

VILLAGE SPIRE

June 2025



Teach Your Children Well

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor
June 2025

"Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to these children that the kingdom of God belongs.'"

An Altar in the World Worship "The Practice of Saying No"

June 15 - 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 June, we'll explore "The Practice of Saying No." Adopting a practice of saying "no" to others can be about knowing our limitations (and keeping sabbath!), and it also can be an act of resistance, as we say "No!" to the forces that seek to keep us small. In this service we'll explore both, and hopefully send you off with a practice that speaks to the need that you're carrying.

Church School is on summer break, but we will have Message for All Ages for the children in attendance. We hope you can join us, either in-person or online!

Every child is precious. Whether the child is part of our family, or our community, or born on the other side of the world. Which is why many of us would say that we long to live in a world where all children are valued, nurtured, and loved. As a society, we strive to make this a reality for the children in our collective care. We work together to feed and clothe them; to educate, mentor and coach them; and to welcome and nurture them in our communities of faith, in the hope that they will become all that they were created to be - physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. We do this knowing that what we do today will shape our children's tomorrow. And we do this imperfectly, recognizing that many children fall through the cracks in our broken systems of care.

We all were children once. We all know how much a word of encouragement, an imparted bit of wisdom, or a much-needed hug meant to us when we felt small and vulnerable. We carry these tiny moments in time with us wherever we go and remember them for the rest of our lives. We do the same with the harsher moments: words said in anger or criticism, a withheld or unwanted touch, the sting of being forgotten, neglected, or ignored. As we rightly concern ourselves with the condition of the world that we are leaving for our children, we also would be wise to concern ourselves with the condition of the children we are leaving for our world.

Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God belongs to children." We may interpret this to mean that we adults must be as open, as trusting, and as loving as children to live in a world where God's love reigns. Which requires unlearning or leaving behind the limiting, distrusting, and fearful ways we've acquired in our journey to adulthood. But Jesus' claim that God's Kingdom belongs to "these children" could also be interpreted in this way: our hurting world is not going to heal itself overnight. The utopian existence that Jesus continually described - where all will share equally in the bounty of creation, where death and suffering will be no more - is not something that we can expect to experience in our lifetime. This is a long-term planning project if there ever was one. This both "yet-to-be-created" and "in the process of being created" world belongs to the children. The children who will live in this world long after we've gone. And these children of our children's children will arrive in that world carrying the impression that we impart upon them today.



Continued on page 2

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

During the summer months, the church office is open Wednesdays and Fridays 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

Youth Ministries in June

Church School

June 1: Our last day of regular church school!

June 8: Children's Sunday: To wrap up the end of our church school year, the children will be staying in worship for a special service. The children and youth will be assisting the pastors and deacons with many roles during worship. After worship we will celebrate with an ice cream social in the Community Room.



Junior Youth Group (open to all 5th - 7th graders)

June 1: Final meeting after worship. Pack a lunch and wear sturdy shoes. We'll be going on a local hike! Please RSVP.

Confirmation Class

June 4: 6:30 PM - 8:30 p.m. Celebration dinner and rehearsal with mentors and parents.

June 8: Confirmation during Children's Sunday worship service.

Senior Youth Group

June 1: 6:00 p.m. Games and Mission Trip Preparations - We will review the packing list, covenant, and med forms needed for the mission trip.

June 8: Come to Children's Sunday worship service: There will be a special blessing for our mission trip team.

June 15: 6:00 p.m. Pizza & Games: *Final paperwork for the mission trip is due. Any final details and questions before the trip!

June 22-27 Mission trip to NC!

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

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 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/

Teach Your Children Well, continued from page 1

If we wish to leave our children a world that is compassionate, kind, and just, then we must raise our children to be compassionate, kind, and just people. And to do that we must be compassionate, kind, and just people ourselves. When we speak negatively about our neighbor or our enemy, when we seek to hurt or demean those we don't understand, when we look down on those who need our help, calling them disparaging names or labeling them as drains on society, our children are listening and learning. If we carry judgment, fear, and hate in our hearts it's likely that our children will as well. If we see the world as a scary place full of people who wish to do us harm or take what we have, our children will see the world that way as well.

Similarly, if we see the church as a place to shelter ourselves from our unpredictable and divided world, as a place where time and tradition stand still and the messiness of human conflict, brokenness, and fallibility should not be addressed, then our children will see the church this way as well. Which may be why we're seeing that more often than not, the stagnant and detached church that many of us were raised in, and may long to recreate, is not the church our children wish to be a part of.

What we're seeing in our church is that our children and youth are leading the way. With surprising frequency we're hearing from parents that their children are the ones asking to come to church. They want to be a part of VBS, they want to be a part of our confirmation class and youth groups, they want to come here on Sunday mornings, not just to be with their friends, but because they're longing to learn more about God and connect with something larger than themselves. The children and youth are bringing their parents to church, and in some cases, coming without their parents. And the younger couples coming with new babies and growing families are coming because they want to raise their children in a faith community that teaches them about a God of unconditional love, with arms wide enough to embrace us all.

It is to these children that the "Kingdom of God" belongs. And I have no doubt that these children are prepared to work with God in its creating. The prophet Isaiah famously predicted that one day God's love and peace would reign over all creation, and "a little child shall lead them" in its making. Yes, we adults are models for the children who will follow in our footsteps, but we surely can learn from following in their tiny footsteps as well. On Sunday, June 8th, we will celebrate our children and our youth in worship and lean into what they have to teach us. I hope you can be there to celebrate, and learn, with us!

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Maureen



Adult Volunteers Needed

Do you love spending time with children, pre-teens, and/or teens? Our Christian Education Team is looking for a few more adult volunteers to be Church School Teachers or Youth Group Advisors for the 2025-2026 school year. Reach out to Larissa Riley for more information.

Can You Help, Sign Up Now

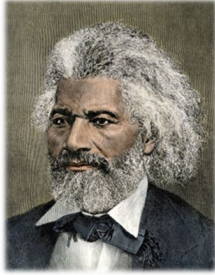
At the Annual Meeting held on May 18th, it was decided that it was best to finance the proposed front lawn signage for the church through a special fundraiser. At this point, virtually everything is ready to go except how to pay for it.

Within hours of the meeting, an inspired member of the church stepped up and offered a donation of \$1000 toward the sign project. If any other members are also feeling inspired, please send us a sign (pun intended). You can contact Andrea (andrea@ccamherst.org or 603-673-3231) to make a donation or just write a check and note that it is for the sign.

Thanks in advance for your support.



Readers of All Ages Wanted



Every year on the Saturday before Independence Day, [Black Heritage Trail New Hampshire](#) sponsors an event known as the [Frederick Douglass Statewide Readings](#). At the gathering, participants take turns reading from his 1852 speech, "What to the Slave is your Fourth of July?" The Racial Justice Team at the Congregational Church of Amherst has hosted this event for the past three years.

This year, Amherst will be one of twenty New Hampshire communities planning a reading. Amherst's reading of Frederick Douglass' speech will be held on Saturday, June 28 at noon here at our church.

We hope you will consider being a reader! This year we will also have community members singing before and after the speech. If you would like to read and/or to sing, we would be happy to have you join us. We request that all readers and singers arrive no later than 11:45 a.m. It is anticipated that the reading will take about an hour. It will be followed by a reception with refreshments in our Memorial Garden.

Please email Gail Miller at sisduras@yahoo.com for more information and to let us know how you would like to participate in this inspiring event!

Thank you, Your Racial Justice Team: Gail Miller, Gina Frey, Joan Egbertson, Lee Bowley, Linda Lannin, Sally Bowkett, Sheryl Gottwald, and Stuart Coon

We Celebrate True Independence on June 19th

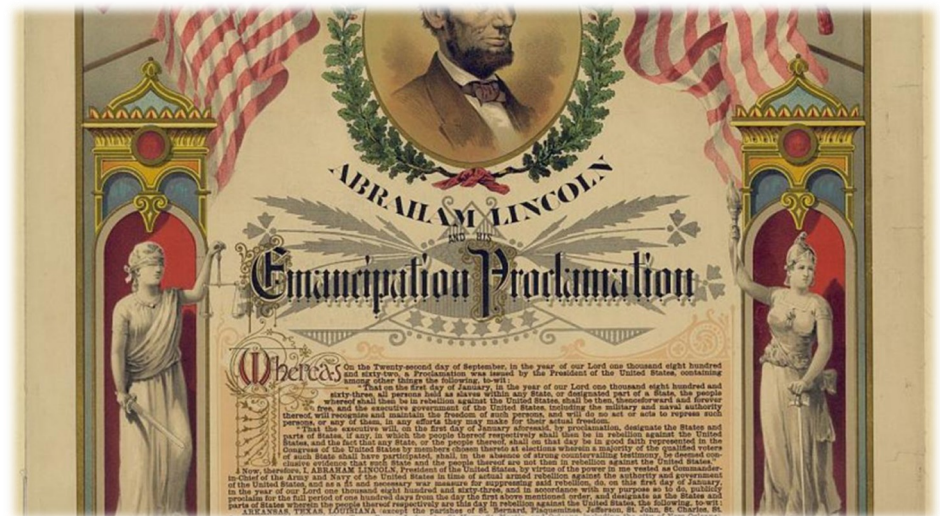
President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, when confederate soldiers refused to cease their rebellion during the American Civil War. This proclamation declared that more than three million enslaved people living in the Confederate states were now free. However, more than two years would pass before the news reached African Americans living in Texas. It was not until Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, that the state's residents finally learned that slavery had been abolished. Upon hearing of their freedom, the formerly enslaved people immediately began to celebrate with prayer, feasting, song and dance.

The following year, on June 19th, the first official Juneteenth celebrations took place in Texas. The original observances included prayer meetings with the singing of spirituals. Celebrants wore new clothes as a way of representing their newfound freedom. It did not take long for African Americans in other states to celebrate the day as well, making Juneteenth an annual tradition. Celebrations have continued across the United States into the 21st century and typically include prayer and religious services, speeches, educational events, family gatherings, picnics, and festivals with music, food, and dancing.

Juneteenth became a state holiday in Texas in 1980, and a number of other states subsequently followed. In 2021 Juneteenth was made a federal holiday. The day is also celebrated outside the United States, being used by organizations in a number of countries to recognize the end of slavery and to honor the culture and achievements of African Americans.

All of the New England states except for New Hampshire have identified Juneteenth as an official state holiday. Although not an official New Hampshire state holiday, Juneteenth is recognized as a day of observance and celebration throughout the state. A Juneteenth celebration will take place in Sullivan Park, Nashua, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. This will be an afternoon filled with music, food, and community as we commemorate the end of slavery in the United States. For more information about the many other Juneteenth activities in your area, contact Black Heritage Trail NH (<https://blackheritagetrailnh.org>).

Submitted by CCA Racial Justice Team



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 period from January through April. Where relevant and available, website information is noted for those who would like to know more about the organizations to which we have made donations.

The **Home Starter Program** (ccamherst.org/homestarter/) continues to help newly housed individuals and families with donations of furniture and household goods. Many members of the congregation volunteer time, energy, compassion and muscle to coordinate donations and make deliveries to people in need.

Through the **Diaconate** and donations from the congregation, Easter gift cards were provided to 14 families this year.

The **Woman’s Association** held their annual Good Stuff Sale, a project that provides quality used clothing and household goods to the community at bargain prices. Clothing items that remained were donated to the United Methodist Church (Manchester) Clothing Program or recycled through EcoSmith. The WA also made donations to the following organizations:

- **Pass Along Project** (thepassalongproject.com), an organization that provides clothing kits to children in foster care.
- **Meals on Wheels of Hillsborough County** (hcmow.org), delivering meals to older and disabled adults.
- **The Nashua Center** (nashuacenter.org), providing support services for children from birth to age 3, as well as supporting individuals with developmental disabilities or acquired brain disorders.
- **Greater Nashua Habitat for Humanity** (nashuahabitat.org), providing need-based home repairs and construction .
- **Senior Youth Group** received funds to support their mission trip to North Carolina to help in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

Through the Mission Fund, the World Service Committee recommended, and Church Council approved, the following donations:

- **\$1,000 to The Carter Center** (cartercenter.org) whose motto is “Waging Peace. Fighting Disease. Building Hope.”, after the passing of former US president Jimmy Carter.
- **\$1,000 to The Front Door Agency** (frontdooragency.org), combatting homelessness and housing insufficiency in Nashua.
- **\$500 to Holy Joe’s Café** (holyjoes.org), providing free coffee to US military bases around the world.
- **\$2,500 to UCC Disaster Ministries** (UCC.org) targeted to help in the aftermath of the wildfires in California.
- **\$1,500 to New Hampshire Food Bank** (nhfoodbank.org), fighting food insecurity in New Hampshire.
- \$2,000 of our annual \$4,000 contribution to **SHARE** (sharenh.org), providing emergency and ongoing support to individuals and families in the Milford, NH area.
- \$2,000 to support the **Senior Youth Group** mission trip to North Carolina.

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

An Annual UCC Appeal Strengthen the Church

The Strengthen the Church offering furthers the work of our conferences and the national UCC as we work together to strengthen and renew existing congregations, fund leadership development, and provide exciting new programs for youth and young adults. Your gift helps plant new churches, inspire fresh ideas in established ones, and nurture the spiritual lives of the next generation. The offering is divided with 50% staying regionally within your conference and 50% supporting the national ministries.

Each day, visions and dreams take root in the hearts of those in the UCC. Through your generosity, they can flourish—so the message that God is still speaking reaches even more lives.

Please consider giving to Strengthen the Church; checks can be made payable to *Congregational Church of Amherst*, with *STC* written on the memo line.

THANK YOU!

Garden Flowers Wanted



Fresh cut garden flowers are lovely for simple altar arrangements during the summer. If you can provide a bouquet of cut flowers, or can simply contribute flowers for a bouquet, please contact Sue Stout or Andrea in the church office to schedule a Sunday. Thank you for sharing your flower gardens!

SHARE Food Pantry

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

June 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!



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.



Financial Summary

(as of April 30, 2025)

	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$411,800	\$395,487	\$16,314
Expenses	\$391,201	\$386,668	\$ 4,533
Net Income	\$ 20,600	\$ 8,819	\$11,781

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), Paul Spiess, Doug Topliffe, and Todd Whitney.

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.

Meet Our New Members!

On Sunday, May 4th, we welcomed new members into our church family!

Danielle and Jen Batey live here in Amherst and have three children: Aidan Phillips (16), Xander Batey (14) and McKenzie Phillips (12). They also have a dog (Jupiter), four cats (Otto, Maisel, Allie, and Winnie), twelve chickens, and several aquatic pets (beta fish, snail and frog). Danielle is a Sr. Director at IDEMIA. Jen is a sales support representative for PC Connection in Merrimack. Both work remotely. Jen loves to garden, read, do yoga, crochet, and craft. Danielle loves to cycle, hike, read, and do anything outside.



Danielle and Jen Batey



Shellie and Rebecca Brook

Shellie and Rebecca Brook live in Goffstown with their six children, Patrick (18), Elijah (16), Hannah Grace (15), Josiah and Isaiah (14), and Hannah J (10), and their dogs, Bella and Minnie. Shellie is a Member in Discernment in the United Church of Christ and has served as our Student Pastor for the last year. She's also served as a chaplain, supply pastor, and in various roles in hospice agencies. Rebecca has worked for almost two decades in her calling as a nurse: from family practice to pediatrics to hospice case management, to the CICU and trauma units at Elliot hospital, where she currently works. When not at work or singing duets together they can be found cooking for their crew of six kids, playing with their ducks and chicks, hiking and gardening.



Laurie, Ivy, Isaac and Hazel Elwin

Tim and Kelly Cackett have lived here in Amherst for eight years. They have a son, Abel (13) and two cats. Kelly is a product delivery manager and works at Fidelity. Tim is a new business development manager and works for Gannet. Tim is a musician and is in several bands. They also enjoy going to Abel's soccer and basketball games, as well going to concerts and spending time outdoors.



Tim and Kelly Cackett

Laurie Elwin, lives in Amherst with her husband, Stephen, and their three children, Ivy (7), Isaac (4), and Hazel (1.5). They also have a dog (Penny), two cats (Simba and Pepper), and "a lot" of houseplants! Laurie is a full-time mom, and also works part-time as an Operational

Research Analyst for Naval Aviation. Which she describes as a fancy way of saying, "I do math." Laurie grew up in New Jersey and found a home in our church this past fall, thanks to the gentle nudging of her daughter, Ivy, who participated in our summer VBS program.

We're so glad
**YOU'RE
HERE!**

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

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
P A I D
PERMIT NO. 4
AMHERST, NH

June



Spend time with God
THIS SUMMER



June 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:30 Junior Youth Group 11:30 Small Group Ministry 6:00 Senior Youth Group	2) 10:00 WA Workshop	3) 1:30 Small Group Ministry 4:30 Church Council 7:00 Trustees of the Facility	4)	5) 6:30 Confirmation Class Dinner & Rehearsal 7:30 Chancel Choir	6)	7)
8) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:30 Racial Justice Team	9) 10:00 WA Workshop	10) 10:00 WA Board Meeting	11)	12) 10:00 Congregational Care 7:30 Chancel Choir	13)	14)
15) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 6:00 Senior Youth Group	16) 10:00 WA Workshop	17) 10:00 Caregivers Circle 6:00 Diaconate 7:00 Communications	18)	19)	20)	21)
22) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship	23)	24)	25)	26) 12:00 Frederick Douglass Speech Reading	27)	28)
29) 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship	30) 7:00 World Service					