



## Parish Visitor

First Congregational Church UCC

603-756-4075

walpolechurch@yahoo.com

www.walpolenhucc.org

### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Friends,

No doubt about it. This is a strange time to be the new pastor of any congregation. It is never easy to meet dozens of people in a small period of time, remember names and put the right name with the right face. Now we have to put names to half faces! The classic pastoral duty of making visits has to remain on hold as long as social distancing is necessary to remain safe and healthy. Even if we have to remain physically separate, we are all in this together.

Though physically distant, your hearts have not been remote. Jane, Fletcher and I have never felt so warmly welcomed arriving to a new parish. The meals, the treats, handmade masks, all the help with the parsonage... I could go on. Instead, I am going to get on with it. At this time, it is unsafe to gather in large groups in doors, so why don't we meet in small groups outdoors? It is springtime, after all, soon to be summer. There is a beautiful historic green right in front of the church.

I would like to invite you to meet me for a brown bag lunch. In order to be safe, we will have to take a few precautions. In order to regulate the size of the gathering (I suggest that we keep the size to five, including me). This way it will be possible to socially distance and enjoy conversation. To schedule, please call the office for a lunch time (noon to 1, Mon-Thurs until the end of August). Please schedule by noon the day before. Pat and/or I are generally in the office weekdays 9am to noon. Make a date, bring your lunch, and I'll bring mine. We'll talk.

On Pentecost Sunday, May 31, I announced that I would like to lead a Bible Study on Zoom. I invited suggestions of what book of the Bible to study first. So far, I have received two email suggestions and would like to get more. I also welcome suggestions of an optimal time to meet on Zoom. I plan to announce a final plan by Annual Meeting on June 21. My email address is: PastorRichardWCC@gmail.com.

In the meantime, I have been asked to initiate a congregational conversation about race. This is obviously motivated by the killing of George Floyd and ongoing civil unrest. The first will be held following Zoom worship, Sunday, June 7. I will post a brief reading on the Church Facebook page to use as a conversation starter. We will proceed from there. At this moment in history, we Americans have to grapple with the legacy of racial injustice. It is especially important for Caucasian Americans to ask ourselves hard questions about white privilege. This is long overdue. I pray that by the grace of God, we are up to it,

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Richard



Where are we? Paul Looney, Amy Cann and Richard have transformed us from the joint services of Walpole and Wilmot to our own home grown version in Walpole. Little did we know how much Eric and Sara were working together “behind the scenes” to pull off a pretty smooth online service. Of course, it was back in mid-March that they began (and it wasn’t always smooth) and we all were on a steep learning curve. But Paul has been determined to create our own version and with Amy’s experience and knowledge they are doing very well. We are now to the point that we can be invitational by reaching out to family, friends and neighbors to tell them the good news that we are gathering in faith and love and we want them to share in the service. All are welcome and we all are welcoming people.

What is church in our future going to look like? Clearly it will not be the same as it was prior to March 15, 2020. Like every opening of a service or business there are unique challenges. For us, not everyone will be ready to physically enter the sanctuary. We have a vulnerable population. We have challenges of space, proximity and time. But, we have Zoom and we have an 800 number for those with no computer but do have a phone. When we do return to the sanctuary we will need to have a Zoom camera so the service can be watched at home or from far away and be recorded and posted on our website most likely as a YouTube video. It’s new but it’s exciting!

This week we will be sending out our annual Stewardship letter. There are headwinds. Our sources of funding have changed creating new challenges. Just this past week we were informed by the Savings Bank of Walpole that the Summer Band Concert series has been canceled. That represents another fundraising source lost for the next fiscal year, probably close to \$3,000. We are going ahead with an upgrade to the sound system in the church

that we received at an estimated cost, as of March, of \$1,838. The good news is that it’s paid for thanks to the generosity of one member who donated \$1,000 and nine council members who donated the remaining \$838. We will need more people to come forward and give knowing we are in challenging times.

Despair is not an option. I have been grateful for the positive energy of the leadership of this church. We have set goals with calling a full time minister, making major renovations to the parsonage and transitioning to the Zoom online services. We have not wavered. Let’s continue to go forward together. Thanks be to God!

Peace, Chuck

### **MALMBERG TRANSITION TEAM**

Believe it or not, the Malmbergs have been in Walpole for over two weeks, and a lot has been happening. The moving van arrived at the parsonage on Monday, May 11, the drive-by parade (so wonderfully organized by Frank and Kathryn) was Thursday, May 14, and Pastor Richard preached his first sermon via Zoom on May 17. During the first fourteen days of their settling in, Richard and Jane were treated to dinners, “Field of Meals”, organized by Chris Miller and provided by Ann Looney, Jane Vesper, Marcia and Jeanne, Kat Graves, Maggi Suttles, Judy Daniels, and Janet Wilson. We’ve heard that the peanut butter fudge made by Kat Graves scored a home run – any chance we can get the recipe? Thank you to all who pitched in.

Looking ahead, we are exploring ways to build relationships between Pastor Richard and our church family. Stay tuned! The MTT (Malmberg Transition Team) continues to meet every Tuesday at 1 p.m. via Zoom. Three members of the former Search Committee will be joining us until the official Pastor-Parish Relations Committee is voted in at the annual meeting on June 21.



May 2020

We had our trustee meeting for May on the 12th.

- Our focus in April and the beginning of May was to complete the Parsonage refresh before our new minister and family arrive on the 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - For the most part we accomplished our goal.
  - A FEW ITEMS REMAIN.
    - The new floor in the summer kitchen needs to be finished.
    - The ramp entrance is yet to be started.
      - The front step needs to be repaired.
    - We are looking at trying to stop moisture from entering the cellar.
      - Not yet sure how we will resolve.
    - There is a list of small items the Malmbergs have noticed.

Our next meeting is June 9th at 6:30.

Paul

My contact information: phone number 603-318-8917, looneyp@msagroup.com.

If you call, please leave a message and I will get back to you. You can also text to that number if you would prefer.

Missions activity has been quiet for the past two months due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We did send \$465.00 to the UCC for One Great Hour of Sharing. We will be collecting for Strengthen the Church on May 31<sup>st</sup>. Both of these offerings are part of our five for five commitment.

During these difficult times, the Food Shelf is in need of help. Please continue to send in your checks and we will see that the contributions get to the Food Shelf.

We are in hopes of having our fall rummage sale. We will keep you informed. With all of this stay-at-home time we are having, we should all have well-organized closets and cupboards, and bags or boxes of items to donate.

We welcome Rev. Malmberg and Jane to our church and community and look forward to our relationship with them.

Everyone stay safe and well. Despite all the turmoil and conflict in the world, we have many blessings to thank God for.

Linda Smith, Clerk



The Memorial Committee is starting to see some movement. Sue Scott started tending the Memorial Garden as of last Thursday. She will be planting some annuals. At her request, we shall be replacing one of the adirondack chairs with two new ones.

Keene Monument has opened again and hopefully we will have the paver for Evelyn Tewksbury to be placed in the Garden.

Peace to all.  
Minna Good

## **SBW CONCERTS ON THE GREEN – CANCELLED**

From: **Sarah Downing** <[sdowning@walpolenh.us](mailto:sdowning@walpolenh.us)>  
Date: Tue, May 26, 2020, 1:38 PM  
Subject: Town\_FW: 2020\_SBW Concerts on the Green -  
Cancelled

Hello all: There have been questions regarding the Concerts on the Green for this summer. See the notice of cancellation below.

Sarah

**From:** Danielle Ruffo <[druffo@walpolebank.com](mailto:druffo@walpolebank.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 26, 2020 1:27 PM  
**To:** 'Sarah Downing' <[sdowning@walpolenh.us](mailto:sdowning@walpolenh.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: 2020\_SBW Concerts on the Green

Hi Sarah,

With much dismay, we have decided to cancel our summer concerts on the green for this year. I wanted you to be the first to know. It is so unfortunate but I think we all knew this may be the case. Depending on how things look in the fall we may consider something then and will be sure to keep you in the loop.

Thank you,

Danielle

## **FINANCE** COMMITTEE

Finance committee has been meeting more often than usual, due to the time of year when a lot is going on! Our Annual Meeting is coming up at the end of June and the Church Council has now approved the budget for 2020-21. It will be presented for approval at the meeting. As I mentioned last month, we were not happy with the size of the deficit budget (\$66,000), and after re-working it a second and third time, it has now reached a better number (\$56,500). The good news is that we are doing very well for this period, holding our own and keeping expenses low. There are many unknowns in our immediate future which makes it exceptionally hard to project our expenses accurately, but we are confident that we will be able to meet the challenge.

The Easter Appeal brought in an amazing \$6450, and the most recent request for donations toward the cost of the new sound system brought in more than enough, when members and friends were challenged!

On another note, various members of the congregation have jumped in and helped us cover some of the extra costs incurred while refurbishing the parsonage—and we hope that all of you will have an opportunity to see what wonderful changes have been made to make it a most desirable residence.

Obviously, our endowment with Mascoma has been reduced since, along with the withdrawal for parsonage work, the stock market took a big hit thanks to the covid-19 virus. Again, the good news is that it has already returned to an amount over one million dollars, due to some grants and special gifts from friends.

We are looking forward to a low-key pledge drive at the end of May/early June, and you will soon hear about that and be able to participate. According to our financial secretary Linda Smith, some members have already paid their pledge in full for this fiscal year, ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Stay safe!  
Janet

## LETTER FROM ZIMBABWE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ZIBABWE  
CHIREDDI CHURCH  
1268 NJONJOLINJOLINJO ROAD  
CHIREDDI  
Email address [chiredziuccz@gmail.com](mailto:chiredziuccz@gmail.com)  
Phone +263 312316662

To: Walpole Church  
From: Chiredzi UCCZ  
07 May 2020

We greet you in the name of Lord Jesus Christ.

The year 2020 become one of the toughest years after a century of another 1920 pandemic. We are living in this period on the mercies of our Lord Jesus.

When the outbreak started we went into a shock of what the world would bring. Nevertheless God's hand is helping us to soldier on.

We stopped our normal services as directed by our church leadership as well as the Government not to gather as a way of compacting the spread of the virus.

As a nation as I write we are now on a second stage of lockdown. Certain companies had resumed operations on strict health monitoring.

As for the churches they remain suspended. We have device a method of contacting our services through whatsapp chat group where one will preach through an audio or a text message. We are very optimistic that this world fever will soon go.

We mourn with the world on the passing on of our loved on due to this covid 19.

It is still a challenge to go for a zoom church service due to the economic hurdle as well as live Facebook church series.

It is our prayer as a church that Walpole church will be protected from this disease.

We are doing all well. Our Chiredzi District hasn't recorded as infection, and we continue to supplicate that we remain under God's shade.

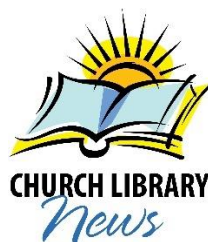
Most of the church programs has been affected by the covid induced lockdown.

What strengthen us are Jesus' words that (Matthew 19:2)6, "With God all things are possible". The possibility is from God.

It is our prayer that the church minister has settled now.

May God bless us all as we join hands in prayer of fighting the world pandemic

Yours  
Rev. Hatienzani Sozayapi  
Minister in Charge  
UCCZ Chiredzi Church.



We have received seven new books to add to our library.

Thank you, Nancianne Houghton, for giving six lovely inspirational books.

FIRST THING EVERY MORNING by Lewis Timberlake.  
JESUS CALLING by Sarah Young.  
EVERYDAY COMFORT by Rebecca Currington.  
BEDSIDE BLESSINGS by Charles Swindoll.  
WALKING WITH THE LORD by Christine Dallman.  
INSPIRED FAITH by Simple Truth Books.

Thank you, Bob Rhodes for giving a Church bloopers book: CHURCH CHUCKLES by Ellen Blooming. Guaranteed to make you laugh!

Hope to see you soon. Stay safe :)

Judy Foley  
Librarian

## **LETTER BY THE REVERENCE GORDON M. RANKIN, CONFERENCE MINISTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Not Yet...And I Don't Know When  
*A Personal Reflection by Rev. Gordon Rankin*

Nearly twenty years ago, my wife and I entered the adoption process. At our very first orientation with our adoption agency, we were given pin-on buttons that said, "Not Yet and Don't Ask." The idea was that there are so many times through the adoption process when you are asked when your child will arrive that you have the button to provide the answer for you. To be honest, when I first received that button, I thought it rather rude. I came to appreciate it more as our adoption process moved forward. Just a couple weeks after we received a profile with information and a couple of pictures of the young girl we were to adopt, SARS struck in China. Both the United States and Chinese governments said we were not allowed to travel to China to pick her up. I was heartbroken. The delay was excruciating. It was also absolutely necessary.

In my role as Conference Minister, I am asked several times a day the question "When do you think we will be able to resume in-person worship?" I find myself more and more giving an answer similar to that which was on that adoption button, "Not yet...and I don't know when." It seems the most honest answer I can give. It breaks my heart a little every time I need to say it. But I also believe it is necessary.

So I know there is a lot of talk right now about churches "reopening". So you may rightly wonder why I would say "Not yet". Here is my thinking:

o First, we have had some changes with regard to public health and Covid-19. We now better understand transmission of the virus. There are also some places around the state where we are seeing declines in cases of the disease. But one very important thing that has not changed at all is that churches (and other faith communities) remain a very high-risk location for transmission. The Center for Disease Control has referred to churches as "super spreaders". Because of the numbers we gather in, what we do when we are together and how we do it, churches are incubators for wide-scale community infection with this virus. Not only has the CDC documented specific cases but, as churches in some communities have begun to resume in person worship (even in modified ways), there has been plenty of anecdotal evidence as well.

o Given the high-risk factor of viral spread in church communities, it is clear that when we resume in-person worship our services will need to be highly modified.

Unless there are marked changes in testing and tracing or treatment, our services will likely need to remain significantly modified until there is a publicly accessible vaccine. Based on the CDC's Interim Guidelines for Faith Communities and the current conversations occurring in Governor Sununu's Reopening Task Force, such modifications are likely to include limiting the size of worship gatherings, marking seating locations out in tape to promote social distancing, propping doors open throughout the entire gathering (clearly more problematic in the winter), requiring masks be worn by staff and the congregation, abstaining from physical contact, avoiding use of commonly touched items, vigorous cleaning routines and restriction on how and when food may be served. Further, it seems that Governor Sununu will be expecting denominations (in conjunction with their insurance carriers) to provide guidelines regarding liturgical matters such as abstaining from singing and modified routines for serving communion. As I have written about before, I can't help but wonder if our current alternative forms of worship are providing a more meaningful worship than these highly modified in-person versions will be able to do.

o As we all know, it is taking a lot of intentional effort to maintain unity of community right now. Some are not able to connect to worship, study and fellowship opportunities they way others are. From my perspective, our churches have been very attentive to this reality. As we return to in-person worship, I believe our unity of community issues will become more complex rather than less. Because of people's personal health risks, we will have some worshipping in person, some likely by technology, and some who are not able to connect in either method. I have no doubt that our congregations will be able to find ways to keep all three groups connected with one another. But it will take time and planning. My concern, is that if we resume in-person worship before we've done such planning, we risk leaving some in our communities feeling isolate and deserted.

o Finally, I am concerned for the health of our pastors and church musicians. I well know that a significant number of both in our churches fall in to high-risk populations. As a Type-2 diabetic, I do as well. Never before have I known that to limit what I do in ministry, but now, I'll admit, it has me being far more cautious. I was quite touched to hear a story this past week of a Jewish congregation in Concord who told their Rabbi who has a compromised immune system from medical treatments that they would not discuss resuming in-person worship until it was safe for her to do so. We cannot afford to ignore the health risks to our pastors and musicians in our discernment regarding resuming inperson worship. Such conversations need to be had in a respectfully and confidentially manner, but they do need to happen. We

have talked a lot about how our discernment in these days must reflect the love and care for everyone in our communities. Our staff are very much among those who need our love and care right now.

I expect sometime in the next few week's Governor Sununu's Office will provide guidance for the "reopening" of faith communities. After the opportunity to review the Governor's guidance and consult with our insurance carrier, the Conference will provide some denominational guidelines. With those resources in hand, I expect the leadership of our churches will engage in the faithful discernment of what is the best way forward in their setting. Until that time, and perhaps even long after it, when folk inquire of you when in-person worship will resume, I invite you to share my phrase. You could even put it on a button if you want. Not yet...and I don't know when.

Blessings during these uncertain days,  
Gordon



"I want to thank all the people who have sent me get well cards, notes and phone calls over the past few months. Your thoughts and prayers have been appreciated and now I'm looking forward to the future when we can once again gather together.

Nancianne Houghton"

### **WANTED FOR PARSONAGE**

Executive-style wooden desk,  
excellent condition.  
Office chair to go with desk.  
Area rugs.



### **BIRTHDAYS**

6/03 June Houghton  
6/05 Virginia Putnam  
6/09 Martha Kingsbury  
6/13 Geri Stevens  
6/16 Erin Bowen  
6/18 Susan Durgin  
6/18 Rebecca Pearson  
6/20 Jeanne Cloues  
6/21 Pat Kingsbury  
6/24 Jane Vesper  
6/25 Tom Winmill  
6/29 Shirley Byczkowski

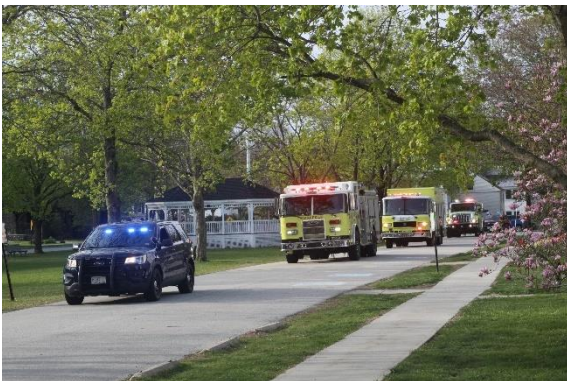
### **ANNIVERSARIES**

6/01 Dave & Cindy Westover  
6/02 Leroy & Cheryl Watson  
6/04 Don & Jana Sellarole  
6/09 David & Barbara Maysilles  
6/15 Bruce & Jan Martin  
6/21 Bill & Nancianne Houghton  
6/26 Curt & Betsey Congdon

For help for yourself or a loved  
one suffering from addiction,  
call Becky Pearson at  
603-860-0221.

# MALMBERG'S WELCOME AUTO PARADE

## MAY 14, 2020



**PLEASE POST THIS CALENDAR FOR EASY REFERENCE**

**June 2020**

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**\* Calendar subject to change due to challenges of Covid-19**

Tuesday, June 2	Malmberg Transition Team/Pastor Parish Committee Meetings via Zoom	1:00 pm
Wednesday, June 3	Executive Board Meeting via Zoom	4:30 pm
Saturday, June 6	Church Council Meeting via Zoom	8:30 am
Sunday, June 7	Worship Service / Communion online via Zoom	10:00 am
Tuesday, June 9	Malmberg Transition Team/Pastor Parish Committee Meetings via Zoom Deacons Meeting	1:00 pm 5:00 pm
Wednesday, June 10	Executive Board Meeting via Zoom	4:30 pm
Sunday, June 14	Worship Service online via Zoom	10:00 am
Tuesday, June 16	Malmberg Transition Team/Pastor Parish Committee Finance Committee Meeting	1:00 pm 4:30 pm
Wednesday, June 17	Executive Board Meeting via Zoom	4:30 pm
Thursday, June 18	Mission & Action Committee Meeting	3:00 pm
Sunday, June 21	Worship Service online via Zoom ANNUAL MEETING online via Zoom	10:00 am 11:30 am
Monday, June 22	CLARION DEADLINE	
Tuesday, June 23	PARISH VISITOR DEADLINE	
Sunday, June 28	Worship Service online via Zoom	

Church Office Hours: 9 am to 12 noon, M-F

# PARISH VISITOR



If we live by the  
**SPIRIT,**  
let us also keep  
in step with the  
**SPIRIT.**

**GALATIANS 5:25. ESV**



First Congregational Church  
PO Box 393  
Walpole, NH 03608

