

The Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
Amherst, New Hampshire

# VILLAGE SPIRE

September 2020



## Rally Sunday

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor  
September 2020



September 13

**Welcome Back,  
Church!**

We may be gathering “virtually” for worship in September but we will have our traditional RALLY SUNDAY to celebrate the return of our church school children and teachers AND the many other programs and ministries we have restarting or continuing this fall!

We'll also be doing a “BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS and SCHOOL SUPPLIES” for all of our teachers and students who are returning to school in-person and remotely!

We hope you can join us at 10:00 a.m. on September 13 on Facebook, YouTube, or our church website at [ccamherst.org](http://ccamherst.org)!

In many churches, the Sunday set aside every September to launch the new program year is no longer called “Rally Sunday” but instead is called “Ingathering Sunday” or “Welcoming Sunday.” Rally Sunday has traditionally been connected with the start-up of Sunday school, but as times change and churches have seen their children’s programming shrink or move to days other than Sunday, a more modern name for this “start of the new program year” has been sought. One that is not tied specifically to children’s programming and which better reflects the coming together of the whole church after the summer months. Thankfully, we have a healthy church school program for all ages, and while we’re honoring tradition and sticking with the “Rally Sunday” name for the kick-off of our new church year on September 13, this special Sunday really is a celebration of our church as a whole.

We could call it “Ingathering Sunday” but as we will continue to worship virtually with our online service in the month of September, and possibly all of October, we will save the “Ingathering” designation for the Sunday when we’re back worshipping in our sanctuary. Or possibly even save it for the Sunday we’re truly longing for - when we’re ALL able to gather in the sanctuary again, without limitations or precautions. Our ad-hoc “reopening” team has been hard at work all summer long reviewing the recommendations of the state, health, and church governing bodies, putting together guidelines for smaller in-person gatherings while preparing a plan for future gatherings in our sanctuary, working with the Preschool in the Village to ensure we’re sharing our building safely, and polling the congregation to see how we’re all feeling about coming together again. Until we’re ready to gather IN our sanctuary, which may not be until much later in the fall, it doesn’t feel right to call September 13 “Ingathering Sunday.”

*Continued on page 3*

## Sharing the Good News

We know that Jesus commanded us to “share the Good News.” We often think of this in terms of speaking about our faith to others. This year, the Diaconate thought about sharing in a different way.

Last year, the Diaconate offered congregation members the opportunity to purchase New Revised Standard Bibles, the version used during worship readings. 128 new Bibles will be placed in the pews when we can safely return to in-person worship. That raised the question: What do we do with the old Bibles?

Gail and Tim Wiegand came up with a wonderful solution that enabled us to truly share the Good News. They drove the Bibles to their hometown, Lorain, Ohio, where they were picked up by Steve Richardson, a truck driver who often drops off Bibles at truck stops. Steve delivered our Bibles to Fowlerville, Michigan, the home of Mission Cry. Dedicated to spreading the Good News, Mission Cry has sent over \$375 million in Bibles and Christian books to over 178 nations since 1956.

If you have extra Bibles that need a new home, Gail and Tim ([nhwiegand@comcast.net](mailto:nhwiegand@comcast.net)) will collect them and deliver them to Steve Richardson. If you would like to purchase a new pew Bible (\$10) in memory or in honor of a loved one, please contact Andrea Cyr ([andrea@ccamherst.org](mailto:andrea@ccamherst.org) or 673-3231).

## 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 available.

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Office Phone (603) 673-3231,  
(603) 673-6848  
[www.ccamherst.org](http://www.ccamherst.org)  
[Facebook.com/ccamherst](https://www.facebook.com/ccamherst)

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

Send in all news by the  
fifteenth of the month.

Announcements  
for the Sunday bulletins  
are due Thursday morning.

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### OUR CHURCH STAFF:

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*Senior Pastor*  
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Marilyn Gibson  
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## Behind the Scenes Our Time, Our Turn: Capital Campaign Progress



Even COVID-19 can't stop the progress on our capital campaign projects! Team members continue to work overseeing repairs, kitchen design, and securing grants. A quick update:

- Ø The parsonage window restoration was completed and all new storm windows were installed in June.
- Ø Final layout drawings for the kitchen design are expected from the architect in August.
- Ø The building assessment is complete and we have received all grant funds, covering 100% of the \$12,750 cost.
- Ø The LCHIP grant application was submitted in late June. CCA applied for ~1/3 of the total project cost of ~\$294,000. LCHIP personnel will be doing a site assessment in August; award announcements are expected in November.
- Ø Initial projects include restoration of the meetinghouse windows, painting of the meetinghouse and parsonage, and parsonage shutter (technically called blinds) restoration.
- Ø Preservationist Steven Bedard recommended three additional projects: a snow fence on the east roof of the meetinghouse, repairs to decay in two steeple posts in the belfry, and shoring up the piers/supports under the narthex.

None of this project would have been possible without the efforts of Barbara Williams, Doug Topliffe, Susan Holden, Nancy Protzmann, Anne Krantz, Todd Whitney and Andrea Cyr. They continue working tirelessly, making our meetinghouse and parsonage meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

## SOS—Volunteers Needed

We need people to cut the church lawn during September and October. The front lawn needs to be cut weekly, but the rest of the lawn only needs to be cut once every 2-3 weeks. To sign up for a week, contact Tom Werst 603-759-8191 or [tom-w@pobox.com](mailto:tom-w@pobox.com).

The church has a lawn tractor. Instruction on operating the lawn tractor and boundaries of the church lawn are available upon request.



### Financial Summary

(as of July 31, 2020)



	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$123,938	\$79,138	\$44,800
Expenses	<u>\$ 60,465</u>	<u>\$65,366</u>	<u>\$( 4,901)</u>
Net Income	\$ 63,473	\$13,772	\$49,701

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: Keith Lammers, Paul Spiess, Doug Topliffe, Todd Whitney and Tim Wiegand (Treasurer).

## Rally Sunday, *continued from page 1*

We could call this special Sunday “Welcoming Sunday,” as we welcome everyone back from summer breaks, vacations and scatterings to lake houses and recreational pursuits. But in this unusual year, thanks to the technological reach of our online service, many of you continued to worship with us all summer long – while on vacation, at your lake houses, in your own back gardens, or wandering out in the world. And because we missed our in-person gatherings so much, many of our small groups and ministry programs decided to forgo the traditional summer break and continued to run all summer long. Our Middle and Senior High Youth, the parent’s Prayerful Playgroup, the Men’s Group, the Woman’s Association, our Confirmation Class, the Chancel Choir, our Small Group Ministry groups, all met weekly, or monthly, or several times over the summer just to keep that valued connection alive. Our World Service Team (with help from many others!) ran several SHARE food drives and a successful College Care Package drive for foster kids heading off to school. Our deacons packed up our old pew Bibles and hand-delivered them to Ohio, where they were then transported to a charity in Michigan for distribution around the world. And Pastor Kate ran a summer-long book group on racism that attracted over 25 regular attendees – twice the turnout of our usual summer Back Porch Theology series!

So, in this very untraditional year it seems appropriate to stick with tradition, and to “Rally” ourselves together as a church on Sunday, September 13 as we look ahead to a very active fall. Our children’s Church School program begins a week early this year, on September 6, as our Church School Coordinator, Marilyn Gibson, and our wonderful Christian Education team provide “Church School in a Bag” – weekly lessons and activities that the parents can pick up, and that will be featured during our Sunday Children’s Time on select Sundays. Pastor Kate will continue to offer kid “check-ins” on Zoom during the week. On Rally Sunday, we’ll do a special “Blessing of the Backpacks and School Supplies” for all our teachers and students returning to school, in-person or virtually! Our “Creative Worship” series returns on September 21, as this year we’re focusing on the UCC “Be The Church” themes (see article in this *Spire!*). Our wonderful music team, Sara Phelps, Michael Havay and Wendy Valeri, will continue to produce new music for our online worship along with previously recorded pieces, and is exploring new ways to feature our Chancel, Bell, and children’s choirs in the fall. Our monthly Small Group Ministry program returns as well with a year-long exploration of the parables of Jesus. Pastor Kate’s racism class continues through September 24, so our regular Wednesday morning adult education program will begin in October. We’ll wrap up our Confirmation Class in September as well and hope to have our youth confirmed during our online worship on September 27! We look forward to the start of new year for our middle and senior high youth groups, and the Prayerful Playgroup. And of course, all of our ministry teams will be back in action and continuing to do the work of our church in creative ways through a combination of Zoom, outdoor gatherings, and small indoor gatherings when appropriate.

As we “rally” together this fall, virtually or in-person when possible, we will continue to be the church for one another. By reaching out to those who can’t be with us in person or who don’t have the ability to “zoom” into a meeting online. By remembering that we are the church even without our building or our technology. In this untraditional and uncertain time, we will continue to rally together as the body of Christ. Join us on September 13 to learn more about our fall kick-off, and to be with us as we celebrate our new church year, together!

Peace and blessings,  
*Pastor Maureen*

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



Mark your calendars! Creative Worship returns in the fall on the THIRD SUNDAY of every month. We’ll come together as the community of Christ to worship God with special music, interactive liturgy, an engaging message, and a focus theme to frame our worship. This year our overarching theme is BE THE CHURCH – the bold statements issued by the United Church of Christ to inspire us to live our faith in the world. In September and October we’ll still be worshipping online, but each service will have an at-home activity for us to participate in! Here are our Creative Worship Sundays and themes for the year. We hope you can join us!

September 20	Embrace Diversity
October 18	Care for the Poor
November 15	Share Earthly & Spiritual Resources
December 20	Fight for the Powerless
January 17	Reject Racism
February 21	Love God
March 21	Forgive Often
April 18	Protect the Environment
May 16	Enjoy this Life



## Prayerful Playgroup



Since the start of Covid-19, the CCAmherst parents group has continued to meet throughout the summer on Zoom! Prayerful Playgroup is a group for parents with young children. Each week, Prayerful Playgroup offers a space for parents to check-in, talk about the joys and trials of parenthood, and grow in faith.

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.”

If you are interested in joining this group, please reach out to Pastor Kate.



### What is Small Group Ministry?

Small Group Ministry is where 8-10 people meet 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 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 a weekday group, an evening group, and a weekend group to allow members to pick a time that best fits their schedule.

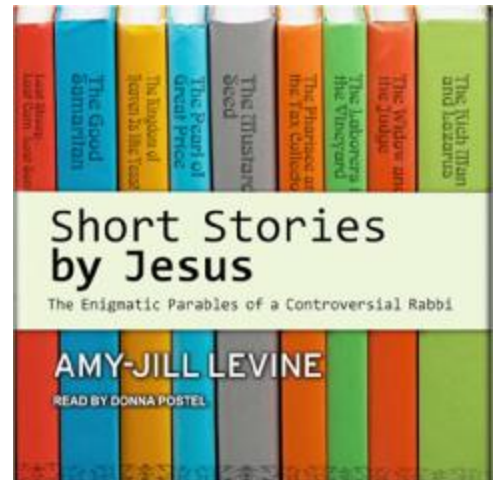
This year we’re focusing on *Short Stories by Jesus*

Using the book by Amy-Jill Levine as a guide, we’ll explore the parables of Jesus and the many ways they have to guide, comfort, inspire, provoke, and change us!

There’s no need to purchase the book and no prep-time is needed! The readings and discussion questions for each month will be emailed ahead of time and are short enough to be read when the group is gathered.

### Schedule for 2020-2021

- October: The Good Samaritan
- November: The Rich Man
- December: The Persistent Widow
- January: The Laborers in the Vineyard
- February: The Talents
- March: The Prodigal Son
- April: The Sower
- May: The Mustard Seed
- June: The Lost Sheep



### Choose a Group!

- First Tuesday 1:30–3:00 p.m.
- Second Wednesday 6:30-8:00 p.m.
- First Sunday 12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.

All groups will meet on Zoom in October. Plans for in-person meetings may be arranged after that point if possible!

### 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 ten members.

Sign up online at [ccamherst.org](http://ccamherst.org) or contact Pastor Maureen at 603-673-3231 x11

[pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastormaureen@ccamherst.org)



## 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 & Beefaroni

Donations should be brought directly to the SHARE Center in Milford. In this time of social distancing, please call their office at 673-9898 for guidance. Many thanks for your continuing support!





## Church School

*"Train up a child in the way he should go;  
even when he is old he will not depart from it."*  
(Proverbs 22:6)

**Brown Bag Lessons:** Returning to church school is offered through innovation (maybe similar to a successful program in town). Church school lessons for children in grades Pre-K through 4, related to the lectionary for each Sunday's worship, are being made available during the fall term of church school. To receive a lesson each week, sign up using the link below. You only need to sign up once, recording your family's name. There will be a brown paper bag for your family containing the lesson and activity/activities in a large Tupperware container at the back entrance to the building (under the overhang).

Once signed up, your family will receive information and activities for all lessons in the fall term. (However, knowing that returning to school can be stressful, please know that your family is under no obligation to complete the lessons. By all means, their use is at your discretion.)

SignUpGenius Link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4CAEA62EA1F8C25-church>

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Marilyn Gibson, Church School Coordinator, at [mgibson@ccamherst.org](mailto:mgibson@ccamherst.org).



## Middle High Youth Group Grades 5-7

Calling all new fifth, sixth and seventh graders! MHYG meets the third Wednesday of every month, and YOU'RE invited!! Our first meeting of the year will be a socially distant, in-person, outdoor meeting on September 16 (September 23 rain date).

At a time in life when most tweens are struggling to figure out who they are, what they like, who to be friends with, and what to believe, MHYG is a sacred space to learn, grow, and have fun. MHYG offers kids a safe place to explore their spirituality, form deep relationships, and let loose through fellowship, games, check-ins and sanctuary time.

ALL fifth, sixth and seventh graders are invited—whether or not they attend CCAmherst! MHYG kids are always welcome to bring friends.

Email Pastor Kate for more information.



## Confirmation: Looking to 2021

Traditionally, September means the start of a new confirmation class at CCAmherst. However, due to the continued interference of COVID-19 on our "normal" lives, the confirmation leaders — Vicky Leknes, Pastor Maureen and Pastor Kate — have decided that it's in the best interest of our incoming confirmands to wait until next year to start their confirmation journey. While Zoom offers so many great ways for our church to connect virtually, confirmation is a personal, social and spiritual program that is most effective when done in-person with hands-on learning. It is our hope that in 2021, we can have one great big confirmation class of eighth and ninth graders.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to Pastor Kate.

## Senior High Youth Group Grades 9-12

HEY, High Schoolers! A lot of things are uncertain right now—are you going back to school in person or remotely? Who will your teachers be? What will the fall bring? Will I get to play my favorite sport? Will the spring musical still happen?

So many things are up in the air, but SHYG is still here! Until the weather says otherwise, SHYG will be meeting outside for socially distant, in-person SHYG meetings, featuring a fire pit, games, highs and lows, smores, and more! Our first SHYG meeting will be on September 20 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Questions? Concerns? Get in touch with Pastor Kate by email or text.

## Thank You!

From our World Service Team



### Foster Care College Care Package Drive

Thank you to all those that contributed to the Foster Care College Care Package Drive. We were able to put together five of both the 'Starter' and 'Returning' student kits, to be distributed to those foster kids that have graduated high school and are entering college for the first time, and those returning to continue their education. We are grateful to be able to help take some of the financial pressure off of these students so they can focus on their education. Thank you again for your generous support!

### SHARE Food Pantry Drive

The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly hard on those struggling to hold jobs and keep food on the table. We held three drive-by food drives for SHARE in the past few months and each drive collected at least two cars FULL of needed food and supplies. Many teams and individuals were involved in these hands-on food drives—teamwork at its best! *Your generosity is greatly appreciated.* We also always keep a list of current SHARE needs on our SOS page on our website, so please keep that in mind. Due to COVID 19 all donations need to be dropped off directly at the SHARE office at 1 Columbus Ave, Milford. Their hours are Friday 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

## “Blessed by a Rich and Wonderful Life”

By Sue Spiess

Chris and Vern Trudo reached a truly remarkable milestone on July 12. Sharing champagne (Chris' request!), cake and ice cream, the whole family gathered to celebrate Chris and Vern's 75<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

The Trudos' roots run deep in Amherst. While much has changed in the 51 years they have lived here, their enthusiasm for and love of the town and the Congregational Church of Amherst have only grown. Their gifts of time, talent and treasure have been recognized by both the town in 2009, as Joint Citizens of the Year (the only couple so honored), and the CCA at a special tribute.

Chris had four young children at home when she attended college at night and then full-time in Connecticut. When she arrived in Amherst, she enrolled in the UNH Education Masters Program and graduated in 1971. At the time, there was no program in Early Childhood Development in Amherst and Chris became the first Readiness teacher at Clark School. After receiving a second master's degree in counseling from Rivier College, she became both principal and guidance counselor at Clark School. She shared her knowledge and many years of experience with Rivier College education majors. After retirement, she saw a need for quality early childhood education in Amherst, and with Betsy Austen, formed the Preschool in the Village at CCA.

Vern, an insurance agent at the Holt Agency in Milford, became deeply vested in the community as well. As one of the founding members of the Amherst Lion's Club, he was committed to selling light bulbs to anyone he met. An enthusiastic supporter of SHARE, he walked in the annual CROP Walk into his late 80's. It was hard to say “no” to Vern when he asked for support, and as a result, he was very often the top fundraiser for the event, raising thousands of dollars.

Their involvement at CCA has encompassed almost every committee, sometimes serving two or three times. Together they served on the Greater Nashua Interfaith Hospitality Network. Vern was a founding member of Anne-Marie House, and has fostered CCA's involvement there. Chris saw the need for a group to encourage connections among women with years of experience and founded the Octogenarians. She is a longstanding member of the Woman's Association, and for quite a while ran the SERRV shop.

Chris says “We've been blessed by a rich and wonderful life.” Their commitment to each other and their joint commitment to their family, their town and their church have built that rich and wonderful life for 75 years.

*Cheers, Vern and Chris!*



## Health and Welfare of Amherst Residents 200 years Ago

By Anne Krantz, Historian

Secomb, in his *History of the Town of Amherst, 1883*, lists random information in chronological order, but with no index it is difficult to find information by topic. For instance: "1826 was long remembered as the 'grasshopper year.' Those insects were so plenty that nearly every green thin was eaten.... A great rain storm occurred during the last week in August, which destroyed them." [Pg. 137]

Then he abruptly jumps to deaths and public health information, now more interesting during a real pandemic. "Fifty-three deaths occurred in Amherst in the year of 1826, a greater number than is recorded in any other year since its settlement. In July whooping-cough broke out, followed by measles and then dysentery. The cases were more severe than usual with more deaths. The Center school was hit hard; 47 cases of whooping-cough, 122 of measles and 109 of dysentery." [Pg. 137] Adults also suffered severely. By the end of the town-wide sickness in December, 18 had died from the three illnesses: 16 children and 2 adults; 13 males and 5 females.

Secomb next discusses the use of wine and ardent spirits, citing the Hillsborough County Agricultural Society Fair held in Amherst on September 24 & 25, where 'premiums' were awarded to farmers from several area farms for "performing the labor on their farms that year without the aid of distilled liquors." He continues with this explanation:

"The use of distilled liquors was at that time nearly universal among all classes of the people. The farmer carried them to his fields, the mechanic to his workshop, and the professional man to his office; all used them freely, and the legitimate consequences – drunkenness, idleness, poverty, disease and crime – followed.

About this time a society was formed in the town the members of which were pledged to abstain from the use of intoxicating spirits. Associations of a similar kind were formed in many other towns. In these movements many of the most distinguished physicians and other educated men in the State, took an active part, and suffered no small amount of abuse in consequence of their exertions."

Later, in *Chapter XXXIII* [pg. 299] about churches, in his summary of historical events of the Congregational Church and Society, he abruptly includes a heading of *TEMPERANCE* with a list of resolutions and no other comment. Unfortunately, the list of signers on the resolutions is not included, but we can assume that the Reverend Silas Aiken, who had just been ordained on March 4, 1829, was among the 224 who signed it. Since the church membership was made up of about half women, at least half of the signers were women. Churches were a logical institution to promote and pass temperance resolutions because women were voting members, although they were denied a vote in political elections. The population of Amherst in 1830 was 1,649.

'Ardent Spirits,' the focus of this resolution, is defined in my *Webster's Dictionary*: "(1833): strong distilled liquors." Consistent with the idea of temperance, wine and beer are not mentioned even though Americans were becoming more skilled in crafting these alcoholic beverages, including hard cider popular in New England, and beer that was brewed in Pennsylvania.

Summarized in this article: *Spirited Republic, Alcohol's Evolving Role in U. S. History* by Bruce Bustard <https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2014/winter/spirited.pdf>, we learn that in the early republic, Americans drank

quantities we would consider astounding today. In 1790, they consumed an average of 5.8 gallons of absolute alcohol annually for each drinking-age individual. (Cider, beer and wine are 8% - 10% proof so the quantity drunk of those beverages would have been approximately ten times the pure alcohol.) By 1830 that figure peaked at 7.1 gallons! Today, in contrast, Americans consume about 2.3 gallons of absolute alcohol in a year. Alcoholism - also known as dipsomania - was starting to have a serious impact on communities and families as portrayed in this cartoon: John W. Barber, "The Drunkard's Progress, or the Direct Road to Poverty, Wretchedness & Ruin," New Haven, Conn., September 9, 1826 (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC06025)



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