

The Congregational Church of Amherst, NH,
United Church of Christ
Amherst, New Hampshire

VILLAGE SPIRE

June 2022



Confirmation Sunday June 5



This year, many of CCA's 8th and 9th graders have spent two Thursdays a month, along with several Sundays and weekends, exploring what it means to be a Christian. On June 5th, Pentecost Sunday, we will welcome them into full membership through the Rite of Confirmation. Join us for this special service!

Parents' Group June 5

All parents of young children are welcome to join us in the nursery after church on the first Sunday of the month for a time of fellowship and faith formation. Parents' Group is a space for parents and kids—parents get time to connect while their kids play! Come discuss the joys and trials of parenting, reflect on a spiritual topic for the day, and pray together.

This month, Parents' Group is discussing the idea of being "called." How do you feel called by God? Has becoming a parent changed your sense of call? Join us for a discussion exploring the many ways we shape our identity over the course of our lives, and how we can allow space for the Holy Spirit to help us in that pursuit.

Parents' Group is a welcoming space, open to people who attend our church, or any church, or none at all! For more information, email Pastor Kate.

Frederick Douglass Speech Event July 1 at 12:00 p.m.

On July 5, 1852, Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist and heroic orator for liberty, delivered one of his most famous speeches in which he asked, "What to the slave is your Fourth of July?" In addressing an Independence Day observance in Rochester, New York, his speech was an indictment of an American idealism that ignored and accepted the inhuman treatment of enslaved African Americans as part of the country's identity and economy. Ironically, even though Douglass' words spoke directly to this moment in history, they still ring with an unsettling power today.

On Friday, July 1, 2022, CCA's Racial Justice Group is hosting a reading of Douglass' historic protest speech. The reading will take place on the steps of the church opposite the Village Green. Come and listen to part or all of the speech and then join us for refreshments and discussion in the Memorial Garden. The reading will begin at 12:00 noon.



Senior High Youth Group Mission Trip - June 19-24

From June 19 through 24, our SHYG and wonderful advisors Kathy Johnson, Ken D'Ambrosio and Vicky Leknes will be traveling to Austin, Texas to truly embody part of our Congregational Church of Amherst Mission Statement, "Serving Neighbors Near and Far." Throughout the week, the SHYG and their advisors will be working, praying and playing in the beautiful city of Austin, and learning a whole lot about the issue of food insecurity in this country.

What YOU can do to support us from Amherst:

Pray! Pray for the mission trip—pray for good team dynamics, safety, meaningful connections with the community, and opened eyes and hearts of our teens.

Engage! Watch our Facebook page for posts from the SHYG, and see what we are doing from afar.

Serve! Have a parallel experience that you can share with the SHYGers when they return—volunteer for SHARE, or another food bank or homeless shelter in the area. Help out CCAmherst's Homestarter program moving furniture. Read to some kids at the library—however you feel called to serve, pick an activity to do this week, and let your SHYG team know how it went!

THANK YOU to all who contributed to the Senior High Youth Group's annual 100 envelope fundraiser! This year, you helped us raise over \$3000 towards our mission trip to Austin, TX! If you gave to the 100 Envelope Fundraiser, look for a newsletter from the mission trip sometime during the week of June 19-24.

The SHYG program and annual mission trip would not be possible without your support!

VILLAGE SPIRE

A Parish Newsletter
Editor, Andrea Cyr

The Congregational Church of Amherst, NH,
United Church of Christ
11 Church Street
Amherst, NH 03031

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
July & August 9:00 a.m.

Church school available.

How to reach us:
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(603) 673-6848
www.ccamherst.org
[Facebook.com/ccamherst](https://www.facebook.com/ccamherst)
[Instagram.com/ccamherstnh](https://www.instagram.com/ccamherstnh)

The church office is available
by telephone and email.

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. Prescott
Senior Pastor
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Rev. Katherine R. Kennedy
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Gretchen Davis
Interim Children's Coordinator
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Don't forget to register for Vacation Bible School 2022

Discovery on Adventure Island: Quest for God's Great Light!

Our island adventure will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on August 15-19. VBS is open to children from preschool to rising 5th grade. We will have daily snacks, crafts, science, games, songs, Bible stories, and more! Cost is \$25 per child with a family maximum of \$60.

But that's not all. Parents with infants and toddlers are invited to come join the fun in their own Parent and Me class.

You can sign up online at www.myvbs.org/CCAmherst. Once registration and payment are complete each family will receive their very own music CD!

For more information about Discovery on Adventure Island VBS contact Gretchen Davis at churchschool@ccamherst.org or visit our church's website at www.ccamherst.org



Middle High Youth Group – June 12

MHYG is going on a field trip for our final meeting of the year! Join the MHYG on June 12 for a high and low ropes course adventure at Souhegan High School. Our theme this month is "Encourage Others," and we will be encouraging our MHYG to step out of their comfort zone and onto some ropes! MHYG and their advisors will leave the church at 11:30 a.m. after Children's Sunday, and return by 2:00 p.m. Please bring a packed lunch.

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 5-7th graders are invited—whether or not they attend CCA! MHYG kids are always welcome to bring friends. Email Pastor Kate for more information.

Nursery Coordinator Needed

The position of Nursery Coordinator was created to provide consistent, quality care to children in our nursery during worship. This person may also provide care before and after worship for children through secondnd grade whose parents are involved in choir, worship preparation, or adult education programs.

The Nursery Coordinator, as a part time employee of the church, will be on site from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. each Sunday of the normal church schedule (10:00 a.m. worship). The position will pay \$15.50/hour. This position will start on Rally Sunday, September 11, 2022.

Applicants for this position should be 18 years of age or older.

If you have any questions about the position, Sue Werst is the CE Ministry Coordinator and the point person for this position.



Dear Congregational Church of Amherst,

As I sit down to write this pastor's message, I am reeling from the news out of Uvalde, TX. On May 24, 2022, nineteen children and two faculty members were murdered in their school, and the world will never be the same. My heart cries out a prayer of deep lament for their loss, and for their families.

We here in New Hampshire will never know what we have lost when we lost the lives of these small

people—which of them would have been artists or doctors or teachers or homemakers, how each of them would have shown the face of God to the world. However, we *do* know that the impact of this grief, pain and shock will stay with us. It will ripple out across our country, whether we are conscious of it or not. Parents will have a lingering sense of anxiety when their kids leave the house. People will worry just a bit more about what might happen when they go to the grocery store, or the movies, or to church. Folks will look at their neighbor with a little more suspicion, be a bit warier of new comers and difference. The kind of large-scale evil that we saw on May 24th—the kind of evil that shoots down school children in their classrooms—begets small-scale malice and fear that corrodes our very souls.

Yes, the world will never be the same after the shooting at Robb Elementary School. Or maybe I should say, I hope the world will never be the same. In a country that has had 212 mass shootings in the first 154 days of 2022, thoughts and prayers without action are just not enough. It is my prayer that we will not go through another cycle of outrage and amnesia as we incorporate the ongoing reality of mass shootings in this country into our consciousness. It is my prayer that our elected officials will set aside love of power and focus their efforts on creating a safer nation for all of us. It is my prayer that we will listen well to the words of Christ: "not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Matt 7:21), and seek to bring more systemic, reliable security and peace to our communities.

By the time you are reading this, it will have been at least a week since this shooting, and who knows what the news will be cycling through by then. But I don't think this issue is going away any time soon. So, my question for you this month is this: what do you need, dear church, to process, grieve, and hold space for hope in the wake of this terrible event, and events like it? Do you think a conversation with a pastor would help? Would you like to talk, pray, and sing together as a community? Would it be helpful to learn more about this country's history of violence, so we can understand how we got to this present moment? Whatever comes to mind, please do not hesitate to reach out. My door is always open.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Kate

Lawn Mowing Team



Our beautiful lawn needs attention! If you are able to be a part of the 'mowing team' please sign up either through our website or by contacting Tim Wiegand. It doesn't take long and we would be most appreciative of your hard work! We will send you specific instructions in a confirmation email. Thank you!

Sunday Worship July and August



Begins at 9:00 a.m.

Racial Justice Group

The Racial Justice Group at CCA is dedicated to learning about the impact of racism on God's world and our own hearts and minds, and taking action to bring about justice and the kin-dom of God in our community. Through reading, discussion, and service, CCA's Racial Justice Group seeks to live more fully into God's call to love our neighbor as ourselves.

The Racial Justice Group meets every second Sunday of the month after worship. All who seek to learn more are welcome to join—you do not need to have participated in past meetings to join the conversation now! If you are interested in participating, please contact Pastor Kate or Steve Boczenowski.

SHARE Food Pantry

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



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

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

Stepping Stones Presentation

On Monday, June 13, the Woman's Association will host a guest speaker, Kathy Farland, the Executive Director of Stepping Stones, an agency which serves homeless youths in Nashua. (www.steppingstonesnh.org)

The program will take place in the church vestry beginning at 10:15 a.m. All interested church members are welcome to attend.



The Woman's Association would like to thank all the folks who donated to, set up, ran, shopped and helped clean up from the Good Stuff Sale. With all of your help, we were able to raise over 2100.00. These funds go into our coffer for our church and our charities.

Considerable items were donated to help the Home Starter Project and the causes that fall under the Boston Share Network. (Tom Werst was the go-to for the Boston Charity. Thank you Tom!)

We wish to give a huge thank you to our non-WA members who were instrumental in our success: Carole Byatt, Leona Hendrickson, Don Lyon, Dick Stout, Anita Swanson, Holly Tonnesen and Doug Topliffe (apologies if we missed someone.)



The Topliffe Team: Adrienne and Doug Share Their Time and Talent

An Interview by Sue Spiess

What do the President and Treasurer of the Woman's Association and the Resource Ministry Coordinator have in common? The obvious answer is they share the last name of Topliffe, but that is just the beginning of the story. Adrienne and Doug Topliffe are both dedicated church members who share their talents and their time in so many different ways. Often behind the scenes, they offer support and direction to others to make the things happen that help the church run smoothly and successfully.

Adrienne has been president of the Woman's Association (WA) since 2004. Her association with the WA began as a family affair; her mother, Gwen Berry, was treasurer for many years before Adrienne took over that position. For 16 years she has done double duty as president and treasurer. The WA raises funds for the church and outreach organizations, but equally important is its role as a fellowship opportunity for women of the church and the community to come together, work together, and share fellowship together. Adrienne credits the talented, creative, and energetic women in the group for making the Good Stuff sales and the Holiday Fairs so successful. The WA also caters funeral and memorial service receptions. She modestly says she is the "administrator" who keeps everything running smoothly. She is much more than that; she has guided the 150+ year-old group through the last 18 years by reaching out to new members, helping the WA to adapt to changing times, and keeping it a vital and vibrant part of the church family.

Doug has worn several hats as a member of the church. First a member of the stewardship team and then a deacon, he enjoyed meeting new and "seasoned" members, which led to becoming the Resource Ministry Coordinator 6 years ago. But it's his role as co-chair of the Capital Campaign that has called on his skills as an engineer, leader, and cheerleader that has kept him busy for the last four years. Doug says it has been so rewarding to see the enthusiasm and the dedication of so many folks who have supported the campaign projects. He expressed pride in all of the successful projects completed, especially all of the parsonage work and the new kitchen. And he adds, we did it all with NO debt!

In their spare time, they enjoy their two sons, daughter-in-law, and a three year old granddaughter. Doug's hobbies include golf and restoring antique cars, while Adrienne enjoys gardening and solving crossword puzzles.

Both Adrienne and Doug feel that they receive a lot more than they give to the church community. If that's true, they have certainly received a lot from the Congregational Church. We are indeed lucky to have them!



Garden Flowers for the Altar

Fresh cut garden flowers are lovely for simple altar arrangements during the summer. If you can provide a bouquet of cut flowers, or can simply contribute flowers for a bouquet, please contact Sue Stout or Andrea in the church office to schedule a Sunday. Thank you for sharing your flower gardens!

June 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1) 6:30 Confirmation Class Dinner & Rehearsal	2) 6:30 Confirmation Class Dinner & Rehearsal	3)	4)
5) PENTECOST 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Parents Group 11:30 Small Group Ministry 4:00 Senior High Youth	6) 10:00 WA Workshop	7) 1:30 Small Group Ministry 5:00 Church Council	8) 9:30 Staff Meeting 4:00 Communications	9) 9:30 Congregational Care	10)	11) 2:00 Memorial Service for Carolyn Mitchell
12) CHILDREN'S SUNDAY 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Racial Justice Group 11:30 Middle High Youth 4:00 Senior High Youth	13) 10:00 WA – Presentation on Stepping Stones	14) 7:00 Diaconate 7:00 Trustees of the Facility	15)	16)	17)	18)
19) 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:30 Christian Ed	20) 10:00 WA Workshop 6:00 Budget & Finance Team	21)	22)	23)	24)	25)
26) 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	27)	28) 7:00 World Service Team	29)	30)		

The Congregational Church
of Amherst, NH, UCC
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