

STEEPLE VIEWS

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION



REVEREND DR. JAMES L. MILLS, SR., PASTOR

REVEREND GEORGE HARVEY, PASTOR EMERITUS

REVEREND MARY A. JAMES, PASTOR EMERITA

AUGUST 2026

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THE PASTOR'S PAGE

Rev. Dr. James L. Mills, Sr.

Greetings Beloveds . . .

Hope that comes crashing down resonates with me on a personal level. I am sure like me; you have experienced moments in life where it felt like all hope was lost and your world was crashing down around your feet. It is truly felt like a knife to the soul, a deep wound that can shake our faith and make us question everything we thought we believed in. I am sure most of you remember the story. The religious authority conspired to be rid of Jesus once and for all. Even Pilate and Herod could not find any fault with Jesus, so they offered Barabbas who was convicted of insurrection. The people were having none of it and choose the criminal Barabbas to be set free over Jesus. Fast-forward, Jesus was resurrected and has appeared to his followers several times. Cleopas and an unnamed follower left Jerusalem headed toward Emmaus because their hearts were broken. Hoped gave way to despair. They had enough and were washing their hands of the whole matter. The rest of the story Luke relays indicates Jesus came to them as they walked and talked together. However, they did not recognize Him. At the end of the journey, they invited this stranger to stay for dinner. The stranger (**Jesus**) took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them.

Here is the hope! Something happened amid the taking, blessing, breaking and giving of the bread. Cleopas says wait a minute I've seen this movie before. This isn't the first time we needed some bread. This isn't the first time something was broken. This isn't the first time a blessing came through the breaking. Cleopas gets a flash back to when they were out in the wilderness when Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it. Luke tells us that's when their eyes were open. (v31)

They remembered we've have been here before. They remembered Jesus has handled this type of situation before. FCCW — God has a way of showing up in times of grief and pain. It can be easy to lose sight of God's presence and plan. The Emmaus account is a reminder that God has a way of showing up when we least expect it, even during our brokenness. He walks and talks with us on our road to Emmaus, offering comfort and reminding us that he is with us every step of the way.

Let us to hold onto hope, knowing that even when it feels like everything is falling apart, God can turn our brokenness into something satisfying and beautiful.

Luke 24:35 "Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made know to them in the breaking of the bread."

The Village Fair—August 8

The Parish Helpers' Village Fair and Cookie Walk will be held on **Saturday, August 8, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** The Treasure Shop will also be open! We'll have vendors outside on the lawn and more indoors including our popular bake sale and jewelry sale. The Annual Parish Helpers Quilt Raffle is underway for a queen-size quilt that was lovingly made by Parish Helpers.

We will need lots and lots of cookies for the Cookie Walk as well as baked goods, particularly pies and breads for the Bake Table. We will be serving lunch as well as morning coffee and goodies.

We look forward to a successful Fair! Hope to see you there.

Carol Jeffery

Outreach Ministry

The following women are still being detained at Richwood Detention Center in Louisiana, some now for more than a year. A note, a card or a prayer would be most appreciated.

Arezoo Mostafavi is from Iran. A- 221391268

Brkti Zerabouk Kahsay is from Ethiopia. A- 221388797

Selam Gebre Haile is from Eritrea. A-249122177

Her sister is Haben Haile. A-221387571

Letters and cards must have the detainees' name in full, along with their A number underneath. Mail may be sent to:

180 Pine Bayou Circle
Richwood, LA 71202

Your name and address must be in the upper left corner of the envelope to be accepted.

Connie Littlefield

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 has been completed. A copy is posted on the Ministries Bulletin Board under the Finance section. Any member is encouraged to request a copy from the office. I hope you will take a minute (or five) and take a look. It really shows just how much is involved in the running of our church. I'll bet there are things on there that you never thought of before!

Nancy Dee, Treasurer

It's a Wrap—Music Camp 2026!

Our theme this year was PEACE We had fewer children than in years past, only 16 children and 3 dropped out after the first day. The 13 kids that stayed enjoyed songs, musical instruction, harmonicas and ukelele and choir. We also had discussions on what PEACE means to them. Games and snacks and more singing everyday. We were delighted to see new faces and some returning campers.

Our Church is made up of many great people. The 20+ volunteers made this week a success. From our check-in/checkout people, crossing guard, music teachers, prayer leaders, tech team. Let's not forget the people who helped the kids make beautiful arts and crafts and the ones who fed 13 kids every day. Our games this year were led by 3 fine youth volunteers—they were a blessing.

Thank you all for the support Music Camp year after year. We dedicated the 2026 Music Camp to Jan Stanley, get well soon and prayers for complete healing.

Peace, Buddy Dee



Parks and Rec Donations

Your donation of snacks for the children attending Parks and Rec this summer is much appreciated. They have 80 kids in summer program plus older-aged kids who stop in to talk and grab a snack!

Granola bars, juice boxes, individual bags of popcorn, pretzels, Cheez-its, peanut butter crackers, and more are most welcome.

Getting to Know Our CLA

For those who don't know me, I've been the Congregational Life Administrator (CLA) at FCCW for five years this July! If you haven't seen my bio on our website, here's what it reads:

"In July 2021, we welcomed Andrea Selig to our staff. As Congregational Life Administrator, she handles our church office administration and pastor support as well as assisting the various church ministries.



Andrea grew up in York, Maine and then attended undergraduate studies in business at Siena College in upstate New York. After school she entered the Real Estate Lending Industry and then the Real Estate Title Insurance Industry, where she facilitated real estate closings for over a decade. Most recently, Andrea worked at a local family-owned insurance agency as a Service Specialist and Administrative Assistant. There she supported all departments in day-to-day operations.

In 2004, Andrea and her husband Steve moved from the seacoast to enjoy the quiet country life in the hills of Wakefield, New Hampshire. There they enjoy gardening, kayaking, snowshoeing, and spending lots of time with their fuzzy four-legged "kids".

And for those who also don't know, I am half Thai, a quarter Norwegian, and a quarter Staten Island mutt! Why am I sharing all of this, well because I thought it would be fun to share my personal experience of being born, growing up and living here in the USA as a mixed race/AAPI. While my life has been pretty run of the mill, my early beginnings were a lot like many of the Southeast Asians you come across here and along the ME/NH Seacoast. Our fathers served during the Vietnam War and met their wives overseas, married and returned home with a family! My father was in the Airforce and was based in Thailand along the Laotian border. While my brother Carl was born on a US Airforce Base in Thailand, I was born in Idaho at Mountain Home AFB, which is probably why I love potatoes so much! Growing up mostly in York Maine, I knew a few other minorities, but we were pretty much in an all-white community. In fact, after my parents divorced, my father remarried, and my entire family is pretty much all white. So, I haven't really experienced a true AAPI existence, since my biological mother moved to Japan with her new husband and my brothers for the bulk of my childhood. It wasn't until I went to college did I come across a diverse group of minorities and some of my best friends grew up just like me, but with

Indian, Pakistani, and Latino heritage, as well as kids from all over the country! It was fun to learn about each other and all our different backgrounds. I even attended the arranged marriage of my Pakistani friend and it's probably the most memorable wedding I've ever been to!

So, despite not having a strong connection to my Thai roots, that is something I hope to learn more about as I continue my life's journey. There is a lot of AAPI history regarding Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans and all of that has been well documented. The one negative thing I can say about being a mixed race/AAPI is that it wasn't until recently that I have felt any fear of living in this country. Starting with Covid when all Asians were targeted and again with the heightened immigration activity. It's a new, strange, and scary experience here in my homeland for me, and one I don't wish upon anyone. Luckily, I have a great support team in my family, friends, and the folks here at FCCW. I love how FCCW really embraces everyone and seeks to care for and protect all – no matter the color of our skin or who we love. It's a special place here at FCCW, and one I'm proud to be a part of. Thanks for reading my story and I'd love to learn more about you too, so feel free to stop by to say Hi!

Sincerely, Your FCCW CLA - Andrea Selig

Annual Quilt Raffle

The Parish Helpers are continuing their 100+ year tradition of quilt making. This year's quilt is named "Magic Patches" and is queen/ king size. Tickets are available at \$5 each or 3 for \$10. The quilt will be displayed at the Village Fair on August 8th and tickets are also for sale at the Treasure Shop. The drawing will take place in November at the conclusion of the Harvest Fair.

(Pictured on a king size bed.)



News from Zimbabwe

The work crew is making great progress on the cottage for the Daisy Dube Children's Village. Inside plastering is almost complete and this week the electrical wiring is being installed. Our builder Maxwell needed medical attention. They were unsure if his "flu" was caused by sleeping in the room with the bags of cement or if he had TB. Yes, the workmen sleep with the building supplies, no beds, to protect the supplies and thwart would be thieves. Nearby medical staff at Mt. Selinda Hospital couldn't make the diagnosis for TB because X-Ray machines were unavailable/not working. Flu is a wastebasket category in Zimbabwe; the term is used whenever someone doesn't feel well. This is the state of medical care in Zimbabwe these days. Those with resources go to the capital city of Harare or to neighboring countries for care.



Speaking of care, I put a plea for Peter, a young lad who is approx. 14 years old but looks much, much younger. Peter was brought to Vranje at PKZ headquarters by a former member of Parliament who had learned that this lad was being severely abused emotionally and physically by an aunt and an uncle. The government was unable to help so they brought him to PKZ.

Vranje had never seen such a severe situation and immediately brought him to a place where they could get him a cooked meal. It became quite emotional for Vranje because Peter was starving. Over the next two weeks Peter would be taken to the doctor to determine why his hands and feet were so malformed and scarred. Vranje "interviewed" the aunt and uncle and then went to social welfare to have this child removed from the home. In the meantime, compassionate people responded to my plea on social media and \$2,000 has been raised for his medical care. A health care worker has been hired to clean, apply medication, and bandage Peter's hands and feet as well as provide food (only for him) so that he can take the other medication prescribed by the doctor. The work with social welfare is ongoing for a new environment where Peter will be loved and cared for. We hope for physical and occupational therapy and ultimately a wheelchair which will enable Peter to attend school. Peter has a long way to go but he is no longer alone.

Connie Littlefield

PS I included the least graphic photo of Peter that I had!

Service Auction Experiences



Connie—"Great Food, games, and the 'Best Seat in the House' for Cinderella at Prescott Park. We had a blast!"

Donna—"The Pontoon boat ride around Great East Lake was amazing.

Great company, snacks and beverages on a magical New Hampshire summer day. The water was warm and the sunshine was a welcome blessing."

Evelyn—"Barry & I spent the day today painting the Noyes kitchen/family room! The best part is getting to know Deb & Bert Noyes! Bert has been attending our Sunday service as well. Lovely people."

Connie—"I did the first half of my C&J run and it was pretty hilarious with last minute laundry and tidying up, getting the travelers into the car with all their necessary travel items, and on to C&J in Friday late afternoon traffic. Our travelers needed an extra stop to say goodbye to relatives and then needed to return home to pick up a missing jacket. They were so good-natured and appreciative. We enjoyed lots of laughter and amazingly, we arrived at C&J with time to spare!"

Deb & Nate—"Painkillers and jello shots, need we say more?" (Drinks on the Dock with Ken & Gloria)

Ann—"Fancy cheese & wine, seafood chowder, filet mignon, fresh picked raspberries. YUM!" (Dinner with Kevin & Chris)



These are just a few — Stay tuned next month for more auction highlights!

Nancy Dee

Clarifying a Misunderstanding

As Archivist for the FCCW, I believe I have a responsibility, to the best of my ability, to identify and address recent misunderstandings or historically inaccurate statements concerning FCCW and the Wakefield Historic Community. Such errors often arise from a lack of knowledge about the facts or circumstances involved.

CASE IN POINT: OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND UPON WHICH THIS CHURCH IS SITUATED

At the May meeting of the FCCW Leadership Council, the discussion of Church insurance requirements led to the disclosure of a letter dated May 15, 2026, written to our insurance agent where it was erroneously stated that the church land was not owned by the church, but by me – the next-door neighbor. Some of you might recall from the talk that I gave in May about Rev. Asa Piper and his service as our beloved Pastor during our formative years, that the conclusion of the talk dwelt upon the tragic lightning strike on September 2, 1956, resulting in the burning of our impressive church building.

After the church burned in 1956, the Town Hall that for years had been used for Church suppers became our only place for worship and meetings. In retrospect I can recall the feeling of dissention, a malaise in the air, for there was “angst”, a deep pain, about the loss of our beautiful church, there was frustration at having to use the small Town Hall building for worship, and there was rumbling around rumored gossip about the ownership of the land now that the academy and church were gone and there was \$ in hand, (close to \$35,000) money that could be spend right away to build a new, but smaller church. Many were frustrated that additional time and money would be needed order to rebuild an adequate church. The tea pot kept boiling until one fall evening someone stood up and announced that the Spencers, the Henry and Joseph Wiggin heirs, were going to reclaim the land. Despite my seeming youth I stood up and said “No way is that going to happen”. And below you can find printed out an excerpt of the deed that was entered into by my mother and father that put to an end that rumor. So, you can now appreciate why I am correcting and hoping to put this rumor to bed forever. However, in retrospect, and putting my legally trained mind to work, I can understand why there might have been confusion over the language in the 1830 deed originally conveying the land and why some might have thought that a right of reversion existed as there had not been an academy usage for a long time.

The fall out from that encounter caused considerable pain to my family and it took many years for me to persuade them to attend services. One memorable Christmas eve my persuasion prevailed, and I well remember the closing of the service, with lit candle in hand, all of us standing in the powerful circle around the sanctuary singing

“Silent Night”. The peace of the Lord was present as the snow reverently buried the past.

Pertinent language of Deed of Helen Spencer, holder of reversionary rights under deed of Henry L. Wiggin and Joseph P. Wiggin to the trustees of the of Wakefield Academy, dated February 27, 1830:

This deed is to remain in full force and effect so long as said parcel shall be used and maintained as a site for a structure erected and finished in a manner suitable and appropriate for a place of religious worship and actively used for that purpose by the First Congregational Church of Wakefield, New Hampshire, or by any church with which it is merged or consolidated; but should such structure ... be converted to a use...other than that set forth hereinabove...or should it cease to be used and maintained for the purposes hereinabove specified, then all right, interest and title hereby conveyed shall revert to the grantor herein or to her heirs . . .

Nancy Spencer Smith, Archivist



Church Library

Author Highlight:
MJ Pettengill

MJ Pettengill is a historian and author of the Etched in Granite historical fiction series, which explores cultural narratives and traditions, historical and intergenerational trauma, ancestral healing, and the development of social welfare.

She is a woman of the woods, often carrying nuts and seeds in her pockets to hand-feed birds, chipmunks, and other small creatures. Pettengill writes from her woodland studio on a New Hampshire farm, where she also practices medicinal plant work and wildcrafting. Her undergraduate studies included music, history, psychology, and theology, and she holds an MFA in creative writing.

Our library has all four books in her Etched in Granite series, donated by Catherine Britton in memory of her sister, Elizabeth (“Zibby”) Heinlein, a longtime member of our church. The books are shelved in the Parish Helpers Room.

Linda Petkunas, Church Librarian

Celebrations!

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

2 Phillip Twombly	14 Dan James
4 Chris James	14 Matt Mooers
4 Madeline Johnson	15 Amanda Crew
5 Douglas Ball	15 Shannon Johnson
5 Richard Messer	17 Nancy Jacobson
6 Shane Caplette	19 Stephanie Ballard
8 Rebecca Ellis	23 Matthew Boggs
8 Julie Evenson	28 Debbie Soucey
9 Harriet Wilson	29 Anastasia St Pierre
11 Cassandra Ball	30 Ken Ballinger

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

20 David & Sharon Tinkham
21 George & Jo Szirbik
22 Royal & Carole Doughty
30 Jim and Allison Hayward



I would like to thank the many people at FCCW who have sent me cards and messages at the occasion of my turning 94 years old as well as when I was hospitalized earlier this spring. It was heartening and overwhelming to be at the receiving end of so much love and goodwill. The spirit of

love and community is strong in our church and this was proof!!! Thank you all.

Titia Bozuwa

YARD SALE!

Our annual yard sale will be held on **Saturday, August 29**. We need lots of volunteers as well as lots of donations to sell! Look for more information in the coming weeks via email or speak to Julie Kessler on how you can sign up to be part of this major FUNdraiser!

FELLOWSHIP OF CONCERN

We believe that prayer is powerful!

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; Nancy P's brother and sister in law, Paul and Carol; Pat A; Celia R; Priscilla F; the Galabrunns; Jan S; John S; Sarah M; Brian T; Gerald B; Lois B; Nancy B; Cindy E; Our sister church in Zimbabwe, Rufumiso UCCZ; Pastor Ruzana and the Louisiana detainees.

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.



Our deepest sympathy to Sue and Kelly Fielders on the recent passing of Sue's mother.

Notes from the Diaconate

Rev will have knee replacement surgery on Wednesday, August 5th. Please keep Rev in your prayers for a speedy and full recovery. In his absence, we have pulpit coverage as follows:

August 9	Donna Ackerman
August 16	Ken and Gloria Ballinger
August 23	Linda Walter
August 30	"Music Fills Your Heart"

While Rev is convalescing, Deacons Ginny Schweitzer and Jo Szirbik will cover as emergency contacts.

AUGUST 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Treasure Shop 9 to Noon
2 Sunday Worship And Communion 10 a.m. Coffee Hour	3 Caregivers Support Group 9:30—10:30 Choir 5:30	4	5 Treasure Shop 9 to Noon Chair Yoga 10 a.m.	6 End 68 Hours of Hunger Volunteer Meeting 10 a.m.	7	8 Treasure Shop 9 to Noon VILLAGE FAIR 9 a.m.—1 p.m.
9 Sunday Worship 10 a.m. Coffee Hour Harriet Wilson's Birthday Party 2 – 5 p.m.	10 Choir 5:30	11 Ukulele Club—6 p.m.	12 Treasure Shop 9 to Noon Chair Yoga 10 a.m.	13 End 68 Hours of Hunger Volunteer Meeting 10 a.m.	14	15 Treasure Shop 9 to Noon
16 Sunday Worship 10 a.m. Coffee Hour LC Meeting	17 Caregivers Support Group 9:30—10:30 Choir 5:30	18	19 Treasure Shop 9 to Noon Chair Yoga 10 a.m.	20 End 68 Hours of Hunger Volunteer Meeting 10 a.m.	21	22 Treasure Shop 9 to Noon
23 Sunday Worship 10 a.m. Coffee Hour	24 Choir 5:30	25 Ukulele Club—6 p.m.	26 Treasure Shop 9 to Noon Chair Yoga 10 a.m.	27 End 68 Hours of Hunger Volunteer Meeting—10 a.m.	28	29 Church Yard Sale 8 a.m.1 p.m. Treasure Shop 9 to Noon
30 Sunday Worship 10 a.m. Coffee Hour	31 Choir 5:30					



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