

STEEPLE VIEWS



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

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JANUARY 2022

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THE PASTOR'S PAGE

IS JESUS CALLING?

What if, in this New Year, you wanted to make changes in your thinking? You would need something to encourage you, right? Well, I found a wonderful little book in Denver when I was ministering in Wyoming. I was led to this one. When I first saw it, I thought, “*I suppose this is just another religious-oriented daily devotional*” (which I don’t tend to enjoy). I felt led to look at it, anyway. I read a page..... “WOW, this is different!! It’s speaking to me. It’s opening my eyes to ways I stop myself from allowing God into my life! It is helping me to sense Jesus’ presence! Yay....Let’s see if it hits my people like this!” (It Did.) Here’s a sample for you.

*Welcome problems as **perspective-lifters**. My children, you tend to sleepwalk through your day until you bump into an obstacle that stymies you. If you encounter a problem with no immediate solution, your response to that situation will take you either up or down. You can lash out at the difficulty, resenting it and feeling sorry for yourself. This will take you down into a pit of self-pity.*

*Alternatively, the problem can be a ladder, enabling you to climb up and see your life from My perspective. Viewed from above, the obstacle that frustrated you is only a light and momentary trouble. Once your perspective has been heightened, you can look away from the problem altogether. Turn toward Me and see the Light of My Presence shining upon you.” * (Don’t know about you, but I relate to the ‘sleepwalking’ and ‘lashing out’ parts ☐ I love the solutions.)*

You know, I’m wondering whether reading this book could help us to make changes we’ve been yearning for? And, what if it could be a brilliant tool to help us, not only as individuals--but as a community, to be “**Hearing God’s Call**” and “**Growing in Love and Care**” (our Mission)! A mission says why we are—our purpose. A vision grows out of this and says, “Given our mission, purpose, what is God calling us to do?” Are we beginning to have a vision at FCCW--that God is calling us to--in the near future? We have decisions to make. Our mission aptly says we will go to God and listen. We have some history using a “team synergy” approach involving lots of communication with each other, and we want to plan some team synergy meetings. Here are some questions to think about.

How are you hearing God’s call in your life? What challenges are you having concerning growing in love and how might the church help? Are you beginning to have some visions regarding what God is calling us to do? Look, listen for inklings. While we are in the organizing stages of this, let me suggest that if you are interested--begin to read “Jesus Calling”* As you read, at least sometimes, allow your imagination to wander and ask the Holy Spirit for new pictures, images, dreams and ideas? Even seemingly silly and unusual things may be clues as we entertain them for a moment. I believe this is a powerfully inspired and inspiring book and could help us with discernment. It turns our minds to God’s perspective in a bright, positive, immediate and heart-opening way. It can help create “space” in our thinking—space for new thoughts and ideas.

If you are interested reading this book with me and asking Spirit to guide us, please let me know. We can find a time to meet and share. And, may we pray, opening ourselves to all which God is calling us to and seeking to grow in love and care of each other through all. Amen.

In love, Rev

“This is how we know we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in Jesus’ presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts and knows everything.” I John 3:19-20

* “**Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence**” by Sarah Young (available in sanctuary ½ price)

Celebrations!

Gratitude and Joy

Thank you to many of our Church family friends for providing our sanctuary with the gorgeous poinsettias. The lovely plants created a festive and colorful atmosphere. The beauty and delight of flowers is a gentle reminder of God's Grace and Love.

Blessings, Rachel White

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

3	Donald Silcocks	20	Gail Leyare
4	Austin "Max" Gehring	22	Susan Raban
4	Caitlin Koukal Howes	23	Jill Mullen
6	Penny Grover	24	Sid Girardin
7	Donna Ackerman	25	Aileen Koukal
9	Rachel Wilson	25	Martha Jo McCarthy
12	Jillian Currier	28	Samantha Michalsky
15	Lindsay Baldwin	28	Erin Seaboyer
16	Carole Doughty	29	Timothy McCarthy
16	Robert Chadbourne	30	John Hebb
18	Eric Boggs	30	Joanne Dolbear
19	George Szirbik	30	Janie Silcocks

Christmas Bazaar - Another Successful FUNdraiser!

We had been hopeful to return to our always successful Harvest Fair this past year, but COVID had other plans for us. Given the nature of our Harvest Fair - that is, use of every square inch of downstairs encouraging a bustling of people to view our for sale items and partake of our food offerings - any attempt to maintain social distancing to keep people safe was just not viable. Instead, we decided to set up Fellowship Hall with a Christmas shopping opportunity - one where we could have multiple times for people to shop over the weeks leading up to Christmas and one where we could insure the proper distancing and masking of all. And in the end, we made close to \$800! Many thanks to all those that helped set up, donated items and, of course, who came to shop!

Julie Kessler

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 12 Richard & Diana Peckham
- 16 Jeff & Valerie Ward

Youth Group

The church youth would like to acknowledge Miss E, the bell choir, Jillian Currier as our resident snoop :) and the cookie helpers for assisting us with our Birthday celebration skit. There may not be a lot of us, but hoped we entertained the congregation as well as getting the word out that Jesus' Birthday is almost here!

In other news, the youth group has taken some time to regroup and we look forward to the upcoming events that we have in the works and hope to see some of you there as chaperones to share in the fun! More details to come! Please contact Gina at gmgsm615@gmail.com if you would like to participate or help in some capacity with this in the near future. Think outdoor activities, visiting other congregations when we can do so safely, baking cookies and volunteer work to name a few.

Gina Golden

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.

Please keep in prayer: Annie G, Bob and Mary J, Carol J's Niece Chrissy, Lyn S, Ryan S, Sue L's Daughter Cindy, Brandon & family, Wendy D, Aaron J., Rob L., Arlene L., Josiah S.

Our Condolences

We are saddened by the passing of David Morrison's father, Roger Morrison, on December 16. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Morrison family during this difficult time.



It's That Time of Year Again

2021 Donation Reports will be generated and sent out before the end of January. Reports will be sent via email unless told otherwise (or if we don't have your email address). Please contact Julie Kessler (julielouisekessler@gmail.com or 603-871-8066) if you have any questions about your report.

Coming Up in February

A Souper Sunday Soup Sale is being planned for the weekend of February 12—13.

Prepared to Serve online event February 8 - 17. Registration begins January 3. www.nhcucc.org/caring-for-congregations/prepared-to-serve

For more news and information about FCCW, visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalChurchofWakefieldUCC> and/ or our [web-site at www.fccwakefieldnh.org](http://www.fccwakefieldnh.org)

JANUARY 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 NEW YEAR'S DAY
2 2ND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS Worship and Holy Communion 10 a.m. In-person or On Zoom/Facebook	3 Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m.	4 Adult Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 p.m.–1 p.m. Spirit Discovery Group—4:30 Choir 5:30	5 Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room Diaconate Meeting 4:30 p.m.	6 EPIPHANY String Band Location TBA or Zoom	7	8
9 1st SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY BAPTISM OF OUR LORD WORSHIP 10 a.m. In-person or On Zoom/Facebook	10	11 Adult Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 p.m.–1 p.m. Spirit Discovery Group—4:30 Choir 5:30	12 Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room Leadership Council Meeting 4:45 p.m.	13 String Band Location TBA or Zoom	14	15
16 2nd SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY WORSHIP 10 a.m. In-person or On Zoom/Facebook	17 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m.	18 Adult Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 p.m.–1 p.m. Spirit Discovery Group—4:30 Choir 5:30	19 Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room	20 String Band Location TBA or Zoom	21	22
23 3rd SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY WORSHIP 10 a.m. In-person or On Zoom/Facebook	24	25 Adult Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 p.m.–1 p.m. Spirit Discovery Group—4:30	26 Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room	27 String Band Location TBA or Zoom	28	29
30 4th SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY WORSHIP 10 a.m. In-person or On Zoom/Facebook	31					

WINTER
By Donna V Ackerman

Snow covers the forest floor,
The canopies are bare.
Woodland creatures regulate their body temperature
and breath,
Foraging for fat building foods.

Birds who in months past seemed hidden due to nature's
bountiful supply,
Now jockey for a place at the feeders.
Turkeys also mysteriously reappear,
Blazing snow-cruusted pathways from feeding station to
station.

The sun so low in the sky,
Creates wonderment in her ability to rise.
Full moon shines brightly in the night,
Reflecting across the frozen crystals embracing all
she encounters.

Stillness and movement,
Silence and a cacophony of sounds,
All at the same time,
Yet all at their own tempo.

Winter means change,
Change in how we approach it.
Some travel to warmer climates,
Others relish in the joy that snow brings.

Rest and renewal,
Is what this season is about.
Like nature's creatures,
We pace ourselves and breath.



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