

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

# VILLAGE SPIRE

October 2023



## Creative Worship

Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

### “Noah and the Ark”

This year we're celebrating THE STORIES OF OUR FAITH during our monthly Creative Worship! Each month we'll focus on a different beloved story from our Bible and the message it has for all ages.

In **October**, we'll hear the story of **Noah and the Ark**. As children, we may hear this story and think, "How did God fit all those animals on the ark?" When we look at this story through more mature eyes, we may wonder, "Why would a loving and merciful God unleash such destruction upon the world?"

On Creative Worship Sundays, we step outside the box of our traditional service with interactive liturgies, music, and activities. The children participate in the beginning of the service before heading off to Church School. We hope you can join us, either in-person or online!

## 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Meeting House

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor

October 2023

The next time you're sitting in worship listening to the Prelude, or bowing your head in prayer, or even allowing your mind to wander during the sermon, I invite you to look down at the floor beneath your feet – at the wide pine boards that run the length of the sanctuary under the pews. Take some time to note the scuffs, nicks, divots, and worn spots. You might notice how the floor is more worn nearer to the windows, or how one pew shows more wear than another. You might think about who you often see sitting there and how many years they may have been attending worship here. If no one is sitting in a particularly worn spot, you may wonder who is missing, or who used to sit there and may no longer be with us. You may also conclude that most of the scuffs and wear pre-date any one of us who currently call this sanctuary home. And go on to imagine who may have worshipped here long ago – in the 1940's, in the 1840's, or in 1774 – when the floorboards were newly hewn, and the sanctuary looked very different to how it looks today, with its dark wooden pew boxes and 10-foot-high pulpit that gave the preacher a God's eye view of everything happening below.

On January 19, 2024, we'll celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our meetinghouse. Our congregation is 282 years old, having officially formed in 1741, but the meetinghouse we worship in is a bit younger. Our first meetinghouse sat on the corner of Mack Hill and Jones Rd. and served our congregation well, until the town grew in population and importance, and a new, larger, grander meetinghouse was needed.

If you're a long-time member, then you've likely heard the story of how our current meetinghouse once sat upon the town green, and it was subsequently moved to its present location in the 1830's when the separation of church and state required it to be moved off of town property. While the building has changed over the years – we added a narthex in front, a vestry beneath, classrooms and meeting spaces in the rear, and have remodeled the sanctuary on several occasions – the “bones” of our 1774 meetinghouse remain the same. The sturdy virgin white pines that our forebearers lifted and slotted into place, are still holding the weight of the walls, the floor, the roof, and the steeple. If you joined us for worship on September 24<sup>th</sup>, then you had a chance to hear more about the history of our meetinghouse and to see some of the historic photos and documents that we've collected over the years. We'll have more opportunities to celebrate in the winter and spring, with an after-worship presentation/speaker and a possible open-house that invites the Amherst community to celebrate with us.

*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](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.

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### OUR CHURCH STAFF:

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

Kevin G. S. Marsh  
*Acting Associate Pastor*  
[pastorkevin@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastorkevin@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)

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



### 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.

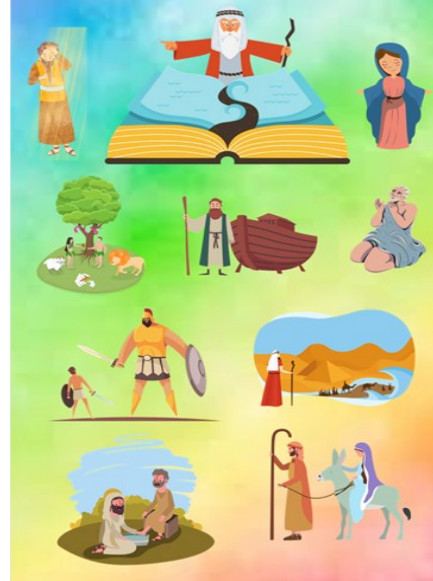
All groups will meet in-person or on Zoom as needed.

### 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](http://ccamherst.org) or contact Pastor Maureen at 603-673-3231 x11,  
[pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastormaureen@ccamherst.org)

## The Stories of Our Faith



This year our Small Groups will focus on the STORIES OF OUR FAITH theme that is guiding our Creative Worship and other church programs. Each month we'll focus on a different beloved Bible story and how it connects with our faith journey!

### Schedule for 2023-2024

October:	The Garden of Eden
November:	Noah and the Ark
December:	Abraham and Sarah
January:	Moses and the Mountain
February:	The Patience of Job
March:	David and Goliath
April:	Mary of Magdala
May:	Saul Becomes Paul
June:	Peter the Rock

## 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Meeting House, continued from page 1

Regardless of how you're involved in our church community – if you sing in our choir, if your children are in our church school or youth groups, if you deliver furniture for our Home Starter program, if you're active in our Woman's Association, if you participate in Adult Ed, or if you do your best to join us for worship, either in-person or by watching our livestream – you are following in the footsteps of those who have done the same, for over two centuries. The people who added their mark to the well-worn floorboards in our sanctuary may have walked in a different time, worshiped in a different way, and carried different concerns upon their hearts, but they came here with similar desires to our own. They came to hear a word of comfort. They came to find peace. They came to be inspired. They came to serve others. They came seeking community. They came seeking change. They came to join with others in the presence of our Creator, to offer gratitude, praise, petition, and prayer.

The world outside of our sanctuary has experienced great change over the last 250 years. The horse and buggies, shifting fashions, and “colonial” understanding of how we came to build a community on this land now seem antiquated, as new generations brought new ways of moving in the world, new fashions, and new understandings of how power, privilege, and injustice function in our human history and in our present. We may worship the same God in the same meetinghouse as our ancestors once did, but in many ways we are different. We've made space in our belief systems, in our ideologies, in our faith, for a God who is much more merciful, gracious, and inclusive. And subsequently, we've made space in our congregation, in our sanctuary, in our hearts, for those who wouldn't have been welcomed, just decades ago.

All of the above is certainly worth celebrating. Whether you're a history buff, or not, we hope you can join us in the coming year as we continue to reflect on *where* we've come from as a congregation and *how far* we've come – as we celebrate those who built our meetinghouse, those who've worshiped within it, and those who handed it lovingly down to us over the last 250 years.

And if dwelling in the past is truly not your thing, I invite you to look down at those worn floorboards anyway, and focus on the nicks, scuffs, and wear marks that you may be making, that will still be there for generations to come.

Peace and blessings,  
*Pastor Maureen*



### The Church in the Village: Stories About Its People and Its History

We still have a few copies left of the historical booklet containing columns written by Anne Krantz.

They are being sold for \$15 (cash or check made out to the church), and can be ordered through the church office.



### New Members and Visitors Info Session October 25 and November 2 7:00 p.m.

Are you NEW (or not-so-new) to our church and interested in learning more about our congregation? Are you interested in learning more about becoming a member? Do you want to know more about the UCC? If so, please join us for one of our INFO SESSIONS on either Wednesday, October 25 or Thursday, November 2 at 7:00 p.m. to learn more about all of the above!

For those who've already joined our mailing list and/or inquired about becoming a member, you'll be hearing from us soon! If you've joined us for our in-person or online worship over the last year and are interested in attending one of our info sessions please reach out to Andrea in our church office at [andrea@ccamherst.org](mailto:andrea@ccamherst.org) or 673-3231, or contact Pastor Maureen at [pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastormaureen@ccamherst.org)



## UCC Appeal Neighbors in Need



*"God saw everything God made and behold, it was very good."*  
Genesis 1:31

In 2023, the Neighbors in Need **"BEHOLD!"** theme continues. This year's focus is on environmental justice. Plastics, electronics, and other non-compostable wastes are being shipped across, and even tossed into, our waterways, launched into space, as well as buried in landfills. As people of faith, we believe these egregious acts are sinful and unholy. We must be better stewards of our planet!

One-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

This appeal will run for the month of October. To donate, visit our Online Giving page or send a check to the church office (11 Church St., Amherst, NH 03031) with Neighbors in Need in the memo line.

We thank you for your support and generosity.

## October Church School

It has been great to see so many children and youth participating in Church School this fall! Church School is open to all children in preschool through 7<sup>th</sup> grade and will meet every Sunday during October. This month, we are looking forward to partnering with the World Service Team to prepare for Mission Sunday. Remember, it is not too late to register for Church School. New friends are welcome to join our classes any time throughout the year! Please reach out to Larissa Riley at [churchschool@ccamherst.org](mailto:churchschool@ccamherst.org) with any questions.

### Mission Sunday is October 29



Mission Sunday is our annual celebration to highlight the mission/outreach work that is done throughout the year. This year, it will be the kickoff for a Book Drive to purchase new books for the Children's Literacy Foundation, which provides books and literacy opportunities to underserved populations in New Hampshire and Vermont. Stay tuned for more details!

## Understanding the New Testament Wednesday Morning Adult Ed

October 4th and 18th  
10:00-11:30 a.m. on Zoom



Why do we have four Gospels? Why do they contradict each other at times? What is the Book of Revelation really about? This fall, we're continuing our year-long look at the New Testament with this Great Courses video lecture series. In **October**, we're exploring **the Gospel of John**.

No bible knowledge is necessary, and newcomers are welcome! In each session, we watch a video together as a group and then have a discussion facilitated by Pastor Maureen. The class meets every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. from September through May. We meet on Zoom because we've found this to be a more inclusive way to be together. Please RSVP to [pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastormaureen@ccamherst.org) to receive the Zoom link, or access the link on our church website in the Members Section under "Wednesday Adult Ed"

### Understanding the New Testament - Upcoming Sessions

October 4 - "Gospel of John: Jesus and the Jews"  
October 18 - "The Community of John after the Gospel"  
November 1 - "Galatians: Salvation for Gentiles"  
November 15 - "The Abraham Letters: Hebrews and James"  
December 6 - "Churches in Crisis in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter and Jude"  
December 20 - "New Leaders in the Pastoral Epistles"  
January 17 - "Revelation: Envisioning God's Reality"  
February 7 - "The Quest for Unity in the New Testament"



## WA Holiday Fair - Saturday, November 18th

This year's Holiday Fair will take place as usual on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The lower level of the church will be transformed into a holiday wonderland full of features to delight shoppers of all ages. Plan to see special craft items, wreaths, ornaments and other holiday decorations, holiday baked goods, pecans

and cheese, jewelry, handbags, collectibles, gifts for all ages, a raffle of holiday baskets and a silent auction.

The WA welcomes anyone interested in getting involved in the Fair preparations:

- crafting (at home or on Monday mornings with WA members),
- donating potential silent auction items (gift certificates, experiences, special gift items),
- donating "giftable" items for the Treasures section of the Fair.
- baking for the bake shop,
- helping with set-up and/or clean-up,
- working at the Fair.

Don't miss this special event. Mark your calendar for November 18 and contact the WA ([wa@ccamherst.org](mailto:wa@ccamherst.org)) with any questions or to volunteer. You can also talk to Adrienne Topliffe, Sally Bowkett, Carol Lyon or any other WA member for more information.

## News from the Director of Music

The Chancel Choir and the Bell Choir have resumed rehearsals. We meet on Thursday evenings:

6:00 p.m. Bell Choir - Sanctuary

7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir - Vestry

New members are welcome anytime! Please contact Sara Phelps at [kalben1@comcast.net](mailto:kalben1@comcast.net)



## Weekly Joys and Concerns

The Sunday Joys and Concerns and Pastoral Prayer 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).

## What's Growing in the Greenhouse? *Welcome to the new hub for youth ministry in our church!*

### What's happening in October?

#### Confirmation Classes (Students 8th grade and up)

Meets Thursday nights 6:30–8:30 p.m.

- October 5
- October 19 (session with parents)
- October 22 Confirmation commissioning worship service

#### Youth Groups

##### Senior High Youth Group (Grades 9–12)

Meets Sunday nights 4:30–6:30 p.m.

- October 1 Youth Group
- October 22 Youth Group
- October 29 Halloween Party

##### Middle High Youth Group (Grades 5–8)

Meets Sunday afternoon 2:00–4:00 p.m.

- October 1 Kickoff



## John Swanson Active in CCA for 30 Years

Church has always been a part of John Swanson's life, finding it "a source of comfort." Growing up in Newington CT, his family attended the local Congregational church where he was confirmed. His grandfather was a third-generation Methodist minister and John attended a Methodist college in Iowa, but didn't follow in his forbearers' careers in the ministry. Following graduation, he joined the US Navy and trained to be a pilot. He eventually joined the FBI, spending 30 years working for the Bureau. During his career he also served as a naval, FBI, and civilian flight instructor, finding satisfaction in teaching. He and his wife Anita attended Methodist churches when they lived in NJ, PA, and Washington, DC., since there were very few Congregational churches in those areas. When John and Anita moved to Amherst with their four children in 1992, they were "attracted to the church on the Green and Anita to the Bell Choir."

Since joining our church, John, who is currently a member of the Diaconate, has served on numerous committees, including two Pastoral Search Committees, the Kitchen Renovation Committee, and Stewardship. But he has spent most of his time over the years on the Trustees and the Diaconate. He recalls first joining the Trustees after helping Bob Marley, the church's Sexton, with projects around the church. In addition to serving on standing Committees, John has volunteered his time at church in other ways. He has been a big supporter of the Community Suppers, serving as one of the cooks. He is hoping that the Community Suppers will resume this fall, either in conjunction with SHARE or at our church. John was also one of the cooks for the church's Thanksgiving dinners, which were held for many years on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. He feels that fellowship was an important aspect of those dinners. Also, John and Anita have been an immense help to the Woman's Association by driving to Vermont before the Holiday Fair to pick up the Cabot cheese, one of the Fair's most popular items. John also cuts, packages and sells the cheese at the Fair, for which the WA is very appreciative.

In addition to his church activities, John is an active member of the Amherst Lions Club, whose mission is to raise funds for community organizations. He has worked on the Lions' Spaghetti Dinner held at our church as part of Amherst Tree Lighting festivities. The proceeds from those dinners have been generously donated to our church's Senior High Youth Group for their mission trips. At the time of this writing, John was working on preparations for the Lions Club Car Show.



*John Swanson, pictured with Santa and Mrs. Claus*

### Community Supper



**Monday, October 2**  
**Serving 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.**  
**Community Room**

Join us for a FREE community supper—all are welcome!

On the menu is ham and beans, salad, bread and dessert.

*Thank you to everyone who has offered to help. We have all the volunteers we need this time.*

John and Anita also enjoy traveling, often with Anita's brother and his wife. This summer they went on an Alaskan cruise. Last fall they finally took a Grand European River Cruise that had been postponed due to covid. John has also been instrumental in organizing reunions for groups he was a part of in the Navy and the FBI. In the summer John and Anita spend time at their cottage on Little Squam Lake. John's morning routine is a swim, followed by coffee and reading his Kindle by the lake. He prefers fiction, his favorite authors being Lee Child, Clive Cussler, Nelson DeMille, and Tom Clancy.

John feels "blessed for all we have." Our church is certainly blessed to have had John as a devoted member for the past three decades.

*Written by Adrienne Topliffe*

### SHARE Food Pantry

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

**October Pantry Requests** include canned ham, canned meats, side dishes (seasoned pasta mix, Hamburger Helper, etc.), Ravioli & Beefaroni.

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



# October 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 11:30 Small Group Ministry 2:00 Middle High Youth Group 4:30 Senior High Youth Group	2) 10:00 WA Workshop 5:30 Community Supper 7:00 World Service	3) 1:30 Small Group Ministry 4:30 Church Council	4) 10:00 Wednesday Morning Adult Ed	5) 6:00 Bell Choir 6:30 Confirmation Class 7:30 Chancel Choir	6) 	7) 
8) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 11:15 Racial Justice Group	9) 10:00 WA Workshop	10) 10:00 WA Board Meeting 7:00 Diaconate 7:00 Trustees of the Facility	11) 9:30 Staff Meeting 6:00 Budget & Finance Team	12) 9:30 Congregational Care 4:00 Communications Team 6:00 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	13) 	14) 
15) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 11:30 Christian Ed	16) 10:00 WA Workshop	17) 	18) 10:00 Wednesday 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 4:30 Senior High Youth Group	23) 10:00 WA Workshop	24) 	25) 9:30 Staff Meeting 4:30 Trustees of the Invested Funds 7:00 New Member Info Session	26) 6:00 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	27) 	28) 
29) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 4:30 Senior High Youth Group	30) 10:00 WA Workshop 7:00 World Service Team	31) 				



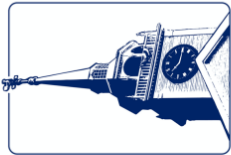
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Amherst, NH 03031

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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

October 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>

WHERE

Meeting Place Plaza

199 Route 101, Amherst, NH

CONTACT

Nancy Protzmann

nancymvy@gmail.com

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

info@ecosmithrecyclers.com • 11 Byam Road, New Boston, NH 03070 • 603-647-1088