

# STEEPLE VIEWS

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION*



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JULY 2024

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## The Pastor's Page

### Long and Winding Roads

Rev. Larry Brickner-Wood

Here we are in summer, such a glorious time here in northern New England. Yes, we have had our share of rain, cold streaks, heat waves, flooding, thunderstorms and power outages. Such things contribute to our reputation for the New England quality of resiliency, and we are resilient.

Sometimes it may seem like the erratic and changing nature of the weather mirrors our lives, that can be on roller coasters of joy and sadness, triumph and defeat, celebration and despair. Or we can just be in that neutral zone, where things are just “okay” or “not too bad.” We are not static, stagnant beings, nor are our lives a straight line. Our lives, no matter our age, are usually long and winding roads, complete with the full experience of living.

As we say in the United Church of Christ, “whoever you are and wherever you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” This is more than just a nice slogan, motto or phrase. It is the epitome of Jesus’ ministry. It is a beautiful and vivid description of our God who wants to be in relationship with us, and to meet us where we are. It is the culmination of opening, again and again, to the saving and healing power of the Holy Spirit. Our relationship with God, and our spiritual journeys, are evolving and dynamic processes that are full of possibility, and sometimes, surprise. Being a Christian is, among other things, being prepared to be surprised.

This morning in Church we read from the long passage in Mark 5:23-41, where Jesus heals a woman with bleeding and the daughter of one of the Jewish religious leaders of the times. Aside from the dramatic healings Jesus performs, the passages, and those preceding it and that follow, show a Jesus moving through the societal and religious barriers of the times to bring healing to those who were outcast and left behind by the wider society. Jesus, the human manifestation of God, refused to be shoved into the boxes of the times, and to be constrained by laws and customs that often caused more harm than good.

I pray for a fun, restful, and rejuvenating summer for you. Amidst all you may be doing, and all you may be facing, may there be room in your life for the possibility of opening to a wider faith, to meeting Jesus “again for the first time” and for encountering the God who finds us, no matter where we are. May the Holy Spirit of transcendent love be your guide and companion along the way. God bless you and peace be with you.

## Welcome New Members

Five new members joined our church on Sunday, June 30th. Welcome to Gloria and Ken Ballinger, Maxi Schultz, Nancy and Jeff Perkins! We look forward to getting to know more about them in the coming months.



## Notes from Finance

Just a reminder of a few things that seem to be easily forgotten. The Treasurer (Nancy) pays the bills, which means if you have paid for something and want to be reimbursed, a Payment Authorization needs to be prepared. This needs to be signed by the Ministry Coordinator who oversees the expenses. If the person being reimbursed IS the coordinator, then another person on that ministry needs to sign off on it. The Payment Authorization also needs an invoice or a confirmation of order for backup, then you can put it in the Treasurer's box in the Narthex.

The Assistant Treasurer (Julie) handles all donations, in all forms. She is the one who records pledges and makes sure your donations go into the correct accounts. We have separate accounts for the General Funds, Memorial (which includes the Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund and the George Wentworth Grant) and Zimbabwe Account. AND then there are the online donations, which often go to all three accounts. It's a lot! So, if you have a donation that does not go into the Sunday plate, then it needs to go into the box for the Assistant Treasurer.

One more thing—The Men's Fellowship is its own entity, much like Parish Helpers. They handle their own money. So, if you are donating to the men, please don't make the check out to the church. Those checks can be made out to George Ackerman, Ron Kratt or Paul Allen.

*Nancy Dee & Julie Kessler*

## From the Sage

Another year has passed, and what a year it was! A restorative year, I would like to call it. After the pain of the Pandemic and an abruptly ended ministry, we had to pick up the pieces and find a way forward.

As a congregation we owe a debt to our Diaconate for its unflagging energy, its commitment to our church, and for its wise guidance. These qualities also shine in the work of our Moderator as she guides the Leadership Council and tends to other aspects of church life. It took a lot of people making good decisions to get us back on our feet after a few difficult years.

And one of those good decisions was the choice of our excellent interim minister: Pastor Larry set a tone that made us realize why we are "Church" in the first place; why we love to come together on Sunday mornings; why we hunker to hear the stories of the Bible explained in inspiring, innovative ways. The Ship of Faith is sailing smoothly under his guidance and it shows. One way that is obvious to all of us old-timers: there are new faces filling the pews on Sunday mornings.

We're back on our feet. We made two far-reaching decisions: one was to engage an outside consultant ("Holy Cow") to establish where we want to go as a congregation. The other was to find a full-time minister to lead us. Both decisions have far-reaching consequences. We are about to take considerable risks. Will we find a pastor who can lead us even as we know that we live in uncertain times, especially where it concerns the future of mainline churches? And - no small matter - will we be able to foot the bill?

It will take all of our best qualities, our enduring faith and a determined spirit of cooperation to tackle these uncertainties.

Right now we are riding high! There is palpable enthusiasm in the congregation. We welcome back people who had stayed on the outside; and our minds are fully engaged by the unique way our interim minister delivers his interpretation of the Bible. It is a good time to be a member of the Wakefield Congregational church...but here in lurks a danger. We will be tempted to compare the next minister to the beloved ones of our immediate past and set the bar too high. That would be a disservice to our new minister, whoever that might be, and ultimately to ourselves.

The way to solve this potential dilemma is to recognize that we have matured as a congregation. Having been led by both experienced and inexperienced pastors, we should be able to meet our new minister half-way, put to good use our past experiences, and apply an attitude of cooperation, shared responsibility, fairness and above all LOVE.

We can do it!!!!

*Titia Bozuwa*

## Community

One thing I can say about our church, and to be honest I could say a plethora of good things about our church, but the thing that stands out to me is “Community”. We are a community within a community. We support each other no matter what our religious, economic, and social backgrounds are. When one of us has a need, someone jumps and takes the lead to help. When prayers are asked for, the Holy Spirit gets blasted with requests for healing, love, patience and strength. Then when needs arise from our surrounding community, the Wakefield Villages, we are there to provide whatever is necessary. This is what makes the First Congregational Church of Wakefield United Church of Christ an amazing environment. It seems that each week we see new faces on Sunday morning. More importantly, many are returning.

On a secular note, a few weeks ago, nine ladies launched kayaks from Carol and Rob Lundgren’s beach and Sally and Ron Kratt’s beach to enjoy a beautiful morning paddle. Some of us were novice paddlers and others had clocked some time on the water. The weather was perfect. We saw baby geese and their parents, a pair of loons, and a bald eagle. We know that not everyone knew about this excursion, or was not able to join us, but you were in our hearts. Don’t worry, I’m sure the social coordinator (Connie) will schedule something that fits your interests and abilities. No pressure Con, ha-ha.

In the meantime, our church will continue to put into action exactly as Jesus instructed us, “Do unto others as you would have done unto you.” We will be there for each other and the beautiful community we are privileged to live in.

*Donna Ackerman*



Kayaking on Pine River Pond

## Hazel Mc Brien NS News

June is the last month of our school year and the two weeks we have class flies by!! It's always amazing to see how the kiddos have grown and changed throughout the school year.

For the first week of June, we introduced letter Xx and did a lot of activities around our pirate theme. The threes class worked on numbers by rolling a die, counting the dots and then putting that many gold coins in a treasure chest. We also worked on shapes by playing pass the shape bean bag. Our fours class used unifix cubes to measure pirate pictures, drew on whiteboards and did a cut and paste pirate or not pirate paper.

During the second week of June we introduced number 5. Our threes played color and shape bingo, memory and explored with playdough. The fours class played Candy Land, alphabet bingo and made pictures using geo boards. Our fours have now graduated from HMNS and are looking forward to going to Kindergarten this fall! We are so proud of all the kids and excited to have our threes class come back to us in September as the four year old class.

We ended the year with a fun field trip to the Nick playground in Wolfeboro. The weather was beautiful, and it was so nice to see the kids play together and to visit with their families too.

Miss Sara and I would like to thank everyone here at FCCW for their support and kindness! Whenever HMNS' path crosses with FCCW they always smile and make you feel so welcome. We so appreciate having a beautiful space at your church!! Enjoy the summer months and warmer weather! See you in September !

*Jen Brackett, HMNS Director*

## Library Highlight

“Our Children: Questions and Answers for Families of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Gender-Expansive and Queer Youth and Adults” (J-R)

“Be Yourself: Questions & Answers for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Youth” (J-R)

These books published by PFLAG, an organization of LGBTQ+ people, parents, families, and allies who work together to create an equitable and inclusive world. PFLAG includes thousands of people and hundreds of chapters from coast to coast who are leading with love to support families, educate allies, and advocate for just, equitable, and inclusive legislation and policies. Since its founding in 1973, PFLAG works every day to ensure LGBTQ+ people everywhere are safe, celebrated, empowered and loved. Learn more, find support and take action at [PFLAG.org](http://PFLAG.org).

*Linda Petkunas, Church Librarian*



## News of Zimbabwe

Many thanks to all who supported our recent Zimbabwe pancake breakfast. The hardworking volunteers raised close to \$800 for the 2025 shipping container. The PKZ Zim team will need to host two or three more breakfasts to cover the cost to ship the donated items going to our sister church at Rufumiso, the Daisy Dube Children's Home, local schools and our network of PKZ projects. While a wide variety of donated goods will be cheerfully accepted, the team will focus on medical supplies and equipment for the completed Humani Clinic.

The next time you have a medical appointment would you consider asking your medical practitioners or medical contacts if they have no longer used items or equipment to donate? In the past we have received a blood warming machine and lab supplies, a hospital bed, surgical tools, a huge variety of obstetric supplies when Huggins Hospital closed their maternity wing, and boxes of surgical gowns, masks, latex gloves, hospital sheets and dental supplies. Medical facilities are very generous when they know it goes to a good cause.

More good news! The Outreach Ministry team is hosting a **Zimbabwe Pot Luck Supper on Tuesday, August 13** beginning at 5:00 pm. Vranje Mahlupeko, our PKZ Director, and his son Trevor Mahlupeko, will showcase Ndaue culture through drumming, cultural dance, and food. We shall learn how to cook and eat sadza, the staple food. Through a time of Q & A Vranje will share what is happening in Zimbabwe and provide updates on the various projects. The wider community is invited to attend.

Samuel Khumbula is enjoying his internship in radiation oncology at the University of Pennsylvania. He is deep in research -- which is very definitely another language -- attending seminars on radioresistance in glioblastoma and analysis of MRIs in neurodegenerative diseases, while also shadowing a radiation oncologist.



Blessing Sithole is very busy this summer working full time with the Keene State College maintenance department, playing in two local soccer leagues, and spending various weekends in Keene and in Wakefield with landscaping and property maintenance work.

These two talented young men represent the power of student sponsorship while also enjoying some fishing

## Annual Meeting

As mandated by our bylaws, the congregation comes together once a year for the annual meeting. At the 2024 Annual Meeting on June 30, we remembered those who have passed during the year, approved minutes of previous meetings, received annual ministry reports. (If you haven't seen them, the Annual Reports can be found here: [Annual Report](#).)

There was a presentation on the budget for the upcoming year and we voted to approve it. We were updated on the Search and Call for a settled minister, the status of the Endowment Fund, and heard a proposal for improvements on our sound system. It was an uncontentious and productive meeting and we went forth with blessings into the new fiscal year.



A well-attended 2024 Annual Meeting



Co-moderators Margie Galabrun and Max Gehring facilitated the Annual Meeting

## The WAY

The Wakefield Adult Youth group (the WAY) invites and welcomes all to our faith formation study entitled "Anatomy of a Christian," which will take place on the following Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Helpers Room: July 29th, August 26th, September 9th, and September 23rd.

*Max Gehring*

## Parish Helpers Happenings

Our next meeting is our Annual Picnic on July 11 at 12 noon at Nancy Dee's home at 134 Deer Ridge Road. Please plan on bringing a potluck dish (not dessert) to share—we love salads! If it is difficult for you to bring a dish, please come anyway! We always have plenty! If you can manage, please bring a chair and we look forward to seeing you there! (I'll email directions and a reminder next week.)

We will be looking for help with the Village Fair on August 10th. And we are still filling in spots to work at the Treasure Shop. Summer is our big season for raising funds for our charities. Please consider signing up!

*Carol Jeffery*

## PH Annual Raffle

Once again, the Parish Helpers have a beautiful quilt for the annual raffle. It is pieced with multi-colored batik fabric and is queen size. And again, thanks to Catherine Britton, we also have a 2' x 3' rug she hand braided. Tickets are currently being sold for \$5 each or 3 for \$10 and are available from a Parish Helper or at the Treasure Shop. We will also be showing it at the Village Fair on August 10.



## Music Camp

Music Camp is fast approaching, this is one of the most rewarding and fun activities that FCCW does for the community. Music Camp is a spin-off from Vacation Bible School (VBS) that was popular many years ago. Our Church always participated with the other church's in town for VBS to happen. Under the leadership of Jan Stanley and with help from many volunteers, music became part of the Camp experience.

Music Camp introduces our Church and the love of Christ to the greater Wakefield area. Many of these families do not have a church that they attend regularly; some have found a home and comfort at FCCW.

If you have a child, grandchild or neighbor child that would like songs, music, arts/crafts, snacks, games and meeting new friends, have them sign up. Deadline for sign ups is 7/22/2024. Camp is from 9am to 12noon July 29 thru August 2. See the Church's website for sign up information and best of all like God's love it's free. [Music Camp Registration](#)

Blessings, *Connie, Donna, and Buddy*

## Netflix, Hulu, Prime, FCCW?

At Annual Meeting we were updated on our Endowment Fund. We are about one third the way to our goal thanks to generous donations of members and friends of over the past few years. But we still have a way to go!

If writing a check is not comfortable for you, there is another easy and painless way to donate. Subscribe! Just like we do for streaming our favorite shows or supporting public media, we can donate on a monthly basis with PayPal or credit card through our website. It's easy to do and even a small amount on a monthly basis can make an impact. Go to our [website](#) to make a monthly donation or a one-time donation.



# Celebrations!

## JULY BIRTHDAYS

1	Chrissie Levesque	20	Andrea Szirbik Groft
3	Tammy Canney	22	Linda Foss
4	Brenna Hagy	23	Linda Petkunas
5	Royal Doughty	24	JohnPaul Eaton
7	Robert Baldwin	24	Chip Hagy
8	Lee Robinson	24	Stephen Royle
9	Keaghan Canney	26	Faith Harvey
9	Bob Foulks	26	Janet Twombly
10	Linda Shepard	27	Rev. Alberta Wallace
13	Titia Bozuwa	28	Sue Littlefield
14	Michelle Crew	28	Lynn Weeks
16	Kathy Frothingham	30	Jan Fairchild
17	Rick Denver	30	Jan Maki

## JULY ANNIVERSARIES

4	Buddy & Nancy Dee
15	Curt & MaryBeth Cook
17	David & Ginny Schweitzer
24	Jean-Michel & Margie Galabrun

**The Treasure Shop is open for the season!** And we are off to a good start! New hours this summer are Wednesday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon and Friday from 1 to 5 p.m. We get new merchandise on a regular basis. Come and see what treasures await you!

The **Tuesday Noon Faith Formation** class will take a brief hiatus beginning July 9th. Classes will resume on August 6th.

The Thursday morning **Chair Yoga** class is on hold until further notice as instructor Lindsey Kipp recovers from eye surgery. We wish her a speedy recovery!

## FELLOWSHIP OF CONCERN

We believe that prayer is powerful! During this time of transition in our church, let us pray for the Diaconate, the Search Committee, the Officers, Ministry Coordinators, and Leadership Council for their thoughtful deliberations in guiding our church onward.

And as always, please keep in your prayers all those who suffer in any way in mind, body and spirit,

We ask also your prayers for peace in our world, for the health and integrity of our democracy, and for the flourishing of the work of our community of faith.



Please pray for family and friends of Gilman P; family and friends of Mary Ann Fountain, Marie H and family; Titia and family; Nancy B; Connie's sister-in-law Sarah; ; Bob L; Sue L; Arlene L; Cindy E; Michael T; Chrissy B.

**FCCW Prayer Chain:** Through emails and text messages, we are able to increase our prayer power for "immediate intercessory prayer" for the concerns of our congregation and friends. If you have a prayer request, please email Harriet Wilson ([dhwilson39@gmail.com](mailto:dhwilson39@gmail.com)) All prayer requests are kept strictly confidential and will only be shared with the express permission of the people involved.

*with sympathy*



**Mary Ann Fountain**


Mary Ann Fountain passed peacefully on June 26 after a brief hospitalization. She was a good friend to our church participating in Parish Helpers, Prayer Shawl Ministry and yoga. Please keep Maryann's family and friends in prayer.

**Gilman Pond**

We are saddened by the passing of George Gilman Pond who died on June 6 peacefully at his home in Middleton, NH. Please keep his husband David, son, Sam, and family in your prayers during this difficult time.



# JULY 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> Caregiver Self-Care Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m.  Choir 5:30	<b>2</b> Faith Formation 12 Noon	<b>3</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.—12 noon  Scrabble Group 1–3 p.m.  Diaconate Meeting	<b>4</b> 	<b>5</b> Treasure Shop Open 1 p.m. –5 p.m.	<b>6</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.—12 noon
<b>7</b> <b>7th Sunday</b> <b>After PENTECOST</b> Worship—10 a.m.  Coffee Hour	<b>8</b> Choir 5:30	<b>9</b> Ukelele Club 6 p.m.	<b>10</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.—12 noon	<b>11</b> Parish Helpers Picnic  12 Noon Nancy Dee's	<b>12</b> Treasure Shop Open 1 p.m. –5 p.m.	<b>13</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.—12 noon
<b>14</b> <b>8th Sunday</b> <b>After PENTECOST</b> Worship—10 a.m.  Coffee Hour	<b>15</b> Choir 5:30	<b>16</b> Prayer Shawl Ministry 10:30	<b>17</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.—12 noon	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Treasure Shop Open 1 p.m. –5 p.m.	<b>20</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.—12 noon
<b>21</b> <b>9th Sunday</b> <b>After PENTECOST</b> Worship—10 a.m.  Coffee Hour	<b>22</b> Choir 5:30	<b>23</b> Ukelele Club 6 p.m.	<b>24</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.—12 n	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Treasure Shop Open 1 p.m. –5 p.m.	<b>27</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.—12 noon
<b>28</b> <b>10th Sunday</b> <b>After PENTECOST</b> Worship—10 a.m.  Coffee Hour	<b>29</b> Choir 5:30  The WAYS Meeting 6:30 p.m.	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.—12 n	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">           Coming up in August—             Village Fair            Zimbabwe Pot Luck Supper            Yard Sale            Wakefield's 250th Birthday         </div>		



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