

# STEEPLE VIEWS

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION



REVEREND GEORGE HARVEY, PASTOR EMERITUS  
FEBRUARY 2023

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## Follow Who?

**Matthew 4: 19, 20** “Come follow me” Jesus said. “And I will send you out to fish for people.” And at once they left their nets and followed Him. (NIV New International Version)

To say that I was an ‘adventurous’ child might be an understatement. When it came to my relationship with my older brother, Vic, you could include the label, ‘gullible’. When I was six, and Vic nine we were holding, along with some other children, an Olympic style contest involving two sets of bunkbeds. We would leap from the top of one bunkbed to the top of the other. As we conducted this feat of acrobatics one set of beds would slide away from the other until the distance between them was quite expansive, at least for a six-year-old. All the other kids had completed their latest leap and were daring me to follow. Never to be one who resisted a challenge, and of course hearing Vic’s voice of encouragement, I jumped with the grace and style of a magnificent belly-flop, which would have been fine if there was water below me. Without cat-like abilities to land on my feet, I found myself face-first on the linoleum floor. My lips splayed across my face and blood splattered everywhere. After cleaning me up and applying cold compresses to my face, Mama was not sympathetic.

When I was seven and Vic ten, he stole a pack of our daddy’s cigarettes. Together we snuck out into the woods surrounding our Texas home and began to light up. In big-brother fashion Vic taught me the art of inhaling. The immediate reaction of coughing and choking should have been enough to make me stop, but no. I had to do whatever Vic did, so I inhaled again just not as deeply. Mama, of course, smelled the lingering aroma and confronted us. Vic instantly denied any wrongdoing, but unable to lie to my mother I wept with the confession like that of a parochial student to a nun. That evening I suffered with nausea and a headache. Again, Mama was not sympathetic.

I could continue to regale you with more childhood experiences, but it is sufficient to say, “I would follow my brother anywhere”. I’m sure many who read this essay are mentally reminiscing about their own adventures of following siblings or friends through good and bad circumstances. When Jesus called His disciples to follow Him, they had no idea what was going to happen. They didn’t know whether they might be harmed because of their association with this charismatic person. They only knew that He asked, and they answered. Today, to declare yourself a follower of Christ may result in loving support or dismissive negativity. It is only human to, like Peter, deny your relationship with Christ. As long as, like Peter, you rise up filled with the Holy Spirit and claim your standing even if it is only to yourself.

*Lord, you know my childhood antics. You know how my love and adoration for my brother brought me to questionable results. You also know that, like that innocent child, I will follow you anywhere.*

Donna V Ackerman

## Search and Call

The Search and Call team has met three times and will soon begin gathering input from the Congregation regarding a settled Pastor. This is YOUR/OUR Church, Your input is critical. There is now a HOPES and DREAMS box in Fellowship Hall. We encourage all members to write down the qualifications, leadership skills etc, you would like to have in a settled Pastor and place it in the HOPES and DREAMS box.

In February we will be meeting with our new interim pastor Rev. Larry Brickner-Wood, who will give us input and counsel. We have a long way to go to complete our mission of finding a settled Pastor, however with God's guidance and your prayers we will reach that goal!!

*Blessings, Buddy Dee*

## As The World Turns

...and there are so many people whose lives take unexpected turns and help is needed. Thankfully, there are people like the Parish Helpers, and members and friends of our community of faith that are open to the needs of others. The results of your responsiveness are a blessing to all concerned. The Parish Helpers responded with their very generous donation of \$2,000 dollars. Members and friends also responded open-heartedly with an additional \$2,312 during 2022.

Surely these donations will help worlds turn a little easier for those in need. Over \$3,400 of assistance was provided during 2022! You provided heat, electricity, a car payment, and helped with a means of transportation. Your help provides light at the end of their tunnel.

If you would like to make a donation, or if emergency assistance is needed, please call our CLA, Andrea Selig at the church office (603) 522-3189 or email [churchoffice@fccwakefield.org](mailto:churchoffice@fccwakefield.org). Requests for financial assistance are handled with discretion by the Diaconate and the Pastor.

On behalf of the Diaconate, "Thank You"!

*Gail Feddern*

## Faith Formation FCCW Church School



FCCW does not currently offer church school classes for our young ones, but FCCW children are learning! Church school is only one element of a child's spiritual development. Friends, siblings and adults, especially parents, make a significant impact on young inquiring, develop-

ing minds. We are the models that will shape their thoughts about church, religion, worship, faith, and God. We don't have to have sit-down, classroom instruction to teach them right from wrong, how to be compassionate, or how to help someone in need. Habits we model... worship, prayer and church attendance are being observed. Simply put, we need to be the people we want them to be.

Children will continue to learn as we look forward to once again offering new Christian Ed possibilities. FCCW is definitely in for some changes (again) with the leadership of a new Pastor who will begin mid-February. Hopefully, we can imagine and create new programs that we ALL will find inspiring and fulfilling for our young people and adults alike. And with your input, commitment and passion we will succeed. It has already begun...with you!

Please contact the Ministry of Faith Formation Coordinators with YOUR ideas!!

*Linda Messer*

## Church Library

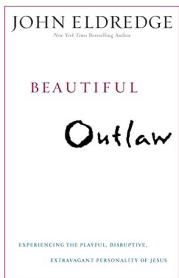
"Forgiveness: Finding Peace Through Letting Go"  
by Adam Hamilton; Category: Spiritual Growth

There is nothing more crippling than holding on to anger. Anger, more than any other emotion, has the power to consume all aspects of our lives, distort our sense of purpose, and destroy our relationship with God. In this passionate and life-changing book, Hamilton argues that revelation comes when we realize that forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves rather than someone else. He also contends that only when we learn to forgive others and ourselves can we truly receive forgiveness from God. Source: Amazon

*Linda Petkunas, Church Librarian*

## Faith Formation Book Study Offerings

### A New Study!



We have a new study that we'll be starting up on Tuesday, January 31st at noon. The book we'll be using is entitled **Beautiful Outlaw** by John Eldredge.

Description follows:

*"Reading the Gospels without knowing the personality of Jesus is like watching television with the sound turned off. The result is a dry, two dimensional person*

*doing strange, undecipherable things.*

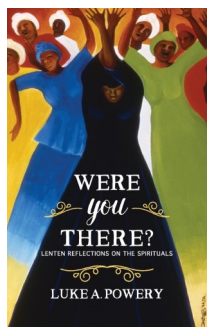
*But when we discover his true character-this man who made the wind, music and flying squirrels-suddenly all of the remarkable qualities of Jesus burst forth with color and brilliance like fireworks.*

*Breaking Jesus out of the typical stereotypes, BEAUTIFUL OUTLAW welcomes readers into the rich emotional life of Christ showing how they can experience the actual personality of Jesus in their daily lives in ways that will deepen their faith."*

It's likely that the book will take more than the 4 classes that we'll have leading up to Lent. If that is the case, we will put this study to one side and pick it up again after Easter.

Julie Kessler

### A New Lenten Study!



Come join us for a Lenten walk through the Spirituals using the book by Luke Lowery: **Were You There? A Lenten Reflections on the Spirituals.**

Description follows:

*"Valuable not only for their sublime musical expression, the African American spirituals provide profound insights into the human condition and Christian life. Many spirituals focus on the climax*

*of the Christian drama, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the ways in which those events bring about the liberation of God's people*

*In these devotions for the season of Lent, Powery leads the reader through the spirituals as they confront the mystery of Christ's atoning death and victory over the grave. Each selection includes the lyrics of the spiritual*

*a reflection by the author on the spiritual's meaning, a Scripture verse related to that meaning, and a brief prayer."*

Our first class in Lent will be Tuesday at noon on February 28th. We will use the time to discuss the readings for that week, along with listening (and perhaps even singing!) some of those spirituals.

### Stillspeaking Lenten Devotional - Running From Empty



Once again we'll be ordering the ever popular, ever meaningful Lenten Devotional put out by the Stillspeaking Writers.

Description follows:

*"Many of us are constantly on the go—not only because our production-addicted society demands it, while shaming those with too little to do, but also because staying busy is a familiar way to avoid anxiety and angst.*

*We are simultaneously running from empty while running on empty.*

*Jesus might ask us: "Beloved, is empty the worst thing that can happen to you? Is stillness and doing nothing so awful? Perhaps the thing you are running from is the very thing you most need."*

*Enter Lent, which is all about surrender, emptying, and letting go of everything that leads away from the cross. Running from Empty is a daily invitation to embrace the empty places we might prefer to avoid; to breathe deeply, love fully, act justly; and to find Jesus in the stillness and the storm."*

The Studies are being held via Zoom at least through February when there is the possible option of hybrid discussion

If you're interested in any or all of the above studies, please reach out to Julie Kessler ([julielouisekessler@gmail.com](mailto:julielouisekessler@gmail.com) or 603-871-8066)

### 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/>

## News of Zimbabwe

Thank you so, so much for the generosity for Zimbabwe projects through the Alternative Gift Giving program. Your gifts will assist with school fees, add to the food program for the orphans at the Daisy Dube Children's Home, and provide the necessary funds for us to continue to assist high school girls stay in school through the reusable sanitary pad program.

Many of you renewed your annual commitment to child sponsorship. Some people are new to sponsorship while others have been participating since the program began some 13 years ago. With all of the demands on finite gift giving dollars, your continued support is truly a blessing. PKZ also received very generous donations that will enable the work on the rural health clinic in Humani to continue. In ways big and small, this congregation continues to change the trajectory of lives in Zimbabwe.

Churches in Zimbabwe are experiencing a shortage of pastors and congregations struggle to pay the recommended minimum salary. Our sister church, Rufumiso UCCZ, has been assigned a young man in his early 20s to serve as their lay pastor. Mr. Dhliwayo is called a student pastor but he actually will begin theological school *after* his year of service at Rufumiso.



Our Zim visitors had an opportunity to visit both Rev. George Harvey and Rev. Mary James. Rev. Harvey had wonderful stories of attending Andover Newton Theological School with Rev. Ndabanigi Sithole, a leader of Zimbabwe's independence movement in the 1960s and a political icon, activist and author. I learned that Rev. Harvey was a member of the 1996 mission group that recommended Zimbabwe as the country to become a partner to the NH UCC. George noted that Zimbabwe's size and number of UCCZ churches was very similar to that of New Hampshire making it a good fit. The UCC and Zimbabwe have had a long relationship. In 1893 the American Board Mission, the forerunner of the current UCC Board for World Ministries, founded the first mission station at Mt. Selinda in what was then known as Southern Rhodesia. Time with Rev. Mary was also a

delight. She has been a longtime supporter of all things Zimbabwe and lively discussion ensued about current situations and future goals. Mary's lovable, large, furry companion Andi was quite a hit with young Trevor!

Term 1 of Zimbabwe's new school year began in mid-January and we know that 38 of our sponsored kids are off to a good start!

*God bless, Connie Littlefield*

## Souper Bowl Soup Sale! Back by popular demand!

We are once again offering a wide variety of soup for take out! Soups must be pre-ordered and pre-paid and will be available for pickup at the church on Feb. 11 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Snow Date is Feb. 12, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.) Local home delivery can be arranged.

Choose from a wide selection of soups (see below) at a cost of \$5 per 16-oz. container. Call Margie at 522-6674 or email her at [balchlaker@gmail.com](mailto:balchlaker@gmail.com) to place your order. Payment can be made by check made out to FCCW and mailed to FCCW Assistant Treasurer at 2718 Wakefield Road, Wakefield, NH 03872 or dropped in the mailbox attached to the church by the side entrance. You can also pay online through PayPal on our website by going to <http://www.fccwakefieldnh.org> and look for the "Donate Button" on our homepage (on drop down menu - choose "Soup".)

Consider donating a homemade soup to someone in need. Just let us know and we will arrange to deliver it.

There are limited quantities on some varieties, so act now! Deadline to order is February 6.

15 Bean Soup w/ Kielbasa, Carrot Ginger Soup, Chicken Noodle Soup, Chicken Pot Pie Soup, Clam Chowder, Hearty Southwestern Salsa Soup. Meat Chili Pasta Fagioli, Pea Soup w/ Ham, Pea Soup - Vegetarian, Potato Cheddar Soup w/ Ham, Roasted Cauliflower Soup, Stuffed Pepper Soup. Sweet Potato Turkey Chili

## Parish Helpers

The Parish Helpers will hold its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, February 9, at 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will welcome our guest speaker, Wanda Wanson, who will tell us all about making goat soap products. Among Wanda's other talents are raising chickens, jam and jelly making, and her amazing dilly green beans. All women of the church and community are welcome! Hope to see you there!

*Carol Jeffery*

## Prepared to Serve 2023

Pembroke Academy  
February 25th from 9AM to 4PM.

Prepared to Serve is an annual gathering coordinated by the NH Conference with meaningful worship and an array of workshop offerings, including refreshments! It is a wonderful way to connect with others from churches across NH while acquiring valuable information for personal and spiritual growth as well as strategies to maintain the vitality of our congregation.

Workshop themes include spirituality in aging, creation justice, climate justice, church financial practices, homeland security, sacred spaces, caring for those with Alzheimer's, public education, immigration, death and dying, housing insecurity, church vitality, spiritual community in worship, hybrid worship, challenges of decreased volunteerism and MORE!

In addition, Rev. Sara Marean, our new Associate Conference Minister will be installed.

The early bird registration cost is \$40 through Feb. 8th. Registration after February 8th is \$55.00. *(There is scholarship money available to defray the costs prior to Feb. 8. Please see Andrea for details or if you need help registering!)*

**\*\*Let Connie Littlefield know if you have any questions or if you are interested in carpooling!\*\***

Link to PTS brochure with additional information and link to registration.

[Prepared to Serve Brochure](#)

*Linda Messer, Faith Formation Ministry*

## Hazel MacBrien Nursery School News

We started off the New Year by working on letter Ww, exploring in our "cocoa" sensory table, made red cardinal handprints for our class family tree and painted coffee filters which we cut into snowflakes.

We also worked on letter Ii, explored in our bear hibernating sensory table, painted with frozen paint ice cubes, made ice cream cones using shaving cream, glue and topped them with sprinkles, played our musical instruments and colored and cut out a bear for our bulletin board.

We ended the month with working on number 2 and creating penguins for our bulletin board, exploring with playdough, practicing cutting with scissors and playing a letter match game with penguins and fish.

It was a great start to 2023!

## Interim Minister Announcement

The Diaconate is happy to announce that at the Congregational Meeting on January 8, it was agreed unanimously and with great joy to offer a full time Interim position to Rev. Larry Brickner-Wood. Rev. Brickner-Wood is no stranger to FCCW, having been a guest preacher a number of times over the years. Most recently he has served at the Lee Congregational Church as its Intentional Interim Minister. His starting date is February 19 - and we look forward to it eagerly!



## Hail to the Volunteers!

Last Saturday, January 21st, as I was settling in for a cozy night next to the fire with a good book and, who knows... a glass of equally good white wine... when the phone rang. A member of the Church's Buildings & Grounds Ministry, George Ackerman, was on the other end of the line. What was he doing at church on a cold Saturday evening, I asked. Sitting in my car waiting for a repair man, he said, who is on his way to Rochester to pick up a part for the furnace.

I invited him over. He got a roaring fire going in my wood stove in no time, and instead of reading my book, I entertained George and Rob Nelson, who wandered in, until the repair man phoned he was back with the replacement part.

I listened to George explaining to Rob what exactly was wrong with the church's furnace. The technical details went over my head, but I was impressed with George's grasp of the workings of our heating system. Somebody had been in the building that morning and heard a bang and was smart enough to report it to George. He, in turn, was willing to spend his Saturday evening trying to fix the problem.

The point of this little story is that we owe George a thank you for seeing to it that the church building was heated enough to have the service the next morning. It was a demonstration of how our church functions by the grace of many people who offer their expertise and time. I would like to lift all of them up in gratitude.

*Titia Bozuwa*

# Celebrations!

## FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 Joe & Jan Brejwo (1973)
- 14 Lance & Marilou MacLean

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Pat Anderson     | 17 Ryan Dee         |
| 2 Marilou MacLean  | 19 Lisa Robinson    |
| 3 Kenneth Crew     | 23 Allisa Eaton     |
| 3 Maureen Steer    | 24 Barry Lockard    |
| 6 Sue Lynn         | 25 Cheyanne Boggs   |
| 10 Peter Foss      | 25 Arlene Leyare    |
| 11 Rob Lundgren    | 25 Kristin Weeks    |
| 12 Peter Connell   | 26 Evelyn Truhn     |
| 12 David Haag      | 27 Charlie Bilodeau |
| 12 Ryan McCarthy   | 27 Tom Weeks        |
| 14 Marion Blomster | 28 David Fairchild  |
| 14 Ann Gehring     | 28 Emma Royle       |
| 15 Nicky Mercer    | 28 Stephen Silcocks |

*Thank You!*

In Loving Memories of  
Frederick Leon Chesbrough III

A donation to the Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund was received to honor the memory of Frederick ‘Sonny’ Chesbrough III. Sonny was the brother of Gail (Chesbrough) Feddern and passed away on Dec. 18, 2022. He was 79 years old.

Donna Vanderhoof

The Diaconate has received two memorial donations to honor and celebrate the life of Donna Vanderhoof. These donations to the Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund will help to provide emergency relief for people of our church and community.

We are grateful for these generous donations.  
On behalf of the Diaconate, Gail Feddern

## 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 carrying on duties of worship leadership and pulpit supply. For the Search Committee, the Officers, Ministry Coordinators, and Leadership Council for their thoughtful deliberations in guiding our church onward.

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; Gloria, Chrissy, Maryann, and Michael; Joan C; Don S., Cindy E., Glenna, Chuck H.**



**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](mailto:dhwilson39@gmail.com)) All prayer requests are kept strictly confidential and will only be shared with the express permission of the people involved.

A **GO FUND ME PAGE** has been set up to help Patty Golden purchase a van modified for wheelchair access. She needs this because she will have to go for periodic treatments for the cancer that has caused her to be partially paralyzed and unable to walk. If you like to contribute you can find the GO FUND ME PAGE [here](#).

## Thank You

We recently received a thank you note from Rev Richard Slater, former Associate Conference Minister of the New Hampshire Conference of the UCC, for the donation which our church and members of the congregation sent to him on the occasion of his retirement.

He writes:

“I was greatly surprised to receive your note and the enclosed gift of money! How wonderful it felt to read your words of gratitude and to know that my ministry was appreciated so much. Thank you from the depths of my heart.

In Christ’s peace  
Richard”

# FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Coffee Hour is held every Sunday. Thank you to our weekly welcoming team of Rachel White, Janet Twombly, and Laura Frye.</p> <p>Show your appreciation by signing up to help with clean up!</p>			<p><b>1</b></p> <p>Scrabble Group 1–3 p.m.</p> <p>Diaconate Meeting</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Chair Yoga 10:30 Parish Helpers Room</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Grief Support Group 11 a.m.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>5th Sunday After The Epiphany</b></p> <p>Worship 10 a.m.</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m.</p> <p>DEADLINE TO ORDER SOUP!</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 noon</p> <p>Choir 5:30</p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>Chair Yoga 10:30 Parish Helpers Room</p> <p>Parish Helpers Meeting—1 p.m.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>Leadership Council Meeting via Zoom 10 a.m.</p> <p>SOUPER BOWL SOUP SALE PICKUP UP 11 a.m.—1 p.m.</p>
<p><b>12</b></p> <p><b>6th Sunday After The Epiphany</b></p> <p>Worship 10 a.m.</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 noon</p> <p>Choir 5:30</p> <p>Ukulele Club 6–7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>Chair Yoga 10:30 Parish Helpers Room</p>	<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>Grief Support Group 11 a.m.</p>
<p><b>19</b></p> <p><b>7th Sunday After The Epiphany</b></p> <p>Worship 10 a.m.</p> <p><b>Welcome Rev. Brickner-Woods!</b></p> <p>Coffee Hour</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>Prayer Shawl Ministry 10 a.m.</p> <p>Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 noon</p> <p>Choir 5:30</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p><b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b></p> <p>Lent Begins</p> <p>Finance Team Meeting 1 p.m.</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>Chair Yoga 10:30 Parish Helpers Room</p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>Grief Support Group 11 a.m.</p>
<p><b>26</b></p> <p><b>1st Sunday of Lent</b></p> <p>Worship 10 a.m.</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>Faith Formation Via Zoom 12 noon</p> <p>Choir 5:30</p> <p>Ukulele Club 6–7:30 p.m.</p>				

## **I See a Song of the Saints of God**

*Tune: Grand Isle, Irregular, John H. Hopkins*

*Words: Mark A. Rideout, 2017*

*(To the tune of "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God")*

I see a song of the saints of God, shining the light of love.  
A living web of present grace, empow'ring the world around.  
They stand with the immigrant, clean up the flood,  
Go where the need is for shelter and food  
To bring living witness as neighbor to share  
God calling for me to care.

I hear a song of the saints of God, in places both near and far.  
Where children live and learn and grow in spite of the pain of  
war.  
You see parent or teacher in park, school and street  
Give purpose to living by helping them meet  
In facing down power, transforming their heart.  
God wants me to take my part.

I feel a song of the saints of God, where wealth and want di-  
vide.  
Creation's care in balance held, will earth, will we survive?  
When people together keep atmosphere pure,  
Bring justice for creatures, air, water, and earth  
God's people as stewards will truly rejoice  
God help me to make wise choice.

I know a song of the saints of God, in the midst of the daily  
round.  
As people: all colors and races and faiths, seek justice and love,  
I've found  
The same hopes and purposes sought for today,  
Where hunger and hatred will all pass away,  
Working together, see saints selfless be



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