



During my years in seminary, Tamara and I would take turns visiting our families during the holidays. We would alternate Thanksgiving and Christmas each year between the two families. On one particular visit we were to fly back to Chicago Midway from Denver International Airport with enough time to return home and get ready to attend a wedding of two seminary classmates of mine. That was the plan, anyway. Our flight had a small delay. Then, a larger delay was announced. Soon, you guessed it, departure was delayed yet again. It became apparent that we would not even be able to be on the ground in Chicago—much less at the wedding—before the ceremony began. The plans that looked so good all week changed before our very eyes. We didn't have a choice. In the moment it was hard to feel positive.

This “Word from the Pastor” is not the one I had intended to write. I had planned to write about the hope and glory of resurrection. I was going to

write about how the Easter message gives us hope because no matter our present suffering or evil that confronts us or the difficulties and stresses of life, God's grace will triumph in the end. I wanted to emphasize what I had shared in last week's sermon that, as Fredrick Buechner wrote, the worst thing is never the last thing. This is the reality of resurrection. I was going to point out all we have experienced as a congregation over the past 1½ years (fire, flood, illness, death, urgent building repairs and changing demographics and ministries...) and how following each challenge there have been signs of resurrection. Hope has always emerged. God's Spirit is experienced anew. Blessings, both familiar and unexpected, have been abundant. However, the coronavirus has changed so much about life. Little about Lent, Easter or life seems normal or within our control. We won't be able to worship in person on Easter or Holy Week. Most spring events we usually look forward to will not take place this year. We don't even know how long this all will last.

Except, of course, life in the shadow of the COVID-19 disease is but the latest challenge we have faced. From a biblical point of view, I have often experienced that Easter loses much of its power if we don't honestly deal with the events between Jesus' entry to Jerusalem and his death. Most of us, naturally, don't like to confront issues of mortality, suffering and injustice. Now, however, the novel coronavirus means we can't escape such considerations. Most of us will suffer some combination of physical, social, emotional, spiritual and financial distress. For some, these effects will be severe. Yet, even when we “walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” the psalmist says we have nothing to fear because God is with us, protecting and comforting us, even preparing a feast amidst our crises. We know the virus in circulation is not God's will, but rather part of the way nature can run its course. Clearly, then, faith isn't causal of disaster and struggle. Neither is ingenuity or technical skill preventative. *We depend on God for the abundant life.* Easter reminds us God ultimately prevails, even when God's son was tortured and killed—because of resurrection. Don't be afraid to walk through the present dark valley in the present or to encounter the scriptures of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. For in the suffering of Jesus and those close to him, we can see reflections of the sin and suffering in our lives. And, we can see how the resurrection on Easter can powerfully animate our lives. So, live like Easter people and God's grace will multiply! We will get through this...we have already overcome crises several times!

Grace and peace,
Rev. Tim

And a note of thanks...A big thank you to all the people who have assisted with developing the process of posting devotions and worship times online. Will Barnum and Alaina Pethick in particular have put many hours into editing and uploading the videos. Chris Dare, Judson Drake and Steve Dale have all been most helpful in finding options to various technical issues. Thank you to one and all. Thank you, too, to the staff of Gray Memorial, most of whom have already found ways to continue their work even as this means adapting to our current situation.



Caribou Clock

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Greetings from the Church Office!

Much has changed since last month's Newsletter! Due to the virus situation, several church & community events have either been postponed or cancelled completely.

Recently, we had to postpone our "Discovering the Possibilities" workshop scheduled for March 15th. We will reschedule at a future time. I am no longer preparing free tax returns on Tuesdays and Thursdays as our operations were suspended until further notice. The church was officially closed as of Saturday, March 21st - all Worship Services and meetings are now cancelled through **Sunday, April 26th**. Rev. Tim is working on alternative ways for everyone to stay in touch (see page 11). For the first time EVER, there is no calendar in this newsletter.

I will continue to work in the church office from 9am to noon each weekday morning as there is always work to do! ☺ Judson is also working to retain the beauty and cleanliness of our church. All I ask is that you refrain from just "dropping in" - please call first, as the church doors are locked. We need to honor the social distance policy as much as possible just to ensure everyone's safety!

Please help me meet deadlines by submitting things for the Newsletter when due. It is very difficult to "pull it all together" at the last minute and create a quality product. **For our next Newsletter, all input must be submitted by 10:00am on Friday, April 24th!**

Until next month.....

Bobbi Pelletier
Church Secretary



March Prayer Joys and Concerns

Prayer Concerns: Debbie & Lu Sharp, Darlene Nelder, Sheila Belyea, Dave & Marcia DeMerchant, Emily Stuart, Robin Stuart, James Stuart, Phyllis Sykes, Leona Michaud, Bob Cyr, Danny Haines, David Corriveau, Sandra Boykin, Meaghan Lombard, Diane Pelletier, David Steward, Emerson Langworthy, Adam Langworthy, Martha Dunn, Betty Albair, Romeo Bouchard, Ron Albert, Joyce Knorr, George Knorr, Cathy Firth, Nancy Lilley, Betty Albair, John Laskey, Jerry Pelletier, Cheryl Stratton, Barbara Dee

On Family Death: Family of Dawn Powell (previous member of our Senior Choir); Family of Galen Doody; Family of Bob Quinn

Other: Those suffering from PTSD and depression; Staff & students at Black Forest Academy in Germany (where Jeff Cyr serves)

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PROVIDE A MAILING ADDRESS FOR PEOPLE OR FAMILIES YOU PUT ON THE PRAYER LIST SO WE CAN SEND THEM A NOTE FROM REV. TIM. WE OFTEN HEAR FROM RECIPIENTS ON HOW TOUCHED THEY ARE THAT WE OFFERED PRAYERS FOR THEM!

REMINDERS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LITUGIST</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>	<u>COUNTER</u>	<u>COFFEE FELLOWSHIP</u>
Apr 5 - Service Cancelled		Temporarily Suspended	N/A	N/A
Apr 12 - Service Cancelled		Temporarily Suspended	N/A	N/A
Apr 19 - Service Cancelled		Temporarily Suspended	N/A	N/A
Apr 26 - Service Cancelled		Temporarily Suspended	N/A	N/A

Please note that the church building was initially closed on March 21st until Friday, April 10th. A more recent decision was made that we will suspend all activities at the church through Sunday, April 26th.

While we are going through this situation, remember to take care of yourself and stay in contact with your friends and family!

If you would like to have someone placed on the prayer list and/or you would like an alternate (non-internet based) way of receiving notes from the sermon, please call the church office.

* * April Birthdays & Anniversaries * *

Birthdays and Anniversaries are celebrated on the first Sunday during Coffee Fellowship.

Remember your birthday & anniversary by making a special offering!



1	Jim Topping	14	Debbie Barnes
2	Tammy Albert	16	Mary Ayers, Stephen Griffeth
3	Keegan Wakana	18	Larry Conrad, Peter Edgecomb
4	Greg Anderson	21	Sally Carde, Heather Chandler, Bruce Hagelstein
5	Anna Soderberg	22	Avis Armstrong
6	Teelynn Herbert	23	Kenneth Irving
7	Scott Irving	24	Richard Carde, Debbie Jordan
8	Michael Irving	27	Shirley Bowman, Casey Lancaster
9	Albert Akeley	28	Katie Cyr, Margaret Cyr, Mary Ouellette
11	Christopher & Taylor Adams, Steven Branscom, Katherine Danforth, Diane DuBois	29	Bert Branscom
12	Rachel Warner	30	Danielle McBreaity, Nolan Sayers



7 Diana Locke & Dave Wakana

If your name or the name of someone in the Gray Memorial Family
does not appear on this list and you would like to add it,
please contact the church office, 498-2103.

Corrections are ALWAYS appreciated!!! If you know someone whose last name
has changed, please let Bobbi know so she can update the database.

Finance & Stewardship Committee

Worship Attendance and General Fund Offerings:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Operating Fund Offering</u>
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Mar 1	78	\$3,609.00
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Mar 8	78	\$4,618.00
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Mar 15	48	\$1,482.50
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Mar 22 – Service cancelled		\$1,807.50
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Mar 29 – Service cancelled - donations will be reported next month		
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Needed to meet 2020 Budget: \$4,427.15 weekly

“Growing in Faith” Capital Campaign Account (previously known as “Capital Account Seed Money”):

As we begin to receive the Growing in Faith (GIF) donations, we will report the balance in the account each month. As of March 26th, the account has a balance of \$75,978.65 (of that amount, the “furnace replacement donations” total \$32,828.00. All donations made for the “Furnace Replacement” will be held in this account until needed.) In March, we paid contractors the balance owed on the electrical upgrades and the new bathroom. The Trustees also received an insurance check and reimbursed the GIF Capital Campaign account for expenses paid from that account.

Photo Directory Changes (April 2020 Newsletter changes):

Stallings, Debra: Address – 187 State Park Rd., Dover-Foxcroft ME 04426; email dstallings35@icloud.com

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Pictures from Our Worship Services!!

(photos by Dale Sharp, unless otherwise noted)



March 1 - First Sunday in Lent;
flowers from Rebecca Griffeth's service



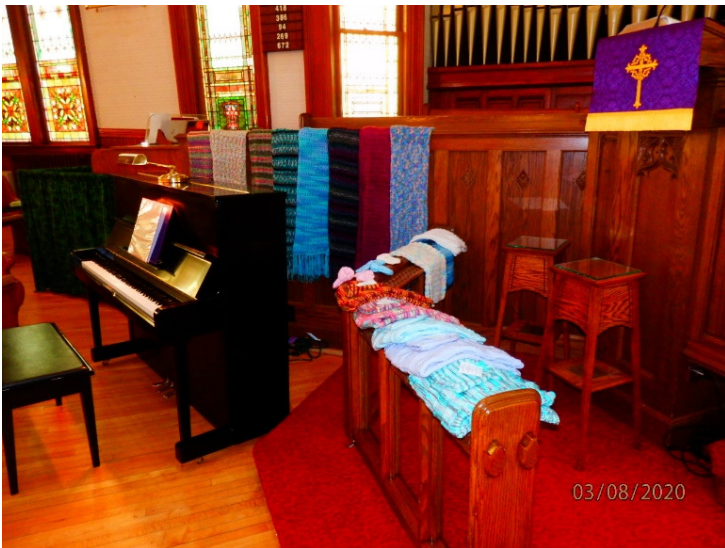
Rev. Tim challenged the children to arm wrestle
with him! His sermon was “Wrestling with God”.



Rev. Tim arm wrestles with other children during the "Time with Children and Youth"



Mar 8 - The Senior Choir sang many selections from "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" that corresponded to scripture readings. Dean Rauch portrayed Jacob. The children and adults then demonstrated all the various colors of the coat of many colors - as the choir sang the various colors, they held up that color (thanks to Diana Rauch who provided all the color ribbons!).



Mar 8 - The Prayer Shawl Ministry provided many shawls, pocket prayer shawls and baby blanket/hat sets for dedication, which visually corresponded to the "coat of many colors" theme for the service!



Rev. Tim blessed the Prayer Shawl Ministry's pieces during the service as members of the ministry were invited forward to touch one of the items during his dedication.



Mar 8 - Chris Dare (as Joseph) showed off his coat (shawl) of many colors and he and Dean Rauch (as Jacob) performed solo pieces while the Senior Choir shared more songs from "Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat" production by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The congregation enjoyed it! Many thanks to Rev. Tim and Margaret Cyr for working together to share this wonderful story!



Mar 15 - Richard Clark's painting of the Burning Bush was on display; Rev. Tim's sermon was based on Moses and the burning bush.

Other Kodak Moments!



Mar 1-improvements to our lighting system: new panel and switches, plus sanctuary overhead lights are much brighter!

In honor of Women's History Month, Worship Committee members Beth Alden and Diane Fitzpatrick (along with research help from Wendy Bossie and Mary Lou Brown) created a beautiful display in the library! This display honors five women in the life of Gray Memorial UMC - Beulah McNeal, Louise Norsworthy, Florence Gallagher, Vivian Brown and Barbara Van Kirk (from left to right).



Mar 1 - our monthly "Happy Birthday and Anniversary Cake" had a St. Patrick's Day Theme!



Would you like to receive the weekly email newsletter summarizing events at worship and upcoming events? Also, special bulletins, notices of changes of events, etc.? Send an email to the church office or call 498-2103 so we can add you to the email list!

You can make a contribution to our church through a mobile app!

To get started, download GivePlus Church for free from the App Store or Google Play. Simply search for "GivePlus Church" to quickly find and download the app today. Then, you can easily make donations directly from your smartphone using your debit/credit card or checking/savings account.

You can also choose to donate as a guest or set up an account that allows you to securely and conveniently schedule recurring donations and manage and review your giving history.

We hope you enjoy this new way to contribute to our ministry! Thanks for your support!

Please note that you can make arrangements to have your tithes and offerings withdrawn from your account on a regular basis, thus ensuring your donations are received even when/if you are unable to attend church. Please contact Tamara Wilcox for additional information.



The Worship Committee will continue to sponsor a project to provide school supplies, clothing (socks, underwear, etc.) and hygiene items to local school children.

All donations received as of March 22nd will be given to our school point-of-contact to distribute when children return to school!

The boxes are in the Library again - once we are permitted to reopen the church, we will again accept donations.

Please consider helping our local school children with these much needed items. Thank you!

Worship & Ministry Opportunities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Weekly Devotion – posted Thursdays on GMUMC's Facebook page and on YouTube

Sunday Worship – posted Sunday mornings on Facebook page and on YouTube; some upcoming worship may utilize Facebook live or Zoom; more details to be announced

Bible Study – if you are interested in an online Bible Study, contact Rev. Tim

Phone Tree – forthcoming in April; please reach out to people in the congregation, family, friends and community members; if you are comfortable, there are persons confined to their homes for health reasons that may need deliveries of food, medicine and other necessities

Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry – The CEFPP is implementing a plan we hope will allow the pantry to keep open on a no or limited contact basis for the duration of this crisis as food insecurity appears to be growing in our area. If you can offer yourself for packing boxes or assisting at the pantry in some fashion, contact Ruthann Weeks.

Bobbi Pelletier is available by phone and email for church business during her usual hours, M-F from 9-noon. The Gray Memorial building remains closed until further notice. We are asking that people NOT come to the church in-person unless you have an essential item to be picked up or dropped off that can't be handled in any other way. Tithes and offerings should be contributed using one of the methods outlined on the next page. This procedure is meant to protect the health of our remaining staff who use the building and the people with whom they live or with whom they have contact. Thank you for your understanding. Rev. Tim is available for appointments by phone and video conference. Mondays continue to be his usual day off. Contact him by phone or email to arrange a time.

**** Worship services at the church building and in-person events remain suspended until further notice. As of this writing, these suspensions will at a minimum continue through Sunday, April 26. We urge people to heed the recommendations and directives of local, state and CDC officials due to the large numbers of people at elevated and high risk during this COVID-19 outbreak. The church, that is the people of God, is not closed. Even though we will be conducting ministries in ways that are different than what is familiar, it is no less ministry.**



Give Us a Hand

Giving continues to be important for our ministries that are continuing and adapting. Your ongoing tithes and offerings will make it both possible to maintain ministries during this time of international pandemic and to position us for ministry needs when the crisis is over.

There are currently four ways to make your contributions to GMUMC:

- Send checks by mail to Gray Memorial United Methodist Church, PO Box 69, Caribou, ME 04736. Include your offering envelope if you have one.
- By Phone through VANCO, a third party company providing financial and donation services. Call 800-675-7430 to make a gift to Gray Memorial United Methodist Church in Caribou, Maine.
- By EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) via VANCO--several people have already chosen this method for recurring gifts. If you are interested in this method, please contact Tamara Wilcox, 492-0371, to set up an EFT.
- By GiftPlus, a mobile application, also offered by VANCO. You can download GiftPlus from the Apple App Store or from Google Play. This method supports both recurring and one-time gifts.

All VANCO methods include a nominal service fee for the church. Many people choose the options provided by VANCO for convenience and, for the electronic options, to ensure their gifts are always regularly given. Because of regular giving, research shows churches receive more funds overall using these methods. Contact Tamara Wilcox for more information on giving options.

The Board of Trustees acknowledges with gratitude contributions received from the following during 2019:

* * * * for the *Trustees' Permanent Fund* * * * *

in loving memory of **Barbara Van Kirk** who passed away September 4, 2019.
Betty Branscom

in loving memory of **Nancy Leavitt** who passed away September 2, 2019.
Betty Branscom

in loving memory of **Robert C. Ellinwood**, who passed away December 5, 2018.
Emmett and Ruth Ross
Robert J. and Margaret Cyr

in honor of **Ruth and Emmett Ross** for their years of dedicated and faithful service.
Mary Lou Brown

* * * *

in loving memory of *Stephen L. Cashman*, who passed away February 27, 2019

Bruce and Diane Fitzpatrick

Jean H. Cashman

William C. and Carolyn Hibbard

Betty Branscom

Louis and Judi Greenier

Emmett and Ruth Ross

Gwen Ellinwood

friends & co-workers of Jean at the University

Todd and Mary Theriault & family

Mary Anderson

Dale Dee

Ruthann Weeks

Shirley Bowman

Richard and Susan Clark

Margaret Cyr

Diane McDonough

Lehrle Kieffer

Diane Fitzpatrick

Bill Thomas

David DeMerchant

Bobbi Pelletier

Michelle Sterner

Karen White

Mary Lou Brown

Duska Franklin

Dedication of the new *Stephen L. Cashman Memorial Fund* was held
during Sunday worship on June 23, 2019

toward the 2019 Herbert and Elizabeth Brown Memorial Scholarship

Mary Lou Brown

to the *Edward Merrithew Bertsch Branscom Memorial Fund*

Betty Branscom

to the *Norris Brown Memorial Fund*

Leland Frost

to the *Oscar Edwards Memorial Fund*

in loving memory of *Betty Edwards* who passed away August 2019

Betty Branscom

Louis and Judi Greenier

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The Board of Trustees at Gray Memorial would also like to give
special recognition to very generous donations received in 2019 which have
made it possible to accomplish major capital-improvement projects to our Church's sprinkler
system and to our Church and parsonage roofs:

Deborah Nichols

The Philip B. and Jean M. Turner Trust

