



# VILLAGE SPIRE

April 2023



## **Palm/Passion Sunday** **April 2, 10:00 a.m.**

We begin with the traditional waving of the palms and end with a new interactive presentation of the Passion story.

## **Maundy Thursday** **April 6, 7:00 p.m.**

A prayerful reflective service with Communion and Tenebrae—a commemoration of Jesus' last night with his disciples

## **Easter Sunday, April 9**

**7:00 a.m.** Sunrise service on the Amherst village green. Celebrate the Resurrection at daybreak followed by coffee and donuts on the green.

**10:00 a.m.** Easter celebration service in our sanctuary with our Chancel and Bell Choirs. Join us as we praise God with a joyful noise!

All services will be in-person and available to watch online (except for the Easter Sunrise Service).



## **Discerning**

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor  
April 2023

Thomas wasn't buying it. His closest friends, and fellow disciples, were trying to convince him that Jesus had returned. That their recently crucified master and teacher had walked right through a locked door and greeted them with, "Peace be with you" – as if they hadn't just buried him and been pouring out their tears and hearts over his loss in that locked room. "I'll believe it when I see it for myself," Thomas told them. And wouldn't most of us do the same? Most of us likely consider ourselves to be discerning people, especially when it comes to matters of faith. If it sounds too good to be true, or too fantastical to be true, or too illogical to be true, then we may find good reason to dismiss it or dispute it or deny it.

But unlike Thomas, we don't have the luxury of requesting that Jesus make an additional appearance just for us. That window of opportunity closed long ago, when the resurrected Jesus waved his final goodbye, ascended into heaven, and summoned the Holy Spirit into the world to

*Continued on page 3*

## **Early Amherst and the First Meetinghouse**

Claire Choiniere, Historian

In 2024 the Congregational Church of Amherst will celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the dedication of our beloved church building, the Second Meetinghouse. As this structure is the *second*, what happened to the *first* meetinghouse? To share that story, we will start with a shortened version of the early history of Amherst.

Colonial militias from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Connecticut Colony and Plymouth Colony were promised land grants in return for a successful military operation in a Rhode Island swamp against the Narragansett Indians in December 1675. After a fierce battle with losses on both sides, the colonists successfully overran the Indian settlement. Receiving the land these Narragansett soldiers were promised took years of patience and persistence. The Massachusetts House of Representatives passed several acts that were never sanctioned or decidedly declined by the lieutenant governor and/or governor. Year after year, the grantees, and now their descendants, had to submit petitions to the court while various tracts of land were granted, land claims verified and re-verified, surveyed, and re-surveyed, and court sessions scheduled then canceled. Finally on October 17, 1733, Governor Jonathan Belcher approved the newest grant.

Townships were assigned to the grantees and Narragansett No. 3, comprising sections of Amherst, Merrimack, Milford, and Mont Vernon, became known as Souhegan West. It took another two years for this

*Continued on page 7*

## 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](http://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.

Items for the Sunday bulletin  
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)

Larissa Riley  
*Church School Coordinator*  
[churchschool@ccamherst.org](mailto:churchschool@ccamherst.org)

## Good Stuff Sale to Be Held On April 28 & 29

The Good Stuff Sale, formerly the Spring Rummage Sale, sponsored by the Woman's Association, will take place in the Community Room and the Vestry on Friday, April 28 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., and Saturday, April 29 from 9:00 a.m. to noon. The sale will feature clothing, jewelry, handbags and linens, along with all kinds of household goods, plus books, toys, puzzles and games. Please put the dates on your calendar and spread the word about this always-popular event.

The WA is still accepting donations of the items included in the sale which can be dropped off in the designated area in the Vestry on Sunday or Monday mornings, or by arrangement with Sally Bowkett [sbb46@hotmail.com](mailto:sbb46@hotmail.com) or 603-673-7409). Clothing should be clean and in good condition. Please sort items and label clothing bags to indicate whether they contain items for men, women, teens or children, linens, etc. Other items you can donate include fine, costume and fun jewelry, good purses, backpacks, shoes, boots etc. and accessories. Household items to donate include 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, and DVDs. Items that are **not accepted** include bicycles, large sports equipment, big furniture, computers, TVs, textbooks, car seats or baby furniture.

Volunteers will be needed the week preceding the sale to help with set-up and on the days of the sale. Help will also be needed on Saturday, 4/29 at 12:00 to bag up unsold clothes and take them to the Ecosmith container at the Meeting Place and to load non-clothing items into cars or trucks and drive them to Goodwill.

If you have any questions please about donations for the sale or assisting with the sale, contact Sally Bowkett at 603-673-7409 or [sbb46@hotmail.com](mailto:sbb46@hotmail.com), or Alicia Wight at 603-345-0155.

All proceeds from the sale go to local charities and to meet needs within our church.



## Financial Summary

(as of February 28, 2023)

	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$322,746	\$299,779	\$22,967
Expenses	\$314,551	\$320,661	\$ (6,110)
Net Income	\$ 8,196	\$ (20,882)	\$29,078

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.

## **Discerning**, continued from page 1

serve in his place. What we do have is scripture. The stories that Jesus' followers left behind to ensure the "Good News" of the resurrection was shared with all who wished and needed to hear it. The thing about scripture is that we often find ourselves leaning heavily on our powers of discernment. To set scripture in its context. To tease out what the writer wanted us to hear. To understand what those first readers were longing to hear. And to then peel back all the layers of interpretation and tradition that successive generations of readers have laid upon it. Finally, we have to sort through all the stuff that we bring to the discernment table as well. The way we've encountered a scriptural passage in the past. What we're dealing with in the here and now that shapes how we hear it in the here and now. Then there's the Doubting Thomas that we all carry inside of us - who tells us what is too good, or too fantastical, or too illogical to be true.

The tricky thing about turning our discerning lens on scripture is that we often frame it as a way to "listen" for the voice of God. We ask ourselves, "How is God speaking to us - to ME - through this ancient passage?" - this passage that was written in another time, in another place, for another people, far removed from where we may be. Let me pause right here and assure you that I truly believe that God speaks to us through scripture. God finds ways to bring what is beautiful, what is meaningful, what is motivating, what is relevant, to our particular moment and place in time. But not all scripture functions in that way. In the library of genres that we have in our Bible - amidst the narrative, poetry, prophecy, and history - there are passages that are akin to a car repair manual. It served a purpose in its time and was relevant for those who needed its guidance, but it won't do much for us if we're looking for advice on how to live more loving, grace filled lives. Knowing what to pick up and what to set aside is part of discernment.

In April, during our post-Easter Creative Worship, we'll be focusing on the part of our service that invites us into discernment - the sermon. This is usually left to the skills of the pastor, who spends hours poring over biblical commentaries, listening to preaching podcasts, and "discerning" what a particular congregation needs to hear at that particular time. But the people in the pews - all of you - are skilled at discernment as well. You can choose to run with the pastoral interpretation or wrestle with your own. Using the window the pastor provides as a springboard for your own discernment - as you ask, "How is God speaking to me?" in this passage, in the pastor's message, in the worship service itself. As discerning disciples of Jesus we're invited into this process. Sometimes it may feel as if we're lifting up the carpets and peaking behind corners in an effort to find God in a particular passage, but in doing so we never know what we may find. We may just find Jesus, standing before us, saying, "Peace be with you!" Which is often all we need to hear.

Happy Easter, and happy discerning!

Peace and blessings,  
*Pastor Maureen*



## **Bell Choir News**

Wendy Valeri will be stepping down as our Bell Choir Director at the end of May. Her dedication, talent and commitment to this ministry will be missed. Our Bell Choir has grown under her leadership and we are so grateful. It has been so wonderful to have her on the music staff these past several years. Thank you Wendy!



## **Creative Worship**

Sunday, April 16 at 10:00 a.m.

### **"Discerning"**

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 April, our worship theme is "Discerning" and this month our focus is on the Sermon - the time in our service where we interpret God's word and listen for the message God has for us - as individuals and as a church community. We hope you can join us for this service, in-person or on online, as we move into the season of Easter!

## Why Racial Justice is Important A few words from a Member of the Racial Justice Group

By Steve Boczenowski

For the past couple of years, I have been leading the Racial Justice Group here at the Congregational Church at Amherst, under the guidance of Pastor Kate. Recently, our group decided to share our feelings of why this work is important to us with the congregation.

My story begins some 20 years ago, when I was a member of the Union Congregational Church in Groton, MA and Pastor Vicki Hammel suggested in a sermon that we, as Christians, should seek justice. That concept resonated with me and is reflected in Proverbs 31:8-9 ("Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.") And over the years, I have come to realize that to truly and fully love thy neighbor, as the Bible instructs us, we must seek justice for all people.

Then in August, 2014, I read about the murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO. And in the following months, other Black men were murdered: Ezell Ford, Laquan McDonald, and Tamir Rice – although Tamir Rice was only a boy playing near his home. These series of murders led me to start reading about race in America. I learned new concepts such as systemic racism and white privilege.

**Systemic racism** is policies and practices that exist throughout a whole society or organization, that result in and support a continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race.

**White privilege** is inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice.

The question is, Do these things really exist or are they "figments of our imagination?" Honestly, I don't consider myself or anybody I know to be a "racist person." But to dig a little deeper, let's look at three basic categories for life in the US: health, wealth, and incarceration.

**Health:** First, it should be pointed out that both the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Medical Association (AMA) have acknowledged that "racism is a public health issue." Additionally, there is much data that indicates that Black people in America receive inferior health care than White people. Here is one particularly alarming statistic: Black women are 5X more likely to die from pregnancy-related cardiomyopathy and blood pressure disorders than White women.

**Wealth:** Nationally, the wealth of average White family is 10X the wealth of the average Black family. How did this happen? Well, one critical factor was the G.I. Bill, which provided help to veterans returning from WW II in buying a home, setting up a business, starting a farm, going to college, learning a trade, finishing high school, or getting a government job. It helped to significantly increase the wealth of the middle class in America. But the G.I. Bill benefits were disproportionately extended to White veterans over Black veterans. This was true for the distribution of higher education benefits but was especially the case when it came to extending mortgages, which left Black families out of the middle class expansion that occurred in the 50s and 60s.

**Incarceration:** Black people in America are much more likely to go to prison than White people, despite ample evidence that both Blacks and Whites commit crimes at the same rate. The incarceration rate for Black vs. white Americans is 2,306 vs. 450 per 100,000; and the arrest rate for Black vs White Americans is 6,109 vs. 2,795 per 100,000.

To me, these statistics suggest that something is going on – such disparities don't just happen for no reason. It would seem that Black Americans do not enjoy the same access to justice as White Americans do.

The Racial Justice Group is grappling with these and other issues. As we develop a better understanding of race in America through reading and discussion, we are trying to connect it to our Christian faith.

*"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" Matthew 25:37-40*

### The Racial Justice Group Welcomes YOU!

The Racial Justice Group meets on the second Sunday of the month after worship. The group is dedicated to learning about the impact of racism and acting to bring about God's love and justice in and beyond 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.

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! Contact any of the RJG members (Steve Boczenowski, Sally Bowkett, Gail Miller, Lee Bowley, Stuart Coon, Linda Lannin, Sheryl Gottwald, and Joan Egbertson) to learn more about the exciting things CCA's Racial Justice Group is doing this spring, or to hear about how their antiracism journey has increased their faith.





*Just as you did it to the one of least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.*

Matthew 25:40

Paul's letters remind us that as members of the church, we are so closely connected that we can think of ourselves as parts of one body. The New Testament constantly refers to followers of Jesus, not as Christians, but as a family—brothers and sisters.

Many churches live this out when someone is ill, mourning, or facing a crisis. You show up. You are there for your loved ones in need. You show that love in tangible ways, with casseroles and cards, hugs, and spoken words of prayer. These acts of kindness let your brothers and sisters in Christ know that you are present with them. They know they are not alone because you are beside them. They know that they are not forgotten in their times of trouble. When someone you care about suffers—all your truest words and most loving actions simply declare: "I am here."

The Bible tells us that God is like us in this respect. When one of God's beloved children suffers, God declares, "I am here." God hears the cries of the poor and oppressed (Exodus 3:9, Psalm 10:17, 69:33), is near to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18), and is near to all who call God's name (Psalm 145:18). The promise that God will be with us is a constant refrain from Genesis to Revelation.

When we see the latest tragedy on the news, we might ask, "Where are you, God?" But we already know the answer—God is here, in the midst of those who are hurting.

When Jesus tells the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31–40), he reveals to us a mystery. God is most tangibly present in this world where people hunger, thirst, lack adequate clothing and shelter, and are sick or imprisoned. Christ cares for people who suffer and says He is so present in them that when you feed the hungry, care for the sick, welcome the stranger—you feed, and care for, and welcome Christ.

Not just your fellow Christians, but anyone in need, anywhere in the world—these are your sisters, your brothers, your children. Their needs might seem different than the people you worship with on Sunday, but your tangible gifts declare the same message: "I am here." By reaching out to those who suffer from natural disasters, war, or systemic poverty, you let them know that they are not forgotten. Even when the need seems far from here, by acting together as the body of Christ, we are able to be there for members of Christ's family.

We are there through providing well pumps for clean water, seeds and training for sustainable agriculture, and rice and oil to provide nourishment and cooking supplies. We are there through medical kits, school supplies, temporary shelters, and safe housing projects where needed most.

Please consider giving to One Great Hour of Sharing. There are several ways to donate:

1. One Great Hour of Sharing envelopes are in the pews for your convenience during the month of April.
2. [Donate Online](#): select the 'Missions' offering and type OGHS in the text box)
3. Send a check to the office with OGHS in the memo of the check

## SHARE Food Pantry

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

### April Pantry Requests:

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



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



## Save the Date!

This year's annual meeting will be  
on **Sunday, May 21**  
after the worship service.

*Reminder: Annual Reports are due  
in to the church office on April 15.*

## 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.



### What is Small Group Ministry?

Small Group Ministry is where 8-10 people meet with the intention of establishing deeper connections with each other and with God. The group 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](http://ccamherst.org) or contact Pastor Maureen at 603-673-3231 x11, [pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto: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!



## Adult Ed Series: Understanding the New Testament

Wednesdays, April 5 and 19  
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](mailto: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 - Remaining Series Schedule

April 5:	Gospel of Matthew: The Church
April 19:	Gospel of Luke: God's Salvation
May 3:	Luke and Acts: Luke's Inclusive Message
May 17:	Acts: The Apostles and the Church



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](mailto:andrea@ccamherst.org).

## 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](mailto:@ccamherst.org). If you don't see that, it is not from us.

We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

## **Early Amherst and the First Meetinghouse,** continued from page 1

township to (again) be surveyed and subdivided into 60 acre lots. A committee was formed to review the claims, and lots drawn for each proprietor. Committees were formed to find the best place to build a bridge over the Souhegan River, and committees formed to lay out the best places for a Meeting House, a training field, a cemetery, and to select lots for a school and a house for the future minister. According to Daniel F. Secomb, in his book *History of the Town of Amherst*, the first settlers were Samuel Lamson and Samuel Walton who in 1735 built a log house one mile south of the village. Hardships were plenty and life wasn't easy for these first settlers, and financial inducements were necessary to speed up growth. A settler from one of the other Narragansett townships wrote "A howling wilderness it was, where no man dwelt. The hideous yells of wolves, the shrieks of owls, the gobblings of turkeys, and the barking of foxes, was all the music we heard. All a dreary waste and exposed to a thousand difficulties" (Secomb, p. 37).



By September 1741, only 14 families had settled in Souhegan West No. 3.

Daniel Wilkins, a 1736 Harvard graduate from Middleton, MA, and his family arrived in Souhegan West in 1740 upon the "solicitations" of families he knew. In April 1741, negotiations ensued to hire Mr. Wilkins as the first minister. On September 21, 1741, the church was created, and the covenant written by six men including Mr. Wilkins, who was ordained as pastor the next day. The church was the third to be organized in Hillsborough County, preceded by Nashua in 1685 and Hudson in 1737. Communion was served five times a year, and Deborah Lancy was the first recorded baptism in September 1743.

The Souhegan West #3 proprietors voted in August 1735 to build the first meetinghouse on the corner of Mack Hill and Jones Road though it took years to finish. It is questionable if Rev. Wilken's 1741 ordination even took place in what would have been a bare bones structure of a house of worship. By 1745 the first meeting house still was not finished. Yet the delays are understandable considering the physical efforts and hardships it took these first settlers to clear the land, build roads, paths, homes, barns, and fences. It took time to hunt, take care of their animals, and grow and harvest food, never mind the energy, muscle, and money necessary to finish the meetinghouse.

The Rev. Josiah Gardner Davis, the 7<sup>th</sup> minister to lead the church, tells us on page 11 of his *Historical Discourse on the Hundredth Anniversary of the Dedication of the Congregational Meeting-House*, that money was scarce and continually depreciating.

Built at the taxpayer's expense, Secomb chronicles meetings in 1742, 1743, 1747, and 1751 when residents voted time and again to finish the building (p. 235-236). Finally in 1753 the first meetinghouse was completed. Simple and without ornamentation, the meetinghouse was used for worship and town business. There are no drawings of the first meetinghouse and no notes on any dedication of the building.

The residents petitioned Gov. Benning Wentworth to incorporate Souhegan West as a town choosing the name Amherst. On February 20, 1760, they met in the meetinghouse, read the charter, and elected town officers, and the meetinghouse officially became a possession of the town. In a coup for town leaders, Amherst became the shire town of Hillsborough County in 1769, creating an increase in all types of businesses and influencing a population growth. As the number of citizens grew so did the number of people attending worship. In October 1770 the town voted to build a new and larger meetinghouse, this one to be located on the plain or training field (the common). With their sights set on building the Second Meetinghouse, in December 1771, the town voted to give the First Meetinghouse to Hillsborough's County Court of General Sessions of the Peace to accommodate the many court sessions now held in town, retaining the right to worship there until the new church was ready.

The first meetinghouse took 18 years to build. It was occupied as a place of worship for 21 years, and then as a county courthouse for 14 years when it burned down March 15, 1788.

Pastor J.G. Davis gave his *Historical Discourse on the Hundredth Anniversary of the Dedication of the Congregational Meeting-House* to congregants, guests and friends in the church on Sunday, January 18, 1874. The following paragraph towards the end of his speech stills speaks to us:

*"Whatever your use or improvement of the hours spent here, I know there are associations connected with the old meeting-house that stir the deepest springs of your being. There is something in the company of fathers and mothers, of kindred, companions, and neighbors, which lends a pathos and weight to the word spoken here that few can resist...if Christ (can) be preached and God worshipped, the rude structure is thereby sanctified, and we say This is holy ground."* (p. 38).

We are grateful to the generations before us for their dedication, persistence in the face of hardships, and their love of God.

## **Meet Jean Tonnesen, CCA Member for Five Decades**

Jean Tonnesen has been an active member of our church since 1971 when she, her husband, and their two young children moved from their native New Jersey to Amherst. Although they were Methodists, Jean recalls with amusement that the Rev. Arnie Johnson, our pastor at the time, convinced her that they should come to our church, rather than attend the local Methodist church. Jean wasn't at all familiar with the Congregational denomination, but the family began attending our church and "never went anywhere else".

Jean has many fond memories of her involvement in various aspects of church life over the past fifty plus years. She has served terms on numerous committees: the Diaconate, Christian Ed, New Members, Memorial Gifts, and Trustees. While a member of the Trustees, she was on the committee that hired Andrea Cyr as our Church Administrator in 1995. When her children were young, Jean taught Sunday School and ran the Nursery when it was in what is now the former SERRV Shop space. She also joined the Bell Choir for a time, but decided that ringing bells was not one of her strong suits. She recalls that she was the winner of the church's car raffle fund raiser in 2012, but she was so intimidated by the new Prius that Pastor Maureen ended up driving it to Amherst for her from the dealership in Nashua. She went on the adult mission trip to Punta Gorda FL in 2006 to help with clean-up after Hurricane Charlie devastated that area. Working with drywall was one of Jean's tasks.

Having taught kindergarten before her four children were born, Jean resumed her career as a teacher's aide at both Wilkins and Clark schools once her kids were older. After her retirement in 2000, Jean became very involved in the Woman's Association and the Congregational Care Committee. She recalls Louise Marley asking her right off the bat to help run the WA Rummage Sale and Jean has been working on the Rummage, now Good Stuff Sale, ever since. At this month's sale Jean will once again organize the Linen Table. Since 2010, Jean has been the WA's "Sunshine Chair", sending greeting cards to members and friends of the WA who have moved away or who are no longer able to attend WA meetings. She also brings cheer and flowers to those members she visits in person.

Wanting to help others made her a natural fit for the Congregational Care Committee. She has delivered countless meals, given rides to people who need transportation to medical appointments, and paid visits to shut-ins on behalf of the church. Being a knitter, joining the Prayer Shawl Ministry was also right up Jean's alley. Lovely shawls knit by the group have been given to church members and friends who are in need of comfort.

Jean doesn't limit her service to others to just church members. Friends and neighbors of Jean's have also been helped by her caring spirit. She has been a longtime volunteer at SHARE, helping clients shop for groceries at the food pantry and she has worked on many of the SHARE dinners setting up tables and greeting the diners. Putting her knitting skills to work, she makes premie hats for babies in the hospital.

Jean lives in Milford with her daughter Holly and their cat Shadow. She has one granddaughter and four grandsons, three of whom live in Canada. Her youngest grandson, who is 13, is very helpful to Jean when she has computer problems. Jean loves the ocean and remembers family trips to the Jersey Shore when she was growing up. Her favorite spot on the ocean in NH is Jenness Beach in Rye. She is still close with four girlfriends that she has known since kindergarten and is planning on enjoying a trip to Atlantic City with them next month.

For over half a century Jean has been a caring, cheerful presence in our church, living her faith by helping others. We're so grateful she took Reverend Johnson's advice and decided not to attend the Methodist church back in 1971!



*Written by Adrienne Topliffe*



## April Church School Schedule:

- 4/2: Regular Church School and Youth Choir (Palm Sunday).  
 4/9: No Church School (Easter). This is a special day for kids to come and experience worship with their families, either at the 7:00 a.m. service outside on the Village Green, or the traditional 10:00 a.m. service.  
 4/16: Regular Church School and Youth Choir.  
 4/23: No Church School (School Vacation).  
 4/30: Regular Church School and Youth Choir.



## Vacation Bible School

- What:** A fun week of Bible stories, music, games, science, crafts, and more!  
**Where:** The Congregational Church of Amherst, NH, UCC  
**When:** August 14-18, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. each day  
**Who:** Participants: 3 year olds to rising 5th graders  
**Cost:** \$25 per participant (family maximum of \$50)

Registration information: [www.ccamherst.org/church-school](http://www.ccamherst.org/church-school)



### Volunteer Opportunities:

Older youth, teens, and adults are needed to fill many roles. Please contact Larissa Riley or Gretchen Davis if you are interested in learning more.

### Other questions?

Please contact Larissa Riley: [churchschool@ccamherst.org](mailto:churchschool@ccamherst.org)

## Middle High Youth Group (MHYG)

MHYG will meet on April 2 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.—Palm Sunday! Join us for a games, treats, and a conversation about how we hold on to faith and hope through uncertain times.

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)

During April, SHYG is celebrating the journey of Jesus from the cross to the resurrection and beyond. Come help lead the congregation at our Palm Sunday service, and then later in the month, come to SHYG to learn what the resurrection means to us in our everyday lives.

- April 2: Palm Sunday!  
 April 9: No SHYG (HAPPY EASTER!)  
 April 16: SHYG Meeting  
 April 23: No SHYG (April Break)  
 April 30: SHYG Meeting

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!



## Congregational Church of Amherst Fundraiser



Ecosmith Recyclers Inc. and Congregational Church are proud to partner in hosting a fundraising clothing and shoe drive.

Raise money to support your local church by donating new or used articles of clothing, pairs of shoes, and household textiles.



# CLOTHING & SHOE DRIVE

### WHAT TO DONATE

- Shirts
- Jeans
- Pants
- Shorts
- Sweaters
- Jackets
- Socks
- Dresses
- Skirts
- Bed linen
- Purses
- Backpacks
- Hats
- Scarves
- Belts
- Sneakers
- Sandals
- Dress Shoes
- Boots
- Towels

PLEASE BAG SHOES AND CLOTHING  
SEPARATELY

### WHEN

**April 28<sup>th</sup> through May 12<sup>th</sup>**

### WHERE

**Meeting Place Plaza**  
199 Route 101, Amherst, NH

### CONTACT

**Colleen Cushing**  
[colleencushing54@gmail.com](mailto:colleencushing54@gmail.com)

All collected material is destined for export to less advantaged persons in developing nations around the world.

# April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2) <b>Palm Sunday</b> 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 11:30 Small Group Ministry 2:00 Middle High Youth	3) 10:00 WA Workshop	4) 1:30 Small Group Ministry 4:30 Church Council 7:00 Diaconate Rehearsal	5) 10:00 Weds. Morning Adult Ed	6) 7:00 Maundy Thursday Service	7) 12:00 Racial Justice Group	1) 
9) <b>Easter Sunday</b> 7:00 Sunrise Service 10:00 Easter Worship	10) 10:00 WA Workshop	11) 7:00 Diaconate 7:00 Trustees of the Facility	12) 9:30 Staff Meeting	13) 9:30 Congregational Care 4:00 Communications Team 6:00 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	14) 12:00 Racial Justice Group	15) 
16) <b>Creative Worship</b> 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 11:30 Christian Ed 4:00 Senior High Youth	17) 10:00 WA Workshop	18) 	19) 10:00 Weds. Morning Adult Ed	20) 6:00 Bell Choir 6:30 Confirmation Class 7:30 Chancel Choir	21) 	22) 
23) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship	24) 10:00 WA Workshop 7:00 World Service	25) 7:00 Racial Justice Group	26) 	27) 6:00 Bell Choir	28) 4:00 Good Stuff Sale	29) 9:00 Good Stuff Sale
30) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 4:00 Senior High Youth						

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

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

Address Service Requested



*"Peace  
be with you.  
As the  
Father  
has sent me,  
so I send you."*

*John 20:21, NRSV*