

VILLAGE SPIRE

January 2020



Woman's Association's Monday Meetings Resume

The weekly Monday Morning Workshops of the Woman's Association will resume on January 6, 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 plan events, such as the upcoming Spring Rummage Sale, work on craft projects for the 2020 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.

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.



Spaghetti Supper & Variety Show

Come One! Come All!

Saturday, January 25 at 6:00 p.m.
in the community room

This year's Annual Spaghetti Dinner & Variety Show is your chance to let your God-given gifts SHINE!!

Join us for an evening of food, fellowship, and fabulous entertainment—hosted by the SHYG, with performances by YOU! Singers, musicians, dancers, comedians, jugglers, magicians, yoyo-ers, karate choppers, pie-eaters, hula-hoopers, lip-sync-ers, even especially skillful nose-whistlers—whatever YOUR special skill is, come show your stuff! Adults, youth, and children of all ages are welcome to participate.

If you have an act or a talent that you'd like to share in the variety show, please email Pastor Kate at pastorkate@ccamherst.org, or talk to me in person any Sunday morning!

All proceeds benefit our Senior High Youth Group's 2020 mission trip to Denver, where we will be serving native communities, people who are homeless and food insecure, and underserved schools with DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection).

This is one event you DON'T WANT TO MISS!!

"Survey Says!"

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor
January 2020

On Sunday, January 12, after worship, we're unveiling the results of the CAT Survey our congregation participated in last May and June. We had a high participation level in the survey and your responses have revealed what drives our congregation's energy and satisfaction, what our top priorities are as a congregation, and where we'd like to place additional energy. To give you all a bit of a "sneak peak" at those results I will now reveal the TOP TWO PRIORITIES named by the majority of you who took the survey:

1. "Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church."
2. "Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church."

Ta da! Are you surprised? Actually, we're not revealing much here, as the CAT survey analysts informed us that these specific priorities have appeared at the top of nearly every congregational survey that they've administered over the last 25 years. It's not surprising that we have a desire to attract new people to our congregation and in particular would like to see more families with children

JANUARY At a Glance

- Jan. 5 Worship, Youth Choir resumes
- Jan. 6 WA Monday Workshops resume
- Jan. 7 Church Council meets
- Jan. 10 and 11 Confirmation Class retreat
- Jan. 12 Worship, CAT Survey presentation after worship
- Jan. 13 WA Stone Soup
- Jan. 15 *The Story of God* resumes
- Jan. 19 Worship
- Jan. 25 SHYG Spaghetti Supper & Variety Show
- Jan. 26 Worship, *Songs of NH* program

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
Alternate (603) 673-6848
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
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Andrea Cyr
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Sara L. Phelps
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kalben1@comcast.net

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michaelh117@gmail.com

Wendy Valeri
Bell Choir Director
wendylazott@tds.net

Marilyn Gibson
Church School Coordinator
mgibson@ccamherst.org



Adult Ed Series Wednesday, January 15 10:00-11:30 a.m. in the Parlor

Our Fall/Winter Adult Ed series continues with Season Three of THE STORY OF GOD - the popular series produced by the National Geographic Channel and 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. Join us every first and third Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. (Does not meet the first Wednesday in January.) All are welcome!

The Story of God – Upcoming Schedule

January 15 – “Deadly Sins”
February 5 – “Divine Secrets”
February 19 - “Holy Laws”



Small Groups Bring Us Closer Together and Closer to God!

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. In January, our focus statement is “Reject Racism.” We are all created in the image of God, but one of our biggest struggles as human beings involves our ability to see the image of God in one another.

What is racism? What is white privilege? How we define these terms often determines our ability to understand who experiences racism, who has privilege and who benefits from it, and how we apply or take ownership of these terms in our own lives.

January Meeting Schedule:

Sunday Group, January 5
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Tuesday Group, January 7
1:30–3:00 p.m.

Upcoming Group Discussion Topics:

February: Forgive Often
March: Love God
April: Fight For the Powerless
May: Share Earthly and Spiritual Resources
June: Enjoy this Life

If you're interested in joining one of our groups please contact Pastor Maureen at 673-3231 x14 - pastormaureen@ccamherst.org.

Survey Says!, continued from page 1

worshipping with us on Sunday morning and taking part in the life of our church. New people and families bring life to a church. Their presence is a sign that a congregation is growing. And there is of course the added bonus of having more hands to share the work of the church, and more pledging units to help fund that work. From the beginning, Christianity has been about “evangelism” and “discipleship” – attracting others to the fold so that they may know the love of God and walk in the footsteps of Christ, with us.

What is surprising about these top priorities is what is named as the action step in each priority: “Make necessary changes” and “Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy.” These are the steps that many churches are often unwilling or unprepared to take when they voice a desire to attract new people. There’s an old joke that the most often heard request of new pastors is this: “We want you to bring in new people and revitalize our church...but don’t change anything.” The hard truth is that change is necessary if we’re looking to attract people to our church in this era where church attendance is no longer a priority for many, and where many of the “younger people with families” we desire to reach were not necessarily raised in a church themselves. This means that people no longer move to a town and automatically look for a church – by attending worship to see if it’s a good fit, or perusing the local church websites to see which might be a good match. In today’s world, the primary way the “unchurched” find their way to a church is through relationships with people in their community, a visible presence of the congregation’s work in the community, and clear and identifying signage and advertising that tells the community something about a church’s identity and mission.

What this means is that congregations who wish to attract newcomers must think about the ways they are resistant to doing some of the work that falls under “make necessary changes.” Rather than hold an event in our building “to bring people in” what would it look like to be more present at community events where the people are? Rather than hope and pray our neighbors and friends might one day ask us about the church we attend, what would it look like to talk to them about the joy and sense of purpose we find from being part of this faith community? Rather than hold to a rigid idea of what the inside and outside of our church building should look like given its place in our historic town, what would it look like to change our space – inside and outside – to make it more welcoming and inviting, while still honoring the history we’ve inherited?

There are reasons why some or all of the above actions steps may make us uncomfortable or anxious. Planning church events outside of our space is more complicated. Talking to people we know about our faith feels imposing and “weird.” And our historic building is what attracted many of us to our church and still does attract many of our newcomers - do we really want to mess with that by taking out pews or putting up banners or signs?

What DOES it look like to make “necessary changes” to ensure that others feel welcome and find a spiritual home in our congregation just as we did? Reviewing the results of the CAT survey is just the first step in the conversation we’ll have in response to these two top priorities, and the many others that were revealed in the survey results. We hope you can join us on January 12 to hear more and add your voice to the conversation!

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Maureen

Gifted Ladies

The Gifted Ladies will meet on Wednesday, January 22, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. in the parlor. All church women 80+ years of age are welcome to join us.



Songs of Old NH

The Congregational Church of Amherst, with support from NH Humanities, welcomes folk singer Jeff Warner on Sunday, January 26 at 4:00 p.m. Jeff will present “Songs of Old New Hampshire” in song and story. He sings and accompanies himself with guitar, banjo, concertina and antique rhythm instruments, creating lively music and a fun concert. Jeff performs with no printed music; he knows all the songs and stories by heart!

Jeff Warner is among the nation’s foremost performers and interpreters of traditional music. He will entertain us with a vast repertoire of ballads, love songs, and comic pieces from the 19th century that tell the stories of the daily lives of working folks, sung in lumber camps, textile mills, ships, and the backcountry. His songs and stories bring us the latest news from the distant past.

He performs nationally and internationally, but happily his home is New Hampshire, where he is a performer for the NH Humanities to Go program. The Congregational Church, 11 Church Street, Amherst, is pleased to offer this toe-tapping program for all to enjoy. No admission.

A reception with refreshments will follow the program to provide the opportunity to meet Jeff, and to purchase his CDs.

For more info go to: <https://www.ccamherst.org/events/nh-humanities-concert/>

Or contact Anne Krantz: Annekrantz@comcast.net, 673-9684. Church office 673-3231 or 673-6848.

WA Fair Critique and Lunch



The Woman's Association's Fair Critique and Lunch will be on Monday, January 13, featuring our traditional, delicious Stone Soup.

The soup making begins at 9:30 a.m. so it can simmer while we talk.

We will begin the fair discussion at 10:00 a.m. This is when we review the receipts for each table or category and discuss improvements or changes.

If you helped in any way or have ideas for new items to sell or suggestions for next year, please join us as we are always looking for new ideas and inspiration!

To volunteer to bring an ingredient for the soup, a dessert or to help contact Carol Lyon 672-0100 or cml750@comcast.net.

Meals on Wheels Volunteers Needed



Meals on Wheels needs volunteers to deliver meals to homebound senior citizens and disabled adults in communities throughout Hillsborough County. Just a few hours of your assistance on the weekday of your choice from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm can help the elderly and disabled remain healthy and live independently at home. Training is provided. Please call our Program Manager, Jillian Toce, at 603-424-9967. You can visit their website at www.mealsonwheelssnh.org.

Food, Fellowship and Fun: Community Suppers at SHARE and CCA

Don Lyon and John Swanson have had little or no experience in the kitchen. What they do have is a contagious enthusiasm, a bundle of energy, and an ability to laugh, learn, and enjoy working with each other and many willing volunteers. The result?? Five community suppers at our church and five spaghetti suppers at SHARE prepared and served each year, and hundreds of happy, well-fed community members.

About four years ago, Bob Miskelly, Bob Gibson, and John Swanson and a group of CCA volunteers worked at SHARE helping to prepare and serve spaghetti suppers. The Men's Group realized that suppers here at the church would be excellent community outreach. Not content to duplicate the dinners at SHARE, Bob, Bob, and John decided to expand the menus and their culinary skills and provide a family-style community supper at CCA. Don Lyon joined them. Under the tutelage of the experienced Bob Gibson, Don and John learned to cook and soon became the new team.

Before each dinner, they decide on a menu. They've served roast pork, ham, and Chicken Marsala. Pot roast may be next. With shopping lists in hand, they head to Market Basket and WalMart, looking for the best prices on meat (they've been known to haggle).

At 3:00 on the day of the supper here or at SHARE, they prepare the meal, with help from church volunteers. Crystal Chen and Claire Choiniere purchase and prepare the salads. Heather MacDonald is the "onion lady," ready willing to chop lots of onions. Almost 20 volunteers bring desserts, set up tables and chairs, act as greeters, serve the meal, and clean up. Ice cream, the "specialty of the house" at CCA is always a big hit.

90-100 people come to the suppers for the food, but they come for the friendship as well, and often come early to socialize. John says we "feed the stomach and feed the heart." All are welcome here, and all are made to feel at home.

Without volunteers, none of this would be possible. Nancy Protzmann is the "organizer extraordinaire." While there are many "regulars," the team is always looking for new volunteers. Our SHARE suppers are every other month on the first Tuesday, and the CCA suppers are every other month on the first Thursday. Contact [Nancy Protzmann](#) to join this enthusiastic group!

Don and John's enthusiasm and energy are contagious; the Men's Group is now considering reinstating the congregational Thanksgiving dinner and perhaps holding a summer chicken barbeque. It's all about the fellowship, they say – and good food and good fun too!



Mission Moments from your World Service Team

Christmas Gift Drives: Thank you so much to everyone who donated gifts to our 3 Christmas gift drives. We were able to bring some Christmas joy to 5 SHARE families, 20 senior residents of Crestwood, and 20 children who sadly may find themselves in emergency foster care this season. We are grateful for your generosity and kindness.

Anne-Marie House: Santa & Mrs. Claus were a big hit at our annual visit to the Anne-Marie House. Your World Service benevolence fund provided a special gift for each of the 25 children currently residing at AMH. Santa & Mrs. Claus provided surprise and Christmas joy, and the WS team provided snacks and cocoa! Thank you to all who participated, and to the congregation for supporting the World Service missions.

World Service Funds update:

In an effort to provide more information on where our Mission and Benevolence monies are spent, we have included the organizations we have supported to date this fiscal year. In addition to these two funds, our congregation supports the UCC Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM). For more information on any of these organizations please reach out to Susan Holden (Outreach Ministry Coordinator) or Terri Behm (World Service Team Leader).

Anne-Marie House Christmas Gifts
Community Suppers (funds as needed)
David's House
End 68 Hours of Hunger Nashua
FISH
Greater Nashua Habitat for Humanity
Holy Joe's Café
Maine Seacoast Mission
Middle High Youth Group startup funds
Nashua Soup Kitchen
NH Chaplains' Relief Fund
SHARE
Souhegan Valley Blue Bus



What's on tap for 2020?

We are working on more hands on opportunities for the congregation, and are very open to suggestions and ideas! We will be scheduling our next Habitat for Humanity Build Day soon, so if you are interested please reach out to Nancy Protzmann, Dave Phelps, or Dave Poltack.

Holiday Fair Thanks

The members of the Woman's Association would like to thank the following "Friends of the WA" for generously donating their time to work on our Holiday Fair. Their help was invaluable in making the fair so successful: Margi Bagley, Terri Behm, Pat Buben, Carole Byatt, Ken D'Ambrosio, Meredith Dart, Mariellah Dart, Oriannah Dart, Camille Davis, Marty Furst, Bob Gibson, Leona Hendrickson, Sally Hooper, Carol Landon, Art Leknes, Vicky Leknes, Don Lyon, Joan Lyons, Heather MacDonald, Liz MacMillan, Bruce Manchester, Carolyn Mitchell, Nancy Peterson, Nadine Obermiller, Dave Phelps, Lora Philp, Dave Poltack, Carolin Sanchez, Sue Spiess, Dick Stout, Anita Swanson, John Swanson, Holly Tonnesen, Doug Topliffe, Tim Wiegand.

KUDOS to Kindness

The church received a very generous anonymous donation of \$2,200 this summer, with no specific instructions other than to use it specifically for outreach. After much discernment and discussion, the World Service team chose to use the donation to provide kitchen kits to young adults aging out of the foster care system. These kits give them one less worry when starting out in their own living space. Each kit contains the following items and will be distributed through Bethany Christian Services. We are deeply grateful for this special donation ~ THANK YOU!

Toaster
Baking dish glass
Cookie sheet
Microwave dish
Set of plastic bowls
Set of dishes/glasses
Silverware set
Oven mitts
Dish towels
Measuring cups
Measuring spoons
Spatulas
Large spoon
Peeler
Paring Knife
Can Opener

SHARE Food Pantry

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

January

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!

Reasons Why Sunday School is Important

"The goal of Christian formation is not to create churchgoers; the goal of Christian formation is to raise up disciples of Jesus Christ."

Reason #2: Find Mentors

Parenting is tough, but when you have Sunday school teachers working to mentor your children, they can provide another source of guidance. The church is a community where everyone helps their neighbors. When you take your children to Sunday school, you can rest assured you have qualified help with their spiritual education.



Youth Choir Resumes in January

Come and sing, beginning on Sunday, January 5! Grab a snack from coffee hour and meet in the vestry.

Are children of any age welcome? Of course, keep in mind that we do some reading, and some of the music may be challenging for the very young. Little ones are ALWAYS welcome to join us.

I get nervous singing in front of people, do I have to sing alone? No, we sing together, singing as a group is fun.

How often do we sing in church? I hope we will sing once a month, let's see how it goes!

What do I wear? We have robes – gold robes for smaller children and maroon robes for the older kids.

How often do we rehearse? Every Sunday after church. If anything changes, I will let you know by email.

What if I need to miss a rehearsal? That happens! I will make sure that the Sunday we are actually singing during the church service is in the calendar in advance!

Further questions? Please contact me at kalben1@comcast.net.

Sara Phelps, Director of Music



Church School News

As Christians we are followers of Jesus Christ. January *Spark* lessons are *The Wise Men*, *Jesus' Baptism*, *Jesus Goes To Nazareth*, and *The Disciples*, all of which teach the children that as Christians we are messengers of God's words, living in the way Jesus taught us, bringing love, joy and hope to everyone. Our teachers are Marianne Stone, Shannon Gascoyne, Sue Werst, Rebecca Bolin, Gretchen Davis, Larissa Riley, and Dave Hagerstrom.

January Mission Project: SHARE

Following Jesus' teachings we are serving neighbors near and far. SHARE Food Pantry is always in need of condiments. In contacting the office, there is a need for salad dressings, cooking oils, ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise. Children are encouraged to donate these at church school, whereupon, they will be delivered to SHARE. If you would like to help, there are receptacles in the narthex and near the community room.

Middle High Youth Group (MHYG)



MHYG had a great first meeting of the year on December 15, 2019, starting with an international call to the Halley Research Station in Antarctica and ending with a field trip to Altitude Trampoline Park in Merrimack! The MHYG learned a whole lot about penguins and the environment, and what we can do to help stop climate change in its tracks. And the jumping was pretty fun, too!

For more information about ongoing MHYG programming, contact Pastor Kate at pastorkate@ccamherst.org.

Our Time, Our Turn: News for the New Year!

Freezing temperatures, snow, ice, and the holidays have not deterred the work of the Capital Campaign committee. Throughout December, the progress continued.

In December, we received very exciting news from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. They have approved a grant to CCA of \$4,125 which has been matched by an anonymous donor for a total of \$8,250 toward the cost of the updated building assessment study to be conducted by Steve Bedard of Bedard Preservation Consultants. We are hopeful that a second grant will be forthcoming in January from the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance (NHPA) for the balance of the contract.

The building assessment study serves two purposes: it gives us a current view of what needs to be done now and over the next twenty years to maintain our historic buildings and is required when applying for an LCHIP renovation grant. Receiving an LCHIP grant could help cover up to 50% of the cost of the capital campaign meetinghouse exterior painting and window restoration projects. It is also a "gateway" for receiving grants from other institutions and organizations in the future.

On November 24, we held an informational meeting with the congregation to discuss plans for the upcoming kitchen renovation. We sincerely appreciated the interest, the feedback, and the support that so many members offered. Transparency, along with open and honest dialogue, has been the hallmark of our successful campaign so far and we know that will continue. The kitchen team of Sue and Dick Stout, John Swanson, and Charlie Vars spent countless hours refining plans leading up to that informational meeting, and we are all deeply appreciative of their dedication and hard work. Kitchen plans will continue to evolve in the new year, and we will continue to keep the congregation informed.

Restoration work on the parsonage windows continues on schedule, and Pastor Maureen and Stephanie Dumoski appreciate the warmer climate indoors! The church electrical project continued with completion of the lighting upgrades in the connector and education wing of the building.

Thanks to all who have contributed their time, their talent, and their treasure to this campaign. You have truly embraced the slogan, "Our Time, Our Turn!"

Senior High Youth Group (SHYG)

Happy New Year SHYG!! With January's icy roads, extra heavy homework loads, and Sunday night football, SHYG is going to try a CHANGE OF TIME for one month!!



SHYG will meet at 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. for the month of January.

Altar Flowers Always Needed

Donated altar arrangements are always welcome. Flowers can be given to remember a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion. The donor arranges with a local florist to have their chosen flowers delivered. After the service they may take the flowers home or donate them to someone in need of cheer. There are many openings in the coming months. Please call Anne Krantz (673-9684) to schedule a Sunday.



A Few Words About the Weather...

Church Closings Due to Bad Weather:

As we all know, New England weather is ever changing and at times quite unpredictable. In case of bad weather and the need to cancel a worship service, we will do our best to get the word out. Tune in to WMUR Channel 9 television, WZID 95.7 FM radio, WMLL 96.5 FM radio, or WFEA 1370 AM radio to check for a cancellation notice. We will also leave a recorded message on the church answering system (673-3231), and will post a notice on our website and our Facebook page.

Beware of Falling Snow and Ice:

It is that time of year again when we must remind everyone that snow and ice may fall from our roof at any time. Please use caution when in our driveway, and do not walk too close to the building.

Financial Summary (as of November 30, 2019)

	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$203,656	\$198,397	\$ 5,259
Expenses	\$187,670	\$198,862	\$(11,192)
Net Income	\$ 15,986	\$ (465)	\$ 16,450

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 Team: Gail Agans (chair), Paul Spiess, Doug Topliffe, Todd Whitney and Tim Wiegand (Treasurer).

The Congregational Church
11 Church Street
Amherst, NH 03031

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