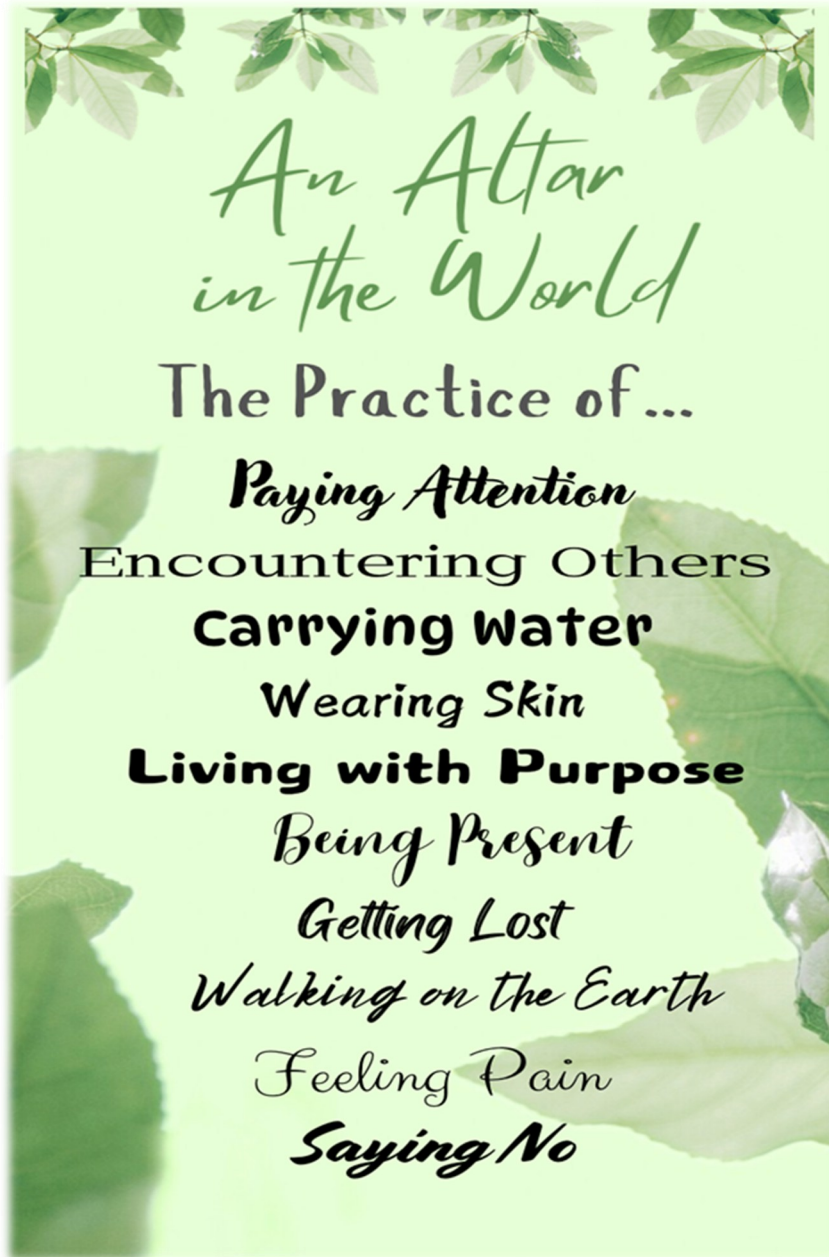


The Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Amherst, New Hampshire



*An Altar
in the World*

The Practice of...

Paying Attention

Encountering Others

Carrying Water

Wearing Skin

Living with Purpose

Being Present

Getting Lost

Walking on the Earth

Feeling Pain

Saying No

THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

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

May 18, 2025

An Altar in the World

10:00 a.m.

The Practice of Getting Lost

GATHERING CHIMES

Let us be gathered in silence so that we may prepare to worship.

GREETING AND NOTICES OF PARISH LIFE

PRELUDE

This Joyful Day of Days

Dale Wood

INTROIT

*GATHERING OUR COMMUNITY BEFORE GOD

Please rise in body or spirit.

One: Friends, let this be a welcoming place,
the place of return

**Many: and let it be built by a love
that bends towards all who enter here**

One: a love that has been waiting

Many: a love that has been longing

One: like a candle in the window
ever lighting the way back

**Many: never letting go of the hope
that each child will return home**

One: Holy One, let this be a welcoming place

**Many: where the only response
to those longing for love**

One: is to feast and celebrate
to dance and rejoice
**Many: for what we thought we had lost
has returned to us once more!**
All: We lift our voices to you, O God, in gratitude!

*HYMN *Come, O Fount of Every Blessing*

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MESSAGE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

ANTHEM

The Road Not Taken
Chancel Choir

Randall Thompson,
poem by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of God be with you. **AND ALSO WITH YOU.**

SCRIPTURE: SETTING THE STAGE

SCRIPTURE READING and REFLECTIONS

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
The Prodigal Son—Lost
The Prodigal Son—Found
The Prodigal Sons—Loved

OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND PRAYERS

All are invited to place their offerings and prayer cards in the plates as they're passed.

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

Centennial Triptych: 2. Cantabile

David Lasky

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

Contemporary Language Version

**Holy One, closer to us than our own hearts,
farther from us than the most distant star,
you are beyond naming.**

**May your powerful presence become obvious
not only in the undeniable glory of the skies,
but also in the everyday moments on earth.**

**Give us what we need, day by day,
to sustain our bodies and spirits.**

**Help us to see that in order to reconcile our world,
we must live peaceably and justly with others,
putting fear and bitterness behind us.**

**When we are torn between our faith in your goodness
and our awareness of the evil that exists in your creation,
deliver us from the temptation to despair.**

**Yours alone is the universe and may your love reign always,
and in all ways. Amen.**

*HYMN

Amazing Grace!

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*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD

*BLESSING OUR COMMUNITY

One: People of God, may we carry our wandering hearts into the world.

Many: To offer good news to all who long to hear it.

One: In the midst of a brokenness and division,

Many: We proclaim the God of Healing.

One: In the midst of despair and sorrow,

Many: We proclaim the God of Hope.

One: In the midst of unkindness and apathy,
Many: **We proclaim the God of Love and Compassion.**
All: **We go now, as servants in Christ,
as conduits of God's grace, offered to all. Amen!**

*CHORAL RESPONSE

*POSTLUDE *Toccata on "Unser Herrscher" (Lord, Our Ruler)* Joachim Neander/
Alan Smith

*(*Please rise in body or spirit.)*

*Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service
obtained from One License with license #A-731944.*

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AMHERST, NH, UCC



**A Welcoming, Open and Affirming Congregation
of the United Church of Christ**



**“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,
you are welcome here.”**

We, the members of The Congregational Church of Amherst, New Hampshire, United Church of Christ, believe God’s Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ call us to love all our neighbors as we would want to be loved. We are called to be as one body, seeking to walk together in the full life and ministry of our church.

We welcome each individual as a child of God. As covenant members of Christ’s church, we celebrate God’s love for people of all races and ethnic backgrounds, all mental and physical abilities, all socioeconomic backgrounds, all sexual orientations, all gender identities and gender expressions, and all of the other diverse attributes woven into the fabric of humankind.

With God’s grace, we invite all to share in the life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship and sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of our church.

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us. Our membership is open to all those who choose to walk with us in our witness. Please speak with any of our deacons or pastors should you have any questions regarding our church or our membership.

Worship Notes:

- Church school is available for children Pre-K through grade 7.
- Our church nursery is staffed and available for parents with young children.
- Joys and Concerns may be written on the cards found in the pews. You are also welcome to submit your prayer request through our website in advance of the worship service.
- Please remember to wear your nametag each Sunday, so that we may all greet our neighbors. If you do not have a permanent nametag, temporary nametags may be found inside the friendship registers. If you are in need of a new, permanent nametag, please see one of the deacons.
- Please join us in the community room for a time of fellowship after the worship service. Coffee and beverages are offered.
- In the event of an emergency, please remain seated until instructions have been given. An emergency plan is in place for the children in the church school.

The church office is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 to 1:00 p.m., and available Monday through Friday by telephone 673-3231 and by email info@ccamherst.org. Please feel free to leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can. Visit our church’s website at www.ccamherst.org, and follow us on Facebook.com/ccamherst and Instagram.com/ccamherstnh.

Grounded in God’s Love—Serving Neighbors Near and Far—Welcoming to All

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE

Members and Friends of The Congregational Church
 Rev. Maureen R. Frescott
 Rev. Charlotte E. Y. Bell
 Shellie Brook
 Sara L. Phelps
 Michael Havay
 Sue Ruggiero
 Sally Hooper, John Swanson
 Patricia Bodan

Ministers to the World
 Senior Pastor
 Associate Pastor
 Student Pastor
 Director of Music
 Organist/Accompanist
 Deacon in Charge
 Deacons
 Videographer

LEADING OUR CHURCH SCHOOL TODAY

Larissa Riley
 Sue Werst
 Larissa Riley
 Dave Hagerstrom
 Melissa Lewis

Director of Youth Ministries
 Teacher, Preschool /Kindergarten
 Teacher, Grades 1 to 4
 Teacher, Grades 5 to 7
 Nursery Attendant

ANNUAL MEETING TODAY: After this morning's worship service, we'll enjoy a brief time of fellowship and coffee, and the meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m. in the community room and on Zoom. All members are encouraged to attend; childcare will be provided.

Copies of the 2024-2025 Annual Report are available on the table in the narthex.

THE WOMAN'S ASSOCIATION invites any interested women - church members or others - to attend this year's Annual Luncheon on Tuesday, May 20. Beginning at 10:30 attendees will gather for pre-luncheon socializing. Following the luncheon, a brief annual meeting will review the group's 2024-25 activities and induct officers for the new year. For more information or to sign up to attend, please contact Sue Werst at sue.w.0323@gmail.com or 603-759-5344.

Our Church Calendar

May 18—24, 2025

Some events are taking place virtually.
 Links are sent out directly by email, and a list of recurring meetings with their links can be found in the member section of our website.

Today	10:00 a.m. Worship 11:15 a.m. Fellowship 11:30 a.m. Annual Meeting 6:00 p.m. Senior Youth Group
Monday	10:00 a.m. WA Workshop
Tuesday	10:00 a.m. Caregivers Circle 10:30 a.m. WA Luncheon
Thursday	6:30 p.m. Confirmation Class 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

My son was lost and is found.

Luke 15:24



Milford Rotary 100 Holes of Golf Raffle Tickets

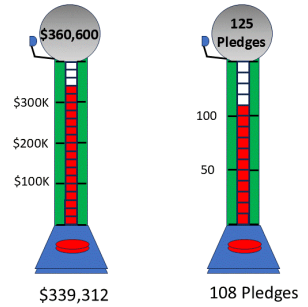
- 10 cash prizes range from \$500—\$5,000. Yes, you could win \$5,000!
- Ticket price is \$20, and \$10 comes straight back to the church.
- **Drawing Friday, June 20, 2025** — you do not need to be in attendance to win.
- Bonus: each ticket comes with great local coupons, including Giorgios, Aroma Joes, and more.

Each year this event raises considerable funds that are distributed to local, regional and international community and non-profit organizations, and are used to provide \$30,000 in scholarships to area students.

Raffle tickets are on sale now, and can be purchased by following this link: <https://golf100holes.com/product/raffle-ticket?ref=59>. This link is specific to our church and we will receive direct credit from all tickets purchased through this link. The drawing will be Friday, June 20, 2025 during the 100 Holes of Golf event, and you do not need to be present to win.

Updated Results of Our Faith Promise Stewardship Campaign

Our 2025-2026 fiscal year **Stewardship Campaign** is underway. Thank you to all that have responded so far. To those who are still considering your pledge, you can email your intents to Andrea at andrea@ccamherst.org, mail in your pledge intentions, call Andrea (673-3231) or go to the church website <https://www.ccamherst.org/stewardship-pledge/>.



Kate Ackerman
 Patricia Ansdell
 Shayna Appel
 Herb & Emily Archer
 Mark & Fran Baddeley
 Terri Behm & Ken D'Ambrosio
 Ken & Charlotte Bell
 Steve & Deb Boczenowski
 Patricia Bodan
 Jessica Bortolotto
 Kathleen Bouchard &
 Christie Gould
 Sally Bowkett
 Lee Bowley & Gail Miller
 Jeff & Patti Brown
 Jack & Patricia Buben
 Tim & Kelly Cackett
 Sydney Conti
 Wayne & Audrey Crosswell
 Colleen Cushing
 Camille Davis
 Eric Davis
 Tyler & Gretchen Davis
 Eric Doberstein, Robin Clark,
 Kara & Scott Spector
 Meredith & Obadiah Dart
 Susan Deschenes & Fred Dyke
 Cynthia Dokmo
 Judi Dunbar
 Greg & Jennifer Eccleston
 Joan Egbertson
 Stephen Egbertson
 Matt & Laura Endres
 Judy Ferraro
 Alvin & Heidi Fortune
 Maureen Frescott
 Andre & Nancy Gagnon
 Edith Gambee

Sheryl Gottwald
 Dan Grainger
 Nathan & Jessica Greer
 David & Kim Hagerstrom
 Brian & Alice Handwerk
 Leona Hendrickson
 Scott & Sally Hewett
 Susan & Don Holden
 Roger & Sally Hooper
 Jana Howe
 Kelly & Stephen Isaacs
 Patty Jillson
 Bruce & Regina Kinney
 Wilene Knight
 Ted Krantz
 Romi Krosch
 Peter & Irene Labombarde
 Keith & Gail Lammers
 Tedd & Carol Landon
 Linda Lannin
 Arthur & Victoria Leknes
 Elizabeth Levesque
 Donald & Carol Lyon
 Joan Lyons
 Elizabeth MacMillan &
 Hamilton Stewart
 Heather MacDonald &
 Bill Dallas
 Bruce & Susan Manchester
 Ingrid Michaelis
 Kerri Miller
 Howell Mitchell
 Avis Moller
 Mary Moore
 Avery & Maude Morin
 Jeanne Neverisky
 Dan & Samantha Pawlowski
 Judy Peterson

David & Sara Phelps
 David & Joan Poltack
 Nancy & Daniel Protzmann
 Gretchen & Chris Pyles
 Craig & Kathe Richardson
 Travis & Larissa Riley
 Robert Rowe
 Sue Ruggiero
 Carol St. Jean
 Vic & Carolin Sanchez
 Paul & Maggie Schellenberg
 Kelly Schmidt
 Beth Secor
 Kathy Skoglund
 Paul & Susan Spiess
 Richard & Kathleen Steeves
 Sean & Ann Stevenson
 Richard & Susan Stout
 Audrey & Marshall Strickland
 John & Anita Swanson
 Bill Swift
 Art & Jackie Tardif
 Kate & Keith Thompson
 Holly Tonnesen
 Jean Tonnesen
 Douglas & Adrienne Topliffe
 Theresa van Ham
 Sally & Michael Varanka
 Charlie & Rolinda Vars
 Marti Warren
 Tom & Sue Werst
 Todd & Jennifer Whitney
 Tim & Gail Wiegand
 Alicia Wight
 Ken & Barbara Wolfe
 Jodi Woroski & Gwenael Busnel

Sunday, May 18, 2025



*In the first five books of the Hebrew Bible
there is a command that runs through Torah
like a hymn refrain.*

*There are many variations on it,
given in very many contexts,
but the basic gist of it is this:*

*“You shall love the stranger
for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”*

*Those most likely to befriend strangers,
in other words,*

are those who have been strangers themselves.

*The best way to grow empathy for those who are lost
is to know what it means to be lost yourself.*

— Barbara Brown Taylor

