

VILLAGE SPIRE

March 2018



Senior High Youth Group



Palm Sunday, March 25

Did you give up sweets for Lent and are you craving to get them back?

Have you been wondering what you could serve for Easter dessert?

The Senior High Youth Group Cookie Walk is your answer! Join us in the vestry after worship on Palm Sunday to hand pick your delicious assortment of cookies. The cost is \$5.00 for as many cookies you can fit in a box! All proceeds go towards our SHYG Mission Trip to Miami in June.

And while you're picking up your cookies, be sure to check out our SHYG "144 Envelopes" bulletin board to find out more about our trip and how you can support our youth and their mission work!

Altar Flowers Always Welcome!



Celebrate a special occasion, a birthday, anniversary, graduation, or remember a loved one, by donating altar flowers. Your message will be in the bulletin and the flowers are yours to take home after the service.

Contact Anne Krantz, 673-9684, to schedule a Sunday.

A Little Easter

The Rev. Richard G. Leavitt, Senior Pastor
March 2018

I'll bet some of you don't know much about the season of Lent. You probably think it's all somber and gloomy, that it starts with ashes and goes downhill from there, ending with death upon the cross on Good Friday. Maybe you think it's all about giving up pleasurable things like chocolate or sugar or red meat, but you don't really know much else about it. Here are a few fun facts about the Season of Lent.

Lent is a time of preparation for the celebration of Easter. It lasts 40 days (minus the Sundays), because Sundays are considered "a little Easter," celebrating the resurrection of Jesus each week. The word comes to us from an old English word which means "to lengthen," because in the Northern Hemisphere anyway it coincides with the lengthening of days each spring. (I wonder what they're supposed to call it in Australia or Argentina—shortening?)

In the early church, at least for the first two centuries, there was no identifiable season of Lent nor was there a defined Holy Week as we know it today. The sole focus was upon Easter itself and getting ready for the new life in Christ. The Easter vigil took place the last 24 hours before Easter and was the culmination of a year long process of preparing new converts to be welcomed into the Christian church. Fasting was often observed for that final 24 hours, broken only by the sharing of the Eucharist (or Holy Communion).

It wasn't till near the year 600 A.D. that Christians began to observe the 40 days of Lent and more extensive periods of fasting and prayer during that time of preparation. Why were 40 days identified as the proper length of Lent? That stems from the experience of Jesus fasting in the wilderness for 40 days in preparation for his public ministry.

While Lent is still sometimes perceived as a gloomy time of self-denial, it is actually intended to be a time of reflection and contemplation, a time for the believer to focus upon the meaning of their baptism and to attend to the parts of our life that we often neglect. We are challenged to open ourselves in new ways to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. That's why we usually offer some Lenten study opportunity during Lent for folks to deepen their walk with God.

The liturgical color used throughout Lent is purple, indicating a time of repentance and preparation. Some churches minimize the use of flowers and remove the brass candlesticks and crosses in favor of simple wooden decorations. Other churches refrain from singing hymns with the word "Alleluia" so that the praise of Easter becomes more notable in contrast. On Good Friday the cross may be veiled in black and all paraments and liturgical stoles removed. Then on Easter the white of light and purity returns with the joy of Easter.

So, there you have it. A very quick primer on Lent. Will you be ready when Easter comes?

Grace and peace,

Dick

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
[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
15th of the month.

Announcements
for the Sunday bulletins
are due Thursdays.

OUR CHURCH STAFF:

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Winter/Spring Adult Ed Series



First and Third Wednesdays, February–May
10:00–11:30 a.m. in the parlor

The ANIMATE adult education series is an exciting new way to learn and grow in faith outside of Sunday morning worship. Each session is led by Pastor Maureen and features short videos and engaging questions to inspire conversation about our Christian faith, practices, and sacred stories. The videos feature creative animation and presentations by contemporary pastors, writers, and theologians, and the material is accessible to all.

Here are our March session dates and topics:

Wednesday, March 7—"Religion: Spirituality Is Not Enough"

What does it mean to be spiritual? Is it the same as being religious? Lillian Daniel pushes back at this question that has been stirring up the cultural conversation for a while now. She asks us to consider how the seeds of faith take root and thrive. What role does organized religion play in helping—or hindering—growth? If religion is the problem, why has it held fast for thousands of years? In this age of religious pluralism, is it possible or even desirable to stick with our age-old traditions?

Wednesday, March 21—"Jesus: The Revolution of Love"

What does it mean to walk in the way of Jesus? To explore this question, Mark Scandrette looks to the ancient Japanese concept of the Dojo. What if our churches became places where we practiced being like Jesus? What if we were serious about joining in with Jesus' Revolution of Love? What if we took the kind of social and economic risks Jesus took, and reshaped what it means to be a Christian? As Mark invites us into the Dojo, we find ourselves looking at a Master who might be asking us to walk down a path we never imagined.



Time to Order Easter Lilies

Orders for lily plants used to decorate the chancel for Easter Sunday will be taken after church in the community room March 4, 11 and 18. Or you can stop by or call the church office on before March 21 to place your order.

Donate a plant in memory of a loved one or in celebration of Easter. Your name and those you wish to remember will be printed in the bulletin.

After the Easter services you may keep your lily or donate it to someone in need of some cheer.

Our local grower provides lush plants with either one or two bulbs per pot - \$12.00 or \$20.00 for the huge double pots.

Holy Week Services

The services of Holy Week also help us prepare for Easter.

On Palm/Passion Sunday, Christians focus upon the symbolic triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem upon a donkey. It is a bitter sweet procession, however, because the crowds are with Jesus only while it remains easy to cheer him on. Some churches focus instead upon the Passion (or Suffering) of Jesus on this particular Sunday, because it gives the overview of his betrayal, suffering, and crucifixion.

At the Congregational Church of Amherst on March 25: We will observe the first part of our service focused upon a Palm Sunday message, but end it with a re-enactment of the Passion story by our Senior High Youth.

On Maundy Thursday, Christians celebrate the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples when the twelve gathered together to observe the Passover. That is when Jesus gave them a new commandment—to love one another as he loved them. He showed them what kind of love that meant—servant love—and he washed their feet, a most lowly and humble act of hospitality usually performed by the hired help. That evening he also transformed the bread and the wine that they shared into symbols of his own body and blood which through God he offered up as a sacrifice for them and for the world.

At the Congregational Church of Amherst on March 29: We will offer a 7:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday service with a symbolic foot washing of the 12 by the two pastors, the rite of Holy Communion, and a Tenebrae (shadows) service, symbolizing the fading loyalty of the disciples as they betray him, deny him, then flee for their own lives.

On Good Friday, the day starts out not so good at all! That is the day Jesus was beaten, tortured and crucified—a most gruesome means of execution. If God had not raised Jesus on Easter morning, we would never be able to call that Friday good. It is only good in relationship to the Easter miracle on Sunday morning.

At the United Methodist Church in Milford on March 30: We will take part in an ecumenical service of Good Friday at noon—the hour Jesus was nailed on the cross. Sharing with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we mourn the death of our Savior, the lowest day of the entire liturgical year.

Easter celebrates a day of great joy, gratitude and praise. Jesus is not dead! He is risen! God has raised him up, proving that God's last word is not death, but life. Human hatred, cruelty and death do not prevail, but life everlasting! Alleluia is sung in triumph and gratitude.

At the Congregational Church of Amherst on April 1: We begin the Day of Resurrection with a sunrise service on the Common in front of the church at 6:30 a.m. Led by Pastor Maureen and the Senior High Youth, this elemental celebration of that first dawn is simple and powerful. Later in the morning, at 10:00 a.m., we will also celebrate the day with full festival worship, including special music and uplifting, triumphant hymns.



Lenten Soup and Study Series

Wednesdays, March 7 and 14
6:30-8:30 p.m.

Our Lenten series continues as we gather in the parlor for delicious soup and engaging discussion based on the wonderful book *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor. Together we'll explore what it means to see and embrace the sacred in our everyday life, through simple practices such as walking, working, and prayer. Even folding laundry and grocery shopping can be meaningful if we take the time to notice the sights, smells, sounds, and opportunities for connection around us. We'll gather at 6:30 p.m. for a light supper of soup and bread and the discussion will run from 7:15-8:30. Pastor Dick and Pastor Maureen will alternate as facilitators of the sessions. The book is available for purchase for \$10 in the church office. Even if you haven't read the book, all are welcome to participate in the meal and discussion!

Easter Food Baskets

On behalf of the congregation, your diaconate is planning to deliver Easter Food Baskets to families in our community who need a little help. We want to assist them by providing the ingredients necessary to prepare a complete, wholesome Easter meal. We will be passing the Friendship Baskets for monetary collections the first two Sundays in March, during worship. Any donations that you can make will help with the purchase of items for these Easter meals. Thank you very much for your generosity.

The Church and Society Win the Auction

Anne Krantz, Historian

As the town prepared to auction off the meetinghouse, owners of the pews were required to either remove them or sell them, but not for less than \$100.00. On Saturday, April 14, 1832, the town auctioned the meetinghouse. The Congregational Church and Society won the auction with a bid of \$100.

Nearly four years passed before the meetinghouse history was continued in *Secomb's*. At a church meeting on Jan. 4, 1836 "a committee was chosen to ascertain the probable cost of altering and repairing the meetinghouse." [Secomb's pg. 245] A month later the committee presented their plans for the alteration of the house with estimate of expenses. Many more committees and meetings followed, including several with the pew holders. After buying the meeting-house, some proposed to build a new building! They visited the new 'house' in Milford and it was estimated that a similar one in Amherst would cost about \$5,000. After hearing the reports the Society voted to repair the one they now owned.

They then voted to remove the house from the common to a piece of land across Church Street, owned by Jonathan Bennett, "provided a sum of money could be raised by subscription sufficient to purchase the land and pay the expense of moving and underpinning the house."

The selectmen called a town meeting on May 21, 1836 and gave the society permission to remove the building and gave the title the town had in the land where the string of horse sheds stood that were owned and used by church members. This strip of land was combined with the Bennett lot for the placement of meeting-house, provided the shed owners gave consent. The church was required to remove the sheds at no expense to the town or owner.

"The town also consented that the society should make such alterations in the house, and about the west porch, bell deck, and steeple, as they wished, provided the house was left as convenient for town purposes as it then was." [Pg. 247]

The society sold unneeded parts of the meetinghouse including the east porch. The accounting document pictured left lists the building materials and parts that were sold including timbers, planks and the log for Madam Means to make a trough. They sold the East Porch to Hugh Moore for \$15.00. It would not be needed after the move because the building was to be pivoted 90 degrees to orient it so the west gable end with the tower and steeple would face Church Street looking south. The new floor plan placed the pulpit at the north gable end, with the new pew benches arranged in rows in an 'auditorium' layout. The porch contained the stairs to the former balcony that would no longer along this north wall. See photo of the Freemont meetinghouse built in 1800 with a porch at one gable end. Also note the many windows at that gable end that were removed and sold in the Amherst meetinghouse after the 1836 renovation & modernization. The new flat front built across the front of the tower now had our three doors.

Also, documented in the receipt were three pieces of stove pipe for \$2.38. Nine people bought windows ranging from .75 to \$15.00. One can conclude that the members of the church were not only meticulous bookkeepers but resourceful recyclers. After buying the meetinghouse for \$100 they collected \$158.12 for the sale of unneeded materials!

Memorandum of Articles Sold by the Church and Society	
Jonathan Knight 1857 Planks	3.50
James C. Williams 1857 Planks	6.50
Hugh Moore 52 ft Plank	1.50
Madam Means for Log to make Trough	15.00
Wilford Committee 1857 Planks	27.00
" " 582 ft Plank	5.64
" " Lot of Planks	10.00
Henry Anthony 1857 Planks	11.05
" " 1874 Pine Planks	.38
Ray Smith 1857 Planks	1.50
David M. Keen 1857 Planks	1.50
John G. Henry 1857 Planks	19.56
Henry Jackson for Windows	1.75
Andrew Wallum " "	.57
Edwin Howard " "	1.75
H. B. Davis " "	2.50
E. Parker " "	15.00
G. Richardson " "	9.00
Southwell Newton " "	2.50
D. Russell " "	.75
A. Lawrence " "	2.00
	\$158.12

Just in Receipt

Memorandum of articles sold.



Freemont NH Meetinghouse - photo by Paul Wainwright



The Meetinghouse at Freemont -- 1800

Senior High Youth Group Mission Trip Fundraiser

*"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 – March 25 – our Senior High Youth Group is kicking off its annual "144 ENVELOPES" Fun-Raiser to help support its MISSION TRIP to MIAMI in June!

28 of our teens and adult advisers are headed down to Florida to work with an organization called DOOR, which serves a diverse urban population through food pantries, homeless shelters, urban gardens, and programs that serve the elderly, adults with disabilities, and immigrant communities.

Look for the SHYG bulletin board display in the community room. On it you'll find info about our upcoming trip along with 144 envelopes decorated by our teens. Each envelope will be numbered from 1 to 144. You choose an envelope and make a donation to our youth in the amount equal to the number on the envelope. It's that simple.

Each envelope also contains a picture of SHYG to hang on your refrigerator to remind you to pray for us while we're on the trip and to pray for those we'll be serving in Miami!

As an added BONUS, everyone who chooses an envelope and makes a donation on Palm Sunday will receive a complimentary box of cookies from our COOKIE WALK!

We have 40 fabulous teens in our Senior High Youth Group, which is something to be very proud of. Stop by, grab an envelope, and help our youth as they honor our mission to SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS NEAR AND FAR!



WA to Assist in Worship

Members of the Woman's Association are helping with all aspects of the March 11 worship service to show our appreciation for the congregation's and the community's continual support of our fundraising efforts. The Spring and Fall Rummage Sales and the Holiday Fair are a success because of your generosity, allowing us to pay it forward and donate to many local, national and world wide organizations.

Rummage Wanted

WA is now accepting rummage for the Spring Rummage Sale Friday, April 13 and Saturday, April 14



Here is another chance to tackle those closets and hide-aways you didn't get to last year and donate your unwanted stuff to a good cause. If we don't sell it, the rummage is passed on to other sales.

We want clothing: women's, men's, children's and infants. Also accessories, handbags, jewelry, etc.

Household items: kitchen utensils, small working appliances, pots and pans, dinnerware, glassware, clean linens and bedding, blankets and spreads, towels, curtains, etc.

Home décor: framed pictures, small furniture, toys and games, puzzles, new books, small gardening tools or other small tools, etc.

Bring your sorted, labeled bags of clean clothing and boxes of household rummage to the WA workroom in the vestry.

Mention this opportunity to family, friends and neighbors. Offer to help bring rummage to church.

Contact Sally Bowkett with any questions about rummage donations.

Sorry but we cannot accept TVs, computer equipment, baby furniture, bicycles, textbooks/technical manuals, large furniture or appliances, or STUFFED ANIMALS.

SHARE Food Pantry

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

March Pantry Requests:
pancake mix and syrup,
condiments, cooking
sauces and seasonings,
cooking oils, jelly,
cold cereal



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!

Weekly After Sunday Service Fundraiser at LaBelle Winery



Visit LaBelle Winery after a Sunday worship service, now through April 30, and enjoy lunch or brunch in The Bistro at LaBelle Winery or make a wine purchase in The Gift Shop, and 10% of your total purchase will be donated to our church. This is an excellent way to support the church and a local winery! We hope you'll take advantage of this charitable offer from Amy LaBelle and Cesar Arboleda, co-owners of LaBelle Winery. Please inform your server at LaBelle Winery that you are a parishioner of The Congregational Church of Amherst and the 10% donation, calculated from your total bill in The Bistro or Gift Shop, will be applied correctly as a donation to the church. If you have any questions about this program, contact Amy LaBelle at amy@labellewinerynh.com.

Open Arms and Kindness An Interview with Amy LaBelle

By Sue Spiess

Amy LaBelle's enthusiasm is contagious. Whether she is talking about her family, her career, the LaBelle winery, charitable support, or our church, her passion and her determination are evident.

Amy says she was very fortunate to grow up in a family that values hard work and education. They encouraged her to go to college but couldn't financially support her, so she put herself through college and law school. An attorney in a Boston law firm for five years, she then became in-house counsel at Fidelity Investments in Merrimack, which allowed her to pay off large student loans and to buy a house in Bedford.

However, she had a dream that she was determined to make a reality. Amy wanted to make wine. Starting in 2001, she did one thing every day to make that happen. She studied, learned, worked hard, and 4083 days later, LaBelle Winery in Amherst opened.

It wasn't easy. She kept her day job, so she worked on a business plan nights and weekends and saved her money. Amy started a small production at Alyson's Orchard in Walpole, NH in 2005. A year later, she married Cesar Arboleda, and they had two sons, now eight and ten. They moved to Amherst and built a barn so they could make wine at home. When they outgrew that space, they built the Winery in 2012. Both Amy and Cesar now work full time at LaBelle, managing the winery, the Bistro restaurant and the Event Center.

During all this time, Amy has attended the Congregational Church of Amherst. She and Cesar and the two boys come as a family whenever they can because they find comfort here. Although Amy will miss Rev. Leavitt and his sermons "terribly," they come because they are greeted with "open arms, open doors, and kindness."

LaBelle Winery has given back to the community with open arms and kindness as well. They have helped over 1000 local charities and organizations raise money. Empowering Angels, a workshop for Girls, Inc., is one Amy is most proud of. The two-day free event helps young girls realize the entrepreneurial possibilities open to them if they have know they have support, have confidence in themselves and develop business skills and financial strategies.

LaBelle Winery is now offering us a special opportunity. Through the end of April, we can enjoy lunch or brunch in their Bistro after church on Sunday and/or purchase any items from their gift shop, and they will donate 10% of the bill to the church. What a perfect way to support the church and a local community-minded business at the same time!



But There Is Hope! Better Yet: We Are That Hope!



"Now to God be the glory, who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20).

"We are the agents of transformation that God uses to transfigure this world" (Archbishop Desmond Tutu).

Wishing and dreaming of a better world means nothing if we don't realize that God gives us community to practice love and compassion. We cannot only care for ourselves, but we must also care about those around us, both near and far.

Our gifts become part of a loving legacy in ways we can't foresee. Our gifts become blessings to people we don't know and blesses in ways we can't expect. We can make a difference beyond what we can imagine.

Words cannot capture the anguish of people when they lose everything in a disaster or have to leave it behind while fleeing war or conflict. Through One Great Hour of Sharing, lives are literally changed daily. Your support provides clean water, food, medicines, shelter, healthcare, education and so much more.

WHAT IS ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING?

One Great Hour of Sharing, as part of Our Churches Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

How is the United Church of Christ's offering used?

Almost 60 percent of the UCC's offering supports international development initiatives, including annual support for missionaries. Currently there are 4 OGHS supported missionaries and 2 Global Mission Interns working in disaster relief, health care, education, sustainable agricultural development, and refugee support. The offering also funds disaster preparedness and response, and disaster related volunteer initiatives in the U.S.

Where and how are the OGHS funds shared?

The United Church of Christ responds to development, disaster, and refugee needs in 138 countries, and provides disaster relief and immigration assistance in the United States. Funding decisions are made by asking our worldwide mission partners, "What would you have us do with you?" The United Church of Christ responds as a member of organizations such as Church World Service and the ACT Alliance. We also support the direct mission efforts of churches and church-based organizations that the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have direct partnerships with through Global Ministries. Nearly one-third of the UCC's offering is shared through Church World Service to support refugee, disaster, development, and advocacy programs.

What percentage of OGHS donations are used directly for mission?

On average, of every dollar given to One Great Hour of Sharing, 95 cents is used directly for mission programming, and the remaining 5 cents is used to create interpretation materials. Administrative costs are paid by gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission National Basic Support.

Please give to One Great Hour of Sharing this month. There are several ways to donate: OGHS envelopes are in the pews for your convenience, donate online (<http://www.ccamherst.org/online-giving/> select the 'Missions' offering and type OGHS in the comment box, or send a check to the office with OGHS in the memo of the check.



Small Groups Bring Us Closer Together and Closer to God!

This year our Small Group Ministry program is following the seasonal themes of the Christian Calendar.

In March, our theme is "Lent: Letting Go." The word "Lent" comes from the old English, "lenceten," which means "spring" – and the season of Lent is a wonderful time to do some spring cleaning and some spring planting. It's a time to be intentional about letting go of the things that weigh us down—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—and seek to create our hearts anew. What have you been carrying that you've been longing to put down? What seed might you be longing to plant in its place? Now is the time to purge and plant. Easter is coming. What is holding you back?

March Meeting Schedule:

First Tuesday Group,
March 6, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
Sunday Group,
March 18, 11:30 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

Upcoming Group Discussion Topics:

April: Easter: Healing & Hope
May: Pentecost: Future Dreams
June: Ordinary Time: Go and Do

If you're interested in joining one of our groups, or if you'd like to receiving the monthly readings and reflection questions, please contact Pastor Maureen at 673-3231 x14 - pastormaureen@ccamherst.org.

The Congregational Church
11 Church Street
Amherst, NH 03031

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Please join us for the Fourth Annual

EMPTY BOWLS

Sunday, March 18, 2018
12 noon-2 PM at the SHARE Center



All are invited to the SHARE Center for a simple meal of soup, bread, and beverages to remind us of those in our community who suffer from hunger and poverty.

Bowls hand crafted by the school children of our communities.

All food donated by local restaurants and stores.

All proceeds will go to stock SHARE's food pantry for those in need.

Tickets will be sold at the door or at the SHARE Center
18 and under: \$10, Adults: \$15, Families: \$25.

Call 603-673-9898 or visit www.sharenh.org
or SHARE Outreach, Inc. on Facebook.

The SHARE Center is located at 1 Columbus Avenue in Milford.

www.sharenh.org