

STEEPLE VIEWS

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION



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APRIL 2020

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FIRSTCONGREGATIONALCHURCHOFWAKEFIELDUCC

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

It's Thursday. The sun is shining bright upon the remnants of the snow from the most recent snowstorm. I was really bemoaning the beautiful white flacks that fell from the sky providing the moisture, I have learned that New Hampshire farmers look forward to before the spring burst forward. I want the spring to burst forward just like we leaped into setting our clocks ahead!

My impatience with the move of the seasons comes along with me having to set up a new workflow. I am a very adaptable person; it comes with the call to transitional ministry, yet I feel as if a giant STOP sign has been placed in my life/ our lives.

This week I started my new workflow schedule. I am now in the office Monday – Thursday with Friday, Saturday and SUNDAY off! (Yes, I do 10- or 12-hour days.) Whoever heard of a pastor taking every Sunday off? What has happened to church? “COVID-19!”

The virtual STOP sign emerged for our safety; stop gathering in groups larger than 10; stop in-person meetings; stop 6 feet behind a person or allow 6 feet in between; stop eating out (a major stop for me); stop and wash your hands after touching any hard surfaces; stop touching your face with your hands; STOP the spread of this novel coronavirus by flattening the curve.

NEWS FLASH!!! New Hampshire Governor just announced an Emergency Stay-at-Home Order!!!

STOP! Again. This is our current season. Be Ready! Stay Alert! Be Calm! Connect!
BREATHE IN/ BLOW IT OUT!

God of grace and God of mercy hear our cries! Show us how to be your people during this health pandemic. Shower us with your peace that is beyond all understanding. Knit us tighter together. Let us show the world what Love looks like. Expand our understanding of community and communal worship. Give us the right questions to ask and open our ears and hearts to hear. Come Holy Spirit! Come!! Amen.

Pastor Alberta

How is the Church Being Church!

**We will never
change the world
by going to church.
We will only
change the world
by being the church.**

At FCCW we are being the Church in these times when churches cannot gather due to the pandemic health crisis. This is how we are continuing to change the world:

+ Your Deacons have been assigned persons to check in on. This is our commitment to making sure all are connected, and all can have a sense of belonging. You know, to say with pride, “that is MY Church!”

+To make sure basic needs can be met, i.e., getting groceries when you cannot get out or should not be out, FCCW has partnered with Lovell Lake Food Center. For those persons, FCCW members and those in our

community, who do not have help from family or friends to pick up groceries and may not have a credit card to pay on-line, our **Expanded Shepherds Program** will provide someone to **pick up groceries** at Lovell Lake, **charge to FCCW account, drop off the groceries** and allow the **person to mail in a check** for the cost of the groceries to FCCW.

+ During the Governor’s “stay at home” order our Congregational Life Administrator, Julie Margolis is working from home. She has transferred the church phone to her personal cell during working hours (9am to 3pm) and has set up the office equipment (computers) in her home. Your calls, emails and requests are still addressed, and she continues to support the tasks that come from me.

+ All Ministry leaders meet weekly by Zoom to check in and to make sure we have not missed any of the essentials of running the church. Every voice has voice!

+ The Diaconate meet weekly by Zoom to check-in and to let me know how everybody is doing and who may need a pastoral call.

+ Building and Grounds devised a plan for the church to be disinfected. When we can gather again, it will be in a building that has had a deep cleaning of all hard surfaces and of its carpets.

+ To support the Hazel MacBrien Nursery School who rents space at the church, it was agreed to move outside of the contract, which requires a monthly fee usage and only invoice for the space when it is used. “Grace makes space!”

+ As usual, Sunday worship services have many behind the scenes people. The technology that the church already had in place has been used to connect us on Sunday morning with pre-taped services uploaded to our YouTube page, website and Facebook page. The church now has Zoom Pro, which allows teleconferencing of meetings that last longer than 40 minutes. Beginning Sunday, April 5th we will invite everyone to Zoom Worship. You will be able to connect via your phone with audio only or via your computer with video and audio. We will be able to hear one another and see some. We will no longer pre-tape to comply with the “stay-at-home” order.

+Your financial generosity has not stopped! You have dropped off your pledges and donations or placed them in the U.S. mail. THANK YOU!!

+ The Shepherd’s Program continues to provide rides to **critical appointments, i.e. outpatient services that are life saving** and the rider has no family or friends who can transport. To keep the rider and driver safe, we are asking the driver to wear a mask and gloves and would like the rider to do the same. Social distancing cannot be achieved in a vehicle and if you are transporting someone who is not in your familiar (family) circle, please wear mask and gloves. FCCW is committed to assist the “least of these” in times of need.

+ You have reached out to call and check in on folks. You have sent me encouraging emails and notes. You are continuing to *be* the love we talk about! You, FCCW are being the Church! Be Calm! Connect! Remember, it is just a season.

Wash your hands, don’t touch your face; continue to BE the Church!

Pastor Alberta

HOW DO WE CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTED ONE WHEN WE CAN'T GATHER?!

As your pastor, I've been asking myself that question since we closed the building on March 15th. The building closed, but our hearts did not.

Maybe the question is: how do we show community and express joy for what God has done for us? What will Easter Service look like in this season of COVID-19?

It will look like Hollywood Squares!!!



Yes, we each will be at home and seen on our screens. Some people will have their names attached to the symbol of a phone, as they connect by phone only.

What will you share on your screen in your box to show the joy of the Easter Season?

Well, think on that and be prepared to have a "show and tell" as we gather for Easter Service via Zoom on April 12th. Mine, will be something that sits on top.

Check out our Facebook page for live messages on Mondays at 7:30pm EST and Thursdays at 7:30pm.

"The JOY of the LORD is MY Strength!"

Pastor Alberta

Staying Connected

One of the best ways to stay connected to your church these days is through Facebook. I know many of you "don't do Facebook", but hear me out. You can create a Facebook account and only do as much as you are comfortable with. Go to: www.facebook.com/r.php. The only personal information you need to give is your name, gender, date of birth, and email address. You don't have to post photos or add Friends. You can simply just go to our church page and "Like" us. You will get all the updates and have access to Facebook Live videos. Why not give it a try? Our church Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalChurchofWakefieldUCC/>

Carol Jeffery

Thank you to Julie Margolis for compiling the following information to help us stay connected:

Change only means we need to embrace new ways of staying connected...our **Website & Facebook** are wonderful ways to stay connected with our family, friends, community and our CHURCH!

The First Congregational Church of Wakefield's Facebook page is very active with Facebook live messages, Worship video from Pastor Alberta Wallace, our Church Service Children's Messages, helpful videos, fundraisers, our Endowment Campaign and more. Take a moment to explore and don't forget to "Like" us!

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalChurchofWakefieldUCC/>

Our Website offers all the information needed to learn more about our church and all that we have to offer. Visit the link below and you will find:

"Who We Are" – our history, our staff, our church structure, our By-Laws

"Connect with Other" – Parish Helpers, Care Givers, Prayer Shawl, Wakefield Men's Fellowship, Adult Faith Formation (offering Zoom Meeting Gatherings), Zimbabwe PKZ Team

"Endowment" – Help us continue enriching our community, why give, history

FUNdraising – Amazon smile, Savers, Staples, The Treasure Shop, Online Sales, Annual Yard Sale, Shoe Box Recycling

Newsletter – Steeple Views is published monthly offering many updates on our Ministries

Video – Link to our YouTube Channel to view Worship services and more:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEhtYIk-rtRJO7VAmnLssyA/videos>

Shout Outs

Here are some cool things going on worth celebrating:

- ◇ Deacon “check-ins” – weekly calls to members. If you want one and have not received one yet, contact Jo Szirbik or Ginny Schweitzer. So uplifting!
- ◇ Sunday website – doing church in a virtual way. Thanks to Pastor, Sound Team, Webmaster, Margie Galabrun, Wendy DeCroteau, Jo Szirbik, young Julia Alie and others who are going to be adding their voices to virtual worship weekly.
- ◇ Endowment video – an inspiring real-life story by newest church member: Ashley!
- ◇ Endowment “comic” video – way to go Clark! Simple, direct message. Well done!
- ◇ Emailing of Profile document for critique to Members prior to conference approval and posting for pastor candidates. Great and loving input from so many so many. Humble thanks from Committee Members: Harriet Wilson, Judy Trepal, Carol Lundgren!
- ◇ Kudos to Profile “Readers”: Elizabeth Fogg, Jillian Currier, Max Gehring, and Search and Call Team George Ackerman, Chuck Hodsdon, Ryan McCarthy, Julie Evenson, Linda Messer.
- ◇ Julia Alie – awesome reading of Children’s story on 3/28 website church service!
- ◇ Frequent ZOOM meetings by Pastor and Leadership to help us be aware, prepared, ready to “Be the Church ... differently” for now.
- ◇ Hooray for Communications guru, Carol Jeffery, for keeping us connected through Steeple Views, Facebook and our Church Website.
- ◇ Hooray for CLA Julie Margolis – now working from home to facilitate the work and smooth running of the church.
- ◇ Shout out to Finance Team as they prepare an **important Membership ONLINE meeting on April 5 at 1:00 p.m.** Please plan to watch and participate. Your invitation is coming by email. We have such a conscientious team who look out for our financial wellness.
- ◇ Big thanks to Shepherd Program through Margie Galabrun and Rachel White – now offering to help pick up groceries or pharmacy needs. Medical rides are limited and determined on a case by case basis.
- ◇ Shout out to Building & Grounds – even though the Church is closed, they check to be sure all is safe, nothing is leaking, nothing is amiss.
- ◇ **Shout out to Pastor Alberta – if you need her, call the office # 522-3189. You are NOT EVER alone!**

Sunday, April 5th— Palm Sunday with Communion

Worship will be by Zoom Invite. On Sunday morning you will receive an email invite to a Zoom Meeting where Pastor Alberta will be offering Palm Sunday with Communion Worship. Please join us with bread and juice to allow us all to share in Communion together.

Here are several Zoom Tutorials you can watch to help familiarize yourself with Zoom Meetings! It very easy and we do hope you will join us!

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>

Membership Meeting —April 5th

This meeting will be via Zoom Meeting invite. You will receive an email invitation to join a Zoom Meeting which can be done by calling in to the number listed on the email invitation or clicking on the link invite to join us via the computer.

Rock Star Corner – Do YOU know who you are?

YOU ARE: Tim, Julia, Clark, Luke, Coralena, Cecilia, Julia, McAuley, Molly Rose, James, Autumn, Sophia and Madeline, Vincenzo and Giacomo. You are each our church’s ROCK STAR – including friends you bring from time to time! And we have an idea for you to consider!

How would you like your OWN corner to put **Rock Star News** in the monthly edition of Steeple Views! Pretty awesome, right? This is such an important time to be connected. We may not be in church together right now because of the virus called Covid-19, but we STILL love and pray for each other. We still miss seeing each other and miss doing the things we do in church. You must be missing school and seeing friends, right? Thank goodness for the different ways we can see each other through telephone/cell phone, email, FaceTime, Skype, Instagram, Zoom. Would you like to connect with each other even though we can’t meet in person right now?

Please email our Faith Formation Coordinator, Max Gehring. Tell Max what you would like to do with Rock Star News! It will be fun and interesting. Keep your spirits up! God is with us and cares about each and every one. Connect with Max – email: maxen3r-gy@gmail.com.

Faith Formation Class Continues Online

We "tested the waters" and are happy to say that our Faith Formation class, while different, is thriving! Please consider joining us on Tuesdays at noon via Zoom conferencing. We're currently working with the book, "We Make the Road by Walking" by Brian McLaren - at this moment, we're working with the chapters that have been designated as a Lenten Study. After Easter, we will continue with the remaining chapters of the book.

If you don't have the book, I'd be happy to copy the chapter for anyone that wants to join in. Just let me know and I'll add you to the Zoom invite list and will attach the current chapter we're working on.

You can contact me
at julielouisekessler@gmail.com.

Julie Kessler

Grief Support Group

I hope you are all doing well in light of these unprecedented times. As I watch events unfold and speak with people all over the world, I've been able to see a direct correlation between current circumstances and the grieving process.

Grief comes in many flavors, and can be experienced at times when we lose something that's important to us. It's both universal and personal; we all experience grief, each in our own way.

It's been my experience that feelings of grief can be made lighter when we connect with others who can help us lighten our burden.

If you would like to connect with me to talk about any feelings you may be having or if you would like some tips about moving forward from grief, you can access my website
at www.fromgrievingtoliving.com.

I can also be found on Facebook
at www.fromgrievingtoliving.com/facebook

I can also be reached at 603-491-0474, please text first if possible

Patti Schmook

Troubling Times?

So many ways to introduce fear,
Facebook, twitter, 24/7 news channels.
We hear, read, and share information that is real and scary.
Do we go outside, or stay in?
Is six feet enough, or should we distance ourselves more?
Another announcement of those infected and those who have passed.
We rush to the stores and hoard the items deemed necessary.
Governors, mayors, scientists, and federal administrators making decisions together or sometimes contradict each other. This is chaos!

But wait, God did not give us the spirit of fear, but of love.
We rise above the negatives. We connect in ways like never before.
Someone is getting groceries for those who cannot do so for themselves.
Someone has started a parade past a child's house to wish them a Happy Birthday.
Others video their sermons, school lessons, and songs then share them.
Celebrities provide live YouTube concerts. Art galleries create virtual museum tours.
Zoom, House Party, and Google Duo visually connect families and friends so they can see their loved ones even if they cannot touch or hold them.

Troubling times? Perhaps. But we will overcome. We will shine again and maybe a little better than before. And when this chaos passes, and it will, maybe we will hesitate and remember the love shared in this time of need instead of turning to anger, hate and fear. We are all in this together, and together we will see the love of God shine.

Donna Ackerman

Parish Helpers

Of course, like everything else, our PH meetings are suspended until further notice. We will miss being together, and pray that our due diligence in quarantine and isolation will ultimately result in putting an end to this pandemic. Thinking of you all and can't wait until we can be together again.

*God bless,
Ginny and Carol*

News from Zimbabwe

I had the opportunity to visit two schools, Singizi and Rutengeni High Schools, to distribute sanitary pads this past week before schools closed. These are government schools located in very rural areas. Both were established in 2015 due to the growing need. At Singizi, teachers taught in small wooden sheds with metal sides and a metal roof until four new classrooms were built this January. Singizi has 300 students and six teachers. Some are still taught outside. Depending on the subject, there are 50-70 kids in one classroom. The government started to erect multiple Blair toilets (hole in the cement floor style) but they couldn't pay the builders so the builders walked off the job. Only four toilets are completed for the 300+ people present each day. Of the six staff, three went on maternity leave in January. (Yikes!) The government did not provide substitute teachers so the school committee enticed two people from Chipinge to teach. The parents put together a little money to pay them but it hardly covers the money for combis to get to or from school. These two teachers consider their time as community service. Some students travel 15-20 km (9 -12+ miles one way) to get to Singizi. One organization donated eight bicycles to be shared by the 20 who have the longest distance. The head teacher said eight kids use the bicycle one week and eight the next. I didn't have the heart to ask about the four who aren't factored into the biweekly arrangement.

At Rutengeni High School we learned that two of the 230 students are physically disabled. One girl has crutches but the male student, who was perfectly fine before contracting TB last year, is in need of a wheelchair. I have no idea how they physically get to school. The girls and the teachers were absolutely thrilled to receive sanitary pads--the same with Singizi-- yet one very persistent teacher asked, "But how are they to wash them? Did you bring soap?" I was surprised as no school had ever mentioned the need for soap. She went on, "The green bar (a basic laundry soap used in Zimbabwe for dishes, bathing and laundry) is too dear and our students can't afford it." Sadly, that made sense as already high prices on basic goods had risen about 40% just in the past five days.

I also stopped at Rimbi High School to check in on one of our sponsored Form 1 students. Christina Bandama lives in Gumira with her grandmother some 15k away (9.6 miles) and it is too far to walk to school every day so she rents a room for 100 rand (about \$6) each month in order to be closer to the school. (Imagine your 8th grader living on her own, doing all of her own cooking, laundry, and other chores including fetching wood for a fire.) She came running when she saw me saying "MADAME!" and wrapped me in a huge hug. She reported school had been going well and, although she had enough books, having enough pens has been a problem.

I wanted to give you a flavor of what life is like for Zim students. My heart breaks just about everyday but I am so grateful for your support that allows PKZ to help as we can. Believe me, Christina will have all the pens she needs when school resumes.

Connie



The Messiah Wrap Up

Over the past couple of months several of us have been gathering to watch the Netflix series, The Messiah. We met at the Messer's home and enjoyed good food, good conversation and a great movie. We had our wrap up session last Thursday night via Zoom. This is just to report that we all want to do it again, and the next time we hope you join us. Because of our social distancing, Max has promised he would investigate a way for us to stream together, and then we could have conversation following. Please watch for the next announcement and be sure to join us because it was fun, and we missed you.

Margie Galabrun

Just For Fun



Shepherd Program (rides to medical appointments)

The Shepherd Program is continuing to offer **CRITICAL rides for people who are NOT ill**. In this time of uncertainty, many of our faithful drivers have chosen to step back from driving people to doctor's appointments. We do have a few remaining drivers, and even a new driver, but our concern for their well-being is high. We want both our drivers and riders to be as safe as possible. Therefore, we are now requiring our drivers to wear protective gloves and masks during transport. **This program should now be used only for critical rides for people who are not ill.** If you are ill or not feeling well, we ask that you call your doctor for advice, and use professional transportation such as an ambulance.

Shepherd Program — (expanded service)

NEW! The Shepherd Program is expanding its ministry to help deliver groceries to those who are shut in. This is a temporary and expanded service utilizing many of our already committed drivers, and new folk are signing up to help as well.

FIRST, Lovell Lake Market will take orders over the phone, charge your credit card, and deliver groceries to your door. If for some reason this doesn't work for you, the Shepherd Program may be able to help.

If you are shut in, please call the church office at 522-3189 and speak with Julie Margolis, our Congregational Life Administrator. She will direct the need to the Shepherd Program who will make a list of the items you need, and then will find a driver to pick up your groceries and deliver them to your door. Inside the bag with your items, you will find a slip with the amount you owe the church. It will be your responsibility to make repayment to the church.

We're all connected to one another. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need help.

Margie Galabrun

Many of our local businesses—especially the restaurants—are remaining open for take out orders. Please remember to support them as they support our needs during this time. A special shout-out to Lovell Lake Food Center for their support in helping us get food to the people in our community. And also to the Wakefield Food Pantry for continuing to service their clients. We live in a wonderful, caring community—it certainly “takes a village”.

History Article —Congregationalism

Written By: Daniel T. Jenkins

Congregationalism, Christian movement arose in England in the late 16th and 17th centuries. It emphasizes the right and responsibility of each properly organized congregation to determine its own affairs, without having to submit these decisions to the judgment of any higher human authority. Each individual church is regarded as independent and autonomous.

Although it was not always true in the early days in America, Congregationalists have generally been distrustful of state establishment of religion and have worked for civil and religious liberty. Their emphasis on the rights of the particular congregation and on freedom of conscience arose from their strong convictions concerning the sovereignty of God and the priesthood of all believers. This attitude has led many of them to adopt theological and social liberalism and to participate in the ecumenical movement. ©2020 Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

Linda Petkunas, Church Historian

Right Place, Right Time

On our way south in February, we stopped for a visit with my cousin Ann Snyder in the rural town of McCormick, South Carolina. It is located in western SC about 40 miles from Augusta, GA. Ann is very involved in the Lutheran Church of the Lake and was part of the team organizing the Women's World Day of Prayer for area churches. As it turns out, the focus of this year's day of prayer was ZIMBABWE! And Zimbabwe women had helped to put the prayer program together.

Of course, I began to tell Ann all about our connection to Zimbabwe and of Connie and her efforts there. She wasn't aware of how dire the situation in Zimbabwe was at the time (this was late February) and I offered to let her read one of Connie's updates. She was moved and suggested that they may be able to give the donations collected at the service directly to PKZ through Connie rather than going through other channels. Well, one thing led to another and they ended up making a donation of \$881. Not only that, but when they heard of our Dress A Girl program, the women of McCormick, SC want to sew dresses as well. Goes to show, it was meant to be! Many thanks to the ladies of McCormick for their generosity.

Carol Jeffery

Celebrations!

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1 Rob Nelson	15 Ginny Schweitzer
4 Karen Hagy	17 Aimee Ball
4 Jean Lloyd	19 Jo Szirbik
4 Julia McCarthy	20 Susan Jacobson
6 Jo-Anne Perks	20 Raenya Morann
7 David Albro	21 Amanda Boggs
10 Kristin Galabrun	23 Ciera Rose Dee
11 Michael Crew	23 Natalee Royle
11 Linda Turner	24 Ann Eaton
11 Michael Weeks	24 Molly James
12 Darlene Clements	26 Sarah Kinville
13 Persis Hildebrandt	28 Dawson Cotreau
14 Agnes Carlson	28 Madison Cotreau
14 Elizabeth Heinlein	28 Del Littlefield
14 Adam Szirbik	29 Lauree Royle
15 Sharon Lafond	30 Linda Messer

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

3	Dean & Colleen Nicastro
5	Rick & Cindy Denver
15	Bill & Susie Goodwin
15	Anders & Nancy Jacobson
22	Carol & Rob Lundgren
23	Dana & Julie Margolis
23	Scott & Nicky Mercer
25	Nathan & Debbie Fogg

FELLOWSHIP OF CONCERN



We are a community that believes that prayer is powerful! Please keep in your prayers all those who suffer in any way in mind, body and spirit, as well as those who by virtue of their service are far from home or in harm's way. 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.

Prayer Chain: Through phone calls, 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 would like to be a member of the prayer chain, or have a prayer request, please get in touch with Harriet Wilson (dhwilson39@gmail.com)



We are deeply saddened by the passing our dear friend, Paul Carlson, who passed away on February 27th at the age of 99. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife of 74 years, Agnes, and their family. A memorial service was held for Paul at our church on March 7. You can read Paul's obituary here: <http://csnh.tributes.com/obituary/read/Paul-V.-Carlson-108240496>

Thank You to the Food Pantry

When the schools closed, The Wakefield Food Pantry began providing FIT \$25 a week food cards for children of eligible food pantry recipients who normally qualify for free lunches at school. Here is a great example of a community helping during a crisis.

Dave Schweitzer

From the FUNdraising Team

Congratulations to all our bakers and sellers! Our Town Election Day Bake Sale was a big success! We totally sold out by 1:30 and made \$288 which combined with the Primary Day sale, added up to over \$500 on bake sales. Many thanks for all who made this fundraiser FUN (and a success!).



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.



www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalChurchofWakefieldUCC

A Prayer for Connection

Dear God,

We're grateful that You never leave or forsake us. And, we're grateful for the technology that helps us stay in touch with each other.

Give us the strength to endure this difficult season, and deepen our connection with You and Your people.

Today, help us remember that this time of social distancing and isolation will not last forever.

Empower us with an extra dose of Your love, peace, hope and joy. Remind us of Your promises, and please heal our land.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

YouVersion



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