

"While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom." Luke 2:6-7

In my years of ministry, I have only missed 3 – maybe 4 – worship services due to illness. Although there are a couple occasions I would have been better advised to stay home and some others in which I did not shake hands at the door (remember those days of shaking hands?), I haven't missed many services for health reasons. Amazingly, two of those occasions were on major dates on the church's calendar: Easter and Christmas. They weren't a random Sunday in the summer or during the short days of winter. They were times of worship I look forward to with high expectation. These are times in a church's life that normally involve considerable planning, that draw upon cherished traditions and involve considerable anticipation. It was an odd feeling not being present on an occasion when the sanctuary was filled with lilies and flowers. I missed singing carols and seeing the sanctuary aglow with candlelight. Apart from feeling really crummy, those occasions simply didn't feel at all like what I was used to feeling.

How was it for you over the last 20 months not to be in the sanctuary for Easter (twice) and Christmas Eve? Even though I actually was in the sanctuary for two of those three occasions during this time, it wasn't the same. Yes, we read scripture. We sang hymns and carols of the season. There was special music. The gospel was proclaimed and prayers were heard. God was surely with us. Yet, missing was the people, gathered together for worship. Although we were gathered together online by cameras, cable and Wi-Fi signals it was a much different feeling.

Although I know that not everyone will attend worship on Christmas Eve due to family commitments and the ongoing pandemic (though I hope you can join us online), it will be the first time that there will be a public gathering on Christmas or Easter since 2019. 2019! Don't take these special moments for granted or approach them like merely another year among many. Let the stories and rituals of the season come alive in you, filled with meaning and purpose. The birth of Jesus changed the world. The word made flesh should change all of us. While I wouldn't want to have to have a pandemic to drive home the point, I don't want to forget this lesson of the last couple years. Knowing what it is like without the community gathered together with each other for worship, I am looking forward to sharing the space with many of you. As we sing in *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, I am praying the Christ child will "be born in us today."

Have a blessed, Advent, Christmas and Epiphany!

Grace and peace, Rev. Tim



# The Caribou Clock

Publisher - Gray Memorial United Methodist Church 2 Prospect Street, P. O. Box 69 Caribou ME 04736

E-mail: graymemorial@outlook.com

Date: December 2021

Church Office: (207) 498-2103
Website: http://www.bgmumc.com

### Greetings from the Church Office!

I had a wonderful vacation with family in November and will also take a few days in December (Dec 16-21) to celebrate Christmas in Massachusetts.

The new Church Directory is still a "work in progress" as other priorities and a few vacation days have limited the time I had to update it. I do plan to make it a priority over the next couple of months.

I hope each of you has a wonderful Christmas this year and are able to safely gather with family and friends. As we approach the New Year, may you all experience God's presence.

Please help me meet deadlines by submitting things for the Newsletter when due. For our next Newsletter, all input must be submitted by 10am on Wednesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>!!!

Until next month (and year!).....

Bobbi Pelletier Church Secretary



### October 31st and November Prayer Joys and Concerns

<u>Prayer Concerns</u>: Debbie & Lu Sharp, Sheila Belyea, Dave DeMerchant, Bob Cyr, Richard & Susan Clark, Gary & Marilyn Langley, Ralph & Gwen Ferguson, Audrey Bubar (Caribou Rehab Center), Sylvia Akeley, Louis Greenier, Leland Frost, Kaitlin Alden, Ken Doody, Debbie Jordan (cancer free), Laurie Cataldo, Ivan Shaw, Debbie Nichols, Pauline Davis

On Family Death: Family of Diane McDonough; Family of Mary Walton

#### Other:

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!

The following message was received in the Church Office – Dear Friends, Please accept my thanks for the calls, cards, and visits during Bob's stay at the hospital and the House of Comfort. I also want to thank those of you who were able to come to the calling hours and the funeral. It meant a lot to my family and myself. Bob thought a lot of Gray Memorial and I want to thank Rev. Tim for including Bob's name in the All Saints' Day Service.

Margaret Cyr

#### **REMINDERS**

DATE	<u>LITURGIST</u>	Organist/Pianist	<u>COUNTER</u>	COFFEE FELLOWSHIP
Dec 5	<b>Mary Lou Brown</b>	TBD	Diane Fitzpatrick	No Coffee Fellowship
Dec 12	Richard Clark	TBD	Diane Fitzpatrick	"
Dec 19	<b>Kathleen Forbes</b>	TBD	Diane Fitzpatrick	"
Dec 24	<b>Claire Hodgkins</b>	TBD	Elsie Doody	66
Dec 26	Samuela Manages	TBD	Elsie Doody	ш

Usher Coordinator for November: Judson Drake

Please note that the church building is open for visitors and committee meetings.

Rev. Tim and the Worship Committee will make decisions on whether Worship Services will continue to be in-person or on-line.

## \* \* December Birthdays & Anniversaries \* \*

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

Remember your birthday & anniversary by making a special offering!



1	Mike Ayers, Carson Doody	16	Leland Frost
4	Robin Cyr	18	Donald Cole
5	Victoria Wakana	20	Hazel Barnum
7	Bonnie Ward	23	Diane Fitzpatrick, Alison Kieffer,
9	Jeffrey Alden, Janet Chandler, Dave Doody,		Meghan Scott, Katherine Scott
	Daniel Swain	24	Dylan LaForge, Carol Norsworthy
lO	Pamela Danforth, Paula Richards	27	Dan DaCosta
l1	Elsie Doody, George Knorr	28	Nick Pelletier
12	Leslie Anderson, Steven Scott	29	Ken Albert, Jody Smith
l4	Libby Collier, Connie Ennis, Claire Hodgkins	30	Kathleen Forbes
15	Ryan Fitzpatrick, Dawn Frost, Zelma Merritt		



- Penny & Ivan Shaw
   Sally & Richard Carde
   Ruthann & John Weeks
  - 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 <u>ALWAYS</u> appreciated!!! If you know someone whose last name has changed, please let Bobbi know so she can update the database.



#### Worship Attendance and General Fund Offerings:

<u>Date</u>	* Attendance	<b>Operating Fund Offering</b>
October 31	38	\$1,399.72
November 7	32	\$4,255.00
November 14	39	\$4,511.00
November 21	44	\$2,834.72
November 28 (will report next month)		

\*In-person attendance only Needed to meet 2021 Budget: \$3,986.53 weekly

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

As we continue to receive the Growing in Faith (GIF) donations, we will report the balance in the

account each month. As of November 21<sup>st</sup>, the balance in the account is \$98,259.54 (of that amount, the "furnace replacement donations" total \$32,153.05. All remaining donations made for the "Furnace Replacement" will be held in this account until needed.)

#### **Photo Directory Changes (December 2021 Newsletter changes):**

McDonough, Diane - deceased; November 7, 2021





The Missions & Evangelism Committee and the Church Council is still seeking a volunteer (or two) to handle local publicity for the church's events. This person would be responsible for advertising through a number of sources - WAGM-TV, newspapers, Rec Center sign, flyers, etc. If you are interested, please contact Melonie Carlson or the Church Office.



A new Church Directory is in progress! The new directory will be produced by the church office and look similar to the one printed in 2016. The "Membership/Constituent Information" form had been provided for several months within the monthly Newsletter and is still emailed with the weekly email Newsletter. If you have not completed it yet, please contact the church office for the form. It is vital that we have the most update information (names, mailing address, email address, birth dates, anniversaries, etc.) to ensure our database and a new directory is as current as possible! We would appreciate it if we could get a form from every household!

## Worship & Ministry Opportunities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Worship Services will be held in the church sanctuary until next summer and will continue to be streamed live. Masking and social distancing for indoor services and meetings is advised.

#### Reminder from Rev. Tim -

Rev. Tim's is available for appointments Tuesday - Sunday with Monday being his usual day off. His cell phone number is (207) 551-

7924. Depending on the situation, he can arrange for the particular means for the meeting as necessary.



In an effort to improve communication, I want to provide clear guidance on how to reach me in certain situations:

On my day off (usually Monday), on a Saturday, or in an emergency (for example, a death, hospitalization or family crisis) the best way to reach me is by first calling the parsonage, 207-492-0371. Someone is at the parsonage most of the time. For the most part I do not often check phone or email messages on a day off or during family time.

When I am traveling and on most other occasions, the best way to reach me is on the cell phone, 207-551-7924. You can also call the church office at 207-498-2103. Ordinarily, my goal is to respond within 24 hours. It may take additional time to return your call when I am traveling or when a day off is involved.

If you have any questions or need more information about reaching me when needed, please contact me.

--Rev. Tim

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The Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry is in need of the following items: cranberry sauce and stuffing mix.

Donations may be brought to the church on Monday mornings from 9am to noon. Thank you!



Is your household or someone you know experiencing food insecurity? The Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry serves the communities of Caribou, Connor, Woodland, Wade, Washburn and Perham and will provide food to those households that meet income guidelines. The Pantry, located at 31 Herschel Street in Caribou, is open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8am to 11am. Please call 493-4860 between those hours and the pantry volunteers will help provide you with food boxes (available every 4 weeks or as needed.)



#### 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 three 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 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 Vanco Mobile, an app provided by VANCO. You can download on an Apple or android phone. This method supports both recurring and one-time gifts. For more information, contact Tamara Wilcox.

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.



Gray Memorial UMC has an account at the Bennett Drive Redemption Center. When you bring your bottles/cans to the center, you may designate the proceeds to go the church's account!

If you are not comfortable bringing them yourselves, contact the Church Office and we'll make arrangements to pick them up!

So far, we have received donations of \$481.45 from this "fun-raiser"! Thank you!

#### TREE OF LIGHTS ORDER FORM

The Church is sponsoring a "Tree of Lights" that will have approximately 200 white lights and be on display outside the church.

You may "purchase" a light for \$5 and as the lights are "sold", the lights will be changed to red! Our hope is that all the lights will be "sold" by Sunday, Dec 19th.

Please complete the form below and proceeds will go towards our operating budget. Payment to the church is due by Sunday, Dec 19th.

Please make checks payable to Gray Memorial UMC and indicate "Tree of Lights" in the memo line.

******	********	******	*****
Number of lights:	@ \$5.00 each	Total	
In Memory of:			
In Honor of:			
Зу:			



#### **FLOWERS FOR CHRISTMAS SEASON**

Again this year, the Worship Committee is offering people the opportunity to purchase their own plants/flowers and bring them to the church for display during the Christmas Season.

Flowers are to be brought in or delivered from 9am – 12pm on <u>Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup></u> or at <u>1:00pm on Saturday, December 18<sup>th</sup></u>, when Worship Committee members are here to arrange them for the December 19<sup>th</sup> Service the next day. If the following information is provided by <u>Tuesday, December 14th</u>, it will be announced during the December 19<sup>th</sup> and December 24<sup>th</sup> services:

LEA	SE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN TO THE CHURCH OFFICE BY TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14 <sup>th</sup> !
	BY:
	IN HONOR OF:
	IN MEMORY OF:

The Missions & Evangelism Committee will sponsor the "Angel Tree" again this year! We have received a list of 29 students with gender & age and placed angel ornaments on the tree on Saturday, November 26<sup>th</sup>. If you wish to sponsor a child, please call the church office and speak with Bobbi about selecting an ornament. We will also have ornaments for cash donations as well. All presents must be brought to the church by Sunday, December 12th!





The Church is selling Christmas Trees this year!
Schedule is as follows:

Saturdays (Nov 27, Dec 4, 11, 18): 9:00am – 4:00pm Sundays (Nov 28, Dec 5, 12, 29): 11:00am - 4:00pm

Volunteers are needed to help with this year's tree sales! There is a sign-up poster in the Narthex.

Plan to come and support our church!



## CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES 11-18-21

<u>ATTENDEES</u>: Judi Greenier (Vice-Chair), Claire Hodgkins, Chris Dare, Judson Drake, Debbie Barnes, Bobbi Pelletier, Duska Franklin, Tamara Wilcox, Rev. Tim Wilcox, and Mary Lou Brown

The Council meeting came to order at 6 P.M. in the fellowship hall with Judi Greenier, Vice-Chair presiding. She requested a prayer from Rev. Tim. The first order of business was to see if the Council would approve the minutes of the last meeting. There being no corrections or additions the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of last month's meeting. Judi stated that the goal of the meeting was to approve the 2022 Budget. First she started with Committee reports.

<u>SPRC</u>: The discussion began with the issue of a childcare provider since some proposed spending had been downsized or eliminated. Bobbi mentioned that she had found a student from Presque Isle High who was interested in the position. Bobbi pointed out that the position description stated that the provider had to be at least 18 years old, but this could be revisited. The Council agreed and voted to allow a younger person who had completed the childcare classes at Cary and wanted to work with the children. She might also be asked to be involved with Sunday School as well as childcare if necessary. The Council voted to accept this revision to the childcare description. Bobbi will reach out to see of the student would still be interested and if she has or would take a childcare class.

SPRC is planning to honor Diane McDonough in some way. Nothing has been decided yet. Also the Committee is bringing its Budget proposal before the Council at tonight's meeting.

<u>EDUCATION</u>: Duska said that she only had two child care volunteers which had prompted the Council to consider including the childcare person to help if other volunteers could not be found. We do not have a Sunday school due to the pandemic. Duska wondered what materials there were. She had looked in some catalogs but was unsure what was already available. Judson said he would show Duska where the materials could be found after the meeting.

MISSIONS & EVANGELISM: There are 10 church members working with 7 high school students on the Pen Pal project. The Committee wishes to give each student a prayer shawl. The Council thought that was a great idea. The Committee plans to have an Angel Tree again this Christmas. The presents must be under the tree by Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. The Angel Tree will be up on November 27<sup>th</sup>.

<u>FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP</u>: Tamara reported the total Regular Offering for October was \$11,022.44. Reimbursements came to \$30 (\$29 for Discovery Guides) and a \$1 donation was given for The Upper Room). Special Funds for church use was \$2,732.71 of which \$750.00 was for the Senior Choir in the name of the Elsie Locke Memorial Music Program. An offering not for Church use was \$25 for the Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry. The total amount received in October was \$13,810.15. Bobbi proposed paying the Mission Shares she had kept in reserve for September and October. Debbie Barnes moved the Church pay two months Mission Shares and Judson seconded it. The Council voted to pay the two months Mission Shares.

Chris Dale reported that it was difficult to make an accurate count of on-line attendance since all hits on both You-Tube and Facebook counted as one even though more than one person may be viewing from a specific site. Also, just because there was a hit did not mean the person or persons were actually engaged in the service. Bobbi specified that the in-person count was between 30 and 40 people each week.

<u>THE 2022 BUDGET</u>: Each member had a draft copy of the proposed budget with figures provided for the Programs, Trustees, Mission Shares and some of the SPRC line items. The draft version totaled \$176,794.50. During the discussion of the proposed Budget some corrections and additions were made to the spreadsheet. The Community Service line will be eliminated. Also the following line items from SPRC were presented:

Childcare Provider salary - \$750

Organist/pianist - \$2,000

Choir Director salary - \$3,900

Financial Secretary salary - \$1,600

Treasurer salary - \$1,600

Worker's Comp - \$1,000

Church Secretary salary was initially \$10,000, but was changed to \$8,000 at Bobbi Pelletier's request Custodian salary was changed from \$14,820 to \$16,820 after Bobbi Pelletier made the case for that change

Under "Other Expenses" the following lines were presented: Guest & Subst. Staff line - \$1,000 Delegates to Annual Conference - \$800 SPRC Miscellaneous - \$250 FICA - \$3,000

Rev. Tim estimated that the final total proposed Budget amount was \$217,514.50. After discussing the 2022 Budget Mary Lou Brown moved that the Council accept the amended Budget as presented and Judson Drake seconded the motion. The Council raised hands in solidarity to pass the Budget as amended and presented. *Note: After updating the 2022 Budget Worksheet with changes identified during the meeting, the actual approved budget changed from* 

\$217,514.50 to \$217,399.50 when Bobbi recalculated the numbers. The final approved 2022 Budget Worksheet was distributed to all Church Council Members on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Bobbi requested that we be allowed to place the Bibles, Hymnals, and Kleenex boxes back in the pews. The Council voted to allow those items to be placed back in the pews immediately.

<u>UMM/MEN'S CLUB</u>: Judson reported that the men planned to meet on December 4<sup>th</sup> and plan to tour the new Caribou Community School. They are also discussing creating a scholarship. The breakfast will be pancakes and breakfast casseroles. The men plan to sell Christmas trees. Also, it is hoped that by spring the church will be able to have a regular food booth fund raiser. Judson announced he is planning to create a meal run for the homeless shelter once a month and get other people involved in similar actions over time.

<u>PASTOR'S TIME</u>: Rev. Tim reported that 11 people were taking the Bible Study class based on Romans as part of the Disciple series which will go until just before Christmas. After New Year the topic will be on Genesis. The theme for the Advent season will be on Hope. This year Advent will be blue.

<u>OTHER</u>: There will be no Council meeting in December unless it becomes necessary. The next meeting will be January 20, 2022. There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Claire Hodgkins, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_\_

#### REPORTS RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING:

Finance/Stewardship Reports for October:

Operating Budget Checkbook Figures:

Beginning Balance 12,632.07 2021 Operating Income 11,022.44

Fun-Raiser Proceeds <u>16.15</u> (Bottle Redemption)

Interest <u>1.63</u>

Less EFT fee (29.34) VANCO fees (EFT deposits)

Less Expenses (13,157.99)

2021 Mission Shares (2,469.50) (Note: Monthly amount put into Special Funds temporarily)
Ending Balance 8,015.46 (Without PPP money of \$15,739.57, balance would be -\$7,724.11)

\$25,000.00 invested with Thompson/Hamel LLC for Memorial Garden on June 29, 2017. Investment cost was \$1,073.78; withdrew \$3,000 in March 2021; as of October 29, 2021, on-line report shows ending value = \$28,923.10.

The Capital Account Seed Money for October is as follows: Previous Balance \$93,107.16; Deposits \$1,695.60; No expenses; Current Balance \$94,802.76.

October Budget figures are as follows: Target- \$172,749.58; Tithes & Offerings- \$133,303.43; Expenses- \$155,007.99; Unpaid bills- \$4,939 (Mission Shares)

Average October aggregate Attendance (In-person & On-line) was 50 and the Year to date average aggregate attendance stands at 57.

#### TRUSTEES:

Present: Wendy Bossie, Richard Clark, Judson Drake (chairman), Louis Greenier, Tamara Wilcox, Rev. Tim Wilcox Absent: Judi Greenier, Debbie Nichols, Del Ramey

Rev. Tim opened the meeting with prayer.

<u>Secretary's report</u>. Read silently. One change under Old Business – Stained Glass windows. The man doing the repair is *Greg* Theriault and not *Craig* Theriault. Louis moved that the secretary's report be accepted, Richard seconded. Passed.

<u>Treasurer's report</u>. Judson read the report that Judi had sent to the meeting. There is \$18,618.68 in the checking account. He discussed the *organ fund* (\$276.54) and feels there should be more money in this fund. Also, the organ is not being used and the "boards need to be kept moving." There was some discussion about closing it down for a while until an organist can be found.

This was put on hold for now as there has been some organ practice and the possibility of a future organist. Judson also feels that there should be more money in the *steeple maintenance* fund (\$1016.52). The shingles on the steeple need to be redone. Wendy moved that the treasurer's report be accepted, Louis seconded. Passed.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

<u>Stained glass windows</u> on Sweden St. side of church. The plexiglass over the windows is broken. Greg Theriault is waiting for the polycarbonate replacement which should be here on November 24th (\$450).

<u>Narthex carpet.</u> Sullivan's Floor Covering will be here tomorrow, November 18, to measure for the carpet and special blinds for the windows. The cost of the carpet will come from the Capital Campaign; the frayed edges are a trip hazard. The blinds will help in the heating and cooling of the church and will save the woodwork from sun exposure. Another bid is coming from a company in New York in January.

<u>Pew cushions</u>. Judson had samples of pew cover materials. Wendy suggested that we do only the back since there were samples that matched the present seat cushions, A representative of Pews Cushions Midwest Co. will be here in January to take measurements, show samples and answer questions.

<u>Windows for parsonage.</u> Rev. Tim asked when these windows (6) would be put in. They are still on their way in shipping.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Furnaces. Dead River has serviced the furnaces and propane heating units in both the church and the parsonage.

<u>Snow removal</u>. Judson has contracted with Jennifer Michaud who has a tractor with a snow blower for a four-month winter period at \$450 a month or \$1800. He will plow on the months before and after those contracted, if necessary. He will also plow the upper parking lot at no charge. John Noble will sand at \$65 an hour. It should not take a whole hour to do the church yard. Louis made a motion that we approve this arrangement, Richard seconded. Passed.

<u>Budget.</u> We would like to change our line Snow Removal/Mowing from \$4200 to \$5200. Wendy made the motion, Richard seconded. Passed.

<u>Sound booth</u>. It is 90% finished. Judson is waiting for 300' feet of cable that has been ordered since July. There was some discussion of the present supply line problem for materials.

Main office. The new ceiling is in place with sprinkler heads. The wall is up with insulation and sheet rock. Judson was able to acquire some insulation donated. Cabinets to store the prayer shawls and materials would cost \$600. He will construct lockers 4' wide by 7' tall for about \$220. He also plans to put in a counter top with storage underneath. The office is now "legal."

#### **OUT-OF-THE-BOX BUSINESS**

A Church business and extended parking lot. Gary and Mary Raymond's corner lot and building across Prospect St. from the church is now empty. There was much discussion about the church owning a business to bring in much-needed revenue. A loan could be made through the United Methodist Foundation. Judson suggested a "Jiffy Lube" type business. Richard thought a coffee shop midtown would be appreciated. There was a question about the soil suitability of a past service station. The tanks have been dug up. It was noted that most small businesses do not survive. The property could be sold. The Raymonds were asking \$200,000 which is not feasible. Judson will approach them again – just asking.

<u>CLUSTER</u>: The meeting came to order at 9:02 am with the following in attendance via Zoom. Ellen Cleaves, Paula Lilley, Bill Thomas, Victor Han, Mary Miller, Tim Wilcox, Cheryl Stratton, Chris Dare and Sue Brown.

Chris offered devotions beginning with the passage from Matthew "My yoke is easy Rev. Choi told the conference members if they wish these lay servants to continue to say, "Thank you". All replied.

#### Secretary's Report

The minutes of the October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting were presented. Motion to approve by Cheryl and seconded by Bill. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Paula reported that there has been no activity during October. The current checkbook balance is 223.05. Motion to approve the report by Chris and seconded by Cheryl. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Current worship in our churches**

Limestone is meeting in person and streaming. Sunday School also in person (20). The purple ladle is serving over 200 meals. Houlton had one Covid case but no additional cases. After one week online only, they have resumed in person and streaming. The children prepared a Harvest Party for the adults after worship on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Caribou is meeting in person and streaming. Congregants are masked and sing with masks in place. Most church congregations are wearing masks and also singing. Some choirs have also resumed singing (with masks).

#### 2021 Discipleship Recognition

Photos are needed of the recipient (or recipient and pastor). Each slide will need to name the church and the recipient.

#### <u>Cluster Thanksgiving Service</u> – November 21, 2021

The Thanksgiving service will be recorded. Tim will let us know where we should send video and photos. Cheryl has prepared the service and will assign parts that are not chosen (please let her know if there is a specific piece you wish to do). All parts need to be pre-recorded by each individual. An offering can be received in each congregation and should then be sent to Paula. After discussion, consensus was that the offering be provided to "Wabanaki Reach."

#### <u>Cluster Mission Project – St. Apollonia Festival of Trees</u>

This year's theme: "Look for the Helpers." We need decorations and gifts for the tree. All items should be provided in each church no later than November 21<sup>st</sup> so that we can get the items to Cheryl. Chris will pick up items around the cluster and work out a meeting time with Cheryl. Sue volunteered to help with the set up. We discussed possible gifts that might be provided.

#### **Cluster Council Gathering**

On hold until covid lessens. We will keep it in the agenda – it WILL happen!

#### **Cluster Confirmation Class**

Tim and Choi continue to discuss.

#### **Akeley Scholarship**

Tim will be sending the applications to Sue, Dan and Paula. Debbie Barnes has indicated that we can award two scholarships.

#### **New Business**

We shared our prayer concerns, and Ellen led us in prayer.

<u>WORSHIP COMMITTEE</u>: Members present: Bobbi Pelletier (chair), Rev. Tim Wilcox, Claire Hodgkins, Richard Clark, Gwen Ellinwood, Neal Genz, Diane Fitzpatrick, Diana Locke (by phone)

The meeting was opened at 9:35 a.m. by Bobbi in the church library. Devotions were presented by Diana Locke, who shared a lovely reading called The Best Gift, by Dr. James Merritt. This reading illustrated what a wonderful gift the Holy Spirit is because it is always in us, not just with us.

Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as printed.

Old Business: Bobbi asked Richard about an article he had written about our church that could be used for publication. He suggested that perhaps newer members of our church could speak better about how this church could attract new people. Both Claire and Bobbi talked about the qualities of this congregation that attracted them to our church and made them feel as though they belonged (warmth of the congregation, family feeling, openness to accepting others). Bobbi suggested passing Richard's article on to the Missions and Evangelism committee and ask others to add their testimonies about what brought them to Gray Memorial and what made them feel the desire to stay.

- November 7 will be All Saints Sunday as well as Communion Sunday. Since Bobbi will be away on vacation, Diane, Neal, and Diana will set up the sanctuary for this Sunday. Candles will be placed on the altar in memory of the twelve persons we have lost to death in the past year: Darlene Nelder, Doris Jeffery, Dale Fowler, Marcia DeMerchant, Albert Akeley, Leila Robertson, Priscilla (Pat) Dobson, Robert Buchanan, Elsie Locke, Ronald Nedeau, Chester Gage, Robert Cyr. A small table will be set up with

votives for people to light in silent memory of a loved one. Bobbi suggested that the liturgist and Rev. Tim could share in reading the names and lighting of the altar candles.

- November 14 will be our observation of Laity Sunday. Richard will be the worship leader. Dr. Sam Manages has agreed to speak and Rev. Tim will be asking Ruthann Weeks about speaking as well.
- November 21 will be Commitment Sunday as well as Thanksgiving Sunday. Chris Dare is leading the stewardship campaign and will be preaching on this day. There will be stewardship moments observed during the services on Nov. 7 and 14 as well. Bobbi offered to arrange the altar for a Thanksgiving theme. People will be asked to donate fresh or canned vegetables for this service and these will be given to the food pantry

after the service. Rev. Tim mentioned that the cluster will be having a Thanksgiving service either in person or on line, depending upon the status of the Covid pandemic.

#### **New Business:**

- November 28 will be the first Sunday in Advent. Members were asked to come to the church on Saturday, November 27 at 1:00 to help decorate the sanctuary. The Missions and Evangelism Committee will set up and decorate the angel tree. Our committee will set up the other decorations with a blue theme this year. Rev. Tim is planning a Christmas Eve service but will not be offering a Blue Christmas service this year.
- Rev. Tim mentioned that he will be at Mechuwana for his week of renewal from November 8 14.
- Bobbi said that she has asked the liturgists to have the congregation stand during appropriate parts of the service (call to worship, Gospel reading, etc.). She also mentioned that all our hearing devices are being used, but others may try them out if any of them are not being used on a given Sunday.
- Rev. Tim asked about who would be lighting the Advent candles during the service each Sunday. Bobbi suggested
  that the liturgist could do this on the first Sunday and others can be asked on the following Sundays in Advent.

Our next meeting will be held on Friday, December 3, at 9:30 a.m. Diane Fitzpatrick will offer devotions.

### LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING IN DECEMBER 2021!!!

MEETINGS ARE AUTHORIZED TO BE IN-PERSON AT THE CHURCH (MASKING & SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIRED); STILL POSSIBLE TO JOIN BY VIDEO OR PHONE ALL SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES WILL BE LIVE STREAMED ON YOUTUBE

Wednesday Friday Saturday	01 03 04	9:30am 9:30am 8:00am	Disciple Class in Fellowship Hall (Session 5) Worship Committee Meeting in Fellowship Hall UMM Breakfast; Tour of New Caribou Community School; Meeting
Sunday Wednesday Thursday	05 08 09	10:00am 9:30am 6:30pm	Worship - Second Sunday of Advent Disciple Class in Fellowship Hall (Session 6) SPRC Meeting in Fellowship Hall
Sunday Wednesday	12 15	10:00am 9:30am	Worship - Third Sunday of Advent Disciple Class in Fellowship Hall (Session 7)
Sunday	19	10:00am 11:30am	Worship - Fourth Sunday of Advent Missions & Evangelism Committee Meeting
Tuesday	21	6:00pm	Trustee Meeting
Wednesday	22	9:30am 10:00am	Disciple Class in Fellowship Hall (Session 8; Last Session) <u>DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWSLETTER INPUT</u>
Thursday	24	FEDERAL H 4:00pm	OLIDAY - CHRISTMAS - CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED  Christmas Eve Worship Service



Sunday	26	10:00am Worship - First Sunday after Christmas Day
Friday	31	FEDERAL HOLIDAY - NEW YEAR'S DAY - CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED

