



# First Church in Jaffrey Weathervane January - February 2023

## CALL FOR FCiJ ANNUAL MEETING

January 8, 2023



To All Members and Friends of the First Church in Jaffrey (UCC):

The 2023 Annual Meeting of The First Church in Jaffrey will be held in our sanctuary on Sunday, January 29, 2023, immediately following the morning worship service.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

Receive and vote on reports for the year 2022;

Vote on the proposed 2023 Budget;

Vote on the election of officers or circles (*just trustee nominations this year*);

Vote on an addition to our investment policy, as suggested by the Trustees as follows:

1. The manager (*currently Bar Harbor Wealth Management*) will consider Environmental, Social, and Governance criteria when selecting equity investments. ESG scores for current holdings will be reported to the committee periodically or upon request.
2. The manager shall incorporate environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and governance (ESG) into the investment evaluation process as part of its overall risk assessment in its investments decision making.

Undertake such other actions that may legally come before the meeting.

All members and friends are invited to attend. However, only members and associate members may vote.

Nancy Elder-Wilfrid, Clerk

This meeting will be available via Zoom for those wishing to attend from home.



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## **Some Thoughts from the Christmas Season**

***Poem from Christmas Day shared by John Raleigh***

This Christmas, mend a quarrel,  
 Seek out a forgotten friend,  
 Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust,  
 Write a love letter,  
 Share some treasure,  
 Give a soft answer,  
 Encourage youth,  
 Manifest your loyalty in word or deed,  
 Keep a promise,  
 Find the time,  
 Forego a grudge,  
 Forgive an enemy,  
 Listen,  
 Apologize if you were wrong,  
 Try to understand,  
 Speak your love,  
 Speak it again,  
 Speak it still once more.

***Prayer from Christmas Day shared by Seth Miller***

*Prayer from Rev. William Barber*

God, help us to be angry enough at injustice that we hurt, tearful enough to cry with those who are crying, hopeful enough in the midst of despair that we do not give up, faithful enough to stay with the task, and foolish enough to believe that we can make a difference. Help us and hold us. Amen

**(continued on Page 3)**

*(Christmas Thoughts – cont'd)*

*Quote about Christmas Pageants from Jill Tyler*

Christianity survives because once a year, our children dress up in bathrobes and remind us  
to not be afraid  
to spend time with animals  
to keep looking at the stars  
to make the trip  
to share our gifts  
to rejoice

*Poem from Steve's sermon on January 1*

*“The Work of Christmas” by Howard Thurman*

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among all people,  
To make music in the heart.



**The Christmas Eve Quartet:  
Jim Reiman, Linda Grant Reiman,  
Janet Grant and Steve Miller**

## 2023 January/February Worship at First Church

**Meditation text in bold; Call to Worship text in plain font**

January 8, 2023

“Getting Off to a Good Start”

**Matthew 3:13-17**

Isaiah 42:1-9

February 5, 2023

“The Courage to Be”

**Matthew 5:13-20**

Isaiah 58:1-9

*Communion*

January 15, 2023

*ML King Day*

“The Long Arc”

**Isaiah 49:1-7**

Psalm 40

February 12, 2023

Guest Pastor

Rt. Rev. Mark Beckwith

January 22, 2023

“Welcome Me into the Night”

**Matthew 4:12-23**

Psalm 27

February 19, 2023

“Calling the Elders”

**Matthew 17:1-9**

Psalm 99

January 29, 2023

“Planting Peace”

**Matthew 5:1-12**

Micah 6:1-8

*Annual Meeting*

February 22, 2023

5:00 pm - Ash Wednesday  
Service

(with United Church of Jaffrey)

February 26, 2023

Lent 1

“The Character of Faith”

**Matthew 4:1-11**

Psalm 32



**Steve prepares for the informal Christmas Day Service. More than 30 people attended – many in pajamas – to read, tell stories, listen to music, and enjoy coffee and sweet rolls**

## Upcoming Events

### Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend



There are several opportunities this year to learn about, celebrate and work toward the vision of justice found in the legacy and teaching of Martin Luther King Jr. At our *Sunday morning service on January 15*, Steve will reflect on King's quotes about the moral universe and its bend toward justice. After worship, Steve Brackett will join us for coffee to talk about his continuing work with refugees.

And on *Monday, January 16*, at 5:00 pm the Park Theatre will host a celebration with the theme "Justice Everywhere." The keynote speaker will be Aaron Mair, recent past president of the two million member national Sierra Club. We hope you will join us

ASH WEDNESDAY  
First Day of Lent



### Ash Wednesday Service with United Church on February 22

Once again, this year we will honor the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday (2/22), with a joint service with our friends from the United Church of Jaffrey. The service will be held in the sanctuary of First Church at 5:00 pm and will feature songs, prayers, reflections and the imposition of ashes. We hope you will join us as we begin our Lenten journey.



### Lenten Study Series: The Character of Faith

Steve will be leading a study series on Wednesday afternoons during Lent. These educational gatherings will be held at 4:00 pm in the Parish Hall beginning on *Wednesday, March 1, 2023*. The theme of the series is the 'character of faith.' Using simple biographies from biblical and historic characters of faith, we will explore and discuss how we might live as people of faith in our day and time. If there is interest, the series will also be available on zoom with links emailed out via eblast each week.

## **Benevolence Circle Makes Year-End Donations**

For the second year, we were able to distribute money from by the Fair and Pie sale in the same year it was raised. Due to the success of these fundraisers, we were able to give larger donations to organizations that we have supported for many years. Some funds will be held over to fund scholarships for Conant HS grads in the spring, as well as for emergency requests.

*These organizations received donations in December 2022.*

Home Health Care Hospice and Community Services \$500

Meals on Wheels \$500

Monadnock Area Psychotherapy and Spiritual Services (MAPS) \$300

Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention \$400

Monadnock Community Early Learning Center \$400

Monadnock Family Services \$600

Monadnock Adult Day Care Center \$300

Shelter from the Storm \$600

Reality Check \$500

Got Lunch \$600

JR Memorial Ambulance Service \$300

People who attended the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services were very generous. The offering collected will be divided between the Jaffrey Food Pantry and the Town Welfare Fund.

Benevolence Circle: *Marcia Breckenridge, Mary Jo Marvin, Toni Zajaczkowski*

## Mutual Ministry Evaluation Process

Our First Church bylaws delegate a periodic evaluation of mutual ministry to the Pastoral Relations Circle (PRC). Our pastor Steve believes that, as he concludes his first year in Jaffrey, it is an excellent time to gather this important information.

The review process is an opportunity to reflect on both the pastor's ministry and the ministry of the congregation. It is a means of holding up the parts of our ministry that are going well and identifying ways our ministries can be strengthened and empowered as we look to the future.

Before the end of January, you will receive a two-page form in the mail: one asks you to share your reflections and return it by February 19, 2023. Your completed evaluation can be placed in the evaluation box in the narthex or mailed to The First Church in Jaffrey, Box 673, Jaffrey, NH 03452 attn: PRC. The second page contains information about Steve's ministry and the ministry of the congregation as a helpful resource as you contemplate your reflections. Extra copies will be available at the church.

Thank you for taking the time for this important process.

*The PRC: Bobbie Gilbert, Carol Hess, Sally O'Brien, Rev. Steve Miller*



**Thank you to our  
Weathervane contributors!**

**MaryJo Marvin, Steve Miller, the Miller family, Carol Hess, Ilona Kwiecien, Suze Campbell, Bobbie Gilbert**

## Refugee Support: An Update on “People of Good Will”



### *From Ilona Kwiecien*

First and foremost, a big thank you to all who have made donations to the Refugee support account. It has made a difference.

At the end of October, I went back to Poland for two weeks to reconnect. This trip clearly showed me that, despite the overall dwindling of support, deeply committed and dedicated people in Poland continue to do what they can for people impacted by the war in Ukraine: truly, “people of good will.”

### ***Who are we supporting?***

#### ***In Warsaw***

*Dom Matki* houses about 40 women with small children in Warsaw. Its director, Anna, is a remarkable young woman who introduced me to her two-year old son the day I visited her small office. Anna tackles the Polish nonprofit bureaucracy, nurtures good relations with neighbors, and is committed to doing everything possible to ease the lives of these refugees. My team member/driver Marcin and I noticed that much work had been done to organize and clean up the compound since our first visit. (Steve and Pauline Brackett who were volunteering there when we arrived greatly contributed!) Two new babies were expected “any day” – “we are full, but will never turn anyone away,” Anna declared with a smile.

Residents and volunteers are cooking meals now, participating in Polish lessons three times a week, and working to help the mothers get a fresh start. In one “success” story, three mothers banded together to find jobs and an apartment, with one of the mothers staying home to watch the children. That day we donated \$1,000 (she insisted on a receipt!) and sent another \$1,000 in December before Christmas. We hope to send the same amount monthly.

#### ***In Lublin, 100 miles southeast of Warsaw***

My first night in Lublin I met again with Lukasz, a valued contact who travels regularly to Ukraine with a team of like-minded individuals. He left right after our visit with the \$1,000 I gave him. Since that trip he has returned several times delivering urgently-needed winter clothing, especially in Kherson. Monies from First Church’s refugee support fund (about \$2,000) helped buy the clothes - from socks to jackets. In Poland, \$100 buys 10 warm jackets for children.

We also support a group home in Lublin called *Liliowa 5*. Victoria, a Ukrainian refugee, is the home’s coordinator/director. The home itself was created by a Polish woman, Ola, who vacated her home and moved to an apartment shortly after the war broke out to make it available for refugees. In the first days of the war, they sheltered

over 100 refugees at any one time! Currently Liliowa houses about 30 women and children, several of whom are autistic and one small 2-year-old boy, Dania, who is blind. They also provide a collection/distribution point for supplies that go to Ukraine.

This was my first visit, though Marcin has been delivering about \$1,000 worth of supplies for several months, coordinating with Victoria as to needs. I left an additional \$500 this visit. For Christmas Marcin and his wife, Magda, bought gifts for each of the 11 children (after consulting with the mothers and Victoria). Just before the holidays he purchased a drawing tablet for a 20-year-old autistic man for his birthday. The mother was thrilled, because this device helps her son stay calm. Victoria called around Christmas to thank us.

### ***What to do with Pesto?***

In Zamosc, a smaller town south of Lublin, I met with Stefanie Bogaerts who runs her foundation "Lapigua." She admitted that it took much more effort to secure funds now. Stephanie and her family are still housing refugees, collecting goods for delivery to Ukraine, and trying to help other local Ukrainians. We visited a distribution point (food, clothing, cleaning goods, hygiene products, etc.) which Lapigua supports. It is run by one dynamic, petite woman, Pani Bozenka, with the help of several Ukrainians. We have been sending Lapigua \$1,000 a month, most of which goes to this distribution point. I also left an additional \$500.

Pani Bozenka profusely thanked us, and then pointed to a large stack of cases with pesto jars. She told us they turn nothing away, but they simply did not know what to do with all this pesto. They happily filled our trunk with at least half, which we ended up taking to Liliowa in Lublin! Victoria commented, "Don't worry, we'll find a use for it!"

### ***Where do we go from here?***

As of January 1, 2023, the account in Poland held (between zloty and dollars) about \$4,500. Marcin can draw on the funds with an ATM card, as needed to support local efforts. The First Church account has about \$13,000 thanks to recent donations. Our regular expenditures are in the vicinity of \$3,000/month, so we are in good shape to continue at this level for several months, even without added contributions (not suggesting this!). Steve and I are looking into other funding sources, to including some within the UCC. I plan on going back to Poland around the end of March.

There are several other initiatives for which I would appreciate any insights anyone might have: help for the blind boy at Liliowa and those Ukrainian children who have lost limbs and need prostheses. What might be done regarding services for the autistic children in Lublin?

## One last story

On my last night in Lublin I – through a “strange” series of coincidences – ended up going to a concert at one of the city’s universities. The two-hour show consisted of performances by Ukrainian refugees as their way of “thanking” the city. Personal stories were intermingled with poetry readings, folk and popular songs in both Ukrainian and Polish, dance, violin and accordion solos and two Ukrainian rock bands. There was not a dry eye! One story was about a woman and her daughter who had to leave their home, which was ultimately destroyed. The mother told the daughter she could take only one thing; she chose her violin...which she played that evening. Another young woman summarized her experience with these words: “I realized material things are not important: what is inside is.” She escaped from bombing with just her backpack.

“Strange is this World” originally sung by Czeslaw Nieman in the 1970s was sung by a young woman with an amazing voice. Here are the translated lyrics:

Oh, strange is this world  
Well, still it seems  
There’s so far so much evil  
And strange it is that since long ago  
Man despises man.

Oh, strange this world  
Of human affairs  
Sometimes I’m ashamed to be in it  
Oh, so often a man can kill  
With a bad word or still a knife.

But most people are of good will  
I – thanks to them – believe  
That this world should never, never die  
And now, the time has come  
The final time for hatred, for hatred  
To destroy itself.

May it be so through the efforts of “people of good will!”

*If you would like to donate to the Ukrainian Relief projects, please make out a check to Refugee Support or First Church in Jaffrey (write Refugee Support in the memo line). Mail to First Church in Jaffrey, PO Box 673, Jaffrey, NH 03452.*