



Parish Visitor

First Congregational Church UCC

603-756-4075

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www.walpolenhucc.org

June 2024

Friends,

I would like to propose a Summer Book Club. We will read *The Lemon Tree: an Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East* by Sandy Tolan. It tells the story of one house, to which an Israeli family and a Palestinian family both lay claims. In a region and a country known for a long history of conflict, they explore a different way. This true story portrays an alternative to more death and destruction.

Every day since October 7, we have heard heartbreaking news from Israel and Gaza. I chose the *Lemon Tree* because it portrays a hopeful vision for a battered region. Though it was published nearly twenty years ago, it is still widely available. I called the Village Square Booksellers in Bellows Falls and was told they could order copies to arrive in about a week. I spoke to a librarian I know, and she said there are several copies available for interlibrary loan. Anyone who wants to participate in the Book Club but does not want to buy the book should be able to check it out at the library.

Apart from being an excellent book and an inspiring story, *The Lemon Tree* offers some historical background of an area we hear a lot about but do not know nearly enough. We will gather to discuss the book soon after Labor Day. Time and location to be announced.

Peace,
Richard



Birthdays in June

June Houghton	6/3
Martha Kingsbury	6/9
Erin Bowen	6/16
Daniel Bemis	6/18
Becky Pearson	6/18
Tim Foley	6/19
Pat Kingsbury	6/21
Lester Phillips	6/24
Eryn Sellarole	6/24
Jane Vesper	6/24
Tom Winmill	6/25
Alicia Keller	6/27
Shirley Byczkowski	6/29

Anniversaries in June

David and Cindy Westover	6/1
Leroy and Cheryl Watson	6/2
Don and Jana Sellarole	6/4
Bruce and Jan Martin	6/15
Curt and Betsey Congdon	6/26

Woman's Fellowship

We will be meeting on Wednesday, June 12 at noon. We will be gathering for a potluck picnic. If it is nice we'll meet outside. Discussion of our upcoming year will help us plan for next year. Bring a dish to share. We will provide beverages and dessert. So, bring your ideas to share. See you then.

Our Church Council

Offerings, Pledges, and Artificial Intelligence

This month, I decided to write about our church's online giving option that is on our website, <https://walpolenhucc.org/>. I recently set up a small, weekly recurring donation so if I miss a Sunday in the sanctuary, I can still make an offering. It's easy to do. Check it out!

Then I started thinking about offerings, and why a monetary transaction is part of worship. I couldn't come up with the right words. So, I Googled "Offerings as part of worship," and the following explanation popped up, which was generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI)!

Offerings are a form of worship that allow believers to respond to God's love, grace, and mercy. They can also be a way to put faith and trust in the Lord. Then I started thinking about our annual pledge drive, so I Googled "Pledge as part of worship" and AI came up with this:

A pledge is a promise between a person and God to give their time, talents, and money as a response to God's generosity and an expression of faith.

Pledging can be a spiritual practice that helps people grow in their faith and trust in God and can help keep God a priority in their lives. Pledging can also help people grow in gratitude and generosity in their lives.

As Church Council Co-Chair, I spend a lot of time pouring over the church finances. Pledges and offerings get reduced to line items on a spreadsheet. For me, it's helpful to be reminded that they are so much more than that. Pledges and offerings are reflections of our desire to "improve our conscious contact with God" (from Alcoholics Anonymous' Step 11), and a gesture of gratitude for God's grace in our lives.

Peace,

Marilyn Shriver

Please read below Peg's correspondence with The Reverend Rebean Dirikwe, Minister in charge, UCC in Zimbabwe. Following that is a letter from Peg.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ZIMBABWE

Dear: Margaret Winnen

First Congregational Church- Walpole UCC

REF: APPRECIATING THE SPECIAL GIFTS WE
RECEIVED FROM WALPOLE

Warm greetings in the glorious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ- Amen! I hope and trust this letter finds you well? Here we are doing well, though it's too hot, there is no rain and the whole nation is heading to a drought this year. This will not be good for the Nation, even the Church Congregation is not spared. I'm so glad to hear that you received our letter and photographs from the Pastor and the entire Chiredzi Congregation. Thank you also for lighting the candles every week, wishing us well in Zimbabwe. We wrote this letter as a gesture of appreciation for your unwavering support. We pray our routine visits will resume soon so that we may start visiting each other in person.

We were so happy to receive the response letter from you. Let me take this opportunity to thank you for the special gifts we received in December 2023 from you. There were 10 Boxes full of clothing, medical materials, educational stationeries etc. These gifts were so special for the Church official use and beneficial to individual members. They were distributed equally among the Church families and no one was left behind. As their Pastor, I was so happy to see everyone with shining faces when receiving their share.

It is very true that the children within our Congregation are facing huge challenges on accessing education due to failure to raise tuition fees, buying uniforms and stationeries.

Each Primary School child needs \$250 USD and Secondary School Child \$500 USD per term or semester. As I mentioned on the first letter last year, most of our Church members are surviving on informal work and only 20% are formally employed. We would be appreciating much if you can chip in and assist them. We have compiled a list of 25 children who are the most needy. The Church leadership also found it necessary to include three of the Pastor's children as tuition beneficiaries.

We are also interested in growing vegetables as individuals and as a Church at the premise, though access to vegetable seeds and municipality water are challenging in Chiredzi- Zimbabwe. We are planning to start a borehole drilling project at the Church and we welcome your

maximum support and assistance in order to achieve this goal. We are working on better quotation which are viable for the Church. I once greeted you on your Facebook page, but it seems you are not frequent.

Regards to your Pastor and family, Education committee, Mission team, Evangelism wing, Sales team and the entire First Congregational Church of Walpole UCC.

May God bless you always.
Rev. Rebean Dirikwe
Minister in-charge.

Deacons

A few months ago, we offered the UCC in Zimbabwe a communion tray and chalice that we no longer needed. Last month we received an email from Precious Simango of the Chiredzi UCCZ saying that they would love to have these gifts from our church! They will be hand-delivered by NH UCC members who are visiting Zimbabwe this summer. She sends blessings from their church to ours. How wonderful that we get to share our good fortune with our sister churches?

Currently, we are preparing to assist the family of Grace Chandler with their service to say farewell to a beloved member of our church.

The deacon of the month for June is Peter Graves 756-3077.

Enjoy this beautiful weather!

Becky 603-860-0221



Peg's letter to us:

Our Missions in Action

I hope you have read Rev Dirikwe's letter. In response to his letter, we have decided to donate \$1000 to the Tuition Sponsorship Fund to help bring education to the children of our sister church in Chiredzi. We are also sending \$500 for their borehole project, as having water easily accessible is a life changer for this community. We will also be collecting vegetable seeds in packets to send, too. In July, a delegation from New Hampshire UCC will be going to Zimbabwe and hope to send these things with this group. We are also sending, with thanks to the Diaconate for donating, a communion set.

In Fellowship Hall is a box with the Zimbabwe flag on it. Please place your donated seeds there. We also want photographs of you and your families with a letter about you. We are also looking for any photos you have of our church activities.

On June 1 during the worship service, we will dedicate our gifts that will go to Chiredzi.

Thank you for your support in helping our sister church and encouraging them in their endeavors.

Peg

Stewardship Committee

THE PLEDGE DRIVE IS HERE

June 2024

This month you will receive a letter and a pledge card. In the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year we received pledges of \$97,300, 97.3% of our goal of \$100,000. This year we set a modest goal of \$105,000, an increase of 5%. We prayerfully request you consider increasing your pledge 5%. As we have demonstrated in our church, many hands make light work. This applies to pledges too. If we all increase our pledge by 5% many hands will have made it easy. Thank you.

Memorial Committee

This fiscal year is coming to a close and summer is upon us! This means that we will have an abundance of summer flowers to share with the congregation on the altar every Sunday during June, July and August. We have 3 open dates for altar flowers for the month of June, so the Sundays of June 2,9,23 are open. This is the perfect opportunity for someone to celebrate a high school or college graduation, a wedding anniversary, or other special event. Please contact Ellie Shaw, 603-756-4866, if you would like to contribute flowers for any of these dates.

Please also remember to pick up an "Intentional Memorial Giving" form, to be found on the table under the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. The cover sheet to the form gives a good explanation, so be sure to read it. We are asking members to return the forms to a member of the Memorial Committee (Ellie Shaw, Pat Kingsbury, or Sandy Pickering) any time before or at the Annual Meeting. They will be kept on file and referenced when the time comes.

We are grateful to Susan Scott for tending to the Memorial Garden as she did her spring clean-up recently. Take some time to wander through and enjoy the beauty. Look on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for a description of the garden and a list of the plants. You can also find the description tucked in a Nalgene water bottle attached to one of the chairs in the garden.

Thank you,
Ellie Shaw

Trustees

In April and May the trustees have worked on the budget for 2024-25. We plan to keep it flat and manage our items.

We also met with Blanc Bailey to review the scope of the siding project on the back of the church. We believe we have an accurate estimate and know the scope of the work. We will be able to present the project at the annual meeting.

The spring cleanup is ongoing. We are doing it a little differently by asking members to take cleanup items and do the tasks on their own time. I want to thank all of our members who chipped in!

Ellie is cleaning and putting out the memorial garden chairs.

Bonnie and Chris are cleaning the kitchen.

Lester and Sue are cleaning the inside windows.

Minna is cleaning candle sticks.

Marilyn is cleaning communion serving silver.

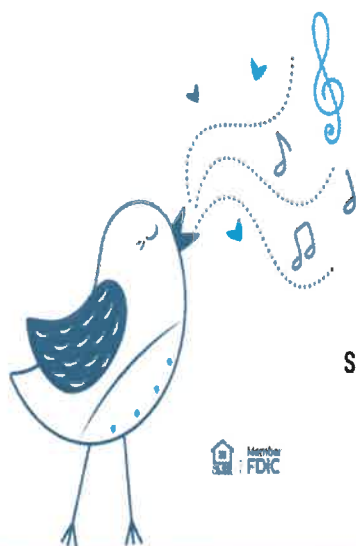
Don is trimming bushes outside.

Sue Scott maintained the memorial garden.

Dale and I mulched.

I will wash the outside fellowship windows.

I apologize if I forgot anyone. Thank you – Paul.



Sweet Sounds of Summer.

SBW Concerts on the Green Summer Series



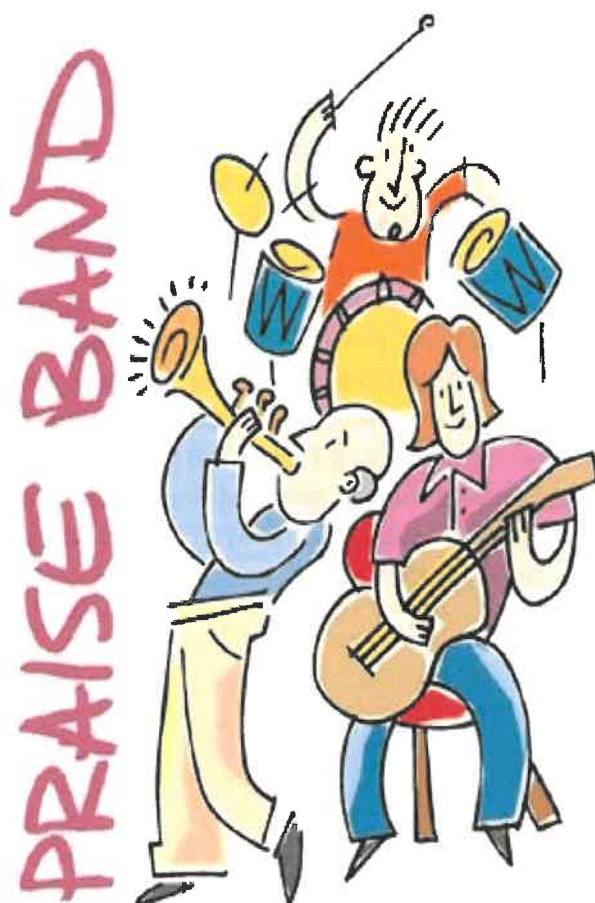
June–August
walpolebank.com/concerts-on-the-green

Sponsored by the Savings Bank
Of Walpole, NH

2024 SBW Concerts on the Green Summer Series
For the 41st year, Savings Bank of Walpole is excited to sponsor the “Concerts on the Green” series in Walpole. The eight-concert series, which will be held on the town green in Walpole, will kick off on Sunday, June 16 with the Westmoreland Town Band and go through mid-August. All shows will be held rain or shine on Sundays from 6:30–8:00 PM. Pack a picnic basket, bring a blanket and/or lawn chair and enjoy the show! For more information, call (603) 352-1822.

2024 SBW CONCERTS ON THE GREEN SUMMER SERIES SCHEDULE

June 16, 2024	Westmoreland Town Band
June 23, 2024	The Walt Sayre Orchestra
June 30, 2024	Keene American Legion Band
July 7, 2024	Nelson Town Band
July 14, 2024	East Bay Jazz Ensemble
July 21, 2024	Springfield Community Band
July 28, 2024	The Temple Band
August 4, 2024	Brattleboro American Legion Band
August 11, 2024	River Valley Dance Band



Church Calendar for June 2024

Sunday, June 2	Communion worship service, in person and on zoom	10:00 am
Sunday, June 9	Worship service, in person and on zoom Notice of Annual meeting posted and read at service.	10:00 am
Wednesday, June 12	Women's Fellowship Tea	12:00 pm
Sunday, June 16	Worship service, in person and on zoom Notice of Annual meeting posted and read at service. Father's Day!	10:00 am
Sunday, June 23	Worship service, in person and on zoom Annual Meeting in Fellowship Hall immediately following.	10:00 am
Sunday, June 30	Worship service, in person and on zoom	10:00 am

Combined July and August Parish Visitor Deadline June 25.

Church Office Hours 9am to 12pm M-F

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