

STEEPLE VIEWS

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



REVEREND LARRY BRICKNER-WOOD, INTERIM MINISTER

REVEREND GEORGE HARVEY, PASTOR EMERITUS

REVEREND MARY A. JAMES, PASTOR EMERITA

NOVEMBER 2023

PHONE: 603-522-3189

WEBSITE: FCCWAKEFIELDNH.ORG

EMAIL: CHURCHOFFICE@FCCWAKEFIELDNH.ORG

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

Living and Praying in Liminal Times

I have Irish, Scottish and English roots, and over the years have studied and followed aspects of the rich Celtic culture and tradition. We are in the time of Samhain (pronounced sow-in), the Celtic new year that heralds the coming of the dark half of the year. It is a time of the Thin Place, where the veil between heaven and earth is at its thinnest. Nature goes through a time of renewal and restoration, and the seasons transition into a darker, colder time. It is also a time of honoring those who have left us, and to celebrate them and all that they meant to us and the legacies that they leave. In the Christian tradition, it is the rhythms of All Hallows Eve, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day.

Samhain, and the shifting of autumn to winter, are liminal times. This is a time of transition that can be filled with uncertainty, disorientation and change. Susan Beaumont, in her book "How to Lead when you don't Know Where you're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season," writes that a liminal period "is a disorienting period of non-structure or anti-structure that opens new possibilities no longer based on old status or power hierarchies. New identities are explored, and new possibilities are considered."

We are in a liminal time, indeed. The global pandemic plunged the world into a liminal period that we are still moving through. Our political and cultural landscapes and systems seem to be exploding. Our religious and faith structures that we have known are shifting in ways that can be hard to understand and analyze. The rhythms of our lives, through death, illness, births, love and love lost, economic disruption and losses we incur along the way, can have us feeling disoriented and uncertain.

Certainly, the Israeli people felt the thrust into a liminal time as they absorbed the aftermath of a brutal rampage that took thousands of lives and over two hundred hostages. The Palestinian people facing another time of war and deprivation, starvation, bombing and the loss of home and heart. The families and beloveds of the hostages living moment by moment praying their loved ones are alive and will be freed. A liminal time of fear, uncertainty and doubt.

I wonder, what are we called to do? Some have chosen to go to political positions they have long espoused, imbuing them with an even greater passion that too often turns to violence, shaming, bullying and great division. Some want to sit in places of vengeance and retribution, equating that with justice. Some want to turn away and just not talk about it. Others want to learn and understand as best they can, trying to find voices of wisdom, compassion and love. During it all, people are grieving. Our friends and neighbors, the ones that Jesus told us to love, are crying, weeping and wailing over their losses. As people of spirit and faith, one thing we can do is to hold them and help them grieve. To listen, to be present, and to serve where and when we can.

In this time, we can also pray. Prayers for peace, for wisdom and for compassion. Prayers that Love will find its way into every heart, into every home, and into every act. Prayers for the spirits of those who have died and will die in the war that wages and the inevitable innocent casualties of war. Prayers for the beloveds who sustain loss after loss as their worlds are ripped apart. Prayers for compassion and love to flow into the hearts of those who too easily turn to violence, anger and hatred as a means to justice and redemption. We pray in word, silence, music, meditation, movement and service. We pray, even when we have no words, for Jesus taught us to pray in the timeless prayer that comes from God. (Continued on Next Page.)

(Pastor's Page Continued)

Jesus tells us "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened". To pray with boldness, persistence and humility. To pray with an open heart, or if our hearts are closed and broken, to pray that God's healing love find us.

The way ahead can feel so unclear. The darkness that surrounds us can threaten to swallow us whole. The voices of absolutism, anger and hatred can be so very loud. I often just want to curl up, shut down and crawl away. In those moments, especially in those moments, a Love from the Thin Place that Jesus opens, comes and embraces me, holds me and lifts me, again. And I pray, for a world where God's healing grace shall flow and Love will fill every heart. This I pray.

Notice from Calling & Discernment

Calling & Discernment is looking for someone to fill the position of CLERK. The Clerk is an officer of the church, and, with the help of our Congregational Life Administrator, Andrea Selig, oversees the following duties:

- a) Keep a complete record of the transactions of all called Membership meetings and Leadership Council meetings;
- b) Keep a record of membership, baptisms, marriages, deaths, and transfers;
- c) Preserve on file all communications and written official reports;
- d) Give legal notice of all meetings when such notice is required;
- e) Place in safe keeping and have charge of all Church historical records and retired record books of all Officers, Leadership Council, Ministry Teams, and Delegates, until such time as these records are transferred to the Archivist;

If you feel called to this position or if you have any questions, please let me know and someone from Calling & Discernment will be in touch with you. Thank you for considering this opportunity.

Margie Galabrun

Help Needed

The Sound Team could use some help in monitoring the sound system and the Zoom/ Facebook Link for our Sunday service. We will train you. No weekly commitment, but on an as-needed basis. If you are interested, please contact Carol Jeffery—carol.jeffery@gmail.com.

Just a Reminder... Emergency Financial Assistance (FDDF)

The Diaconate Discretionary Fund is available to provide temporary emergency financial assistance to individuals and families in need within our church and community. Payments are made for varying reasons including electric, heat and utility assistance, telephone, rent and medical emergencies. The needs and causes vary and sometimes just a little bit of help is all that is needed to overcome difficulty.

The Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund (FDDF) was set up at the request of Henry "Hank" Feddern. Having personally experienced the caring support of others in his own time of need this was a defining purpose of this mission. Hank was a Deacon Emeritus of First Congregational Church of Wakefield and passed away in 1995.

The FDDF is not part of our church budget. It is funded by donations from family, church members and friends; the Parish Helpers; donations received from families in memory of and/or in honor of their loved ones; and is also presented as one giving option for Christmas Alternative Gift Giving.

Donation checks should be made to the 'First Congregational Church of Wakefield' with 'FDDF' in the memo line and a note of explanation if desired.

If you have a request for emergency financial relief, please contact FCCW's Congregational Life Administrator (CLA), Andrea, at our church office, 603-522-3189. Andrea will refer the request to our Pastor or the Diaconate chairpersons. Any requests are considered with the utmost discretion and confidentiality. God Bless!!

Gail Feddern, Diaconate

Membership Meeting November 12th

Please plan on attending the Membership Meeting on November 12th following the worship service. The purpose of the meeting will be to decide to seek a full-time or part-time minister, and also to address some necessary bylaw changes.

Margie Galabrun, Moderator

HMNS - Here's our news!

During the month of October we have so many activities to do. We started with a field trip to McKenzie's farm to have a tractor ride, pick apples and make our own cider! The calendar said October but it felt more like August. It was a very warm trip! The kids loved the ride on the tractor and enjoyed a cold apple cider drink. We worked on letter Pp and talked a lot about pumpkins. We painted pumpkin shapes to hang on our classroom bulletin board; "Cutest little pumpkins in the patch!"

The next week brought number 9 and Fire Safety. We talked about smoke and how you stay low and crawl under the smoke. The kids crawled under a black garbage bag in our doorway to practice how to crawl. We put pretend fire on our clothes and did stop drop and roll and used "fire extinguishers" to put out fires around our classroom. The 3s had to listen and then find the color fire to put out; the 4s had to listen and find the number fire to put out. The Wakefield Fire Department came and showed us their clothes, mask and helmet they use to keep them safe from fire and then we went outside and had turns going inside a real fire truck!

We worked on letter Bb next and painted bats to put up on our "Batty about preschool" bulletin board. We also had a visit from the Wakefield Lions for our annual eye check. It's a great way to discover any issues early. Thank you Lions! This month we will also work on letters Vv and Yy.

As you can imagine we will do a lot with spiders, ghosts and bats. We make patterns using small halloween erasers and put so many spiders on our number cards. During playdough time the kids can use halloween cookie cutters to create lots of cool designs. Our sensory table is filled with dried beans and we added spider rings, bats, ghosts and cauldrons. The kids love to fill the cauldrons and make witch's brews. HMNS will be going trick-or-treating downtown again this year and both the kids and the businesses really enjoy this small town activity!! We are so blessed to live in such a wonderful town!

Arts and Music Ministry

With Advent drawing near if there is a hymn, song or poem that has special meaning for you during this season, Please let us one of us know. We will try to include your wish in a upcoming service.

*Donna Akerman, Cindy Eggleston,
Rev. Larry, and Buddy Dee*

Did You Know?

Did you know that our church was awarded a \$25,000 Non-Profit Security Grant in October 2022? We were very excited about it and immediately put the project out to bid. The winning bidder, a company from Rochester, turned out to disappoint us time and again with their inability to commit to a start date and numerous lapses in communication. It was so frustrating, particularly because the Owner of the Company required a BIG sum of money (\$15,900) up front to buy the products to do the job. After several attempts to resolve the issue and get the project on track, we had no choice but to terminate the contract for failure to perform and produce what had been promised.

Leadership Council agreed with B&G and Safe Church: that we should end the project and look more closely at what our own members may be able to do to accomplish some of the work ourselves. We are actively researching steps to take to legally challenge the former Contractor to return our money. Please pray for a right solution. Unfortunately, scams happen even to churches. Be aware!

Carol Lundgren

AARP Fraud Watch Basics Parish Helpers—All Welcome!



Have you ever been approached with a fraudulent offer or been a victim of identity theft? AARP is working to empower you in the fight, with proven resources and tools to help you spot and avoid identity theft and fraud. By taking a few practical steps, you will have the power to fight back against fraud. This session will arm you with the latest data on fraud trends and provide tips and resources to protect you and your family.

This talk is being provided for us through the AARP Speakers Bureau at our next Parish Helpers meeting on Thursday, November 9th at 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. **All are welcome—bring a friend!**

Carol Jeffery

Items Needed for Fair

We are looking for Donations of costume jewelry for resale at the Harvest Fair. Our Jewelry table is a big draw and some fresh offerings would dress up the table and make it more enticing! Contact Ginny at 522-9593 for more information.



Christmas Poinsettia Order Form

Due by November 20th

Please use the form below for ordering your Christmas Poinsettia Plants. Orders must be placed before **November 20th**. Checks are made payable to: The First Congregational Church of Wakefield, please notate Poinsettia in the memo. Order forms and payments may be left in the Administrators mailbox located in the church narthex or mailed to the address listed below.

Name of Donor(s): _____

I
n Memory or In Honor Of: _____
(Please circle one)

Single Poinsettia Plant ___ @ \$13.00 ___ Red ___ White

Double Poinsettia Plant ___ @ \$24.95 ___ Red ___ White

Plants may be picked up after Christmas Eve Worship

Please contact Rachel White at 603-520-2316 with questions.

*Thank You for helping to make our Sanctuary especially beautiful this
Christmas Season!*

**First Congregational Church of Wakefield
United Church of Christ
2718 Wakefield Road
Sanbornville, NH 03872**



We Are Survivors!

We were awarded a \$25,000 Homeland Security Grant for improving safety in and around our place of worship. Several people worked extremely hard to bring this opportunity to us. Following the specifications of the grant, we were to be repaid for the work once completed. We were so excited. We were so pleased. Unfortunately, we hired the wrong contractor. We paid \$15,900 in advance for him to buy the necessary materials and equipment. We turned over the keys to the building as well as the blueprints. We never saw him again. This has been heart breaking for those most closely involved and they are working to recover the lost money, however unlikely.

We don't really have the money to proceed again. However, this is where the story takes a change for the better, and it wonderfully describes our congregation. Our Safe Church team, after much discussion, decided to notify the grantors that we would not be proceeding. Our team decided that we didn't need the large upgrades that were seemingly "free". We could identify things that should be done, and we could do them ourselves. The key locks have already been replaced largely by an anonymous donation. We're proceeding with the rest as we can, and we know that it will be enough.

Margie Galabrun

Harvest Fair

Our Harvest Fair will be held on Saturday, November 11th, from 9 am. to 1 p.m.

The Fair features Pies and Baked Goods, Gift Baskets, Vendors, Jewelry, a Cookie Walk -- and don't miss our Penny Sale featuring many local businesses gift certificates! Something for everyone - a great opportunity to do some holiday shopping and support the church and its missions at the same time!

We're serving up coffee and breakfast goodies from 9 to 11 a.m. and starting at 11 a.m., you can enjoy a warm lunch of homemade chili, chowder, or soup.

Your Participation is Welcomed! We need baked goods (especially pies!), cookies for the Cookie Walk, and all hands on deck! Contact Nancy Dee and let her know how you can help! 603-522-6307

Peace

Donna Ackerman

I can't begin to imagine what it's like to have my world turned upside down due to an invasion of my homeland. Since September 11, 2001, I guess the only one in our congregation who has experienced such an atrocity would be our beloved Scribe, Titia Bozuwa. For the past few weeks, we wake up every morning with news of the conflict between Israel and Hamas. When people in power decide to extend the hand of war towards another, it is the citizens who become the victims. Men, demanding others to be labeled as the enemy, conspire and implement their plan to eliminate those they have deemed their nemesis. Today's technology allows for the killing of hundreds with just one rocket. These are not the rockets we Ooo and Ahhh over during a 4th of July celebration. These are weapons of mass destruction.

We have become numb over the war in Ukraine. It's been too long since the beginning of the Russian invasion of this otherwise peaceful, democratic nation. With almost blatant disregard, our attention leaps to the new conflict in the Middle East. We watch and listen to the various forms of media feeding us what we are supposed to know about the latest cruelty leveled on innocent people. We point fingers at who we believe to be the instigator of such evil. We go to bed each night thanking God that it is not us who are the victims.

Peace is an interesting word. Merriam-Webster defines peace as, "state of tranquility", "freedom from civil disturbance", and "state of security or order within a community". The King James version of the Bible provides 429 usages of the word peace, while the New International Version uses it 230 times. Is this discrepancy between the two translations because over time we have become disconnected to the word "peace" as we have to the actual conflicts that deprive people of their peace? As Jesus prepared his Disciples of his leaving them, He says in John 14: 27 "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you". Jesus is speaking here of the coming of the "comforter", the Holy Spirit. That Comforter is with us today. Conflict, wars, and evil have existed since the beginning. But it is the Holy Spirit that God has provided that brings the peace we seek. We are to be aware of the world around us, but we are not to be consumed by the bombardment of information or disinformation that comes from telling the stories of evildoers. Gratitude is the emotion we should express. Gratitude that we are not the victims of senseless wars.

Lord, be with those who are in the path of violence, whether it is in the world, our nation, our state, or our community. Help us to be grateful for the peace you have given us.

Parish Helpers Raffle



Harvest Fair Day is the last chance to get your tickets for the 2023 Parish Helper's raffle items - a queen-size quilt, "Bygone Days" and a beautiful 5' x 3' rug hand-braided by Catherine Britton.



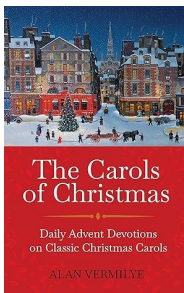
The winning ticket will be drawn at the end of the Fair. Tickets are only \$5 each or 3 for \$10.

Harvest Fair Penny Sale

HELP! I'm getting worried. The Penny Sale usually has 40 – 50 Gift Certificates. Right now I have 7 in hand. I was away for a few days, then out of commission with Covid, and there has been a lot going on. I have asked a few specific people to ask at a few specific places, but now the Fair is only 10 days away. Time to step it up! If you can either ask for a donation at a favorite local place of business or purchase a small gift cert yourself, or even come up with a service you could provide, that would be huge. As you know, the budget passed with a \$50,000 deficit. Fundraising is necessary to pay the bills and the Harvest Fair is one of our biggest of the year. Please help.

Thank you, Nancy Dee

Faith Formation— Advent



The Tuesday Noon Faith Formation class will start up again on December 5 with a study of "The Carols of Christmas: Daily Advent Devotions." The most beloved Christmas carols are arranged in 28 daily devotions for the Advent season. They will also be looking at the UCC StillSpeaking Advent Devotional. If you'd like to participate in the study, either in person or remotely,

please contact Julie Kessler at julielouisekessler@gmail.com for more information.

Holy Communication: Prayer

Linda Messer

I never thought much about prayer until I began attending church regularly. That was about a year before I joined FCCW in 2016. I don't believe that God makes things happen on my behalf because I've prayed enough, nor do I believe God loves me any less if I don't. But I think prayer is an important part of building a relationship with God. And that starts with talking to and about God.

My relationship began when I was a child. I remember asking my Dad questions. "Who/what was God? Where did God live? Will I see God sometime? Why do we pray to God every night?" Most of my prayers were those I learned by rote, especially bedtime prayers like "Now I lay me down to sleep...." When kneeling beside my Dad, he would ask for God's guidance for me as I started school, or when I went for a sleepover with my grandparents, or how I could get along better with my brothers. But HE did most of the praying, and when he finished, we would say "Amen" in unison.

One very special prayer was said the night before I was going to have my tonsils removed. I was probably 8 or 9, and old enough to understand what 'having an operation' meant. To say the least, I had been VERY anxious for a few days. That one simple prayer to ask for God's protection, calmed me enough that there was not a tear shed as we headed for the hospital the next morning. When we got there, I remember there was a little boy hysterically crying. His parents had told him beforehand that they were all going to a 'birthday party'. Imagine his fear as the reality of why he was there set in, never mind the disappointment of no birthday cake!

As the years passed, I've thought of that pivotal event often. I knew from that time that my parents were always truthful with me and that God was with me that day and *every* day. Over time, especially into my more 'mature' years, my relationship with God has deepened, expanded, and cemented into my soul as I've struggled through hard times, and celebrated the happy ones. I know without a doubt God's grace is real. I know without a doubt that when I open myself to God's presence, I will hear the Spirit. I know without a doubt, with God anything is possible and there are miracles. And I know without a doubt, I will never comprehend it all. But I've learned this: the center of my faith, my relationship with God, is in holy communication: at any time, in any place!

With all my heart, with all my soul and with all my mind, I've learned to pray.

Celebrations!

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2	Mary Ann Fountain	20	Mary Beth Cook
2	Glenna Nelson	22	Donna Lewis
3	Kim Cornell	23	Ann Bilodeau
4	Gail Feddern	25	Lauryn Robinson
5	Vincent Mangano	28	Denine Foulks
8	George Ackerman	29	Catherine Britton
14	Pam Wiggin	29	Rev Mary James
16	Julie Margolis	30	Chuck Hodsdon
19	Dana Margolis		

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

4 Skip & Sharon Theiling

Library Highlight



“Journeying Through Grief” Series by Kenneth Haugk.

Book 1: A Time to Grieve; Book 2: Experiencing Grief ;Book 3: Finding Hope and Healing; Book 4: Rebuilding and Remembering

Journeying through Grief is a set of four short books to help people during the first year after the loss of a loved one. Kenneth C. Haugk writes in a warm, caring style, with short, easy-to-read chapters. He walks alongside the reader through the grief journey, sharing helpful insights about grief, biblical truths, and stories that provide comfort and reassurance. Each book focuses on what the person is likely experiencing at that point in grief—offering understanding, empathy, compassion, and hope. Source: Amazon

Linda Petkunas, Church Librarian

FELLOWSHIP OF CONCERN

We believe that prayer is powerful! During this time of transition in our church, let us pray for the Diaconate, 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:



Connie L; Marie and Jack H; Bob L; Dave and Charlotte L; Sue L; Arlene L; Cindy E; Carol J's Family: Chrissy, Maryann, and Michael

It's That Time of Year Again!

COVID-19, FLU, RSV and the Common Cold are making their return. We can do our part and stay vigilant! Please refer to the current CDC Guidelines (below) for Isolation and Precautions for COVID-19 and other contagious viruses circulating throughout the winter:

Stay Home

Isolate

Practice Good Hygiene

Test for COVID-19

Alert others you may have infected

If you absolutely must be in public:

Social Distance

Wear a Mask

Thank you for doing your part to keep us all safe!



Wakefield Food Pantry



For the month of November our “Mother’s Hubbard” collection for the Food Pantry is focusing on holiday prep foods—Stuffing, Cranberry Sauce, Dessert ingredients, Hot Cocoa mix, Marshmallows, Gravy, Canned Vegetables.

Please help feed the hungry in our local area.

NOVEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 ALL SAINTS DAY Scrabble Group 1–3 p.m. Diaconate Meeting	2 Chair Yoga 10:30	3	4 Grief Support Group 11 a.m.
5 Daylight Saving Time Ends 23rd Sunday after Pentecost Worship and Communion 10 a.m. Coffee Hour	6 Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m. Choir 5:30	7	8	9 Chair Yoga 10:30 Parish Helpers 1 p.m. AARP PRESENTATION	10	11 VETERANS' DAY 
12 24th Sunday after Pentecost Worship and Communion 10 a.m. Membership Meeting	13 Choir 5:30	14 Ukulele Club 6–7:30 p.m.	15	16 Chair Yoga 10:30	17	18 Grief Support Group 11 a.m.
19 25th Sunday after Pentecost Worship—10 a.m. Coffee Hour Leadership Council Meeting	20 Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m. Choir 5:30	21 Prayer Shawl Ministry 10 a.m. 	22	23 THANKSGIVING DAY 	24	25
26 26th Sunday after Pentecost Worship—10 a.m. Coffee Hour	27 Choir 5:30	28 Ukulele Club 6–7:30 p.m.	29	30 Chair Yoga 10:30		



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