STEEPLE VIEWS



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

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FIRSTCONGREGATIONALCHURCHOFWAKEFIELDUCC

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

Reverend Dr. Tere Krueger

RESURRECTION PHENOMENONS!

Easter. Resurrection! I'm sure you have experienced little moments—or big occasions in which you have experienced a genuine resurrection phenomenon! Of course, the prototype, the genuine one is THE miraculous Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, thanks to the power of God. That's the essential One we celebrate this month. Because we're human, we are created in God's image and we will experience resurrection moments throughout our lives. The genetic code of the Cosmos is laced through and through with the Wonder of Resurrection. Rising Again—from the dead, from the ashes. Dormant seeds suddenly, shockingly bloom into flowers. Dark cocoons hatch butterflies! People transform!

RE-birth. RE-newal. RE-vitalization. RE-naissance. RE-vival. YES, we pray!

I'd like to share several 'resurrection moments' in hopes that you will recognize and celebrate some of yours!

Last year, I chanced upon *The Abby*, a religious store in Scarborough. As I was in this wonderland, my phone rang. I was stunned. The name was that of my former Spiritual Director from Denver. In a prior call, I had been told he had suffered a serious heart attack, so I had been unwilling to contact him. I was startled--might this be his wife telling me he had died? I was thrilled when I heard his healthy voice! He was fine and eagerly asked if I had been called to a church! He was overjoyed when I shared I was in New Hampshire at FCCW. "I knew God would lead you to a church, Tere!" This resurrection of relationship was a marvelous gift.

I told him the story of how I thought I was "ready" to accept a "call" as I was interviewing seriously with a church. I was out on my bicycle riding on the little road along the RV park where I lived, right on Lake Michigan. I was on the phone and when I looked up--there was a deer on the road! In fear, I hit the brakes hard and fell off the bike, skidding on my knees and chin. Ouch! Some blood and bruising, but not serious.

Later, I reflected on the accident and interpreted it like a dream. I was going along my way, and all of a sudden, Spirit appeared (deer are my symbol for Spirit.) I hit the brakes hard, even though this creature was plenty far ahead of me. Here was Spirit presenting me with a church, but I was fearful and hit the brakes. I was telling myself I was ready to say "yes", but I was putting them off--hitting the brakes as they got more serious with me. So, I found someone to work with me so I could clear my inner path forward. I experienced a resurrection. God readied me for you.

After I hung up with Bob, I discovered wonderful religious tokens like dollar coins in the store. I chose one that depicts the Angel Michael. I enjoy carrying it in in my pocket and reading the prayer. "O Michael, give us your strength to defeat our fears and to rise up to any challenge".

Hmm, a resurrection prayer. Thank You, God, for little accidents through which you lead us to powerful resurrections. Amen.

Calling and Discernment Ministry

1 Corinthians 12:7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

First Congregational Church Wakefield always welcomes your ideas, your donations, your help. Nothing is too little and everything is ALWAYS appreciated. There is always a place here for you to share your spiritual gifts no matter from where you come, whatever you believe, whoever you love, whatever your lifestyle. The Calling and Discernment Ministry can help match your ideals, ideas, and energy... YOU... with a place in our church where you may be filled with joy and accomplishment knowing you are serving so many.

Safe Church Team Members

This team would greatly appreciate the help of additional people. A wonderful ongoing project to upgrade access points to the church with better lighting, locks and video cameras, is being coordinated by the very skillful Tracey Kolb. Other ways Safe Church members can be involved: assuring children and the elderly are kept safe while in our care; providing proper use of AED equipment and knowledge of CPR; attending free training seminars on safe church offered by the NH Department of Safety. If you can share your time and knowledge for these projects, we need you!

Faith Formation Ministry Coordinator(s) and assistant volunteers

This ministry currently has dedicated leaders for both the Adult and Youth Faith Formation groups. FCCW needs an additional person(s) to serve as Coordinator(s), of the Faith Formation Ministry. One may not be involved directly with the classes or related events but would be responsible for calling the FF leaders together occasionally for check-in, brainstorming program development with others, or attending occasional FCCW Leadership Council meetings. We are very hopeful that FCCW will once again be nurturing children and families by extending opportunities for a revitalized church school. Perhaps you have the desire or experience and are called to be involved with the children as a volunteer assistant. Children of all ages are eager to be with each other and learn and use new skills to help others. These relationships will be with them forever. How wonderful when teens, young adults, and young families all work together in love. Come offer your talents and join the fun.

Outreach Ministry Coordinator(s) and volunteers

FCCW is very thankful we are able to provide services to our own members and to the surrounding area. Our volunteers offer rides to community members through the Shepherds Program; there are Grief and Caregiver support groups, and our members support the Food Pantry by donating monthly nonperishable foods. We invite the community to join us for the Harvest Fair, the popular 'Yard Sale', bake sales and Christmas Bazaar. These volunteers are all part of the Outreach Ministry! We are in need of Coordinators as team managers for this fun, enthusiastic and dedicated group of volunteers. This may seem daunting, but this Ministry is often assisted by other FCCW Ministries to accomplish these tasks. Our dedicated volunteers work side by side, supporting and working with each together as a team. Come join us!!

For more information or help with your personal discernment, please contact Linda Messer or Connie Littlefield.

CareGiver Self Care Support Group

The next sessions will be on April 4 and 18 from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Our church offers this support group to the public and welcomes all who are caring for someone they love either at home or in a care community. Many helpful topics and resources are discussed. From time to time, professional speakers share their wisdom. All conversations are confidential within the group. Please share this information with anyone you know who might benefit from such support.

Safe Spaces Team - Up and Running

We are pleased to report that the Safe Spaces Team now has 4 members: Brian Shipley, Annie Gehring, Chuck Hodsdon and Carol Lundgren. Stay tuned for more news about CPR training, AED training and other safe spaces protocols that are being refined or developed

Hazel MacBrien Nursery School News

March was another busy month for us. We began the month talking about the weather and deciding if it was a lion or lamb weather day. We kept track using tally marks. So far, we have had more lion than lamb days. We celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday by making Cat in the Hat hats and on March 17th we celebrated St. Patrick's Day with wearing green and eating green snacks. The little mischievous leprechaun visited our classroom and left his little green footprints on our floor. The kids went on a leprechaun hunt, we didn't find him, but he left us a golden treat! We worked on letters Dd, Zz, Kk and number 2 this month. We are looking forward to warmer weather and seeing the flowers and leaves bloom.

Coffee Hour is Back!

Thank you to our gracious hosts, Laura Frye, Janet Twombley, and Rachel White



Spring



Oh, My Goodness! Is there anything better than the long-awaited season of Spring? OK, yea maybe there is a lengthy list of things, but for this moment Spring and all its glory is on the top of my list. I love when the first

shoots of purple crocus poke their miniature heads out of the mulch, and sometimes snow. I squeal when I spy tulips or daffodils reaching for the warm rays of the sun. I love to watch the "twitter-pated" antics of the birds. Those same birds we have been feeding all winter are now finding sustenance elsewhere, which makes me sad because there are fewer of them gathering at the feeders. But then again, I look forward to the return of migratory birds like the grossbeaks and the orioles, and one time we had an indigo bunting. This morning we saw purple finches with their raspberry colors. Not sure why they are called "purple". Maybe the distributor of names was colorblind. We also saw three pileated woodpeckers chasing each other as they discussed who had what territory. The call-and-response drumming of another kind of woodpecker created a stereo affect from one side of the yard and back. Each one sharing their information of food, nesting sites, or mating requests in what might be considered avian texting. Spring is a time of Rebirth, Renewal, and Resurrection.

What really brings me great celebratory joy about Spring is the Spiritual rebirth that comes with what to-day is called, "Easter". The hope derived from the resurrection of Christ, and the promise of Pentecost and it's "God in Christ in you the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27), is the foundation of Christian doctrine. As we get closer to the saddening reminder of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion of Christ, let's also look forward to the Resurrection. Just as we patiently wait to see those groundbreaking Spring bulbs push triumphant from their earthly restraints, let us also envision the stone rolling away releasing our Savior to Glory and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Donna V Ackerman

Spring Cleaning Time

It's the best time of year to clean out those drawers and closets, etc. We are planning our next **SAVERS** collection for sometime in May, so keep that in mind when you are sorting out your winter items and getting ready for summer. More information will be coming in our next issue!

Easter Week Observances

Easter Week begins with our **Palm Sunday** Worship with the distribution of palms. We commemorate Jesus entering into Jerusalem and being greeted by the people waving palm branches. It is **a** reminder of the welcoming of Jesus into our hearts and of our willingness to follow him.

On **Maundy Thursday**, we commemorate the day on which Jesus Christ shared the Last Supper with his 12 apostles prior to his crucifixion. Jesus is believed to have washed the disciples' feet before the meal in order to demonstrate the importance of serving others. We will celebrate this Last Supper with Communion and hear selections of the passion story that led to the Shadow of the Cross. This service is at 7 p.m. is completed in the dark.

In commemoration of the crucifixion of Jesus, we are offering our sanctuary on **Good Friday** for a Prayer Vigil to all who wish to come and sit silently, pray, meditate, reflect. The church will be open from 12 to 3:30. We will offer several short selections if you choose to read. Spend as much time as you wish.

Ukraine Relief



On Sunday, March 27, FCCW joined with the UCC churches of New Hampshire and held a special vigil service of prayer for Ukraine.

For those who wish to send financial support for the people of Ukraine, you can get more information and can donate through the UCC. Here's the link: <u>Ukraine Relief UCC</u>

An Easy Way to Earn \$ For our Church

I recently got an email from Amazon telling me that our church has received \$448.60 in donations (total to date) from people buying through Amazon Smile and choosing our church as their charity. There is nothing to join, nothing extra to pay, and nothing to it—just an easy way to earn dollars for our general fund. Here's how:

Go to: smile.amazon.com 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. Be sure to log into Amazon Smile every time you shop! Or just bookmark the page and go directly to it! It's as simple as that!

Happy Shopping!

3 Carol Jeffery

News of Zimbabwe

Things are chaotic – more so than usual – in Zimbabwe at this time. A by-election (mid term election) is taking place at the end of March and any peaceful gatherings of opposition parties draw riot police, water cannons, and tear gas. The most wellknown opposition leader, Nelson Chamisa, cautioned his supporters not to blame the police as they more than likely don't support the Zanu PF government but are doing their jobs as directed. Morale of police officers is at an all time low and they lack the resources to provide even basic services. When we needed to provide background checks for the people in our organization, we needed to bring our own fingerprint forms. We then found out they lacked ink for the rollers, for the rubber stamp, pens or adequate paper, definitely no printing or photocopying machines and often the offices had broken down benches, broken windows, falling apart ceilings, etc. (Anyone remember the photo of a few months ago of the Passport Office where you could see through the wooden slats?)

Zimbabwe is also feeling the brunt of 15% increases in the cost of maize meal and bread flour by and of course, fuel. Zimbabweans were paying \$1.34 per liter (approx. \$5.10 a gallon) and prices at this writing are \$1.70 per liter (approx. \$6.50). A median wage has dropped to \$150 or less a month but 90% are unemployed and survive on piece jobs – any type of day labor to put food on the table or pay their child's school fees. Teachers can't afford to go to work if they live any distance from their schools because the cost of transportation eats up what little they make. Teachers use to be paid in USD at about \$500 per month and now receive their salary in Zim dollars which may not even add up to \$150. The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition has called for strikes but soldiers are threatening any government workers who fail to show up. Workers feel it is modern day slavery as the majority are earning below the food poverty line. One nurse midwife from Mt. Selinda wanted to come to the USA to work as my maid as she would earn more money and felt she would be better able to feed her kids in Zimbabwe.

When I left Zimbabwe in December, \$1 USD was going for Z140. One dollar now buys Z200-220 on the streets depending upon the area in which you live. The banks offer a rate of Z130, so the street money changers are ever in demand. But that's if you have USD. Gratefully, I am able to carry our sponsorship fees and project money in the highly desired US currency so we can stay abreast of inflation.

It is with this backdrop that PKZ continues to move forward on the renovation of a building in Humani to be used as a medical clinic and work on an ECD center, continues to sponsor children and make sure they have school fees and adequate school supplies, continues to provide food security for the children at the Daisy Dube Children's Home and selected elders, continues to provide supplies delivered on the shipping container, and continues to support people in whatever way we can. It is often overwhelming when you see the increasing number of children on the streets because they don't have school fees and they don't have food to eat.

Yet this photo of Tatenda Say Sithole is a bright spot. Tatenda is a Form 1 (Grade 8) student at Gaza High School and is sporting a new uniform because of the generosity of people giving through the Alternative Gift Giving program at Christmas.



His mother Nancy is a single mother of four who attends the UCCZ church in Gaza and works extraordinarily hard, sometimes cleaning homes but more likely toiling in the fields day after day to earn a dollar or two. FCCW continues to demonstrate love for unknown others in Zimbabwe. God bless you and your generosity.

Connie Littlefield

Pastoral Relations Team -

The team has recently been formed and the members chosen by Rev. Tere are: Titia Bozuwa, Julie Evenson, Carol Lundgren, Paul Allen and MarthaJo McCarthy. Under our by-laws, the PRT is formed to meet at least quarterly or as needed with the express purpose of supporting the Pastor's ministry. If you have questions and would like to know more or offer comments and ideas, please reach out to Rev. Tere or any member of the Team.

Stewardship Pledge Time

Towards the end of the month, after Easter, you will receive a packet in the mail. As always, if you have any questions, please call the church office and our CLA, Andrea Selig, will connect you with the best person to discuss and answer any questions you may have. Annual pledging puts a number in our budget for the fiscal year that begins on July first. Please be part of the synergy of working together to strengthen FCCW to support its staff and many many programs, as well as ongoing costs of heat, electricity, internet, supplies, plowing, repairs and so much more. Pledges will be dedicated on Pentecost Sunday, June 5th.

Music Camp Is Coming Back Again This Year!

SAVE THE DATE — August 1st - 5th 2022

We need volunteers!! No experience needed If you want to have a truly wonderful experience, volunteer for music camp. You'll have fun and the kids are THE BEST! If you're interested please call one of us.

Evy 516 967 7168; Patricia 603 522 8225 Buddy 603 522 6307



Please come to a discussion on Saturday, April 23rd 10 - 11:30 AM

In person and via Zoom

Mark your calendars ... for Team Synergy & become part of the conversation.

How can we become: a more vibrant, inclusive intergenerational church? What do you need or want from church?

Our church is what we make it.

BE PART OF THE SYNERGY

Reflecting on the Past

Titia Bozuwa, Sage

(The video of this talk can be found on our website homepage—www.fccwakefieldnh.org)

Our Moderator asked me to help answer a question our congregation wants to ask itself: "Where are we going from here? In preparation for the Synergy Meeting, the committee thought it might be helpful to reflect on our past before moving forward, especially in regard to who we are as an organization and what we intend to achieve with it.

My association with this church started in 1958, when my husband opened a medical practice across the street. The church had just been rebuilt after the big fire. I have to admit that I didn't find this a very exciting church, but that had more to do with my being only 26 years old at the time...while most congregants were or *looked* over, at least, 55.

As an organization the church was steered principally by the Paul family, which is well illustrated by the fact that Sam Paul was moderator for 43 years! His lovely wife Julia became the first female deacon in 1966. The governing structure at that time was uncomplicated and traditional; the budget was small, the outlook very frugal. The purpose was simply to have Sunday morning services. The Parish Helpers took care of the social and socializing aspects.

From my perspective, the church came to life in the sixties with the arrival of our first female minister, Esther Vodola, who, among other things, strengthened the Sunday School, which had led a rather anemic life; and she livened up Bible Study for adults.

Very important change came in the eighties. Better roads connected our Seven Lakes to urban areas and younger people decided it was worth the commute to settle here. It was at this time that young mothers like Margie Galabrun, Janice Stanley, Jo Szirbik, Cathy Koukal, Connie Littlefield and others moved their families to the Wakefield area and found our church. This demographic shift caused a significant generational change, and it called for a vigorous new ministry. Rick and Jennifer Russell personified that change. Fresh out of seminary, they immediately set out to bring Wakefield into the mindset of the sixties, in which *they* had come of age, but which had fairly bypassed our traditionally rooted township. The church flourished. The Russels set out to transform the leadership structure into a more dynamic and diversified one. The by-laws were changed to allow for a broader participation in decision making, which had been dominated by a small set of leaders. Rick and Jennifer stoked the fires of compassion, and confronted us with choices on how to LIVE our faith. Not surprisingly then, it was during their tenure that our connections were forged with Zimbabwe. They also introduced the idea of giving shelter to refugees from Cambodia. And they inspired the wonderful Betty Crowe to donate her time as secretary, which in turn resulted in the permanent establishment of an Assistant Administrator's office.

During the tenure of Rev. George Harvey and John Tamilio, a distant member of the Paul family bestowed a considerable legacy on the church. Under their leadership this unexpected gift resulted in the addition to our building, which greatly extended its usefulness. It was hoped that the improved facility would attract young families and increase Sunday school attendance, but that did not happen in any significant numbers. However, it was during this period that we became an Open and Affirmed Church.

And then came Rev. Mary James. Now we have landed in the twenty-first century. Like the Russells, Mary infused the congregation with enthusiasm and compassion, which in turn resulted in meaningful outreach to the community beyond our doors. With the help of Jan Fairchild, a retired minister, she introduced a new leadership structure and a way of attracting members into positions on the basis of their innate gifts. New by-laws were created. Committees became ministries, decision-making was spread out over a newly formed leadership council, and decisions are made by consensus. The nominating committee was done away with.

Rev. Mary had a way of empowering the laity by encouraging it to take on tasks it had never dreamed of doing, like preaching! Our connection with Zimbabwe became very strong through Connie Littlefield and with Mary's encouragement. And Mary took the initiative to get the other clergy in town to work together.

Over the span of the 64 years I am trying to describe here, our church has not only grown in physical size. Our leadership structure expanded significantly. So did the programs we offer, like grief support and the shepherds ride program. We make use of modern technology with a printer, computer, copying machine, camera, projector. Our budget grew along with all these changes, and a significant amount of energy and time is required of the membership to meet the enlarged budget. Sadly, the one thing that has not seen commensurate growth is membership, especially not in the of 20 to 40 age group. This mirrors a contemporary phenomenon. And of course, it doesn't help that we have just gone through two years of pandemic that practically closed our doors.

Where do we go from here? That is the question we have to answer together. What is realistic for us to accomplish in these changed times?

A healthy organization brings in new blood and assures its succession. I saw that happen in the eighties. We have to hope that a new generation will step up and invigorate our purposes. It is heartening to see that that is already happening with the youth group, where Gina who went from going to Sunday school in years back to becoming a vibrant Youth Group leader!

Let me close with the prayer that we will find trust in our future through our faith and reliance on God.



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

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

In Loving Memory of

Elizabeth Heinlein—Maurice Hatch—Peggy Richards

The Diaconate has received additional donations in celebration of the lives of Elizabeth (Zib), Maurice, and Peggy. We are grateful for the generosity of loving friends to the Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund (FDDF). Donations to this Fund help us provide emergency relief for people of our church and community.

Gail Feddern, Diaconate

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: Bob and Mary J, Carol J's Niece Chrissy, Wendy D, Rob L., Arlene L., Josiah S., Kris W, Jan S., Curt C., Cindy E., Marie and her family on the death of grand-daughter Skyler.



Prayer for Ukraine

(Rev. Maren Tirabassi)

God of plowshare and pruning hook, may these old words be our hope for Ukraine, May shattering bows and swords, mean in our time an end to missile strikes, long-range artillery, terror in Kyiv and Mariupol'. We pray your tenderness to surround those who flee, or who shelter in place, those who grieve family or home, troops already exhausted in danger every minute, and kind people of Poland and Moldova opening borders for refugees. We pray for guidance of nations' leaders for many will live or die because of their decisions. And today we especially ask your blessing on all these gifts that we send to plant a sunflower of hope in Ukraine, for we pray in the name of Jesus who wept for the world long time ago and weeps right now that we may all learn the things that make for peace. Amen.

APRIL 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Coffee Hour has resumed following our Sunday Worship Please join us for a time of fellowship!				1	2
3 5th Sunday of Lent Worship and Holy Communion 10 a.m. In-person or On Zoom/ Facebook Youth Group Meet 4:30	Caregiver's Support Group 9:30—10:30 a.m.	Adult Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 p.m.—1 p.m. Spirit Discovery 3:30 Choir 5:30	Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room Diaconate Meeting 4 p.m.	7	8	9
PALM SUNDAY Worship at 10 a.m. In-person or On Zoom/ Facebook	11	Adult Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 p.m.—1 p.m. Spirit Discovery 3:30 Choir 5:30	Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room Leadership Council Meeting via Zoom 4:45 p.m.	14 MAUNDY THURSDAY Service at 7 p.m.	15 GOOD FRIDAY Vigil 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.	16
17 EASTER SUNDAY Worship at 10 a.m. In-person or On Zoom/ Facebook	Caregiver's Support Group 9:30—10:30 a.m.	Adult Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 p.m.—1 p.m. Spirit Discovery 3:30 Choir 5:30	20 Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room	21	22	23 TEAM SYNERGY 10-11:30 a.m.
24 1st Sunday After Easter Worship at 10 a.m. In-person or On Zoom/ Facebook	25	26 Adult Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 p.m.—1 p.m. Spirit Discovery 3:30 Choir 5:30 Men's Group Meeting	27 Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room	28 Prayer Shawl Ministry 10 a.m 11:30	29	30



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