



VILLAGE SPIRE

May 2025



Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting will be
Sunday, May 18

After the worship service, we'll enjoy a brief time of fellowship and coffee, and the meeting will begin around 11:30 a.m. in the community room and on Zoom.

All members are encouraged to attend. Childcare will be provided.

The Zoom link will be emailed to members the week of May 12.

Be Curious

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor
May 2025

In our Lenten series this year, we focused on the intriguing questions that Jesus asked in our gospels. One question in particular had us wondering how we might respond should Jesus pose the same question to us. When Jesus noticed that two of John the Baptist's disciples were now following him, he turned around and asked them, "What are you seeking?"

We often think of Jesus' first followers as a unified group, as they shared a common faith, mission, and purpose. But more than likely, they each had their own answer to give to this question. Some were seeking liberation. Some were seeking peace. Some were seeking hope. Some were seeking escape. Even if they gave a similar answer about seeking "the Messiah" - the long-awaited savior of their people - we now know that within first century Judaism, understandings of who or what the Messiah was meant to be were as varied as our Christian understandings of who Jesus is to us today.

When we contemplate Jesus' question, "What are you seeking?" we may think of the reasons why we are a part of a faith community. Those reasons may vary or change, depending on what is going on in our lives or in our world. At times we may be seeking comfort and ritual, and at others we may be seeking inspiration and renewal. At times we're in need of something familiar and predictable and at other times we may be craving something unfamiliar and unpredictable. We may come through our sanctuary doors

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KENTUCKY DERBY

SOCIAL

SATURDAY, MAY 3
AT 5:00 P.M.



Wear your favorite derby hat/attire and join us on May 3 for this fun annual event, hosted by Sue and Bruce Manchester, along with the Fellowship team.

We will have activities for kids 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: m_getler@hotmail.com.

LGBTQ+ Ally Training

In an effort to widen the welcome our congregation can offer to those who come through our doors, the Widening our Welcome team (WOW) has arranged for an LGBTQ+ Ally 101 training on Wednesday, May 14 at 6:30 in the evening. What does it mean to be an effective LGBTQ+ Ally? How can we widen the circle of support for a community currently up against a great deal of oppression? How might unconscious biases get in the way of our passing on God's extravagant welcome?

In keeping with WOW's core values, this training is open to ALL, though it is geared towards those who identify as straight. And, while the training's purpose circles around the LGBTQ+ community, principles of inclusion can be applied to other marginalized communities as well.

Please save the date: Wednesday, May 14 at 6:30 p.m. here in the church parlor.

And please let Shayna Appel know if you are planning on attending so we can plan accordingly. KShaynaAppel@gmail.com.

See you there!

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.

OUR CHURCH STAFF:

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

Rev. Charlotte E. Y. Bell
Associate Pastor
pastorcharlotte@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

Celebrating an End and a Beginning

On Sunday afternoon, May 4th, CCA will host the final gathering of the Hillsborough Association and a celebration of the founding of the new Granite State Association.

As some of you may know, the New Hampshire Conference had, until March 31 of this year, seven associations which facilitated the work of our local congregations which connects us each to each and each to all. Ordinations, installations, ministerial standing, congregational support, search and call, etc. all constitute work of the local church, but it is work that can't happen in isolation.

For decades, seven associations facilitated this work until getting volunteers to serve on all of these teams became virtually impossible! Two and a half years ago the Association Capacity Task Force (ACTF) was formed to imagine a new way forward, and after lots and lots of meetings, listening sessions, discernment and prayer, the new Granite State Association has arrived!

To celebrate this arrival and to give thanks for all that has been, including the faithful souls who have given so much time and talent over the decades, we will host a celebration on May 4th, here at CCA, starting with a short service at 3:00 p.m. and then proceeding to a catered meal, a wicked fun game of team trivia pursuit, (brush up on denominational and conference trivia y'all), and plenty of time for sharing memories and hopes.

Please come as you are! The table will be set for you!

Blessings,
Rev. Shayna Appel
Former Moderator, Hillsborough Association, NH Conference, UCC
Former Member of the ACTF
Current Member GSA Committee on Covenant and Connection (C3)



Survey Reminder

A reminder that we are still taking responses to the survey about the residual funds from the Capital Campaign. Ballots are available on the table in the narthex, and can be put in the offering plate or returned to the church office. You can also take the [survey online](#) on our church's website.

The survey closes May 16 so that we can announce the results at the annual meeting. We value your input, so please take a moment if you haven't already to let us know your preferences.

WA Annual Luncheon on May 20

After a busy year, the Woman's Association will hold its annual luncheon and meeting on Tuesday, May 20, beginning with an informal gathering at 10:30 a.m. in the vestry on the church's lower level. Members and guests will enjoy a time to socialize, a potluck luncheon and an annual meeting that will recap the activities of the church year, as well as the installation of new officers. Anyone who has questions or who would like to sign up to attend should contact Sue Werst at 603-759-5344 or sue.w.0323@gmail.com.

Be Curious, continued from page 1

on Sunday morning seeking to escape the world and all its uncertainty and confusion; we may come seeking to make sense of the world so we're better equipped to live within it; or we may come seeking to change the world, believing that Jesus called and commissioned us to do just that.

But as we're contemplating how we might respond to Jesus' question we're also encouraged to consider how others might respond. Their responses may be very different than our own or may even conflict with our own. If you think of the parts of Sunday worship, our church programming, or our community outreach that may not resonate with you, or that you wouldn't miss if it went away, or that you outright dislike - there are likely people sitting alongside you in the pews who would name those very things as the reason why they're here. Part of living in community involves seeking to understand one another, especially those who are very different from us.

A common refrain heard in our wider culture is, "I just don't understand (blank)..." What we include in the "blank" often pertains to another's identity, beliefs, ideology, actions, wants, or needs. The follow up refrain is often this: "It's like we're living in different worlds." And in many ways we are. Our individual identities and lived experiences shape how we see and understand the world. Consequently, it's difficult for us to see and understand the world from a perspective that is not our own. But it's not impossible. That's where curiosity comes in.

Jesus' question, "What are you seeking?" gets to the heart of what we value and what we're longing for. We may know how we would respond to this question but how often do we ask others what they are seeking? How might we break down the walls of misunderstanding by not only asking this question, but by truly listening to the response? It's our sense of curiosity that opens us to understanding. Rather than dig in our heels and remain locked within our own perspective, Jesus' question invites us to take a step forward. By asking, "What are you seeking?" we then open the door to hearing the "why" behind the "what" - and when we understand why something is important to another, it's empathy and compassion that leads us to label it as important to us as well.

As we live into our calling as followers of Jesus and seek to widen our welcome as a community of faith, we might remind ourselves to "be curious." If we're truly at a loss to understand why someone sees the world so differently, or why someone might feel "othered" by their difference - especially those who've traditionally encountered barriers to inclusion in faith communities and in the wider culture, we might follow what Jesus modeled for us. As we ask one another, "What are you seeking?" we may just find that beneath it all what we're truly seeking is not much different. Community. Belonging. Purpose. Connection. Love. And finding it together, as we seek to help others find it as well, makes it all the more meaningful.

What are YOU seeking? Ask it. Answer it. Live it. Just as Jesus did.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Maureen



An Altar in the World Worship "The Practice of Getting Lost"

May 18 - 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 focus on a different practice to inspire us to live our faith in the world and in our everyday lives.

In May, we'll explore "The Practice of Getting Lost." Losing our way can be a frightening and frustrating experience. Yet sometimes we discover things about ourselves and our world when we wander off the beaten path, try something new, or embrace the practice of getting lost.

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!

The Annual WA **Good Stuff Sale**

Friday, May 2 - 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, May 3 - 9:00 a.m. to noon
in the vestry and
the community room.

Help needed
with clean-up
beginning at
noon.

All are
welcome!





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 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.

Remaining Schedule for 2025

May: Getting Lost

June: Saying No

Youth Ministries

Church School: Regular classes on 5/4, 5/11, and 5/18 (No Church School on 5/25).

Junior Youth Group (5th - 7th Grade): We meet the first Sunday of each month after worship. Our last two meetings of the year will be May 4th and June 1st.

Senior Youth Group (8th - 12th Grade): May meetings will be Sunday 5/4 and Sunday 5/18 at 6 PM.

Confirmation: May meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. on 5/8 and 5/22.

*We will be scheduling individual meetings in the last week in May.

*Save the dates: Confirmation Rehearsal Dinner 6/5 and Confirmation Sunday 6/8

THANK YOU to all those that contributed to the Senior Youth Group's Mission Trip this year. We raised \$357 at the Cookie Walk, \$7,352 from the 144 Envelopes Fundraiser, and an additional \$8,300 was brought in from generous donations by the *Amherst Lion's Club*, the *Milford Rotary Club*, our *Woman's Association* and our *World Service Team*. These contributions are greatly appreciated and made the trip affordable and accessible to all. Our group (15 teens and 6 adults) is excited for the opportunity to serve those impacted by Hurricane Helene in North Carolina.



Vacation Bible School True North

This year's VBS 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. *VBS is open to all in the community, so spread the word to friends and neighbors!*



Dates: August 4th - 8th, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 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)

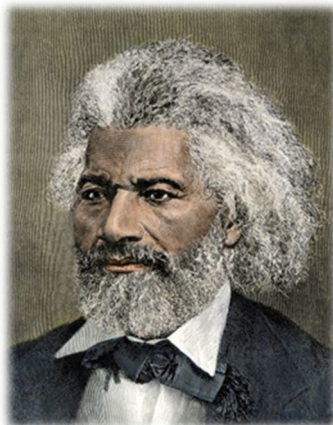
Youth Volunteers: Rising 6th - 12th grade students are needed to help guide younger children through the activities. There is no cost and we will sign off on service hours if needed (school, scouts, or honor societies).

Register Online: ccamherst.org/vbsreg/

Contact Larissa Riley at churchschool@ccamherst.org with questions about any of our Youth Programs.

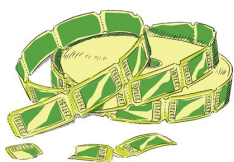
Frederick Douglass Reading

On July 5, 1852, Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist and heroic orator for liberty, delivered one of his most famous speeches in which he asked, "**What, to the slave, is your Fourth of July?**" In addressing an Independence Day observance in Rochester, New York, his speech was a blistering indictment of an American idealism that ignored and accepted the inhuman treatment of enslaved African Americans as part of the country's identity and economy. Ironically, even though Douglass' words spoke directly to this moment in history, they still ring with an unsettling power today.



The Congregational Church of Amherst and the Amherst, NH, community will once again share in the state-wide reading of this speech. Participating in the reading of this speech is a moving experience for many involved and so we once again open this opportunity up to our CCA parishioners as well as anyone in the greater community who might desire to be part of this experience. The reading will take place on Saturday, June 28th, 2025, at Noon outside of the Congregational Church of Amherst, 11 Church Street, Amherst NH. This is the fourth year that the Congregational Church of Amherst is hosting this event. For more information about this reading or to volunteer to be a reader, please contact Gail Miller (sisduras@yahoo.com).

Submitted by CCA Racial Justice Team



Get Your Tickets!

Why Buy a Rotary Raffle Ticket?

Over the years that we have participated in the **Milford Rotary Club 50/50 Raffle** fundraiser, some people have asked "why don't I just give \$20 to the church instead of half going to Milford Rotary?" Here are a few good reasons:

- ◆ Milford Rotary Club covers all the expenses including fronting the prize money (a total of \$12,500.) and printing the tickets.
- ◆ Milford Rotary Club solicits all the coupons included on every ticket.
- ◆ You could win! Last year one of the tickets we sold was the grand prize winner of \$5,000.
- ◆ The church could win! Many of the tickets sold name the church on the raffle stub. Several years ago, the church was the 3rd prize winner of \$1,2500.

In the 5 years we have participated in this raffle the portion of ticket sales that went to MRC has come back to us 3-fold by way of \$17,500 in donations from Milford Rotary Club to the Capital Campaign, Home Starter, and the Youth Group Mission Trip. The Robert Jackson Fund at MRC even donated the two newer maple trees in the area next to the church.

All good reasons!

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.

Music Sunday May 11

Please join us in celebrating our music program!

Chancel Choir ~ Bell Choir ~ Youth Choir



Organist/
Accompanist~
Michael Havay

Director of Music ~
Sara Phelps

Caregivers Circle



We offer a time of support and encouragement for caregivers and/or family and friends of people with providing care to a loved one at home or long distance, residing in a assisted living facility, nursing home or group home, or an adult child. There is no cost involved and you do not need to be a member of the congregation to attend this support group.

By speaking with others who are in a similar situation, folks may gain comfort, understanding, knowledge, and support from those with an understanding or a personal experience of the situation. Be in touch with Pastor Charlotte at pastorcharlotte@ccamherst.org with any questions.

Easter Baskets Thank You

Thank you from the Diaconate to all who contributed to our Friendship Basket collection in the weeks leading up to Easter. With the congregation's generosity, we were able to support fourteen families in the community with a Walmart or Market Basket grocery gift card.

Join in Pow Wow Celebrations in the State of New Hampshire 2025

Would you like to dance and sing while meeting together with old and new friends? If so, attending a Pow Wow might be for you! March is the beginning of the Pow Wow season in New Hampshire, and there are many opportunities for you to participate in and learn about this Native American or Indigenous People's culture and celebration. A Pow Wow is the Native American or Indigenous People's way of meeting together, to join in dancing, singing, visiting, renewing old friendships, and making new ones. It is an event of togetherness, spirituality, and lively good times. There is nothing quite like it on Earth and it's a glimpse into the historic and contemporary nature of America's true native people. Yet most who live on this continent have never seen it. You do not have to be a Native American or Indigenous Person to participate; most Pow Wow's are open to people of all cultures and backgrounds, so read on to find out about what a Pow Wow is and how you can enjoy this cultural tradition too.

A flurry of color, the vibrant bouncing and spinning of ornate regalia, the sounds of the drums... a Pow Wow is a sight to behold! Each Pow Wow has a Master of Ceremonies and this person is the voice of the Pow Wow. The MC sets the schedule of events and maintains the 'drum rotation' or order of when each drum group gets to sing. Pow Wow dress is a powerful mode of self-expression that blends historical and modern dress. Worn with responsibility and pride, the clothing represents community traditions and personal tastes. A dancer's Pow Wow outfit is a collection of items that reflect their lives, interests and family background. There will also be hand-made crafts for sale and a variety of food choices representing historical and present-day Native American cuisine.

Although Pow Wows are a time for togetherness, spirituality, and lively good times, they were not always viewed in a positive light by the United States government. In 1923, Charles H. Burke, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, passed legislation which restricted the time of the year in which Native Americans could practice traditional dance, which was deemed a direct threat to the Christian religion. However, many Native American communities continued to gather in private to enjoy this cultural celebration, and today there are many Pow Wow festivities each year in New Hampshire spread throughout the Spring, Summer and Fall, some indoors and some outdoors, some held for a day while others span two or three days. For more information about the Pow Wow schedule for 2025 in New England, google *NE (Plus) Pow Wow and Event Schedule 2025*. Some upcoming New Hampshire Pow Wow's include *The Spring Awakening Pow Wow* that is sponsored by the NH Intertribal Native American Council. It will be held on May 3rd, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Winnesquam Regional High School in Tilton, NH. For more information, check out nhinac.org. On June 14th through the 15th, attend the *LIHA Good Times Pow Wow* in Sanbornton, NH (www.lihaofnh.net) or the *Mt. Kearsage Indian Museum Pow Wow* in Warner, NH (info@indianmuseum.org). These are just a few of the upcoming Pow Wow's in our state and you will find many more on the site listed above.

Some of this information was collected from comments shared by Paul Pouliot,, the Head Male Speaker/Grand Chief of the Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook-Abenaki People.

Submitted by the CCA Racial Justice Group



It's About Time

Those who attended in person worship at the church during the last couple months may have noticed something missing. The antique clock, which hangs at the rear of the sanctuary, had stopped working this winter, so it was brought to Alan Pinet, an expert in repairing old clocks. Mr. Pinet was familiar with our clock, having cleaned it 2 and ½ years ago. Unfortunately, this time the spring driven Brewster & Ingraham clock needed major work done to get it running again. The broken main spring and click spring were replaced and the spider gear was repaired. Mr. Pinet also cleaned, reoiled, and adjusted it.

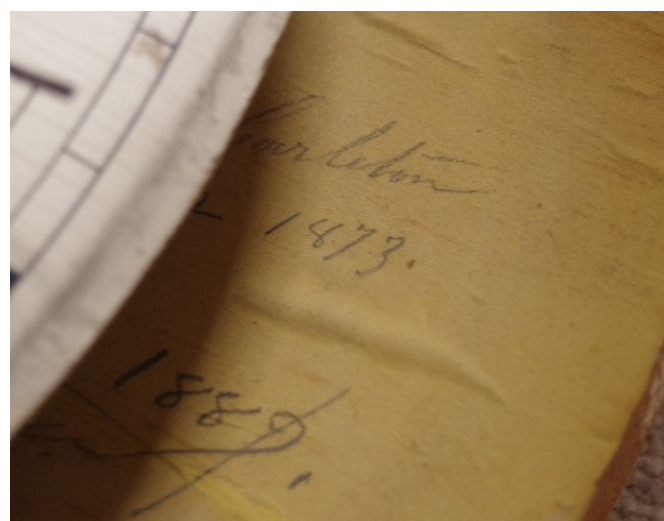
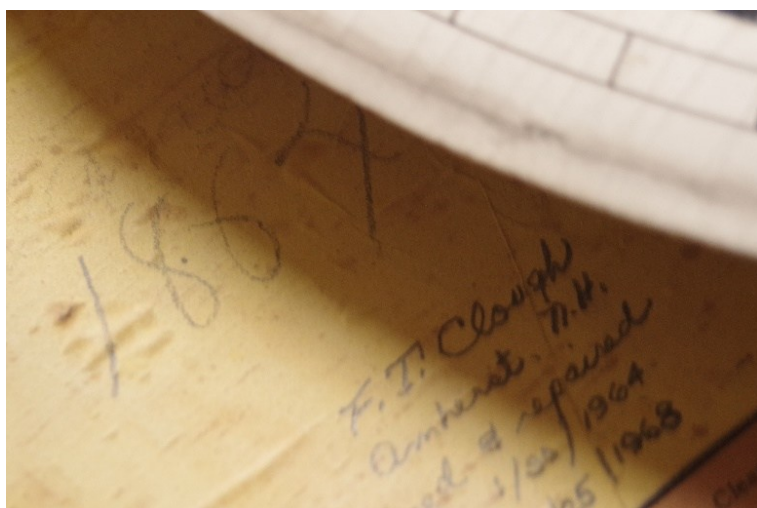
The company that made the clock, Brewster & Ingraham, was in business in Bristol, CT from 1843 to 1852, so our clock is likely over one hundred seventy years old. As shown in the accompanying photos, a mostly hand written repair log was kept inside the back panel of the clock by the various people who worked on it. The earliest repair was dated 1864 and the most recent was by Alan Pinet in 2022. The late Tenney Clough, a longtime church member, repaired the clock a total of five times between 1964 and 1997, according to the log.

The clock repair has another connection to a church member. After Anne Krantz's passing in 2022, the Amherst Nipmugs, of which Anne was a member, generously offered to pay for the repair or restoration of an historical church item, in memory of Anne. The antique clock repair project fit the Nipmugs' donation criteria, so they paid the \$400 repair bill.

Our 19th century clock was returned to its spot in the sanctuary in early April. However, just before Easter the clock had once again stopped working and was returned to the repair shop. Mr. Pinet diagnosed that the spider gear could no longer be repaired. And since parts for the clock are no longer available, a new spider gear will need to be handcrafted in order to get the clock running again.

Let's hope that we hear the soft ticking of our old clock in the sanctuary again soon.

Written by Adrienne Topliffe



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

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AMHERST, NH



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

May 2nd through the 16th

WHERE

Meeting Place Plaza
199 Route 101, Amherst, NH

CONTACT

Sally Hooper
sallyhoop@comcast.net

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