

# VILLAGE SPIRE

February 2021



## The Good News

Rev. Maureen R. Frescott, Senior Pastor  
February 2021

If you check your email or your snail mail box this week you'll find a letter from our Stewardship team touting the "GOOD NEWS of 2020" – but before you say, "Well, that sounds like an oxymoron" and toss the letter or email into the "read later" or "recycle" pile, I invite you to read the letter in full, now. Go ahead. I'll wait for you here while you do...

My hope after you've read the "Good News" letter is that you're feeling a bit more hope-full as we enter this new year. Not because we've tugged at your heartstrings and seeded your generosity, ensuring that we'll have a successful stewardship campaign in 2021. Rather, I hope you're feeling more hope-full because we really do have much to celebrate as a congregation. We accomplished a lot over this past year. And we did it without having worshiped in our sanctuary, or having gathered in our community room, or having sat around the parlor table doing the business of the church in almost a year.

Last March, within days of suspending our in-person gatherings we were up and running with an online worship service. And when it became apparent that our "two-week pause" was going to last much longer than two weeks, all of our ministry team meetings, programs, groups and gatherings moved onto Zoom. We overcame the learning curves and anxiety spikes of using something new and unfamiliar. We learned how to turn on our cameras, and unmute our microphones, and change our backgrounds to something fun or fancy. We learned how to record

Continued on page 3.



Creative Worship  
Sunday, February 21  
10:00 a.m.

## Love God

Creative Worship happens on the THIRD SUNDAY of every month, with special music, an engaging message presented in a creative way, 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 February our worship theme is "Love God." We may wonder what is "bold" about this statement. Loving God feels like the easiest and least controversial statement on the list. But is it really easy? How do we love God in the midst of the suffering and challenges that we face in our world and in our lives? How does loving God influence the way we think, speak and act? We hope you can join us for this special service online!

## Our Time, Our Turn: The Home Stretch Is In Sight!

We are nearing the home stretch in our ambitious capital campaign! We have completed our list of first and second priorities and are now working on the final set of projects. Despite the restrictions that COVID has placed on us, your campaign committee and their building team have continued working and now have plans for the last three undertakings.

Although you will be reading this after the congregational meeting on January 31 and may have already participated in the discussions, here is a quick summary of what was presented and what will be done if approved:

- The building team considered proposals from three vendors for the kitchen renovation. After careful review, they determined that Turnstone Corp. in Milford offered the best plan, price and time frame, and enjoy an excellent reputation. The work can begin in February and should take two months to complete.
- The exterior painting of the meetinghouse will begin in May and take about six weeks.
- The meetinghouse window repair and restoration will be done in phases and will take about a year to complete.



Continued on page 6.

## 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 lessons available.

How to reach us:

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  
by phone and email 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.

\*\*\*\*\*

### OUR CHURCH STAFF:

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

Rev. Katherine R. Kennedy  
*Associate Pastor*  
[pastorkate@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastorkate@ccamherst.org)

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

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

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

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

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



## Lenten Season at CCA

On February 17, we will begin a new Lenten season at the Congregational Church of Amherst. Lent is a 40-day journey that we embark on as a community. During Lent, we hold the deep uncertainty of life, and are reminded again and again of the words of the Psalmist: “Be still, and know that I am God.” Throughout the season of Lent, between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, we’ll explore the wilderness together and embrace the hope of God along the way! Here are just a few ways to participate in the life of our church in this season:

- Ash Wednesday - Every year, Christians go to church on the first day of Lent to mark themselves with ashes, a symbol that reminds us of the impermanence of life and the everlasting love of God. This year, the ashes are coming to you! Keep an eye on your mailbox, and tune in to worship at 7:00 p.m. on February 17 for a Lenten prayer service, bringing your ashes with you to participate in this sacred ritual.
- Lenten Book Series - Join Pastors Kate and Maureen on Wednesday nights for a 5-week online Adult Education offering. Together we will be reading Anne Lamott’s book, *Almost Everything: Notes on Hope*. See Pastor Maureen’s article for more information!
- Church School - Our church school teachers will continue to construct lessons for your family to do at home! Stay tuned for ways to learn about the meaning of Lent with your children.
- Holy Week – Whether online or in-person, we will walk with Jesus as he approaches the cross during Holy Week:
  - Palm Sunday March 28, 10:00 a.m.
  - Maundy Thursday April 1, 7:00 p.m.
  - Good Friday, April 2, TBD
- Easter Sunday - On April 4 at 10:00 a.m., join us for a service to celebrate the new life we find in Christ. Come and sing a joyful song, for Christ has risen, Christ has risen indeed!



### Adult Ed Series A NEW Look at the OLD Testament

Wednesdays, February 3 and 17  
10:00—11:30 a.m. on Zoom

Is the OLD Testament still relevant today? Who wrote it and why? From the Creation story to the Exodus, the stories of the great Kings and Judges, the writing of the prophets, the poetry of the Psalms, the wisdom of Proverbs, and the suffering of Job, the Old Testament is familiar yet mysterious to many of us. We’ll take a NEW look at the OLD Testament through this video lecture series produced by the Great Courses. Each 25-minute lecture offers a fresh perspective and sheds new light on one of the world’s most beloved books.

We’ll gather on Zoom to watch the lectures together and have a group discussion afterward, facilitated by Pastor Maureen. This class meets every first and third Wednesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome even if it’s your first time joining us! Please RSVP to [pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastormaureen@ccamherst.org) to receive the Zoom link, or access the link on our church website in the members section.

## *The Good News*, continued from page 1

videos, and edit music tracks, and produce an entire Christmas pageant without leaving our homes. From our youngest members, who hopped onto Zoom check-ins with Pastor Kate and picked up Sunday school lessons prepared by Marilyn and our Christian Ed team, to our more senior members in our Woman's Association, who gathered in the Memorial Garden weather permitting, met online when it was safer to do so, and organized and ran a virtual and successful Holiday Fair that brought in nearly as much money as in-person fairs, this time with less than 100 items on offer.

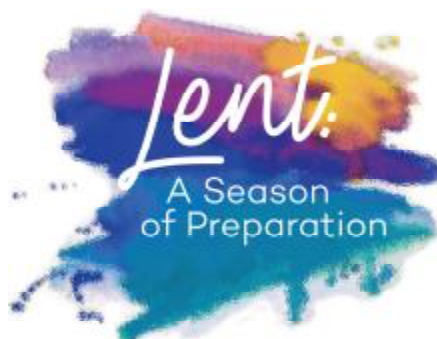
We did as many in-person outdoor activities as we could. We confirmed our confirmands, we presented Bibles to our third graders, we did our own CROP Walks, and we raked leaves on Levi Sunday with more participants than we've seen in years. Our youth groups gathered around fire pits and went on hikes, and our adults attended online classes and went on field trips, while doing the hard work of examining our own implicit biases as Pastor Kate's back-to-back book studies on racism attracted a record number of participants as well.

Our Deacons and World Service teams pooled their efforts and organized three successful "Drive By Food Drives" as we filled multiple SUV's with food for End 68 Hours of Hunger and SHARE. We continued to support foster children and the work of Sleep in Heavenly Peace, as members of our World Service team and others filled their garages and trucks with donations of furniture, clothing, toys and household goods and then delivered them directly to families in need. We also had a record number of participants in our annual Christmas Gift drives, as we purchased and delivered gifts to SHARE, Bethany Christian Services, Anne-Marie House, and the residents of Crestwood. And just last week, we partnered with the Michael Stephen Boyd Memorial Foundation in "Amherst Helps the Homeless" as our volunteers braved the cold while collecting and sorting an abundance of clothing and food to be delivered directly to the unsheltered in our local communities.

And in the midst of all of this, our Capital Campaign teams continued to work behind the scenes as we prepare to launch into our final building projects; our fabulous music team of Sara, Michael and Wendy, continued to bring us new and uplifting music every Sunday by recording in their homes and our sanctuary; and our ad-hoc Reopening Team has been meeting since June, consulting with the state guidelines, medical experts, and the ever-changing case numbers, as they drew up safety guidelines and prepared our sanctuary and building for use by our congregation and the Preschool in the Village.

The GOOD NEWS of 2020 is that our church has survived and thrived during a time that has challenged us all. Our building and sanctuary may have been eerily quiet and empty, but our CHURCH has been active and alive. My hope is that the "Good News" shared by our Stewardship team leaves us all feeling hope-full. And buoyed and inspired by that hope, we will continue to be drawn towards opportunities for connection, towards opportunities to serve our neighbors near and far, towards opportunities to share our gifts and all that God has given us, in gratitude, with our community, and with this Community of Christ—this church that we hold so dear, and long to gather with, and sing with, and serve with, again.

Peace and blessings,  
*Pastor Maureen*



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

This year our groups are exploring THE SHORT STORIES OF 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. In February, our focus parable is "The Talents." This is one of the parables that many of us struggle with as it gives us the tale of three servants who have different understandings of what stewardship means. Should we spend, invest or hide what we have been given? And does it matter if the "talent" we're speaking of is our money, our time, our gifts, or our love?

### February Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday Group—February 2  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Sunday Group—February 7  
11:30 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

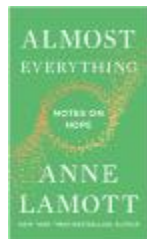
### Upcoming Group Discussion Topics:

March:	The Prodigal Son
April:	The Sower
May:	The Mustard Seed
June:	The Lost Sheep

If you're interested in joining one of our groups please contact Pastor Maureen at 673-3231 x11 - [pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastormaureen@ccamherst.org).



## Lenten Book Series



Wednesday Evenings  
February 24 through March 24  
6:30-8:00 p.m.

For five Wednesday evenings during Lent we will gather on Zoom to discuss writer Anne Lamott's wonderful book: *Almost Everything: Notes on Hope*. With Lamott's engaging wit and insight as our guide, we'll set off in search of hope, even if uncertainty seems to surround us: in the news, in our families, and in ourselves. When we feel, as Lamott puts it, "doomed, stunned, exhausted, and over-caffeinated-the seeds of rejuvenation are at hand." In this profound and funny book, Lamott calls for each of us to rediscover the nuggets of hope and wisdom that are buried within us. Divided into short, easy-to-read chapters, the book explores topics like aging, grief, unplugging from the world, the names and nature of God, and how we might learn to live with and love those who think, believe, and vote so differently than we do.

Pastor Maureen and Pastor Kate will alternate as facilitators of the sessions. The book is available for purchase for \$15 on Amazon. Each session will focus on three chapters of the book beginning with the Prelude. If you're unable to read the book join us anyway! We'll pull out quotes and passages to seed our discussion and all are welcome to participate! RSVP to [pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastormaureen@ccamherst.org) to receive the Zoom link, or find it on our church website in the member's section.

## Why Ashes?

An invitation from Pastor Maureen

Why do we Christians have this strange tradition of marking our foreheads with ashes at the beginning of the season of Lent?

There is a Hasidic teaching that says we should carry two slips of paper with us in our pockets at all times. On the first slip of paper, we should write the words: "For my sake the world was created."

And on the second slip of paper, we should write the words: "I am but dust and ashes."

To remind us that both are true.

To remind us that we are a beloved child of God, uniquely and wonderfully made.

And to remind us that we are made of the same star stuff and earth dust that is part of all of creation. From the tiniest pebble, to the mightiest mountain. From the person we love the most - to the person we love the least.

And all of us are mortal and finite and flawed. Dust is the great equalizer.

At the beginning of the season of Lent, we mark ourselves with ashes to remind us of this dual status that we hold in tension. We are uniquely and wonderfully made by a God who loves us unconditionally. And we are dust. From dust we have come and to dust we shall return.

This is not an easy tension to live into – and the reminder of our mortality is not always welcome, especially if we're carrying the pain of a recent or impending loss.

If you're one who has never participated in an Ash Wednesday service because you feel the tradition of being marked with ash is too morbid, or too intimate, or too "Catholic," or too rooted in despair when you are in need of joy, or too tainted with the belief that brokenness is equated with worthlessness in the eyes of God...

I invite you to hold those feelings aside and join us for our online Ash Wednesday service on February 17 at 7:00 p.m. or whenever you're able to watch. I invite you to bless the ashes that you'll receive from us in the mail, and use them to mark your forehead, or your hand. If you're watching with others I invite you to place the ashes upon each other. And as you do so, say their name, or your name, along with the words: "You are a beloved child of God."

The ashes remind us we are both beautiful and broken.

And our God loves us as we are.



## Santa Comes Early in Manchester

It was the week before Christmas. A couple was leaving a shelter and their two children were returning to their parents from foster care. Their apartment was empty. But Santa came early to this Manchester family, thanks to the efforts of Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP), and Susan and Don Holden of CCA.

Late on a Friday afternoon, Susan posted on Facebook that the family needed a sofa, chairs, end tables, lamps, a kitchen table and chairs, a queen bed and bedding for the parents, dishes, pots and pan, utensils, cloths, a TV, and gift cards. Within ONE hour, she had commitments for everything on the list. In addition, Mont Vernon teachers bought and wrapped gifts for all four family members and another \$175 in gift cards. SHP supplied and built a set of bunk beds for the two kids. The dad literally cried when he saw the furnished apartment.

Santa also visited another apartment where an 18-year-old girl needed a bed. Because she was too old to qualify for a SHP bed, Susan and Don delivered one to her.

How was this possible? SHP and CCA made it happen. "No kid sleeps on the floor in our town!" is the motto of SHP, a non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to building and delivering bed and bedding to kids under 18 years old who do not have a bed of their own. CCA has supported this mission with World Service dollars and offers of labor to assemble the bunk beds (as soon as COVID retreats).

Our World Service team has been collecting beds, furniture, baby furniture, and household items for several months for foster families and for young adults transitioning out of foster homes. The goods are stored in the MI Box in the Black Forest Café parking lot, or in the Holden's garage when the MI Box is too full. Susan knew she had the bed the 18-year-old needed and made sure that she too didn't have to sleep on the floor.

World Service team members Susan Holden, Terri Behm, Nancy Protzmann, Craig Richardson, Bruce Manchester, Cindy Boynton, Karen O'Malley, and Liz MacMillan have found many opportunities for "hands on" outreach opportunities, and this combined effort of SHP and CCA ensured that one family and one 18-year-old in Manchester could sleep in their own beds and celebrate Christmas this year.

## Thank you!



Many thanks to all—donors and volunteers—for another successful Red Cross blood drive on December 30. The drive collected 31 units, surpassing their goal. This means that as many as 93 people could be helped by this drive alone. There were 44 donors scheduled and 35 of them registered at the door, including three first time donors! Here is a breakdown of the blood types collected (by donor):

A+(9)  
A-(2)  
B+(2)  
O+(10!!!)  
O-(6!!!)

Thank you for your support!

## Blankets for Bruce

Hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, homelessness, and poverty are always with us. Add COVID-19, and the need for help is even more dire. Church World Service has always held a blanket drive in February to deliver to those in need, and this year, it is even more important.

Bruce Beckley, a beloved member of our church for decades, passed away this year. The blanket program was always very near and dear to his heart, and this month we are hosting "Blankets for Bruce" online. More details and the donate opportunity are here: <https://fundraise.cwsglobal.org/ccamherst-blankets>, or mail a check to CCA, 11 Church Street, Amherst and indicate "Blankets for Bruce" in the memo line.

Thank you for your support and for helping neighbors near and far stay warm!



## Amherst Helps the Homeless THANK YOU!

A heartfelt thank you for your donations, generosity and support, and to all those that helped haul, sort and collect. A team of all ages loading and unloading and delivering!

*"These items will go a long way to helping the unsheltered that we have come to care so much about. Thank you so much!"* Dawn Nichols, founder, Michael Stephen Boyd Foundation

## SHARE Food Pantry

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



February Pantry Requests:  
canned fruit, flour,  
boxed cake mixes,  
baking supplies,  
sugar, coffee, tea,  
juice, granola

Donations should be brought directly to the SHARE Center in Milford. Thank you for your continuous support!

## Preliminary Budget Presentation

On Sunday, February 7 at 11:30 a.m., the budget team will provide an update on the current financial status of the church, as well as a preliminary budget overview for the next fiscal year, FY22, starting June 1, 2021 and ending May 31, 2022.

The meeting will be via Zoom, and we are using the same link and password as our weekly fellowship hour. The link can be found in the members section of our website.



## Racial Justice Mission Group Presents White Nationalism, Contemporary Racism and the Christian Church

Rev. Dr. Velda Love

Racial Justice Minister, United Church of Christ

February 20, 2021 – 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Via Zoom Webinar

On January 6, white nationalists stormed the Capitol leaving behind destruction, death and a shocked country. What is white nationalism? What is the relationship between white nationalism and contemporary racism? What is the role of the Christian church? How do we address racialized trauma?

Join us on Saturday, February 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. by Zoom Webinar for an enlightening discussion of these questions and more facilitated by Dr. Love. The event is free and sponsored by the Racial Justice Mission Group through your offerings to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM). Register by February 14 in order to receive pre-webinar resources.

Before her call to the national setting of the United Church of Christ to serve as Racial Justice Minister, Dr. Love lived in Chicago. She wrote: "I was a member of Trinity United Church of Christ for more than 20 years. That experience developed my spirituality, theology, biblical understanding and racial justice from an African and African-American perspective. That experience also led to being deeply committed to social justice, gender equality, issues of race and eliminating racism."

Dr. Love was an adjunct professor and conference speaker at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago from 2008–2017, and served North Park University as the director of intercultural justice and learning (2000–2016).

She earned her bachelor's degree from Roosevelt University in 1990, and a master's degree from North Park Theological Seminary in 2006. She attended Chicago Theological Seminary and obtained her D.Min. in 2016, and served various boards and task forces that address interfaith dialogue, homelessness, and youth incarceration.

"Given this critical juncture in our nation, conversations on race are still a priority," Love said. "Racial justice and racial equality need to be part of our national dialogue. As Christians in the United Church of Christ, we are responsible for changing the narrative of how we engage the Gospel of Jesus Christ that is inclusive, liberating and radical."

## Our Time, Our Turn, continued from page 1.

Our three-year campaign will end in December. Many of you have very generously completed your pledge. If it is possible for those who have not yet completed your pledge to do so earlier this year, the campaign committee would greatly appreciate it. We have committed to spend only the funds we have in hand, so progress on the three remaining projects rely on the promised pledges.

Thank you to all who have supported the campaign to maintain our historic meetinghouse and parsonage. We have made great progress and the homestretch is in sight. The committee wholeheartedly thanks you for your support, as do our future members and the community!

## Did You Know?

A little over 22 years ago, I got a telephone call from Pastor David Taylor asking if I could stop by for a chat. Since this was not an everyday event, I should have expected something was brewing. David was a terrific minister who had a way of reaching out to his congregation and inviting people in. What I did not anticipate as we sat down together was that Pastor David had a plan for me, and a journey that continues today.

The conversation started off with a simple question: "What do you see as missing in our community?" Not sure of the context of his question, I asked "Do you mean the church, or the broader community of Amherst?" His response was simple, "What do you see that the community of Amherst needs to do or accomplish that would strengthen the community?" Big question over a morning cup of coffee! After a few seconds that felt like an hour, I responded, "public housing for our senior citizens." Thus, my odyssey began.

We talked for a half hour about why there were no low-income housing units in Amherst due in part to the natural stigma or reluctance to support subsidized housing, and the fear of negative impacts on house values. In my opinion, it was a toxic political issue that would be difficult to get approved through the Planning Board and marshal public support. Plus, finding the right location with access to public utilities and services would be difficult in a mostly rural community like Amherst. David asked if the need was great enough to warrant the effort. My response was that senior citizens, who owned houses in Amherst, faced high taxes relative to their income and continual maintenance expenses. They were left with few choices; either sell their home and move in with family or move out of town to find lower cost housing. There were few affordable options to stay within the community.

Finally, Pastor David asked the gotcha question. "What if we provide the leadership and do it ourselves?" This was the moment that the Souhegan Valley Interfaith Housing Corporation was born!

You may not have heard of SVIHC, but you probably have heard or seen Parkhurst Place off Veterans Road in Amherst. It is a 42-unit independent living facility for low- and moderate-income senior citizens, funded by the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority and subsidized through low-cost financing and federal rental voucher programs. A small but dedicated group of people within our church formed the nucleus of a planning and development team that eventually included four area churches with a Board of twelve individuals of varying background and experience.

Starting in 1998, this group spent two-plus years learning and visiting senior housing projects, searched for a potential development site, met with staff at the Housing Authority to learn about funding requirements, engaged an experienced developer as an advisor, selected an architect with extensive congregational housing experience, and ultimately put the construction project out for bid. No small task for a group of church volunteers.

We were fortunate to find a property owned by Howard Parkhurst, a local farmer and jack-of-all-trades with a crusty attitude but a great heart. Howard had recently lost his wife and saw no good purpose to living alone. But he told me the first time we met that "he wasn't about to sell his land to some local development guy who was planning to build four or five houses and just walk away!" After we talked through our goal and plans with him, he had a twinkle in his eye! We reached a deal under very favorable terms and he signed an agreement that left us plenty of time to get Town approval and necessary financing. The approval process was greatly facilitated by the sponsorship of the four churches (Congregational Church of Amherst, Messiah Lutheran Church, Souhegan Congregational Church and the Uniting Church of Christ) and the site location just off Route 101A with access to public utilities. Construction was started in the fall of 2000 and Parkhurst Place opened for occupancy in the spring of 2001. David Taylor and Howard Parkhurst were there on the day of the official opening, a proud day for all of us.



Photo taken during construction, circa 2001.



Photo taken during construction, circa 2001.

This spring will mark the twentieth opening of the facility. I wish to offer special thanks to those from our church who joined our first Board and made this community project a reality: Carolyn Mitchell, Cole Fach, Ingrid Michaelis, Dean Jackson and of course Pastor David Taylor.

With gratitude to all,  
*Paul Spiess*

If you would be interested in participating on either the Board of Directors or a committee, feel free to contact me at 673-6770

## Slavery in New England and Amherst

Anne Krantz, Historian

Paxton, MA, near Worcester, has a 1767 meetinghouse that is strikingly similar to ours. One notable difference is that it has a slave pew. Although slavery was abolished in Massachusetts in the late 1780s, some of their earliest ministers were slave owners.

The slave pew, a sturdy wooden pew, sits in an enclosure in the far northeast corner of the church gallery by a large window. Some parishioners brought slaves to tend to their horses or handle other duties after arriving at church, and then they could attend the worship service. These pews originally had shackles attached to the floor that could be secured around the slaves' ankles during the service.



Slave Pews in Paxton, MA

<https://www.telegram.com/entertainmentlife/20170203/remnant-of-slavery-overlooks-paxton-churchs-sanctuary>

## Slavery in Amherst

Robert Rowe, in his excellent book, *Amherst Historical Moments*, tackles the delicate issue of 'Slavery in Amherst' pg. 33-34. "Even though New England did not have the type of economy that benefited greatly from slavery, it was common. The first slave brought to New Hampshire was a man who was transported to Portsmouth in 1645 and sold to a Mr. Williams.

In the year 1790, the census noted there were 158 slaves in New Hampshire, most in the coastal city of Portsmouth. About this time the moral outrage against slavery had begun. And in only a decade there were only eight slaves in the state. The statistics for 1800 noted there were 786 "free persons of color" in the state.

Prior census for the years 1767, 1773, and 1775 reported four slaves in Amherst, but there were none in Hillsborough County by the 1790 census. In 1800, when the population of Amherst was 1,470 there were thirty-one persons of color; all were free according to the 1790 census.

There is no question that New Hampshire was in the forefront of the abolition movement. In 1788 slavery was such a major issue that it almost caused the U.S. Constitution not to be adopted by New Hampshire at the Constitutional Convention. It was approved by a majority of only ten – fifty-seven to forty-seven. The most vocal antislavery delegate was Joshua Atherton of Amherst."

Bob's information appears to be from: <http://slavenorth.com/newhampshire.htm>.



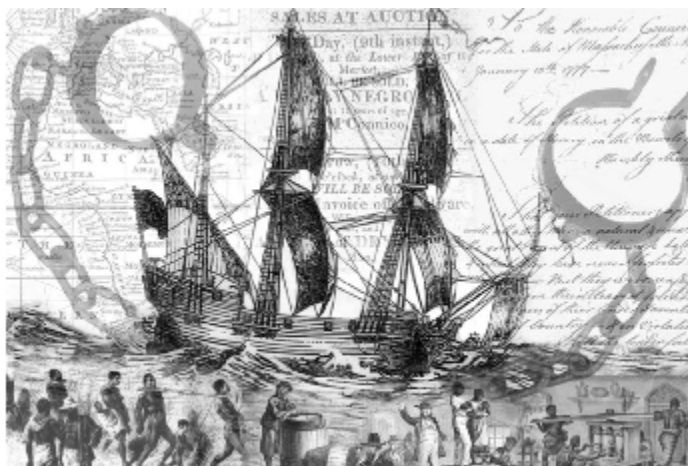
## Slavery in NE and Amherst, from page 8

This source also explains that New Hampshire was one of the few colonies that did not have a tariff on slaves, which incentivized importation of slaves through Portsmouth for smuggling into other colonies. (NH was the 'No Tax' state from its founding!) The slave trade brought business and riches to the Portsmouth merchants. Strawberry Banke does not seem so charming anymore.

The NH slave business was cited at the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia when delegates were arguing over who constituted an 'individual' for figuring out the proportional representation to the House of Representatives.

In his new book published in 2020, *Franklin & Washington*, author Edward Larson explains that after the convention Franklin.... "urged New Hampshire president John Langdon to discourage his state's merchant shippers from participating in the slave trade." In a letter to Langdon, Franklin explained that "Slavery is so evidently repugnant to the political principles and

form of government lately adopted by the citizens of the United States," that it "cannot fail of delaying the employment of the blessings of peace and liberty by drawing down the displeasure of the great and impartial Ruler of the Universe upon our country." (Pg. 250) The chart below is from <http://slavenorth.com/newhampshire.htm>. Every NH census up to the Revolution documented an increase in the NH slave population, although as the chart shows, it was still lower than most other New England colonies.



Montage by Felicia Ricci

State	Mass.	N.H.	N.Y.	Conn.	R.I.	Pa.	N.J.	Vt.
European settlement	1620	1623	1624	1633	1636	1638	1620	1666
First record of slavery	1629?	1645	1626	1639	1652	1639	1626?	c.1760?
Official end of slavery	1783	1783	1799	1784	1784	1780	1804	1777
Actual end of slavery	1783	c.1845?	1827	1848	1842	c.1845?	1865	1777?
Percent black 1790	1.4%	0.6%	7.6%	2.3%	6.3%	2.4%	7.7%	0.3%
Percent black 1860	0.78%	0.15%	1.26%	1.87%	2.26%	1.95%	3.76%	0.22%

The Revolution destroyed the economic viability of slavery in New Hampshire. Between 1773 and 1786, the number of NH slaves fell from 674 to 46. Some escaped to the British army in Boston, and others served in the Continental Army. New Hampshire, desperate to fill its regiments, offered bounties to slaveholders who freed black recruits.

By 1783 the NH constitution declared "all men are born equal and independent, with natural rights, among which are enjoying and defending life and liberty. As we now know, noble words on paper did not solve the problems of slavery and racism, which only festered throughout America up to the Civil War, and beyond.



## A Passion for Christian Faith Formation: An interview with Marilyn Gibson

By Sue Spiess

"I love education and I love children," Marilyn Gibson says. Being with children gives her energy and enthusiasm. What better recipe is there for a successful Church School Coordinator?

As the oldest of nine, the mother of six and the grandmother of 17, Marilyn has had a lot of experience with children. As a former teacher in public and church schools (and here at CCA in the late 90's), a substitute teacher in Amherst and Wilton, girl scout leader, a church school director, and a school board member, she has a wealth of experience in education. As our Church School Coordinator, Marilyn brings not only experience but passion to CCA.

Since becoming Coordinator in August 2016, her goal has been to bring enthusiasm, joy, and knowledge of Christian faith to our future members. Improved communication between parents and the church through the *Spire*, website, News from the Pews, and Facebook has focused attention on what the church school has to offer. Enthusiastic and supportive new families have become very invested in our church and have encouraged their friends to come.

Pre-COVID, church school included activities such as role-playing, singing, and games, all designed to teach while having fun. Marilyn is quick to credit vibrant teachers, Pastor Maureen, Pastor Kate, and the Prayerful Playgroup for attracting young families. Working hand-in-hand with both pastors has been critical. COVID restrictions have been a challenge, but Marilyn has reached out by sending notecards and postcards ("real mail") to students. Marilyn and Vicky Leknes have personally delivered Brown Bag lessons to families which include monthly activities, Bible readings and stories as a way to stay connected and involved.

Raised Roman Catholic in a close-knit Italian family in Newton, MA, Marilyn met her husband Bob from nearby Wellesley, "by a happy accident." They lived in Massachusetts and Rhode Island before moving to Amherst in 1994. Married 49 years, they have worked together in community-minded organizations. They both volunteered for our community suppers. Bob is a member of the Lions Club and the Shriners, and Marilyn often partners with him on projects. In her spare time, she is a voracious reader and a gardener.

Marilyn says she is glad to have gained wisdom and knowledge through her many years of experience with children and in education. She has "great hope for our younger generation" and looks forward to the time that we can all be together again and be joyful.

### Prayerful Playgroup: A Group for Grownups with Kids!

Are you a person with little people at home? Are you navigating parenting in a pandemic? Do you seek spiritual refreshment that is relevant to your life, with people who are also in the midst of raising kids?

Then come to Prayerful Playgroup! Every third Thursday of the month, from 10:00 to 11:15 a.m. on Zoom, parents of faith come together to share the joys and trials of parenting, reflect on a spiritual topic for the day, and pray together. This is a welcoming space, open to people who attend our church, or any church, or none at all! For more information, email Pastor Kate.

### Middle High Youth Group: Save the Date!

Middle High Youth Group will be meeting once a month on Sunday afternoons outside throughout the spring (weather willing)! Here is the MHYG schedule for the next few months:

February 14: Come to MHYG and celebrate Agape Love—the unconditional love God has for each one of us.

March 21: This month, MHYG will think about the meaning of Lent, and wiggle through the wilderness together.

April 18: It's the Easter season! Come to MHYG and celebrate new life.

MHYG is a monthly youth group that welcomes all 5-8<sup>th</sup> graders, whether they go to this church, or any church, or none at all! All are welcome to attend this gathering focused on fun, fellowship and faith. Reach out to Pastor Kate for more information!



## Church School



LOVE GOD  
Matthew 22:37-38

Love God and Love your neighbor.  
Winter lessons end with love,  
Jesus Heals and The Greatest Commandment.  
Jesus' love of the lowly and Loving God, are  
exemplified when we obey God by serving all  
mankind.

Brown Bag lessons for February will be distributed to those who have registered on SignUpGenius. SignUpGenius is waiting for you to sign up if you have not already done so:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4caea62ea1f8c25-church1>

PARTNERSHIP with our church community: An invitation from our church community has many church school families reaching out to members and friends, in February. Volunteerism is an essential ingredient for our spiritual formation (2 Corinthians 3:17-18), that we nurture as parents, guardians, teachers, pastors, and those within our Christian community.

## CASA Needs Volunteers

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of New Hampshire is a statewide non-profit organization that recruits and trains concerned citizens to advocate for abused and neglected children in the courts. There are children waiting for someone to speak on their behalf. Your common sense, commitment to children, and a contribution of 10-12 hours a month will help ensure a child grows up in a safe, permanent home. To become a CASA/GAL volunteer and help the children in your community, please call 800-626-0622, or log onto [www.casanh.org](http://www.casanh.org) for more information or to download an application.

### Financial Summary (as of December 31, 2020)

	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$265,780	\$226,982	\$ 38,798
Expenses	\$211,558	\$229,478	\$(17,920)
Net Income	\$ 54,221	\$ (2,496)	\$ 56,718

*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).*

## Canceled: SHYG Spaghetti Supper and Variety Show

The Senior High Youth Group is disappointed to share that the Spaghetti Supper and Variety show, a beloved church tradition, is going to have to wait a year until we are able to be together again in person. But don't be sad—this just means that you have a whole year to perfect your talents for next year's show! If you would like to support the SHYG during this unusual year, please reach out to Pastor Kate.

# Puzzle!

Find and circle these words associated with the Lenten journey to the cross.

colt	denial	kiss	repent
confess	donkey	lots	silver
cross	forsaken	palms	sins
crown	Gethsemane	penance	suffer
crucifixion	Golgotha	Pilate	thorns
death	hosanna	prayer	vigil

E N A M E S H T E G R L W Y  
C L E U X B M T H B U C W B  
N R I K Y P A T E T I Y X Y  
A V J G A L B R E Y A R P B  
N G N L I S N L A I N E D X  
E W M P R V R D H B N R D F  
P S O G O L G O T H A B S C  
D L N R O C O N F E S S I K  
O T H T C P E K W U O U N D  
M N S H N P W E D R H F S K  
U N F O E T K Y C S G F O E  
H E C R E V L I S W Q E C M  
H V H N C X S O C C J R L O  
F Q E S U D S H C A A Y M C  
C R U C I F I X I O N S R V

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
P A I D  
PERMIT NO. 4  
AMHERST, NH

Address Service Requested



February

I have become

**ALL THINGS**

to

**ALL PEOPLE,**

that I might by

**ALL MEANS**

save some.

1 Corinthians 9:22, NRSV