

# VILLAGE SPIRE

April 2025



## Holy Week

### **Palm/Passion Sunday April 13 - 10:00 a.m.**

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

### **Maundy Thursday April 17 - 7:00 p.m.**

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

### **Holy Saturday - Palms and Peeps April 19 - 5:00 p.m.**

Moving from darkness to light - from inside to outside - celebrate the resurrection to come with a burning of palms and peeps!

### **Easter Sunday April 20**

**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!

## **Putting All Our Eggs in God's Basket**

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor

April 2025

Have you seen the price of eggs lately? That's a rhetorical question, of course. Most of us are keenly aware that the current average cost for a dozen eggs in New Hampshire is \$4.90, which is nearly 50% higher than just a year before. That's if you can find the eggs you seek still on the store shelves, or not limited to one carton per customer. If you're wondering why there are fewer deviled egg or quiche offerings at church receptions or WA gatherings this is why. Baking a batch of brownies is much easier and more cost effective (and some would say, much tastier).

In many ways the price of eggs has become an angst defining issue as we try and make sense of the changing world and shifting sands around us. We can point to direct causes of our egg dilemma, like the outbreak of the bird flu "egged on" by the fragility of industrialized farming. We can name indirect causes, like an overall rise in costs triggered by inflation, or the hoarding human nature that sweeps the shelves clean regardless of need. We're also prone to pointing at causes that struggle to find correlation, including clandestine deals, political pandering, and whatever general fear or anxiety we carry about there being too many people wanting too much, and not enough to go around. The latter is what psychiatrists (and pastors)

*continued on page 3*

An Altar in the World Worship

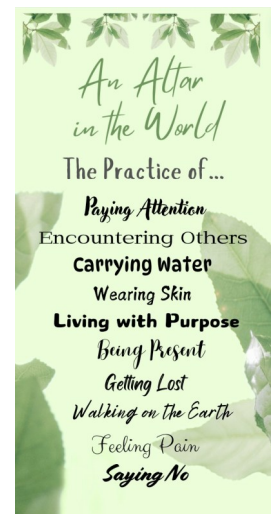
## **The Practice of Walking on the Earth**

April 27 - 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 April, on the Sunday after Easter, we'll explore "The Practice of Walking on the Earth." In their post-Easter grief and amazement, the disciples encounter a stranger as they travel back home on the Road to Emmaus, and they soon realize that Jesus has never left them. Where do we see - or fail to see - Jesus, as we're walking in the world? 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!



## 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](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)

Rev. Charlotte E. Y. Bell  
*Associate Pastor*  
[pastorcharlotte@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastorcharlotte@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  
*Director of Youth Ministries*  
[churchschool@ccamherst.org](mailto:churchschool@ccamherst.org)

Andrea Cyr  
*Church Office Administrator*  
[andrea@ccamherst.org](mailto:andrea@ccamherst.org)

## Lenten Supper Series "Questions Jesus Asked" Wednesdays, April 2, 9, 16 from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Join us as we gather for a simple supper of soup  
and bread and continue to explore the questions  
that Jesus asked in our Gospels:

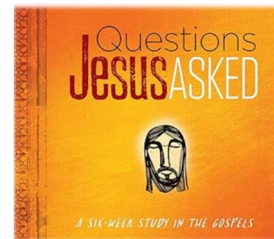
"What do you live for?" (Mark 8:34-38)

"Whom will you love?" (Luke 6:27-36)

"What are you looking for?" (John 1:35-38)

We'll gather in the second-floor parlor for soup and then watch a short  
video before engaging in an informal discussion facilitated by Pastor  
Maureen. The series has a companion book that participants are welcome  
to read, but it's not necessary. All you need to bring is your appetite and  
your wonderings! Those unable to join us in person are welcome to Zoom  
in for the video and discussion!

Email [pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastormaureen@ccamherst.org) to receive the Zoom link.



## Good Stuff Sale on May 2 & 3

Spring is coming, and so is the WA Good Stuff  
Sale! This event will be held in the Community Room  
and the Vestry on Friday, May 2 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.,  
and Saturday, May 3 from 9:00 a.m. to noon. The sale  
will feature clothing, jewelry, handbags and linens,  
along with all kinds of household goods, plus 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 handbags, 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 - also no books this year.

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, May 3rd  
at noon 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 about donations for the sale or assisting with the  
sale, please contact Sally Bowkett at 603-673-7409 or Alicia Wight at 603-345-  
0155.

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

## ***Putting All Our Eggs in God's Basket***, continued from page 1

call a "scarcity mindset." When we sense that something is scarce, we can't help but see grabbing hands all around us, and thus we hold tight to what we have, feel a sense of constant craving for what we don't have, and set ourselves up as judge and jury as we monitor what others have and should not have.

"Consider the lilies..." Jesus once famously said. Lilies don't toil or worry or fight over resources. God gives them all that they need, and thus we should trust that God will provide for us as well. Jesus was correct in pointing out that we can't add a minute to our lives by worrying, but I'll bet no one was counting on him to bring his prize-winning quiche to the synagogue potluck in the midst of an egg shortage.

When prices rise, bills go unpaid, and belts tighten, it's normal - and human - to worry. It's also normal, and human, to see threats all around us, as we fear losing what cushions us from suffering and pain. Some of us have a bigger cushion than others, but that doesn't mean we worry any less about having enough to keep us comfortable or solvent in the uncertain future to come. And this is nothing new. A good portion of our Bible is devoted to addressing and countering our scarcity mindset. Whether it's Old Testament instructions around sharing harvests, forgiving debts, and tithing back to God, or New Testament teachings about pooling resources, caring for widows, and storing up treasures in heaven, rather than in barns prone to rust and decay.

Countering the scarcity mindset has always been the challenge of the church formed in Jesus' name, as we strive to survive and thrive on the giving of the faithful. Imagine how much we could do if our treasures were shared rather than held tightly by our fear that we won't have enough? Stewardship messaging aside, imagine how much less fearful and anxious we'd be if we truly could "consider the lilies" and trust that God has already given us all that we need? Moreover, imagine how much kinder and more merciful we would be if we saw our neighbor not as a threat or a grabbing hand, or as undeserving of what they desire, and instead saw them as a beloved child of God, just like us?

How did eggs bring us here? Easter is coming. And as we pile our plastic eggs and chocolate eggs in our baskets, in lieu of the more costly Real McCoy...may we remember that we are an Easter people. We believe in a God of abundance who makes all things new. A God powerful enough to resurrect what was lost, and merciful enough to bring life out of empty tombs. Jesus had much to say about the World 2.0 that God is longing to create - where scarcity will no longer be firmly planted in our mindset, and it's Jesus who beckons us along the way that will lead us there. Are we courageous, and hopeful, and trusting enough to follow?

Being an Easter people is unlikely to lower the prices of eggs in the here and now, unfortunately, but it may lower our anxiety level, our distrust of others, our conviction that there's not enough to go around. May we be more egg-stravagant in our giving in all ways - as we serve as conduits for our God of abundance.

Happy Easter!

Peace and blessings,  
*Pastor Maureen*



## **Deacon's Friendship Baskets**

On behalf of the congregation, your Diaconate is working with local schools to provide grocery gift cards to families in our community identified as needing a little assistance. We will be passing our Friendship baskets during the services on March 30 and April 6 to gather donations to support the card purchases. These will be delivered prior to Easter and have been gratefully received in the past. Donations may also be provided through the church website or directly to Andrea in the office by identifying them as direct donations to the Friendship Basket account.

Thank you very much for your generosity!

## **New Members and Visitors Info Sessions** **April 22 and 23** **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 Tuesday, April 22 or Wednesday, April 23 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](mailto:andrea@ccamherst.org) or 673-3231, or contact Pastor Maureen at [pastormaureen@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastormaureen@ccamherst.org)

## Racial Justice

Reprint of the Invitation to the Offering,  
Sally Bowkett, January 26, 2025

In 1963 at the March for Freedom in Washington DC, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King said these now familiar words, "I Have a Dream that one day, this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of it's creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal." ( I dare say that all people are created equal).

The Racial Justice Team of this church, four years ago, embarked on a revealing and on going journey, an Anti-Racist journey. We endeavored to strive to know what we didn't know, and peel back the many layers of racism that were generations in the making. This journey into centuries of denied opportunities and denied freedoms for Black, Brown, People of Color and Indigenous people, also brought to light and revealed, and keeps revealing, the many layers of White Privilege. All of this led me to many questions that are rhetorical in nature. When did one group of people decide that they would be better and have power and control over another group of people because of the color of their skin? When did one group of people decide it was morally right to enslave another group of people, to hold in bondage in perpetuity for financial gain? What gives one group of people the right to deny the freedoms and existence of another group of people and to relegate them to the margins of society? Who judges who is in and who is out? Until we face our own reflected images in the mirror, nothing will change. Quoting James Baldwin, "Not everything that is faced will be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

In this church history, many people did 'face' and 'stand up' against the sin of slavery. In 1788, the abolition movement was well underway. One of the vocal anti-slave delegates from New Hampshire was none other than Joshua Atherton of Amherst. In 1841, Luther Melendy a respected citizen of Amherst from an old Amherst family and a member of this congregation, stood up in this sanctuary and presented an abolition resolution. The result of that meeting was that they must find means to end the evil and sin of slavery. Lucinda and Luther Melendy were abolitionist and driven to eliminate slavery from society because, and I quote, "the movement of the day the souls of black folks were as valuable as those of whites; for one of God's children to enslave another was a violation of God's law, even if it was sanctioned by the Constitution." I encourage you to find the Melendys' head stone in Meadow View Cemetery on Foundry Street. On the head stone you will read the inscribed words, "The Slaves Friend and the Colored Peoples Benefactor." You can read more about the Melendys and the people of our church in the book, The Church in the Village: Stories about Its People and Its History, a collection that was gathered by the late Anne Krantz.

Now, in the words C. S. Lewis, "we can't go back and change the beginning, but we can start where we are and change the ending." I'm going to say, yes, yes we can change the ending and help Dr. King's arc of the moral universe, which is long, BEND toward equal justice, fairness, freedom and equality for black people, brown people, people of color, indigenous people, women, the people of the LGBTQ+ community, and people with differing abilities. Collectively, ALL of God's children. Some suggestions of opportunities to raise our awareness and understanding for change are you might want to join racial/social justice groups, or read one of the many books available in the library cabinet in our narthex, or join the Racial Unity Team out of Exeter that offers many ways to be an advocate for Racial Unity, or you might want to attend the White Privilege Conference that is being held in Hartford, Connecticut in March, or you might want to take part in all that is on going with the Black Heritage Trail out of Portsmouth or visit one of their trail markers in several towns across NH, including the statue of Harriet Wilson in Milford, The Amos Fortune Forum in Jaffrey, the marker at Holman Stadium, where both Don Newcombe and Roy Campanella played baseball before going to the majors. This year, The Heritage Trail will celebrate Juneteenth by hosting "The Amistad: A Ship with a History," aka, The Slave Ship. The Amistad will arrive in Portsmouth as a part of a year-long examination of the state's history leading up to our country's 250th anniversary, in 2026.

As we venture forward in our faith for positive change, 'may we all be one' in Dr. King's dream of equality and freedom for all of Gods people. Lets make it so.

### Levi Sunday is April 27



Wear your work clothes to church and join us after worship for our annual spring cleaning day. We have our usual spring projects such as yard clean up, spreading mulch and sweeping/cleaning the parking lot.

Bring your own tools for the jobs you want to tackle. Many hands make light work!



## Meet Melissa Lewis, Our New Nursery Caregiver

Melissa Lewis was hired in November to fill the position of Nursery Caregiver. For the past few years several volunteers have taken turns sharing this responsibility. But now Melissa, along with a teen helper, is there every Sunday to care for the infants and toddlers while their parents attend church. She will also provide child care during congregational meetings after Sunday services, such as the Annual Meeting.

Melissa is very familiar with our church. Her parents are the Reverend Charlotte Bell and Ken Bell. In 1996 the Bell family moved to Amherst and joined the CCA. Melissa was active in the youth groups, which she says had a "profound impact" on her. In 2006, she married her husband Chris in the church and all four of her daughters were baptized here. For three years, starting around 2010, Melissa actually served as our Nursery Caregiver!

In addition to her past caregiving experience, plus being a mother of four daughters, Melissa majored in Family Studies and has worked in the mental health field. She is active at High Mowing School in the Parents Association, which just planned a benefit concert for sister California Waldorf schools that burned in the wildfires. She enjoys walking her dogs, taking ballet classes, and visiting museums with her daughters.

Melissa says that "it's nice to be back at church." Our church is fortunate that Melissa has returned to care for our youngest members.

*Written by Adrienne Topliffe*



## Vacation Bible School True North

It's time for kids to hit the trail...for adventure! True North Vacation Bible School will be filled with awesome Bible-learning experiences that kids can see, hear, and touch! Hands-on science experiments, team-building games, unforgettable music, and tasty treats are just a few of the standout activities that help faith flow into real life.



**Dates:** August 4th - 8th, 2025

**Time:** 9 AM - Noon each day

**Ages:** 3 years old\* through rising 5th graders can participate as VBS campers

\*must be potty trained and comfortable separating from parents

**Cost:** \$25 per child (financial assistance is available)

**Youth Volunteers:** Rising 6th - 12th grade students are needed to help guide younger children through the activities. There is no cost and we will sign off on service hours if needed (school, scouts, or honor societies).

**Register Online:** [ccamherst.org/vbsreg/](http://ccamherst.org/vbsreg/)

Contact Larissa Riley at [churchschool@ccamherst.org](mailto:churchschool@ccamherst.org) with questions about any of our Youth Programs.

## Kentucky Derby Social

Saturday, May 3



Wear your favorite derby hat/ attire and join us on May 3 for this fun annual event hosted by the Sue and Bruce Manchester, along with the Fellowship team. We will have activities for kiddos as well so please know all generations are welcome and encouraged to attend!

This is a potluck style event, and is BYOB. Please RSVP to Meredith Dart at [m\\_gotler@hotmail.com](mailto:m_gotler@hotmail.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

April: Walking on the Earth

May: Getting Lost

June: Saying No

## Youth Ministries

### Church School Schedule

April 6: Church School

April 13: Church School (Palm Sunday)  
Come at 9:45 a.m. if you want to help pass out palms!

April 20: No Church School\* (Easter Sunday) Children are encouraged to attend the 7 AM or 10 AM service with their family!

April 27: No Church School\* (School Vacation Week)

\*The nursery will be open and staffed every Sunday for families with infants and young children. On the Sundays with no church school, older children are welcome to come to the nursery if they need a break from the worship service.



**Junior Youth Group:** This group of 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> graders meets the first Sunday of each month after worship. Our next meeting will be a local hike on April 6.

### Senior Youth Group Schedule

April 6: 6:00 - 7:30 PM Meeting

April 13: Palm Sunday Service & Cookie Walk! Readers should meet in the sanctuary at 9:30 AM. Cookies can be dropped off Saturday 4/12 or before worship.

April 18: Outing to *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Palace Theater (RSVP needed).

**Confirmation:** Next class is April 3 with Mentors!



## Cookie Walk

The Senior Youth Group will be holding a Cookie Walk Fundraiser in the vestry after worship on April 13! Purchase a box for \$5 and fill it with your favorite cookies from our cookie buffet. Proceeds support the 2025 Mission Trip.

## SHARE Food Pantry

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

### April Pantry Requests:

condiments, cooking sauces and seasonings,  
cooking oil, pasta sauce, tomato sauce,  
tomato paste, diced tomatoes

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!



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

PLEASE BAG SHOES AND CLOTHING  
SEPARATELY

### WHEN

**May 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>**

### WHERE

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

### CONTACT

**Sally Hooper**  
[sallyhoop@comcast.net](mailto:sallyhoop@comcast.net)

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



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

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April

