

# 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 EMERIT  
JUNE 2025

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## The Pastor's Page

### A Month of Spirits

Rev. Larry Brickner-Wood

June is a dynamic month, full of anticipation and hope, endings and beginnings. It is a month where summer officially begins with the vernal equinox, schools are out for the summer, graduations galore, camps opened up, expeditions begin and are planned, vacation and travel adventures feed our souls, and those long-delayed flowers and blooms burst even more fully into view.

June is also the month that we celebrate Pentecost this year. Pentecost is the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday and 50<sup>th</sup> day after Easter (June 8<sup>th</sup> this year) and is the English for the Greek word *pentekoste*. It is also a reference to the Jewish festival of Shavuot, which is what the apostles in Jerusalem were celebrating in the Book of Acts. Pentecost is described in the book of Acts 2:1-3

*2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. (NRSVUE)*

Pentecost is the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in Jerusalem. It is essentially one of the birth dates of the Christian church, as from there the apostles and disciples went to share the good news of Jesus to lands beyond the territory they knew. It is a festive day in the Christian tradition and is often symbolized by wearing red. Be sure to put on your favorite red clothing to celebrate our Pentecost Sunday on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

The four symbols of Pentecost are: Fire, wind, a dove and Ruah, (the Breath of God.) These represent the Holy Spirit and the sharing of the Good News with the world. It is a wonderful time to celebrate, give thanks, share blessings and find and/or feel the Spirit in our own lives. We will do that on June 8<sup>th</sup>, which will also be our stewardship Sunday.

Sunday, June 29<sup>th</sup> will be my last service with you as your Intentional Interim Minister. I speak more about this in my annual report, but I wanted to say here what a joy, blessing and honor it has been to serve in ministry with FCCW. FCCW is a vibrant, healthy, ethical, compassionate and grace and spirit filled community, and it has been a wonderful place to serve before I retire on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to serve and shine with you all. I will miss you. Peace be with you!

## Soft Goods and More

It's that time of year again where we'll be collecting bagged soft goods such as clothes, towels, sheets, shoes, purses, etc. and boxed books, DVDs, and CDs.

**Help is needed to collect dropped off bags and boxes** for the next two Saturdays and Sundays. And **drivers to deliver** to Newington on June 9th for 11:00 am drop off! If you are able to help, please contact Julie K. at (603-871-8066) or [julielouisekessler@gmail.com](mailto:julielouisekessler@gmail.com)!

### Scheduled drop off times:

Saturday, May 31—10 a.m. - 12 noon

Sunday June 1—11a.m. - 12 noon

Saturday, June 7— 10 a.m. - 12 noon

Sunday June 8—11a.m. - 12 noon

or contact Julie Kessler to make other arrangements ([julielouisekessler@gmail.com](mailto:julielouisekessler@gmail.com) or 603-871-8066)

## Update On A HAND UP!

Last month "A Hand Up" introduced readers to the story of two people who had become homeless ... right here in our Town. Thanks to individuals, civic organizations and churches responding to their needs, their story is much better today! Soon, we will be seeking affordable housing, but for now, they are being housed by local friends who have hearts for helping. Please continue to pray for those who find themselves in such dire circumstances and if you want to help, please call Carol Lundgren - 978 807-4041. It does, indeed, take a Village!

*Carol Lundgren*

## What If God Wrote Your Bucket List

By J. Payleitner; Journey-Growth (J-G) in our Church Library.

Bucket lists can get pretty crazy! But what if God wanted you to think even further outside the box? To pattern your life after the one who said some pretty crazy things himself: "Love your enemies." "Store up treasures in heaven." "Seek first his kingdom and righteousness."

If you checked every item off your bucket list, would your life be complete? In these pages you'll find 52 items to help you revamp your must-do list. . .

As you check off God's bucket list, you may find yourself doing things you never thought possible. Jay Payleitner helps you get your priorities straight with the most important relationship in your life—you and God. Source: Amazon

*Linda Petkunas, Church Librarian*

## Hazel MacBrien NS News

The first week of May we worked on letter Ff and our theme was flowers and frogs. The sensory table had frogs, foam lilly pads, bug mini erasers and tree cookies. We painted a caterpillar in the 3's class and a butterfly in the 4's class for our school family tree. The morning 3's did a roll a flower activity, played musical color flowers and matched flower shapes. They made fingerprint lovebugs for their moms to celebrate Mother's Day. The afternoon 4's used a magnet wand to pick up a paper clipped seed with a letter on it and made the letter sound, did a count how many flowers and glued the correct number paper, made math equations by placing beads on a flower stem and played musical number flowers. They made a handprint flower for their moms for Mother's Day.

For the second week in May we introduced letter Ww, and our theme was watermelon. Our sensory table had red water beads, black bean "seeds", slotted spoons and cups. The three-year-olds worked on scissor skills by cutting strips of red, green and black paper to then glue onto a watermelon slice for our bulletin board, they rolled a die and then fed a watermelon that many seeds and explored with pink shaving cream and black seeds. The four-year-olds did a roll and cover number activity, a watermelon dot to dot, a color by number paper, fed the watermelon letters, worked on syllable claps and made watermelon number puzzles. The 4's made a watermelon for our bulletin board by cutting pieces of paper and gluing them onto a watermelon shape .

On the third week of May we worked on letter Ii and our theme was insects and ice cream (even though the weather was cold and dreary). Both classes made ice cream art using shaving cream and glue and then they chose the color ice cream scoops they wanted and added "sprinkles" gems and a pom pom cherry. We have these hanging on the wall in the classroom. The sensory table had sand, insects, cups and spoons. The morning threes class matched ice cream colors and then crawled through our tunnel and walked on our liquid stepping stone squares, free painted with watercolors and explored with playdough and insects. The afternoon fours class did a rhyming cut and paste paper, a rhyming ice cream scoop activity, they did a smallest to largest ice cream cutting paper, explored with insects in green "grass" shaving cream and worked on beginning sounds ice cream cone words.

During the last week of May we introduced letter Jj and our theme was jellyfish. The sensory table had water and different fish to explore with in it. The 3's painted a fish and the 4's made jellyfish from a paper bag for our bulletin board. The 3s used parquetry blocks to create different sea creatures, moved around the room like ocean animals and did a mommy/baby sea animal sort. The 4s did not have school on Monday as we celebrated Memorial Day. When they came back to school, we did a follow-directions under the sea cut and paste paper, ocean yoga poses, played ocean bingo and did a jellyfish directive drawing. Both classes visited Foxx Run Farm in Hiram, Me, where we did some farm chores, fed many different animals and had an egg spoon race and feed bag race.

## News from Zimbabwe

Our visitors arrived back to Zimbabwe safely just in time for the opening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> term for schools. Friends, school fees have risen dramatically. It seems quaint to remember fees used to be \$40-\$75 per term as \$75-\$175 per term is now the norm depending on location and grade level. Our old friend Joseph Sibiya has not been well due to significant medical issues. Vranter is now coordinating all of the sponsored children, getting to know each of the new students, guardians, and the headmasters at all of the schools. Some students have "shifted" to economize on fees so he is tracking down the children new to him and sending me photos bit by bit as he can. Vranter is already taking great pleasure in meeting the students formerly under Joseph's care and setting up guidelines and communication with students, guardians, teachers and headmasters.



Tinotenda is very proud in her uniform

One of our newest students is Tinotenda Rutendo Mwashayani (Tinotenda means Thank you and Rutendo means Faith). Tinotenda was to be in Form 1 or Grade 8 but she wasn't able to go to school in January for Term 1 because her mom just didn't have the money. Her mom sells small items as a street vendor and she asked Vranter for help earlier in the year but at that time PKZ just didn't have the re-

sources to assist after paying the registration fees for so many of our students' O level exams. When he returned in May Vranter knew he wanted to help Tinotenda with a bit of extra money which was available.

To add to this story, Tinotenda, her mom and her sibling sleep on the street in front of a grocery store each evening. It's hard to imagine a life where you are selling during the day and sleeping with your kids under a blanket out in the open at night. Yet mom has a smile on her face and is extremely grateful that unknown people are providing assistance for Tinotenda so she may attend school.



Tinotenda, mom and baby with smiles on their cardboard mats for the night

That's the power of sponsorship. Sponsors change lives!

*Connie Littlefield*

## Parish Helpers Quilt Raffle



The Parish Helpers are continuing their 100+ year tradition of quilt making. This year's quilt is named "Summer on the Pond" and is a generous queen size. Tickets are available now at \$5 each or 3 for \$10. The drawing will take place in November at the conclusion of the Harvest Fair.

## Finance Forms

For those of you who donate "things" to the church, please remember that we have several forms that may be of interest to you, should you want to declare the monetary value of those items on your taxes.

**In-Kind Form:** Often church folk will make a purchase for the church. Anything from toilet paper to ukeleles to class materials to ... the list is endless! If you've made a purchase, you can fill in the In-Kind Form; we will then enter that information in our database and when it comes time to run the year end donation report, those purchases will be added to your total donation amount. Note that this also aids us in tracking purchases that we'd have to account for in our budget if not for your generous donation!

**Receipt of Charitable Donation Form:** There are times when someone makes a donation of one or more items to be used for, say, Cool Stuff Boutique at the Yard Sale or an item to be sold online -proceeds to go to the church or perhaps items for our SAVERS dropoff. These items are not for the church to assign a value BUT we can acknowledge receipt and it's then up to the donor to assign the value. This is somewhat like how Goodwill acknowledges donations. Note that this form may also be used for donations to the Treasure Shop.

Both these forms will be available in Fellowship Hall - checkout the Finance segment of the Ministries bulletin board.

*Julie Kessler, Asst. Treasurer*

## A Note from Rev. Larry Brickner-Wood, Interim Minister

Sunday, June 29<sup>th</sup> will be my last worship service, as I am retiring on June 30, 2025. I wanted to take this time to express my gratitude and appreciation to FCCW and its community for all that you have shown me in my 2 & ½ years here. It has been a privilege to work together and accompany you all on our individual paths.

I am excited for the future for FCCW. The Search and Call team did a tremendous job in recommending the call of Rev. James Mills to be your settled Pastor. Rev. Mills was called by the FCCW community on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Hallelujah! He will serve you well and I know you will extend to him the same gracious welcome that you extended to me. The future looks bright!

You all have been gracious and welcoming to me. Your loving kindness shines in your ministry, and you extended that to me. Your generosity, care, compassion and ability to get it done make so many things possible. Your willingness to open your hearts and follow the Holy Spirit is remarkable, and I have learned much from you. I know you will continue to serve the church, the community and the world with the grace of God's Love.

This is my last position in my full-time work career of 48 years, and it has been a magnificent blessing to end here. You have all made my job easy, and I thank you for that. I will miss you all dearly. After June 30<sup>th</sup>, I will no longer be your pastor, but I will always be your friend. May God's peace, Christ's light and the movement of the Holy Spirit always be with you.

## The Treasure Shop is Open!

The Treasure Shop opened for the season with a banner day on Saturday, May 24. The shop will be open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9 to noon through sometime in October.

Our inventory is always changing and we've been getting some real nice items to sell. Your donations are welcome and can be brought to the shop during open hours or contact Rachel White, Carol Doughty, or Ginny Schweitzer.

**Parish Helpers** take notice! We need everyone's help this season. Be sure to stop by and sign up to work in the shop or contact one of the ladies mentioned above. It will take all of us to make it another successful season and allow us to continue our commitment to charitable giving.

## Parish Helpers

Coming up at our regular scheduled meeting this month, we welcome our friend Mary Bernier as our guest speaker. Mary will be discussing her book "Along Comes Mary". A copy of her book is in our church library.

*"In this book, Mary relives phases of her life, from childhood through early retirement, as her own spiritual journey unfolds along a winding river. Her story guides us through smooth and rough passages that include glimpses into her religious background, her spirituality, touches with the paranormal and travel to wondrous places. Her openness invites you to discover ways to increase your presence and gratitude as you live into your spirituality. Source: Amazon"*

Our meeting is on Thursday, June 12 at 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

Carol Jeffery

## Adult Faith Formation



Beginning Tuesday, June 3rd, we will start a new class based on the poetry of Mary Oliver using the SALT devotional entitled: **Summer Days**. This class will consist of four sessions taking us through June. Description follows:

*... summertime taps into the deep, ancient practice of rest and restoration, echoing the joyful, sacred rhythms of sabbath.*

*Mary Oliver's poetry can help us connect with this dimension of the season, savoring its delights, valuing its treasures, and reveling in what she calls summer's "luminous sprawl of gifts." Think of that sprawl as a sabbath for the year as a whole: not the resurrections of spring or the harvests of autumn, but the joyful, restful moments in between. Moments we all are made for.*

*At each of the four steps, you'll find a gentle rhythm to guide you: the lighting of a candle, a passage from Scripture to pair with poems in Oliver's Devotions, a short prayer, and a song or two. Each step also includes a bouquet of "daily practices" to try, activities to help deepen your experience of the poems, the biblical passages, and the wider world they call us to love.*

You will be supplied with a **Summer Days** booklet and copies of the poems being used. Just let Julie Kessler know if you're interested in participating - or if you want copies even if you can't join us. (603-871-8066 or [julielouisekessler@gmail.com](mailto:julielouisekessler@gmail.com))

Julie Kessler

# Celebrations!

## JUNE BIRTHDAYS

1 Molly Rose Szirbik	16 Cathy Koukal
4 Nicholas Legere	16 Julie Leyare
6 Julie Kessler	17 Janet Carr
6 Ron Kratt	20 Cameron Currier
9 Kevin Connell	21 Connie Littlefield
9 Carol Lundgren	21 Dorothy Smith
11 Steve Michalsky	22 Jean Ball
14 Erin Perkins	25 Kaylee Fogg
15 Gina Golden	25 Ron White
15 Adam Koukal	30 Seth Fogg
16 Frank Frazier	

## JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

5	Ryan & Mjo McCarthy
15	Phil & Connie Twombly
20	George & Donna Ackerman
21	Wayne & Lisa Robinson
26	Sid & Susan Girardin
26	Ken & Carol Jeffery
28	John & Sarah Duplinsky
29	David & Jan Fairchild

## Annual Meeting, Sunday June 22nd

Our Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> following our worship service. It will take a few minutes to get organized after the close of worship, but we'll open the meeting as quickly as we can.

It's important for as many as possible to attend to vote (yes, vote) on the budget, as well as other items of business that may arise. Zoomers, please stay on-line and you'll be able to participate as well. See you then.

*Margie Galabrun and Judy Trepal*  
Co-moderators

## FELLOWSHIP OF CONCERN

We believe that prayer is powerful! During this time of transition in our church, let us pray for the Diaconate, the Officers, and Leadership Council for their thoughtful guidance in moving 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:



Rev. Mary and family; Carol J family—  
Maryann and Chrissy; Rev (Rev. James Mills); Anne P & Family; The Fogg Family;; Dave & Charlotte L; Gerald B; Lois B; Sara E; Nancy B; Richard W; Bob L; Cindy E; Our sister church in Zimbabwe, Rufumiso UCCZ

**The 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.

## Pentecost and Stewardship Service

Please join us for our Stewardship Sunday and Pentecost Celebration on June 8, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. Red is the color of Pentecost, so if you have red clothing be sure to wear it that Sunday. We look forward to celebrating with you!



## Let's Celebrate Larry!

After the worship service on June 29<sup>th</sup>, we will thank the Rev. Larry Brickner-Wood for his exemplary service and commitment to our church as Interim Minister for nearly 3 years. Please plan on attending his last worship service with us on June 29<sup>th</sup> and stay for the celebration and reception to follow.

## Stewardship Season 2025

Greetings in the name of the Lord! We welcome you all to our season of Stewardship planning! This includes our annual Pledge Campaign to assist with financial planning for our upcoming fiscal year. Your Pledge is very important to FCCW and will enable us to carry on with our missions and all we do!

Knowing what our budgets are in our personal lives is extremely helpful in our spending process. The same can be said for our church's finance team. Knowledge is a powerful tool to help us move forward! There are several ways to submit your financial pledge: The easiest option for you may be to simply email your pledge amount to [fccwassistanttreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:fccwassistanttreasurer@gmail.com) with 'Pledge' in the subject line. Or, if you prefer, pledge cards are available at the church or via email for you to place in the Sunday offering plate or mail via USPS. We welcome your pledged monetary commitment as early as today! And we will prayerfully dedicate them on **June 8, Dedication Sunday**. We thank you for your generous and faithful Stewardship!

### **Welcoming our Faith-Filled Future: Loving, Giving & Growing Together**

As FCCW welcomes a new pastor and looks to a vibrant future, we are called to love, give, and grow together; deepening our faith, serving our community, and continuing to be a place where love and hope abides.

Please help to ensure that our story continues, and we will be here to carry out God's will in the years and decades to come, in our community and beyond. Your generous gifts of time, talent & treasure are accepted with open hearts.

### **We are Loving.**

Our beloved Rev. Larry Brickner-Wood has developed and nurtured our faith and encouraged us to be a vibrant and purpose-filled community of God. We are now prepared—ready for the arrival of our new Pastor! We are strengthened; we welcome our new pastor and will continue to commit to deeper relationships with God and with one another.

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another."* – John 13:34-35

*"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."* – 1 John 3:1, 3:18

### **We are Giving.**

As Stewards of FCCW, we are called to look after our church and all who enter its doors. As generations before us provided the steppingstones of Faith that are relevant today, we will continue to do so for those who follow us. May we joyously and generously invest in the future of our church through our financial gifts (pledging) as well as our time and our many talents.

Our gifts are reflected in many ways: through the many missions that we promote within our church and community and beyond our borders; by donating to the Endowment Fund; by remembering the Church in your Trust or Will; and by supporting the church financially with your annual giving pledge.

*"Each of you should decide in your heart how much to give, and don't give reluctantly or because you feel pressured. God loves a cheerful giver."* - 2 Corinthians 9:7

### **We will Grow Stronger Together.**

We remain committed to FCCW's future, rooted in love, generosity, and faith-filled growth, embracing new opportunities for faith formation, justice work, and community outreach as we step into this exciting next chapter in FCCW's 240th year history! Change is in the air, and we have much to do! May we listen and hear and let God's Spirit refresh and renew us.

*"Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, but encouraging one another."* - Hebrews 10:24-25

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* – Jeremiah 29:11

# JUNE 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> <b>7th Sunday after Easter</b>  Worship and Communion – 10 a.m.  Coffee Hour	<b>2</b> Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m.  Choir 5:30	<b>3</b> Faith Formation 12 Noon	<b>4</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 to noon  Chair Yoga 10 a.m.  Diaconate Meeting—5 p.m.	<b>5</b> End 68 Hours of Hunger Volunteer Meeting 10 a.m.	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 to noon
<b>8</b> <b>PENTECOST SUNDAY</b>  <b>DEDICATION SUNDAY</b>  Worship 10 a.m.  Coffee Hour	<b>9</b> Hazel MacBrien Nursery School Graduation 5:30 p.m.  Choir 5:30	<b>10</b> Faith Formation 12 Noon  Ukulele Club 6–7:30 p.m.	<b>11</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 to noon  Chair Yoga 10 a.m.	<b>12</b> End 68 Hours of Hunger Volunteer Meeting 10 a.m.  Parish Helpers Meeting—1 p.m.	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <b>FLAG DAY</b>  Treasure Shop Open 9 to noon
<b>15</b> <b>1st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST</b>  <b>FATHER'S DAY</b>  Worship 10 a.m.  Coffee Hour	<b>16</b> Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30 a.m.  Choir 5:30	<b>17</b> Prayer Shawl Ministry—10 a.m.  Faith Formation 12 Noon	<b>18</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 to noon  Chair Yoga 10 a.m.	<b>19</b> <b>JUNETEENTH</b>  End 68 Hours of Hunger Volunteer Meeting 10 a.m.	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 to noon
<b>22</b> <b>2nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST</b>  Worship 10 a.m.  <b>ANNUAL MEETING 11 A.M.</b>  No Coffee Hour	<b>23</b> Choir 5:30	<b>24</b> Faith Formation 12 Noon  Ukulele Club 6–7:30 p.m.	<b>25</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 to noon  Chair Yoga 10 a.m.	<b>26</b> End 68 Hours of Hunger Volunteer Meeting 10 a.m.	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Treasure Shop Open 9 to noon
<b>29</b> <b>3rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST</b>  Worship 10 a.m.  Coffee Hour and Reception for Rev. Larry	<b>30</b> Choir 5:30					

**\*\*\*FCCW SOFT GOODS DRIVE\*\*\***

**SPRING CLOSET (AND BOOKSHELF) CLEANOUT TIME!**

Start prepping bagged (kitchen sized bags) soft items including but not limited to: clothing, footwear, accessories, bedding, towels, etc.

Also accepting boxed books, DVDs & CDs!

**Donations will be accepted at 2718 Wakefield Road on the following days:**

***Saturday May 24<sup>th</sup> from 10am-12pm & Sunday May 25<sup>th</sup> from 11am-12pm***

***Saturday May 31<sup>st</sup> from 10am-12pm & Sunday June 1<sup>st</sup> from 11am-12pm***

***Saturday June 7<sup>th</sup> from 10am-12pm & Sunday June 8<sup>th</sup> from 11am-12pm***

All donations will help support the First Congregational Church of Wakefield

*Thank You for your generous donations!*



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
2718 WAKEFIELD ROAD  
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