

The Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
Amherst, New Hampshire

# VILLAGE SPIRE

May 2017



## Small Groups Bring Us Closer Together and Closer to God!

This year our small group program is following our church school theme of "I Love to Tell the Story." Each month our focus will be on a different person from the Bible and a theme from their story that is meaningful and easily relatable to our own lives.

In May, our theme is "*Hagar: Pride and Prejudice*." The story of Hagar is intertwined with the story of Abraham and Sarah and reads like an ancient soap opera. Hagar was an Egyptian servant girl who bore a child with Abraham at Sarah's request, and then was cast out with her son, Ishmael, once Sarah gave birth to her own son, Isaac. It's a story about prejudice, as it relates to class, bloodlines, and religion. And it's a story about pride, and how it can stand in the way of our ability to connect with those who are different from us. What prejudices do we carry that prevent us from feeling compassion? Is our individual and group pride always detrimental, or can it be used to build bridges as well?

### May Meeting Schedule:

First Tuesday Group  
May 2, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

First Wednesday Group  
May 3, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Sunday Group  
May 21, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

In June, our discussion topic will be *Jesus: Saving the World*.

If you're interested in joining one of our groups in the fall, please contact the church office.

## Come join the celebration of Heritage Sunday, May 21

All are invited to 'Come Home' to Heritage Sunday. Whether a long time Amherst resident or relative newcomer; member of the church, active, inactive or friend, or future friend/member. Come As You Are, 'Come Home to Church' for Heritage Sunday celebrating 275 years of history of "The Church in Amherst."\*

Heritage Sunday is the finale of the year-long celebration of the Congregational Church of Amherst's 275th anniversary of its founding on September 22, 1741.

The three-part program begins with the worship service at 10:00 a.m. that will focus on how our church heritage endures and impacts our church today. After worship, join the special reception to welcome and greet guests and old friends. Finally, a Second Hour presentation will provide a unique opportunity to learn more about our historic building.

During the service, our long-time members, former members and old friends will be honored. Invitations will be sent to our Old Guard members and to folks formerly affiliated with our church. Sally Bowkett and Judi Dunbar are working on invitation lists to send and they welcome suggestions or help addressing them. Contact them directly: Sally – 673-7409, Judi – 673 2823.

Director of Music Sara Phelps has invited singers to join the Chancel Choir in singing the *Hallelujah Chorus* from *Messiah* as part of the celebration. Handel's *Messiah* was completed in 1741, so this musical tribute is the perfect addition to Heritage Sunday. Michael Havay will accompany the choir on the organ.

For our Second Hour program, we are privileged to have former NH Historical Society architectural historian Jim Garvin present a program about our 1774 meetinghouse structure. Go to <http://www.james-garvin.com/resume.html> to learn more about his distinguished career, specializing in the history of American architecture, the history of engineering, geographical history, building investigation, and traditional methods and materials of construction.

This will be a unique opportunity to learn more about how our massive building with its very tall steeple were built. We will do a walk-about after the presentation to actually look at the queens-truss framing in the attic. Additionally,

Steve Fifield, who did the structural restoration work to the meetinghouse in 1999 – 2000, will be on hand to explain the work his firm did to repair and reinforce the frame. And our town clock-winder will also be present to tell about the 1815 original clock that he keeps working 'like clock-work.'

Please register for the second hour program by calling Anne Krantz at 673-9684.

\*Words from the covenants signed September 22, 1741



## VILLAGE SPIRE

A Parish Newsletter  
Editor, Andrea Cyr

The Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
11 Church Street  
Amherst, NH 03031

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 a.m.  
Church school and nursery care available.

How to reach us:  
Office Phone (603) 673-3231  
[www.ccamherst.org](http://www.ccamherst.org)  
[Facebook.com/ccamherst](https://www.facebook.com/ccamherst)

The church office  
is open Monday–Friday,  
from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Send in all news by the  
15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Announcements  
for the Sunday bulletins  
are due Thursdays.

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### OUR CHURCH STAFF:

Richard G. Leavitt  
*Senior Pastor*  
[revlev@ccamherst.org](mailto:revlev@ccamherst.org)

Maureen R. Frescott  
*Associate Pastor*  
[pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastormaureen@ccamherst.org)

Andrea Cyr  
*Church Office Administrator*  
[andrea@ccamherst.org](mailto:andrea@ccamherst.org)

Sara L. Phelps  
*Director of Music*  
[kalben1@comcast.net](mailto:kalben1@comcast.net)

Michael Havay  
*Organist*  
[michaelh117@gmail.com](mailto:michaelh117@gmail.com)

Wendy Valeri  
*Handbell Choir Director*  
[wendylazott@tds.net](mailto:wendylazott@tds.net)

Marilyn Gibson  
*Church School Coordinator*  
[mgibson@ccamherst.org](mailto:m gibson@ccamherst.org)



## 144 Envelopes Fun-Raiser

*“May our youth be like plants full grown,  
may they be like corner pillars cut for the building of a palace.” – Psalm 144*

On Palm Sunday, our Senior High Youth Group kicked off its “144 Envelopes” Fun-Raiser to help support their mission trip to Kentucky this summer!

In the months of May and June, we’ll continue to have an SHYG bulletin board display in the community room. On this board you’ll find 144 numbered envelopes decorated by our teens. Just choose an envelope and make a donation to our youth in the amount equal to the number on the envelope. It’s that simple! Inside each envelope you’ll also find a personal message written by one of our teens about their mission trip experiences!

The funds we raise will help pay for our mission trip to Kentucky on June 18-24. Our teens and adult chaperones will be working with H.O.M.E.S. (Housing Oriented Ministries Established for Service), helping to repair and build homes for families in need in rural Appalachia.

FYI – Our teens in SHYG “earn” their fundraising money by participating in service projects and events in our church and community throughout the year. The money you generously give to SHYG goes into a pool, and through acts of service the teens earn “credit” towards their individual costs for the trip. The more they serve, the less they pay out of pocket! In addition, we set aside some of the money raised to offer as a donation to the organization(s) we work with on the trip, as many only charge enough to cover their costs. Your donation to SHYG goes a long way towards helping others, and helping our teens make a difference in the world!



### Spring Potluck Dinner

**with Cocktails & Mocktails**  
at Bruce & Sue Manchester’s Home

A fun evening for all is planned for Saturday, May 6 from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Manchester’s home in Amherst. Folks are invited to bring an entrée or a dessert to share; drinks will be supplied. If your last name starts with A-N, bring an entrée, and if it starts O-P, bring a dessert. Special non-alcoholic blender drinks will be supplied for children, and beer and wine for adults.

Please RSVP to Andrea in the church office at 673-3231 or [andrea@ccamherst.org](mailto:andrea@ccamherst.org), or to Bruce and Sue Manchester at 673-8148 or [bruceman23@comcast.net](mailto:bruceman23@comcast.net).

The Fellowship Committee hopes to see you there!

### The Woman’s Association’s Brunch and Annual Meeting

### *Flights of Spring & Fancy*

All WA members and friends are invited to attend our celebration of spring with a potluck brunch on Tuesday, May 23 at 10:00 a.m. in the beautifully transformed vestry.

The brief annual meeting will include a report of our accomplishments this year, and the installation of officers.

The WA will also be presenting their fanciful interpretation of the haute couture hidden in rummage!

Please contact Claire Choiniere at 554-1987 to sign up and prevent a duplication of dishes.

## A Goodly Heritage

Rev. Richard G. Leavitt, Senior Pastor  
May 2017

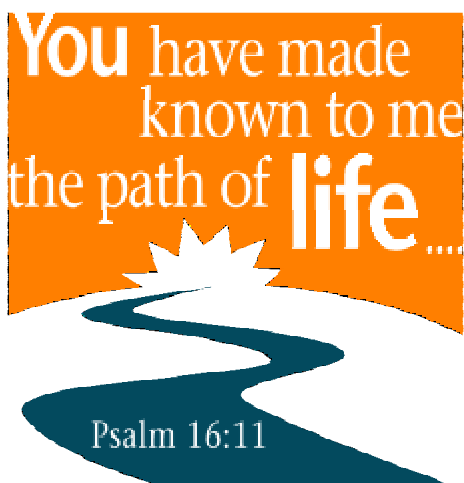
In Psalm 16, the writer gives thanks to God for the many blessings and guidance of God. It's always been one of my favorites. "In you, O God, I take refuge. You are my Lord, I have no good apart from you... (You) are my chosen portion and my cup... I have a goodly heritage." Not only is the psalmist grateful for God's protection and guidance across the years, but he is clear that his abundant future blessings are directly dependent upon a continuing relationship with our gracious God. It's easy to be grateful and give thanks to God when things are going well. It's harder to offer those prayers of gratitude when times are tough. But most importantly, the psalmist reminds us that our future well-being is linked to the vitality of our relationship with the One who gives us life and shares blessings.

On May 21, we will observe one final event in the year-long celebration of our 275 years as a congregation. I'm looking forward to Heritage Sunday as a true celebration of church—not just the historic building, of course, which is impressive to say the least—but as a celebration of the men, women and children who have worshipped in this place for 275 years. In this place they have married, had their children baptized, and been memorialized in death. Here they have pondered great truths, contemplated difficult decisions, struggled to understand the implications of their faith for daily life, and lived out their witness courageously, humbly, and with amazing grace.

I sometimes like to imagine that great cloud of witnesses, the people of God past, present and future, who have been such an inspiration over the years. We don't know all their names, nor in many cases even their stories, but without them the church would be just a quaint building with a funny looking pointed tower protruding above the roof line. On Heritage Sunday, we hope all who have called this church home at some point in time will return to help us celebrate the blessings of this community of faith in our beloved Amherst. We'll pray with the fervor of many generations; we'll sing to raise the rafters; and together we'll praise our living God who is still speaking. Each of us who has been inspired here or has inspired others through our faith in action is part of a living witness that continues even today for a new generation.

Psalm 16 closes with a verse that has been a recurring affirmation and prayer of mine for decades. "God, you show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Joy and blessings are the gifts of a life with God. For me, and I know for many of you, being part of this community of faith for a short time or for many years has been a part of your goodly heritage. Thanks be to God!

Grace and peace,  
*Dick*



## CROP Walk Sunday, May 7

Registration begins at 1:15 p.m.  
Walk steps off at 2:00 p.m.  
at St. Patrick's Church, Milford



## Levi Saturday

May 6  
9:00 a.m. to noon

Many hands make light work!



## SHARE Food Pantry

The SHARE Food Pantry continues to be busy. Please know your donations are needed and truly appreciated.



May Pantry Requests:  
canned ham,  
side dishes  
(seasoned pasta mixes, Hamburger Helper, etc.)  
Ravioli, Beef-a-roni

Donations may be left in the cupboard in the narthex, or in the marked containers near the community room. Thank you for your continuous support!

The Congregational Church  
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Amherst, NH 03031

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