

The Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Amherst, New Hampshire

VILLAGE SPIRE

September 2019



Church Tour
during Amherst's
Old Home Day
Saturday, September 7
Tour begins at 2:00 p.m.

Amherst Old Home Day will include a church historic tour on Saturday, September 7 at 2:00 p.m. Historian Anne Krantz will lead the tour that will begin on the front steps with the story about moving the meetinghouse from the common to its present location and orientation. Learn how the Greek Revival architecture style influenced the new façade of the building. We will tour the sanctuary and view photos of the many interior designs through the decades, and visit the 1887 balcony to ring the bell and peek up the steps to the town bell tower and steeple.

Organist Michael Havey will provide the finale on our historic organ. Learn about the amazing historic Johnson Tracker organ built in 1871 and its trek from Brattleboro, VT to Melrose, NY and finally to Amherst in 1961. Michael will share the history and demonstrate how it is played. View the 1,260 pipes that are located in the organ chamber behind the chancel screen.

September At A Glance

- Sept. 1 Worship returns to 10:00 a.m.
- Sept. 5 Community Supper,
Choirs rehearsals resume
- Sept. 6 Prayerful Playgroup resumes
- Sept. 7 Church tour
- Sept. 8 Rally Day!
Church school resumes
All church picnic after worship
- Sept. 9 WA Workshops resume
- Sept. 15 Backpack Blessing
- Sept. 18 *The Story of God* series begins
- Sept. 29 Creative Worship
Pastors Installations

Welcome

Rally Day is September 8

Church School!

Welcome to All! *With Love We Help One Another* is our church school theme, and our lessons and mission projects foster it. Rally Day heralds everyone back from summer vacation, commissioning our teachers, nurturing our children, and supporting Jesus' teachings.

Church School Registration:

Our Safe Church Policy requires all children to be registered. Having your child's information on-hand helps us better serve you and our teachers. The registration form is available at our church's website <http://www.ccamherst.org/christian-education/church-school/>. Paper registration forms are available at our church school table on Rally Sunday.

Church Picnic!

Please join us as we begin the new church and Sunday School program year.

Immediately following the 10:00 a.m. worship service, head to the community room to enjoy good food, games, renew friendships and make new ones. The Fellowship Committee will provide hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks. If your last name begins A-N please bring a side or salad; O-Z a desert.

All ages are invited and donations are appreciated. Contact Roger Hooper at rhooper673@aol.com if you can help set up or clean up. RSVP's are helpful. Any questions can be addressed any member of the Fellowship Team.

Blessing of the Backpacks

On Sunday, September 15th we are inviting all children, youth, and adults to bring their school backpacks or work bags to church for a special Back-to-School blessing during morning worship. Our pastors will offer a blessing for all the students and teachers, and both the children and adults will receive a special item to keep in their backpacks as a reminder of the blessing throughout the year.



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.
July & August Worship 9:00 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 Thursday morning.

OUR CHURCH STAFF:

Maureen R. Frescott
Senior Pastor
pastormaureen@ccamherst.org

Katherine R. Kennedy
Associate Pastor
pastorkate@ccamherst.org

Andrea Cyr
Church Office Administrator
andrea@ccamherst.org

Sara L. Phelps
Director of Music
kalben1@comcast.net

Michael Havay
Organist
michaelh117@gmail.com

Wendy Valeri
Bell Choir Director
wendylazott@tds.net

Marilyn Gibson
Church School Coordinator
mgibson@ccamherst.org

Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord!

Chancel Choir and Bell Choir

Rehearsals resume Thursday, September 5



Are you interested in singing or ringing?

New members are welcome at any time throughout the year!

Haven't been in a choir since "way back when?"

That's okay! We are teachers and conductors with lots of experience AND current members love to help new folks!

Does the Bell Choir ring every week?

No, once a month.

What if I need to miss a rehearsal or a Sunday service?

Absolutely no problem, that happens during the year for many of us. Travel, work conflicts, illness, etc.

Do I need to purchase my music?

No, we buy music through the music budget and we have an extensive music library.

How often do the choirs rehearse?

Rehearsals are Thursday evenings, Bell Choir at 6:00 p.m. and Chancel Choir at 7:30 p.m.

I want to join a choir! Who do I contact?

Sara Phelps: kalben1@comcast.net Wendy Valeri: Wendy.Valeri@fmr.com

My kids like to sing! What about a children's choir?

Stay "tuned" – it is in the works!

Our wonderful music ministry is a strong, vibrant program made possible by people like YOU who want the opportunity to participate.

Blessing and peace from your music staff!
Sara Phelps – Director of Music
Michael Havay – Organist/Accompanist
Wendy Valeri – Bell Choir Director



Welcoming to All?

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor
September 2019

Every year our congregation adopts a theme at the start-up of our new church year. We then hang a banner that celebrates this theme across the front of our church in preparation for Rally Day. Two years ago, our theme was "Grounded in God's Love" – the first part of our then new mission statement. Last year, our theme moved to the second part of the statement - "Serving Neighbors Near and Far." This year, our theme is the third and final part of that statement – "Welcoming to All." In many ways, this is the most challenging part of any church's mission to live in to. Celebrating God's love and serving neighbors is something we can somewhat easily classify, quantify, and justify. But what does it mean to be welcoming...to ALL? Is it enough to be warm and friendly to everyone who crosses our doorstep? Does it take more than sending a welcoming card or "thank you" email to those who visit us for worship or participate in a church event? Is it more involved than putting a banner across the front of our church that says, "Welcoming to All?"

The United Church of Christ has two phrases that it often uses in its denominational publications, mission and outreach efforts, and marketing campaigns: "We are a people of EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME" and "We offer RADICAL HOSPITALITY." To some, the presence of adjectives that modify the type of welcome and hospitality offered is questionable and unclear. We may see "radical" and "extravagant" as having negative connotations. Or we may question why they're even needed as qualifiers. Isn't it enough to say, "We welcome all" or "We offer hospitality to all"? If we put ourselves in the position of someone who has felt unwelcome in a church for who they are, either explicitly or implicitly, then our answer to this question might be, "No, it's not enough."

The sad reality is that while many churches say they are welcoming to all, many are not as welcoming as they think. As we prepare to celebrate the tenth anniversary (in November 2020) of our vote to become an "Open and Affirming" congregation, it's worth noting again that the majority of Christian churches do not welcome those who are GLBTQI to be full participating members, to serve in leadership roles, or to have their relationships and their core identity acknowledged, accepted and celebrated. It's one thing to feel unwelcome because of a difference in theological beliefs, political leanings, or social standing. It's another to be told that who you know yourself to be in your heart and soul is "wrong," "sinful," or "evil" in the eyes of God. Thirty-four years ago, in 1985, the United Church of Christ made the bold and courageous decision to make its welcome more "extravagant" or "above and beyond" what was previously offered. In the process, the denomination and the congregations that voted to adopt an Open and Affirming policy have suffered through many painful conversations and have lost members. Because for some this was a welcome that went too far. Or it wasn't understood why one particular group should be singled out in the offer of this explicit welcome. If you're struggling with this, it might be helpful to hear the stories of those who have been asked to leave churches (and/or their homes) because of who they are and who they love. Most no longer belong to a faith community – and would not even consider joining a church - because they're convinced that none would have them. This is the reason why an explicit and "extravagant" welcome is needed. It's also worth hearing the stories of the many who have come to the United Church of Christ, and joined congregations like ours, *because* of the extravagant welcome. Most notably, the younger families who are looking for a church that reflects the inclusive values they wish to teach their children.

The Open and Affirming statement that our congregation adopted in November 2010 goes above and beyond singling out one particular group, as we acknowledge and celebrate, "God's love for people of all races and ethnic backgrounds, all mental and physical abilities, all socioeconomic backgrounds, all

Continued on page 4

Creative Worship Last Sunday of the Month 10:00 a.m.



Mark you calendars! On the last Sunday of every month, our 10:00 a.m. service is now called "Creative Worship." We'll come together as the community of Christ to worship God with meaningful music, communal prayers, and an engaging message. While all of our worship services are creative, these special services will be more interactive, informal and shorter than our traditional service, and each will have a theme to frame our worship. This year, our worship themes will match our church school theme for that Sunday, and after a special Children's Time, children will go off to their church school classes.

Here are our Creative Worship themes for the fall – Hope you can join us!

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| September 29 | Healing |
| October 27 | Wandering |
| November 24 | Thanking |

SHARE Food Pantry

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

September
Pantry Requests:
Canned Ham, Canned Meats, Side Dishes (seasoned pasta mix, Hamburger Helper, etc.), Ravioli and Beefaroni



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!

Welcoming to All?,

continued from page 3

sexual orientations, all gender identities and gender expressions, and all of the other diverse attributes woven into the fabric of humankind."

But the question remains: What does it mean to live into this statement in a way that takes us beyond saying "We are Welcoming to All?" How are we reaching out to people who identify in these ways? How are we making them aware that churches like ours exist when they're convinced that none do? How might our mission and outreach efforts incorporate those who need to experience our welcome along with a bit of "radical" hospitality? What could we be doing differently in our worship, in our physical space, in our communications, that would make all of the above more accessible for those who normally encounter obstacles when they enter a faith community? How might we better accommodate the hearing or vision impaired? Children and parents with special needs? Aging adults? Those living with addictions or mental illness?

What a wonderful gift it is to recognize that God loves each and every one of us just as we are, and that we all have value and gifts to bring to the community. The question we'll be asking ourselves as a congregation, this year and in the years to come, is: Who among us and outside of us needs to hear about God's unconditional love? Who is in need of an extravagant welcome? Who needs to experience some radical hospitality to know that they truly belong, just as they are? How might we be welcoming to ALL?

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Maureen



NEW Adult Ed Series Begins Wednesday, September 18 10:00-11:30 a.m. in the Parlor

Who is God for Christians? For Muslims? For Jews? Do Hindus and Buddhists have a conception of God? What do our many world religions have to say about heaven and hell, sin, and the existence of evil? How do we explain miracles, visions, and other divine encounters? Where is God found in our world's most sacred places and texts? We'll explore these and other questions in Season Two and Three of THE STORY OF GOD - the popular series produced by the National Geographic Channel (we watched Season One a few years ago and it inspired many wonderful and thoughtful conversations!) Hosted by the actor Morgan Freeman, we'll travel around the world and learn about the differences and similarities in our world's religions and how they each tell the story of God for their believers.

The format for each 90-minute session includes a 45-minute video presentation and a discussion facilitated by Pastor Maureen. This series has 9 episodes, which we'll watch from September to February, meeting every first and third Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome!

The Story of God - Series Schedule

September 18 – "The Chosen One"

October 2 – "Heaven and Hell"

October 16 – "Proof of God"

November 6 – "Search for The Devil"

November 20 – "Gods Among Us"

December 4 – "Visions of God"

December 18 – "Deadly Sins"

January 15 – "Divine Secrets"

February 5 - "Holy Laws"

New CCA Website Coming Soon!

Our website development team has been hard at work all summer designing and implementing our new church website which will feature a fresh/clean look, updated content, better functionality, and provide us the ability to keep up with emerging technology. The new functionality also makes it mobile-friendly, allowing you to navigate easier and view content in a more consistent manner across any device you are using [cell phone, tablet or type of computer]. The new site also provides a separate login section that will contain church-sensitive information, such as budgets, by-laws, directories, etc., that you may need to access, but wouldn't necessarily want the general public to see.

We are excited to roll out this new web site in September, so please stay tuned for future announcements!

Questions? Please contact Nancy Protzmann (uvmcats84@gmail.com) or Camille Davis (camilledavis6861@gmail.com).



What is Small Group Ministry?

Small Group Ministry is where 8-10 people meet in a committed group with the intention of establishing deeper connections with each other and with God.

The groups meet once a month from October to June, and are led by trained lay members of the congregation.

The group meetings run 1.5 hours and include a check-in, a short topic reading, discussion of the topic, and closing prayer.

We have 2 groups that meet at a variety of times/days to allow members to pick a group that best fits their schedule.

Benefits of Small Groups

Allows for deeper conversations that we can't always have in committee meetings or during coffee hour.

Provides a relaxing and safe place to explore and ask questions about issues of faith and life.

Facilitates the building of friendships and creates an atmosphere of mutual encouragement, support, and prayer.

Participants feel a greater connection to one another and to God, and are FIVE TIMES less likely to drift away from church.

All of our groups follow a common curriculum provided by Pastor Maureen.

Our theme this year is **Be The Church**—using the bold statements issued by the United Church of Christ to inspire us to live our faith in the world.

Topics for 2019-2020

- October: Protect the Environment
- November: Care for the Poor
- December: Embrace Diversity
- January: Reject Racism
- February: Forgive Often
- March: Love God
- April: Fight for the Powerless
- May: Share Earthly and Spiritual Resources
- June: Enjoy This Life

Choose a Group!

- First Tuesday 1:30–3:00 p.m.
- Sunday 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

All groups meet in the church parlor or in the third floor youth room.

How To Get Involved

You may join a group at any time of the year as long as your choice is still open. Each group is limited to 10 members.

Sign up online at ccamherst.org or fill out a registration form in the church office. You may also sign up by contacting Pastor Maureen at 603-673-3231 x11 or pastormaureen@ccamherst.org

Community Supper Needs Volunteers



The next FREE community supper at our church will be on Thursday, September 5, serving from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. A delicious ham and bean supper is being planned. Your help is needed with table set up, kitchen help, serving, clean up and desert making. This is a great opportunity to serve your community.

If you can help, please contact John Swanson at swanjohnny@comcast.net, or Nancy Protzmann at uvmcats84@gmail.com.

THANK YOU to everyone who has helped make these suppers at our church and at SHARE successful!

Garden Flowers Wanted for the Altar

Fresh cut garden flowers are lovely for simple altar arrangements. If you can provide a bouquet of cut flowers, or can simply contribute flowers for a bouquet, please call Anne Krantz (673-9684) to schedule a Sunday. Thank you for sharing your flower gardens!



Save the Date!

**Saturday,
October 19**



Great News! Grants Grow!

CCA's capital campaign, *Our Time, Our Turn*, continues, and there is great news to report! CCA has received a \$27,000 grant from the Bertha Rogers Trust Fund.

Bertha Rogers (1889-1989) lived in Amherst for 47 years. Bertha was active in many town organizations, including the Historical Society of Amherst where she was a charter and life member. Bertha died at her home a bit shy of her 100th birthday.

Bertha was also a very generous donor, leaving the Historical Society a \$10,000 bequest and willing her house and land to the Town. The house was subsequently sold by the Town and the proceeds established the Bertha Rogers Trust Fund, which provides grants for projects that contribute to "the betterment of Amherst."

The BRTF, which gives grants once every three years, had \$30,000 available this year and in June CCA was awarded \$27,000 of these funds toward the cost of the new fire alarm system and fire suppression system. Barbara Williams and Pat Buben, as members of the ad-hoc Grants Committee, were responsible for researching and compiling the vast amount of information needed to secure this grant.

We are also very grateful to the Amherst community for its support. To date, we have received \$57,973 from community members. In anticipation of the need to replace the fire suppression system, Anne Krantz successfully applied for a \$20,000 grant from the Norwin S. and Elizabeth N. Bean Foundation. In addition, the Woman's Association generously donated \$5,000 toward the fire suppression project. The Amherst Junior Women's Club contributed \$1,400. \$18,000 was donated by the Milford Rotary Club through the outreach efforts of Paul Spiess and Judi Dunbar.

As of August 3, the Capital Campaign has received a total of \$71,400 in grants.

None of these grants would have been possible had it not been for the initial support by the congregation. Due to your enthusiastic response, we were confident that we could approach the wider community and local organizations and ask for their support. THANK YOU!

Ghosts?? No, Your Campaign Dollars at Work!!

As you walk into various rooms or spaces in the church and the lights magically turn on, it is not a ghost in the 245-year-old meetinghouse playing tricks on you! You are seeing in action the new motion-sensed LED lighting installed as part of the electrical upgrades, made possible by funds from the Capital Campaign. A new chandelier over the stair landing and wall sconces in the upper and lower narthex, lighting controls in the sanctuary, and new electrical wall outlets are all improved safety and lighting features that have been installed this summer as part of our overall safety and energy-saving work of the church electrical project.

Highlights of what we have done to date:

- Automatic motion sensors in the narthex, narthex restrooms, vestry stairwell, stairwell closets, and the vestry.
- Enhanced lighting controls in the sanctuary (8-level dimming, all LED lighting, 3-way switches (no more circuit breaker).
- New 3-prong outlets in the sanctuary and the narthex
- Thermostatically controlled electric heaters in narthex restrooms (no more frozen pipes!).
- New circuit in kitchen (to address tripping of breakers problem with coffee pots).
- New outlets in the community room.

There is a lot more work to follow, including:

- Lighting upgrades in the connectors and school wing of the facility. We were able to get a \$4300 incentive (grant) from Eversource for this upgrade, as well as an expected \$2,200 annual savings on our electric bill.
- Motion sensors on the remaining restrooms and closet spaces.
- Parking lot and rear door exterior illumination.

Many of the projects to date have been less than visible. The electrical work in the parsonage, the fire-suppression system, the alarm system, and the parsonage chimney repair were very important, safety-related upgrades. Now the building committee can concentrate on the more visible repairs that are equally important.

The roof and chimney on the parsonage is complete. The parsonage window restoration has begun. The parsonage exterior desperately needs to be painted and work will begin in late September.

The committee continues to examine priorities, seek estimates on the remaining work to be done, and pursue more grant opportunities. As always, we welcome your thoughts and questions!

Financial Summary

(as of July 30, 2019)

| | YTD <u>Budget</u> | YTD <u>Actual</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
|------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Income | \$83,202 | \$98,028 | \$14,827 |
| Expenses | \$69,180 | \$63,712 | \$ 5,468 |
| Net Income | \$14,022 | \$34,316 | \$20,295 |

Numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole dollar; as such, some columns may not appear to total correctly.

We hope you are finding this information helpful. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out to anyone on the Finance Committee: Gail Agans (Chair), Doug Topliffe, and Tim Wiegand (Treasurer).

**Woman's Association
Church Holiday Fair
November 23, 2019**



***Treasures & Silent Auction
Items Needed!***

While searching for rummage for the fall Rummage Sale, be on the lookout for items for the Treasures and the Silent Auction tables. These booths are highlights of the Holiday Fair, contributing significantly to our bottom line, while at the same time offering great gift items for customers.

'Thrifting' is in vogue, and secondhand or preowned merchandise, vintage clothing and accessories are all prized finds. So recycle the 'dead' stuff in you closets and drawers, attics and basements to become a sustainable closet and household manager.

We are looking for like-new, or re-giftable items that are suitable for both men and women, young and old: forgotten gifts, wrong sized clothing, and unwanted home décor. Let someone else enjoy your like-new stuff.

Ideas include

- Fine art, antiques and collectables, church and Amherst memorabilia
- Never-used wedding or other gifts: handbags, scarves, sweaters, etc.
- Good condition jewelry, silver, glass, china and framed graphics
- Handmade items - from quilts to small furniture, and Holiday decorations

Your will be thrilled to eliminate clutter, so be generous!!!

We can also assist with disposing of unwanted valuables by selling used merchandise on EBay, Craig's List, at local jewelers, or through other secondhand dealers. Tax receipts from the church are available when appropriate.

Call to discuss donation ideas and to make delivery arrangements:

Treasurers - Carol Lyon: 672-0100 or cml750@comcast.net

Silent Auction - Anne Krantz: 673-9684 or Annekrantz@comcast.net

Rummage Sale – Sally Bowkett: 673-7409 or sbb446@hotmail.com



WA Workshops Resume

The weekly Monday Morning Workshops of the Woman's Association will resume on September 9, beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the church vestry. The workshops are informal meetings at which members and friends of the WA gather to prepare for the upcoming Fall Rummage Sale and Holiday Fair, or to just enjoy the fellowship of the group. Those who can stay past noon should bring their own lunch. Coffee, tea and dessert are always provided. At this first meeting on the 9th we will hold a Fair Planning meeting, beginning around 11:00.

All church and community women are welcome to attend on any Monday. Anyone with questions about the Woman's Association or the workshop can contact Adrienne Topliffe at 673-7436 or abtopliffe@comcast.net.

**Woman's Association's
GOOD STUFF
FALL RUMMAGE SALE**



Rummage Wanted!!!

The WA is now accepting rummage for the Fall Rummage Sale, Friday, October 4 and Saturday, October 5

We are ready for all the great rummage you have collected over the summer.

We need clothing: men's, women's, children's & baby – especially winter clothes.

Other popular items include jewelry, antiques & vintage items, collectables, toys, games and puzzles.

Also linens, table cloths, mats, towels, clean bedding, curtains, small household items, home decorations, dishes, glassware, kitchen utensils, small kitchen appliances, small hand tools and holiday decorations.

Please leave clean, sorted and labeled household items in WA workroom in the vestry, and clothing, bedding and linens on the stage in the community room.

Tell your friends and neighbors about this wonderful way to recycle unwanted GOOD STUFF.

Please NO large sports equipment, electronics, computers, TVs, car seats, large furniture or appliances.

SUCCESS 101

The SUCCESS fundraiser has been ongoing for several years. It has raised over \$13,000 for our church, yet many folks are not clear on what it is or how it works, so this is a quick refresher course.

We use the name "SUCCESS" to stand for Support the UCC with Everyday Shopping Selections." There are a variety of ways you can participate. In its simplest form, participants purchase gift cards from the program coordinators, and use them as they would any gift card. Though you pay and use the face value of the card, the church receives a percentage of the purchase through *Shop with Scrip*, the company we purchase the cards from. Percentages vary. We generally sell some cards after church on the third Sunday of the month, and plan to do so on September 22.

There are hundreds of shops, restaurants, and other businesses that participate in the program, but only a few popular cards are available for immediate purchase after church. We are also happy to accept orders for cards, which arrive the following week. Most of the local selections are on our order form, and you can tailor your purchase to the places you usually shop. Cash or check are accepted for payment.

Some in our congregation have joined *Shop with Scrip* online, creating their own account. This only takes a minute or two. In addition, many set up an online payment system called PrestoPay which links to a checking account. With this in place, it is possible to purchase paper "scripnow" that comes to your computer, acts like a gift card, and is available immediately. Another new option is payment online by credit card, which incurs a 2.6% fee. Many popular cards can also be reloaded from your computer.

If you use a SUCCESS gift card for even one place you frequently shop, you will contribute to the program. You shop as you always do, but use a SUCCESS gift card for payment. Some local favorites include Shaw's, CVS, Panera, Rite Aid, Walmart, Lowe's, Target, Home Depot, Amazon, Marshall's/ HomeGoods/TJ Maxx, Uno's, Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts. Stop by after church to learn more, or go to www.shopwithscrip.com. Sign up with the enrollment code [A5468F4B36127](#) and join our SUCCESS!

Thinking Openly with the Trudos: 50 years in Amherst and our Church

An Interview by Jeanne Neverisky

It was July 1969—the year of the Apollo moonwalk and Woodstock—when Chris and Vern Trudo moved their family from Connecticut to Amherst, NH, joining our church shortly after that. "It was a time of change," in both Amherst and the country, Chris remembers, "especially in the few years that followed." In our current time of change and turmoil, it seems helpful to hear what insights these dear longtime church and community members (and 74-year "longly-weds") have gleaned.

Vern especially credits their happiness and success to their loving and dedicated relationship, based on mutual respect as well as deep affection. It is impossible to be with them and not sense that from each. Chris adds that an essential ingredient in getting through tough times is a sense of humor, while Vern is a practicing and lifelong optimist. "It is a choice to be happy," he says. "If you believe you will be OK, you will be. If not . . ." Life has thrown challenges their way but that hasn't shaken their love, positive spirit or faith.

Their faith has always kept them centered, and they consciously try to follow Christ's teachings—"what is good, and true" as Chris puts it. A Bible verse that Chris has found as a model for her life says it all: "Do all that you do in love." (1 Corinthians 16:14). "When you have meaningful work and good relationships with people"—not just your spouse but the deep friendships they've made through church and community—"what else in life matters?" Chris asks. After basic needs are met, money, cars and houses are meaningless.

Chris worked as a teacher and principal here in town until her retirement in 1991. Despite the fact that Vern was a formidable fundraiser for the CROP Walk, Lions Club, and SHARE, he chuckles admiringly at being known in town as "Chris Trudo's husband." Chris figures that Vern must have raised over \$50,000 for the CROP Walk, as he raised at least \$5,000 each year for ten years. "No one could say no to Vern!" she said. Prior to moving to Amherst, Vern worked as Director of Promotion at Church World Service in NYC, and was instrumental in establishing the World Service Committee here at our church. Considering all Vern has accomplished to help those in need, it's easy to understand why his favorite Bible verse is Matthew 25:40: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Church life has been an important part of their 74 years together. Between them, they've served on almost every committee, taught Sunday school, and been involved in the NH Conference of the UCC (something Chris highly recommends to gain a perspective of how things "fit"). Chris had the idea that the church sponsor the Preschool in the Village (then called the Village Preschool) in 1996 and put plans together with Betsy Austen, another longtime member of the church.

Churches and communities go through change, as the Trudos have seen before in their long lifespan. They are confident that it's part of the necessary and healthy process of keeping a church alive. They are glad to see the church enhancing its service to others with the Community Suppers and more. "Keep your mind open to ideas and consider other ways," Chris advises. "Try to understand the other's point of view." In regard to our culture at large, too, she stresses, "openness of thinking" is key.

Chris and Vern, we are so glad you made that move 50 years ago! Thank you for your service, friendship, and inspiration.

(Note: I borrowed the term "Longly-weds" from the poem "The Longly-weds Know" by Leah Furnas.)

Church School Mission Project News

Thank you for your back to school donations! Our mission projects began with SHARE Outreach in Milford—donations of back packs and back to school materials were collected and received by SHARE.

October's mission is that of Heifer International. Our goal is to raise \$500 through our children's offerings. Please give generously. Parents of church school children who would like to receive a box for donations should request one from the child's teacher. A box will be placed in the narthex and church office to receive donations from others. If you would like to contribute with a check, please make your check payable to the church, with "Heifer International" noted on the memo line. Please contact Marilyn Gibson (mgibson@ccamherst.org) with any questions.

Give the Gift of a Heifer: "A good dairy cow can produce up to 4 gallons of milk a day – enough for a family to drink, share with neighbors and still have enough left over to sell... The sale of surplus milk provides income for school fees medicine, clothing, and home improvements. A cow can produce a calf every year, every gift will be passed on to eventually help entire communities move from poverty to self-reliance." (www.heifer.org/catalog)

Prayerful Playgroup

Parents group is back! Our first meeting back from our summer hiatus is September 6, 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. in the nursery.

Prayerful Playgroup is a group for young parents that meets every first and third Friday of the month for fellowship and faith formation. Your child can play in the nursery while we explore questions of life and belief together through study, discussion and shared experiences.

All are welcome to join this group that seeks to form deeper relationships in faith—whether you go to this church, or any church, or not at all! In the UCC we say, "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

Reach out to Rev. Kate at pastorkate@ccamherst.org for more information or to get on our mailing list.



Calling all 8th and 9th Graders
Time to sign up for

Confirmation!

Confirmation is a very special year for eighth and ninth graders at the Congregational Church of Amherst. Our confirmation program invites kids to go deeper into their own spirituality as they transition from childhood to adulthood, and build a deeper relationship with their church and peers along the way!

Life is hectic! We get it. We know that your family is busy, and the last thing we want is for church (of all places!) to feel like a chore. We strive to make our confirmation program work for your schedule—flexible enough to address the various needs of our confirmation families, and faithful enough to feel like a respite from the daily grind.

Reach out to Pastor Kate (pastorkate@ccamherst.org) for more information! We encourage all eighth and ninth graders to consider joining us for this year of exploration.

Senior High Youth Group Grades 9-12

Welcome back! Back to school means back to the fun and fellowship of SHYG.

Our first Senior High Youth Group gathering will be at the Rally Day Picnic after worship on September 8. Come eat food, see your friends, and work the face-painting station if you'd like!

Our first official SHYG meeting will be Sunday, September 15 at 6:00 p.m. in the community room. We will have pizza, play games, welcome new faces and start planning our year together. And as always, friends welcome!

Get in touch with Rev. Kate at pastorkate@ccamherst.org to sign up for face-painting or for more information!

Middle High Youth Group Grades 6-8

Do you have a sixth, seventh, or eighth grader? Would you love to see them have fun at church, get to know other church kids their age, and be more connected to their community? Vicky Leknes and Pastor Kate are putting their heads together to revive the Middle High Youth Group program at CCA. If you would like to get more information about this process, or help us conceptualize this revitalized program, please email pastorkate@ccamherst.org.



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