, within our community, and as far as our influence can reach. Receive us and our gifts, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## \* **COMMISSION AND BLESSING**

Pastor: Go out to witness to the good news you have heard.  
God is even now raising up prophets among us.

**People: We thank God for this time of being together.  
We are grateful for freedom to worship and grow.**

Pastor: God is establishing truth among us, inviting us to learn.  
Dare to question and explore, as disciples of Jesus.

**People: We praise God for insight and guidance we have received.  
We delight in ways we are able to help others.**

Pastor: God will supply us with words for our witness.  
We will be led to offer others appropriate help.

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**People:** All honor and majesty and glory be to God!  
May we never stop praising God with our lives!

**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:** Be Thou My Vision Arr.

Today's Worship Team

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

**Devotion of the Week**

Let us read ***Deuteronomy 18:15-20*** and ***Mark 1:21-28***.

**Questions for your meditation:**

One of the themes of this passages is the power of words. What are particular words in the church – and in your life – that for you are especially powerful?

Jesus is described in this passage as having authority. What is the basis of his authority? How does his authority compare to other authorities in our lives? What are the distinctive marks of Jesus' authority?

The people in Capernaum are astounded by Jesus' words. What may have elicited that feeling from them? Where else in the gospels does Jesus speak or act in ways that amaze and astound?

## **APC CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — January 28, 2024**

- Please plan to stay after worship today for our Annual Congregational Meeting.
- After the Congregational Meeting today, we will be putting away our Christmas decorations. Everyone is welcome to assist with this.
- If you haven't done so already, please pick up your annual giving statement from the table in the Narthex.
- The Deacons will hold their next meeting on Sunday, February 4 at noon.
- Many thanks to everyone who remembers our APC Food Pantry when grocery shopping and for bringing those donations to church. Food insecurity is a significant concern in WNY at this time, so there is a growing need for your contributions. Your generosity is a blessing to those in need. Thank you! ~APC Deacons
- Ash Wednesday this year will be on February 14th. APC will host a pancake dinner that evening at 6:00 PM, followed by a service with our sister churches at 7:00 PM. Diners are asked to please bring their own place settings and RSVP to Jim Price at [jdprice@buffalo.edu](mailto:jdprice@buffalo.edu) (to ensure we have enough pancakes for everyone). You may also bring a favorite topping to share.

Next week — ***Sunday, February 4***

9:30 AM - Bible Study

10:30 AM - Worship Service

12:00 PM - Deacons' Meeting

### **PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS**

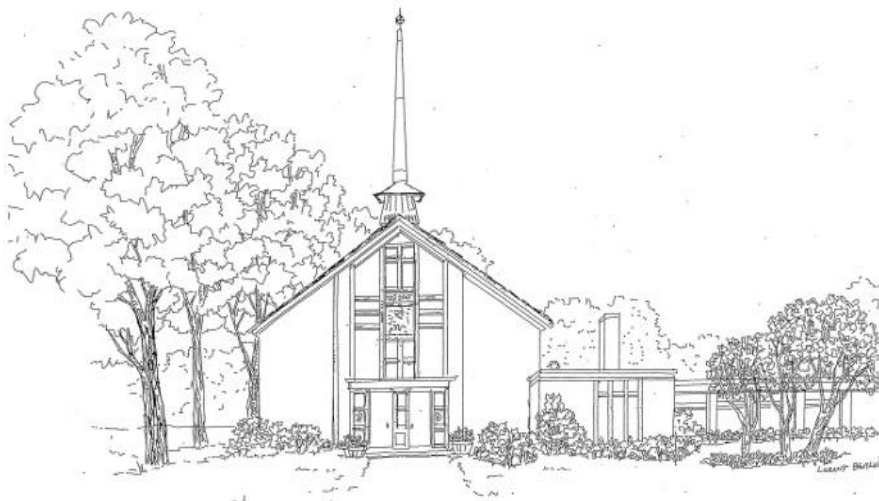
Our friends and family in care facilities and at home, including:

Tom & May Chou, Doreen Connolly, Joan Hambleton,  
John Kelley Jr., Betty Knowl, Lois McMillan, Gail Trankle

# Amherst Presbyterian Church

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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**Office hours:** 9:00am—1:00pm, Monday, Wednesday, Friday

**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