

# Parish Visitor

First Congregational Church UCC

603-756-4075

walpolechurch@yahoo.com

www.walpolenhucc.org



2024

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Friends,

Lent is a time for prayer and contemplation. The forty days recall the time Jesus spent fasting and praying in the wilderness, after his baptism. Mark tells us that after he was baptized, "...the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him." (Mark 1:12-13)

Because Jesus fasted, many observe the season by giving something up for Lent. I find this a helpful focus, and a practical spiritual discipline. I try to avoid giving up some trivial indulgence, like chocolate, or dessert. However, if desserts are significantly impacting your health, that might be just the thing. Rather than giving something up, some choose to take on a Lenten discipline, like daily prayer, Bible Study, exercise, or volunteering. This year, I will offer some opportunities you might like to try during your Lenten journey:

**Ash Wednesday:** Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. there will a special worship service to mark the beginning of Lent. The service will include Communion and the imposition of ashes.

**The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon:** For our Lenten study this year, we will read and discuss Bill McKibben's 2022 memoir, *The Flag, the Cross and the Station Wagon*. We will gather in Fellowship Hall to discuss our reading following worship on five Sundays in Lent: February 18, 25, March 3, 10, and 24. The book is widely available in paperback, and a librarian I know said the title is easily obtained through interlibrary loan.

**Thursday Morning Meditation:** We will gather from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. on Thursday mornings, February 15, 22, 29, March 7, 14 and 21 in the front parlor of the parsonage. We will begin with a brief reading for reflection, then spend 30 minutes in silence. At the end of thirty minutes, we will share our insights and experiences meditating for the remainder of our time together. We will part at 10:00, spiritually primed for the day.

I hope you will find something among these opportunities to enrich your Lenten experience. If none of the above appeal to you, but would like to engage in a Lenten discipline, let me know. I may be able to help you discern something that works for you. **Feel free to call me, email or drop by the office.**

Sometimes it helps to think out loud with someone else.

I wish you all a rich and meaningful Lent, as we prepare for the drama and heartbreak of Holy Week, and glorious resurrection on Easter.

In Christ,  
Richard Malmberg

## February Altar Flowers

2/4 Mike Brodeur  
2/11. Sandy Pickering  
2/18. Richard Malmberg  
2/25. Linda Jeffrey

## From Our Council

I write this in the middle of a cold snap, the perfect time for soup and jigsaw puzzles, and some good reading. I hope you are all staying warm.!

In looking back at 2023, we have much to be thankful for; a very successful Mistletoe Mart after a long hiatus; a free concert by the Westmoreland Town Band in the sanctuary, and a beautiful, very moving Christmas Eve Service that was well-attended. As we look ahead to 2024, we are aware of a renewed energy and sense of optimism in the church.

The January Council meeting was well attended, and topic filled. Pot-luck suppers have resumed, and we discussed a possible Cabaret in April. We also discussed sponsoring a church retreat, which has not been done for several years. Lots of good ideas were shared.

We regret that on January 7, we called off church, as many churches in the area were closing, and our musician had canceled. Four hardy souls still showed up. To rectify this, Richard has registered with WMUR. In the future, please check the latest local cancellations and watch your emails if a question about the weather ever comes up.

The **Prepared to Serve Workshop** in Pembroke is scheduled for February 24, and we have brochures in the office. Part of this will be offered online, so stop by and look at the offerings. This is usually a worthwhile and motivating event.

Easter comes early this year, on March 31, and plans are underway. We are looking forward to an active and engaged Spring season. Welcome aboard and hang on!!

A reminder to all of you, anyone is welcome to attend the Council meetings. We have a dedicated group of about 12 people who work hard to complete the work of the church. We meet once a month at 8:30 on a Saturday morning, a date is determined at each meeting. Please feel welcome.

We wish you all a Happy New Year full of many fruitful possibilities!  
Sue Krebs

## Beki is going to Europe!

In April I will be going to France and Spain for 10 days on a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I will spend 5 days in each country and get to see and explore some amazing places that I have been learning about in my classes. I will be going with other students who are taking French and Spanish at the high school. We will begin our trip by going to Paris then we will proceed to Provence. After a few days we will then go to Barcelona and finally we will go to Madrid. While in these cities we will be able to see the culture and heritage in these places that previously we had only been able to learn about in the classroom. We will also see many iconic and historic places. We will be going on this trip with a tour guide which will help us be able to explore the cities in a way that we otherwise might not be able to. This is an amazing opportunity that I would not be able to experience if it weren't for my school, family, friends, church, and community.

## Missions Report

January 20, with 17-degree temps, your Missions Committee hosted a peanut butter/jelly/snack drive-by. Even with the cold temps, we felt it was very successful (will not do this in January again). 83 jars of peanut butter, 46 jars of jelly, a box full of coffee, and a case of soup. We also had lots of snacks donated. Thank you to all who participated.

Brrrr....

## Gwen Yardley's Mistletoe Mart Repo



**Missions Peanut Butter Ladies**

## Deacons

January was a quiet month for the deacons. In December we purchased gifts for the members of our congregation who are unable to make it to church on Sundays. Warm slipper socks, throw blankets, candles and chocolates were among the gifts that were delivered by Linda Jeffrey. A beautiful earth-toned prayer shawl was given to Chuck Shaw after being blessed by Richard and the deacons.

(continued)

The church has several extra communion plates. We are looking into sending one to the UCC Zimbabwe to be put to good use. The very special plate that we use each month was given to the church by Marjorie McGill and is beautifully engraved in memory of Frank McGill. Next month the deacons will help with the Ash Wednesday event. On Tuesday, Feb 13th (Shrove Tuesday), our church is invited to attend a Mardi Gras dinner and prayer service with the Good Shepherd Church in Charlestown. Call me for details. 603-860-0221. (more information below) Happy February!  
Becky

## Birthdays in February:

Austin Pickering 2/1  
Emily Wilson 2/1  
Judy Daniels 2/2  
Carole Hill 2/2  
Sara Beauregard 2/3  
Ann Rogers 2/6  
Brooke Houghton 2/9  
Charles Wright 2/9  
Michael Wright 2/12  
Jeremy Johns 2/16  
Paul Trask 2/19  
Jane Malmberg 2/20  
Ann Looney 2/21  
George Jeffrey 2/25

## Anniversaries in February:

Mark and Brooke Houghton 2/6

## Women's Fellowship



**Souper Bowl Sunday**, February 11!!! Your **Missions Committee** is once again sponsoring Souper Bowl Sunday.

Join us in Fellowship Hall after service and take home some soup. We will also have rolls and cornbread available. All by donation and proceeds split between Our Place and the Fall Mountain. Food Shelf.

As president of Women's Fellowship, I am calling a monthly meeting for Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 1pm at the church. According to our By-laws our regular officers the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are limited to two terms of two years and then they must take a hiatus. Our present officers are overdue to be replaced. Therefore, we will have an election of officers at this meeting. Our Secretary, Sue Krebs is the only officer who is eligible for re-election. To keep Women's fellowship going, we need new leadership. Is it your turn now?

Other items include a discussion about the future of the Women's Fellowship at our church!

We also need to discuss some requests for money such as a donation to help Beki Bowen fund a school trip this summer. Perhaps a new bible for the altar? Or do you have ideas? Please call me at 603-209-3598 or email me at [gyardley@myfairpoint.net](mailto:gyardley@myfairpoint.net). If you are coming to the meeting, please let me know.

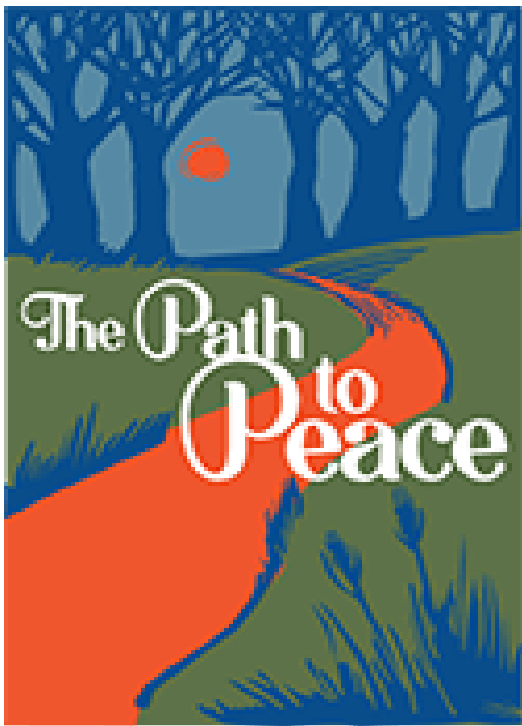


The **Good Shepherd Church in Charlestown, NH** is inviting members of our church and other local churches to enjoy a Mardi Gras-themed dinner on Shrove Tuesday (Fat Tuesday) February 13<sup>th</sup> at their church on Main St. They are hoping to continue the interfaith fellowship that they enjoyed at our town-wide picnic.

There will be an evening prayer at 6:00 pm in the church, which will be followed by a Mardi Gras dinner in their Fellowship Hall across the street. They will be serving traditional foods (Gumbo, Jambalaya, red beans, etc.) If you would like to attend the celebration, they would welcome breads or salads to add to their buffet.

This would be a wonderful way to kick off the Lenten Season! Please email Becky Pearson if you have any questions. Thank you - Becky.

# PARISH VISITOR



First Congregational Church, UCC  
PO Box 393  
Walpole, NH 03608

