



# VILLAGE SPIRE

June 2026

## Caregiver's Circle Group Continues in Summer



We are pleased to announce that the Caregivers Circle Support Group will continue to

meet throughout the summer. Summer can bring unique challenges and changes in routine, and you don't have to navigate your caregiving journey alone, especially during the busy summer months. We recognize that while schedules change, the need for support does not. Whether you need to talk about the difficulties, share a recent win, or simply connect with others who understand, the Caregivers Circle Support Group is a reliable and welcoming resource.

We meet on the third Tuesday of the month in June and July, and the 4th Tuesday in August –

**June 16, July 21, August 25**

**10:00 am - 11:30 am.**

Church Parlor, second floor

Join us in the Church Parlor for an hour and a half of shared encouragement and practical resources. Newcomers are always welcome.

For more information, please contact the Rev. Charlotte E.Y. Bell, [pastorcharlotte@ccamherst.org](mailto:pastorcharlotte@ccamherst.org), or call (603) 673-3231 x14.

## Summer Sanctuary

Rev. Maureen Frescott, Senior Pastor

June 2026

Fewer announcements. Summer music. Shorter services. Lemonade on the Lawn. Room to breathe. These are some of the things we may look forward to as we transition to summer worship here at CCA. From early September to mid-June, we do a lot on Sunday mornings. We have thriving programs for children and youth, fabulous Chancel and Bell Choirs, active outreach ministries, and we embrace our identity as a welcoming, transforming, sending congregation by incorporating these themes and their connecting ministries into our Sunday worship. That can make for a full service. As we welcome new members, celebrate baptisms and communion, give Bibles to our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, commission our teachers and Confirmants, lift up our work in the community, invite our youth to participate in worship, include Stewardship testimonials, and add in all the associated worship elements and rituals of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.

Then there are all the after-worship activities that we incorporate: Second Hour presentations, children's choirs, congregational meetings and forums, youth gatherings, Christian Education and Racial Justice Team meetings, and the extra time many of us spend at Coffee Hour, catching up and making connections. While we make the space for all of the above, many of us then run off to family gatherings, sporting events, concerts, DIY projects, volunteering elsewhere, or afternoon work shifts, making for very full Sundays indeed.

Some of this doesn't go away in the summer, as family gatherings, work obligations, and caregiving demands continue to fill our Sunday afternoons, but at least our Sunday mornings are a little less full. And yes, our pews are less full as well. As our Church School and Choirs take well deserved time off, and others travel, or spend weekends at summer houses, or prefer to spend the morning sipping coffee on their backyard deck, with the worship livestream playing in the background.

In New Hampshire, we're lucky if we get three or four months where we can open the windows, take a walk without putting on multiple layers, spend time digging in our gardens, or just sit outside reading a book and enjoying a warm breeze. We also don't have much of a break from the busyness dictated by school, sports, and family schedules. So, my advice to all of you is this: enjoy this time to breathe.

The challenge of the work we do in God's name is that as rewarding as it may be, it requires time to rest, recharge, and renew in order to be our "best selves" - or even our "best that we can be right now" selves. Sitting in the sanctuary on Sunday morning, or watching worship from afar, may be all the connecting that we need or can handle during the summer. And that's okay. When we say from the pulpit, "No matter who you are, or where you are on your journey, you are welcome here," we mean it.

## 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.

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### 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  
*Church Office Administrator*  
*Organist*  
officeadmin@ccamherst.org

Larissa Riley  
*Director of Youth Ministries*  
churchschool@ccamherst.org

## Share Your Music with Us This Summer

Are you interested in providing music for Summer worship?

The Chancel Choir and Bell Choir take time off from weekly rehearsals and Sunday worship during the summer months. This is a wonderful opportunity to share your talent with us!

Soloists or small groups are enlisted each week to provide a selection for the special music slot in the worship service. Music for preludes, offertories, and postludes are also options. Summer Sundays begin June 21 and run through Labor Day weekend. Michael Havay is available for accompanying.



I will be coordinating the schedule and I am happy to help with music selections. Sundays are already starting to fill up, so contact me to discuss a schedule that works for you.

Sara Phelps, Music Director

## New Walking Group Starting June 3

Join Pastor Charlotte, along with church members and friends, Wednesday mornings (rain or shine) promptly at 9:00 am for a weekly walk-around the Amherst Village and back to the church, approximately one mile.

We will meet outside the church on the front steps and leave together as we begin our walk. We'll walk around the Village green, past the library, take a



right on Davis Lane onto Foundry Street, and walk through Meadowview Cemetery, returning to the church. Folks are welcome to do a second lap if they would like! For those who are one-and-done, that's great too!

Wear sneakers or comfortable walking shoes, and carry your own water. Friends, strollers, and well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcome! No sign up necessary. If you have questions, reach out to Pastor Charlotte via email at pastorcharlotte@ccamherst.org

## **Summer Sanctuary**, continued from page 1

Conversely, if you spend three seasons of the year teaching Church School, or attending choir rehearsals, or carrying furniture up and down stairs for Home Starter, take the time you need to step away for the summer. You've earned it.

Yes, we are the Church, year-round. But even God took time for sabbath after the creation of the universe. Take advantage of this time to feel the sun on your face, to smell the sea, to visit with those you haven't seen in a while, to renew your relationship with the beauty of God's created world. Regardless of what your summer looks like, we invite you to find sanctuary - in our sanctuary - and beyond.

Peace and blessings, *Pastor Maureen*

## **Meet Our New Members**

On Sunday, May 3rd and 17th we welcomed five new members into our church family!

**Becky Fitzgerald** lives here in Amherst with her husband, Sean. She's worked as a corporate attorney for an environmental company, and as a Deputy Sheriff in Massachusetts, where she was born and raised. Becky has been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, which led to her leaving her job as an attorney, which she loved. Since then, she's been volunteering and has become involved with various community groups here in Amherst, as well as our church, which she is so grateful to have found.

**Dan Grainger** is a retired US Marine who now works in construction management for National Grid, where he designs and builds high voltage transmission systems. He's lived in Virginia, California, North Carolina, and now in Merrimack, NH, where he lives with his wife, Cassie, three dogs and a cat, who keep them busy, and chickens, who keep them entertained. They also have a 26-year-old son, Gavin, who lives with his spouse in Idaho. Dan loves volunteering and anything that keeps him outside and active.

**Jeanne Hochstetler** is a retired Technical Writer and English Teacher (high school and college). She was born in Maine, and has lived in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, California, Tennessee. She now lives in Milford with her cat, Truffles. Jeanne's husband, Donald, passed away in November 2024. They have three adult children: Grant (46), Katie (43), and Jill (41) and three grandchildren. Jeanne loves to swim and be on the water in canoes and kayaks. She's a quilter and a crocheter, and volunteers for Home Health and Hospice.

**Rita King** is a retired CPA and investment manager. She lives in Amherst with her husband, Leigh. They have two adult children, Ryan and Jessica, and one elderly cat, Fiona. Rita was previously a member of First Church of Christ, UCC, in Simsbury, CT. She enjoys hiking, pottery, and gardening. Rita also enjoys ringing in our Bell Choir!

**Melissa Lewis** is a familiar face to many of us. She serves as our Nursery Coordinator down in our vestry. She's also the daughter of Charlotte and Ken Bell and was once a member of our Senior High Youth Group. Melissa works at High Mowing Waldorf School in enrollment and communication, and lives in Mont Vernon with her husband, Christopher. They have four children - Evie (19), Rory (18), Ella (15), and Rosa (13), who often helps her in the nursery. Melissa loves photography, dance, nature, and "all dogs."

## **Special Guest Speaker at Milford Juneteenth Celebration**

On Saturday, June 20, 2026, at 5 pm, join us at the Church of Our Saviour, 10 Amherst St, Milford for the **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Juneteenth Celebration of Freedom**. There will be live music and food, as well as a special presentation by James T. McKim, former president of the Manchester NAACP. Mr. McKim is a leader in raising awareness of the discrimination that happens in New Hampshire and in working effortlessly toward systemic change. Food or cash donations for Share Outreach will be accepted. **Save the date!**



*Mr. James T. McKim*

## **Summer Newsletter Schedule**

The *Village Spire* newsletter takes a break during the summer months, and there will be no publications for July or August. We'll be sure to keep you up-to-date on church news through email. Not on our enews list? Contact Michael at [officeadmin@ccamherst.org](mailto:officeadmin@ccamherst.org).

The September issue of the *Spire* will be published the last week of August. The deadline to submit newsletter articles for that issue is **August 15**.

## Register Now for Vacation Bible School

This summer, we'll be going back in time to *Hometown Nazareth: Where Jesus was a kid!* Each day will begin with a new Bible story, followed by games, crafts, science, snacks, music and more. Children will have a blast and make new friends while learning about Jesus's life.



**Dates:** August 3-7, 2026

**Time:** 9am - noon daily

**Ages:** Preschoolers - rising 5th graders

**Cost:** \$30 per child (financial assistance is available - contact Larissa)

**T-shirts:** Pre-Order only - \$10 each (shirts will NOT be sold during VBS week)

**Youth Volunteers:** rising 6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> graders are needed to assist adult leaders and guide younger children (no charge)

**Register for VBS online by July 27: [www.ccamherst.org/vbsreg](http://www.ccamherst.org/vbsreg)**

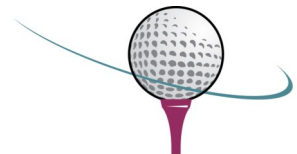
Contact Larissa Riley or Gretchen Davis with questions

## 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 \$12,500.00) and printing the tickets.
- ◆ Milford Rotary Club solicits all the great coupons included on every ticket.
- ◆ You could win! Two years ago one of the tickets we sold was the grand prize winner of \$5,000.00, last year one of our tickets was the 3rd prize winner of \$1,250.00
- ◆ The church could win! Many of the tickets sold name the church on the raffle stub. Several years ago, the church was the 3<sup>rd</sup> prize winner of \$1,250.00

## Milford Rotary's 100 Holes of Golf



## Raffle Tickets

In the 6 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 at coffee hour or 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 19, 2026 during the 100 Holes of Golf event, and you do not need to be present to win.

## Youth Ministries Year-End Wrap Up

Our **Church School** children have had a great year of fun, learning, and growth on Sunday mornings. Regular classes are over until fall, but we are looking forward to a special worship service on June 7<sup>th</sup> with all of our children and teens.

The **Junior Youth Group** will resume in September. Some of this year's highlights included assembling Birthday Bags & Hygiene Kits, serving lunch at the Mill Apartments, and visiting an Escape Room.

The **Confirmation Class** teens and mentors will gather for their Celebration Dinner on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. CCA teens will be confirmed on June 7<sup>th</sup> during worship and those from the Congregational Church of Hollis will be confirmed at their church on June 14<sup>th</sup>. It was great to see the teens connect and explore their faith together this year.

The **Senior Youth Group** has had a busy year. In addition to Sunday evening meetings, the teens have brought donations to the SHARE food pantry, participated in worship services, assisted with Church School, and volunteered at community events. The return of the SYG Spaghetti Supper & Variety Show was a highlight for all! SYG teens are now making final preparations for the Mission Trip to Savannah, GA on July 5<sup>th</sup>. Once in GA, they will be repairing homes with the City of Savannah's *Home Repair Program*, as well as working with *The Salvation Army* and *Old Savannah City Mission* to help people in need of food, clothing, and shelter.

**SYG Cookie Walk** - On May 10<sup>th</sup>, the SYG teens sold cookies and other homemade treats to the congregation after worship. The cookies were gone in record time and \$377 was raised to support this year's Mission Trip. THANK YOU to all that purchased cookies! The pictures below are from the event.

### YOUTH MINISTRIES





## CCA 4th of July Celebrations in 1976

Sue Spiess, Historian

As we prepare to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary, it seems appropriate to relate two events that took place in the Congregational Church 50 years ago, during the 1976 Bicentennial Celebration. The first was reported in the *Milford Cabinet* on July 8, 1976; the second was recounted last year by Bill McKellar, in the book *Home: A Sense of Place, A Sense of Belonging*. Both accounts have been edited for length.

On July 4th, 1976, our church held a special service, and the newly formed vocal group, the Amherst Singers performed. According to the *Milford Cabinet*, the normally staid Congregational Church of Amherst was rocked with spontaneous applause during the July 4th Historical Observation services following a stirring rendition of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir arrangement by Peter J. Wilhousky of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" sung by the Amherst Singers under the direction of Marcia Perry, as well as "Hymn to America" composed by Mrs. Perry, and "America the Beautiful."

The group was composed of local residents "with a wide range of everyday vocations from educator to artist and from sales to judge." Longtime residents today may recognize several names, including Marguerite Brockway, Judi Dunlap, Theresa Kelley, Pixie Lown, Harriet O'Neill, Lucy Ramsey, Norma Specter, Marcia Bowler, Pat Duval, Sally Dyer, Pat Fitzgibbon, Marge Lombard, Helene Pierce, Dottie and Jim Gauvreau, Herb Oliver, Jim Pierce, Sharon Whitehouse, Bob Barton, Bill Drescher, Don Chenard, and Jack Haulenbeek.

A different "performance" occurred on the night of July 3. The town fathers, tired of kids setting off fireworks and the fireman ringing the church bell for an hour at midnight, decided to bring in the police. A huge crowd assembled before midnight on July 3rd to protest the police plans; the firemen joined the crowd because the police were blocking the door, preventing their entry. As Bill McKellar recounts in his "Exploits on the Fourth of July."

"My friend Jad Brown and I, both rock-climbers, were in front of the church, and hatched a plan to circumvent the police to uphold the tradition. I rode my bike home and picked up my rock-climbing rope and harness. Jad went home and got an extension ladder. With the help of an assistant, we put the ladder up on the back annex of the church and climbed up to the ridge of that building, offset from the main building but attached. We lifted the ladder, carrying it to the annex peak so we could reach the slate roof on the east side of the back of the church. Standing on the top of that ladder, we executed a pull up so that we could swing a leg over onto the slate roof and climb to the ridge of the main church building.

Once we got on the roof, our assistant removed the ladder and took it away, leaving us on top of the church. We carefully went along the back of the belfry and climbed inside a small, unlocked window to a catwalk with a small ladder that went through a trap door. Soon we sitting next to the giant, spectacular bell. The view was great. At 11:45, we looked over the front edge and saw the assembled crowd and heard the protest getting louder.

*Continued page 7*





## SHARE Food Pantry

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

### **June Pantry Requests:**

Canned Ham  
Canned Meats/Tuna/Chicken  
Mac and Cheese  
Pasta (all sorts)  
Progresso & Chunky Soups

### **July Pantry Requests:**

Canned Fruit  
Flour, Sugar  
Coffee, Tea, Juice  
Instant Rice  
Cold Cereal  
Instant Oatmeal Packets  
Individually Wrapped Snacks

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.

**Many Thanks for your continued support!**

### **CCA 4th of July - Continued from page 6**

The actual hourly chimes were played through speakers, but the bell was fully functional. We tested its movement as we waited, and the noise and firemen's protest grew louder as it got closer to midnight.

At midnight, the speakers began to chime to ring in the Fourth of July. We began to move the bell and as the chimes on the speakers concluded 10, 11, 12, we rocked bell into full motion and then after 12, we hit 13, 14, 15, as a huge cheer erupted from the crowd below.

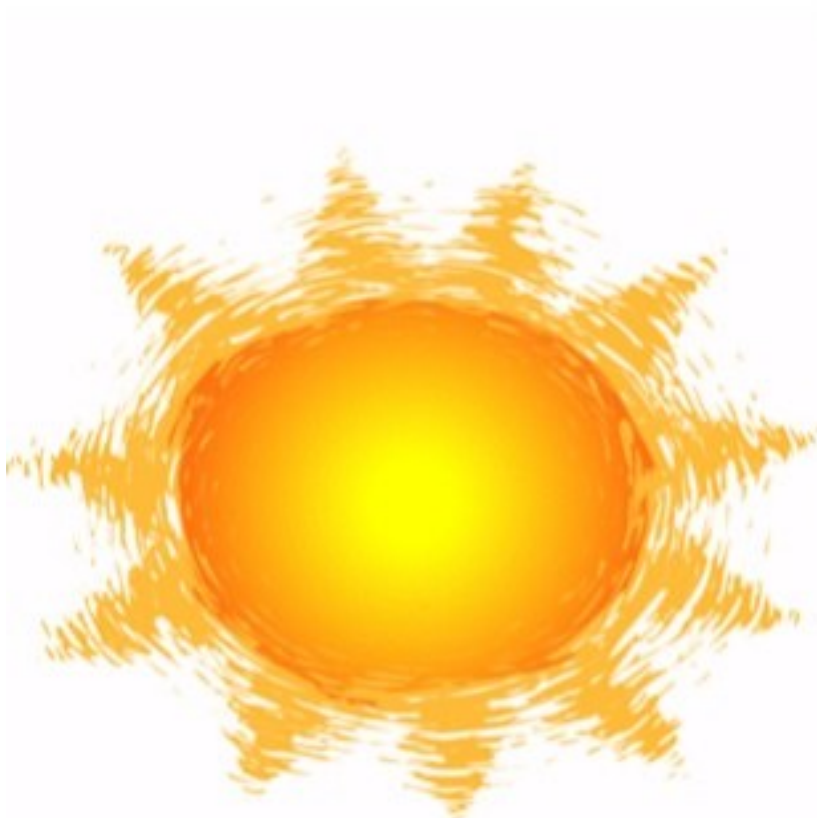
We continued for 45 minutes, then decided we needed an exit strategy. I went down through the belfry out the back window to a cast-iron furnace chimney vent coming through the slate roof on the west side of the building. With my harness on and rope around my shoulders, I slid down and grabbed the vent. I then took my rope and looped it around the chimney vent and clipped my harness in. At 1:00 am, Jad exited the belfry, putting the window back in place. He carefully slid down to where I had located our repell and since we had only one harness, he sat on my shoulders, and I repelled us down almost to the ground. We landed in a heap with the rope on top of us, just as a police officer came around the corner and told us to stop or he would shoot. We didn't stop. We ran off into the back swamp well behind the church and hid for over an hour, with flashlights scanning for us. But we were not found.

We later returned to the scene to receive kudos from our friends and spectators. We celebrated our victory by going swimming at Enright's Quarry, feeling a great sense of accomplishment that we had helped to uphold such an important tradition, and listening to the sound of Freedom on the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence."

While some may doubt the veracity of this tale, and no evidence has been found in the church Annual Report or in the Milford Cabinet, several people who were present have verified this story.

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

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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PERMIT NO. 4  
AMHERST, NH



# Summer Worship 10:00 am

# June 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 10:00am WA Workshop	2 5:30pm Church Council 6:00pm Confirmation Class Dinner & Rehearsal 7:00pm Trustees of the Facility	3	4 8:15am Wilkins School History Tours 6:00pm Bell Choir 6:00pm Safety Review Team 7:30pm Chancel Choir	5	6
7 10:00am Worship 11:15am Fellowship Time	8 10:00am WA Workshop	9 10:00am WA Board 7:00pm Diaconate 7:00pm Communications Team	10	11 PIV last day for some classes 10:00am Congregational Care 6:00pm Safety Review Team	12 PIV last day of school 4:30pm PIV Ice Cream Social	13 11:00am Memorial Service for Hamilton Stewart
14 10:00am Worship 11:15am Fellowship Time 11:30am Youth Choir 11:30am Racial Justice Team 1:00pm Gascoyne Piano Recital	15 10:00am WA Workshop	16 10:00am Caregivers Circle	17	18 6:00pm Safety Review Team	19	20
21 10:00am Worship 11:15am Fellowship Time 11:30am Christian Ed	22 4:00pm WOW Team	23 4:00pm WOW Team	24	25 6:00pm Safety Review Team	26	27 12:00pm Frederick Douglass Speech Reading
28 10:00am Worship 11:15am Fellowship Time	29 7:00pm World Service Team	30 7:00pm World Service Team				