

STEEPLE VIEWS

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION



REVEREND LARRY BRICKNER-WOOD, INTERIM MINISTER

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AUGUST 2024

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The Pastor's Page

Blessed are the Peacemakers...

A familiar phrase that first appears in the sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:9), and one of the teachings of what has come to be called “the Beatitudes” (Matthew 5:1-12). It is one of the scriptures that gave rise to the notion of Jesus as the “Prince of Peace.” And it echoes values heard before and after Matthew was written, in the first (aka Old) and second (aka New) testaments. God is a God of peace, who desires peace for us and for the world. As disciples of Christ, we are called to be peacemakers in this world.

One of the rituals that came to embody this principle was the Passing of the Peace. It is one of the most ancient Christian rituals and was practiced in the earliest Christian communities. In those early Christian communities, it was usually referred to as the Kiss of Peace, as that was a common way of greeting one another in the cultures of the times. In the second testament, there are references to a kiss of greeting, e.g. a “Holy Kiss”(Romans 16:16) and the “kiss of love” (1 Peter 5:14) where it instructs “greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who belong to Christ.”

It was incorporated into early Christian worship and ritual gatherings as a part of the Agape Feast, gatherings in small groups, and as a conclusion to the sacrament of baptism. Over time, it came to be incorporated into the Eucharist, the sacrament of Holy Communion. It fell out of use in many denominations after the Protestant reformation, especially as many traditions moved away from weekly communion. Since the awakening of Vatican II in the sixties in the Roman Catholic tradition, more and more protestant traditions have incorporated the practice in their worship services, be it weekly, monthly or periodically.

The mechanics of the practice invariably reflected the customs of greeting used in particular cultures. For example, in our churches, it is often symbolized by a handshake, a customary way of greeting in our society. Since the pandemic, communities have gotten inventive about how to perform the ritual, using a deep bow, an open arms expression, eye contact, and a simple nod of the head with or without words.

More important than the mechanics of the practice is what the intentions are. The power of the ritual is in its conveyance of peace. That is, when we share the peace of Christ with each other, in or out of worship, we are proclaiming several values: 1) we welcome you and share God's love with each other; 2) we are sharing our most sacred spiritual gift, that you and your beloveds may be at peace, and that we may be reconciled to each other and at peace together; 3) we are a people of peace, and that we individually and collectively pray and act for peace in the world; and 4) that we are never alone in the depth and breadth of God's love, and we are one with God and each other even in the storms that come our way.

The passing of the peace may or may not be something used in our worship services. We may try it from time to time and/or use it as a part of Holy Communion. We may use it in greeting each other and/or starting and ending our meetings. Beyond the words and gestures, we are witnessing to a spiritual and hopefully lived reality, that we are people of peace belonging in a beloved community of peace, grounded in the deep resonance of God's Love. We are disciples of Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Peace be with you all.

Pastor Larry

Pies! Breads! and Cookies! Oh My!



We need your help in providing delicious baked goods for the Parish Helpers Fair on Saturday, August 10. Pies are most popular! We will provide the 9 inch and 5 inch disposable pie pans. They are available in the church on the back table.

Sweet breads, muffins or yeast breads would be wonderful. If you are a candy maker, we welcome that too.

The cookies will go to the **Cookie Walk**. Please provide 5 dozen of your favorite cookies, not too large (about 3" the most).

We thank you, in advance, for your help. Please drop the baked goods off either on Friday, August 9th, after 3 pm, or early Saturday morning.

Jo and Evy

Notes from Finance

The Annual Report of the Treasurer, for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, will be sent out to Leadership Council and a copy will be posted in the Narthex. If you are not on LC and would like to see it, just let me know and I will be happy to email it to you.

Finance team believes it is vitally important that everyone, members and friends, be aware of our financial condition. Long term sustainability has become the most important issue, and the more informed everyone is, the better decisions will be made. So, check out the financials and feel free to ask a question of anyone on the Fun Finance Team—Mary Bernier, Janice Brejwo, Nancy Dee, Julie Kessler, Harriet Wilson.

Nancy Dee, Treasurer
Nancy.dee2018@gmail.com

Library Update

Living, Loving, & Learning (J-G) by Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D. is the only complete collection of his popular lectures, originally delivered via in-person talks and eventually broadcast to worldwide audiences on PBS from 1970 to 1981. Drawing on his personal life and including practical experience gathered while teaching his renowned "Love Class" at the University of Southern California, Buscaglia's personal stories are amusing and informative depictions of how to live a life filled with love. Source: Amazon

The Yard Sale!

Our wonderful, annual yard sale -- our biggest church fundraiser-- is taking place on Saturday, August 24 from 8 a.m.—1 p.m. Please consider donating items in good condition that are taking up space and need a new home! As usual we will have the following selling areas:

- Donna and Chris will need a teammate or two for the section dedicated to used furniture in good condition and other large items (kayaks, outdoor equipment of all types, etc.) Unfortunately beds have not sold well and mattresses or boxsprings need to go straight to the landfill.
- Cool Things Boutique will be in the Parish Helpers room. Julie and her team always know how to showcase some amazing finds.
- Nancy and her team will oversee good quality clothing, shoes, boots, handbags, etc. in the sanctuary.
- Jo handles the unique "Make An Offer" section of eclectic things we didn't know we needed. She may like some help this year... and an awning!
- Ann B coordinates the bake sale area and could use the help of one or two others. Your donation of delicious baked goods are most welcome.
- Margie coordinates those who might like to have their own table of goods in the parking lot area. Be sure to see Margie for details!

Please bring any donations the morning of Thursday, Aug 22 or throughout the day on Friday, Aug. 23. We need help picking up large items from storage and from people's homes. Help is also needed with set up on Friday and the take down on Saturday.

Many hands make this an enjoyable and profitable event for our church. Thanks so much for being a part of the effort!

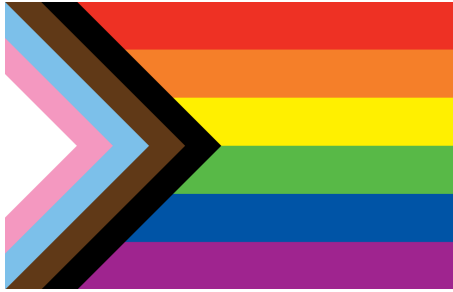
Connie Littlefield

Adult Faith Formation

After taking a summer break for the month of July, we are now looking to restart our Faith Formation class on Tuesday, August 6th. For the month of August, we will be continuing our informal discussion based on a random set of devotionals (three or four per week). These devotionals will be pulled from a variety of sources and your suggestions are welcome! Class meets on Tuesdays at 12:00 in the Parish Helper room and a zoom will be provided if anyone would prefer that option.

Julie Kessler

A Summary of the Discussion Around the Progress and Pride Flags



On April 21st and July 14th, the topic of the presence of the Pride/Progress flag at FCCW was brought up to the Leadership Council. Both discussions were rigorously and attentively facilitated, and their content was ever cordial and respectful of all parties. Both discussions resolved with consensus that the Progress flag, and any LGBTQ+ pride flag, belongs and deserves to have space at FCCW. On July 14th, consensus was given to make more space on or around the FCCW sign for the rainbow, such as that on the Progress flag, and for the flag post to be used for a variety of flags throughout the year, with some suggested flags being environmental justice (Earth-focused), social justice issues, and even the Zimbabwean flag.

In other words, the Leadership Council is ever in discernment on how FCCW can express its status as an Open and Affirming church, as well as how to put in practice our oft-used motto, “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

In my sincere opinion, the rainbow in all its forms and especially as a symbol of LGBTQ+ pride will always have a place at FCCW. For me, it not only reminds me of our Creator’s covenant with all of humanity, but it also reminds me of the diverse nature of humanity, which is so readily apparent in the gay community that I know is based on love and compassion, just as the church which Jesus built and that we are stewards of today.

*Max Gehring, they/them/theirs,
Co-Moderator*



Rest

Matthew 11: 28-30 (Revised Standard Version)
Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Such beautiful words. Rest, today, seems to be an elusive pleasure. We have all these technological timesaving components in our lives, yet we are exhausted. From the Post WWII era of modern household appliances to the 21st Century luxuries of having everything you ever thought you needed delivered to your doorstep. We rush through the days with to-do-lists that most of the time cannot be accomplished in one day. Our calendars are full.

I overheard someone saying that “summer was almost over”. The official days of summer only began on June 20th, just a little over five weeks ago. We have almost two more months before the autumn equinox on September 22nd. I am one of those who feel anxious when I look at my Google calendar with all its appointments, meetings, and travel plans laid out in a collage of colors. My cell phone pings with a new message that causes my brain to think I must respond. I’m trying to take the time to step away from all the responsibilities that I place on myself, yet I awake in the night wondering about silly things that are out of my control. Did you know that if you live to be 90 years old, you will have slept 30 years? And of those 30 years of sleep, you will have dreamed 10 years. Wow! It seems God wants us to rest, and yet we keep rushing through life in an almost apocalyptic haze.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Thank you, Lord, for such a beautiful promise. I will try to take the time to rest each and every day.

Donna V Ackerman

Zimbabwe Potluck Supper

All are welcome! Please join us on Tuesday, August 13 at 5 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

The FCCW Outreach Ministry is hosting a Zimbabwe Pot Luck Supper. Vranthe Mahlupeko, our PKZ Director and his son Trevor Mahlupeko will showcase Ndauculture through drumming, cultural dance, and food. We will learn how to cook and eat sadza, the staple food in Zimbabwe. Through at time of Q and A, Vranthe will share what is happening in Zimbabwe and provide updates on the various projects. The wider community is invited to attend. Hope to see you there!

An Invitation from Calling & Discernment

Isn't it great how active and vibrant our church community is these days? Everyone enjoys and appreciates the spirit of friendliness and goodwill for one another.

In order to keep that FCCW vitality alive and inclusive, we encourage each person to consider how they can support the variety of roles needed to maintain our wonderful community.

- Are you someone who would like to help to work with our hospitality team during coffee hour? If so, talk to Rachel White and Laura Frye.
- The Safe Church Team is seeking folks who are interested in learning, sharing and implementing best policies and practices that keep us all safe. Carol Lundgren, Nate Fogg, Jim Hayford and others would like to hear from you.
- FCCW needs people who have an interest in the Ministry of Stewardship. Chris Feddern is a wonderful coordinator who seeks others who share her enthusiasm for all things stewardship.

Are you a historian/archivist? Or perhaps enjoy adult or youth education opportunities? Would you like working with others on a painting project inside the church? Want to join our expanding voice choir or learn how to ring handbells? There are so many ways to be involved and it isn't a forever choice! Activities can be "one and done" as in one project or a longer expanse of service. The choice is yours.

Please see me, Margie Galabrun, Janice Brejwo or any person previously mentioned for more information.

God bless you, Connie Littlefield

Another Dinner Party

The Men's Fellowship would like to invite you to join us for our second invitational dinner party. In February we gathered for dinner at the Knotty Pine restaurant for our first dinner party. We had individuals, couples and friends show up to join us. In total we had around 30 people at the dinner. It was a blast, an evening full of conversation, great food and where everyone enjoyed themselves. It also gave us an opportunity to publicly thank a few folks that have supported our ministry with their efforts and or their donations.

After that gathering, we were told that we needed to do it again, but not to wait a year. Well, the wait is over because we have set a date. We have reservations for 6:00 at Tumbledown Farm to Fork, on August 21st. This date will ensure that our summer time friends will still be here to join us. Although you don't need to, but plan on attending, please let George Ackerman know so that we can get a rough estimate for the restaurant. Email him at gea5775@yahoo.com

George Ackerman

Parish Helpers Fair

The Annual PH Village Fair will take place on Saturday, **August 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Please note that we have shortened the day to 1 p.m. closing. We hope all Parish Helpers will be on board to help either at the Fair or at the Treasure Shop that day. We are asking for **pies and baked goods** (see Jo's article) and also for **cookies for the Cookie Walk**. The Cookie Walk is a big draw and we tend to run out towards the end of the Fair, so please consider making 5 dozen cookies to add to the assortment!

At this point, it looks like we have all in place for the Fair. We have vendors and there are still a couple openings if you know of anyone who might like to rent an outdoor space.

The Fair is our program item for August so there is no other meeting. We'll resume regular meeting on September 12 with guest speaker, George Ackerman.

Carol Jeffery

Hospitality!



At a recent coffee hour, Rev. Larry presented flowers to our loyal hosts, (left to right) Laura Frye, Rachel White, and Janet Twombly with thanks for making our coffee hours possible week after week. They are there early to make the coffee and set the table with goodies they often provide or that are provided by church-goers. They serve and then clean up, too! We are sad that Janet will be leaving us soon to move on to a new chapter in her life. But happy for her! Rachel and Laura are going to need someone to join their team. Speak to them at coffee hour if you'd like to join them!

PS—The Hospitality Team is always in need for volunteers to help with clean up and to provide goodies for the table. Please offer to help out and keep our coffee hours going!

Celebrations!

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

2 Phillip Twombly	14 Matt Mooers
4 Chris James	15 Amanda Crew
4 Madeline Johnson	15 Shannon Johnson
5 Douglas Ball	17 Nancy Jacobson
5 Richard Messer	19 Stephanie Ballard
6 Shane Caplette	23 Matthew Boggs
8 Rebecca Ellis	24 Dick Wilson
8 Julie Evenson	28 Debbie (Caplette) Soucey
9 Harriet Wilson	29 Anastasia St Pierre
11 Cassandra Ball	
14 Dan James	

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

20 David & Sharon Tinkham
21 George & Jo Szirbik
22 Royal & Carole Doughty

The WAY

The Wakefield Adult Youth group (WAY) welcomes and invites all to a faith formation study titled "Anatomy of a Christian". The discussion continues on **Tuesday, August 26, at 6:30 PM in the Parish Helpers Room.**

Getting in Touch

For more information on articles you read in the Steeple Views, contact the editor, Carol Jeffery, at steepleviews@gmail.com or call our Congregational Life Administrator, Andrea Selig, at the church office at 603-522-3189. Follow us on Facebook for photos and updates at

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalChurchofWakefieldUCC>
or visit our website at www.fccwakefieldnh.org.

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 Elizabeth F; 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) All prayer requests are kept strictly confidential and will only be shared with the express permission of the people involved.

Search and Call Update

The Search and Call Team is continuing with the Search process and we will share news whenever possible. We are asking the Congregation to remember us in prayer as we seek God's guidance in directing us to our next minister.

In Your Service.
The Search and Call Team

The Treasure Shop

The Treasure Shop is going strong! Remember—our 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!

Parish Helpers! We are scheduling Treasure Shop workers through August and September. Be sure to stop in and sign up for a few shifts to help out!

AUGUST 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 End 68 Hours of Hunger Volunteer Meeting 10 a.m.	2 Treasure Shop Open 1 p.m. –5 p.m.	3 Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.— 12 noon
Music Camp all week—9 a.m. to 12 noon						
4 11th Sunday After PENTE- COST Worship—10 a.m. Coffee Hour	5 Caregiver Self-Care Support Group 9:30—10:30 a.m. Choir 5:30	6 Faith Formation 12 Noon	7 Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.— 12 noon Diaconate Meeting	8	9 Treasure Shop Open 1 p.m. –5 p.m.	10 Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.— 12 noon Village Fair 9 a.m.—1 p.m.
11 12th Sunday After PENTE- COST Worship—10 a.m. Coffee Hour	12 Choir 5:30	13 Faith Formation 12 Noon Zim Pot Luck Supper—5 p.m. Ukelele Club 6 p.m.	14 Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.— 12 noon	15	16 Treasure Shop Open 1 p.m. –5 p.m.	17 Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.— 12 noon
18 13th Sunday After PENTE- COST Worship—10 a.m. Coffee Hour Leadership Meeting—11:30	19 Caregiver Self-Care Support Group 9:30—10:30 a.m. Choir 5:30	20 Faith Formation 12 Noon	21 Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.— 12 noon	22	23 Treasure Shop Open 1 p.m. –5 p.m.	24 Yard Sale! 8 a.m.—1 p.m. Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.— 12 noon
25 14th Sunday After PENTE- COST Worship—10 a.m. Coffee Hour	26 Choir 5:30 The WAY Meeting 6:30 p.m.	27 Faith Formation 12 Noon Ukelele Club 6 p.m.	28 Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.— 12 noon	29	30 Treasure Shop Open 1 p.m. –5 p.m.	31 Treasure Shop Open 9 a.m.— 12 noon Wakefield's 250 Birthday Celebration



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