

# VILLAGE SPIRE

January 2025



## Living with Purpose

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor  
January 2025



### An Altar in the World Worship

#### *The Practice of Living with Purpose*

January 19, 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 January, we'll explore "The Practice of Living with Purpose." Our passions - the things we love to do - offer us God-given opportunities to bring joy and meaning to our lives and the lives of others. Our passions invite us to live into our purpose - which is to love God and our neighbor as we love ourselves. 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!

In my previous life, before I became a pastor, I worked in a bike shop selling parts and accessories to fellow cycling enthusiasts; I served as an apprentice audio engineer in various recording studios in NYC; I was a purchasing agent for a clothing manufacturer, buying fabrics and zippers and finished goods from overseas; I stocked shelves and served customers in a bookstore; and I put listings up on eBay for an internet consignment shop. I have no doubt that many of you would be able to assemble an equally eclectic list of the "work" you've done in your life, from menial labors to jobs that "paid the bills" to chosen careers and retirement passions.

Much ado is often made about the need for us to find our purpose in life through our work. Along with the pressure we feel as young adults to figure out what we want "to do with our lives" comes the life-long expectation that the work we do should align with our gifts and passions, and it should bring joy and happiness not just to ourselves but to those around us. But what if it doesn't? Does this mean we're not living up to our potential? That we're not walking the path that God intended us to walk? What if we can't work (for various reasons) or no longer work? Are we meant to find some other way to fill our lives with "doing" - to make our lives purposeful in service to God and others?

Our church-wide theme this year encourages us to build "An Altar in the World" as we practice our faith outside of our church walls. In January, we're focusing on "The Practice of Living with Purpose." In reflecting on this

*Continued on page 2*



## Banned, Burned, and Buried: The Books NOT in the Bible

Wednesday, January 15  
10:00-11:30 a.m. on Zoom

Join us for this video lecture series as we delve into the "lost" books of the Bible. In our January session we'll continue to explore the Gnostic gospels and other writings NOT in our New Testament that offer alternative understandings of traditional Christian beliefs about God, Jesus, and Creation itself. 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](mailto: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.



## 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  
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

Rev. Charlotte E. Y. Bell  
*Associate Pastor*  
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Sara L. Phelps  
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churchschool@ccamherst.org

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*Church Office Administrator*  
andrea@ccamherst.org

## ***Living with Purpose***, continued from page 1

practice, the Reverend Barbara Brown Taylor encourages us to look back on the work we've done in life - and the work we do now - and see all of it as an invitation to live into our purpose, regardless of the nature of the work. Taylor credits Martin Luther, the instigator of the Protestant Reformation, with naming our communal purpose as Christians: to love God and our neighbor as we love ourselves. Jesus had something to say about that as well. If this is our true purpose as people of faith, then all of our work offers us an opportunity to live into it. Every job, every calling, every vocation, every unpaid passion that we share with others offers us an invitation to amplify love - in acts of kindness, patience, generosity, compassion, joy, mercy, and grace.

On Sunday, January 19th, we'll explore the Practice of Living with Purpose in our morning worship. If you're feeling like you're struggling to find your purpose or feel like you're falling short of it, or if you've found it later in life but can't see how the list of previous work you've done aligns with that purpose, we invite you to bring all those longings and lackings with you as we gather. God loves us as we are. God works through us as we are. God also invites us to be more than we are, as we connect our purpose with God's purpose - which is to love.

Through church, we may find a way to live into that purpose - serving in worship, singing in the choir, tending to the building, serving at coffee hour, hauling furniture for the Home Starter Program, teaching in Church School, working with the WOW or Racial Justice Groups, as a member of the Woman's Association.

Outside of church, we may find ways to live into that purpose as well - volunteering in the community, serving on non-profit boards, collecting clothing or food for those in need, sharing our passions with others and spreading joy as a result.

Yet, living with purpose is something we have an opportunity to practice no matter what we're "doing" - standing in line at the grocery store, driving in rush hour traffic, responding to someone on the internet who said something we disagree with.

In this post-Christmas season of Epiphany, and in the upcoming Stewardship season (yet again!) we'll hear a lot about what it means to reveal the light of Christ through our work as a church and through our giving - of our gifts and passions as well as our treasure. Our passions do provide opportunities to serve, and to give, and to live into our purpose. Yet, as Martin Luther, and Jesus, remind us, when we align our true purpose (love) with God's purpose (love), there's no limit to how or when or where we live into it.

Peace and blessings,  
***Pastor Maureen***



## Caregiver's Circle



Are you providing caregiving to a family member, in your home, living away or long distance? Would you be interested in participating in a Caregivers Circle Support Group with others who are on a similar journey as you?

Being a caregiver brings many emotional, physical, and financial tolls on the most loving person. Confidentiality and respect for one another is key in supporting our journeys as caregivers. Discussions are on coping, resources, advocacy, and all aspects of being a caregiver.

Caregiver's Circle is led by Rev. Charlotte Bell MDIV, MSW. Charlotte is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, with a Certificate in Spiritual and Pastoral Care. She has spent 33 years as a medical social worker, specializing in end-of-life support, bereavement, grief, Geriatrics, Oncology and Perinatal Loss. Charlotte worked as a Medical Social Worker with a focus on gerontology, having worked in a variety of senior residential settings. She has been trained and certified to support Alzheimer's patients, families, and caregivers.

Our first Caregivers Circle monthly support group meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 10:00 am -11:30 am in the church parlor, on the second floor, accessible by the rear entrance of the church by taking the elevator or stairs. Light refreshments will be provided.

If you or someone you know might be interested in attending a monthly Caregivers Circle Support Group here at the Congregational Church of Amherst, please contact Pastor Charlotte at the phone or email listed below. You do not need to be a member of this church to attend. The group will be capped at 8-10 participants. Please leave your name, phone, or email and the best time to reach you at the information below.

Blessings, peace, and self-care,  
Rev. Charlotte Bell  
Church Phone 603-673-3231 x14  
Email revcbell20@gmail.com



## 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.

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

## Remaining Schedule for 2025

January:	Living with Purpose
February:	Being Present
March:	Getting Lost
April:	Walking on the Earth
May:	Feeling Pain
June:	Saying No

## Financial Summary

(as of November 30, 2024)



	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$232,763	\$230,781	\$ 1,982
Expenses	\$205,598	\$209,113	\$(3,514)
Net Income	\$ 27,165	\$ 21,668	\$ 5,496

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: Ken Bell (Treasurer), Don Lyon, Paul Spiess, Doug Topliffe, and Todd Whitney (chair).

## A Few Words About the Weather...



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

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

**BEWARE OF FALLING SNOW AND ICE:** During the winter months, we want to remind everyone that snow and ice may fall from our roof at any time. Please use caution when in our driveway, and do not walk too close to the building.



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

## Youth Ministries

### **Church School** (Preschool - 7th Grade)

New children are always welcome. Church School will meet every Sunday in January.

### **Confirmation Class**

Jan. 9: 6:30–8:00 p.m. Meeting

Jan. 24: Overnight Retreat (Squam Lake)

**Junior Youth Group (JYG) Open to** 5th - 7th grade. Meets the first Sunday of each month.

Jan. 5: Bowling Outing after Church

**Senior Youth Group (SYG):** Open to all 8th - 12th grade teens.

Jan. 12: 6:00–7:30 p.m. Meeting (Games and fundraiser prep)

Jan. 19: Attend worship and Fellowship to launch fundraiser (no evening meeting)

Jan. 26: 6:00–7:30 p.m. Meeting

### **Senior Youth Group Mission Trip**

The SYG has scheduled their annual Mission Trip. This June, a group of 15 teens (current 8th - 12th graders) will be traveling with adult advisors to Western NC or Eastern TN to assist with disaster recovery efforts in the areas devastated by Hurricane Helene. The exact location will be determined in the coming months, but it will be in the vicinity of Asheville, NC. The trip is being organized through *Experience Mission*, a faith-based organization that connects volunteers to local groups serving in areas of need.

### **144 Envelopes Fundraiser**

On January 19th, the SYG will be kicking off the *144 Envelopes Fundraiser* to help pay for the 2025 Hurricane Helene Relief Mission Trip. After worship, be sure to visit the Bulletin Board in the Community Room to learn more about the trip and check out the numbered envelopes decorated by the teens. It's easy to support the trip: just choose an envelope from 1 to 144 and make a donation in the amount equal to the number you chose. If you only have \$5 to give, or your child wants to donate \$1, that's great! We need every envelope to be selected in order to reach our goal of \$10,000. We are grateful for every dollar given.





## Governments For and By the People

As we prepare for a new United States government administration to be installed in January, 2025, it is interesting to explore how the Abenaki Peoples, who inhabited the lands we now live on, successfully governed their lands for more than two thousand years before the European settlers arrived. Their governmental structure was consensus-based, and decisions were made by majority rule only. The Abenaki's followed a set of unwritten laws that were passed down through each generation. Punishment for disobeying the laws of the tribe were often severe, including banishment from the tribe. Physical punishment may also be used, including having the accused run through parallel lines of braves with clubs who would aim a blow on the culprit's body. These enforcements were engaged according to tribal customs and traditions, employing both shame and disgrace to ensure that rules were followed.

Some of the components of Abenaki government are described below.

### **Consensus-based Decision Making**

Important decisions were made through group discussion. Band (tribe) members talked through the positive and negative aspects of a decision until an agreement was reached. The chief facilitated this discussion but did not determine the outcome; the members of the tribe made the ultimate choice following ongoing dialogue.

### **Band or Tribe Structure**

The Abenaki society was divided into smaller family groups. Each small kin-based group or band was led by a civil chief. The chief advised the group and facilitated consensus-based decision making. A general council consisted of all adult men and women in the tribe, and they decided matters related to war. A smaller council of chiefs and representatives from each family decided other questions of importance to the group.

### **Civil Chief**

Each band or family group had a civil chief responsible for guiding the group and facilitating decisions through group consensus. The chief elders were chosen for their wisdom and leadership abilities, and always commanded respect. However, a chief seldom made decisions without the ultimate approval and advice from the members of the chief's tribal bands.

### **Elderly Influence**

The elders in a band played a significant role in decision-making and preserving the cultural traditions of a band. Tribe members looked to their elders for guidance, especially around issues of cultural preservation.

Submitted by: The CCA Racial Justice Group


**Jukwaa Mazao presents the 26th Annual**

# **Set the House on Fire**

A Gospel Concert Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

*Martin Luther King*



**Monday, January 20, 2025 at 5:30pm**  
**Seacoast Repertory Theatre, 125 Bow Street, Portsmouth, NH**

*Admission is \$15 plus a non-perishable item to help replenish the shelves at local food pantries. Thank you!*

## SHARE Food Pantry

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

### January Pantry Requests:

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

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



## Beware of Email and Text Scams

We continue to hear, on occasion, of folks receiving a spam email or text message disguising itself as being from Pastor Maureen. Often the request is for assistance purchasing gift cards. If you receive one of these suspicious emails or text messages, please do not click on any links or reply to the message - just delete it.

This type of spam 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.

## Holiday Fair Thanks

The Woman's Association would like to thank all church members and friends who helped to make our 2024 Holiday Fair such a success. As of this writing, the Fair netted just over \$13,000! We are grateful to all those who supported the Fair by donating baked goods, helping with set up or clean up, working during the Fair, or shopping on Fair day. We couldn't have done it without you. The proceeds from the Fair enable the Woman's Association to make a sizable annual pledge, plus other donations to our church, and to support numerous community organizations throughout the year.

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



Fran Baddeley  
Eric Davis  
Leona Hendrickson  
Art Leknes  
Liz MacMillan Stewart  
Kathe Richardson  
Travis Riley  
Anita Swanson  
Holly Tonnesen

Mark Baddeley  
Gretchen Davis  
Roger Hooper  
Bruce Kinney  
Bruce Manchester  
James Riley  
Beth Secor  
John Swanson  
Doug Topliffe

Xander Batey  
Susan Deschenes  
Sophia Jones  
Heather MacDonald  
Dave Phelps  
Nicholas Riley  
Dick Stout  
Kristi Swanson  
MaryBeth Vrees



## CCA's Annual Family Game Night and Potluck Supper

Saturday, February 8 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.



**All ages, friends and family are welcome.**

We will have Bingo, cards, board games and trivia, and attendees are encouraged to bring their own favorite game to share with others.

Prizes will be awarded too!

Pizza and beverages will be provided,  
and it is potluck style for salads/sides/desserts.  
A-M please bring salad/side      N-Z please bring dessert

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

RSVP to [Meredith Dart](mailto:Meredith.Dart@ccamherst.org) at [m\\_getler@hotmail.com](mailto:m_getler@hotmail.com)

# January 2025

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

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

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