

The Campaign for North Chapel Preserving Our History and Vibrant Community

In a town known for historic and beautiful buildings, the North Universalist Unitarian Chapel stands out. For nearly 200 years, the North Chapel has contributed to the historic, social and civic life of the town, and remains vital to life in Woodstock to the present day.

North Chapel's historic and civic presence in the life of Woodstock community and of the wider world underlies all aspects of the North Chapel's campaign goals. We envision a renewed presence for our beautiful and historic North Chapel facility and an expanded ability to serve present and future generations of our community.

The Campaign for North Chapel seeks to preserve and enhance our facility as a gathering place, community resource, and historic treasure; to strengthen the building's presence and contribution to the life of our communities; and ensure the continued use of the building by future generations by reinforcing and repairing key elements of the structure, and by upgrading the building's energy efficiency for its most effective and carbon-neutral use.

We invite you to join us in preserving the North Chapel as a place of historic significance and of community engagement and pride.

A Part of Woodstock History

Universalism came to Woodstock in 1786, just 25 years after the shire town was chartered and first settled. As was typical at that time in New England, Vermont residents were largely members of the Congregational Church, which was the established church until a dispute in the church caused some members, including Benjamin Emmons, Judge William Perry, Captain John Strong, and Dr. Stephen Powers, to leave and form the Universalist Society of Woodstock.

The building is part of the Woodstock Village Historic District and was entered in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The main church building was constructed in 1835—a historic two-story timber-frame structure with its striking sanctuary, and a three-story bell tower. An adjoining church parlor was built in 1885, adding a room and a kitchen. Today, this area houses the church offices and meeting rooms. In 2000, renovations and a further addition to the main building improved the church's social hall and kitchen facilities.

Adding to the church's historic significance is a bell cast by Paul Revere's foundry, one of five Revere bells in Woodstock and still used today by children, young and old. The church's noted pipe organ was built in 1875 for the prominent Boston organist, W. Eugene Thayer, and delivered in 1881 via the Woodstock Railroad. The organ was

purchased for the North Chapel through the influence of another notable Boston organist and composer, Woodstock-born Samuel B. Whitney. Restorations in 1969 and 2007 enable the beautiful instrument to be enjoyed in services and during organ concerts.

Part of a Vibrant Woodstock Community Today

The North Chapel continues to be a place for meeting, reflection, support and engagement—for members of the church, of the broader Woodstock community, and for visitors to the area.

For many years, North Chapel has welcomed community members, un-churched or of all faiths, to join our voices together and celebrate Christmas Eve. Two evening services fill the sanctuary to overflowing every year for these special candle-lit services.

The Amazing Grays gather once a month at the North Chapel to share thoughts and feelings about getting older and to support one another in the process.

The North Chapel was the incubator for and remains the home-base for the Change the World Kids, comprised of energetic local teenagers in grades 7-12 dedicated to making the world a better place. The Change the World Kids complete jobs for those who need assistance, help in emergency situations locally, and work to preserve the global environment.

For several years now, the Change the Word Kids have offered Anti-Cabin Fever Dinners, working with local area chefs to create and serve warm and welcoming community meals in the North Chapel Social Hall on a weekly basis throughout the mid-winter.

Free pizza on summer evenings, made fresh in a wood-fired pizza oven, an inspiration and gift of our former minister Daniel Jantos, who not only knew how to build such an oven, but also the value of gathering people around good food and a fire.

Sustainable Woodstock, a local non-profit that seeks to inspire, organize and empower people to encourage a vibrant community, promote a thriving local economy, and educate community members about how to conserve and protect natural resources grew out of North Chapel. Members work hand-in-hand on sustainable projects.

Our strategic goal of addressing climate change is focused on moving toward a more carbon-neutral environment. Hard work and dedication of several passionate gardeners in North Chapel have turned a large section of grass alongside the church into a beautiful and thriving permaculture garden. Planned upgrades to the insulation in the building will help save energy, and make progress toward the goal of a becoming a more carbon-neutral space. With good stewardship of its energy and space, North Chapel looks forward to fostering community meals and other gatherings—as part of reaching out, engaging, and, and connecting—well into the future.