

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

DECEMBER 2023

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The Pastor's Page

Advent: The Cycle Begins Again

Sunday, December 3, 2023, marks the beginning of the Advent season. Advent means the preparation for the coming of the Christ child, celebrated on Christmas day, and the preparation for the return, or second coming, of Jesus Christ. Churches, communities and individuals celebrate Advent in a variety of ways. Most of them involve singing, feasts and community gatherings. Prayer, meditation, devotional study and reflection are also a spiritual part of the season. It is often a happy and festive time, full of events, concerts, plays, parties, communal gatherings, decorations, gift giving and family time.

The four Sundays of Advent each have a particular theme: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. We celebrate these each Sunday in our morning services. Each service during Advent begins with a ritual candle lighting highlighting the theme of that Sunday and where we are in the Advent journey. The Advent season is also the beginning of the Christian liturgical year, that 12 month cycle that begins on the first Sunday in Advent and ends with the Reign of Christ Sunday 52 weeks later.

The first Sunday in Advent is the Sunday of Hope. The candle is often purple and is also called the Prophecy Candle. It harkens to the prophet Isaiah and his foretelling of the birth of Christ and the fulfillment of God's promises made in the first Testament. It shines forth the Hope of a new day, a new awakening into a world where Love never ends and all are celebrated as beloved children of God.

The second Sunday is the Sunday of Peace. Often marked by a purple candle and sometimes referred to as "The Bethlehem Candle," it remembers the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. It marks a peace that comes in the wake of war, destruction, devastation, pain and suffering, and is not destroyed by evil or the challenges we face in our lives.

The third Sunday is the Sunday of Joy. Often marked by a pink candle and called "the Shepherd's Candle," it remembers the joy of the shepherd's at their learning of the coming of the Christ child, and their journey to welcome him. It marks a time of joy and a God of joy, who calls us to be joyful disciples and messengers of Christ.

The fourth Sunday is the Sunday of Love. It is often marked by a purple candle and called "the Angels Sunday." It celebrates the love of God for all people and the earth, a love so deep that God sent the son, Jesus the Christ, to carry us through the darkness. It is a time of Agape, a love that embraces an embodied, engaged and experienced love that transcends the hard times and challenges of this world.

Advent is the beginning of another journey around the sun, and a sojourn through the seasons of our faith. The season invites us to open and be opened, to see with more than our eyes, and to move beyond the call of the day to more fully experience a Hope that sustains us, a Peace that passes all understanding, a Joy that has no end, and a Love that underlies all that we do. Blessed Advent to you all! I send this prayer to you for the Advent season.

May you be blessed with Hope that is a harbor and a shelter from the storms, and reminds you that you held in the loving arms of God.

May you be blessed with Peace that steadies you in the rocky places, and that holds your heart and spirit clear no matter what may be swirling around you.

May you be blessed with Joy, a joy that delights in your happiness, and that rises up to shine in and through you a light through the shadows.

(Continued on Page 2)

(Pastor's Page Continued)

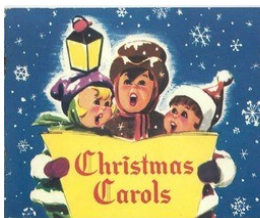
May you be blessed with Love, a love that has no end, that carries you through the wilderness and that reminds you that you are a beloved and beautiful child of God, that you are loved, and that you are worth loving. Amen.

A postscript: At the November 12 congregational meeting, a consensus affirmation was reached to search and call a full time pastor. That will be reflected in the Church profile which should be posted in early 2024. This decision was reached after thoughtful, compassionate, and caring conversation through 2 community dinners, a panel of pastors discussing their part time experiences, the all members meeting, discussion in ministry teams and between individual members of the church. You all listened with open hearts and minds, prayed and reflected and sought God's wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There was no one "right" decision, but careful reflection and prayerful listening that leads to where we are today. You all did this with intention, and you serve as a model to other faith communities having these same challenging conversations.

FCCW is a healthy church. This was deeply affirmed in the Congregational Assessment Tool completed this past spring and summer. You have weathered some storms and turbulent waters, and demonstrated a strength and resilience that will continue to be some of your strongest qualities. You have excellent leadership, dedicated members, creative spirits, compassion, care and love for each other, a sense of justice, hope and respect for all God's creation, a commitment to welcome, hospitality, and inclusion, and a community where people laugh, play, serve and love together. Every person, young, middle and old, feels valued here. The Spirit is alive and strong in FCCW, and you all are a great place to serve. You are good stewards and are in good hands, and God is with you every step of the way. Peace be with you always!

Rev. Larry

All Church Family/Music Camp Christmas Caroling



The music camp children have been invited to join our annual church family Christmas caroling on Saturday, December 16 from 4-6 p.m. We have caroling books and Margie will lead the kids and adults in using hand chimes.

The plan is to dress warmly, meet at church before 4 p.m. and prepare to caravan around the Wakefield community bringing love and Christmas cheer to neighbors and friends. We will return to church around 5:30 to enjoy some pizza, hot beverages, and yummy treats. Let me know if there is someone we should not miss on our caroling route!

Connie Littlefield

Outcome of the Membership Meeting

Forty-seven people came together on November 12 to consider changes to our bylaws and to decide whether to seek a full-time or part-time pastor. All of the bylaw changes were accepted as proposed. It was also decided that we would seek a full-time pastor.

The discussion of funding a full-time or part-time pastor was compassionate and respectful. People spoke from their hearts while others listened. After much discussion, we were not able to reach consensus on this issue. Two straw polls taken during the meeting yielded 23 and 24 for full-time to 13 opposed. What this means is that approximately 1/3 of those in attendance could not support this decision. Complete agreement was evident, however, in our mutual love for this church, and in our determination to move forward united. Thank you to everyone who participated. The Search & Call Committee can now continue with their task of bringing forward the very best possible candidate for our community.

Margie Galabrun, Co-Moderator

Search and Call

Search and Call Committee has been hard at work on our Profile for a new settled Pastor. Our goal is to have the Profile ready for you all to review in mid January.

Once approved by the congregation and then by Rev. Rankin, our UCC Conference Minister, it will be time to send our profile out to be posted. Then, we standby patiently awaiting any inquiries.

Judy Trepal

Calling and Discernment

Do you ever have the feeling that God is calling you in a certain way? Kind of a pull or a nudge to do something, in an expected or unexpected course of action? The Calling and Discernment ministry *loves* that! We love *listening* to people and *helping* them find how their ideas, their gifts and their passions may open up.

Recently Donna Ackerman began considering how FCCW can be a "pinnacle church." (Ask her about that!) There are so many ways you can add your talents into the mix to make a stronger, better FCCW and wider church community.

C & D wishes to extend utmost thanks and appreciation to Annie Gehring for her invaluable service as our church clerk.

Is being our historical archivist or serving as a church clerk something that speaks to you? Or perhaps joining the Outreach/Wider Church Ministry? Working with youth? Something new? If so, please speak to me, Margie Galabrun, Jan Brewjo or Harriet Wilson.

Blessings, Connie Littlefield

New Member Spotlight



Ruth Haskell —

I lived in Massachusetts most of my life. I am widowed and have 3 children, 11 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

I worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant. Now retired, I like to go to movies, do cross-stitching, read and work word puzzles.

Joan Carlson

Who am I? I am a complexity of the journey which led me to your door.

I grew up in a desired area—the sleepy wintering town of Kittery Point, Maine. Winters were dead—the typical skating, sledding and skiing in my older years. In summer the area buzzed as the well-to-do launched their ‘pride’ into the sea. All this was observed from our living room window of the sea captain’s house I grew up in, the old home of Captain Hoyt who was born in the 1800s. Our living room faced southward past New Castle Light. My bedroom window faced Fort Cleary and Pepperrell Cove. It is here I lived until I turned 16.



About a month before my July birthday, my dad, Maurice Wesley Carlson, retired from lobstering. His legs betrayed his occupation. He also sold the seaside house, his boat, one of his rental houses and the ranch home. We moved into his other rental which was a cape built in 1957. It seems I have been moving ever since. I own a home and was stationed there for 23 years in Rochester, NH. I love my house and still miss it dearly. It will always be home. Although I couldn’t stay, I did it alone and paid it off 3 years before I moved away.

Educationally the road has been difficult. I don’t have enough room to explain the horror show the town of Kittery offered this little lost child. Still in the end with many starts and stops I walked away with a few papers in my hand.

The short of my experience from institutional abuse of people who are different served me in my employment for 35 years. Being the oddity in the group lends great compassion toward those on the periphery-which brings me to faith and to God.

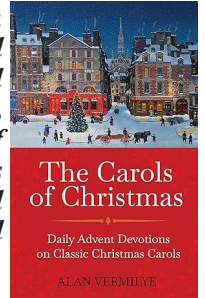
So again - ‘how is it said’ -when you have done it unto the least of us, you have done it to me. The humbleness is to remember how to fit those into the eye of the needle

Joan Carlson

Advent Faith Formation

Faith Formation is coming back beginning with this Advent season! Please consider joining us starting the first Tuesday of Advent - December 5th. We will be using both an Advent study ("The Carols of Christmas: Daily Advent Devotions" Volume 1) and the Advent devotional from Stillspeaking Writers' Group ("Glow")

About "Carols of Christmas":
This is a heart-warming devotional inspired by some of the most beloved Christmas carols of all time. Inside, you'll enjoy a fresh glimpse of some of the same joyful and nostalgic melodies you sing every year now set to personal reflections in this 28-day devotional journey.



The carols include "O Holy Night", "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day", "O Little Town of Bethlehem", and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing." You'll also discover intriguing stories and thought-provoking details like who wrote the carol; what was going on in their life that perhaps inspired the hymn; and how has God used this hymn throughout time.

Our gatherings will be hybrid - in-person in Fellowship Hall with a Zoom option (Zoom only if weather is a concern) and will begin at noon. We will use the time to discuss the "Carols of Christmas" readings for that week, along with listening to a portion of the carol being discussed. Our class will run for an hour (or so) and will be followed by a sharing of thoughts on the Stillspeaking Advent Devotional - "Glow"



Please let Julie Kessler know if you're interested in attending
julielouisekessler@gmail.com or 603-871-8066.

Julie Kessler

Parish Helpers Christmas Luncheon

The Parish Helpers will hold its Annual Christmas Luncheon on Thursday, December 14, at 12 noon. It will be held at the Knotty Pine Grill on Pine River Pond Road.

Back by popular demand is our annual Yankee Swap! Please bring a wrapped gift with a value of about \$10 and join in the fun! If you haven't already signed up, please call Ginny a.s.a.p. at 522-9593. Merry Christmas!

Carol Jeffery

Holiday History

With all the heavy-hearted things going on in the world, I thought it might be fun to look at Holiday Traditions that we sometimes celebrate without knowing where and when they began. I have chosen three items that have become part of most of our household traditions.

First is the candy cane. Supposedly this holiday addition to the expansion of our waistbands began in 1670 when a German choir director gave white sugar sticks to his fidgety choir boys to quiet them down between performances. I wonder how that worked out for him. In the 1920's Bob McCormack gave red and white striped candy canes as treats to friends and family at Christmas. In the 1950's a machine was designed to mechanically produce these sweets. Bob's brother-in-law, Gregory Keller, invented the machine, and the mass production of candy canes became a world-wide distribution.



Our next Holiday Tradition is the Christmas Tree. Evergreen trees, wreaths and garlands represented eternal life and was a custom of Egyptians, Chinese, and Hebrews. These items were part of European pagan traditions of the early 1400's as they decorated their houses with evergreens to scare away the Devil. The modern Christmas tree was part of a German medieval play about Adam and Eve called the "paradise tree". It was decorated with apples to represent the Garden of Eden. By the mid-19th century, the Christmas

tree became a solid tradition due to Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria, who made it popular. The Victorian tree was decorated with small toys, candies, cakes, candles, ribbons, and paper chains. How many of you remember the "aluminum" Christmas trees of the 1960's? Haha, how many of you still have one?

The third Christmas tradition is Santa Claus. The legend of this character can be traced back to the year 280 with a generous fellow named St. Nicholas. The story goes that he traveled the world giving away all his wealth to the poor and sick. Over time his popularity spread, and he became the protector of children and sailors. Not sure what relation these two have, but that's another story to research. St. Nicholas's feast day is celebrated on the anniversary of his death which is December 6th. In 1773, as recorded in a New York newspaper, a group of Dutch families gathered to honor the anniversary of his death. The name Santa Claus derives from the Dutch nickname Sinter Klass, a shortened form of "Sint Nikolaas" which is Dutch for Saint Nicholas. In 1822, Clement Clarke Moore, wrote a poem to his daughters entitled "An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas", better known as "Twas the Night Before Christmas". In 1881, Thomas Nast created a cartoon character for *Harper's Weekly* based on the description of Santa Claus in Moore's poem. Santa now had a round belly, a white beard, a cheerful manner, and a sack

full of toys. In addition, Nast gave him a red suit trimmed in white fur, a North Pole workshop, elves, and a wife, Mrs. Claus. Secular, or winter solstice celebrations, have become part of our traditions during this wonderful time we call Christmas.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ know that from November 20th to January 24th there are at least 14 different religious holidays. Just as there are a variety of holiday traditions, there are a variety of religious celebrations. So "Merry Christmas", "Happy Holidays" and my favorite "Peace on Earth". Let it be so.

Donna Ackerman

Hazel MacBrien NS News

We started the month of November introducing letter Yy and doing activities with yarn. One of the kids favorites was using a piece of yarn to make a shape on the carpet and then jumping into it. They also laid it in a straight line and pretended it was a balance beam that they had to walk on. We then tried to walk backwards down the "beam". Our sensory table was full of white beans and then we added plastic popcorn buckets, scoops and pompoms. The kids really enjoyed making yummy popcorn treats! We decided it would be fun to do a real popcorn taste test. We tried butter, cheese and kettle corn flavors. Most of the kids voted on cheese as their favorite.

Next we introduced letter Qq and did activities like q-tip painting and coin sorting and patterns with quarters. The kids got to use a coin sorter and we talked about the different colors and sizes of our coins.

The third week of November we worked on letter Tt and did a lot of turkey activities and we talked about being thankful. We had corn, turkeys, rubber duck pilgrims and Native Americans as well as plastic pumpkin and leaves in our sensory table. For activities the kids designed turkey feathers using parquetry blocks and unifix cubes that they put into color patterns. We also used feathers to paint with and used magnifying glasses to explore real turkey feathers.

Thanksgiving week brought our Friendsgiving snack celebration which we made homemade cranberry sauce for and our families sent in a food item to share with our class.

During the last week of the month we will be working on number 7 and our sensory table has dragon and unicorn plastic figures as well as wooden treasure boxes, wood pieces, jewels and white beans.

We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday as we get ready for the Christmas season!!

Advent Devotionals

Advent is the beginning of the Church liturgical year, and the season of preparation leading into Christmas. It is a wonderful time of reflection and prayer, amidst the festivals, feast and frolic of the holiday season. We have access to a wonderful array of advent devotionals for you to utilize during the season, and here is a list of them.

SALT Project: Mary's Song and the Magnificent Women of Advent. This is a wonderful weekly devotional with guides to prayer, music and reflection. https://www.fccwakefieldnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/SALT_Magnify_DIGITAL-events.pdf

Luther Seminary: Creators of the Stars of Night. This is a daily devotional from the wonderful folks at Luther seminary in Minnesota. A daily reflection and prayer are included. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Hid5hRLafyOv2bLWiRmwl55XngHypSm/view>

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary: The Big Book of Advent Devotionals: <https://www.pts.edu/UserFiles/File/resources/Publications/Advent%20Devotional%202023/Big%20Book%20of%20Advent%20Year%20-%202023.pdf>

Or sign up here for advent resources from PTS. https://www.pts.edu/devotional_1

UCC Advent Devotionals: Christmas Unwrapped, with the United Church of Canada. Sign up here: <https://www.ucc.org/advent-2023-resources-available-now-from-ucc/>

Presbyterians for Earth Care: 2023 Advent Devotional. <https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/PEC-Advent-Devotional-2023-Online-Version.pdf>

Pastor Larry will be doing a weekly devotional on Mondays at 5:00 p.m. streamed to the FCC Facebook page, 12/4, 12/11, and 12/18 <https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalChurchofWakefieldUCC>

We are also glad to make hard copies of these for anyone. Please contact Andrea Selig, our Congregational Life Administrator, if you would like a hard copy. 603-522-3189.

Endowment Matching

Many thanks to all who participated in online donations to our Endowment Matching Opportunity over the last few months. **Together, WE DID IT!** We matched the gift of \$1,000 from a generous donor and soon \$2,000 will be deposited into our Endowment Fund. This fund has been growing slowly and we are getting closer to having another source of interest income to help our Church move into the future. Although we do not have an End-of-Year matching opportunity — PLEASE consider making a tax-free donation to this important effort.

Judy Trepal

Advent 2023 at First Congregational Church of Wakefield, UCC

Sunday, December 3, 2023, 10:00 a.m. First Sunday in Advent, The Sunday of Hope: A conversation with Titia Bozuwa, FCCW Sage, Candle lighting and Holy Communion

Sunday, December 10, 2023, 10:00 a.m. Second Sunday in Advent, the Sunday of Peace, Message: Vision of Peace, Peace Candle lighting

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 5:00 p.m. Advent Drum Circle, in Fellowship Hall

Saturday, December 16, 4-6 p.m. Caroling...

Sunday, December 17, 2023, 10:00 a.m. Third Sunday in Advent, The Sunday of Joy: Story and Songs; Joy candle lighting

Tuesday, December 19— Blue Christmas Service, 7:00 p.m. A service holding the grief, sadness and despair of the world in this season. Done in Partnership with St. John's Episcopal Church

Sunday, December 24, 2023, 10:00 a.m. Fourth Sunday in Advent, the Sunday of Love. Meditations on Love, and Water Communion; Love candle lighting

Sunday December 24, 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service: Lessons and Carols, Candle of Christ lighting

Harvest Fair Recap



What an awesome event! On November 11th we opened the doors to our annual Harvest Fair and had a steady stream of folks from 9 a.m. thru the raffle drawings at 1 p.m. Our feeding people breakfast, lunch and sweets raised over \$1000 alone. Many thanks to all our cooks and bakers! Note - we sold out of all food items! And kudos to our other money making tables including: Penny Sale, Jewelry, Cool Stuff (including our very cool Fair Trade coffee and tea offerings) and Baskets. In the end, we raised close to \$3000. A huge shout of THANKS to all that helped set up, run and take down the event.

Julie Kessler

Thank You from WFP

Our church has been a major supporter of the Food Pantry for a number of years. We have many church members and friends that volunteer their time at the pantry. Here are some statistics about the difference we are making on easing hunger and food insecurity in our community.

As of Sept. 30th we have given out 80,685 meals to recipients and 54,525 of those have been to Wakefield residents. We serve an average of 180 people per week, and our volunteers give out all this food in 1 day.

Our costs to purchase food have increased 30% over the last couple of years and we are able to order less from the NH Food Bank. So far this year we have purchased 18,541 lbs. of food from the Food Bank, or over 9 TONS of food.

We have received this year 2 NH Feeding NH grants each for \$1,500 which enables us to purchase protein. We are required to buy it from someone that goes to farmer's markets.

Then we have our wonderful garden which has produced during the summer months a great number of vegetables – lettuce, kale, green beans, tomatoes didn't do so well this year with all the rain, but it also a beautiful place just to walk out and see at the back of the pantry building. Frank Frazier and his group of volunteers work hard at producing beautiful fruits and vegetables for our recipients.

But it is all the food that members and friends of this church donate that makes our food pantry work so well. Our church donates the largest amount of food in the community, and it is such a blessing. It is the protein that is so hard for us to get; the birthday cakes and frosting that make someone's birthday more special; the one of a kind items that the pantry can't order and the cat and dog food for all our furry friends.

Thank you all so much for your continued support of our local food pantry – the need is in our communities and you are helping.

Marilou MacLean

Wakefield Food Pantry Totals 2004-2022

Days open: 941
Individuals served: 130,937
Over 60 years old: 25,173
Under 18 years old: 44,503
Food Expenditure: \$489,539
Average cost per meal: \$.39
Average number of people per week: 139;
Average weekly food expense: \$520

Hallelujah! PKZ News



The shipping container arrived in Zimbabwe and had a very smooth clearance this past week. The hardworking team on the ground offloaded and re-loaded more than 1,000 items -- heavy boxes filled with clothing, shoes, medical and school supplies, books, school desks and chairs, bicycles, sewing machines, fabric, bedding, tools and peanut butter! Just imagine what Christmas will look like as these parcels of love make their way around the country. Messages of appreciation are pouring in from people expressing their gratitude and appreciation for the effort, the support, and all ending with, "God bless you." In the unending lack that is Zimbabwe, now with a spike in cholera cases along with the highest inflation rate in Africa, this container gives people a sense of hope and is a tangible reminder that these beleaguered people have not been forgotten.

More good news! Electricity has made its way to the soon-to-be clinic in Humani. This is a huge leap in our renovation project to bring medical care to people in this beautiful yet isolated area. Thanks to the fundraising effort by MJo and a very generous donation by another individual, the goal is to complete the work needed in the coming months for the government to accept and endorse the Humani Clinic as a working medical facility.

Finally, December typically is the child sponsorship renewal month for many of our sponsors. We have two programs: 1) Friends of Orphan Trust (FOOT) which asks for a specific monthly contribution based on the grade of the sponsored child and 2) PKZ sponsorship which asks for a contribution of any amount to cover school fees, uniforms and school supplies. As I have said many times, your support of these programs changes the trajectory of lives. Samuel Khumbula and Blessing Sit-hole are two very visible examples of this impact, yet there are dozens more in Zimbabwe who are realizing their educational goals amidst tremendous challenges because of your participation. Thank you, thank you, thank you for making their dreams a reality.

God bless you, Connie Littlefield

Celebrations!

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 | |

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 Eric & Amanda Boggs
27 Peter & Linda Foss

On Behalf of the Hospitality Team

Laura, Janet and I wish to express our deep gratitude to everyone that has provided our coffee table with treats. We always welcome cheese and fruit as another selection! Our wonderful fellowship time can turn a stranger into a friend.

Blessings, Rachel



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

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.

Alternative Gift Giving

Here's a great idea for Christmas gifts—donate to a worthy cause through our Alternative Gift Giving Program. See the information and order form in this newsletter on Page 9. And thank you!

Community Tree of Memories Sponsored by FCCW

Remember your loved ones with a personalized wooden dove.

We will have a tree in front of the church so that everyone in the community can be part of remembering loved ones.

Doves will be available (free of charge). Stop by any time. Any questions, contact Ginny Schweitzer at 522-9593.



Ginny Schweitzer

DECEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Grief Support Group 11 a.m.
3 1st Sunday of Advent Worship and Communion 10 a.m. Coffee Hour	4 Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m. Choir 5:30	5 Faith Formation 12 Noon	6 Scrabble Group 1–3 p.m. Diaconate Meeting	7	8	9
10 2nd Sunday of Advent Worship—10 a.m. Coffee Hour	11 Choir 5:30	12 Faith Formation 12 Noon Ukulele Club 6–7:30 p.m.	13 Advent Drum Circle— 5 p.m. Fellowship Hall	14 Parish Helpers Christmas Luncheon 12 NOON.	15	16 Grief Support Group—11 a.m. Christmas Caroling 4 p.m.- 6 p.m.
17 3rd Sunday of Advent Worship—10 a.m. Coffee Hour	18 Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m. Choir 5:30	19 Prayer Shawl Ministry—10 a.m. Faith Formation 12 Noon Blue Christmas Service—7 p.m.	20	21	22	23
24 4th Sunday of Advent Worship—10 a.m. (No Coffee Hour) CHRISTMAS EVE Candlelight Service 4 p.m.	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 Faith Formation 12 noon Ukulele Club 6–7:30 p.m.	27	28	29	30
31 1st Sunday after Christmas NEW YEAR'S EVE Worship—10 a.m. No Coffee Hour						

2023 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.

Alternative Gift Giving 2023

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.

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** \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Name: _____

Phone #: _____



I N C L E M E N T
Weather Policy

FCCW Cancellations due to inclement weather will be posted on:
WMUR Channel 9
WCSH Channel 6
FCCW Facebook page at :
<https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalChurchofWakefieldUCC>



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