

# 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

FEBRUARY 2024

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## The Pastor's Page

### Leaning into Lent with Love

Rev. Larry Brickner-Wood

Lent begins on February 14, 2024. It is a wonderful combination of the sacred day of Ash Wednesday and the day we know as Valentine's Day. In addition, Lent overlaps with the celebrations of Black History Month in February, and Women's History Month in March. March is also the celebration of National Reading Month, Disability Awareness Month, Social Work Month, Irish-American and Greek-American Heritage months, Bisexual Health Awareness month and a long list of other notable causes for the month, individual weeks and days, including one of my favorites, Adopt a Rescued Guinea Pig month!

The commemoration of Lent began shortly after the Council of Nicea in 325 CE. It was viewed primarily as a season of preparation for the celebration of Easter. It borrowed from earlier pagan practices, and the word Lent is an Anglo Saxon term meaning the lengthening of the days as Spring approaches. Some believe that the 40 day season of Lent is meant to remember the 40 days of temptation that Jesus endured in the desert.

Some have scoffed at the notion of Lent and Valentine's Day falling on the same day, reading that the "Hallmark" influenced secular holiday of Valentine's Day has nothing in common with Lent. I understand that perspective, but I do not see Valentine's Day as simply a secular holiday. Though the historical facts and evidence are scattered and inconsistent, there are some nice pieces we can use during our Lenten journey. The name Valentine was a popular name in the Roman empire, and there are numerous St. Valentine's in the Roman Catholic tradition. Three appealing images of Valentine are as a Roman Catholic Priest or Bishop in the third century who was often persecuted for his beliefs and actions. While under house arrest ordered by Judge Asterius, Valentine was asked to meet with the blind daughter of the judge. Engaging in conversation with her, Valentine laid his hand upon her eyes and she was healed. Valentine was released and continued to preach the Good News. Later, when he had been sentenced to death by the Roman authorities, he wrote a letter to the daughter starting "to my valentine."

After his release from house arrest, Valentine continued to advocate for the poor and to preach the Gospel. He also performed "secret marriages" as an act of protest to the militarism of Rome. Married young men could not be conscripted into the Roman Army, and Valentine's actions directly contradicted the rule of Rome. He was eventually martyred and executed by the empire.

Rather than see Valentine's Day as simply a day to celebrate romantic love, it can be a day of celebrating love in all its forms, especially the all-embracing and sacred Agape love that Jesus and the disciples speak about so frequently. For the Church, it is a time to lift up the Love that is at the center of our faith, and to celebrate that God's love is for everyone. As we move through our journey in Lent, may we do it centered in the awesome reality of God's love manifest so beautifully in Jesus Christ and brought to our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

This Ash Wednesday we will begin the journey through Lent, and also commemorate the Love that is at our center as a people and a community of faith. Throughout Lent, we will focus on leaning into and leading with Love as the collective people of God. We will be exploring and experiencing God's love as the divine and sacred gift that it is, and also the ways it is manifest in the actions of the beloved cloud of witnesses who shine God's love into the world every day. (Continued on Page 2.)

When I was young, we marked Lent by “giving up” something during the season, and fasting in the morning on Fridays. As life has unfolded and my sense and understandings have changed, I now see it as a time to lean into something. Rather than giving up an item or act, it is a time to do something that renews and enhances my faith journey, that deepens my spiritual growth, and that helps others experience the Love that God provides in my life every day. Prayer, reading of Scripture and sacred texts, engaging in individual or group studies, using a daily or weekly devotional, attending services and events are all wonderful ways to grow in our faith. Just as restorative are the intentional acts of kindness, the acts of service, the care and support of those in need, and engaging in ways that promote justice, enhance equity, broaden inclusion and shine Love into our world.

Welcome into this Lenten season. Welcome into another journey through Spirit and sacred practice. Welcome into a journey with Jesus, blending enlightenment and challenge into a symphony of Love. Welcome into this journey where your heart, mind, spirit, soul and body can be renewed. I look forward to moving along on this journey with you.

## Pastoral Evaluation & Review Team

In preparation for our next settled pastor's arrival, the congregation authorized the naming of a new team that is to work with the new minister to conduct timely evaluations, and recommend salary adjustments. The team, consisting of Harriet Wilson, Frank Frazier and Chris Feddern has now been appointed by the Leadership Council. Rev. Larry will work with this team to ensure their preparedness for our new pastor. We're getting ready.....

Margie Galabrun, Co-Moderator

## Prepared to Serve

Prepared to Serve is an annual NH Conference day long event designed to enrich, expand, and equip lay members, pastors and the church as a whole with a wide variety of topics. This year's event will be held on Saturday, February 24th from 9:00 - 4:00 p.m. Workshop topics include lay preaching, best financial practices, end of life options, racial justice, prayer and spirituality through art and poetry, youth workshops, creativity in worship and much, much more! An always tasty continental breakfast and lunch is provided.

The registration deadline is Monday, February 12. FCCW has designated funds to defray the cost of attendance. Please see Andrea, Margie, Jo, Donna or me if you need help registering. Carpooling will be available!

## Souper Bowl Soup Sale



We are once again having a Souper Bowl Soup Sale! This is one of our best FUNdraisers of the year! We are offering a wide variety of soups, including vegetarian options, for takeout! Soups must be pre-ordered and pre-paid and will be available for pickup at the church (address below) on Saturday, February 10, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Snow Date is Feb. 11 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.) Local home delivery can be arranged.

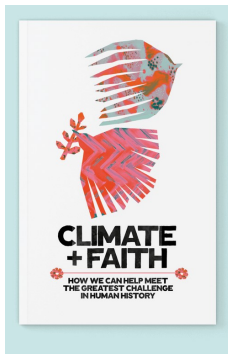
Choose from a wide selection of soups (see below) at a cost of \$5 per 16-oz. container. (With the exception of Lobster Bisque which is \$8. Call Margie at 522-6674 or email her at [balchlaker@gmail.com](mailto:balchlaker@gmail.com) to place your order. Payment can be made by check made out to FCCW and mailed to FCCW Assistant Treasurer at 2718 Wakefield Road, Wakefield, NH 03872 or dropped in the mailbox which is attached to the church at the side entrance. You can also pay online through PayPal on our website. Go to <http://www.fccwakefieldnh.org> and look for the "Donate Button" on our homepage (on drop down menu - choose "Soup".) Deadline to order is February 5.

Consider donating 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!

Soup choices – You can find a complete list of soup ingredients listed elsewhere in this issue! Or go to: <https://www.fccwakefieldnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Soup-List-2024.pdf>

15 Bean with Kielbasa, Beef Stew Soup, Butternut Squash Apple Soup (Vegetarian), Carrot Ginger Soup (Vegetarian), Chicken Noodle Soup, Chicken Pot Pie Soup, Chili – Sweet Potato Turkey, Chili—(Traditional), Chili—(Vegetarian), Chowder—Clam, Chowder—Corn, Lobster Bisque, Pea Soup with Ham, Pea Soup (Vegetarian), Potato Cheddar Soup with Ham, Sausage Tortellini Soup, Stuffed Pepper Soup, Tomato Herb Soup—(Vegetarian), Tuscan Bean and Sausage Soup

## Faith Formation - A New Lenten Study



*"The time has come: God's call to action – to protect and preserve a healthy climate for all – is ringing like church bell."*

Please consider joining us for our Lenten study beginning Tuesday, February 20th. All classes will be hybrid and will meet at 12:00 in Fellowship Hall and on zoom (with the option of going totally

Zoom for any classes where weather might pose a problem)

This Lenten season, we will be using the SALT Lenten Study entitled "Climate + Faith: How We Can Help Meet the Greatest Challenge in Human History" A brief description: *"Indeed, in virtually every transformative movement – from abolitionism to women's suffrage to child labor protections – people of faith have been at the center of the action. To love the world, and put our love into practice. To care for creation, and pass it on to the next generation better than we found it."*

*This seven-week, 40-day devotional takes a "love-and-act" approach (rather than "doom-and-gloom"), building on our love for our neighbors, near and far, and our love for God, Maker of heaven and earth."*

The class materials will be supplied to participants so please get in touch with Julie Kessler ([julielouisekessler@gmail.com](mailto:julielouisekessler@gmail.com) or 603-871-8066) if you're interested in attending.

Also: I've ordered 15 copies of the UCC Still Speaking Lenten Devotional: Bend. The cost is \$5 a copy - please let me know if you're interested in obtaining one. As with past Advent and Lenten classes, we will end each class in Lent with a brief discussion of any UCC daily devotions that especially "spoke" to you.



## One Great Hour of Sharing

One of our annual 5 for 5 UCC offerings, One Great Hour of Sharing, will be taking place soon. This year's theme is Share the Light.

Traditionally, we have used the season of Lent to reflect on the blessings and bounty in our lives and how we can share what we have with people across the United States and around the globe. We have an opportunity to make a difference when disasters strike, when violence disrupts lives and in situations of extreme poverty. Members of FCCW have a strong history of generosity and a willingness to "share the light" and the love with others in our community and beyond.

You will be hearing more in the weeks to come. This very special offering will be collected on March 10th.

*Connie Littlefield & Ann Bilodeau*

## Notes from the Treasurer

We are a generous church! To back up that statement, this is what YOU donated over the last 12 months of 2023: Strengthen the Church \$145.00; Neighbors in Need \$466.00; The Christmas Fund \$777.11; and One Great Hour of Sharing \$1,020.00. These four collections, totaling \$2408.11, go to the NH Conference of UCC.

Additionally, you donated \$575.00 to Heifer International. AND, on top of all that, YOU donated a staggering \$21,328.06 to our Zimbabwe friends and another \$4720 to the Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund of which \$4755 has been donated to people in need.

Let's not forget the in-kind donations of baked goods, soup, yard sale items, and the incredible man-hours it takes to pull off the many fundraisers we have throughout the year. We are so very fortunate to have so many people volunteer their time for building upkeep, maintenance, and attending meetings necessary to keep the church running smoothly.

Financially, we dipped into the Parsonage Fund for the first time in about 5 years, transferring \$10,000 to the General Fund for expenses. This was expected, as our approved budget has a deficit of \$54,514.

*Nancy Dee, Treasurer*

**INCLEMENT**  
*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>

## Maybe I Can Too...

27 After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax-collection station, and he said to him, "Follow me." 28 And he got up, left everything, and followed him. (Luke 5: 27-28 NRSVUE)

There once was a television show named *Joan of Arcadia* that I looked forward to watching every week. The premise of the show was that a teenage girl made a deal with God that if her brother did not die after his horrific automobile accident, she would do whatever God asked of her. In each episode of the series, God's request was delivered to Joan by ordinary people whom she met during her daily routines. The requests seemed small, sometimes mundane, but the outcome of her fulfilling her obligation without hesitation sometimes had monumental effects with everlasting impact on many lives. I loved these fictional stories. Joan was only a teenager and she had an enviable trust in God and the messages randomly delivered to her. I wonder, could I ever be like her?

I believe there is documented evidence that many of the events that occurred in the narratives of the Bible happened, especially about Jesus' life and Ministry. But perspective, translation, and ancient world environs may have skewed the historical details. But the importance of these events remains the same, especially the way they influence how I should strive to live in this world.

But I wonder, do I? Could I TRUST as Joan of Arcadia did? She trusted that God would answer her prayer. She trusted all the friendly, strange, different people who brought her God's requests. Could I? Would I respond to the words "follow me" as Levi did? Maybe to be kind, respectful, and helpful to others; to show mercy and grace to those who need it; to love God unconditionally, and to love my neighbor are what it means to follow Jesus, to truly 'follow in his footsteps'. Maybe I can....

Because I do trust that God has been walking beside me, prodding me, saving me, teaching me, and protecting me all of my life, when I hear or read the words that Jesus said to his disciples, 'Come, follow me', maybe I can too. Or at the very least, I can try.

*Linda Messer*

## Leaning into and Leading with Love in Lent

Lent starts this year on February 14<sup>th</sup>, a journey that will lead us into Holy Week and Easter. Throughout Lent, we will be offering a variety of experiences that will hopefully engage your senses in multiple ways as we move deeper into our faith together.

Each Monday, Pastor Larry will offer a virtual reflection on our Facebook page at 4:00 p.m.

Each Wednesday, we will offer a different type of worship and prayer experience, with the schedule as follows:

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 p.m. Soup and Bread gathering to celebrate Valentine's Day and the power of Love in our lives. Heart stones and heart words will be shared.

February 14, 7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day service, 7:00p.m., including the imposition of ashes.

February 14, 12:00 noon-4:00 p.m. Walk in and drive through Ashes offered!

February 21, 5:00 p.m. Drum Circle, Drumming for the Journey.

February 28, 5:00 p.m. A service of Healing, with prayer, reading, reflection and a time to share.

March 6, 5:00 p.m., Contemplative Prayer service, and a focus on prayers for Peace. A quiet simple service sharing prayers and witnessing to peace in our world.

March 13, 5:00 p.m. Drum Circle, drumming with Love.

March 20, 5:00 p.m. Hymns to the Silence; a prayer service with Psalms, simple songs and elements of Taize.

March 28, 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday service

March 29, Good Friday service, 12:00 noon

March 31, 10:00 a.m. Easter Sunday Celebration

Julie Kessler will be leading a Faith Formation group using the Climate and Faith program of the SALT project., Tuesday at 12:00 noon in person and via Zoom.

We hope to see you as we move intentionally through this Lenten Season!

*Pastor Larry*

## Parish Helpers

Coming up at our regular scheduled meeting this month, we will welcome Lauren Varney of Stepping Stone Wellness who will give a presentation entitled "How to Love Your Brain". This promises to be a very interesting and important topic for us! Our meeting is on Thursday, February 8, at 1 p.m. All women from the church and the community are welcome! Bring a friend!

*Carol Jeffery*

# FEBRUARY 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Please join us each Sunday for Coffee Hour following the Worship Service.				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Al- Anon Family Group 7 p.m.	<b>3</b> Grief Support Group 11 a.m.
<b>4</b> <b>5th Sunday after Epiphany</b>  Worship and Communion— 10 a.m.  Coffee Hour	<b>5</b> Caregiver's Support Group 9:30—10:30 a.m.  Choir 5:30  RSVP for Potluck Supper	<b>6</b> Faith Formation 12 Noon  POTLUCK SUPPER 5:30 P.M.	<b>7</b> Scrabble Group 1—3 p.m.  Diaconate Meeting 5 p.m.	<b>8</b> Parish Helpers Meeting  1 p.m.	<b>9</b> Al- Anon Family Group 7 p.m.	<b>10</b> Grief Support Group 11 a.m.
<b>11</b> <b>1st Sunday of Lent</b> <b>TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY</b> Worship - 10 a.m.  Coffee Hour	<b>12</b> Virtual Reflection on Facebook Live 4 p.m.  Choir 5:30	<b>13</b> Faith Formation 12 Noon  Ukulele Club 6—7:30 p.m.	<b>14</b> <b>ASH WEDNESDAY VALENTINE'S DAY</b> Ashes—12 to4 p.m.  Soup and Bread Supper 5 p.m.  Ash Wednesday Service— 7 p.m.	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Al- Anon Family Group 7 p.m.	<b>17</b> Grief Support Group 11 a.m.
<b>18</b> <b>2nd Sunday of Lent</b> Worship  Coffee Hour  Leadership Council	<b>19</b> <b>PRESIDENTS' DAY</b>  Caregiver's Support Group 9:30—10:30 a.m.  Virtual Reflection on Facebook Live 4 p.m.	<b>20</b> Prayer Shawl Ministry—10 a.m.  Faith Formation 12 Noon	<b>21</b> Lenten Drum Circle 5 p.m. Fellowship Hall	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Al- Anon Family Group 7 p.m.	<b>24</b> Grief Support Group 11 a.m.
<b>25</b> <b>3rd Sunday of Lent</b> Worship  Coffee Hour	<b>26</b> Virtual Reflection on Facebook Live 4 p.m.  Choir 5:30	<b>27</b> Faith Formation 12 Noon  Ukulele Club 6—7:30 p.m.	<b>28</b> Service of Healing 5 p.m.	<b>29</b>		



## Souper Bowl Soup Menu

Soup	Ingredients
15 Bean Soup w/Kielbasa	Onion, tomatoes, green chilis, beans, ham flavoring, kielbasa, salt
Beef Stew Soup	Stew beef, beef broth, carrots, parsnips, onions, potatoes, green beans, flour, pepper, parsley
Butternut Squash Apple Soup, <b>Vegetarian</b>	Butternut squash, onions, apple, low sodium vegetable broth, olive oil, rosemary, sage, pepper, coconut milk
<u>Carrot Ginger Soup</u> , <b>Vegetarian</b>	Carrots, onions, low sodium vegetable broth, butter, fresh grated ginger
Chicken Noodle Soup	Chicken broth, chicken breast, carrots, celery, onion, egg noodles, butter, salt, pepper, ginger, garlic
Chicken Pot Pie Soup	potato, carrot, celery, onion, butter, peas, corn, chicken, chicken broth, cheddar cheese, flour, Worcestershire sauce, salt, pepper, pie crust
Chili, Sweet Potato Turkey	Turkey, sweet potato, onion, tomatoes, corn, black beans, olive oil, chili powder, cumin, paprika, salt, pepper, cinnamon, chicken broth
Chili, Traditional	Ground beef, ground turkey, onions, green pepper, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, chili powder, salt, red pepper, paprika and kidney beans
Chili, <b>Vegetarian</b>	Tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, beans (kidney, black, pinto, garbanzo), corn, bell peppers, jalapenos, chili powder, cayenne pepper, crushed red pepper, black pepper, lime, garlic, onion powder, oregano
Chowder, Clam	Potatoes, bacon, clams and clam juice, onions, chicken broth, evaporated milk, salt, pepper, thyme, butter
Chowder, Corn	Corn, bacon, potatoes, onion, water, half & half, salt, pepper
Lobster Bisque (\$8)	Lobster, lobster stock, half & half, butter, flour, cooking sherry, paprika
Pea Soup w/ Ham	Peas, ham, potato, carrot, onion, vegetable broth, seasoning
Pea Soup, <b>Vegetarian</b>	Peas, potato, carrot, onion, vegetable broth, seasoning
Potato Cheddar Soup w/ Ham	Potatoes, carrots, onion, chicken broth, half & half, shredded cheddar cheese, black pepper blend, ham
Sausage Tortellini	Italian sausage, onion, carrots, celery, garlic, canned tomatoes, chicken broth, tortellini, heavy cream, baby spinach
Stuffed Pepper Soup	Ground beef, green and red bell peppers, onion, garlic, tomatoes, chicken broth, marjoram, rice, salt and pepper.
Tomato Herb Soup, <b>Vegetarian</b>	Tomatoes, butter, flour, V-8 Juice, sugar basil rosemary, salt
Tuscan Bean & Sausage	Sweet Italian sausage, onion, yellow summer squash, garlic, chicken broth, cannellini beans, diced canned tomatoes, red wine, Italian seasoning, fresh baby spinach, pasta

## News of Zimbabwe

Our sister church at Rufumiso has a new pastor. Rev. Farai Mtisi began his ministry on January 1st. He sent the message below after learning of a recent generous donation for the continued building of the parsonage. The pastor's current "accommodation" is two utility rooms at the back of the church. Rev. Mtisi's wife and children have yet to join him because of the housing situation.

"Thanks for your love and generosity. This gesture came to us at a time when we were wondering how we would raise funds for window panes so that at least the plastered rooms can be inhabitable. We will forever be grateful and pray that God blesses you, your friends, and the Wakefield Church. I started well and am coping with the hot temperatures at Rufumiso UCCZ. Thank you for the welcome and prayerful wishes. Kindly pass my fraternal greetings to Rev. Larry Brickner Wood and to the Wakefield Church. Stay blessed." I hope to be able to share a photo soon of Rev. Mtisi and his family.

Last month I told you about the wonderful donation by the Men's Fellowship which provided new uniforms and school supplies for the children at Daisy Dube and I promised you photos. The primary school children have never been able to have the all important track suits shown in the second photo before now! (Continued)



Additionally, due to the generosity of donations for the children's food program, Vranthe Mahlupeko, our PKZ Director, is in the process of acquiring goats. These goats will be both income generating and a significant source of protein for them.

More good news! PKZ finished building a home for a family in which the father is deaf and mute. Shepherd, his wife, and six children had a deteriorating one room accommodation without any proper windows or a floor. The size of the home increased three fold and now has a cement floor, multiple exterior doors, large windows, and it is painted! Shepherd now works as a laborer for Maxwell Makuyana, the builder Vranthe hired for the job. That's empowerment! Celia Randall donated her husband's masonry tools via the shipping container and they are being used by Maxwell and his crew. Maxwell is also a member of Rufumiso UCCZ. Isn't this ripple effect amazing? Since I am clearly over my photo allowance, look for photos to be included on the church website.

Our FOOT and PKZ students have started the first term of new year well and are equipped with uniforms and school supplies. Four are attending a post secondary program: Sydney Sithole is working on his Master's of Education degree at Midlands University, Lucia Sibiya and Lerato Mapakame are taking cosmetology courses at Tongongara Vocational School and Darlington Marashe is attending Mutare Polytechnic Vocational School.

Deep love and appreciation to all of you who make these endeavors a reality!

*Connie Littlefield*

## Returning Choir Members

With dwindling numbers in our vocal choir, it is with great joy that we have back with us two sweet sopranos. Alisa Eaton and Jillian Currier have been members of the church since their Confirmations many years ago. Both are graduates of Spaulding High School, and both have been active performers in Scamp. Each one has served in the past as choir members and now that time allows, they have returned to grace us with their outstanding vocal abilities. You may not see them every Sunday, as we all have personal schedules that prevent us from regular attendance, but following any given service take the time to visit with them and welcome them back.

*Donna V Ackerman, The Arts*

FCCW'S Music Camp for our kids from the area will be happening again this summer. We will be having a organization meeting this February for interested volunteers. It is a lot of work but truly satisfying. If you have helped in years past, don't worry we will be in touch. More information will be forthcoming but you can contact us directly. Thank you,

*Connie Littlefield and Buddy Dee, Co Chairs*

## Lessons From Nature

I'm sitting at my computer watching the birds outside my large bay window. There are chick-a-dees, gold finches, nut hatches, woodpeckers, and juncos. They move between the feeders and the droppings on the snow-covered ground. Occasionally they chase each other away from the seed that they feel is strictly theirs. But for the most part they accept each other as neighbors vying for the same life sustaining nourishment. A couple of grey squirrels have joined the fray as have a few "bully" blue jays. I overheard people asking, "where are the birds"? Between snowfall and melting these past few weeks, the birds were able to find food in the woods and not the feeders.

We could learn a lot from watching nature. The flora and fauna that God has created are interwoven in their existence. Of course, there is the "food chain" that results in life-threatening competition, but for the most part within a species they seem to get along. So why can't humans? As I mentioned in church the other Sunday, ignorance breeds fear, which breeds hate, which breeds violence and war. Differences are normal, and in some cases are healthy. All decisions or choices are based on the simple formula of "push / pull". Something is pushing us away from a belief, environment, or political platform, while pulling us toward another. We must live with our choices and their rewards or consequences. I only ask that we make our choices with an informed, loving heart that results in the betterment for all and not a select few. We as a species need to pause and listen to the concerns of others. 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:7 says, "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind.*" It is Jesus's message that we love one another, as stated in Matthew 22: 27-39. The first and great commandment is to love God, and second to love our neighbor as ourselves. In today's divisional society that second part can be difficult to accomplish. But remember 1 Corinthians 13 says, "*Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs.*"

Looking again out the bay window, the precipitation moves from rain, to sleet, to snow, and back to rain. The birds are still feeding, but not in such numbers as earlier. The squirrels have chased each other away, and the jays have traveled to a different property and feeders. The snow and ice fall from the rooftop with an almost rhythmic thump upon the deck. Life cycles continue and interact. We awake each day with the challenge to love God and neighbor. As we engage with our fellow humans, let's take a pause to listen without fear.

*Donna V Ackerman*

## Help and Contributions Needed

Let's all chip in and help our Hospitality Team to continue to provide and serve refreshments each Sunday. Sign up to help clean up! Your food donations are always appreciated! Baked goods, fruit, cheese and crackers! Or use your imagination! It's all good! Thank you.

## Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day Service

Join us at 7:00 p.m. on February 14 for a special Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day service. We will gather in the sanctuary for a simple service of prayer, music, reflection and imposition of ashes. All are welcome!

Also on February 14<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Larry will be at the church from 12:00 noon until 4:00 p.m., for anyone who wants to swing by and receive ashes, chocolate and a heart stone. At 5:00 p.m., Pastor welcomes you to a simple Valentine's Day meal of soup, bread and chocolate and conversation and community. All are welcome!

## Schedule of events and services in February

- February 4<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. Communion Sunday; Strength for the Journey. Isaiah 40: 21-31, Psalm 147, Mark 1:29-39
- February 11, 10:00 a.m. Transfiguration Sunday; Racial Justice Sunday; Compassionate Community; Psalm 50; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9
- February 14, 12-4 p.m. Stop in/Drive through ashes
- February 14, 5:00 p.m. Valentine's Day soup and bread supper
- February 14, 2024, Ash Wednesday Service, 7:00 p.m.
- February 21, Lenten Drum Circle, 5:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
- February 18, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Lent 1: Genesis 9:8-17, Psalm 25, Mark 1:9-15
- February 25, 2024, 10:00 a.m.. Lent 2: Psalm 22, Romans 4:13-25, Mark 9: 2-9
- February 28, 2024, Healing Service, 5:00 p.m.
- Weekly virtual reflections by Pastor Larry on Facebook, Mondays at 4:00 p.m.

## Lenten Journey Drum Circle: Drumming from the Heart

Join us on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. for our next drum circle. We will focus on rhythmic drumming and finding connections to our hearts and the love that flows through and around us. All are welcome to join us in Fellowship Hall. We have plenty of instruments to share or bring your own!



# Celebrations!

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

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

## FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 Joe & Jan Brejwo
- 14 Lance & Marilou MacLean

## FDDF Diaconate Discretionary Fund



The Diaconate is very grateful for the generous support of friends, our church family, and the Parish Helpers this year. The FDDF is a local mission that lovingly provides temporary emergency and

financial assistance to those who may need it.

Thus far, we have received donations this fiscal year (July '23 to Jan '24) in the amount of \$3,445 and have distributed \$2,339 in assistance towards 2 mortgage payments, a car repair, and groceries. As of Jan. 31, 2024, the current balance of the Fund is \$7,766.

The Discretionary Fund is not included in the church budget and is only made possible by your kind, generous donations!

On behalf of the Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund, God Bless.

*Gail Feddern for the Diaconate*

## 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:

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

We were saddened by the passing of Pat Anderson's husband, Bill, on June 25, 2023. Pat wishes to thank you all for your kind expressions of sympathy over the past several months. Let's keep Pat and her family in our prayers as they move through the grieving process in the weeks and months to come.



## Safe Church

Safe Church is researching a new CPR course to offer at Church in March or April. There is a modest fee and some financial aid is available. If you or friends might have an interest, please email Buddy Dee at [buddy.dee1023@gmail.com](mailto:buddy.dee1023@gmail.com).

## Medical Equipment Resource

If you know of someone who would be interested in a chair stair lift, please let Carol Lundgren know. From time to time, Carol has other equipment like: shower benches, walkers, wheel chairs, commodes, toilet risers, etc.. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you or someone has a need: [carollundgren94@gmail.com](mailto:carollundgren94@gmail.com).

*Carol Lundgren*

## **Congregational Synergy Potluck Supper & Safe Church Program**

**Tuesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at  
5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall**  
(snow date is Thursday 2/8)

Please bring a main dish to share!

Beverages, Rolls/Butter & Desserts  
provided by your Safe Church Team!

- ❖ Social time - 5:30-6:00 pm
- ❖ Dinner - 6:00 pm
- ❖ Dessert & Program 6:30-7:15 pm



**RSVP BY Feb. 5—522-3189**



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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