



December Worship Schedule

December 4 — Worship Service—10 a.m.

December 11—Worship and Holy Communion—10 a.m.

December 18—Worship with Pageant and Christmas Caroling—10 a.m.

December 24—Candlelight Christmas Eve Service—4 p.m.

December 25—Christmas Day—Service of Songs and Readings—10 a.m.



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



STEEPLE VIEWS



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

REVEREND GEORGE HARVEY, PASTOR EMERITUS

DECEMBER 2022

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The “Special” of the Day A Reflection by Donna V Ackerman

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

As many of you know, George and I recently traveled over 4,000 miles in nine days staying in eight different hotels. The reason for this journey to Colorado and back was to collect our son’s dog so that Georgie could begin his rehabilitation treatment. Our average driving was ten hours a day. We woke each day comforted in the knowledge that your traveling prayers were with us. We would say our own prayer and begin our day with the expectation of what would be our “special” of the day. We would reassure ourselves that each day was an adventure and one we had not experienced before. To keep our minds occupied we counted things. One of our daily specials was a big-rig trailer full of Christmas trees which we estimated to be over 100 of them. We decided they were on their way to NYC to be sold in a Manhattan tree-lot. Another was a fence row of small tv satellite dishes painted with a variety of colors and designs. Not sure about the message, but it was different and brought us joy. As winds spread unsightly garbage along the highway, somebody decided to place empty bottles and cans on tree branches and shrubs. I’ve seen this kind of display in people’s yards but never on the side of the road in the middle of nowhere. As creative as this was, it occurred to us that the effort was wasted because the trash was still cluttering the environment.

My favorite “special” was the miles and miles of wind turbines. These stately sentinels slowly turned their massive blades manufacturing electricity for our midwestern neighbors. I am a big fan, no pun intended, of wind turbines. Each time we crested another hill it was breath-taking to see these majestic feats of engineering casting shadows upon the fields of corn. One special of the day involved a truck load of what looked like lobster pots. This of course was strange since we were in the Kansas prairies. Upon closer inspection we discovered that each container was holding about ten or so ring-necked pheasants, and there seemed to be about fifteen to twenty containers. I didn’t want to think about where they were being shipped to.

Of course, most of our day was spent counting hawks and other God’s creatures. Our best hawk-sighting-day resulted in spying 70 of them. Their white breasts basking in the rays of the sun. We also were blessed to see a coyote, eagles, geese and other migrating birds, and George’s favorite, an abundance of deer. We had, cranberry turned to mango sunrises, and sunsets. And on our last leg of our journey, we were greeted with the sight of a hot-air balloon rising in a brisk 28* morning.

The season of Advent begins the anticipation of the birth of Christ. We celebrate and contemplate the gifts God has given us. We share with family and friends the blessings of being together and the many “Specials” set before us.

*Lord, thank you for the season of Advent as we seek out the “Special” of the day.
You have already given us Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love. Help us to see that these are the true “Daily Specials”.*

Faith Formation Ministry News

Confirmation:

On Sunday, November 20, 2022, the Confirmands took their first, next steps on their journey to discover, witness and uniquely develop their faith spirituality. Connie Littlefield led the lovely ceremony. Each of the Confirmands received a Holy Bible from their mentor, inscribed with scripture chosen especially for them.

George Ackerman for Tim McCarthy: *To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.* Colossians 1:27

Margie Galabrun for Julia McCarthy: *I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.* John 10:16

Ann Bilodeau for Julia McCarthy: *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And Who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me."* Isaiah 6:8

Evy Truhn for Cecelia Meroski: *I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* Psalm 139:14

Connie Littlefield for Corelina Meroski: *He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?* Micah 6:8

Not only does FCCW have such wonderful Confirmands and Mentors, the parents and families are incredible too. The following was posted by Mjo McCarthy on Facebook after the FCCW's Confirmand's initial ceremony.



"Mostly due to COVID, our church hasn't run a confirmation program in quite some time. As a result, Julia and Tim are now BOTH in the process of being confirmed! Today was the "kick off." Tim is paired with mentor George Ackerman, and Julia has a two-fer with Godmoms Ann and Margie. Once upon a time I failed out of confirmation classes because some churches really just don't care. This is not that church, and thus why we are here, and why we held each of them in that very same spot when they were baptized. Love this congregation. "

Church Library:

Have you visited the church library recently? There are many great resources found on these shelves: novels by local artists, fun books for kids, previous studies by adult FF, devotionals, videos and books on religion and spirituality. Linda Pekunas keeps the books orderly and up to date. Books are located on the bookshelves in the Parish Helpers Room and at the back of Fellowship Hall. Most books may be borrowed for enjoyment at home by simply signing them out.

Church School/ Education:

It is the vision of the Faith Formation Ministry to create a focus group for any and all who would like to discuss alternative and/or additional group activities regarding traditional church school classes. Initially, we need to assess the needs of our FCCW families. Secondly, we'd like to assemble input from as many members and friends of FCCW as are interested. Please watch for more information to come from the Ministry of Faith Formation co-coordinators Evy Truhn and Linda Messer. Can't wait to be involved? Send an email to linda.messer@gmail.com requesting to be put on the initial mailing list.

Dates to Remember:

December 18th: Christmas Pageant during the Sunday Service. Followed by Christmas Caroling

February 25th: Prepared to Serve, Pembroke Academy

June 30 - July 4: General Synod 34, Indianapolis

Linda Messer, Co-coordinator

Christmas Day Service

The FCCW will be holding a Christmas Day Service at our regularly schedule 10 am time. The online option (Facebook and Zoom) will not be provided. It will be a simplified service with scripture, prayer and the sharing of Christmas' past.

Rehearsal-Free Christmas Pageant

Everyone and Anyone can join in this year's Christmas Pageant. One of our most active elves (Connie Littlefield) has found a script that allows all to participate. The best part is, you don't have to say a thing, just be there. On December 18th, as you enter the sanctuary, choose a prop and be ready to be called forward to bask in the fun of improvisation. What a marvelous way to begin the joy of the Holiday Season. There will be an abundance of Christmas songs to share which will get you warmed up to for the caroling event following the service. I know some of you reserved introverts might find this intimidating, so no pressure, we need spectators too. Let's fill the Sanctuary with the anticipation that this Christmas Season brings.

Donna Ackerman

Come One Come All, Its Caroling Time!

Join in this Festive Holiday Tradition as we bring blessings through song to those in our church family and community. We will be leaving after church services on December 18th to bring Joy to those who may not be able to physically share in the Holiday activities, or someone who just needs a little love. Musical talent is not a requirement. We will return to the church for some hot chocolate in the Fellowship Hall for those who need a little warming up, or maybe to just extend the positive feelings that Christmas songs bring.

Donna Ackerman

Hazel MacBrien Nursery School

During November, we talked about Veterans Day, and had parents come in who have served our country, to show the kids pictures and their uniforms. We also talked about being thankful and treating each other with kindness. Our sensory table had cranberries, water and colored plastic acorns for the kids to explore with. Our science bins had turkey feathers, deer antlers, milkweed pods, mica pieces and witch hazel branches in them. We worked on letters Nn and Tt and number 7. The kids enjoyed making several Thanksgiving crafts, like turkey stick puppets, the Mayflower and Native American teepees and headbands. Miss Sara and I are so thankful for the beautiful classroom, the children that fill it with smiles and everyone's support here at FCCW!!

Winter Weather Cancellations

Cancellations due to bad weather will be posted on:

WMUR Channel 9
WCSH Channel 6, and on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalChurchofWakefieldUCC/>

Library Recommendations

Here are some books from our Parish Helpers Library which can enhance your Christmas experience this season:

Life Book of Christmas Volumes 1-3:
The Glory of Christmas
The Pageantry of Christmas
The Merriment of Christmas
Parables of Christmas
The Purpose of Christmas
Unplug the Christmas Machine

Linda Petkunas, Church Librarian

Rev. Richard Slater Retirement

Rev Richard Slater, Associate Conference Minister for the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ, is retiring at the end of December. Rev Slater has preached several times at this Church and has been extremely helpful in many areas, including our recent and continuing searches for a new pastor.

In recognition of Rev Slater's service to the Conference as a whole and to this Church in particular, the Leadership Council has authorized a collection for a monetary gift towards his retirement.

If you would like to contribute, please make your check payable to FCCW and return it to the church no later than December 11. Please mark your check or envelope as a Rev Slater donation. Cash is always welcome too, and there is a basket on the back table for your donation.

Harriet Wilson

Shepherd Drivers Needed!

The Shepherd Program provides medical appointment rides to local residents who do not have any means of transportation. **We are in earnest need of additional volunteers due to an increase in ride requests.** The drive time commitment is approximately 1-2 hours, with 1-3 ride requests per month.

This enjoyable experience is incredibly rewarding and our riders are immensely grateful. Please contact Rachel White at 603-520-2316 with any questions or if you are interested in becoming a Shepherd!

A tremendous **Thank You** to our current Shepherd Drivers for their dedication to this very important service!

Christmas Bazaar

After a successful Harvest Fair and Election Day Bake Sale, the FUNdraising Team at it again!

The FUNdraising Christmas Shop is set up at the church and will be open right after service on Sundays and on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. until December 18.



There is also the opportunity to purchase Alternative Gifts in support of the Heifer Project, Zim-related Daisy Dube and FOOT, and the Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund.

News of Zimbabwe

December is sponsorship renewal month for many of our friends and supporters, as well as an opportunity to support other Zimbabwe projects through Alternative Giving. It is with this giving that the budget for Daisy Dube food support is set for 2023. The PKZ team is so deeply appreciative of the generosity which abounds within FCCW and beyond!



Food delivery at Daisy Dube

Good news has come our way. First, Vrante Mahlupeko, PKZ director and container guru, has successfully obtained a visa to visit the USA! He and his 10 year old son, Trevor, will be here for Christmas with Sam and they look forward to greeting all the people they have heard so much about. It should be fun watching them negotiate snow. Meanwhile, Trevor dearly hopes to meet "Father Christmas."



Trevor and Blessing

Next, Blessing Sithole -- Sam's brother in spirit and one of our PKZ sponsored students -- has been accepted at Keene State College majoring in mathematics. Blessing first desire was to major in physics like Sam but Keene's physics program is on the chopping block due to budget constraints.

Watching Blessing's reaction with Sam via zoom to such early and fervently hoped for news was heart warming. Blessing joyfully posted his news and his faith filled appreciation on Facebook. The dynamic duo will be reunited in August 2023 after a two year absence.

Samuel has finished his driver training and should have his license in early December. He told Blessing, "You just won't believe what it will be like when you arrive. You will meet loving, kind people and you will have nothing to worry about. It is something you can't imagine in Zimbabwe."

In grateful appreciation for these and other blessings,

Connie Littlefield

Parish Helpers Christmas Luncheon

The PH luncheon is set for **Thursday, December 8, at 12 noon.** We'll be meeting once again at the Wakefield Inn—likely for the last time as the restaurant will be closing this month! We will miss having the Inn operating in Wakefield Corner as many of us have fond memories of good times held there. Best wishes to Christina, Nick and the family in their future endeavors! A sign up sheet was circulated at our November meeting. If you haven't signed up, please contact Rachel White at 603-520-2316. Hope to see you there!

Carol Jeffery

Tis The Season

We have begun our Advent Season, with the beauty of the greens and the lighting of the first Advent candle, HOPE. We thank Rev. Pam Maden for guiding us through this service. We will celebrate PEACE, JOY and LOVE, in the upcoming weeks of Advent.

On **December 4th**, our service will be led by Connie Littlefield. On **December 11th**, Rev. Pam Maden will lead us in Communion. On **December 18th**, we will be treated to an intergenerational Christmas pageant, with the Rev. Gayle Murphy guiding our service. On Saturday, **December 24th**, our candlelight Christmas Eve Service will be led by Rev. Gayle Murphy (thank you SO much Rev. Murphy!) **THE TIME OF THE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE WILL BE 4 p.m.** On Sunday, **December 25th**, our deacons Harriet Wilson and Donna Ackerman, will offer a service of songs and readings. This service will be at the usual time of 10 a.m.

Wishing you all a very blessed, holy season.

Jo Szirbik, Diaconate Co-Coordinator

Search Team Named

At our October 30 Worship Service, Rev. Richard Slater led the congregation in the blessing of our newly-formed Search Committee. Members of the committee are (left to right) Buddy Dee, Norma Gore, Rev. Slater, Joe Palmariello, Max Gehring and Titia Bozuwa. (Not Shown—Margie Galabrun and Judy Trepal.)



Celebrations!

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 Eric & Amanda Boggs
- 27 Peter & Linda Foss

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

Thank You!

A Message from Rev. Mary James

Dear Friends,

As we turn our hearts toward Advent, preparing them once again to receive with hope and love the reality of Christ coming to us as a vulnerable newborn, my family and I want to send to you our deepest thanks for your kindness throughout Bob's long and difficult illness. Your cards, phone calls, kind words and prayers have meant so very much to us all. The presence of so many of you at Bob's memorial service was a great kindness--so meaningful, so lovely. Hearing from you in these days of sadness and adjustment to this profound loss has offered a much-appreciated source of sustenance. With a full heart, I thank you. May your Advent be filled with blessing upon blessing, and may the light of the love of Jesus shine in and through you all.

With love and gratitude,
Mary James

FELLOWSHIP OF CONCERN

We believe that prayer is powerful!

During this time of transition in our church, let us pray for our church leaders—the Diaconate who work tirelessly to carry on duties above and beyond and to the Officers, Ministry Coordinators, and Leadership Council for their thoughtful deliberations in guiding our church during this time of uncertainty.

And as always, please keep in your prayers all those who suffer in any way in mind, body and spirit,

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 pray for:

Patricia G.; Dave and Charlotte L.; Laura F; Sue L; Arlene L; Peter and Linda F; Wendy D & Alberta W; Carol J's Family; Chrissy, Michael, Joan C; Sharon L



FCCW 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 have a prayer request, please email Harriet Wilson (dhwilson39@gmail.com) All prayer requests are kept strictly confidential and will only be shared with the express permission of the people involved.

Lights, Life and Tree of Memories


Concord Regional VNA and Central NH VNA and Hospice have joined to become Granite VNA. The Tree of Memories is now combined with Lights of Life in one of the most meaningful events of the holiday season.

The annual commemoration will be held at the **Wakefield Opera House on Saturday, December 10 at 11 a.m.** This occasion provides opportunities for family, friends, and neighbors to remember a loved one by placing an inscribed porcelain dove, a symbol of serenity, peace, and tranquility, on a lighted tree.

You can purchase an inscribed porcelain dove to be placed on the tree (you need not be there in person) in memory of a departed loved one online at VNA website www.grantitevna.org/lights. Or contact Ginny Schweitzer at 522-9593. Forms are available the church and via email from the church office (see Happenings).



DECEMBER 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Chair Yoga 10:30 Fellowship Hall	2	3 Christmas Bazaar 11 a.m.—1 p.m. Grief Support Group 11 a.m.
4 2nd Sunday of Advent Worship 10 a.m. In person, Zoom Or Facebook Coffee Hour and Christmas Bazaar	5 Caregiver's Support Group 9:30—10:30 a.m.	6 Faith Formation Via Zoom or In- person—12 noon Choir 5:30	7 Scrabble Group — 1 p.m. Diaconate Meeting 4 p.m.	8 Chair Yoga 10:30 Fellowship Hall Parish Helpers Luncheon - Wakefield Inn 12 Noon	9	10 Tree of Memories 11 a.m.—Town Hall Christmas Bazaar 11 a.m.—1 p.m. Grief Support Group 11 a.m.
11 3rd Sunday of Advent Worship and Holy Communion 10 a.m. In person, Zoom Or Facebook Coffee Hour and Christmas Bazaar	12	13 Faith Formation Via Zoom or In- person—12 noon Choir 5:30 Ukulele Club 6 p.m.	14	15 Chair Yoga 10:30 Fellowship Hall	16	17 Christmas Bazaar 11 a.m.—1 p.m. Grief Support Group 11 a.m.
18 4th Sunday of Advent Worship 10 a.m. In person, Zoom Or Facebook Christmas Pageant Coffee Hour and Christmas Bazaar Christmas Carolling	19 Caregiver's Support Group 9:30—10:30 a.m.	20 Prayer Shawls 10 a.m.— 11:30 Faith Formation Via Zoom or In- person—12 noon Choir 5:30	21	22 Chair Yoga 10:30 Fellowship Hall	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE Candlelight Service 4 p.m. 
25 CHRISTMAS DAY Worship 10 a.m.	26	27 Faith Formation Via Zoom or In- person—12 noon Choir 5:30 Ukulele Club 6 p.m.	28	29 Chair Yoga 10:30 Fellowship Hall	30	31

2022 ALTERNATIVE GIFT GIVING PROGRAM

Alternative gift giving is giving in recognition for the person who has everything to benefit the people who don't. We have an opportunity this Christmas season to consider a gift to any of five worthy programs.

The Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund provides temporary emergency assistance to individuals and families in need within our church and within the community.

Heifer International provides livestock and training to individuals or families in need to increase income, food security, and nutrition with a pass it on philosophy. Each person who receives an animal passes on the first offspring to another person/family in need. You can purchase shares of goats, chickens, pigs, rabbits, llamas, buffaloes, heifers and other animals.

Zimbabwean Child Sponsorship makes education a reality. Signs directed to community members in several schools say "Stop early marriage. Give us school fees, not husbands." The sad reality is that orphaned girls have had a limited "career path." Sponsorship provides school fees, uniforms, school supplies to the most disadvantaged and changes the trajectory of their lives.

Daisy Dube Supplemental Food Program provides protein (soya chunks, fish, meat, eggs, peanut butter, etc.) to 18 children living in an orphanage, helping to combat hunger and malnutrition. Having food gives children a sense of worth and freedom of worry about what they will eat or if they will eat.

Re-usable Sanitary Supply Project

Girls miss a week of school each month due to lack of sanitary resources. Washable, reusable sanitary pads provide a sense of dignity and empowerment and allows girls to stay in school.

Alternative Gift Giving 2022

Our members and friends have a long history of sharing their resources with others during the Christmas season. If you wish to participate in more than one of the following programs, it is only necessary to write ONE CHECK with your donation allocated according to your wishes. Checks are made out to **First Congregational Church of Wakefield (FCCW)** and accompany this form with a specified amount indicated to the program(s) you choose below. For more information on each of these projects/missions, please see the back of this form.

Local Programs:

Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund \$ _____

Global:

Heifer International (www.heifer.org) \$ _____

Zimbabwe Mission Projects (www.projectkz.org)

F.O.O.T. / PKZ Child Sponsorship \$ _____

**Supplemental Feeding Program for Children
at the Daisy Dube Orphanage** \$ _____

Re-usable Sanitary Supply Project \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Name: _____

Phone #: _____