

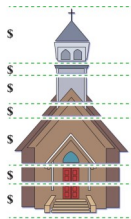
VILLAGE SPIRE

February 2023



Congregational Meeting: Preliminary Budget Meeting

Sunday, February 12,
after worship
Community Room
and Zoom



The Budget and Finance 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 (FY24). This meeting will be held in the community room after worship, and a Zoom link will be available for those unable to join us in person. All members are encouraged to attend; childcare will be available. The Zoom link and password for online participation will be emailed to members. This meeting is for informational purposes only; we will not be voting on anything.

“The Good News”

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor
February 2023

As we prepare to launch our 2023 Stewardship campaign, we’re taking a look back at what we accomplished as a congregation in 2022. The GOOD NEWS is that our church continues to thrive and grow. In this last year, we welcomed new families and new members, expanded our outreach, poured new energy into our children and youth programs, and celebrated the gifts of our lay members when our pastors were away. Joyfully, we continue to live into our mission to be grounded in God’s love, to welcome all, and serve our neighbors near and far.

LIVESTREAMING

Our Sunday worship continues to reach beyond our sanctuary walls, as we regularly welcome visitors new to our area or new to our church who discovered us through our livestream worship. Our livestream also helps our existing members feel more connected, as people actually “attend” more often by watching services when they’re unable to be with us in person. We also continue to reach those who are unable to be with us because of physical limitations, work/family commitments, and distance.

CHILDREN and YOUTH

Last summer we welcomed our new Church School Coordinator, Larissa Riley, who stepped in when Gretchen Davis ended her time as Interim. Together they ran a very successful week-long Vacation Bible School - our first in many years! We had over 45 participants and numerous volunteers, from both our church and the surrounding communities. Our Middle High Youth Group continues to grow and thrive as well, which bodes well for our Confirmation and Senior High programs going forward. A recent survey of our church school participants revealed a high satisfaction level with our children/youth offerings among our kids and their parents. We are grateful to our wonderful Christian Education team for all that they do!

CHRISTMAS SEASON

For the first time in three years, we were able to gather during the Advent and Christmas seasons and celebrate with many of our traditional events: the Woman’s Association Holiday Fair, Family Christmas Concert, Breakfast with Santa fundraiser, Advent Vesper service, Church School Christmas Pageant, and two full Christmas Eve services. The WA Holiday Fair was their most successful yet, as they brought in over \$13K to fund their many ministries. Our Breakfast with Santa Fundraiser was sold out, and our Chancel and Bell Choirs sang to a full sanctuary on a snowy Sunday evening.

Continued on page 3

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](https://www.facebook.com/ccamherst)
[Instagram.com/ccamherstnh](https://www.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

Lenten Study Series

Wednesday Evenings on ZOOM

March 8, 15, 22, and 29
6:30-8:00 p.m.

For four Wednesday evenings during Lent, we will
gather on Zoom to discuss a wonderful new Lenten study:
Meeting Jesus at the Table, by Cynthia M. Campbell and
Christine Coy Fohr.

With passionate words, evocative illustrations, and
engaging discussion questions, the book invites us to move through this
Lenten season using the familiar table stories from the Gospels. Like moving
from house to house in a progressive dinner, at each stop we gather at a
different table with Jesus, learning how to love, serve, and expand the
hospitality of God's grace to others.

Pastor Maureen and Pastor Kate will alternate as facilitators of the
sessions. The book is available for order online and we'll have copies in the
church office available for purchase for \$15. Each session will focus on two
of the eight chapters in the book. If you don't have the time or the space to
add a weekly reading to your plate 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 to receive the Zoom link, or find it on our
church website in the Member's Section.



Beware of Spam Emails Circulating

We continue to see on
occasion spam emails circulating
that disguise themselves as being
from Pastor Maureen. If you
receive one of these suspicious
emails, please do not click on any
links or reply to the email – just
delete it.

This spam email is one that
many pastors and churches are
dealing with these days. The
scammer takes public information
and pretends to be someone you
trust.

If you are unsure if an email
you received appearing to be from
us is fake, just hover over the
sender's name/email with your
mouse. If it is legitimate, the
return email address will show that
is from @ccamherst.org. If you
don't see that, it is not from us.

We are sorry for any
inconvenience this may have
caused.

A Few Words About the Weather...

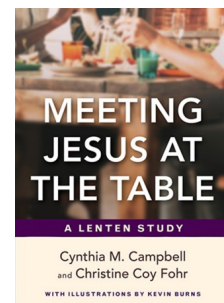
Church Closings Due to Bad Weather:

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:

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



The Good News, continued from page 1

CELEBRATING OUR GIFTS

During my three-month sabbatical and Pastor Kate's maternity leave, our lay members stepped in to fill the pulpit, lead our youth groups and mission trip, and help with pastoral care needs. We were grateful to have clergy filling in as well, but we are blessed to have capable and willing voices, hands and hearts, in our congregation sharing their gifts. Pastor Kate offered a class on how to write a sermon and create a worship service which was well attended, and we now have a list of lay people to call on when the need arises.

HOME STARTER PROGRAM

Last year we continued to serve children and families in transition with our home-grown Home Starter Program. Our World Service Team continues to go above and beyond spending many weekends arranging deliveries and picking up/delivering needed items with help from members of the congregation. This year the team recruited members from outside our church to help with the coordinating and organizing of the storage units, donations, and volunteers. Both the families we serve and the non-profit organizations we assist have expressed their gratitude for all that we do with this very much needed and unique ministry.

The **GOOD NEWS of this last year** is that our church continues to thrive during a time when many congregations have unfortunately struggled. Our energy, passion, and faith carried us through the pandemic as we re-imagined what it means to be church together and in the world, and we continue to adapt to changing habits, traditions and priorities.

With the news that Pastor Kate will be leaving us in June, there is naturally a feeling of uncertainty about what 2023 will bring. We have been blessed with her leadership and her gifts, and it can feel like a daunting task to find someone new to pick up the pastoral reins and keep our momentum moving forward. But as the "Good News" of this past year shows, we've gotten pretty good at empowering our members and trusting God to lead the way as we create space for something new. 2023 will bring changes, as every year does, and I have no doubt that there is more Good News to come.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Maureen



Ash Wednesday Service

February 22 at 7:00 p.m.

Join us in the sanctuary as we begin the season of Lent with our traditional Ash Wednesday service. We will come together for a time of contemplative prayer, readings, special music, communion, and the distribution of ashes.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit." ~ Psalm 51

Creative Worship

Sunday, February 19 at 10:00 a.m.
"Healing"

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 February, our worship theme is "Healing" and this month our focus is on the Confessional Prayer that we include in worship during the season of Lent. Of all the parts of our worship service this is the element that provokes the strongest reactions. For some, public confession is seen as a necessary part of our relationship with God and for others it elicits feelings of guilt, shame and unworthiness. How might confession be seen as "healing?" We hope you can join us for this service, in-person or on online, as we prepare for our Lenten journey.



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

Adult Education Event: A Second Hour with Dr. Gina Zurlo

Sunday, February 19 after worship



On Sunday, February 19, Dr. Gina Zurlo, author of the book *Global Christianity: A Guide to the World's Largest Religion from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe*, will join us for a Second Hour presentation and discussion, in the vestry immediately after worship. Dr. Zurlo is Co-Director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, Massachusetts, and a research fellow at Boston University's Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs. She was named one of the BBC's most inspiring and influential women of 2019 for her work in quantifying religion worldwide. Dr. Zurlo will discuss the history, demographics and trends of global Christianity, and how these bear on worldwide issues today.

This event is an outgrowth of our church school program for the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades, which incorporates lessons about the spread of Christianity throughout the world. **Please join us for this exciting and educational event!**

Adult Ed Series: Understanding the New Testament

Wednesdays, February 1 and 15
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? Join us as we take a year-long look at the New Testament through this 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 Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom. Contact pastormaureen@ccamherst.org to receive the Zoom link, or access it on our church website in the Members Section under "Wednesday Adult Ed."

A New Look at the New Testament - Series Schedule

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



Racial Justice Group

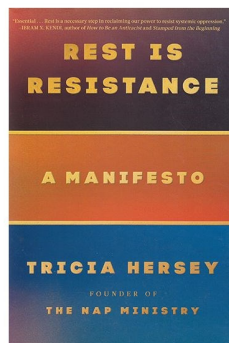
The Racial Justice Group is going strong! In February, the RJG is starting a new group reading experience.

Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto

by Tricia Hersey

From the founder and creator of The Nap Ministry, Rest Is Resistance is a battle cry, a guidebook, a map for a movement, and a field guide for the weary and hopeful.

This book is rooted in spiritual energy and centered in Black liberation, womanism, somatics, and Afrofuturism. With captivating storytelling and practical advice, all delivered in Hersey's lyrical voice and informed by her deep experience in theology, activism, and performance art, Rest Is Resistance is a call to action and manifesto for those who are sleep deprived, searching for justice, and longing to be liberated from the oppressive grip of Grind Culture.



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 Christ'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.

A Few Words from a Member of the Racial Justice Group

After 75 years living in Connecticut, we moved to Amherst, New Hampshire to be closer to our son and extended family. Coming from a UCC church, we decided to visit and then become members of the Congregational Church of Amherst. I decided to join the Racial Justice Group - why- because they were about to read and discuss Layla Saad's book, *Me and White Supremacy*. I longed for a book discussion and as we gathered in lawn chairs behind the church, under the trees, I learned so much each week, also felt the welcoming warmth of the group members and hopefully "grew" in my understanding of racial justice. The Racial Justice Group is a wonderful place to learn and have an opportunity to take some action, no matter how small, for racial justice which we know is impacting our community. Participation in the Frederick Douglass Community Reading on July 1st is an example of one opportunity for us all. *Submitted by Joan Egbertson*



Website Member FAQ

Q: What is the Members section of the website?

A: It is a private 'login' section, to provide the congregation with online access to sensitive information that might not be appropriate for general online viewing, such as the church directory, zoom links, etc.

Q: Why aren't Zoom links in the event details?

A: Unfortunately, hackers/spammers have used public Zoom links to enter meetings and speak/act inappropriately. It is a safety measure for our meeting attendees.

Q: Do I have to be a Member of the church to access this area?

A: Not at all. Anyone that is a Member or Friend of the church can request a login. The login allows us to verify the user before providing access, to ensure the security of the information.

Q: What can I find in the Members section?

A: There is a great deal of useful information! • Important information such as special notices, recurring meeting Zoom links, prayer request form, etc • Current church directory and form to update contact information • Monthly Council minutes and relevant church-wide presentations • Sensitive church financial documents including monthly Treasurer reports • Past annual reports and annual meeting presentations • General policy documents

Q: How do I request access to the Members section?

A: To request an account, please go to our website and click on the MEMBERS menu option, and then click on 'Request User Account' and fill out the form. Your request will be received and once setup, you will receive an email on how to set your password. If you lose your password you can always use the 'Lost Your Password' option.



Paul and Sue Spiess, Serving Our Church and Community

Although Paul and Sue Spiess weren't Congregationalists when they joined our church in 1981, the church on the village green in the center of Amherst felt like the right place for them and their two young children. Paul and Sue fondly remember Chris and Vern Trudo welcoming them to the church, acting as their mentors.

Over the past forty plus years, Paul and Sue have been involved in both the life of the church and the greater Amherst community. Paul, a banker, has served the church as a Trustee, a Trustee of the Trust Funds, a liaison to PIV, worked on two Capital Campaigns and Long Range Planning, and is currently the church Treasurer and a member of the Budget Committee. His volunteer work outside the church is also

extensive. Paul served as a Representative to the NH House for four years, then worked with Governor John Lynch for six years. He has served on the Souhegan High School Board and the Souhegan Building Committee and as a Board member and Chairman of SHARE. One significant project he spearheaded involving both our church and the community was the development in the late 1990's of Parkhurst Place. Working with other churches in Amherst, the Souhegan Valley Interfaith Housing Corp. was formed, culminating in the building of an affordable housing facility for elderly Amherst residents. Paul is still involved with Parkhurst in an advisory capacity.

Sue has also been an active member of our church for decades. She served as Church Clerk in the early 90's and was a member of the Pastoral Search Committee which chose the Reverend David Taylor as our pastor in 1996. She was on the Retire the Debt Committee, which raised money by putting on the first very successful Christmas in the Village House Tours. As a member of the most recent Capital Campaign Committee, Sue was responsible for the campaign's publicity. She worked on church publicity for many years on what was then called Publications, and has just recently retired from the Communications Committee. Sue is a longtime active member of the Amherst Garden Club. These days she also volunteers for SHARE as a "worker bee."

Paul and Sue celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this past summer. They have five grandchildren, ages 3 months to 18 years, so are often busy with grandparent duties, such as attending their older grandkids' sporting events and babysitting the younger ones. Sue, who is a member of two book groups, also enjoys gardening and cooking. Paul golfs and reads in his spare time. In the summer the Spiesses both love spending time at their house on Lake Sunapee. They will be away from Amherst this March for a trip south.

Our church is blessed to have Sue and Paul as active members who have given so much of their time and talent to the church and to their community over the years.

Written by Adrienne Topliffe

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,
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!



WA Valentines Luncheon

Monday, February 13
10:30 a.m. in the Vestry

Woman's Association members and any other women are invited to enjoy a festive Valentine's potluck luncheon on February 13. The event will kick off at 10:30 a.m. with socializing and an optional Valentine craft activity, followed by the luncheon. Those planning to attend should sign up to bring something for the luncheon by contacting Kay Steeves (kksteeves@gmail.com) or 978-337-1041. You can also contact Kay with any questions.

The Woman's Association is an organization with a long history of service to the church and charitable organizations. The variety of the organization's activities has something for everyone! Please join us!

Senior High Youth Group (SHYG)

In February, SHYG is getting out and about! Join SHYG in February for adventures in and beyond our church building.

February 5: NO SHYG—Join your SHYG friends at 10:00 a.m. worship!

February 12: SHYG goes out to lunch! Join us from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m., and then get home for Super Bowl kick-off.

February 19: SHYG service project!

February 26: NO SHYG—Happy February Break!

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!



Middle High Youth Group (MHYG)

February is MHYG Field Trip Month! On February 5, MHYG is heading to Altitude

Trampoline Park in Merrimack, NH from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. This is a great gathering for new friends to join, so feel free to bring a buddy!

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.

Good Stuff Sale

Time to spring clean your home and collect good stuff for the Woman's Associations' Annual Good Stuff Sale, which will be held Friday, April 28, 4:00–7:00 p.m., and Saturday, April 29, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

It would be helpful to have all clothing cleaned, sorted, bagged and possibly labeled for men, women, children and infants.

We are collecting fine, costume and fun jewelry, good purses, backpacks, shoes, boots etc.; all accessories too.

Household items: linens, sheets, towels, bedspreads, curtains, drapes, home decorative items, kitchen pots and pans, utensils, dishes, glassware, small appliances that work, small furniture, lamps, toys, games, puzzles, CDs, DVDs, books etc.

You may leave bagged linens and clothing behind the curtain on the stage in the community room.

Housewares, toys, glass, pots and pans etc. may be left in the vestry by the partition that says "Rummage Here."

Please do NOT donate bicycles, large sports equipment, big furniture, computers, TVs, textbooks, car seats or baby furniture.

All proceeds go to our charities and other needs within our church.

Thank you so much!

If you have any questions please contact Sally Bowkett, 603-673-7409 or Alicia Wight 603-345-0155



CCA's Annual
Game Night
Saturday, February 11
5:00 to 8:00 p.m.



All ages, friends and family are welcome!

RSVP to Meredith Dart at
m_getler@hotmail.com

We will have Bingo, ping pong, cards, board games and trivia, and attendees are encouraged to bring their own favorite game to share with others. Prizes will be awarded!



Supper is potluck style. Pizza and beverages will be provided, and folks are asked to bring a side/salad/dessert to share.

A voluntary donation is welcome:
\$5 for individuals/\$10 for families.



Volunteers Needed for Livestream

Volunteers are needed on Sunday mornings to help run the livestream camera and computer during worship. It's easy and we are hoping to train a few more folks so the rotation is easy on everyone. Contact Doug Topliffe to learn more.



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

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February

