

STEEPLE VIEWS



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WAKEFIELD

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

DR. TERE KRUEGER, PASTOR

REVEREND GEORGE HARVEY, PASTOR EMERITUS

FEBRUARY 2021

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Listening for Spirit

Don't worry over anything whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus. " (Philippians 4:6-7, Phillips translation)

Good People,

Aside from illness and the worst possible scenario, the death of a loved one, many of you are suffering because of Covid restrictions: isolation, loss of work, lowered income, closed businesses, homeschooling, separation from grandchildren and health concerns and fear.

Early on, when I heard about the hospital & nursing home visitor bans and a friend who couldn't visit her father, I was livid! How could he grieve for his wife, negotiate a move into a place full of strangers AND without the physical and emotional support of his family who were locked out? This made me livid! I knew what that would feel like because for 4 years, I visited my Mom in a small residential home for elders. I had been with her in Denver and circulated my ministerial profile in the Rocky Mountain Conference of the UCC (our denomination). I found an interim pastorate in Wyoming so I could make that 500-mile round-trip nearly every week to hold her hand and laugh with her. I thought about how I would have fared if Covid had hit then. Oh, no doubt! I would have been so outrageously ANGRY that I would have seriously thought about ways to abduct her! SERIOUSLY!

But, then one day last April, as I was doing dishes (isn't that where you get flashes of insight?), I suddenly thought, "The Holy Spirit (I just call Her 'Spirit', for short) is with my friend's father—right in his heart—closer than even a loyal daughter—or any person could be! What's more, there are multitudes of Angels surrounding and ministering to people who are alone, sick, dying—and those being healed, too!" Yup. Indeed, we are ALL precious to "the Beloved!" And, Jesus said he would never leave us nor forsake us! Did you know Angels are mentioned 273 times in the Bible? My favorite is Psalm 91:11— "God instructs His angels to watch over you, to guard you in everything you do."

Before giving a sermon a few weeks ago, I asked Spirit if I should share this idea with you, because I found it so comforting. The answer seemed to be "yes", but it didn't occur to me during the service. Then, the other day when I was chatting with "Linder" (from our respective cars), we discussed that many in our church family need reassurance on this topic. Tonight, as I type, I see how Spirit put this on her heart, not just for her, but for me. . . and for someone reading this whom Spirit wants to comfort! "It's the right time and venue, Tere". Timing. It's big thing! (More on that next month—well, maybe— if it's the time, LOL.)

Please, listen. Open your heart—as wide as you are able. Ask God/Jesus/Spirit for what you think you need and then give it to HIM/HER. "They" will sort it out. Watch for comfort or answers with even a wee bit of a faith. Know that what you really need will be given to you at just the right time. What's the worst that could happen if you believe it? You might be comforted or feel a spasm of hope. Your life might be transformed as you begin to know there is more HEALING and true GOOD happening here than you dared imagine—and after death—than you dared to hope!

As, a famous old philosopher said, "Have faith. What can it hurt? If it's not true, you're no worse off than you were before. But, if it IS true, you gain eternal joy!" (My version of Pascal's Wager.) And if you don't experience angels—or even want to, that's okay. Don't take my word for it. Ask LOVE to be gracious to you. S/HE will—all in good time.

Peace, Love & Light,
Pastor Tere Krueger

Stewardship Moment – Awareness and Responsibility

As stewards of our Church there is a path that we are commanded to follow: be responsible and concerned for our family, friends, neighbors, and community. This message rings throughout the New Testament as well as Jesus's messages to us.

Today, in the time of a pandemic, mask wearing, hand sanitizing and staying 6' apart are what we do to keep all as safe as possible. The vaccine is happening and we can see a time "in the future" when normal life will resume. What a time that will be!

Let us LEAD by example, continuing to follow the CDC guidelines and make arrangements to get the vaccine doses as soon as eligible. Need a ride to get the vaccine? Call the Shepherd Program at church and let us know.

If you or someone you know have concerns about the safety of the vaccine, please look at this important site to be as informed as possible: <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>.

If, after researching, you are not convinced to wear a mask or get the vaccine, please do what is responsible – wear a mask anyway when out in public ... so that all those whom you encounter remain as safe as possible. Do it for others – out of love and respect.

No one said that being a good steward was easy. No one said that taking personal responsibility was just a phrase said to feel good about yourself rather than an act that, in some cases, does take courage balanced with compassion.

God bless us all. Surely this health crisis, when we work together, will pass.

*Carol Lundgren and Frank Frazier,
Stewardship Ministry*



Photo credit: Abagael Giles, Vermont Public Radio

Ash Wednesday Service

There will be an Ash Wednesday Service on Wednesday, February 17 at 6 p.m. Dr. Tere and Rev. David DeSalvo from St. John the Baptist will join our congregations for a Zoom service. A Zoom invitation will be sent out for those who want to attend.

Black History Month

Black History Month was officially recognized when President Gerald Ford in 1976, called upon the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history". That was 45 years ago. That was also our bicentennial year. But the actual movement to recognize Black history began as early as 1915, fifty years after passing the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery. It is remarkable that in the rise of the Jim Crow era two men, Carter G. Woodson and Jesse E. Morland, founded the Study of Negro Life and History, an organization focusing on the achievements of Black Americans. A bold move in the early twentieth century. In 1926 this organization promoted the recognition of Negro History Week to be the second week in February which correlates with the birthdates of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. This recognition only occurred at the community and state level until the 1960s when it was transformed into Black History Month which was celebrated on many college campuses.

The theme for Black History Month 2021 is, "Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity". As we all know the 46th Presidential Inauguration installed our nation's first African American, South Asian American, Female Vice President Kamala Harris. Our country should be proud, but we should also realize that we, as a society, have been taking baby steps from the time of 1619 when the first African slave was brought to this continent, to where we are today.

Our church is an Open and Affirming Congregation. We enthusiastically welcome people of all races, nationalities, gender origins and disabilities. Let us continue to grow as a church and as a society in learning more about Black Americans. Let us celebrate the Black heritage that makes our nation strong. Let us choose to take more than baby steps toward understanding the reasons that protests like Black Lives Matter have risen in our nation's communities. After hearing our National Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman, speak at the inauguration, I am hopeful that young voices like hers will sing above the noise of hate. I challenge you to read, listen to, or watch at least one source concerning the lives of Black Americans as we celebrate this February's Black History Month.

Respectfully Submitted, Donna V Ackerman

A Very Different Lenten Study

Our Lenten Faith Formation study will begin the first Tuesday in Lent (February 23rd). This study will focus on a different type of devotional entitled "The Art of Lent" by Sister Wendy Beckett. During this study we will look at a wide variety of paintings - ancient and modern, sacred and secular, familiar and unfamiliar. Sister Wendy presents us with a painting and brief reflection for every day of Lent;

You don't have to have a degree in art history (in fact, it's preferable that you don't!). We're all invited to look at paintings in a very different way - one where the act of seeing slows us down, and invites us to prayer, to pay attention to the moment, to pause and reflect and make sense of our own relationship with the world around us.

Please consider joining us for this most intriguing Lenten zoom study! The book can be purchased through Amazon.com at a price of \$14.59. For those of you who just want to attend on occasion and/or not purchase your own copy, know that each piece of artwork will be shared on the zoom session. Let Julie Kessler know if you're interested in attending (julielouisekessler@gmail.com or 603-871-8066).

Julie Kessler

CareGiver Self Care Support Group

Dear Friends - This support group inspires me! If you are providing love and support for someone — whether in person, or at a distance, please know you are welcome to drop in to a session any time for a warm welcome, caring/sharing and being supported in a confidential setting. The group meets for 1 hour on the first and third Monday each month — weather permitting. Questions? Please call Carol Lundgren @ 978 807-4041.

Carol Lundgren

Matching Challenge!

It's You're being challenged to stroll through your homes to find items that aren't of use to you but could very well generate value for the church! An anonymous donor will put up to \$1000 to match money made on the sales of these donations. This matching challenge is for donations made between now and March 31!

More details on the Household Challenge on Page 5!

FUNdraisiing Team

Souper Sunday Soup Sale Order by February 1

Back by popular demand! Our annual Souper Sunday Soup Sale will be a little different this year!

Soups must be pre-ordered and pre-paid and will be available for curbside pickup on Feb. 6 from 12 noon to 2 p.m. (Snow Date is Feb. 7, 12 noon to 2 p.m.) Arrangements can be made for home delivery.

Choose from a selection of 14 soups (see below) at a cost of \$5 per 16-oz. container. Call Margie at 522-6674 or email her at 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 attached to the church by the side entrance. You can also pay online through PayPal on our website. Go to www.fccwakefieldnh.org and look for the "Donate Button" on our homepage (on drop down menu - choose "Souper Sunday".)

There are limited quantities on some varieties, so act now! **Deadline to order is February 1.**

Choose from:

Sweet Potato Turkey Chili
Ground Beef and Sausage Chili

White Chicken Chili
Creamy Bacon Corn Chowder
Clam Chowder
Beef Barley Soup
Sweet Potato Black-eyed Pea Soup
Potato Cheddar Soup w/ Ham
Chicken Noodle Soup
Stuffed Pepper Soup
Pea Soup w/ Ham
Chicken Pot Pie Soup
Carrot Ginger Soup

Churches of Wakefield

The Wakefield community started as a town dominated by Congregationalists but over time other Christian denominations founded their own churches here. Below is a list of when these first churches were built:

Town Meeting House & Congregational Church at Lovell Lake (1771)
First Congregational Church of Wakefield (1831)
St. John the Baptist's Episcopal Church (1876)
Methodist Church (1887)
St. Anthony's Catholic Church (1895)

In 1785 Rev. Asa Piper was called and ordained as our first settled pastor.

Linda Petkunas, Church Historian

News from Zimbabwe

Zimbabweans seem unable to catch a break. The nation has been on Covid lockdown since January 5, not January 9th as I previously noted. Those extra four days matter! It means children have not been able to attend school, street vendors/informal traders are unable to openly sell whatever they sell to make a living (90% of Zimbabweans exists on informal trading), so no fresh fruits or vegetables are easily available. The government allows grocery stores and pharmacies to remain open from 9:00 – 3:00. The small business grocery stores are not allowed to open, so only the big chain stores are surviving. People follow social distancing and mask regulations and when in a queue to get into a store, the security guard takes your temperature, squirts waaaayyyy too much sanitizer in your hand and in you go. Picture the goopy mess as you figure out if you wipe it on your clothing or your cart or just kind of go with it as you quickly pick up groceries. But then, the cashier squirts another mess in your hand before they take the huge wads of bills. Approximately 1,000 Zim notes equals \$10. Most are in \$5 or \$2 denominations so you essentially carry a backpack to deal with ridiculous stacks of money. (I am still not use to paying \$50 for a 50 cent bar of soap or seeing a grocery bill for a mere \$35,000.)

We hear Covid vaccines might be available here in a few months. Covid is on the rise and now everyone knows someone who has died. Three front line staff members at Mt. Selinda Hospital tested positive. Many hospitals won't even accept someone whom they suspect has the virus as there are absolutely no medical interventions. Several well know people, including politicians at the national level, have succumbed to Covid. The virus is now at Birchenough Bridge where Rufumiso is located and in Chipinge and in many other formerly untouched communities. People tell one another to make a tea from local herbs to stay safe and they pray for God to intervene.

On top of everything else, it's rainy season. For more than a month the rains have been absolutely torrential day after day, often with high winds. Simply washing the family laundry and trying to figure out where one can hang to dry is a challenge. People worry about their crops rotting in the field because the water has saturated the land or the maize has been destroyed by the wind or worse yet, kids and others being swept away by fast moving water. Cylone Eloise came through via

Mozambique this past weekend and three people in our area were swept away walking to reach their homes. The Chipinge roads are a mess and nearly impassable with huge craters and crevasses 18-36" deep. And this is the same Zimbabwe where people experience drought once rainy season is over.

There is much time to reflect upon what it means to live among the 'have nots' as we 'haves' complain about an inconvenience – a power outage and lack of internet or cable during a snowstorm, a delay in receiving something that has been ordered, postponed travel plans, not being able to go to a restaurant, etc. Most Zimbabweans show no resentment toward those who are the "haves." They marvel at the blessings available to people in the United States. They sent heartfelt prayers and congratulations during the recent inauguration and upon hearing news that vaccines are being distributed. Zimbabweans are a resilient and faith-filled people. They are ever so grateful for each and every kindness shown to them.

Deep thanks to each and every one who gave through the Alternative Gift Giving program. Recipients are so very, very appreciative of the outreach by the FCCW community.

Love to all, Connie



Some local kids play something like "group horsey" with a tree branch during a break in the rain. Three are barefoot. Four are in tattered clothing.

Hazel MacBrien Nursery School

January was a nice month for us, we had some normalcy and routine, now with the holidays over. Our 4s have been counting how many days they have been in school, adding a straw each day and bundling them together. When we get ten straws, we move those bundles to the tens pocket. We finally made it to 50 days in school; half way to day 100! The children are very excited to make their 100-piece trail mix. On January 21st we celebrated Pajama Day with hot chocolate. We did math sorting with our stuffed animals along with some parachute fun. In February we look forward to celebrating Valentine's Day, focusing on what makes a good friend! We will also be selling Little Caesar's pizza kits in February. We will leave an order form in the kitchen, or just contact us if you are interested. As always, we so appreciate all the support you provide us!

Food Pantry Needs

I was recently in touch with Brian Shipley and Marilou MacLean, volunteers at the Food Pantry. These are the items they thought would be appreciated.

Jams- strawberry and grape
Canned soups, stews and meats
Crackers
Cookie and cake mixes

Thank you for continuing to be the very generous people that you are. God bless you all.

Jo Szirbik, Deacon

Building & Grounds Ministry Update

The parking lot side door entrance to the church has been adjusted to make it easier to open. That was done by reducing the force of the piston that is used to close the door behind you. That means we are using the minimum force to close the door, and it did close yesterday under nearly perfect conditions, the hinges were just oiled and the wind wasn't blowing.

As conditions change over time and usage, the door may not close on its own behind you. Building and Grounds is asking that you be aware and be sure that the door does close. If you experience a situation when/where the door does not close, please close it and inform B&G.

George Ackerman

From The Assistant Treasurer

All 2020 year-end donation reports have been sent out. If you haven't received your report, or if you have any questions, please get in touch with Julie Kessler (at julielouisekessler@gmail.com or 603-871-8066)

PayPal Options

Did you know that you can make a donation online through PayPal or Debit or Credit Card? If you go to our website at fccwakefieldnh.org and click on "Donate", you will be directed to the PayPal site where you can pay your pledge, make a donation to the Endowment Fund, or even pay for soup! It's easy!

The logo for the Household Items Challenge features the words "Household Items" in a colorful, bubbly font. "Household" is in blue and purple, and "Items" is in green and yellow. A small graphic of a pencil or crayon is positioned below the word "Items".The word "CHALLENGE" is written in large, colorful, block letters. Each letter is a different color: C (green), H (blue), A (red), L (yellow), L (green), E (blue), N (red), G (yellow), E (blue).

2021 Household Challenge ... Game on!! ... Join the fun!!

The FUNdraising Team challenges you to find 1 (or more!) items around the house that you no longer want or need, but that would be of value when sold by our online salesforce. **THIS CHALLENGE STARTS NOW!** Once you have located your item(s) or if you have questions, please contact:

Julie Kessler 871-8066 julielouisekessler@gmail.com
Margie Galabrun 522-6647 balchlaker@gmail.com

All we need is a short description, a photo and a suggested price range. (Keep in mind that we ALL think all our items are priceless— and they are ... but only to us!) Let's see just how resourceful we ALL can be in coming up with things to sell and add to our beloved church's coffers through online sales. **Adding to the value right now—we have an anonymous donor who will match the sales price to add to the Endowment Fund** So let's get ...

Ready, set, GO!!!!

Celebrations!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 Pat Anderson	15 Nicky Mercer
1 Barbara Cawlina	17 Ryan Dee
2 Bob James	19 Lisa Robinson
2 Marilou MacLean	23 Allisa Eaton
3 Kenneth Crew	24 Barry Lockard
3 Maureen Steer	25 Cheyanne Boggs
6 Sue Lynn	25 Arlene Leyare
10 Peter Foss	25 Kristin Weeks
11 Rob Lundgren	26 Evelyn Truhn
12 Peter Connell	27 Charlie Bilodeau
12 David Haag	27 Tom Weeks
12 Ryan McCarthy	28 David Fairchild
14 Marion Blomster	28 Emma Royle
14 Ann Gehring	28 Stephen Silcocks

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

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

Dr. Tere's Ordination

Dr. Tere's Ordination is being planned for Sunday, February 28, at 3 p.m.

It will be a Zoom service. More information along with the Zoom invitation will be forthcoming.

Help Build Our Endowment Fund

If you have a Birthday or an Anniversary in February, it's your moment to make a difference! Create a Facebook Fundraiser to support our Endowment Fund. It's easy! Instructions on setting up your Facebook Fundraiser can be found on our website here: <https://www.fccwakefieldnh.org/fundraising/>

FELLOWSHIP OF CONCERN



We are a community that believes that prayer is powerful! Please keep in your prayers all those who suffer in any way in mind, body and spirit, as well as those who by virtue of their service are far from home or in harm's way. 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.

How Our Prayer Chain Works

Our Prayer Chain has been part of our ministry for many years and has taken on a few incarnations to arrive at what it is now. From a strictly phone chain years ago, we are now into the 21st century and are communicating through phone, text, and email messages.

Here's how it works. If you have a request for "immediate intercessory prayer" for yourself or others, please contact Harriet Wilson by emailing her at (dhwilson39@gmail.com) or by text message to 603-998-4700. If these methods don't work for you, please phone her.

Once Harriet receives a request, she sends out the request by email to those who have volunteered to pray. At which point, Carol Jeffery sends group text message to those who prefer that method of communication.

If you would like to sign up to pray as a member of the prayer chain, please contact Harriet and let her know if you want to be added to the email list or if you prefer text messages.

Virtual Worship

We continue to gather via Zoom for our Sunday Worship. We'd love to see you there. Be sure we have your email address to send you a Zoom invitation. We are also broadcasting it on Facebook Live and uploading some services to YouTube. Go to our Website homepage for links. www.fccwakefieldnh.org

For more information on articles you read in the Steeple Views, contact the editor at steepleviews@gmail.com or call the church office at 603-522-3189.



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FEBRUARY 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<p>1</p> <p>Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30</p> <p>DEADLINE TO ORDER SOUP!</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Faith Formation Study Via Zoom Noon</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room</p> <p>Diaconate Mtg Via Zoom 2 p.m.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Community String Band Via Zoom— 6:30 pm</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>SOUPER SUNDAY SOUP SALE</p> <p>Curbside Pickup 12 noon–2 p.m.</p>
<p>7</p> <p>Fifth Sunday after Epiphany</p> <p>Online Worship Via Zoom and Facebook Live 10 a.m.</p> <p>(Soup Sale Snow Date)</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Faith Formation Study Via Zoom Noon</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Racial Justice Discussion Group via Zoom 4:30</p> <p>Community String Band Via Zoom— 6:30 pm</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14</p> <p>Sixth Sunday after Epiphany</p> <p>Online Worship Via Zoom and Facebook Live 10 a.m.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Caregiver's Support Group 9:30–10:30</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Faith Formation Study Via Zoom Noon</p>	<p>17</p> <p>ASH WEDNESDAY</p> <p>Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room</p> <p>Ash Wednesday Service via Zoom 6 p.m.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Community String Band Via Zoom— 6:30 pm</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>21</p> <p>First Sunday in Lent</p> <p>Online Worship Via Zoom and Facebook Live 10 a.m.</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Faith Formation Study Via Zoom Noon</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Grief Support Group 11 a.m. Parish Helpers Room</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Prayer Shawl Ministry 10 a.m.</p> <p>Community String Band Via Zoom— 6:30 pm</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Second Sunday in Lent</p> <p>Online Worship Via Zoom and Facebook Live 10 a.m.</p> <p>Dr. Tere Ordination 3 p.m. via Zoom</p>						

ORDER NOW!

Souper Bowl Sunday Soups!

\$5.00 for a 16oz container! All orders need to be prepaid.

To place your order, call or email Margie Galabrun at 522-6647 or balchlaker@gmail.com

Order soon! Limited quantities on some of the offerings.

Cut off date for ordering: Monday, February 1st

Curbside Pickup in front of church (across from Wakefield Inn): Saturday, February 6th between 12-2 (snow date: Sunday, February 7th between 12-2). Arrangements can be made for home delivery.



ChurchArt.soup_21918c

Chilis, Chowders and Soups!

Sweet Potato Turkey Chili
Ground Beef and Sausage Chili
White Chicken Chili
Creamy Bacon Corn Chowder
Clam Chowder
Beef Barley Soup
Sweet Potato Black-eyed Pea Soup
Potato Cheddar Soup w/ Ham
Chicken Noodle Soup
Stuffed Pepper Soup
Pea Soup w/ Ham
Chicken Pot Pie Soup
Carrot Ginger Soup
Tomato Basil Soup



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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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SOUPER SUNDAY
SOUP SALE IS ON!
ORDER NOW!
CUT OFF DATE IS
FEBRUARY 1