Let’s Get Outside and Have Some Fun!

It is said that if you can walk, you can snowshoe. Please join us on Saturday, March 12 at Peabody Mill Environmental Center, 66 Brook Road, Amherst, for a snowshoe walk in the woods. We will meet at 1:00 p.m. in the PMEC parking lot. As a group we will be able to rent snowshoes for $4 per person. Snowshoes are available for children and adults. RSVP to heatherreagan@comcast.net if you would like to attend, as PMEC would like an estimated headcount. Hope to see you there!

We’d Love Your Input!

Please join us for a small group gathering to discuss the proposed reorganization of the church leadership with the goal of achieving an efficient and energizing church.

You may ask: “What’s all this talk about reorganizing the church?” Over a year ago, the Moderator asked Don Lyon to perform a review of the bylaws. At the same time, our Long Range Planning Committee requested that he look at decision making. In doing this work, Don and an ad hoc group comprised of Herb Archer and Gretchen Pyles, tapped numerous CCA stakeholders, including the Long Range Planning Committee, other committee chairs, Church Council, Trustees, and our pastors. The team also reviewed four successful churches of various sizes, both inside and outside of the denomination, who had recently spent time reevaluating and restructuring their own organizations. Throughout this process, the team sought to strike a balance between our valued traditions and new possibilities of mission and ministry. They prayerfully developed initial concepts and vetted these back with each of the stakeholders noted above – winnowing, refining, altering through multiple iterations.

Rummage Now Being Accepted!

For the Woman’s Associations’ Spring Rummage Sale
April 8 and 9

It’s that time already!!! Winter is the perfect time to tidy-up your overflowing closets, drawers, basements, attics and other storage areas.

Bring your sorted bags of clothing and rummage to the WA workroom in the vestry. Also, JEWELRY, toys, linens, kitchen utensils, pots and pans, dinnerware, household items and décor.

Mention this perfect way to get rid of stuff to family, friends and neighbors: clothes you don’t wear anymore, clothes that don’t fit, that you never liked, things take up too much space, etc. Duplicate kitchen stuff, gadgets you never use, gift items that are never going to be opened, etc.

Sorry but we cannot accept TVs, computer equipment, baby furniture, bicycles, textbooks/technical manuals, large furniture or appliances.

SHARE Food Pantry

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

March Pantry Requests:
apple juice, canned meats, side dishes (seasoned pasta mixes, Hamburger Helper, etc.), sandwich bread

Donations may be left in the cupboard in the narthex, or in the marked containers near the community room. Thank you for your continuous support!
We’d Love Your Input!, continued from page 1

As they prepared for their second meeting with Council, the team came to the conclusion that because of the significant scope of this effort, they wanted input from as many members as possible. They ran a test group of 12 representatives of the church after worship late last year who offered the suggestion that they organize small group meetings, held mostly in members’ homes, with one or two small meetings also scheduled at the church. Eleven members have generously offered to host these sessions (let us know if you’d like to as well.) The small group gatherings that have space available include:

- **Thursday, March 3** at 7:00 p.m. at Don and Carol Lyon's home, 23 Upham Road, Amherst.
- **Monday, March 7** at 7:00 p.m. at John and Anita Swanson’s home, 52 Christian Hill Road, Amherst.
- **Sunday, March 13** at 2:00 p.m. at Scott and Mary Ellen Hettinger’s home, 40 Middlesex Road, Merrimack.
- **Thursday, March 17** at 1:30 p.m. in the church parlor.

The following meetings are now full:

- **Monday, March 14** at 7:00 p.m. at Dick and Sue Stout's home, 20 Buckridge Drive, Amherst.
- **Tuesday, March 22** at 6:00 p.m. at Art and Vicky Leknes’ home, 17 Greenbriar Lane, Amherst.
- **Tuesday, March 29** at 7:00 p.m. at Roger and Sally Hooper's home, 10 Foundry Street, Amherst.

Signup sheets for these small group meetings will be available at coffee hour after church or you can e-mail Gretchen Pyles at nhpyles@yahoo.com. Please take a moment to sign up for one of these sessions. Your thoughts are important to us!

A Few Words About the Weather...

Church Closings Due to Bad Weather:

It’s rare, but it happens. A snowstorm last year forced us to cancel our worship service. We hope this does not happen again anytime soon, but as we all know, New England weather is ever changing and at times quite unpredictable. In case of bad weather and the need to cancel a worship service, we will do our best to get the word out. Tune in to WMUR Channel 9 television, WZID 95.7 FM radio, WMLL 96.5 FM radio, or WFEA 1370 AM radio to check for a cancellation notice. We will also leave a recorded message on the church answering system (673-3231), and will post a notice on our website and our Facebook page.

Beware of Falling Snow and Ice:

It is that time of year again when we must remind everyone that snow and ice may fall from our roof at any time. Please use caution when in our driveway, and do not walk too close to the building.
The Crucifixion

As I stood there beneath the cross, I was horrified. I was a mess. How can someone as loving as Jesus have human beings do something this terrible to him? I don’t understand! He had been suffering on the cross for what seemed like forever, and it was almost a relief to see he could no longer feel the pain. Right at that moment, the horrible Roman soldiers, jeering, put a sponge of what smelled pungently of vinegar up to his nose. He started choking in air trying to inhale, but he was unable to do so because of his pressured lungs. Some of the people started to cheer. This is so messed up—on a hundred different levels. It began to grow dark as he again stilled. This time when the soldiers approached they unsheathed their swords and stabbed his body to make sure he was dead. Out gushed a mixture of blood and water. There was a murmur from the crowd and then they dispersed, some of them satisfied, others feeling angry and sad.”

The Empty Tomb

“I’m standing in front of his empty tomb, and I’m devastated. I don’t believe he’s here. I don’t see him; he’s gone. How can you believe in the truth when you have no proof? He’s gone. What happened to him? If you can’t see something, does that mean he’s gone forever? Mary told us she...
Once a month, our groups come together for a time of sharing and discussion. In March, our topic is "God’s Plan: Does Everything Happen for a Reason?" Do you believe that God has a ‘master plan’ for each of our lives? Have you ever felt guided or nudged by God to go in one direction rather than another? Do you see serendipitous events as coincidences and random occurrences, or do you see God’s hand directing these events? What plan might God have for us as a faith community?

March Meeting Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Group Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Tuesday</td>
<td>1:30 – 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Wednesday</td>
<td>7:00 – 8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>March 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Sunday</td>
<td>11:30 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>March 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upcoming Group Discussion Topics:

- **April:** Money
- **May:** Judgment and Grace
- **June:** Discipleship

If you’re interested in joining one of our groups, please contact Pastor Maureen at 673-3231 x14 - pastormaureen@ccamherst.org.
144 Envelopes Fun-Raiser

“May our youth be like plants full grown, may they be like corner pillars cut for the building of a palace.”
—Psalm 144

On Palm Sunday, March 20, our Senior High Youth Group is kicking off its “144 Envelopes” Fun-Raiser to help support the MISSION TRIP to NEW ORLEANS in June!

How does it work? Look for the SHYG bulletin board display in the community room. On it you’ll find info about our upcoming Mission Trip with YRNO (Youth Rebuilding New Orleans) along with 144 envelopes decorated by our teens. Each envelope will be numbered from 1 to 144.

You choose an envelope and make a donation to our youth in the amount equal to the number on the envelope. It’s that simple. If you choose envelope #1, you donate $1. If you choose envelope #144, you donate $144. We are grateful for every dollar given!

As an added BONUS, everyone who chooses an envelope and makes a donation on Palm Sunday will receive a complimentary box of cookies from our COOKIE WALK!

We have 45 fabulous teens in our Senior High Youth Group, which is something to be very proud of. Stop by, grab an envelope, and help our youth make a difference in the world!

Confirming Our Faith, continued from page 3

had seen him. But how can this be? When you’re gone, you’re gone. I don’t understand. Then Jesus showed up. I’m overwhelmed. So he’s not gone! I don’t stop believing when I stop seeing. He’s not here, but he’s here! It’s a miracle!”

Thomas Doubts - “The other disciples and I were sitting together, drinking wine, eating, carelessly talking and thinking many thoughts. We were still grieving, but we needed to be together again. Then Jesus walked in. I stood there and I watched Thomas’s eyes widen with surprise. The hands that were punctured and bleeding reached out to him from the one and only Jesus. All his doubt burst like a balloon. He was totally amazed, but with his own eyes he saw him in the flesh. I couldn’t move either. It seemed like a moment frozen in time. But I know for certain now, Jesus was raised from the dead! Talk about Good News!”

Later this month, come to our Maundy Thursday service (March 24 at 7:30 p.m.). Join us as we gather with other Christians on Good Friday (March 25 at 3:00 p.m. at St. Patrick Church). Then celebrate the incredible joy of Easter (March 27) at the sunrise service on the Common at 6:30 a.m. or at the uplifting festival service at 10:00 a.m. It will make a world of difference!

Grace and peace,
Dick

Are You Ready to Join?

Anyone interested in becoming, or just thinking about becoming a member of the Congregational Church of Amherst UCC, is cordially invited to attend one of the two orientation sessions scheduled for Thursday, March 10 and Tuesday, March 29 at 7:00 p.m. in the parlor. Find out more about our church and membership. For more information or to sign up for one of these two orientation sessions, please contact Andrea at 673-3231 or andrea@ccamherst.org. Also, feel free to talk to either pastor or any deacon (green name tag folks). We look forward to hearing from you.
Nathan Lord, born in Berwick, Maine in 1793, graduated from Bowdoin in 1809 at the age of 16. He taught at Phillips Academy, Exeter, NH for two years before studying theology at Andover Seminary where he graduated in 1817.

In the May 1999 Spire, Historian Gene Cronin wrote an excellent summary of his years in Amherst followed by his long tenure of 36 years as President of Dartmouth:

May 22, 1816 - The Reverend Nathan Lord is ordained as a minister to the Amherst Congregational Church. Nathan Lord came to our church at 23, a recent graduate of Bowdoin College. Secomb's History of Amherst describes him as a thoroughly educated man with a decided conviction and an iron will. He was our minister for 12 years and, for 35 years after that, president of Dartmouth College. Nathan Lord Drive was named in his honor.

While it might seem an easy task to praise a man with such a resume, he was a complex man whose life was contentious and tragic. Lord came to town as a colleague minister to assist Reverend Barnard, who had been minister since 1780. Barnard was in failing health and surely welcomed the help of a younger man.

Lord's congregation was difficult and, according to Secomb, when "called upon to reconcile or combat, he threw himself into it with his whole energy." The town, in those years, was subject to religious strife. According to Secomb, Barnard was a very accepting man and allowed visitors with different shades of Christian belief to share the Sunday pulpit with him. Lord, on the other hand, was a strict Calvinist who held with no diversity and once kept a popular minister with different views from preaching in the Meetinghouse.

A Dartmouth historian describes Lord's philosophy as "based upon a belief in the literal accuracy and inerrancy of Holy Writ" and he was said to have preached scripture from memory, "unbeknownst to his audience to whom his eyes were always camouflage by dark glasses." The Amherst congregation thought well of him and would have kept him in the pulpit longer, but Lord contracted a cold in 1826 that settled into his chest and halted his voice. Unable to preach, Lord left Amherst and went to Dartmouth in 1828.

At Dartmouth, in the 1860's, Lord's convictions and iron will ran afoul of changing times. Lord was pro-slavery. His strict interpretation of the Bible led him to say, "Slavery was incorporated into the civil institutions of Moses; it was recognized accordingly by Christ and his apostles. They condemned all intermeddlers with it." But, with the nation at civil war to end slavery, his views put him at odds with the many Dartmouth students and alumni in the Northern army. In 1863, the Dartmouth Trustees voted to remove Dr. Lord from office. The day before the removal took effect, he resigned.

The religious strife referred to was the over the growing Unitarian movement. Just months after his ordination, a group of church members left to form the Amherst Unitarian Society, publishing the required notice September 9, 1818. The departing members included prominent lawyer the Honorable Charles H. Atherton. Nationally, the Unitarians became a distinct church in Baltimore in 1819, so remote Amherst, NH was caught up in an emerging theological controversy. In 1822 the Amherst Unitarians unsuccessfully applied to the selectmen for the use of the town-owned meetinghouse for a Sunday to engage the Reverend Henry Ware of Cambridge, MA. Ware was the leader of the Unitarian movement at Harvard: in 1805 "Unitarian Henry Ware (1764–1845) was appointed as the Hollis professor of divinity at Harvard College; Harvard Divinity school then shifted from its conservative roots to teach Unitarian theology." Upon Ware's arrival for the speaking engagement, Reverend Lord presented him with a letter that denied him access to the meetinghouse; other church members concurred with their own letters. Ware spoke at the court house the following day, and 'his discourse was afterward published.'

The fact that the Amherst church still retained Reverend Bernard as co-minister, who was a Harvard trained minister, presented a curious situation that reflected the religious tension these divergent theologies created. In 1807, New England Congregationalists, who were concerned about "Unitarian" trends at Harvard College, had created a separate department of divinity with a Professor of Theology at Phillips Academy. In 1808 Calvinists went on to organize and found a new school, Andover Theological Seminary, Lord's alma mater.

'In the "Antinomian Controversy" of the first generation (of Puritans), they argued with intensity and bitterness whether or not people who lived righteously necessarily demonstrated a state of grace. This argument prefigured later arguments between free-will Arminians and predestination Calvinists.'

To learn more about The Unitarian Controversy and Its Puritan Roots, go to: http://uudb.org/articles/unitariancontroversy.html
The Congregational Church
11 Church Street
Amherst, NH 03031

I have seen

JOHN 20:18