

STEEPLE VIEWS



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

REVEREND GEORGE HARVEY, PASTOR EMERITUS

JULY 2020

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FIRSTCONGREGATIONALCHURCHOFWAKEFIELDUCC

When Will We Open The Doors Again?

To determine when we might be able to “open the doors” again and hold in-person worship services and activities, the Leadership Council is paying close attention to information and recommendations coming from the NH Conference.

Small groups such as Bereavement and Care Givers have already returned to the church. Sr. handbells has also begun to practice utilizing increased spacing in the Fellowship Hall. Stringent guidelines of distancing, wearing masks and disinfecting must be followed. It is our determination that we are not yet ready to open church to larger groups, but we have also decided that we will revisit this issue every two months.

This was announced at Annual Meeting in June. A date for the next Leadership Council gathering has not been determined but it will be in July and will be announced by an all-church e-mail. All are welcome at Leadership Council gatherings. Currently they are being conducted using Zoom via the Internet.

If you wish to express your opinions about the opening of church, this is the best place to do it. Please join us.

*Margie Galabrun,
Moderator*

Pastoral Care in the Months Ahead

While we await the call of our new settled pastor, arrangements have been made for Pastoral Care and Pulpit supply. Here is what is in store for us in the next couple of months.

Rev. Gayle Murphy will provide Pastoral Support.

We will continue with online worship. The link to the service can be found each Sunday morning on our website, www.fccwakefieldnh.org. It can be viewed at that time or at any other time thereafter on our YouTube channel accessed through our website. The persons who will provide digital pulpit support are as follows:

July 5—Rev. Peter Preble, Interim at 2nd Congregational Church, Beverly, MA. Virtual Communion will be offered.

July 12—Donna Ackerman, FCCW

July 19—Rev. Dr. Ruth Shaver, Interim at First Church Congregational, N. Conway

July 26—Reverend Peter Preble

August 9—Service by UCC NH Conference

August 16—Reverend Peter Preble

August 23—Service by UCC NH Conference

August 30—Reverend Peter Preble

A Letter from Pastor Alberta

Beloved FCCW,

Thank you for allowing me to share this time with you. There are many who are not comfortable with Zoom or Facebook therefore, this farewell message is simply to make sure everyone was able to "hear" me say it was truly an honor to walk with you during the intentional interim season.

As you pray for your Search and Call Committee, I too will keep them and you in my prayers. Remember, God is making ready the person who will partner with you in fulfilling the mission God has given you. Stay prayerful!

Your Diaconate Ministry assists in overseeing the spiritual health of the church. You have already witnessed their love and care from their reach out to you to see how you are doing and to keep you connected. FCCW Virtual Services are coordinated by the Diaconate Ministry in cooperation with many others. I am saying these things to remind you God has prepared you for this season and there will be no lack.

The Leadership Council moderated by the Moderator will bring you together to review and discuss the outcomes of the ministries of the church. Your ministry coordinators willingly share their gifts and talents to glorify God. I say this to remind you again, God has prepared you for this season. There is no lack! Your called settled pastor will partner with you in your abundance and walk with you to help you thrive.

Remember Paul's words to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 15:58 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

58 Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Pray for me as I prepare to journey with Grace Congregational Church in Rutland, VT. Walk in the promise.

Be Blessed and Be A Blessing!!

Pastor Alberta

Parish Helpers Annual Picnic

The Parish Helpers are having a picnic! It will be held outdoors and seating will be 6 feet apart. Please have a mask. We will meet at Carol Lundgren's on Pine River Pond at 12 noon on Thursday, July 9. It will be BYOB & L (bring your own beverage and lunch). Dessert will be provided. Please RSVP by calling Ginny Schweitzer at 522-9593 or email Carol Jeffery at carol.jeffery@gmail.com Hope to see your smiling faces once again!

Carol Jeffery

Men's Fellowship Update

Despite Covid-19 The Men's Fellowship has forged ahead both socially and across the community in need. We held our June meeting in George Ackerman's beautiful back yard observing social distancing and catching up over burgers by Paul Allen, fruit, salad, deviled eggs and cold malty refreshments out of iced coolers.

We have been assisting the elderly and folks in need across Wakefield moving donated furniture and beds from one overstocked home to folks in need in another. The Tripp House fence was in precarious shape and four of our handy members restored it to stability one sunny day. We placed American Flags on veterans' graves on Memorial Day in Lovell Cemetery along with the Pride of Wakefield Volunteers. We observed 5 minutes of silence to honor Chuck Russell who entered eternal rest in June. We plan to attack the carpets in the Church with Buddy Dee's direction in July. We are always open to new members and welcomed one of Paul Allen's at the recent meeting.

Dave Schweitzer

Thank You Pastor Alberta For Our New Church Banner!



Rufumiso Church in Time of Covid



This is a photo of church executive members. We held an executive meeting last Saturday to map the way forward on requirements needed to resume church service in view of Covid 19. All other requirements needed for Covid 19 Prevention we can afford (masks, hand sanitizers) but the only impediment is an infra red thermometer for screening congregates. Therefore due to that we could not resume but continue with family based church services. As soon as we afford to buy that thermometer we will resume. Stay blessed.

*Nicholas Sithole,
Rufumiso Church Head Deacon*

Stewardship Thanks You!

The Stewardship team offers deep thanks to those who have sent in their pledge offering for the coming fiscal year. The start of the 2020-2021 year is just a few days away!

A lot of pledges came in early which really helps the Finance Team and Church Leadership get the budget ready. **We are almost at our goal!** In this difficult time, it is great to see the Holy Spirit at work through each member and friend.

Pledge season is never really over – we are a 24 by 7 operation. So, if you have not yet pledged and meant to do so, it's not too late. If you need a new pledge card, just print the form on Page 6 or ask CLA Julie in the office and we will express one to you!

Stewardship looks forward to working with our new settled pastor, once that person is selected and installed. As always, if you have any questions at all about stewardship of time, talent and treasure - just ask us!

Carol Lundgren and Frank Frazier

Zimbabwe News

Sadly, the very difficult economic situation continues to decline in Zimbabwe. Prices of basic goods rise exponentially every week and the "official" inflation rate is now 786%. A loaf of bread and a sack of mealie-meal (cornmeal) increased by 30% in the last week alone. The same with fuel. Vranté Mahlupeko, PKZ Director, can sit in a fuel queue all day and only obtain 20 liters, which is slightly less than 5 gallons. Imagine if different sectors of our personal and church budget increased over the course of one week with no end in sight.

PKZ received approx \$1300 for food security from two church groups, \$400 from a NH based church and \$900 from churches in South Carolina. PKZ solicited wholesale food stores to allow us to buy mealie-meal and cooking oil in bulk -- not to be resold but for humanitarian purposes -- as traditional grocery stores place a limit when mealie meal is available. Since basic staples have not been available, Vranté has made an arrangement to buy special 5/10 kg. bags and will purchase maize from local growers, like our good friend Joseph Sibiya, take it to the grinding mill and then bag it up to provide for the elderly for the food security distribution. The team will also distribute the masks which have been sewn as many of the elderly are unable to secure them. I am grateful for the ways in which our friends seek to troubleshoot around the current conditions.

In an effort to gain control of the monetary crisis, the government just suspended (at end of June) all mobile money transactions through Ecocash. Ecocash is a way for people within the country to send and receive money and make payments for all goods and services. This is now more than a nightmare because people can not obtain actual currency of any type and rely heavily on the Ecocash platform. This impacts the viability and livelihoods of the entire population. One political scientist stated, "Nothing points to stability, but I don't want to overstate this because we have reached this crossroads many times before and the country has not collapsed. The default position in the country is one of instability."

The country's inflation rate reached the unfathomable 500 billion percent mark in 2008 and most economists see the same scenario replaying now in 2020.

Your prayers for the well being of the people of Zimbabwe are much needed and appreciated

Connie Littlefield

The UCC & Creeds

In the United Church of Christ, creeds, confessions, and affirmations of faith function as "testimonies of faith" around which the church gathers rather than as "tests of faith" rigidly prescribing required doctrinal consent. As expressed in the United Church of Christ constitution:

The United Church of Christ acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior. It acknowledges as kindred in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

Source: Wikipedia.com

Lnda Petkunas, Historian

Prayer Shawl Blessing



Members of the Prayer Shawl Ministry met outdoors to bless completed shawls. They got a chance to spend a little time with Pastor Alberta to say goodbye and to present her with a shawl as a parting gift. It was a hot, sunny day, but the ladies enjoyed seeing each other again even if they were 6 feet apart and wearing masks!

The group was formed over 10 years ago and normally meets once a month to pray and knit shawls to give comfort to those in need. Even though they have not met the past few months, the knitting and praying continue and six new shawls were blessed as a result.

"You created every part of me, knitting me in my Mother's womb. For such handiwork, I praise you. Awesome this great wonder!" Psalm 139:13-14

Progress Report from your Search and Call Committee

(Ryan McCarthy, George Ackerman, Linda Messer, Julie Evenson, Chuck Hodsdon.)

The quest for a settled pastor for our beloved church faithfully continues with your prayers. Although the worldwide pandemic has altered some of the ways to that end, be assured we are continually moving forward. Pastor Alberta has left us with the confidence and the skills that our new minister will be presented to you with joy and enthusiasm when the time and all hearts are right.

As you know, the profile went live in early April and we started receiving candidate profiles shortly thereafter. It is clear from the positive feedback from candidates that the excellence of the FCCW Profile was the reason. Thank you Carol, Harriet and Judy for your professionalism, artistic presentation and your accurate description of our church.

Zoom has become our friend. It is the only way that we have been able to meet as a group since the church doors were closed to gatherings. Interviews continue by Zoom safely from home. The steps following completion of interviews may require a little more ingenuity and creativity as the Committee actually meets, observes and enthusiastically presents a final candidate to you, the church Congregation, for your approval and acceptance.

This process may seem long. But it is a prayerful journey and no one can rush the Holy Spirit. We constantly listen for Her wisdom and guidance to prepare us for each new step. Please continue to hold us in your prayers.

Linda Messer

Online Sales

Might you have an item worth \$500 or more that you would like to sell, but just have never gotten around to it?

WELL here's an easy way — Contact our online sales team Margie or Connie and they will post it up for sale. They will send you contact information from interested buyers and you can set up time for viewing or selling.

All we ask is for you to donate 10-15% of purchase price to our Endowment Fund. George has a \$3,000 outdoor wood furnace listed right now!

Judy Trepal

JULY 2020

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|---|--|-----------|--|
| | | | 1 Diaconate Meeting Via Zoom | 2 Racial Justice Discussion Group Via Zoom 4:30 Community String Band Via Zoom—6:30 pm | 3 | 4 Independence Day |
| 5 5th Sunday After Pentecost Worship Online Via YouTube video on our Website 10 a.m. | 6 Caregivers' Support Group 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 am | 7 Faith Formation Study via Zoom 12 Noon | 8 Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room | 9 Parish Helpers Picnic—12 noon Racial Justice Discussion Group Via Zoom 4:30 Community String Band Via Zoom—6:30 pm | 10 | 11 Birthday Party! At the Tripp House Lawn 12:30—3 p.m. |
| 12 6th Sunday After Pentecost Online Worship 10 a.m. Bells Practice 6 p.m. Fellowship Hall | 13 | 14 Faith Formation Study via Zoom 12 Noon | 15 Finance Team Meeting 1:30 | 16 Racial Justice Discussion Group Via Zoom 4:30 Community String Band Via Zoom—6:30 pm | 17 | 18 |
| 19 7th Sunday After Pentecost Online Worship 10 a.m. | 20 Caregivers' Support Group 9:30 - 10:30 am | 21 Faith Formation Study via Zoom 12 Noon | 22 Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room | 23 Racial Justice Discussion Group Via Zoom 4:30 Community String Band Via Zoom—6:30 pm | 24 | 25 |
| 26 8th Sunday After Pentecost Online Worship 10 a.m. | 27 | 28 Faith Formation Study via Zoom 12 Noon | 29 | 30 Racial Justice Discussion Group Via Zoom 4:30 Community String Band Via Zoom—6:30 pm | 31 | |

2020 Birthday Celebrations

This Pandemic has sent most of us into a tailspin. Everybody either has already had a birthday or will be having one in the future and Outreach thought it might be a good idea to gather and celebrate. Reverend Gordon Rankin and Reverend Richard Slater, our Conference ministers, have said that we could hold gatherings outside as long as we follow the safe distance guidelines. So, this is your invitation to gather on Saturday July 11th from 12:30 to 3:00 on the Tripp House lawn (house across from the church where Pastor Alberta is living).



We have plenty of hand sanitizer available. It is a simple meet and greet event, as well as an opportunity to say farewell to Pastor Alberta and Wendy. You have a window of time to see people in person and not just through a Zoom meeting. We require all who attend to wear face masks. We might even make it a contest of “who has the best mask”, or “who is that masked person”? Ha Ha. There will not be any refreshments, because we want to limit any possibility of contamination. Parking will be in the church parking lot as well as along Wakefield Road. There will not be a “Rain Date”. If the weather is bad, then bummer.

We understand if anyone feels that meeting in this manner is too risky. We do not want anyone to feel uncomfortable and we want all to be safe. Be Well!

Donna V Ackerman, Outreach Ministry Coordinator



First Congregational Church
of Wakefield, NH UCC

2020-2021 Annual Giving Pledge

Dedication and blessings of all pledges: Sunday, June 7th.

Yes! I/we support this church with a pledge of: \$ _____

This gift will be fulfilled as follows: Weekly Monthly Quarterly Annually

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email(s): _____

Preferred Phone(s): _____

Thank You

I received this letter from fire victim Beth Hines. She wants and has authorized me to share it. Norma Gore

I would like to thank the congregation of the First Congregational Church of Wakefield for all of your prayers. I would also like to thank you for the donations that were given. This gift helped my family so much with both food, gas and housing. We are so grateful for the endless support while we've dealt with this horrible situation.

My older daughters Sky and Aliya are tuff women, Sky is starting to walk short distances without crutches and sitting in a chair to paint and draw for a longer period of time when she tries. Aliya just started walking without her walker. Her babies are healthy and happy.



Aliya and her husband will both need more surgery. Aliya's hardware in her back needs adjusting. Both girls have the same injuries L2 had to be rebuilt to their pelvis and L12 hardware to replace the damage. It's amazing how they can rebuild spines.

We need all the prayers we can get at this time we have a bit of tough road ahead of us.”

Sincerely, Beth Hines

Calling & Discernment Ministry Announces Openings

Calling & Discernment announces openings in the following ministries:

Faith Formation—We seek a coordinator, or co-coordinators, and a variety of helpers. Are you an organizer, a scheduler, a teacher, a curriculum reader? Do you have a passion for discussing current topics and relating them to your faith? Do you find joy in relating to enthusiastic and curious children and youth? Do you look forward to working with our next settled pastor to advance our church school into the future? There are great people already working in this ministry. This is a vital ministry and we look forward to adding new members to this team!

Finance—A coordinator or co-coordinators are needed to work with this GREAT and multi-talented team that oversees all aspects of the church finances. Are you a numbers person? Do you enjoy working as a team to recommend, manage, make projections and keep the congregation apprised of income, expenditures, and investments? If so, Calling and Discernment is looking for you!

Co-moderator—Margie is looking for someone to help guide and lead our church into a healthy future. Moderators are ex-officio members of all ministries. Love of our church is paramount. Listening, communications skills and a willingness to share the leadership role at meetings are key components for the co-moderator.

The essential take away is that working on any one of these teams will deepen the bonds of friendship, fellowship and vitality within FCCW. Please contact me! I would love to talk with you about how you might share your interest, time, and talent within these positions as well as other ministries of the church.

Connie Littlefield

AMAZON SMILE, We Smile!

If you're anything like me, you're doing a lot more online shopping these days! Here's a very easy way to support our church without any cost to you!

Instead of going to **amazon.com**, go to [smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) and search for First Congregational Church of Wakefield, NH (Sanbornville) as your charity. Then shop as usual! After checkout, a .5% of your eligible purchases will go to the church. Our church has received over \$200 from this program so far, but I bet we can do better than that! Be sure to log into Amazon Smile every time you shop! I bookmarked the site so go directly to it each time. It's as simple as that! Happy Shopping!

Carol Jeffery

Farewell to Pastor Alberta Zoom Meeting

A Zoom meeting was held on Sunday, June 28, to say goodbye to our Intentional Interim Pastor Alberta. Previous to the meeting she asked if some would share their thoughts about these questions:

In what way(s) did you see the church: "Rise above limited potentials held?"

Where/ when/ in what activity or task did you see the church stretch in new ways?

Where/when/in what activity did you see the church reaffirm "this is who/what we are called to do?"

Where/when or how did you see the church "rise above limited potentials held (or assumed they had)" during the interim season?

Here are some of written responses that were shared in the meeting.

From Titia Bozuwa:

Here is my attempt at answering questions posed re the interim period with Pastor Alberta. I don't think I am totally qualified, because I did not "work" on any committee. I was more an observer on the sidelines. But of course, I have impressions!

1. The corona virus influenced the latter part of Pastor A's interim period, and it will have lasting effects on the way we proceed. We were/are forced to look inward, since moving into the community with programs and other efforts was/is hampered by the lockdown and social distancing. Yet, it offered opportunities, and we were in a good position to seize that opportunity to connect with people within and outside of our church through the streaming of the Sunday services. It was a God send that we already had an excellent audio/visual system in place. Pastor Alberta made the most of working with what we had. I think one of her greatest contributions has been her training of many members in how to effectively use this medium.

2. Her tenure with us reaffirmed that we are a warm and caring congregation. When Pastor Alberta arrived, we were exhausted and she made us take a break. But she also pointed out that what we had been so busy with was raising money... We like to think of our congregation as being primarily concerned with reaching out to the needy and to the community at large. But we have to find better ways to strengthen personal ties, (including new members), enrich their spiritual lives, and spend less time worrying about raising money, though no church can function without it... The corona virus will push us to find new ways of reaching out to the world beyond our doors.

3. Pastor Alberta taught us to be bolder in managing our affairs. She encouraged modernization in various fields, streamlining the office with Julie's willing cooperation. She showed us the pros and cons of our leadership structure. She supported the starting of a Racial Justice ministry, an area our church had not paid much attention to. She awakened in us a potential for addressing the structural injustice that exists in our society and which will take real courage to change.

In sum: the interim period with Pastor Alberta was a blessing for our church. Her preaching was inspiring, her Bible Study Classes equally so. She connected with people in need, and led us with insight and innovation.

From George Ackerman:

We found new ways of being church during this time of COVID. We see that church is still church, even when we can not meet in our building every Sunday.

It is unfortunate that we had to make the decision to go to a part time Pastor. I was impressed with the honesty and ease at which we address the realities of the situation. During this search and call process, I learned of more than one church that wasn't being honest with itself, in denial actually. They hired a full time Pastor which they couldn't afford to keep. Both churches ended up dealing with the situation in what I would call very unfortunate ways. I am proud of our honesty and stewardship.

During this whole time of transition, we continued to be givers and reach out to those in need. Our members are involved in multiple ways, through many organizations, in which suppose is given to those in need. I am impressed of our commitment and passion toward helping others. Even with the changes brought about by the pandemic, we have continued to reach out and help others. In fact, our support has increased in many ways as the need has increased!!

You Pastor Alberta have continued to encourage us to discern our own calling, individually and collectively as a church. I have seen individuals participate in things that they thought were outside of their comfort level and calling. Others for example, have considered openings in ministries and offered to fill a need after discernment. The Church as a whole, moving toward becoming more welcoming, recognizing who we are and evaluating that, along with entering into discussions of racial justice.

Several other attendees offered their impromptu thoughts, praise and well wishes for Pastor Alberta as she moves into her next role as Intentional Interim Pastor in Rutland, Vermont.

Thank you, Pastor Alberta, and God Bless!

Celebrations!

JULY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Chrissie Levesque | 22 Linda Foss |
| 1 Betty Seibert | 22 Patricia Golden |
| 2 Marjorie Berg | 23 Linda Petkunas |
| 3 Tammy Canney | 24 JohnPaul Eaton |
| 4 Brenna Hagy | 24 Chip Hagy |
| 5 Royal Doughty | 24 Dick Nelson |
| 7 Robert Baldwin | 24 Stephen Royle |
| 8 Lee Robinson | 25 Sandy Burr |
| 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 |
| 20 Andrea Szirbik Groft | |

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

- 4 Buddy & Nancy Dee (1970)
- 15 Curt & MaryBeth Cook
- 17 David & Ginny Schweitzer
- 24 Jean-Michel & Margie Galabrun

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 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)

Facebook Birthday/ Anniversary Fundraiser

Thank you, June Birthday Participants — Carol Lundgren, Royal Doughty and Bonnie Hines. Your Facebook Fundraisers for our Endowment raised \$615! WOW. And thank you to all participants, you've raised over \$2,500.

Our challenge to July Birthday and Anniversary folks is to beat the June total. You can do it!

Easy instructions on setting up your fundraiser can be found on our website. Follow this link: <https://www.fcwakefieldnh.org/fundraising/>

Gratitude, Celebration and Joy

to all of our wonderful deacons who have keep us informed, connected and grounded during this time of Church separation.



Blessings, Rachel and Ron White



The Peace of Heaven has come to Chuck Russell, he left his earthly life on Friday, June 5th peacefully with his family at home. Please pray for comfort during this difficult time for his family. A Celebration of Life will be announced at a future date.

Grief Support Group Resumes at FCCW

Patti Schmook will again be holding Grief Support Group in the church twice a month on Wednesday, July 8, and July 22 at 11 a.m. The meetings will be in the Parish Helpers Room. They will be social distancing and asking participants to have masks.

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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