

VILLAGE SPIRE

October 2024



Mission Sunday ***The Practice of*** ***Encountering Others*** October 20th - 10:00 a.m.

On the third Sunday of every month, our 10:00 a.m. worship celebrates our church-wide theme, AN ALTAR IN THE WORLD. Each month we'll focus on a different practice to inspire us to live our faith in the world and in our everyday lives.

In October, we're exploring "The Practice of Encountering Others," which invites us to hear the stories of those not like us - to build understanding, facilitate relationships, and encourage acts of service. This will also be our annual "Mission Sunday" as we celebrate the ways we serve others, locally and globally. Our children will participate in the beginning of the service before heading off to church school to engage the theme in their class time.

We hope you can join us, either in-person or online!



Why Church?

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor
October 2024

Here's a question I invite you to ask of yourself: Why is being a part of a church important to you? Are you looking for connection, community, to be a part of something larger than yourself?

Are you seeking spiritual guidance or understanding, for yourself or your children, as you navigate the challenges of living in today's world? Do you find comfort, enjoyment, or inspiration in gathering on Sunday mornings - in the music, in scripture, in ritual, in reflecting upon how God is speaking to us and moving us to respond? Do you feel called to serve others and being a part of a church provides the opportunity to do more in a more meaningful way?

There are many reasons why being a part of a church may be important to us. And the order of importance we place on the reasons given above may be different for each one of us and may change over time. On Sunday, October 27, we're hosting a Second Hour discussion after worship where we'll pose the question, "Why Church?" to share our own responses to this question and to hear how others respond as well. We'll also explore how our collective response to this question as a society has changed over time and continues to change in our time. What drove our Christian forebearers to build church communities? Why are fewer and fewer people seeking to be a part of church communities today? What role might the church play in people's lives in the years to come?

Continued on page 3

Serving Neighbors Near and Far

Our church mission statement contains the phrase "Serving neighbors near and far." Following is a summary of our efforts to fulfill that mission for the last six months (March - August). Where relevant, website information is noted for those who would like to know more about the organizations to which we have made donations.

The Homestarter Program continues to help newly housed individuals and families with donations of furniture and household goods. Heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers from our church and the wider community who contribute time and labor to this program. (<https://www.ccamherst.org/homestarter/>)

The Woman's Association had their annual Good Stuff Sale in April, providing the community with an opportunity to buy good gently used clothing and household items at very low cost. As in years past, Home Starter, Milford Rotary, Pass Along Project and Animal Rescue League were given items free of charge. Needed items were also donated to the First United Methodist Church of Manchester for its homeless mission.

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VILLAGE SPIRE

A Parish Newsletter

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

***"No matter who you are or
where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here."***

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.

Items for the Sunday bulletin
are due Thursday morning.

OUR CHURCH STAFF:

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

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

Michael Havay
Organist
michaelh117@gmail.com

Larissa Riley
Director of Youth Ministries
churchschool@ccamherst.org

Andrea Cyr
Church Office Administrator
andrea@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 our pastors.

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 theme is "An Altar in the World." Each month we'll focus on a different practice to inspire us to live our faith in our everyday lives.

Schedule for 2023-2024

October:	Encountering Others
November:	Carrying Water
December:	Wearing Skin
January:	Living with Purpose
February:	Being Present
March:	Getting Lost
April:	Walking on the Earth
May:	Feeling Pain
June:	Saying No



Why Church?, continued from page 1

These are big questions, and they're a part of the larger conversation that our "Widening Our Welcome" team initiated last spring. Last April, on "Belonging Sunday," we explored what it means to belong to a community and then gathered for a workshop to ask some hard questions about why some find barriers to belonging, in our church or in any church. The reasons why some are NOT a part of a faith community are as varied as the reasons we give for why we are here. There are spiritual, emotional and physical barriers that directly or indirectly communicate to others, "You don't belong here." As a congregation, we'll continue to explore what those barriers may be, and how we might lessen or remove them, so those seeking a church community for any of the reasons above might find a sense of belonging here.

Throughout this coming program year, our WOW team will host conversations like the one on October 27th, in preparation for a church-wide workshop that will take place next spring, where we'll focus on "Finding Our Why" as a congregation. Why are we a church together? How is our collective "why" expressed in our worship, our relationships, and in the work we do in our community? How might we invite others to join us on our journey?

If you can't make the after-worship discussion on October 27, we'll have other opportunities to gather in November and after the new year. All are invited to attend these conversations, and you're welcome to attend one or attend them all, to learn more about why others are a part of our community and to share your reasons as well.

If you talk to any of the newer members of our church community (or if you are one yourself) you'll discover that their reasons for seeking us out are not much different than what may have brought you here. It is part of our human condition to "long to belong" and despite declining involvement in faith communities as a whole, there's still a spiritual longing that many have to be a part of something larger than oneself. Why haven't others found that belonging in our community? Why might they not even be looking in our direction? How might we widen our welcome - in our hearts and in our minds, in our building and in our surrounding community - as the loving, grace-filled church that God calls us to be?

Join us on October 27th - to add your voice to our conversation, or to just listen and learn.

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Maureen



Congregational Meeting

Sunday, October 13, 2024

Following the Worship Service

A special Congregational Meeting is being called for Sunday, October 13, 2024 for the purpose of voting on the 2024 Pastoral Search Team's recommendation to call the Rev. Charlotte Bell to be the church's new settled part-time Associate Pastor. As this is an important decision for the congregation, the Pastoral Search Team is asking all who are able to attend. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary directly after worship. Church school children will return the sanctuary to join their parents during the meeting. Remote viewing or voting will not be supported for this meeting, in-person attendance will be required to cast your vote.



Why Church?

Second Hour Discussion
Sunday, October 27 at 11:30 a.m.

Why is being a part of a church community important to you?

What role do church communities play in today's world?

What will the church look like in years to come?

After worship on October 27, join us for a **Second Hour discussion at 11:30 a.m.** as we share our responses to the question, "Why Church?" and explore how widening our welcome may invite others to be "church" along with us. The discussion will be facilitated by Pastor Maureen and members of our WOW Team.

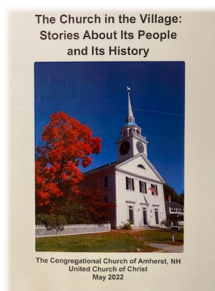
All are welcome! Lunch and childcare will be provided.

Please RSVP to
pastormaureen@ccamherst.org
to ensure we have enough space
and lunch for all!

The Church in the Village: Stories About Its People and Its History by Anne Krantz

It has been two years since we printed *The Church in the Village: Stories About Its People and Its History* and it was a sellout! The book is a compilation of 55 articles that Anne Krantz wrote and were printed monthly in the *Spire* over several years.

Several people have indicated interest in purchasing a copy so we are considering a reprint. If you are interested, please contact Sue Spiess (susan.spieess@gmail.com) so we can gauge the number to order.



SHARE Food Pantry

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

October Pantry Requests:

canned ham, canned meats/tuna/chicken, mac and cheese, pasta (all sorts), Progresso and Chunky soups



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!

Serving Neighbors Near and Far, continued from page 1

Also, the WA gave \$500 to Pass Along Project and \$250 to Meals on Wheels Hillsborough County. (www.hcmow.org)

The Church School made donations from weekly offerings to SHARE and End 68 Hours of Hunger (end68hoursofhunger.org), an organization working to fill the food gap experienced by some children between school lunch on Friday and school breakfast on Monday.

There were several community events we participated in and/or organized. The **Sacred Ally Quilt display** was held at the Unitarian-Universalist Community in Milford, co-sponsored by the Racial Justice Team at CCA and funded in part by a donation from the newly created Special Ministry Project Fund. That fund also provided money for our congregation's participation in **Milford Pride**. A public reading of the Frederick Douglass speech "**What to the Slave is the Fourth of July**" was held in front of the church on June 29. We also continued our participation in the town celebration of the **Fourth of July**. The Christian Education staff and committee offered **Vacation Bible School** in August, with many children from the community outside our church participating.

Donations of various amounts were made from the Mission Fund to organizations listed here:

- \$1,000 to the Nashua Children's Home Capital Campaign (www.nashuachidrenshome.org) for a new playground.
- \$1,000 to Welcoming NH (www.welcomingnh.org) a coalition that works with immigrants and refugees.
- \$500 to Victory Women of Vision (www.victorywomenofvision.org), a mentoring program that encourages, empowers and nurtures immigrant and refugee families.
- \$1,500 for Home Starter storage units (balance of the fiscal year).
- \$1,000 to NH4Ukraine (www.nh4ukraine.org), an organization that purchases relief supplies in Ukraine and distributes direct aid to Ukrainian children and families.
- \$500 to Waypoint (www.waypointnh.org), a social service organization based in Manchester
- \$1,000 to the Souhegan Valley Boys and Girls Club (svbgc.org).

Our outreach attempts to address many persistent needs in the world, and we are able to do far more as a faith community than we could as individuals. If you have projects, events or donations you believe deserve inclusion in future updates, please contact Mark Baddeley in person or via email at mbaddeley@comcast.net

Levi Sunday is November 3

Fall is upon us and trees are dropping their colorful leaves again. Time for another Levi Sunday, this year planned for November 3 right after worship. We have a number of outdoor projects planned including leaf raking and general lawn and grounds clean up.

Everyone is invited to come out and help. Please bring your favorite rake and tools to help accomplish the jobs you would like to help with. Many hands make light work! Hope to see you there.



Exploring Antiracism Potluck Lunch

The Anti-Racism Ministries Group (ARMg) of the NH Conference, United Church of Christ and the Racial Justice Team (RJT) at the Congregational Church of Amherst, UCC, invite all people interested in anti-racism to a potluck lunch and discussion of the many ways we can be involved in the mission and ministry of promoting anti-racism in our church and community. It will take place on Sunday, October 20, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. in the Community Room at the Congregational Church of Amherst. A short program and discussion will follow the potluck lunch. This potluck lunch activity is open to any church member, neighbor, extended family, or any person interested in learning more about anti-racism in our community and our world.

The ARMg has been working on a menu of actions that individuals, small groups, and entire congregations can do to humbly increase relationships between people of European descent (white people) and people who are Black, Indigenous, or other Peoples of Color (BIPOC). We believe that as friendships and relationships between these races/ethnicities/cultures blossom, deepen, and prosper, that attitudes and beliefs about each other will change for the better. Knowledge and understanding will grow and as a result, racism will diminish.

Please RSVP to Linda Lannin (linda.lannin1@gmail.com) or Bruce Kinney (bruce.a.kinney@gmail.com), if you are interested in joining us on October 20! Linda is a member of the RJT, Bruce is a member of the ARMg, and both are members of the CCA. Either will be happy to answer any questions you might have. Thank you so much for your consideration.



Banned, Burned, and Buried: The Books NOT in the Bible Wednesdays, October 2 & 16 10:00-11:30 a.m. on Zoom

This fall, we began a year-long video lecture series delving into the "lost" books of the Bible.

We'll explore the Gnostic gospels and other writings NOT in our New Testament that offer alternative understandings of who Jesus was, who and what God is, and what our spiritual purpose is as created beings. We'll also look at the books of the Old Testament that are in some Bibles but not in others, including stories of giants, dragons, and fallen angels.

In each session, we'll watch a video together as a group and then have a discussion facilitated by Pastor Maureen. The class will meet every first and third Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom. All are welcome! Email pastormaureen@ccamherst.org to receive the Zoom link, or to receive links to the videos we're watching if you're unable to participate in the class.

Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering



In 2024, the Neighbors in Need theme is **"Mental Health Justice For All!"** This year's focus is on Mental Health Justice. In 2015, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health.

A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life's mental health journey.

As you may recall, 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.

New Member Info Sessions

October 24 and 30
7:00 p.m. on ZOOM

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 United Church of Christ? If so, please join us for one of our INFO SESSIONS on either Thursday, October 24 or Wednesday, October 30 at 7:00 p.m. to learn more about all of the above! The sessions will be held on ZOOM to make it easier for all to attend. 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 or contact Pastor Maureen at pastormaureen@ccamherst.org.

Trick or Treat

Trick or Treat on Halloween in the Amherst village is a fun, slightly chaotic night, bringing lots of ghosts, goblins and other scary (and not-so-scary) beings into town.

Once again, our church is participating in the activity in the village by passing out candy. Since we can easily see upwards of 1000 children, we are in need of lots of fun-sized candy. A donation container can be found in the narthex.

We recognize that candy is not for everyone, and so we also hope to have a few small items to give out as an alternative to candy: think party favors such as glow sticks, pencils, stickers, etc.

Thank you so much for your generosity!

From the Director of Youth Ministries

Church School: We have had a great start to Church School for students in preschool to grade 7 this fall. Church School will continue to meet during worship every Sunday in October. New friends are always welcome!

Confirmation Class: This year's Confirmation Class is open to all students in grade 8 or older. We have already had our first information meeting, so please reach out ASAP if you missed it and have a student that is interested in participating this year.

Junior Youth Group (JYG): This group is open to all students in grades 5-7. JYG will meet on the first Sunday of each month for a variety of activities, outings and service opportunities. The first activity of the year will be an **Apple Picking Outing** after worship on Sunday, October 6!

Senior Youth Group (SYG): This group is open to all teens in grades 8 - 12 and will gather on Sunday evenings for fellowship and service. SYG had a great kickoff campfire in September and has exciting plans for the month of October:

10/6: Meeting 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. (mission trip ideas and planning)

10/20: Outing to "The Dark Woods" at Trombley Gardens (time TBD)

10/27: Meeting 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. (carving pumpkins and Halloween prep)

If you would like to RSVP for youth group events or have any questions regarding Youth Ministries, please contact me at churchschool@ccamherst.org.

Larissa Riley



WA Holiday Fair

Saturday, November 23

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 23 and contact the WA (wa@ccamherst.org) with any questions or to volunteer. Check out the [WA website](#) for current information. You can also talk to Adrienne Topliffe, Sally Bowkett, or any other WA member for more information.

October 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1) 1:30 Small Group Ministry 4:30 Church Council 7:00 Trustees of the Facility	2) 10:00 Wednesday Morning Adult Ed Group	3) 6:00 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	4)	5)
6) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 11:30 Small Group Ministry 12:00 Junior Youth Group 6:00 Senior Youth Group	7) 10:00 WA Workshop	8) 10:00 WA Board Meeting 7:00 Diaconate	9) 9:30 Staff Meeting	10) 10:00 Congregational Care 6:00 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	11)	12) 11:00 Memorial Service for Mary Howe
13) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Congregational Meeting 11:30 Fellowship	14) 10:00 WA Workshop	15) 7:00 Communications	16) 10:00 Wednesday Morning Adult Ed Group 6:00 Budget & Finance Team	17) 6:00 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	18)	19)
20) CREATIVE WORSHIP 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 11:30 Christian Ed 1:00 Anti-Racism Potluck Lunch	21) 10:00 WA Workshop	22)	23) 9:30 Staff Meeting	24) 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 New Member Info Session 7:30 Chancel Choir	25)	26)
27) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:15 Youth Choir 11:30 Second Hour	28) 10:00 WA Workshop 7:00 World Service Team	29) 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 New Member Info Session 7:30 Chancel Choir	30) 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 New Member Info Session 7:30 Chancel Choir	31) 6:00 Trick or Treat in the Village		

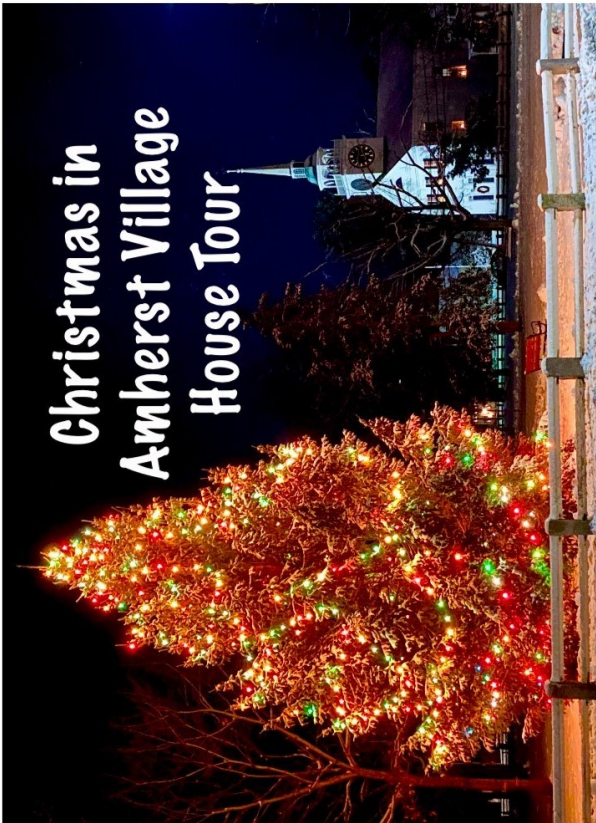
The Congregational Church
of Amherst, NH, UCC
11 Church Street
Amherst, NH 03031

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SAVE THE DATE!



**Christmas in
Amherst Village
House Tour**

Saturday, December 14, 2024
**A walking tour of five village houses,
decorated for the holidays!**

Ticket Sales are limited
\$40.00 advanced sale
\$45.00 day of tour

Tickets go on sale
November 1, 2024
www.ccamherst.org/cav