STEEPLE VIEWS

First Congregational Church of Wakefield
United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation

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November 2026

The Pastor's Page

Rev. Dr. James L Mills, Sr.

When was the last time you had a genuine conversation with yourself—a challenging, compassionate discussion about you, with you, and how you are living?

There are moments when we must step back and place ourselves on our own proverbial therapist couch. We must ask difficult but necessary questions: Why am I feeling this way? What is this moment revealing about me? How might I be contributing to the situation? Sometimes honest reflection leads us to an uncomfortable realization: "Perhaps I am part of the problem." That recognition is not a failure. It can be the beginning of transformation.

Often, we come face to face with our inner selves only when life gives us no other choice. A crisis may interrupt our routines and expose the places where change is needed. The death of someone we love can force us to learn how to live without their physical presence. The aging process may remind us that our memories are changing, and our physical abilities are not what they once were. These experiences can unsettle us, but they can also invite us into a deeper understanding of ourselves. Other moments of self-examination may seem much less dramatic. A simple comment from a friend can reveal that we have been living in ways that do not align with our deepest values. A burst of anger may lead us to say something hurtful, exposing feelings or assumptions we would rather not acknowledge. Later, shame and regret may become invitations to examine what lies beneath our words and actions.

Even the need to make an important decision can uncover how little clarity we possess about our own lives. We may realize that we have spent years responding to the desires and expectations of others, while neglecting the still, small voice within us. We may discover that we have been living according to someone else's definition of success, respectability, or happiness. Whatever the circumstance, there comes a time when we must turn inward—not to retreat from the world, but to return to it with greater honesty. In the quiet of self-examination, we encounter questions that reach beneath our roles, accomplishments, fears, and distractions: Who am I, really? What do I truly want? What kind of person am I becoming? What is mine to change, and what is mine to release?

These are spiritual questions. They move beyond the surface of our lives and bring us closer to the meaning, purpose, and truth at the center of our being. For people of faith, this inward journey is not a journey away from God. It can be a way of becoming more aware of the sacred presence within and around us. When we are willing to be honest about our flaws, our wounds, our contradictions, and our gifts, we make room for grace. We begin to understand that our worth does not depend upon perfection, productivity, approval, or the ability to satisfy everyone's expectations.

Our worth is deeper than all of that. (Continued on next page.)

Many of us discover that our identity is grounded in our relationship with the Divine. We are not merely the sum of our mistakes, our regrets, or our accomplishments. We are human beings held within a larger love—a love that calls us toward greater compassion, courage, justice, and authenticity. This does not mean that faith excuses us from accountability. On the contrary, a living faith asks us to face the truth about ourselves so that we can participate more fully in the healing of the world. We cannot pursue justice while refusing to examine our own assumptions. We cannot build peace while ignoring the conflicts within us. We cannot extend empathy to others if we are unwilling to receive the truth about our own lives.

Self-reflection, then, is not self-absorption. It is preparation for more faithful engagement with the world. When we understand ourselves more honestly, we become better able to listen to others, repair the harm we have caused, resist the temptation to act from fear, and choose responses rooted in love rather than defensiveness. The work is not easy. It requires humility. It asks us to acknowledge where we have been wrong and to accept that growth often begins with discomfort. But we do not undertake this work alone. We are accompanied by grace, by community, by the wisdom of those who have come before us, and by the persistent presence of the Divine. There will be moments when we discover that we are not who we imagined ourselves to be. There will be moments when our carefully constructed identities begin to loosen. Yet this unraveling can become an opening. It can make space for a truer self—one less governed by fear, more grounded in compassion, and more willing to live according to deeply held values.

The invitation is not to become perfect. It is to become honest. It is to meet ourselves with enough courage to tell the truth and enough grace and kindness to believe that transformation remains possible. When we are willing to look within, we may discover not only our weaknesses but also our capacity for renewal. We may find that the sacred has been present all along—not demanding that we pretend to be someone else but calling us to become more fully who we are.



Safe Church

The Safe Church ministry has become active again. Our basic job is to keep the Staff, Congregation, Visitors and the Church's assets protected from harm at all times. Members will notice an uptick in security in our Church, this is for our benefit. In the coming months the Congregation will be invited to experience different ways to exit the Sanctuary. The use of the Church's AED will also be demonstrated after a Coffee Hour. In the future a First Aid and CPR course will be offered.

We pray that no harm will ever come to the members or our beloved Church building. However all of us should be aware of this possibility.

The Safe Church Team

Nate Fogg, Jim Hayford, Carol Lundgren, Buddy Dee

NOTICE

The door from the parking lot will be locked on Sundays after 10:10 a.m.

Please use the front door, Thank You

Join Us for a Chili Dinner!

The FCCW Outreach Ministry is excited to invite you to a Chili Dinner featuring cornbread, coleslaw, and dessert on Saturday, November 7th from 5:00 - 6:30 pm. Our goal is to provide fellowship and a warm meal for our church members, as well as to welcome individuals and families in our community who are facing economic challenges.

We envision this dinner as the first of many monthly meals in collaboration with the Wakefield Church of the Nazarene, the First Congregational Church of Wakefield, the Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist, and the Community Church of Milton. Our goal is to rotate hosting duties among the churches and rekindle a vibrant ecumenical relationship.

Let us know if you would like to volunteer at any one of the monthly events or donate a food item. For November we are looking for 9 x 13 pans of cornbread or a yummy dessert. Either way, we hope you will save the date and join us for this special occasion!

Connie, Ann, Jean, Patty, and Andrea

Parish Helpers

The next Parish Helpers meeting will be held on Thursday, November 12th, at 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will welocme back our favorite author/ guest Jessie Crocket and find out what she's been up to since the last time she visited us!

Thank you to all the Parish Helpers who contriubted to the success of the Treasure Shop this summer. It is our major fundraiser and will allow us to continue our generous support of the Church and many local and global charities!

And a huge thanks to Rachel White and Carole Doughty for their leadership in keeping the shop up and running and always looking so inviting.

Hope to see you on November 12th!

Carol Jeffery

Thank You FCCW!

Thank you to all those who contributed to my new Monarch Butterfly Field!! I'm going to mow the area this weekend and spread all the milkweed seeds!



Exciting news, I saw about five Monarch Butterflies this year, which is more than usual! So, all these new milkweed plants will be a welcome site to them next year! I'll be sure to send updates and pictures as it progresses!

Andrea Selig, CLA

Finance Announcement

The Finance Ministry is very pleased to announce that Joan Peresada has agreed to serve as the Church's insurance liaison. She will be taking over from our dear Carol Lundgren who has spent several years getting advice from our agents and answers to any questions about our coverage. Carol decided to step away from this position for a number of reasons, and we wish her all the best in her future activities. We know she won't be far away!

Joan has 40 years of experience in the insurance industry and this background will be very beneficial to the Church in the future. We look forward to working with her!

Our great thanks to Carol for all her efforts in this role

Harriet Wilson, Finance

Library Book Review

Theo of Golden (J-F) By Allen Levi

One spring morning, a stranger named Theo arrives in the small Southern city of Golden. He doesn't explain much about where he came from or why he's there—but when he visits the local coffeehouse, where pencil portraits of the people of Golden hang on the walls, he begins purchasing them, one at a time, and giving each portrait to the person depicted. In exchange, he asks only for the person's story. And so portrait by portrait, person by person, secrets are revealed, regrets are shared, and ordinary lives are profoundly altered.

A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen, Theo of Golden is an unforgettable novel about the power of generosity, the importance of connection, and the quiet miracles that happen when we choose kindness and wonder. Thanks to Donna Ackerman for recommending this book.
Source: Amazon

Linda Petkunas, Church Librarian

The Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund

Your Gift Helps FDDF Provide Emergency Financial Assistance. Times are hard, and many of our neighbors are struggling. Some cannot pay an electric bill, fill their gas tank, make their mortgage or rent payment, or afford a doctor's visit because of a medical crisis, job loss, or another circumstance beyond their control.

The Feddern Diaconate Discretionary Fund (FDDF) provides temporary emergency financial assistance to neighbors facing hardship. There is no shame in asking for help; many of us have experienced times when a little support made all the difference and FDDF is here to help members of our community through frightening, stressful circumstances and toward greater stability.

Please consider supporting FDDF. Your donation could make a meaningful difference for a local family! Your check can be made payable to FCCW and write "FDDF" in the memo line. If you need financial assistance, contact the church office at churchoffice@fccwakefieldnh.org or speak with a member of the Diaconate.

With thanks and blessings,
The Diaconate

As John Lennon and Paul McCartney wrote in "With a Little Help from My Friends," we all get by with support from one another.

Faith Formation

Come join us on Tuesdays from 12:00 - 1:00 in the Parish Helper Room for some lively discussions based on a weekly set of devotions. that are emailed each week. If interested, contact Julie Kessler (julielouisekessler@gmail.com) to have your email added to the class distribution list. NOTE: There will be no class on Election Day, Tuesday November 3rd.

And .. Advent begins the Sunday after Thanksgiving (November 29th). Please consider joining us starting the first Tuesday of Advent - December 1st. We will be using both a SALT study ("Starry Nights: An Advent Devotional Full of Light and Wonder") and the Advent devotional from Stillspeaking Writers' Group ("Suddenly").

About "Starry Nights: An Advent Devotional Full of Light and Wonder" - This devotional is all about embracing light and wonder. It comes complete with simple, candlelight weekly services, biblical passages to read, prayers to pray, reflections to think about, practices to try, and more. And since the stars appeal to all ages, this devotional is designed to do the same: amazing facts interweave with engaging activities, big ideas, and the wondrous, star-studded stories of Advent and Christmas.

About " Suddenly " - Urgent times demand God's sudden in-breaking. Mark's Gospel presents the story of Jesus at the break-neck speed of "suddenly": Suddenly Jesus was driven into the wilderness. Suddenly the fishermen left their nets. Suddenly the woman was cured, suddenly the girl woke up, suddenly the man could see. Maybe the nativity is a "suddenly" story, too: Suddenly, a birth interrupts business-as-usual.

Molly Baskette writes in the introduction of Suddenly:"Both human history and natural history offer this truth: things seem to change very slowly, or not at all. But then suddenly, everything changes all at once. The old world passes away and a new one is born, thanks to the labors that were happening all along."

What divine interruption does the world need? What holy "suddenly" does your life need?

Again, contact Julie Kessler if interested in finding out more or would like a copy of either of the Advent devotional booklets.

News From Zimbabwe

Deepest thanks and appreciation to all the volunteers and those who attended our October pancake breakfast and jewelry fundraiser in support of the Daisy Dube building project! Thanks to your incredible generosity, proceeds and extra donations surpassed an amazing $5,000. The ceilings will soon be completed, and the team will move on to plumbing and floor tiles. Hallelujah—what a community we have to make this all come together!

Zim school children are gearing up for their final exams in November. Because the school year runs from January to early December, this is a major milestone and can be really stressful for them. Our sponsored students typically take 9 to 12 subjects, with two exams in science, math and English. Students in Form 4 take their O Level national exams—comparable to the SATs—and must pass at least five subjects to graduate and move on to A Levels or vocational training. English, math, and science are mandatory among those five. Some students return for extra classes to master the material and retake the core subjects if needed, which is why whenever someone asks me what grade a student is in, I always check in with Vrante, our PKZ Director, to see who has passed, who is taking extra lessons, and what the game plan is for each child.

Looking ahead, December is our sponsorship renewal month as we prepare for the new school year in January. The PKZ team, both here and in Zimbabwe, is deeply grateful for the unwavering commitment of everyone who supports these children. If you would like to learn more about sponsorship opportunities, please see me!
You are a blessing!

Connie Littlefield



End 68 Hours of Hunger

Wakefield End 68 Hour s of Hunger is a program that benefits the students at the Paul School. Food-insecure students receive a bag of food which contains three dinners, two lunches and two breakfasts along with snacks each week to cover the 68 hours they are not in school over the weekend. We are grateful to the First Congregational Church of Wakefield, NH United Church of Christ for allowing us to use one of the classrooms to store our food and for space to bag the 18-30 bags we may need on any given week. Donations can be made by check to the Paul School, 60 Taylor Way, Sanbornville, NH 03872 attn: Wakefield End 68 Hours of Hunger, making it payable to Wakefield End 68 Hours or make a credit card donation through the link below.





The Harvest Fair

Mark your calendars for November 14th! We're looking for your donations of baked goods such as pies and breads, , cookies for the cookie walk and gift cards for the Penny Sale! We're collecting items for the beautiful gift baskets that will be offered for sale! The PH Quilt Raffle winner will be drawn and lunch will be available.

There are many ways you can help make this FUNdraiser a success! Plan to come and tell your friends! Any questions, contact Julie Kessler or Nancy Dee.

Hazel MacBrien NS News

Week one covered number 9 and fire safety. Sensory play featured water, fire extinguisher squirt bottles, red/yellow/orange caps and firefighter ducks. The 4's explored hot/cold items, cut and pasted AAB fire patterns, and sprayed numbered fires. The 3's made red/yellow squish paintings, sorted hot/cold pictures and sprayed fires matching color-cube rolls. Both practiced "stay low and go" and "stop, drop and roll"; the 4's crawled under doorway "smoke" and rolled to extinguish pretend clothing fires. Both picked apples and made cider at McKenzie's Farm!

Week two featured Pp and pumpkins, with water, small floating plastic jack-o-lanterns, little people and funnels for sensory play.The 4's identified musical-pumpkin numbers, named letters on "vine" pumpkins and rhymed with pumpkin cards. The 3's named musical-pumpkin shapes, counted pumpkins into a truck and used Halloween cutters with playdough. Both painted bulletin-board bats and moons and welcomed the Wakefield Fire Department.

Week three featured Cc and candy corn, with white beans, plastic cauldrons, bones, witch fingers, potion bottles and eyeballs for sensory play. The 4's counted candy corn eraser "teeth" into a monster's mouth by rolls, played candy corn number bingo and counted candy corn into jars. They cut orange/yellow/white bulletin-board candy corn, sequenced Room on the Broom through cut-and-paste, and graphed Halloween items. The 3's named cauldron numbers before walking liquid stepping stones, tweezer-counted pom-poms onto stew pictures, cork-painted candy corn and counted pasta "bats" into a cave by rolls. Both enjoyed candy corn bowling, witch's hat ring toss and eyeball spoon races.

October ended with Bb and bats, with spider webs, spider rings, plastic bats and other spooky sensory items. The 4's counted web spiders by rolls, played Monster Says, cut and pasted a number puzzle, named witch's-brew letters, used count-and-clip cards and fed a ghost shapes. The 3's matched Frankenstein shapes, hunted numbered spiders and sang Old McDonald Had a Haunted House. Both finished the month trick-or-treating at our amazing downtown businesses!

Food Pantry Requests for November

Let's think about Thanksgiving Dinner -
stuffing, canned green beans or other canned vegetables, gravy, cranberry sauce, and hot cocoa.

November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 **All Saints Day** Sunday Worship and Communion 10 a.m. Coffee Hour New Members Class	2 Choir 5:30	3 Faith Formation 12 noon	4 End 68 Hours 8 a.m. Caregiver Support 9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga 9:30	5 Bible Study With Rev 5:30	6	7
8 Sunday Worship and Church School - 10 a.m. Coffee Hour	9 Choir 5:30	10 Faith Formation 12 noon Ukelele Club 6:30	11 End 68 Hours 8 a.m. Chair Yoga 9:30	12 Parish Helpers 1 p.m..	13	14 **Harvest Fair 9 to 1 p.m.**
15 Sunday Worship 10 a.m. Coffee Hour Leadership Council	16 Choir 5:30	17 Faith Formation 12 noon	18 End 68 Hours 8 a.m. Caregiver Support 9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga - 9:30	19 Bible Study With Rev 5:30	20	21
22 Sunday Worship and Church School - 10 a.m. Coffee Hour	23 Choir 5:30	24 Faith Formation 12 noon Ukelele Club 6:30	25 End 68 Hours 8 a.m. Chair Yoga 9:30	26 **Thanksgiving Day**	27	28
29 **First Sunday of Advent** Sunday Worship - 10 a.m. Coffee Hour	30 Choir 5:30					

Celebrations

November Birthdays

3 Kim Cornell
4 Gail Feddern
4 Rev Larry Brickner-Wood
5 Vincent Mangano
8 George Ackerman
14 Pam Wiggin
16 Julie Margolis
19 Dana Margolis
20 MaryBeth Cook
22 Donna Lewis
23 Ann Bilodeau
25 Lauryn Robinson
29 Catherine Britton
29 Rev. Mary James
30 Chuck Hodsdon

November Anniversaries

4 Skip and Sharon Theiling

Day o' Fun



Service Auction follow up! It was a beautiful day for a drive to the ocean. Ginny and Carol enjoyed a day at the shore with lunch at Billy's Chowder House in Wells, Maine. Thanks to Marilou MacLean for donating this service at the recent service auction. We had a wonderful time!

Carol and Ginny

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:
Sue L; Diane D, Nancy P's brother and sister in law, Paul and Carol; Celia R; the Galabruns; Jan S; John S; Sarah M; Brian T; Gerald B; Lois B; Nancy B; Cindy E; Our sister church in Zimbabwe, Rufumiso UCCZ; Louisiana detainees: Mahsa Dehzadhamedani, Pouria Nazari (Mahsa's husband), Selam Gebre Haile (from Eritrea)

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.

Thank You!

To my wonderful church family, I wish to express much appreciation, love and graciousness for your cards, calls, and powerful prayers. It has been one of greatest honors of my life to have been a part of and to have served FCCW. Our church family has been my family for 40 plus years. We have a rich history and so many fond memories. I quite often sit and reflect on our good times. I treasure the memories.

For now, I am hanging in there. I am taking a new cancer drug that has extended the lives of many. It has nasty side effects but so far, I have been able to tolerate it. The family is coming for Thanksgiving. Their visits boost my spirits.

I will forever keep you in my heart.

Blessings and Love, Jan Stanley

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

Poinsettia Order Form
Orders due November 18

Please use the form below for ordering your Christmas Poinsettia Plants. Orders must be placed before November 18th. Make checks payable to: The First Congregational Church of Wakefield, please notate Poinsettia in the memo. Order forms and payments may be left in the CLA's mailbox located in the church narthex or mailed to 2718 Wakefield Road, Sanbornville, NH 03872 or placed in the maibox attached to the side door.

Name of Donor(s): _____

In Memory or In Honor of: _____
(Please circle one)

Single Poinsettia Plant _____@ $14.50 _____Red _____White

Double Poinsettia Plant _____@ $24.95 _____Red _____White

Plants may be picked up after Christmas Eve Service. Thank You for helping to make our Sanctuary especially beautiful this Christmas Season!