

STEEPLE VIEWS

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION



REVEREND MARY A. JAMES, PASTOR

REVEREND GEORGE HARVEY, PASTOR EMERITUS

VOLUME 39: NUMBER 12

DECEMBER 2015

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THE PASTOR'S PLACE . . .

LET US SEE

Imagine. Imagine those shepherds long ago, out in the field, watching their flocks by night. Together, they experienced an appearance of an angel of God, emanating glory all around.

They were afraid.

The angel, very sensibly, calmed them right down by telling them not to be afraid and giving them an elegantly simple and beautiful explanation about what exactly was going on. "For to you is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

The fear of the shepherds gave way to awe and curiosity. "Let us go and SEE this thing that has happened!"

Of all the characters in the narrative, we are probably most like the shepherds— just everyday people, doing their jobs, and suddenly: GLORY.

Christmas is that time of year when we all concede --conspire really--- to recognize that it is still possible for glory to surprise us. This, possibly, is why we get so very jazzed about Christmas, rushing here and there, because we want our celebrations to match that certainty we have inside about the glory of God made manifest in the arrival of an infant child. We buy into (literally) all the sparkle and shine because we know deep down that God sparkled and shone in entering this world as the Christ.

Remember (can we?), though, that the shepherds experienced this glory and opened their eyes to it in the midst of a regular night, a workaday night out in the fields. Perhaps this year we can trust God to send divine glory our way without the imagined necessity of running ourselves ragged trying to put on our own little glory show.

Whatever you do, read the story out loud some quiet evening (I suggest Luke 2: 1-20). Read it slowly and savor the words. Read it to someone; ask them to read it to you. Talk about it, if and when you feel ready to speak. What does it mean to you, this child Jesus coming to the world?

Sit with the story, dear friends. Let us see what glories it brings to our weary, worried hearts and souls. In that story is all the glory we need.

Grace and peace,
Mary

And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Luke 2: 12

Now Available! The estate of Beth MacRury has donated a limited supply of Marjorie Banks' book, Through the Open Doors of the First Congregational Church, as a fundraiser. This historical book is available for \$25 each and are available in the church office.

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

The Tuesday noon Bible Study group will take a break in its study of the history of Christianity in Advent, and will instead turn its attention to spiritual preparation for Christmas. Julie Kessler will lead a study called "The Purpose of Christmas." This DVD study features three sessions taught by Rick Warren on why we celebrate Christmas, and how it can change our lives forever. At the very first Christmas - the birth of Jesus - an angel announced three things. In those three statements of the angel, we find the three purposes of Christmas. The three sessions on this DVD look at each of those purposes:

1. Christmas is a time for celebration;
2. Christmas is a time for salvation;
3. Christmas is a time for reconciliation.

All are welcome to join in for three consecutive Tuesdays in December at noon, beginning on December 1.

WONDER ADVENT READINGS AND DISCUSSION



The Still Speaking Writers' Group have been at it again. Hot off the presses is the 2015 Advent Devotional book, *Wonder, Hearing God where you live (and other surprising places)*.

The daily readings begin on November 29th and continue through December 25th. Books are now available for \$4 each and can be picked up in the church office.

For those wishing to gather to discuss their favorite readings, we'll be meeting on Sunday Dec. 6th and Dec. 13th at 9 AM. Any questions, please contact Margie 522-6647.

For more information on articles you read in the Steeple Views, contact the editor at steepleviews@gmail.com or call the church office at 603-522-3189.



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And on Twitter - @wakefieldnhucc
<https://twitter.com/wakefieldnhucc>

CHRISTMAS BELLS IN THE VILLAGE

DECEMBER 12TH—5:30 P.M.



It is such a joy to extend this invitation to hear the beautiful bells of the Wakefield Memorial Bell Choir as they ring in the sounds of Christmas on December 12th. The Sanctuary will be decorated, the stained glass windows will be lit and the extraordinary music of the bells will ring to the rafters! Come, bring friends, bring the family!

Deep thanks to the members of the Bell Choir and to their director, Janice Stanley. We are blessed to have this Ministry right here at church! In harmony with this evening (pun intended), the Wakefield Inn will offer a special pre-concert dinner at 4 p.m. Please call the Inn for reservations at: 522-8272.

CHURCH FAMILY POT-LUCK AND CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Fun, fun, fun! Let's all gather for a pot luck lunch after church on Dec. 6th. Bring something yummy to share. Cookies and drinks will be provided, so please bring something to warm our tummies before braving the elements. You don't even have to be a singer to join us. If you don't want to go caroling, please just come and eat with us to celebrate the season. It's been said so many times but it's worth a reminder; we all are part of a wonderful church family. Hope you will join us!

PARISH HELPERS CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON AT THE WAKEFIELD INN

The Parish Helpers will have their annual Christmas Gathering on December 10 at 12 noon at the Wakefield Inn. Chef Christina is preparing a special menu for us for the occasion. Please let Carol J. or Ginny know if you are planning on attending - just so we can give the Inn an approximate number. Last minute additions are always welcome! And of course, we will have our annual Yankee Swap, our favorite part! Please bring a wrapped gift (\$10) value and be prepared to have some fun!

As always, all women of the church and community are welcome at the Parish Helpers. You need not be a member of the church. Hope to see you there!

Carol Jeffery

ALTERNATIVE GIFTING

Once again the Outreach Ministry is offering an assortment of ways to share your abundance in the name of others. So instead of buying another tie or sweater how about buying a card showing the proceeds going to the betterment of others. The choices for alternative gifting are:

Friends of Orphaned Trust (FOOT), this helps children in Zimbabwe with their school fees and uniforms. As you know an education can change a society not just an individual.

Heifer Project, this is an international organization that provides various animal contributions that not only sustain the family that receives the animal, but also spreads within their community the opportunity for better food, economy and health.

Wakefield Food Pantry, supporting our local food pantry is a strong ministry within the church membership. Your gifting in the name of the Food Pantry spreads your abundance locally.

Feddern Discretionary Fund, provides an opportunity for Reverend Mary and others to assist people within the Wakefield community to meet certain financial obligations that due to circumstances have left them monetarily behind.

A display table is set up in Fellowship Hall. Purchasing a card under the banner of the listed gifting opportunities and sharing that card with a friend or loved one shows that they mean more to you than another item to be returned to the store or worse discarded. Share your abundance with others while sharing your love for others.

*Respectfully,
Donna V Ackerman
. Outreach Ministry Coordinator*



NEW DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

Have you noticed the new directional signs as you enter and walk around the church? Our hope is to make navigation within our building easier and less confusing for our friends, neighbors, and visitors. The current signs, at all three entrances and at several doors and in the stairwells, are just drafts.

We need your feedback! What other signs do we need? Where do we need more signs? (For example, we already know we need to include the restrooms on the signs.)

Please check out what we have and let us know what you think. Speak to Dalton, Harriet, or Carol Lundgren. Thank you!

DONATE NOW BUTTON OUR CHURCH'S NEW E-GIVING PROGRAM

Donate Now

The Finance, Stewardship & Communications Ministries are excited to let our Church Family know about an exciting new e-Giving page coming soon to our Church Website and the Church Facebook page! It may be there by the time you read this article.

E-Giving allows all of us in our Church and the wonderful community around us to donate to the Church electronically by using a checking or savings account, credit card or even direct transfer from your bank. What you will see on our website and on our Facebook page will be a "Donate Now" button that will take you to our e-Giving page. On this page you will have four options categories for your e-giving:

- **General Fund**—Our online Offering Plate - this is where general support of our Church would go.
- **Pledge**—Allows our Church Family and supporters to automatically schedule a pledge payment, every week, month, etc.
- **Memorial**—Allows specific targeted memorial giving. This option will require you to specify where your gift is headed such as the Feddern Memorial Fund and/or "In Memory of _____".
- **Outreach-Missions**—This is where you can support one of our specific wonderful outreach programs such as Zimbabwe FOOT project, Connie's Zim Mission, or annual drives like Neighbors in Need.

Reminder: when you give electronically to the Church there is a processing fee we will need to pay that ranges from 1% to 5% and averages around 3% so when you use this option please be mindful of this fee and perhaps give a "little more" to help cover this cost.

The e-Giving page is fully "mobile device ready" so for those folks who have put their old paper checkbooks away and now do all their business on their smart phones we are ready to receive! Our new e-Giving program is one of the exciting steps we are taking for our Church. This program comes out of our Team Synergy discussions on how to grow and strengthen the Church.

Our hope is that this will provide an easy way for members of our Church and for people who are not Church members who support our mission and value our presence in our community to help support us financially. Also in the works is a whole new Website! It will be coming soon!

Frank Frazier

A HYMN OF STEWARDSHIP

This past week a **hymn of stewardship** was selected. And since it is so appropriate for the Season and relevant in our World today, it is here for your pleasure and appreciation.

*Shalom, Chris Feddern
Stewardship Ministry*

God Whose Giving Knows no Ending

Robert L. Edwards, 1961 / 1989

God, whose giving knows no ending,
from your rich and endless store--
nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom,
costly cross, grave's shattered door--
gifted by you, we turn to you,
offering up ourselves in praise;
thankful song shall rise forever,
gracious Donor of our days.

Skills and time are ours for pressing
toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
all at peace in health and freedom,
races joined, the Church made one.
Now direct our daily labor,
lest we strive for self alone.
Born with talents, make us servants
fit to answer at your throne.

Treasure, too, you have entrusted,
gain through powers your grace conferred,
ours to use for home and kindred,
and to spread the gospel word.
Open wide our hands in sharing,
as we heed Christ's ageless call,
healing, teaching, and reclaiming,
serving you by loving all

CARE GIVER SUPPORT GROUP BEGINNING AT FCCW



Following a series of meetings with care givers during October and November, it was decided to continue on with monthly meetings focusing on self-care while caring for and about loved ones. This ongoing support group will meet on the first Monday of each month from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the Parish Helpers Room. It is open to all whether you care for a loved one at home, in a care setting or at a distance. For more information, please contact Carol Lundgren through the Church Office.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS



Please Pardon our Appearance ó good progress is being made on the driveway side entry to create a more welcoming atmosphere. Soon, this area will be completed with new flooring, paint and an activity bulletin board. All in the spirit of providing welcome and information about church life.

Dalton & Carol L

TREASURER'S REPORT

Operating Budget (Non-restricted): July 1, 2015 – Oct 31, 2015

Income:	\$ 48,508.92
Expenditures:	\$ (51,094.31)
Net Income (Loss)	\$ <u>(2,585.39)</u>

Checking Non-Restricted Funds balance as of 10/31/15: \$2,977.98

Restricted Funds balance as of 10/31/2015: \$2,532.37

What an energetic and hard-working church family we have! The Harvest Fair, held on November 14th, was a very lively event and hugely profitable for the church general fund. To date, \$2800.25 has been deposited in the bank and will show up on the November report. Thank you Ginny Schweitzer for stepping forward as organizer and to all the extremely capable worker bees and donors.

As reported in the above numbers, expenses were still outpacing income at the end of October which is to be expected. The good news is our general checking account still has a positive cash flow. This means we have not yet needed the Alden Young gift money which is held in our savings account. The income side of the budget is on target with a boost from the previous fund raising activities held this year. In October, we paid ahead on our church general insurance in order to save quarterly fee charges. Maintenance costs were up this month for things such as light replacements, furnace repair, tree treatments, and supplies for the sprucing up of the side entrance foyer.

Just a little reminder to all ministry coordinators and to any members interested in assisting with the annual budget process ó time is getting close to prepare the 2016-17 budget. We have a big task ahead. It would be great if we never had to crunch numbers, but it is a necessary part of the behind the scenes work of keeping the church running smoothly.

*Janice Brejwo and Shannon Johnson, Co-Treasurers
fccwtreasurer@gmail.com*

Ed. Note: I thought I'd share Connie's message along with her news from Zimbabwe — C.J.

õHi Donna and Carol,
News article plus photo of two of our FOOT kids enjoying their PPP t shirts. I want our congregation to know how much people in Zim appreciate all that Wakefield does through their love and their alternative gift giving.

Please eat a honkin' piece of pie for me on Thanksgiving Day!!! Lots of love, Connieõ

NEWS FROM ZIMBABWE

I continue to bring a little bit of Spaulding High School to Mt. Selinda High School. An amazing Form 6 student (which equates to freshman year at college) was selected by the US Embassy Advanced Student Program to study in the USA. Brighton Tandabantu is the Head Boy for 1,100 students and has been for the past three years. A Head Boy (or Prefect) serves as a role model, disciplinarian, counselor, etc working with the administrators. He would be ranked either #1 or #2 in his class if Mt. Selinda ranked the way Spaulding does. He asked for my help in completing his Common Application for schools in the USA. So, I was back to reviewing essays, helping teachers write letters of recommendation, creating a template for a transcript so the school could start incorporating the grades, etc. Oh yes, and selecting colleges. He scored 650 and 640 on his SATs (Remember English is his 2nd language) and he wants to study electrical engineering. He has traveled to Harare to take his SAT subject tests too. So, dear friends, I have recommended the University of NH along with some õwarm weatherõ engineering schools. If he goes to NH, I know you will show him some good old Wakefield love and help him feel at home. He is a gem.

I also recently forwarded the names of 55 Zimbabwean Form 2 students (Grade 9) to a Freshman Class at Nute High School so that they can begin email pen pal project. We just need the electricity and internet to remain consistent for these students to be able to reach one another!

Yes! electricity, water and internet. How I took these things for granted in the USA. I recently experienced 6 days without electricity and 4 days without water. The country cannot maintain the current electric system so daily outages are common but this time it lasted for days. All the food in the fridge had to be thrown out. Most people can cook outdoors but I haven't mastered that technique nor have the cookware to do so. (Where is a Webber grill when you need one???) Water is in critical shortage. Rains simply haven't been adequate to restore the water needed for Mt. Selinda õ or the rest of the country -- so the water is shut off twice a day. Or I should say, water is only available for a few hours each day. So, like everyone else, we fill buckets, buckets, and more buckets when it is available to cook, clean, bathe, do laundry and flush. People are unable

to plant their fields and the outlook is extremely negative for any type of food production.

The kids at the home are fine. Their school term ends December 3 so they have already begun to õrelaxõ a bit. Not good. When I arrive at night they run to shut off the music and look like they are busy studying . . .tee hee! .

I can't wait for the container to arrive mid-December. I have a Charlie Brown tree on board for the kids and I to decorate (shouldn't be hard, it's pretty small) and I hope to surprise them with gifts under the tree to show them that Father Christmas does come to children in Zimbabwe. The FOOT kids are doing extremely well. Having orphaned children live in a traditional family is far, far better than an institutional setting like the Daisy Dube Home. Please dear friends, keep the Alternative Gift Giving for FOOT going. You are making an immeasurable difference in these lives. There are Brightons among them and your support is transforming!

*Love to all,
Connie*



HOSPICE TREE OF MEMORIES



One of the most meaningful and expressive events of the holiday season, the Hospice Tree of Memories, is celebrating its annual commemoration at the **Wakefield Opera House on Saturday, December 12 at 11 a.m.** This occasion provides opportunities for family, friends, and neighbors to remember a

loved one by placing an inscribed porcelain dove, a symbol of serenity, peace, and tranquility, on a lighted tree. Everyone is welcome to attend the ceremony. To purchase a dove in the name of a loved one, please speak to Ginny Schweitzer (522-9593) or contact the VNA-Hospice of Southern Carroll County at 569-2729.

Celebrations!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Rachel Yazinka	11 Dorothy MacKenzie
1 Tom Stanley	13 Carol Jeffery
2 Shannon Mercer	16 Jeff Ballard
2 Lynn Watts	16 Jay Tamilio
3 Robert Gehring Jr.	16 Barry Truhn
3 Marie Hebb	20 George Harvey
8 David Silcocks	26 Jessica St. Pierre
9 Richard Zacher	30 Skip Theiling

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

1 Arthur & Louise Wheeler
10 Eric & Amanda Boggs
27 Peter & Linda Foss

THANK YOU NOTES

HARVEST FAIR ô As chair of the Harvest Fair, Ginny Schweitzer would like to thank everyone who baked, cooked, served, donated, set up, cleaned up, manned a table, attended, and purchased items at the Harvest Fair. It was a HUGE success ô raising over \$3000 (a record) for the General Fund. It was the very definition of a group effort! A special thank you must go to Ginny, though, for taking up the lead to organize the Fair. She did an outstanding job as evidenced by how much was raised, and that the vendors, volunteers and the community at large are already looking forward to next year's Fair. Thank you, Ginny!

PKD WALKô Thank you so much to all of you who contributed to the 2015 Walk for PKD by sponsoring me on September 20. Together we raised \$2,610 for the fight to find treatments and a cure for Polycystic Kidney Disease. The Boston walk as a whole raised \$133, 082 - and money is still coming in! Bless you for your efforts on behalf of all of those with PKD (approximately 800,000 in the United States alone) and our families. Your support is appreciated more than we can ever say. — *Harriet*

IN APPRECIATIONô Many thanks to Dave Schweitzer for his article about the Bergs. We are happy to be members of FCCW and look forward to reading about other members. *Sincerely, Warren and Marge Berg*

FELLOWSHIP OF CONCERN

PLEASE PRAY FOR:



We ask your continued prayers and support for those members of our church and wider community who are ill, or who suffer in mind, body, or spirit, and for their families

Dot R.	Jan F.
Tom and Barbara T.	Donald L.
George B.	George J.
Art W.	Sid & Ginny S.
Mackenzie M.	Marcia H.
Marcia	Parker V.
Marsha A.	

AND FOR:

Our global neighbors in places where there is great strife.
Our servicemen and women
Our friends in Rufumiso, Zimbabwe
Residents of the Nursing Homes and Retirement Communities in our area

BIT OF HISTORY: WAKEFIELD INN

The Wakefield Inn and Restaurant was originally built as a home for Seaman William Frost in 1804. It was converted into an inn and known, at different points in time, as the Staircase, Carriage Stop and Elmwood Inn. The inn served the needs of stage coach and railroad travelers when these forms of transportation were dominant. In recent years it has been the venue for Parish Helpers luncheons and Christmas in Wakefield Corner events.

Sources: [Images of America: Wakefield and Brookfield](#) by the Wakefield Brookfield Historical Society & www.wakefieldinn.com

Linda Petkumas

Please save the date and stay tuned!

Turning Point 230 March Gala

March 5, 2016

Potluck dinner & Entertainment!

A wondrous way to celebrate

Stewardship for our Church & Missions

DECEMBER 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		1 12 Noon Bible Study 4 pm Centering Prayer	2 10 am Scrabble 4 pm Diaconate	3 6 pm Folk Bank 7 pm String Band	4	5 7:30 am-10 am Pancake Breakfast 10 am Hanging of the Greens	
6 <i>Advent II</i> 10 AM Worship and Communion 6 pm Bells	7 6 pm Choir	8 12 Noon Bible Study	9 6 pm Pairs and Spares 6 pm Pub Grub and Soul Food PPP	10 1 p.m. Parish Helpers 6 pm Folk Bank 7 pm String Band	11	12 <i>All day Bell rehearsal</i> 5:30 pm Christmas Bells in the Village Bell concert	
13 <i>Advent III</i> 10 am Worship & Coffee Hour 6 pm Bells	14 6 pm Choir	15 10 am Scrabble 12 Noon Bible Study 4 pm Centering Prayer	16 5 pm Calling & Discernment	17 6 pm Folk Bank 7 pm String Band	18	19	
20 <i>Advent IV -Bell Choir Rings</i> 10 am Worship and Christmas Pageant 11:15 am Leadership Council 6 pm Bells	21 6 pm Choir	22	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> 6 pm Worship Service	25 <i>Christmas Day</i> <i>Merry Christmas!</i>	26	
27 10 am Worship & Coffee Hour 6 pm Bells	28 6 pm Choir	29	30	31			
		<p>Next Prayer Shawl Ministry will be held on January 28th at 10 am and it will be the 6th anniversary of this ministry!</p>					



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
2718 WAKEFIELD ROAD, PO BOX 809
SANBORNVILLE, NH 03872

**CHRISTMAS PAGEANT
DECEMBER 20—10 A.M.**

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
DECEMBER 24 — 6 PM.**

CHRISTMAS BELLS IN THE VILLAGE

A joyous hand bell concert, ringing in the season of Light and Christ's Peace

Performed by the Wakefield Memorial Hand Bell Choir

*First Congregational Church of Wakefield, UCC
2718 Wakefield Road, Wakefield, NH 603 522-3189*



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2015 ~ 5:30 P.M.
Suggested Donation \$10.



The Wakefield Inn and Restaurant is pleased to offer a special
pre-concert dinner at 4 p.m.
For reservations, please call the Inn at 603 522-8272.