



VILLAGE SPIRE

November 2025



Shine Sunday
November 16, 10:00 a.m.

“Enough for All”

Our monthly themed worship returns on the third Sunday in November! This year our theme is *SHINE: Living in God's Light*. Each month we'll focus on the ways we are the presence of God for one another in matters of mercy, compassion, and justice.

On November 16th, our worship theme is “Enough for All,” as we turn to the Book of Acts and see how the first Christian communities modeled Jesus' call to share all we have with others. Our children will participate in the beginning of the service before heading off to church school to engage the theme and scripture in their class time.

We hope you can join us, either in-person or online!



The Holiday Rush

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor
November 2025

As we turn the page into November, you may be experiencing that mix of anticipation, joy, and dread that many of us feel at this time of year. We're still polishing off the leftover Halloween candy, but our minds may already be thinking ahead to Thanksgiving and all its uncertainties: who's hosting, who's coming, who's traveling where and when, and who is bringing or making what (and how they make it matters as well). We may also be anticipating whom we would rather not see, where we would rather not go, and what we would rather not be making, bringing, or doing, because “it's-all-just-too-much.” And for some of us, it's who's not coming, who we won't be seeing, where we won't be going, that is adding a weight of sadness to the season.

Continued on page 3

We Did It!

After seven years and fourteen successfully completed projects, our church's 2018 Capital Campaign is finally closed. We addressed safety, preservation, upgrades and long term (overdue) maintenance items for our church and parsonage. Although not all projects were completed in the timeframe expected (the parsonage and church window restoration took years longer than initially thought), the original projects collectively came in under budget. As a result, we were able to add two more projects this year with money left over from the original twelve projects of the campaign. The congregation prioritized from a list of five possible projects. The two highest priority projects, approved by the congregation at the 2025 Annual Meeting in May, were repainting the sanctuary ceiling, which was completed in August, and replacing the 36-year-old furnace in the parsonage, which was installed in October.

Those who have attended worship this fall will likely have noticed the wonderful improvement in appearance to our freshly repaired and painted sanctuary ceiling. The new parsonage furnace is not such a visible improvement, but it will provide a modern and efficient heating system for our 170+ year-old parsonage for years to come.

There are too many people to recognize everyone individually in this message who contributed their time, talent, and financial support to this campaign, so a heartfelt thanks goes out to all of you for making this campaign such a success.

Sincerely,

Doug Topliffe, for the Capital Campaign Team



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

Adult Confirmation: A Spiritual Journey

Wednesday mornings and evenings on ZOOM

If you've ever been envious of our youth confirmands as they gather to ask and seek answers to the big questions of faith that many of us still have as adults, now is your opportunity to do the same! You're invited to join us on a year-long journey, or to come as you're able, as we explore the same topics that our youth confirmands wrestle with in their classes. The sessions are open to all, regardless of what faith tradition you were raised in (or not) or confirmed in (or not).

Sessions are held twice a month, on Wednesday mornings and evenings, on ZOOM. Our morning class meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, from 10:00-11:30 a.m. Our evening class will meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, from 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Email pastormaureen@ccamherst.org to receive the Zoom link.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE

(first date listed is a.m., second date listed is p.m.)

Nov 5, 12	Jesus: Teacher, Prophet, or Savior?
Nov 19, 26	Holy Spirit: Blowing in the Wind
Dec 3	The Bible: Is the Old Testament Relevant?
Dec 17	The Bible: Gospels, Letters, and Prophecy, Oh My!
Jan 7, 14	Christian History: Roots to Reformation
Jan 21, 28	Christian History: Denominational Differences
Feb 4, 11	United Church of Christ: Who Are We?
Feb 18, 25	Worship and The Christian Calendar
Mar 4, 11	Sacraments: Communion and Baptism
Mar 18, 25	Spiritual Practices: Prayer and Reflection
Apr 1, 8	Suffering: Why Bad Things Happen to Good People
Apr 15, 22	Discipleship: Living Our Faith Every Day
May 6, 13	World Religions: What Do Others Believe?
May 20, 27	What We Believe: Our Personal Statement of Faith



Financial Summary

(as of September 30, 2025)

	YTD <u>Actual</u>	YTD <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	\$188,905	\$187,891	\$ 1,014
Expenses	\$156,034	\$160,039	\$(4,004)
Net Income	\$ 32,871	\$ 27,852	\$ 5,019

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.

The Holiday Rush, continued from page 1

Simmering in the background of this Thanksgiving angst is the anticipation, joy or dread of what comes next. The ramp up to Christmas often brings all of the above, times ten, with the added pressure of gift giving and receiving laid on top. And in our church community, there's the WA Holiday Fair, World Service Christmas Drives, Breakfast with Santa fundraiser, Family Christmas Concert, and Advent and Christmas Eve Services, all adding their own joys, and pressures, to our already occupied minds and time. It can often feel like we're all on a seasonal conveyor belt that rushes us through Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas, before dumping us off on the other side of the new year, with only long January days and past-their-expiration-date holiday decorations looming before us.

There is no denying that there are many things to love about what has come to be known as the "Holiday Season." Seeing family and friends we haven't seen in a while, attending holiday parties with all the festivities and food, watching the world around us turn into a Currier and Ives painting, as cornucopias, twinkling lights, decorated trees, and familiar carols become the backdrop of our daily comings and goings. But there is some irony in the fact that we've created a two-month long period of celebration, preparation, and agitation, to honor what God intended to be a gift to our lives - the birth of Jesus - Emmanuel - God with Us.

What we celebrate on Christmas Day is the liberation that God offers to us all: a sense of peace and joy that is rooted in love and hope. The hope (or light) of God illuminates the path in front of us, revealing what was hiding in the shadows, making our way forward less fraught with fear. The joy of God lifts us from despair, breaking the chains that once held us down. The peace of God flows over us, prompting us to breathe freely - in and out - and no longer feel as if we're holding our breath, waiting for the next horrible thing to break our spirits. The love of God wraps us in a warm embrace, reminding us that no matter how broken, battered, or unlovable we feel, we are in fact LOVED, down to the core of our being.

My suggestion for us all during this "holiday season" is that we accept the gift that God is offering us. When all that needs to be done in preparation for [insert holiday event here] begins to weigh on you, take a Jesus break - an Emmanuel/God with Us break. Find a quiet place to sit, go for a walk, practice some intentional breathing, cross something off your "to do" list by handing it off to someone else or by letting it go. Truthfully, the world will go on spinning if you don't have gifts for every member of your extended family, if you don't make the bean casserole that everyone expects you to bring, if you can't help with the big church event because you just don't have the time/will/energy to spare.

The Thanksgiving and Christmas season is a gift. Make the pies, enjoy the lights, sing the carols, eat the cookies, watch the parade, laugh with friends, spend time with family, lift up a prayer of thanksgiving. Everything else is "add as needed or wanted." And when it feels overwhelming (and at times, it will), listen for the voice of God with Us, whispering, "take a break" - "go for a walk" - "breathe in and out" - "let it go." Feel the holiday rush of the Spirit as it gives you permission to just be.

Happy Thanksgiving, church!

May we lift up a prayer of gratitude for all that we've been given.

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Maureen

Book Nook

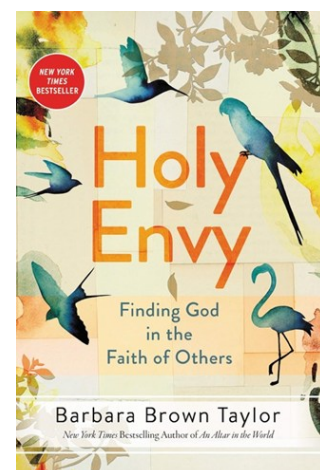


Monthly Book Recommendation

Barbara Brown Taylor left parish ministry to teach college students what we have to learn from the world's religions. In *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others*, she contemplates the myriad ways other people and traditions encounter the Transcendent, both by digging deeper into those traditions herself and by seeing them through her students' eyes as she sets off with them on field trips to monasteries, temples, and mosques.

Re-imagining some central stories from the Christian tradition she knows best, Taylor takes heart in how often God chooses outsiders to teach insiders how out-of-bounds God really is.

★★★★☆ 4.39



A note from your new Historian:

When Doug Topliffe asked me to assume the responsibilities of the church historian, I agreed. I love the history of this church, both the building itself and the members of the congregation. However, I am following in the footsteps of Anne Krantz, and those are big shoes to fill. Anne wrote interesting, historically accurate columns for the *Spire* over more than five years. What she also did, quietly and out of the spotlight, was organize and catalog hundreds of documents, scrapbooks, and memorabilia that are now safe and accessible. Her work was truly a gift to future generations and is a vital part of the history of our 280-year-old church.

Anne focused on the early years of our founding, up until the mid-20th century. Amherst was truly a "sleepy town" of 1,400 people in 1950. The changes that occurred in the next 20 years, in the church, the community, and the nation were seismic. By 1970, the population was 4,000. Today, it is almost 12,000. Future columns will explore that growth and its impact on the church and its congregation.

Sue Spiess

The Church in the 1950's—A New Era Begins Part One—Maurice "Squire" Barrett

By Sue Spiess, Historian

Handwritten notes of the history of the church from 1945-1960 acknowledge change was on the horizon. Mabel Connelly (perhaps the unofficial church historian?) noted:

As World War II ground to a halt, there were stirrings in the town and church, which portended a more vigorous future than the somnolent years of the first half of the century. New people were moving to town—veterans and their families, former war-workers who were seeking a quieter life, and all attracted by the colonial charm of Amherst and the dignity of the old church edifice.

Change was coming on many fronts. In one of Anne Krantz's columns, she described the renovation of the church sanctuary in 1950, returning it to its original colonial character. Funds were raised by the congregation and by two "open house" events...forerunners of our successful house tours in the early 2000s.

In July 1951, Maurice "Squire" Barrett answered the call to become pastor. His photo hangs in the connector "room" from the sanctuary to the church office. Ms. Connolly noted he was a retired Methodist minister who held "several prestigious pulpits throughout the state, and was currently the pastor of the Mont Vernon church, and he welcomed the opportunity to be the pastor of Amherst's historic church in 1951." He was also simultaneously a town selectman.

Dorothy Davis, who became the church historian in 1956, was also a correspondent of the *Milford Cabinet*. She recalls Pastor Barrett with fondness.

Maurice first preached at age seventeen in his home state of Indiana and was still accepting engagements in his 81st year while living in Florida.

In the twenty years of strong ties with Amherst, the effect of Squire's personality both on the town and the church was deep. Recalled with pleasure and a smile are his enthusiastic sermons when he pounded home a point. Remembered with delight also were the times he stopped suddenly in his discourse to request confirmation from one of his listeners.

Such naturalness, such placing of himself on a level with his congregation, made him as well liked a man of the cloth as ever. He traveled daily to the post office as much to get his mail as to pass the time of day with whoever crossed his path.

One of his keenest pleasures was to fish all the nearby streams. We often wondered if he put up with the flies and the poor fishing because he was foremost a fisher of men, and enjoyed his casual encounters with fellow anglers.

"Squire" Barrett's health declined in early 1954 and he moved to Florida. Interim pastor Rev. Kendall Burgess was called, and in July 1954, Rev. Frank Weiskel became the pastor. A new, dynamic chapter in the life of the Congregational Church was about to begin. To be continued next month...



Fellowship Hour SOS

Snack food donations
for coffee hour are
most welcome!

GOODIES

If you would like to contribute something for a Sunday, please contact Meredith Dart (m_getler@hotmail.com or 603-305-9065).

Youth Ministries

Church School: Church School for children in preschool - 7th grade will meet every Sunday in November during worship. New friends are always welcome!

Junior Youth Group (JYG): All students in grades 5 - 7 are invited to participate in JYG activities. The group meets after worship for games, service, or outings. This month, JYG will meet on Nov. 9 to make Birthday Bag kits for SHARE and on Nov. 23 to serve lunch at the Mill Apartments.

Confirmation: Our confirmands were commissioned during worship on October 26th. This month's meetings will be on Nov. 4 (with mentors) and Nov. 18.

Senior Youth Group (SYG): Teens in 8th - 12th grade are welcome to join us for SYG meetings and events. We will be holding an overnight lock-in for teens at the church on November 14th. Contact Larissa if you'd like to be on the contact list for SYG.

Mill Apartments Luncheon

On November 23rd, we will continue the much-loved tradition of preparing a meal for the residents of the Mill Apartments in Milford. All church school students will participate in preparing food and decorations during worship. After fellowship, the middle school (JYG) students and chaperones will go to the Mill Apartments to serve lunch and visit with the residents.

Christmas Pageant Planning

Christmas will be here before we know it and we have pageant opportunities for all ages. Readers and costumed (non-speaking) roles are available. Mark your calendars and contact Larissa Riley if your children are interested in participating this year.

Children in preschool - fourth grade are invited to participate in a mini-pageant during worship on Dec. 21.

Middle School and High School students are needed to participate in the Christmas Eve Family Service at 5 p.m. on Dec. 24.

Diaconate's Friendship Baskets

On behalf of the congregation, your Diaconate is planning to deliver grocery gift cards to local families who need help in these trying times to put food on the table for the Thanksgiving holiday. We expect to have many requests from the school district. This past spring, we were able to support 14 families, and we expect the need to be even greater now.

We will be passing our Friendship baskets during the service on November 2nd and November 9th to gather donations to support the gift card purchases. If you would like to help, but are participating in the service from home, you can also donate through the church website and direct your donation to the Friendship Basket collection. Thank you very much for your generosity!



Breakfast With Santa Saturday, December 6, 2025

"Breakfast with Santa" is a special annual event sponsored by our church community and open to the general public. This year's event will take place on Saturday, December 6 and will include two sittings: 9:00–10:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. –12:00 noon. A hot breakfast with a variety of options will be served, there will be organized games and crafts, and of course the opportunity to visit with Santa himself. Remember to bring your phone or camera and take your own photos of your children with Santa. Santa's Bookshop is open and each child gets to choose a recycled book.

We hope many church families will participate - this is a great event for grandparents to bring their grandchildren. The money raised goes back into our church. To register please visit <https://www.ccamherst.org/bws/>

BWS registration starts November 1st and goes through December 3rd. Cost is \$12.00 for adults, \$10.00 for children under 14, and children 12-months & younger are free. We usually sell out way before the event so register early! We will also be looking for donations of casseroles and other breakfast food from church members. Stay tuned for those details.

Questions? Contact Marti Warren: martiwarren@comcast.net

Home Starter Needs Your Help!

Home Starter Top 5 Service Needs:

--Transport locally available smaller house goods (under 20 lbs) to the housewares coordinator in Nashua during workdays/weeknights. (As needed)

--Help the volunteer coordinator/delivery-pickup coordinator make confirmation phone calls. (This can be a remote role.)

--Sign up to be part of a regularly rotating Saturday morning move team. (Commitment is four hours, one Saturday per month. Bonus points if you're willing to drive and your vehicle has a trailer hitch.)

--Help write grants to cover storage fees and incidental expenses for necessities that aren't donated or can't be donated used, such as toasters.

--Help recruit volunteers willing to be regulars. (Contact homestarter@ccamherst.org if your business or organization would like Home Starter to come talk about the project and how they can get involved donating items, money or their time.)

Home Starter Top (Current) Primary Donation Needs:

(Rule of Thumb: "Something to sleep on, sit on and eat at...and all the basics for a kitchen and bathroom"--Terri Behm)

--Dressers, coffee/side tables, night stands

--Kitchen tables and chairs (unmatched is fine)

--Love seats

--Items for kitchen and bath kits (see church website for list)

It began with a 2019 call for assistance from Sleep in Heavenly Peace organizers tasked with helping a newly housed single mother and her very young son, who were sleeping on the floor of their bare apartment. The little boy was too small to sleep safely in the beds that SHP typically constructs and supplies so the CCA World Service Committee stepped up to assist by procuring a toddler bed--and eventually outfitting the 2-bedroom apartment with all needed basics. The committee heard of and assisted another family in need, and then another. Thus, the Home Starter ministry was born.

"I can't control for these families the craziness going on [in their lives]--I can sympathize, I can empathize, but I can't change it. But I can take one worry off; I can give them one thing that lets them know that someone's in their corner and it might get better," said Terri Behm, the overall coordinator of Home Starter. "It legitimately gives them hope and makes them feel like someone cares."

So far this year, Home Starter has served approximately 80 clients, most in or around Nashua and every one of them thanks to referrals from a cluster of more than a dozen area social service agencies. Since its inception the program has leveled off at 100 or so families helped annually in a steady stream of requests that sees a slight spike each spring, when most eviction notices go out.

Volunteers are currently split evenly between CCA congregants and residents of the greater Nashua-Manchester communities, in a ratio that pleases organizers.

"We hoped to engage the community and are thrilled to be 50/50 on volunteers," said Terri.

Sharing the helm with Terri are Donna Watson of Nashua coordinating houseware donations and Sheryl Gottwald of Amherst coordinating volunteers and confirming delivery-pickup arrangements.

Adding more people to the group's Saturday morning delivery team pool would go a long way towards accommodating personal schedules and helping avoid volunteer burnout.

"[But although] it can get overwhelming, it fills my cup back up, to feel like I've made a difference," Terri said.

Even as she encourages people to volunteer, to help lighten the load, Terri wishes to thank those who are already involved.

"I would like to say "thank you" to those who have already supported us in lots of different ways, either monetarily or with time or with their things. It all makes a huge difference, and it really does change people's lives...[It] truly helps them kind of turn that corner," she said.

Terri likens the role of Home Starter to the allegory of a slew of stranded starfish--you can't save everyone, but you can make a difference in the lives of those who you are able to help.



He Was a Leader Who Sought Peace at All Costs

He was Chief of the Chieftans in the 17th-century and leader of a large multi-tribal confederation of the Abenaki People. Chief Passaconaway governed many indigenous groups of people from Concord, NH all the way south to Lowell, MA, including territory on which our church sits. But his most important legacy was his desire and ability to achieve peace, first with the Mohawk Nation and other smaller tribes, and later with the arrival of European settlers.

Chief Passaconaway understood that having a larger protective force would provide threat enough to discourage rival native groups such as the Mohawk Nation from attacking his people. He therefore called together numerous Pennacook tribes to form an alliance as safety from raids from native tribes including the Mohawk Nation. And it worked! The Abenaki People in the Pennacook confederacy were able to live peacefully throughout Southern New Hampshire, Southwestern Maine and Northern Massachusetts, moving from place to place depending on the season and the needs of his people.

This peace and prosperity was once again challenged with the arrival of the European settlers. Passaconaway came to believe that resistance was futile. Despite insults, killings, and theft from the newly arrived English settlers, Passaconaway continued to believe that the spirits were directing him to interact in peace. He therefore promoted coexistence with the settlers. In reality, it is believed that Passaconaway's large band of warriors might have annihilated English colonists. But Passaconaway was a visionary and he could see that peaceful cohabitation would allow his people the most freedom to live a productive life. When famine and disease killed many of his people, Passaconaway leased land no longer essential to indigenous survival to the English, leaving small swaths of land for indigenous fishing rights. When Passaconaway's son, Wonalancet, was held hostage by a group of colonists, Passaconaway pledged peace if his son was released. In 1644, Passaconaway formally submitted to colonial authority when Wonalancet and his family were set free.

In a farewell speech, Passaconaway urged his people to live in perpetual harmony with the English. Passaconaway passed away around 1665 with little recorded detail. A popular legend claims he was carried up to Mount Washington on a wolf-drawn sled before ascending to heaven in a flash of fire. Due to his peaceful policies, Passaconaway was posthumously celebrated by non-native New Englanders, and his name is commemorated by Mount Passaconaway and other landmarks in New Hampshire. His son, Wonalancet, continued Passaconaway's peace-seeking legacy as the new Chief of Chieftans.

Sections extracted from: Heald, B.D., *A History of the New Hampshire Abenaki*, The History Press, 2014,
Submitted by: *The CCA Racial Justice Team*

SHARE Food Pantry

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

November Pantry Requests:

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

Donations may be left in our SHARE collection containers found in the narthex, the church office, and outside the community room. Donations may also be brought directly to the SHARE Center in Milford; if you are unsure where, please call their office at 673-9898.



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.



Many thanks for your continuing support!



Who Sits in the Pews (or Online)? (a.k.a. “Know Your Neighbor”)

Steve and Deb Boczenowski

Life is what we make of it, and we’re all in “it” together. Dousing pain with purpose can buoy spirits and enrich the lives of those whose circles surround us, helping love and light to ripple out into the world. It’s those ripples that heal us.

Steve and Deb Boczenowski are living proof of this. “I think the way we live is to help others, to serve,” said Deb. “That is what we do—whatever we’re participating in we help out.”

The Boczenowskis, retirees who recently celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary, met as college sweethearts pursuing math degrees at Northeastern University. They

entered the workforce as software engineers. But over time they pivoted, organically, toward making the world better for others—Deb as a home daycare provider during their kids’ younger years and ultimately as a middle school math teacher, Steve as a computer security engineer and a passionate advocate for affordable housing by serving on the board of a local chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

The loss of their 21-year-old son, Jeffrey, to suicide 15 years ago shifted Deb’s and Steve’s focus once more. It prompted them to create the Massachusetts-based non-profit Teenage Anxiety & Depression Solutions (TADS), which for seven years helped hundreds before dissolving when they moved to NH.

TADS provided an ear, a shoulder and—thanks to fundraising that allowed them to purchase a multi-town service that matched residents with available mental health professionals and that confirmed insurance coverage—a referral service for families struggling with teen mental health issues.

“We believe Jeffrey’s story is very typical—that his depression came upon him in adolescence and we just couldn’t get ahead of it,” said Steve. “The story is more common than you’d believe, because nobody talks about it. When you have kids struggling like that your first job is to try to heal your kid so you don’t want to tell the whole world about it and it’s a very private thing.” But, Deb interjected, “if we talked about it maybe we could learn things from other people—what they’ve tried and what they’re doing, and you wouldn’t feel so isolated on your journey.” Steve responded with, “Exactly!”

Jeffrey’s death “changed our lives,” said Deb and Steve. Many of those changes, the creation of TADS included, were positive ones.

Their tragedy set balls in motion that ultimately led Deb and Steve to living under one mutually supportive roof here in Amherst with their daughter, Stephanie, their son-in-law, Matt Emmons, and their four “young and active” grandchildren, who were all born within 2 ½ years of each other (thanks to medical and adoptive blessings).

“They help us, and we help them. We’re glad we’re all together...It’s been nearly eight years and it’s working—it’s great,” said Deb, an avid crafter and consummate teacher. “Literally, the kids heal us,” she added.

Deb enjoys engaging with her grandkids, sowing seeds of faith on Sundays and, as time permits, passing along the sewing craft tradition that she learned from her mother and grandmother. (Most of the family cooking is left to Matt.)

On the faith front, “we learned first-hand how important it is to be part of a loving church congregation when you experience difficult times,” Deb and Steve said. Noticing the rainbow affixed to the CCA’s exterior had been just the salve that they needed while healing from the negative repercussion of expressing Open and Affirming interest in their former UCC church, an experience that had left them spurned and unsupported during their time of raw grief following their son’s passing, they said.

Here at CCA, now, Steve keeps busy behind the scenes on the Widening Our Welcome (WOW) Team. He’s been very active with the You are Not Alone (YANA) initiative and, most recently, with the Out and Allied Monthly Social, as well.

Steve, currently a church delegate and a member of the choir, is also on the Pastoral Relations Team and on a new committee charged with reviewing CCA bylaws.

Steve and Deb Boczenowski, continued from page 8

Asked where he sees the church headed, Steve replied that he hopes that “everyone without exception” will come to feel “extravagantly welcome” in the CCA. To that end a recent Second Hour conversation on immigration aimed to target a potentially underserved population that had not previously been highlighted, he said.

Deb, who serves on the Christian Education Board and teaches preschool/kindergarten religious ed, concurred with Steve’s inclusive sentiment. But she added that she hoped children would be explored as a WOW concentration, too. “To me, that’s what draws more people in and feeling welcome, is when their kids feel welcome,” she said. (Hopefully WSITP can help with that sometime soon, pending parent approval. Stay tuned!)

As a member of the Woman’s Association, Deb provides a plethora of crafted goods for the WA Holiday Fair, which is coming up on Saturday, November 22, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. She’s even the craft donation contact person.

The fair will meander throughout the church’s lower level with offerings ranging from holiday handmades to re-giftable treasures, South Carolina pecans to Cabot cheese, raffle baskets to exceptional auction items...and Christmas decorations to make your season bright. (I promised Deb that I’d make a plug to promote the fair. How’d I do?)

Be on the lookout for Deb’s crocheted nylon netting pot scrubbers. She learned to make them 35 years ago—specifically for church fairs—and has been selling them ever since!

She’ll also have embroidered book pillows, landscape purses, tea towels and other items. But the American Girl doll outfits that she crafted when her daughter was young remain only a fond memory of church fundraisers gone by.

**Manchester True Collaborative’s
Out & Allied
Monthly Social!**



Sunday, September 7th
Sunday, October 5th
Sunday, November 2nd
Sunday, December 7th

3PM TO 5PM

**ALL LGBTQ+ folks and allies welcome! Come
socialize and meet some new people!
Please bring a snack or non-alcoholic drink
to share!**



**Manchester True
Collaborative**
72 Concord St.
Manchester, NH



Who Sits in the Pews (and Online)? (a.k.a. “Know Your Neighbor”)

We worship together. Some of us work in direct service to God, congregation or needs outside our church doors. Perhaps we enjoy a bit of fellowship. Maybe, simply, our warm smiles silently touch the hearts of those who need them most as we “pass the peace” each Sunday.

We are a community—a faith family—but how much do we truly understand each other’s core? New members are introduced to the congregation. But typically those who have prayed together for decades are never re-introduced.

So, here’s your chance to more fully embrace the sense of community that is the Congregational Church of Amherst.

Share and shine with us—tell us about yourself or your family. We’ll publish periodic member spotlights in *The Spire* throughout the year...for as long as it takes!

Below are a few questions to get the ball rolling. Submit your responses to patty_cc@yahoo.com. Patty Jillson will contact you for clarification or additional insights.

- Individual or Family Surname(s):
- Individual First Name(s):
- Preferred Contact: (phone, email)
- How long have you been with the Congregational Church of Amherst? What brought you here?
- What roles do your faith and this community play in your life? How have they helped you?
- What do you like most about the CCA?
- Do you have a favorite CCA memory that you’d like to share? If so, please do.
- What else would you like to share? (Perhaps a life’s motto or goal, a job or hobby, an obstacle overcome, a current struggle, a fun factoid?) What makes you “tick?”

Thank you for sharing!

Invitation to Help Decorate Holiday Wreaths and Greens

Do you like to decorate for the holidays? If so, please come to one of the wreath and greenery workshops, where WA members and others will be decorating wreaths and greenery arrangements to be sold at the Woman's Association Holiday Fair. The WA will hold two decorating workshops, one on Monday, November 17, and the other on Tuesday, November 18, both from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the church vestry (downstairs).

Anyone interested in helping is welcome to come on one or both days. If you can, please bring greens, containers for greens and your inspiration! A variety of decorating supplies will be available. It promises to be a festive time, and beverages and snacks will be provided. If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Wight at 603-345-0155.



WA Holiday Fair Saturday, November 22

Mark your calendar for this year's Holiday Fair which will take place on November 22, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The lower level of the church building will be transformed into a holiday wonderland full of features to delight shoppers of all ages.

We will have one of a kind craft items, wreaths, ornaments, holiday decorations, baked goods, pecans, cheese, jewelry, handbags, collectibles, and gifts for all ages. In addition, children can purchase gift items for \$15 or less at a table set up just for them.

The WA welcomes help with Fair preparations Here are some ways that you can help:

- crafting (at home or on Monday mornings with WA members),
- helping with creating holiday wreaths or arrangements (see separate article),
- donating potential silent auction items (gift certificates, experiences, special gift items),
- donating "giftable" items for the Treasures section of the Fair,
- baking for the bake shop,
- helping with set-up and/or clean-up,
- working at the Fair.

Don't miss this festive and special event. You can contact the WA through the church website (wa@ccamherst.org) with any questions or to volunteer, or feel free to talk to Adrienne Topliffe, Sally Bowkett or any other WA member for more information.

WA Fair Raffle Baskets

One of the Holiday Fair highlights is the raffle baskets, and we need your help to make them a success. The WA is accepting items for two of our popular baskets, the *Made in New Hampshire* basket and the *Chocolate* basket.

Please contact Gail Miller (Five0vNine@yahoo.com) for donations or questions.

The baskets will be on display in the community room on Sunday, November 16 during fellowship time.

Fair Bake Shop

The WA Holiday Fair is **Saturday, November 22** and we need your help providing homemade baked goods for our very popular bakery! The WA is asking church members for a variety of homemade items to sell! Donations of pies, coffee cakes, holiday cookies, fudge, candy and spiced nuts would be greatly appreciated.

Please drop off bakery items in the vestry on Friday, Nov. 21 between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. or before 8:30 a.m. the morning of the fair. This gives us time to price and prep the donations. Thank you in advance for your delicious contributions!

Questions?

Anita Swanson:

neetoswanson@comcast.net
(603) 673-7612

Joan Poltack:

jpoltack@comcast.net
(603) 672-2728

Sara Phelps: kalben1@comcast.net





FAMILY
Christmas
CONCERT

SUNDAY
DECEMBER 14, 2025
4:00 PM

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sacred and Popular Christmas Songs
Choral and Instrumental Classics
Sing-A-Long Holiday Favorites

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ
11 CHURCH ST, AMHERST NH

SARA PHELPS, Music Director
CHANCEL CHOIR
HANDBELL CHOIR
YOUTH CHOIR
MICHAEL HAVAY, Piano/Organ
SUE WERST, Flute



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