

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

VILLAGE SPIRE

January 2023



Creative Worship Sunday, January 15 10:00 a.m. "Praying"

Mark your calendars! "Creative Worship" is on the third Sunday of the month! The theme for our church year is WHY WE WORSHIP - each month we'll focus on a different part of our worship service and explore why we include it and how it connects with our faith.

In January, our worship theme is "Praying" and this month our focus is on the Joys and Concerns that we lift up during worship. There are scripted prayers that we read together in worship - The Lord's Prayer, the Prayer of Invocation, the Prayer of Dedication - but we also make space for the prayers that we carry with us on Sunday morning, to share them with one another and with our God. We hope you can join us in-person or online!

"Praying"

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor
January 2023

What are you praying for in this New Year? For world peace? For an end to division between nations, neighbors, or family members? Perhaps you're praying for healing - for an illness or injury, for a relationship that has been broken, for a devastating loss that has left a hole in your life where a loved one used to be. Or perhaps you're praying for guidance. For a nudge or a sign or a roadmap that tells you which way you should turn, which direction you should go, which choice you should make. There are many reasons why we pray, and the objects of our prayer are just as varied. We pray for our world, we pray for our loved ones, we pray for ourselves.

If we don't have a regular habit of lifting up prayers on our own, because we don't have the time or because we're not sure how to even go about it, there's a weekly opportunity for us to pray in community - during our Sunday worship service. Prayer is woven throughout our worship service - in the Prayer of Invocation, the Lord's Prayer, the Pastoral Prayer, in the Prayer of Dedication after our offering, in the Prayer of Thanksgiving after we receive Communion, and in the Prayer of Confession that we include during the season of Lent. Reciting a familiar prayer from memory, or reading a scripted prayer printed in the Sunday bulletin, or listening to one of our pastors pray for us, is at times all the prayer we need. Yet in our worship service we also set aside a time for our unscripted prayers. For the joys and concerns that we each carry with us as we gather on Sunday

Continued on page 3

WA Fair Critique & Stone Soup Luncheon Monday, January 9

WA members will meet on January 9th at 10:30 a.m. in the vestry to do an evaluation of the various aspects of the November 19 Holiday Fair. The information from this discussion will help shape the November 2023 Holiday Fair.

Non-WA members who worked at the fair are also welcome to participate in this discussion and the subsequent luncheon. Feedback or suggestions from fair attendees can also be passed along to Carol Lyon or Adrienne Topliffe.

After the discussion on January 9, participants will enjoy a luncheon of Stone Soup, bread and desserts. WA members and fair volunteers who haven't signed up and would like to attend should contact Carol Lyon (cml750@comcast.net).



VILLAGE SPIRE

A Parish Newsletter

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

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Church school available.

How to reach us:
Office Phone (603) 673-3231,
(603) 673-6848
www.ccamherst.org
Facebook.com/ccamherst
Instagram.com/ccamherstnh

The church office is open
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and
is available by telephone and email
Monday through Friday.

Send in all newsletter articles
by the fifteenth of the month.

Sunday bulletin announcements
are due Thursday morning.

OUR CHURCH STAFF:

Rev. Maureen R. Frescott
Senior Pastor
pastormaureen@ccamherst.org

Rev. Katherine R. Kennedy
Associate Pastor
pastorkate@ccamherst.org

Andrea Cyr
Church Office Administrator
andrea@ccamherst.org

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

Michael Havay
Organist
michaelh117@gmail.com

Wendy Valeri
Bell Choir Director
wendylazott@tds.net

Larissa Riley
Church School Coordinator
churchschool@ccamherst.org



Adult Ed Series

Understanding the New Testament

Wednesday, January 18
(No Class January 3)
10:00-11:30 a.m. on Zoom

Why do we have four Gospels? Why do they contradict each other at times? What was the purpose of Paul's letters? What is the Book of Revelation really about? Beginning this fall, we'll take a year-long look at the New Testament through this 24-part video lecture series produced by the Great Courses. We'll examine the original contexts of these writings and the people who wrote them, giving us a new perspective on these ancient texts. We'll watch the video together as a group and then have a discussion facilitated by Pastor Maureen. The class meets every first and third Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom. **(No class the first Wednesday in January.)**

Contact Pastor Maureen (pastormaureen@ccamherst.org) to receive the Zoom link, or access it on our church website in the Members Section under "Wednesday Adult Ed."

Understanding the New Testament - Series Schedule

January 18 - Paul's Theology on Slavery
February 1 - Adapting Paul's Teachings to New Situations
February 15 - Gospel of Mark: Jesus as the Suffering Son of Man
March 1 - Gospel of Matthew: Jesus as the New Moses
March 15 - Gospel of Matthew: The Church
April 5 - Gospel of Luke: God's Salvation
April 19 - Luke and Acts: Luke's Inclusive Message
May 3 - Acts: The Apostles and the Church
May 17 - Gospel of John: Jesus as the Divine Word
June 7 - Gospel of John: Jesus and the Jews



Financial Summary

(as of November 30, 2022)

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Difference
Income	\$205,894	\$208,731	\$ (2,837)
Expenses	\$212,393	\$214,449	\$ (2,056)
Net Income	\$ (6,499)	\$ (5,717)	\$ 781

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 (Treasurer), Doug Topliffe, Todd Whitney and Tim Wiegand.

Praying, continued from page 1

morning. We might fill out a prayer card to be read in worship, or submit a prayer to be shared only with our pastors, or choose to lift up a silent prayer to God – feeling strengthened, inspired, and comforted to do so by the presence of others doing the same.

During the month of January, as we move into the season of Epiphany, the church wide “Why We Worship” theme we’re focusing on is “Praying.” Our Small Group Ministry groups will discuss why and how we pray, our Church School children will take a closer look at the Lord’s Prayer, and during our Creative Worship service (on January 15th) we’ll explore the different kinds of prayer we include in worship and what we believe happens as a result of our prayers. Does God hear and respond to our prayers? How do we know? How do those around us respond? What do we do when our prayers go unanswered? Is there value to be found in giving voice to the prayer itself?

The word *epiphany* means “revelation” – and in the church, the season of Epiphany is when celebrate the many ways that God is revealed to us in the life of Jesus. But we might begin to think of prayer as a form of revelation as well. As we use prayer to reveal ourselves to God – our innermost thoughts, our persistent longings, our deepest hurts, our most fragile hopes. It’s in our communal prayers that we reveal ours longing, hurts, and hopes to one another as well. It’s in communal prayer that we’re given an opportunity to be the presence of God for one another. As we’re made aware of what others are carrying, and step in to give them a shoulder to lean on, or we make others aware of what we’re carrying, so they might give us a shoulder to lean on as well.

Through all of this, our amazing God is at work. God’s presence is revealed in the presence of others. In the helping hand, or the open heart, or the act of compassion that comes as a result of our prayers; in the prayers we lift up in community, and in the prayers that we share only with God. At times the response to our prayer is not the one we expect, or it doesn’t come when we expect it, or we have something “revealed” to us that sends our prayer in an entirely different direction from where it began. God moves in mysterious ways, as the saying goes. I pray that you’ll join us in January as we explore the mystery of God in prayer.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Maureen



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.

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

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.

Choose a Group!

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

All groups will meet in-person or on Zoom as needed.

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 or contact Pastor Maureen at 603-673-3231 x11, pastormaureen@ccamherst.org

This year our Small Groups will focus on the WHY WE WORSHIP theme that is guiding our Creative Worship and other church programs. Each month we'll focus on a different aspect of our worship and how it connects with our faith journey!

Schedule for 2022-2023

January:	Praying
February:	Healing
March:	Giving
April:	Discerning
May:	Singing
June:	Nurturing

Confirmation



This month, our confirmation class is going on retreat! January 27th-28th, our four confirmands, led by Pastor Maureen and Vicky Leknes, will head up to Squam Lake for 24 hours of fun, food, and faith formation. The Confirmation Retreat is all about the Trinity! Our confirmands will learn about how God shows up in each part of the Trinity—God the Creator, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit-- and how each understanding of God opens up our own relationship with the Divine.

You can support our confirmands by praying for deep conversation and meaningful connection throughout the weekend. (Send up a prayer for Pastor Maureen and Mrs. Leknes while you're at it as well!)

SHARE Food Pantry

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

January Pantry Requests:



toothbrushes,
toothpaste, bar soap,
deodorants,
shampoo,
conditioner, feminine
hygiene products,
diapers, wipes

Donations should be brought directly to the SHARE Center in Milford; if you are unsure where, please call their office at 673-9898. Many thanks for your continuing support!

Racial Justice Group

The Racial Justice Group is going strong! In January, the RJG will meet to talk about various topics, including recognizing the native ancestors who lived on CCA's land, bringing the Sacred Ally Quilts Project to CCA, and partnering again with the Black Heritage Trail to host another Fredrick Douglass event in July.



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 on the 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! Please contact Steve Boczenowski for more information.



Holiday Fair Thanks

The Woman's Association would like to thank all church members and friends who helped to make our 2022 Holiday Fair such a success. The Fair netted over \$13,000! We are grateful to all those who supported the Fair by donating baked goods, helping with set up or clean up, working at the Fair, or shopping on Fair day. We couldn't have done it without you! The proceeds from the Fair enable the Woman's Association to make a sizable annual pledge, plus other donations to our church, and to support numerous community organizations throughout the year.

A special thanks goes to the following "Friends of the WA" who generously donated their time to work on the Fair. Their help was invaluable in making the Fair so successful. We apologize to anyone who was inadvertently omitted.

Emily Archer
Mark Baddeley
Sandra Carberry
Camille Davis
Sally Hewett
Sally Hooper
Art Leknes
Heather MacDonald
Bruce Manchester
Dave Poltack
Dick Stout
John Swanson
Doug Topliffe

Fran Baddeley
Carol Byatt
Colleen Cushing
Leona Hendrickson
Roger Hooper
Carol Landon
Vicki Leknes
Liz MacMillan
Dave Phelps
Sue Spiess
Anita Swanson
Holly Tonnesen



Breakfast With Santa 2022

This year Breakfast With Santa was welcomed back by many local families after not happening for two years during the covid pandemic. The registrations filled up quickly and donations of food and beverages from our congregation were happily received. Thank you to everyone who participated in making this event happen with very little expense. We served just under 200 at the event organized by Marti Warren and Sally Hooper.

Tom and Sue Werst were happy to transform into Mr & Mrs Claus and did an amazing job greeting each child/family and spent time talking with each child. Maureen Minner coordinated the children's visits on stage. There was never a waiting line and parents had the opportunity to take many photos. A special Christmas slap bracelet was given each child as well as the opportunity to choose a book from Santa's Bookshop. The gently used books are always a hit each year and this year they were organized by Becky and Emily Bolin.

The Game and Craft Room was managed by Larissa Riley and Gretchen Davis. Teen youth volunteered to work with the children at each table. All sorts of age appropriate crafts and games were on hand. A huge thank you to Adelia Curtis, Ori Dart, Audrey Pyles, Molly Benson, Scotty Benson, Izzie Warren, Libby Kennedy, Lilly and Phoebe Handwerk for spending the morning working the event.

The Food crew was managed by Anita Swanson working with Vicki Leknes. Her crew at the event was amazing. Preparing food and serving were: Sue Stout, Kim Swanson, Heather MacDonald, Joan Poltack, Carol Landon, Sally Bowkett and Barbara Wolfe, Anita Swanson. Also a huge thanks to the husbands who helped off and on during the event: Roger Hooper, John Swanson and Tom Warren.

This event is a great opportunity for our church to show the community what we are all about. Next year we will be looking for new coordinators to take it on. It is well organized and easy to slip into any of the positions. Please speak to Sally Hooper if you are interested.



A Few Words About the Weather...



Church Closings Due to Bad Weather:

As many know, New England weather is ever changing and at times can be quite unpredictable. In the case of bad weather and the need to cancel an in-person worship service, we will post announcements on WMUR Channel 9 television, and on our website and Facebook pages.

Of course, that doesn't mean you will miss out on Sunday morning worship. Our live streamed service will still be available for folks to tune to at 10:00 a.m. on our Facebook page, and we will continue to upload the recorded service to our website by noon.

Beware of Falling Snow and Ice:

During the winter months, we want to 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.



The Sunday **Joys and Concerns** are emailed to those who want to include them in their daily personal prayers. If you would like to receive them each week, please let Andrea in the church office know: andrea@ccamherst.org.

Middle High Youth Group (MHYG)

MHYG meets January 8th from 2-3:30pm. This month's theme is "New Year's intentions." The group will talk about all the ways we set goals as we grow, and discovering God's hopes and plans for our lives in the process.

At a time in life when most tweens are figuring 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 middle schoolers are invited, and bringing friends is strongly encouraged!

Email Pastor Kate for more information.



Senior High Youth Group (SHYG)

In January, SHYG is getting a re-boot! Let's regather on Epiphany to set some new SHYG intentions.

The first SHYG meeting of 2023 is on January 8th from 4-5:30pm, Epiphany Sunday. Bring a gift (re-gifted, created, or purchased for \$10 or less) for our Wise People Gift Swap! Come celebrate all the ways God made us as gifts to the world, and talk about how we can share our gifts with others.

SHYG is a time of fellowship, fun, and faith exploration. As always, friends are welcome, whether they attend this church, any church, or none at all! SHYG is a place for high school kids to connect socially and spiritually, no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey.

Get in touch with Pastor Kate for more information!



Keeping the Time

A wonderful article in New Hampshire Magazine, written by Marshall Hudson, on our church clock, clock tower, and steeple.

Be sure to check out this wonderful article about our historic church steeple and clock, written by Marshall Hudson, found in the January 2023 edition of New Hampshire Magazine.

[Keeping the Time - New Hampshire Magazine \(nhmagazine.com\)](https://www.nhmagazine.com/keeping-the-time/)
<https://www.nhmagazine.com/keeping-the-time/>

January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship	2) 	3) 1:30 Small Group Ministry 4:30 Church Council	4) 	5) 6:00 Bell Choir 6:30 Confirmation Class 7:30 Chancel Choir	6) 	7)
8) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Racial Justice Group 11:15 Youth Choir 2:00 Middle High Youth 4:00 Senior High Youth	9) 10:30 WA Fair Critique & Stone Soup Luncheon	10) 7:00 Diaconate 7:00 Trustees of the Facility	11) 9:30 Staff Meeting 6:00 Budget & Finance	12) 9:30 Congregational Care Team 4:00 Communications 6:00 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	13) 	14)
15) Creative Worship 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Christian Ed 11:15 Youth Choir 4:00 Senior High Youth	16) 10:00 WA Workshop	17) 10:00 WA Board	18) 10:00 Weds. Morning Adult Ed	19) 6:00 Bell Choir 6:30 Confirmation Class 7:30 Chancel Choir	20) 	21)
22) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 4:00 Senior High Youth	23) 10:00 WA Workshop	24) 	25) 9:30 Staff Meeting	26) 6:00 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	27) Confirmation Class Retreat	28)
29) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 4:00 Senior High Youth	30) 10:00 WA Workshop 7:00 World Service Team	31) 	 	 	 	

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of Amherst, NH, UCC
11 Church Street
Amherst, NH 03031

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