

*I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.*
Psalm 116:1-2



Grace and Peace, Gray Memorial UMC,

WE PASSED!!!

I am deeply humbled and grateful for last week's outcome of my exams before the Board of Ordained Ministry. God willing, I will be ordained as a full elder in the UMC next June, during Annual Conference. As I reflect on all the steps that have led to this milestone: the generosity, prayers, kindness, friendship, guidance, trust, and grace from so many folks who have walked with me over these years, I see even more clearly that it takes a village to raise a minister. Lest you read in the above that the path has been all affirmation and encouragement, sunshine and puppy dogs, even the corrections and rebukes I have received, the adversity I've seen along the way, and last year's "not yet" from the Board, as trying as they were to navigate, absorb, confront, or receive, have all served to the good, in the sovereign will and enduring love of our Creator God, by the Holy Spirit. Thank you, Jesus!

And since it's important to celebrate life's victories, on Friday last week I drove north from Massachusetts to enjoy a weekend of swing dance in Montreal. I received the news of the Board's vote while on the road. I had already signed up for the event, the *Cat's Corner Exchange*, and I would have gone either way, but the positive outcome certainly added to the joy of moving to some great jazz music and learning new steps on the dance floor. Over those couple of days, I got to stay with my dear friend of 27 years, make some new friends, and pour out my thanks to God through dance! Wow!

Once again, thank you for your part in making all this possible. God shines brightly through you, and I am most blessed and grateful to be a part of your story! Yes, God has much more in store for Gray Memorial UMC!

For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay, Habakkuk 2:3.

With Love in Christ,

Pastor Ben



The Caribou Clock

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Greetings from the Church Office!

If you take a quick peak at the last page of this newsletter which shows the month's calendar, you will see this is a VERY busy month! So much going on in this church! Praise the Lord!

Updating the membership records is a very long process, so my hope is that I will get this done by the end of December and publish a new Church Directory around that time or in early January.

Since I am also the Church Treasurer, I pray that we will be able to pay our operating expenses over the next few months. The cost of many things are going up. I encourage you to really look at the Finance documents that are included in each month's newsletter. Hard copies of these reports are also available each month.

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 Thursday, November 20th!!*

Until next month.....

Bobbi Pelletier
Church Office Administrator



September 28th and October Prayer Requests

Prayer Concerns: Dale, Lu & Debbie Sharp; Leland Frost, Sylvia Akeley, Jeff Franklin, Richard Carde, Shirley Bowman, Phyllis Sykes, Bess Thornton, William Autrey, Kris McEwen, James Stuart, Rodney Nichols, Peter Doody, Dave & Sheila Belyea, Kenneth N. Stuart, Gwen Barnum, Melonie Carlson, Kara Thayer, Jeff & Duska Franklin, Elida Frederick, Katherine Noyes, Jere Leary, Seth Hodgkins, Jean Hodgkin's dog Max, Nancy Hunter

Deaths: Family of Carol McElwee; Family of Donald DeMerchant; Family of Phyllis Sykes; Prayers for Greene family in the loss of their brother Andy; Steve & Kim (Cousins) Perrault on loss of their son Branden; Family of Mike Stanley

Other: Chris Ouellette (safe traveling); Claire Hodgkins (family health issues)

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 PASTOR BEN. WE OFTEN HEAR FROM RECIPIENTS ON HOW TOUCHED THEY ARE THAT WE OFFERED PRAYERS FOR THEM!

REMINDERS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Pianist</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	<u>Counter</u>	<u>Coffee Fellowship</u>
Nov 02	Conrad Walton	Judi Greenier	Diane Fitzpatrick	Ruthann Weeks	SPRC
Nov 09	Deborah Pringnitz	Mari-Jo Hedman	Cheryl Martin	Ruthann Weeks	NOW Committee
Nov 16	Duska Franklin	Mari-Jo Hedman	Deborah Nichols	Elsie Doody	UMM
Nov 23	Penny Shaw	Mary Lou Brown	Mary Ouellette	Elsie Doody	Worship Committee
Nov 30	Charlotte Willey	Judi Greenier	Bobbi Pelletier	Elsie Doody	NEED VOLUNTEERS

Usher Coordinator for November ~ Dave Belyea
Communion Stewardess for November ~ Mary Theriault
Communion Bread for November ~ Debbie Barnes

Changes to the May 2022 Church Directory (please update your copy!):

Anderson, Betheny – new email address: bethenyndrsn12@gmail.com
Bossie, Wendy – new email address: wendybossie4@gmail.com
DeMerchant, Donald – delete; passed away September 27th
McDonough, Phil – new email address: damariscottamaine@gmail.com
Thornton, Bess – delete; passed away September 30th
White, Karen – delete home phone number (498-2796)

* * November Birthdays & Anniversaries * *

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

Remember your birthday & anniversary by making a special offering!



5 Deborah Pringnitz
9 Catherine Brewer
10 Doug Hise, Gary Langley
12 Karen Rego
15 Conrad Walton
16 Evelyn Irving
17 Locke Wischmann

23 David DeMerchant
24 Scott Albert
25 Lehrle Kieffer, Barbara Scott
26 Lisa Soderberg
27 Rhonda Cyr
28 Aurora Pethick Barnum
30 Penny Shaw



9 Danna & Rickey Bouchard

23 Mary & Todd Theriault

29 Lehrle & Robert Kieffer

x

Note: A number of people with birthdays and/or anniversaries are not listed here due to no response to the August Membership Audit project and church members were reported in the October 15, 2023 annual Church Conference Booklet for ultimate removal from our membership rolls. This also includes some non-members who are no longer active in the life of our church.

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

<u>Worship Attendance and General Fund Offerings:</u>			
<u>Date</u>	<u>In-Person Attendance</u>	<u>*On-Line Attendance</u>	<u>+ Operating Fund Offering</u>
Sep 21	53	35	\$2,546.00
Sep 28	49	(no on-line video)	\$1,053.63
Oct 05	50	36	\$5,122.00
Oct 12	39	27	\$4,319.63
Oct 19	44	32	\$1,801.00
Oct 26	50	(will provide next month)	\$2,073.63

+ Needed weekly to meet 2025 Budget: \$4,282.62

* On-line attendance shows the number of unique viewers, but may not capture accurate number of people if more than one person is viewing the service from one location.

"Growing in Faith" Capital Campaign Account: Balance reported in last month's Newsletter was \$31,190.41. Since then, we received interest of \$1.34 and did not have any payments. Our balance as of October 28th is \$31,191.75 (of that amount, the "furnace replacement donation funds" that remain are \$5,424.27).



The Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry is in need of the following items: Any type of jam or jelly, marshmallow fluff, adult cereals and canned vegetables. Donations may be brought to the church on Sunday and placed in the marked box in the Narthex OR Monday through Friday from 9am to 12pm. Thank you! Monetary donations are always welcome!

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).

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The Worship Committee is resuming their Mission Project to provide supplies to the schools. These are the items needed: shampoo, soap, deodorants, toothpaste, notebooks, bookbags, folders, colored pencils. They also have a “snack closet” the kids come to quite often for items like gummies, cheez nips, trail mix; any single serve items, water, juice boxes. Marked boxes are in the library. Please consider donating to this project! Thank you!

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, you may bring them to the church and we will take them to the Redemption Center.

We received \$25.85 in donations for October, so our proceeds are now \$1,337.80! Thank you for your support of this project! Just a reminder that these monies are used to cover operating expenses.



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 our ministries.

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 the church office (498-2103), 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.

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.

Here are the links for our November Sunday Worship Services at 10:00am:

Nov. 2 - <https://youtube.com/live/Ee80NcEILQw>

Nov. 9 - <https://youtube.com/live/eIIVqcyhz8k>

Nov. 16 - <https://youtube.com/live/ixxMKdXAUr8>

Nov. 23 - <https://youtube.com/live/ROAG-VKB6uM>

Nov. 30 - <https://youtube.com/live/jyYOp52HYnc>

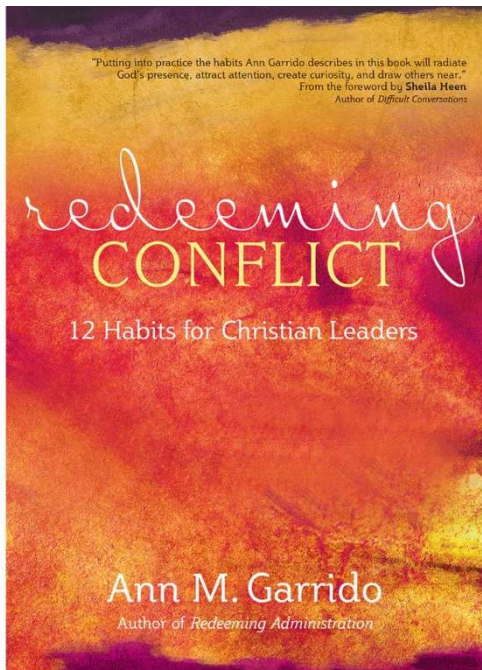
The Caribou Assembly of God Church offers “Friday Nite Meals” and in order to receive these meals, you must call on Monday of every week if you want a meal for that Friday. Please call Diane at 207-496-0373. You may also pick-up you own meal(s) or eat-in. Deliveries are made to Rose Acre residents or those in town (Caribou).

UPCOMING EVENTS:



Sunday, Nov 2nd - All Saints Sunday.
We will honor those individuals we have
lost this past year.

We will have a Harvest Supper on Saturday,
November 15th from 4:30-6pm.
The cost is \$15 for adults; \$8 for children 5-13;
children under 5 – free. All proceeds will go
towards the Operating Budget expenses. The
menu is: salad, turkey, potatoes, stuffing,
squash, carrots, peas, homemade rolls, dessert
and drinks. Tickets will be available beginning
Sunday, November 2nd. We encourage you to
purchase tickets in advance!
Take-outs are available (drinks not included).
We will have a poster in the Narthex that has a
list of meal ingredients we need and volunteer
hours and various tasks where we need help!



Pastor Ben is planning to lead a book study using the book
“Redeeming Conflict” by Ann M. Garrido. There are 12
chapters, so the study will last for 12 weeks in two 6-week
segments. There will be two classes – Sundays after
Worship (12:00pm) and Mondays at 10am.

The first 6 weeks will be November 16 & 17 through
December 22 & 23. We will then take a break for the
holidays and resume in January with the remaining 6
sessions.

If you are intested in attending this book study, please
contact the church office by Sunday, November 2nd to
enroll in either class. If you plan to attend, it would be
more cost effective for each person to order their own used
book on-line. New books cost \$17.95; used books are less.

We will host a free-will offering Thanksgiving Dinner at 1pm
on Thursday, November 27th.
If you wish to attend, reservations are required by
Tuesday, November 18th.
Please call the church office (498-2103) and make your
reservation!
All proceeds will go towards the Operating Budget expenses.

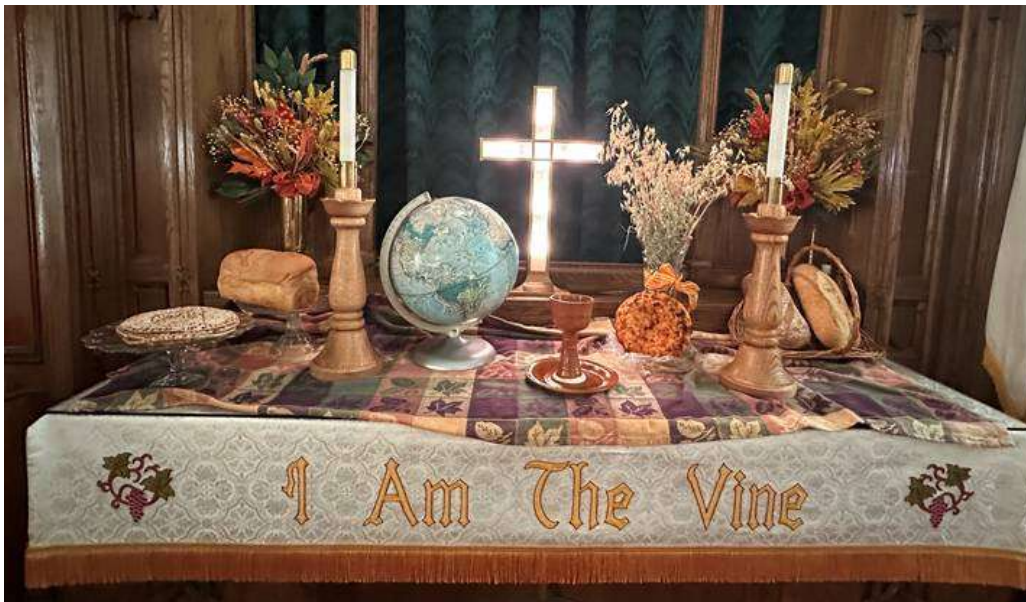


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PICTURES FROM OUR WORSHIP SERVICES (photos by Melonie Carlson)



September 21st – Pastor Ben and Cheryl Martin introduced the children to our new
“Pray Ground” (table/chairs/supplies) which will be in the library for the children to use each Sunday!



Sunday, October 5th – the special altar arrangement in honor of World Communion Sunday.
Thank you, Beth Alden and Diane Fitzpatrick! (Picture taken by Mary Theriault)

OTHER KODAK MOMENTS! (photos by Melonie Carlson)



October 18 - Ruthann Weeks sitting our church's Cookie Booth at the annual Caribou Arts & Craft Fair!



October 18/19 - Pictures of cookie buyers at the Caribou Arts & Craft Fair!

A Simple Words of Thanks!

The NOW committee would like to express a sincere word of thanks to everyone from our church family that helped make our 2025 annual cookie booth a success. Each of you helped make this year's cookie booth happen. We cannot thank you enough for your generosity, time and baking skills that help us not just this year, but each year to raise funds for both the church and our mission work.

Melonie Carlson, Chair

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Announcement from our Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC):

Gray Memorial has an immediate opening for a Financial Secretary. Shirley Bowman has expressed her desire to step down from this position and move on to other plans. Shirley has done a wonderful job over the last three plus years as well as during a previous tenure. She will be greatly missed in this position.

The Financial Secretary position oversees the tracking and reporting of financial gifts to Gray Memorial. It requires weekly deposit reports, a monthly report to the Church Council, two reports annually to donors, and tracking the results of the annual stewardship campaign, all using a computerized software program. Training assistance would be provided. The position also requires a general knowledge of bookkeeping, a detail-oriented work standard as well as an ability to maintain very strict privacy about individual donors and their accounts. The Financial Secretary is expected to attend the monthly Church Council meetings to address any issues brought up relative to the monthly reports.

If you, or anyone you know, might be interested in this position a formal job description and/or a job application can be requested from the church office or from any SPRC member (Melonie Carlson, Cheryl Martin, Kathy Panaro, Dave Belyea, Mary Lou Brown, or Debbie Barnes).

When you have a chance, please express your thanks to Shirley for the great job she has done for our church and wish her many blessings in her future.

Debbie Barnes, SPRC Chair



Church Council Minutes October 21, 2025

Members Present: Roy Alden (chair), Pastor Ben Daggett, David DeMerchant, Judi Greeier, Cheryl Martin, Bobbi Pelletier, Debbie Barnes

The meeting was opened shortly after 3:00pm by Roy Alden. Pastor Ben offered a prayer.

Roy's open discussion question was: "Are we listening? Or is the noise distracting us? Are we too busy to hear? God is always listening. Maybe the better question is are you listening? We commonly think of prayer as a time when we talk to God. Ben has tried to demonstrate to us through his pastoral prayers during church that we need to wait and listen to God. We cannot hear if we are not listening."

There was some discussion and Roy said we need to not be too busy doing the work of the church that we aren't really listening. Pastor Ben offered a poem entitled "Peace of Wild Things" by Wendell Berry (1968).

Financial Statements:

- Debbie presented the financial secretary's report for September, which included total regular offerings of \$10,849.63. There were donations of \$4.00 in reimbursements; \$1,181.15 in various Special Funds for Church Use; \$300.00 for the Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry. The total of all donations received was \$12,224.78.
- Bobbi presented her Treasurer's report which shows an ending balance of (\$1,989.80) in the Operating Budget account. The Special Funds held in the account total \$30,732.01 in the funds for church use and \$345.08 in the funds not for church use.
- Bobbi told everyone that because our donations continue to be less than expenses, she will have to use the remaining \$7,422.32 in the Special Funds for Church Use that was held to cover operating expenses.
- Bobbi expressed her concern that as of the end of September, we are six months behind in paying our Mission Shares, which is \$14,323.98. To totally pay what is owed through December, we need \$21,486.01.

Committee Reports:

- Debbie Barnes said that SPRC might have to advertise externally for the position. For now, she and Cheryl are working on the weekly deposit reports and starting to record the donations in Servant Keeper.
- Cheryl reported that the NOW Committee's cookie booth raised \$943. Half (\$471.50) was given to the church for operating expenses.

Other Items:

- Roy asked about Nominations – where are we at? Pastor Ben said that not much has happened. We need to prepare a revised Leadership Report for our next meeting.
- The Committees have to provide their proposed 2026 Budget at the next meeting.
- The Church Council members need to discuss both the Leadership Report and the 2026 Budget and approve. The final approved documents need to be provided to the congregation ahead of a Special Church Conference led by Pastor Ben. We need to provide a two-week notice of this Special Church Conference, so it was decided that the two documents have to be given to the congregation by Sunday, November 23rd. We will schedule the Special Church Conference to follow our Sunday Worship service on December 7th.

- Stewardship campaign – Pastor Ben, Cheryl and Melonie haven't had any time to work on it. After this week, they will call a meeting to start working on it.
- Bobbi told everyone that we have not received a bill from the Red Cross for the in-person training they conducted last month.
- Bobbi mentioned that Del and Judson have agreed to have a Harvest Supper on Saturday, November 15th. We will sell tickets ahead of time, starting November 2nd. All proceeds will go towards the operating budget.
- Cheryl shared that the NOW Committee has decided not to partner with Colleen during her scheduled December event. The committee will do something in January.

Roy asked us to pray silently for Pastor Ben as he meets with the Board of Ordained Ministry on Thursday at Rolling Ridge in North Andover, Massachusetts. He is being considered for becoming a full elder and ordination.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13th at 1pm.

Bobbi Pelletier, Fill-in Secretary

Committee/Group Reports provided to the Church Council during October:

Aroostook Cluster of the United Methodist Churches Meeting Minutes for October 2, 2025

The meeting came to order at 9:00 am with the following present via Zoom. Victor Han, Paula Lilley, Sue Michaud, Joyce Kang, Melonie Carlson, Ben Daggett, Nicholas Perez, Sara Hill, Carolyn Kimball, James Choi, and Sue Brown.

Victor welcomed everyone and invited James to lead us in devotions. James read Matthew 11:28-30 and spoke about our call to serve, reminding us that our jobs are not always easy including the challenge of caring for others when we are weary. Jesus promises us that we can rest in him and find peace, sustaining peace, for our souls when we bring our burdens to Jesus. James closed with prayer.

Secretary's Report

The minutes of the September 4th meeting were presented. Motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Carolyn and seconded by James. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Paula reported that our current checkbook balance is \$538.10. There has been no activity since last we met. Motion to approve the report was made by Sue M. and seconded by Sara. Motion carried unanimously. Thank you, Paula.

2025 St. Apollonia Festival of Trees

Melonie shared that they are making quilled ornaments (fruits). After discussion, it was decided that probably 1 - 2 dozen will be sufficient. Sue B. reported that she has completed the registration form for this year's Festival of Trees. Sue M. offered to look for a tree at Walmart today. Thank you, Sue.

Pulpit Exchange

Tabled until January.

Fall Cluster Service

Our Cluster service will be held at Houlton UMC on Sunday, November 2nd at 3:00pm. Note: This Service was subsequently changed to November 9th. Victor had emailed a tentative order of the service. Theme will be giving thanks

with Psalm readings and music. Discussion around where the offering for this service might best be used. As Anderson Soares has come and shared with us from his street ministry in Brazil, it was decided that this would be an excellent outreach to support him. There was strong support for this, and Ben is willing to prepare an invitation to the offering and show a short video. Joyce suggested we have a time of fellowship following the service. Host church will prepare some hot food, and other churches are invited to contribute as they are able. Joyce offered that all who are interested in the worship dance can practice with her ahead of the service. Joyce can send out a link to the worship video. Victor will ask DS McKinley if he would like to come and offer the dismissal with blessing.

Fall Cluster Gathering

The Cluster gathering was uplifting for all who were able to attend. It was a joy to hear Nicholas' and Ben's stories of God's leading and how they arrived here in The County.

Sharing Mission and Outreach Ideas

- Paula shared that Hodgdon is beginning a new project where they will offer a food pantry/lending library along with coffee and refreshments on Saturday inviting members of the community.
- Sara Hill reported that Stetson Memorial United Women of Faith is going to put warm socks and a gift certificate for a cup of coffee into Dunkin' Donuts travel mugs to share with homeless persons.
- Sue M. shared that Lidstone Memorial is making upgrades to the local Food Cupboard. A new cupboard has been built and will be provided along with a new large "waterhog" mat and some new chairs. The remainder of the funds will be used to provide food.
- Carolyn shared how Grant Memorial is collecting socks, mittens, hats, etc. to be donated to the homeless shelter in Presque Isle.
- Victor shared that Houlton UMC provides meals for elderly folks and will invite them to the church for a harvest meal.
- James reported that Limestone serves lunch to about 80 people every Thursday. The numbers increase each week. They have also begun to practice for a Christmas choir cantata.
- Ben shared that Gray Memorial is starting a midweek prayer service at 3:00pm on Thursdays, which will become a Vesper Service by winter. It will be a time for quiet contemplation and prayer.
- Joyce shared how persons in several of the churches she and Victor have served have been invited to share their life stories and personal testimonies - it has been a powerful witness to others.

New Business

Service with Bishop Bickerton

Victor confirmed that Bishop Bickerton will come to the County on April 12, 2026 for a combined Cluster Service. We will discuss this further at another meeting. As the fall service is in Houlton, the spring service will be somewhere in the northern area of the County.

Joys and concerns

After sharing joys and concerns, Nicholas led us in prayer.

Next meeting: Thursday, October 30th via Zoom at 9:00am

Devotions for next meeting: Victor

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Brown
Sue Brown
Secretary
Aroostook Cluster Council of United Methodist Churches

September 17, 2025

The meeting came to order with the following members present: Cheryl Martin (chair), Melonie Carlson, Pastor Ben Daggett, Alaina Pethick. Colleen Harmon was also in attendance to discuss Safer Sanctuaries/Red Cross training.

Pastor Ben opened the meeting with a scripture reading and prayer.

Melonie moved to accept the minutes of the August meeting. Alaina seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- **Safer Sanctuaries**

- Cheryl expressed our thanks to Colleen for providing this training.
- Colleen reported that all attendees passed the test.

- **Red Cross**

- The link on the slip of paper on the sign up sheet was not working correctly. Cheryl forwarded an email from the training provider with the correct link.
- Please complete the online training prior to the in person session on Sept. 25. There are 7 modules with a test at the end of each one.

- **Sunday School registration form**

- A form for the Sunday school registration was shared and we discussed various revisions that need to be made to it, particularly regarding photo/video release. Cheryl and Melonie will review and revise the form.

- **Pray Ground**

- There is a new area for children in the library with fidget toys and quiet activities. This Sunday the Education Committee and Pastor Ben will incorporate an explanation of the new area and a dedication of the space during the children's lesson of the service.

- **Sunday School**

- We discussed the previously shared materials as well as a couple of new ones. With many of the committee members missing from this meeting, no decisions were made.
- We also discussed the possible starting date of sometime in October, how far in advance to plan, and reviewing/scheduling the list of volunteers. Further discussion with the whole group is needed.

Pastor Ben ended the meeting with a message about conflict reconciliation, especially focusing on the practice of sabbath keeping. He encouraged us to keep this in mind when teaching and modeling for the children.

Melonie gave the closing prayer.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, October 8th at 9:30. We will be meeting on the second Wednesday of the month from this point forward.

Respectfully submitted,
Alaina Pethick

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP REPORTS:

From Financial Secretary:

The following is the total church offering for September:

Regular Offering	\$10,493.63
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<u>Loose Offering</u>	356.00
Subtotal-Regular Offering	\$10,849.63

<u>Other Sources Operating Fund:</u>	.00
Total Regular Offerings	\$10,849.63

Reimbursements:	
Upper Room	4.00

Special Funds for Church Use:	
Coffee Fellowship	139.15
Bottle Redemption	7.00
Community Support	720.00
Ivan Shaw Memorial Gifts	315.00
Subtotal Funds for Church Use	\$1,181.15

Special Funds Not for Church Use:	
<u>Ecumenical Food Pantry</u>	300.00
Sub-Total Funds Not for Church Use	300.00
Grand Total:	\$12,334.78

From Treasurer:

Beginning Balance	2,908.90	
2025 Operating income	10,849.63	
Bottle Redemption	7.00	
Interest	1.51	
Less EFT fee	(32.55)	VANCO fees (EFT deposits)
<u>Less Expenses</u>	<u>(15,724.29)</u>	
Ending Balance	(1,989.80)	

Total "Special Funds for Church Use", which included many lines for various donations, total \$21,191.75. The "Special Funds NOT for Church Use" total \$345.08. Details are available in complete report packages available at the church.

* \$25,000.00 invested with Thompson/Hamel LLC for Memorial Garden on June 29, 2017. Investment cost of \$1,073.78; withdrew \$3,000 in March 2021, \$3,000 in May 2023 & \$3,000 in Aug 2025; as of October 3, 2025, on-line report shows ending value = \$26,018.56.

The Capital Account Money is as follows as of September 30: Previous Balance - \$32,990.41; Deposits - \$1.34; Expenses = \$1,800.00 (AM Construction – install new Narthex door). Current Balance - \$31,191.75. *(Includes funds earmarked for Furnace Fund - \$5,397.33; Emergency Fund Donations = \$21,104.23).*

Expenditures for September 2025:

<u>Programs:</u>	
Office	\$ 206.04
<u>NOW Team</u>	<u>46.00</u>
Programs Sub-Total	\$ 252.04

Trustee Expenses:

Church Utilities	\$835.06	
Parsonage Utilities	775.38	
Telephone/Internet	215.00	
Property Insurance	2,789.74	(20% of new year's insurance contract; \$1,384.97 per month Oct - May)
Snow Removal/Mowing	450.00	
<u>Maintenance/Cleaning</u>	<u>128.83</u>	
Trustee Sub-Total	\$5,194.01	

Staff-Parish Relations Expenses:

Pastor's Salary	\$4,420.00
<u>Health Insurance</u>	<u>1,788.83</u>
Pastor's Total Comp	\$6,208.83

Choir Director	200.00
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Treasurer	166.67
Church Office Administrator	833.33
Custodian	1,625.00
Maine PFML Deductions	(39.98)
Total Other Salaries	\$2,785.02

Other Expenses:	
Guest & Substitute Staff	\$200.00
FICA	185.51
Workman's Comp	66.64
Total Other Expenses	\$452.15

Sub-Total SPRC Expenses \$9,446.00

New England Conference:

Pastor Pension Benefit	\$832.24
NEC Total	\$832.24
Grand Total Expenses	\$15,724.29

Weekly Average Needed for 2025: \$4,282.62 (52 Sundays)

Mission Shares = \$2,387.33/mo. As of EOM September, 6 months behind - \$14,323.98. (2 months of Mission Shares paid in March; one month paid in August)

Note: Dead River bills for church also include charges for propane deliveries. Balances as of Sep 30: Church = (\$896.15); Parsonage = (\$1,563.53)

2025 YTD REVIEW – September 2025

Annual Budget	\$222,696.29
Required Monthly	\$18,558.02
Required Weekly	\$4,282.62

September:

Target = \$167,022.22; Beginning Operating Fund Balance (Jan only) - \$924.51; Operating Fund Income from F/S YTD - \$132,051.95; Special Funds Used for Operating Fund Expenses YTD = \$17,976.26; Total Expenses YTD - \$152,646.92; Unpaid Mission Shares = \$14,323.98.

An aggregate of in-person and virtual attendance shows monthly average of 76 and 81 YTD.

NOW Committee Minutes

October 1st, 2025

Gray Memorial Library

10am

In attendance: Melonie Carlson, Cheryl Martin, Sandy Pethick, Ben Daggett, Bobbi Pelletier, Ruthann Weeks\

Absent: Alaina Pethick, Aurora Pethick Barnum, Kathy Panaro

Meeting called to order at 10:00am.

Opening Prayer – Ruthann

Approval of September Minutes – Bobbi motioned, Cheryl seconded, all approved.

Treasurers Report - Cheryl Martin

Beginning Balance	\$1,595.56
9-19-25 Reimbursement Check	
Travel expenses to Bangor and back	
Parishioner's medical appointment	
(Check #555)	\$38.14
Balance 10-1-25	\$1,558.42

Ruthann made motion to approve Treasurer's report, Sandy seconded, all approved.

Cookie Booth Sale at the Craft Fair - October 18th & 19th ...set up, volunteers, bakers

The committee discussed making an appeal to the congregation on the services of 10/5 and 10/12, for bakers and volunteers. The dog treats are the most popular item (6-8 per bag, and 8-10, depending on the size). Volunteer shifts at the booth: 2 people are needed for 2 hours, from 10-4 each day of the fair, which will be held at the high school. Melonie prepared a signup sheet (now located in the Narthex) for setup, breakdown, and 2-hour shifts. Ben thought we'd need about a dozen bakers. ;)

Bobbi noted that Donald DeMerchant's memorial service will be held on Saturday the 18th as well, at Mockler's Funeral Home, at 1pm. The family has requested a meal to be held at the church, to follow the (now confirmed with Mockler, BD) graveside committal service. It will be a full day for the NOW Committee, between the cookie booth and preparing for the meal! We are awaiting word from the family as to their specific requests regarding the menu.

St Apollonia Christmas tree

Melonie noted we'd have an update on some of the specifics at the 10/2 cluster meeting. The theme is "Fruits of the Spirit," and the request made to the churches by the organizing group is for gift cards. The tree will be decorated with a tree runner, tree skirt, and ornaments of various kinds of fruit made by "quilling" (thank you Sandy and Melonie for your artistic talents!). The team discussed the importance of the funds on the gift cards having a "focus" (i.e., fuel, food, etc.) for how and where the money goes. Wal-Mart gift cards were put forth as an option, but a concern was raised about whether we'd prefer to invest in (more) local businesses, such as Hannaford, Sleepers, and Marden's, as examples. Save-A-Lot was not a preference of the group, either.

Angel tree/Advent season

On Thanksgiving turkeys, GMUMC has given 20 turkeys to the food pantry in past years, at 10-12 lbs. each (no larger). Judson needs to order the turkeys by 10/27. Bobbi motioned and Sandy seconded that the NOW Committee pay for twenty turkeys to the Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry. All in favor.

For the Thanksgiving meal, planning needs to begin in early November. The dinner begins at 1pm on Thanksgiving Day for a free will offering, with no set fee. Bobbi will handle advertisement and reservations for this meal. She may ask for help with donating some dinner ingredients; she's already told Judson that she wants 2 turkeys. More on this next month.

Melonie made note that Alaina had gotten back to her with the quote for 2,000 cards (\$108.64) to include with the bags of cookies for the Craft Fair.

The Advent paraments need to be ready by November 30th (first day of Advent).

More details on the Angel Tree are pending further conversation with Denise at the school, and there was discussion on the fact that the church can say how many children we'd like to sponsor, (i.e., to cap the number at 15). In past years the number was too large for the congregation to support.

Status Reports - food pantry, photo class, penpal, etc

Bobbi shared about a couple of conversations she had had about a new home for the food pantry, first with Penny Thompson at the Town office (regarding the old Greenier Building), and then with Laurel Kieffer (who asked about building where Monica's used to be, on the lot the church owns). She suggested and asked the group for our thoughts about constructing a permanent new location for the food pantry on that land. Ben shared how he has taken part in the grant-writing process for two separate proposals (one of which went through) for a Hebrews 11 Grant through the Conference, and that funds might be made available for a project like that, from NEAC. (Hebrews 11 Grant monies come from the closure and sale of church properties, and those funds are reinvested in local church ministry projects through these grants).

Melonie suggested Dave Abbott of the UM Foundation as another person to talk to regarding potential grants for a project like this.

Sandy reported that the photo class is off to a good start, though the last session (9/29) was cancelled due to covid exposure. Rich and Jeanne Daggett will also be joining the class. The final class will be on Nov 10th.

Pen pals – Melonie is in conversation with Denise about 8th graders. There were not a lot of pen pal letters for this first round, and Melonie will write an email to the church.

December Holiday event discussion...

Further conversation with Colleen has yet to happen to coordinate around the use of space for that day (Saturday, December 6th), since she originally reserved the fellowship hall/kitchen for her own event – a plan was made to invite Colleen to the next NOW meeting to plan for that. Discussion on having the event on a day that corresponds with the vendors' booths that get set up in Caribou that time of year (and explanation to give Ben more context about that).

Committee membership/chair nomination finalized

No names have been raised for new volunteers to be a part of this committee, nor has anyone approached the members. Some discussion around seeing the same faces on various ministry teams and committees. We paused to pray to the Lord of the harvest, and asked God to send us workers.

Correction of the date of the Coffee fellowship to October 12th, 2025

Additional agenda items...

The team discussed and agreed to share proceeds from the cookie sale 50/50 to the operating budget and this committee.

Ben shared about hearing a talk by the director of the (soon to be in Caribou!) Aroostook Children’s Museum at the last Rotary Club meeting. The museum will be closing on the property next to County Quik Print. She shared very eloquently about the museum and its purpose, and the team discussed inviting her to speak at Gray, ultimately deciding to invite her to speak on Children’s Sabbath/Laity Sunday (October 19th). Ben will reach out to her to see about setting that up.

Children’s hand bells on the 19th? Melonie to follow up.

Members were asked to consider ideas of folks who might be a member of the NOW Committee.

Setup for the DeMerchant reception was scheduled for Friday, October 17th (3pm at GMUMC) with craft fair setup to follow (5:30pm at the high school).

Agenda items for November meeting – none noted.

Opening prayer November meeting: Kathy
The November meeting date and time will be 11/12/25, at 10am
We adjourned at 11:40ish.

Ben Daggett
Volunteer Secretary

Trustee Meeting
September 16, 2025

Present: Pastor Ben, Richard Clark, Judson Drake, Colleen Harmon, Del Ramey, Debbie Nichols, Judi Greenier, and David DeMerchant (chair)
The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.
Opening prayer was given by Pastor Ben.

Secretary’s report was presented. Motion to accept the report with corrections. Report approved.
Treasurer’s report was given by Judi Greenier as follows:

I.	D. SCHOLARSHIP FUND – UMFNE	
	Reverend George Budd	9,422
	Herbert & Elizabeth Brown	9,590
	Jack & Juanita Lancaster	<u>9,714</u>
	TOTAL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS	28,726 *
II.	Local Accounts (Aroostook Federal Savings & Loan Association)	
	A. Organ Fund	2,487.26
	B. Church Clock Account	537.03
	C. Steeple Maintenance	1,024.18
	D. Pastors Moving Account	768.73
	E. Trustee’s CD	11,968.92
	F. Balance in Checking	2,953.74
	G. Hazel Greenier Family Accessibility Fund	<u>14,756.50</u>
	(the elevator fund)	

TOTAL LOCAL ACCOUNTS

\$34,496.36

III. Summary

A. Permanent Fund & Jennie Lyon Memorial	92,517 *
B. Total UMFNE Memorials	216,813 *
C. Total Scholarship Funds	28,726 *
D. Total Local Accounts	<u>34,496</u>
TOTAL TRUSTEES PORTFOLIO	<u>\$372,552</u>

* Represents UMFNE market values as of 06/30/2025

Gray Memorial United Methodist Church
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Checking account from 07/15/2025 – 09/16/2025

INCOME (+)

07/17/2025	Donation to Brown Scholarship	50.00	from MLBrown ILM R&A Hamilton
07/26/2025	UMFNE Ck #80658 07/04/2025	2060.22	dividends qtr ended 06/30/2025
09/06/2025	Donation to UMFNE Perm Fund	50.00	from J Greenier IM Anna Roberts
07/31/2025	Bank Interest July	.18	
07/30/2025	Proceeds from Backpack event	470.00	Earmarked for "Guest Services"
08/31/2025	Bank Interest August	<u>.16</u>	
TOTAL ADDITIONS:			\$2,630.56

Payouts (-)

07/16/2025	S. W. Collins	3,460.00	**purch new dbl door w/frame**
07/29/2025	UMFNE Brown Scholarship	50.00	IM Rev & Mrs. Hamilton
07/29/2025	UMFNE Permanent Fund	50.00	IM Anna Roberts
08/06/2025	S.W. Collins	184.30	**matrls for door installation**
09/15/2025	Seacoast Security	125.00	labor/new door security
09/15/2025	Seacoast Security	<u>114.45</u>	Monitoring SEPT. OCT. NOV.
TOTAL PAYOUTS			<u>\$3,983.76</u>
CHEEKBOOK BALANCE SEPTEMBER 16, 2025			<u>\$2,953.74</u>

- INCLUDES \$754.95 BALANCE EARMARKED FOR Guest Services

**Deducted from Guest Services funds.

Available funds 09/16/2025 \$2,198.79

Treasurers report was accepted.

Discussion of the Trustees role in dealing with the Memorial Funds. Do the Trustees have sole authority over these funds? Judson thought Yes and so did the rest of the trustees, but unfortunately, it is not being exercised. Pastor Ben looked into the Book of Discipline and confirmed that the Trustees do have such an authority; but can share it with a Memorials Committee. GMUMC did have such a committee but it has become inactive and decisions are made by one person in consultation with the families involved. The problem might be alleviated. Del thought If the families were offered the choice of donating to the permanent fund rather than setting up one more Memorial fund. Judi reported that the Board of Trustees is still waiting for information on the status of the Memorial Fund. It was moved and approved that Pastor Ben become a member of the Board of Trustee. Two other church member names were reported to be interested in becoming a member of the Board of Trustees. Their names were given to the membership committee.

OLD BUSINESS

The sanctuary ceiling is planned for repairs and repainting in January 2026.

The front doors in the narthex have been replaced and are working well.

As soon as possible the Standard Operating Procedures manual for emergencies will be completed.

NEW BUSINESS

Assignment of Duties for Trustee members- waiting for the new security system to be installed.

Pastor Ben needs a new laptop and printer. It was moved, seconded and approved to purchase an HP Envy \$775. We need to replace the projector in the sanctuary. The plan is to replace it with a commercial grade with adjustable hanging brackets and Bluetooth capabilities and surround sound that eliminates the needs to take the microphone to the pews. Estimated costs of \$6800. This item was tabled.

We need to send out invitations for snow plow contracts for 2025-2026. Dave DeMerchant will get the information from Judson and mail them.

The printer in the library quit and needs to be replaced. Estimate costs of a new one is \$890. Moved and second to purchase it. Approved the purchase.

We had to recast the hammer for the tower bell. The Amish craftsman will make a new one. Estimate cost of \$100. Moved, second, and approved the work.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

Colleen reported the Safer Sanctuary training was held and everyone passed.

The garden is again being used by the homeless and druggies at night. Needles, trash and other items are being left behind. The Police were contacted and advised us to put up signage. Judson will take care of it.

Closing prayer given by Pastor Ben

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm

Richard Clark

Worship Committee Minutes October 2, 2025

Members present: Bobbi Pelletier (chair), Cheryl Martin, Gwen Ellinwood, Pastor Ben Daggett, Richard Clark, Claire Hodgkins, Diana Locke.

The meeting was opened by Bobbi at 10:32.

Devotions: Diana Locke offered a message on how silence can filter things we hear in our heads to our hearts and how silence helps us hear God's heartbeat and voice.

The September 4th minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business:

- For "Back to Church Sunday", Bobbi sent out 13 invitations to people who hadn't been to church for a while. Unfortunately, none of those people came. Thanks for trying Bobbi! Wendy Bossie had several family members with her and Judi Greenier did introduce a couple she had invited.
- The Safer Sanctuary and Red Cross training is completed and all who attended passed! Colleen H. has not yet submitted a bill. Neither has the Red Cross.
- Bobbi is waiting for Judson D. to provide information on purchasing a new projector.
- Bobbi thanked Aurora for playing her flute during worship - excellent job!
- Our mission project with the Caribou School System has started. Denise Hamlin picked up a couple boxes of school supplies (snacks, hygiene products along with pencils, notebooks etc.) and was very grateful. We will continue collecting for the 2025-2026 school year.
- Bobbi asked if anyone had thought of new people to join our worship committee - no names were given.

- Pastor Ben will be asking people to spell the names of people (when necessary) who are verbally lifted up in prayer. Pastor Ben suggested that people could place the names in the offering plate and Bobbi suggested reminding people of the prayer list sheet in the Narthex.

Upcoming Sundays:

- October 5th is World Communion Sunday. Beth A. and Diane F. will do a special arrangement (Saturday) and there will be a special offerings envelope in the bulletin.
- October 19th is Laity Sunday/Children's Sabbath. Bobbi asked Melonie if kids might play the handbells. Also, Pastor Ben will ask the children's museum director if she would like to speak. Bobbi suggested that Laity lead the service except for the sermon.
- October 26th - Ellen Cleaves will lead the service. Pastor Ben will be going before the board for Elders Orders - our thoughts and prayers go with him!
- November 2nd is All Saints Sunday. In honor of the saints, Wendy Bossie will do a bulletin board of individuals and their obituary. As their picture appears on the projection screen, Pastor Ben will read the name and a flower will be brought forward by family members or friends of the saints and placed in a vase (held by the liturgist) and a candle will be lit (Aurora/Gwen) on the altar. Soft music will play in the background. We will honor the following people we've lost (family/friends in parentheses): Betty Holdsworth (Gwen Ellinwood), Anna Roberts (Brenda Curtis), Ivan Shaw (Penny Shaw), Donald DeMerchant (Dave DeMerchant), Bess Thornton (Cindy Heron), along with Willis Sutherland (Judi Greenier).

New Business:

- November 2nd is All Saints Sunday. The Aroostook Cluster Service will take place in Houlton at 3pm. Houlton will provide the hot dishes and other churches should contribute as able. Our choir will sing and combine with Washburn's choir to sing. Make a joyous noise unto the Lord!!
- October 18th (Saturday) Don DeMerchant's service is at 1:00pm at Mocklers then to the gravesite. Reception following at the church - helpers? Bobbi and the NOW Committee will coordinate.
- October 18th & 19th - Cookie Booth at the Arts and Crafts Fair at CHS sponsored by the NOW Committee
- Advent begins Sunday November 30th. Bobbi will order 50 copies of "The Gifts of Christmas" devotional (\$.58 each). *Update – the one we chose was sold out, so Bobbi ordered the other option - "Joy to the World" - for \$.69 each.)*
- Worship Committee members will meet on Saturday, November 29th at 1pm to decorate the sanctuary for Advent season (blue this year). Any volunteer to wrap the purple candles with the blue adhesive paper? NOW Committee members will set up the Angel Tree at the same time.

Other Business:

- The bell hammer is being replace on Wednesday October 8th. Thoughts on the volume setting for the bell? Some thought full volume, others were uncertain - just how loud is it? How difficult is it to raise or lower the volume? Is it set it and forget it? Pastor Ben and Bobbi (perhaps some other people) will be around on the 8th to listen and make a judgement call. *Note: Personnel coming to replace hammer were not able to make it on the 8th so they will reschedule.*
- Thoughts on where to put a new building for the food pantry? Bobbi did talk with city official about the previous location (Greenier's building), but not sure that space would work.

Pastor's time:

- Pastor Ben and the CCMT (Crash Course Ministry Team: Melonie, Cheryl, Kim) thought a mid-week prayer service on Thursdays from 3:00-3:45 or so, would be helpful to the community. The prayer list from the previous week would be provided. It would be a time for people to gather for quiet contemplation, reflection, and intercession. It starts today!
- Pastor Ben suggested we have sung Communion responses for Sunday (10/5) All were in favor.

Next meeting with be Thursday November 13th at 10:30am. (Pastor Ben is away on the 6th)

Devotions: Gwen Ellinwood volunteered

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Diana Locke (filling in for Diane Fitzpatrick)

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NOVEMBER 2025!!!

Saturday	01	11:30am	Senior Choir Practice
<i>DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS - PUT CLOCKS <u>BACK</u> ONE HOUR BEFORE YOU GO TO BED!!</i>			

Sunday	02	10:00am	Worship; Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost; All Saints Sunday
Monday	03	1:00pm	Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting
		1:00pm	"Snap and Shoot: Photography Basics" Class led by Sandy Pethick (6 of 7)
Tuesday	04	7:00pm	Caribou Choral Society Practice at Caribou United Baptist Church
Thursday	06	3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service (all are welcome!)
Saturday	08	11:30am	Senior Choir Practice

Sunday	09	10:00am	Worship; Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost (Senior Choir sings); Laity Sunday (postponed from Oct 19 th)
		3:00pm	Aroostook Cluster Fall Service at Houlton UMC (our choir will sing); our church members are asked to bring something cold or dessert
Monday	10	9:30am	Education Committee Meeting (note date change)
		11:30am	"Gray Gals" Pot-Luck Luncheon
		1:00pm	"Snap and Shoot: Photography Basics" Class led by Sandy Pethick (Final)
Tuesday	11	<u>FEDERAL HOLIDAY - VETERANS DAY - CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED</u>	
		6:00pm	Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry Board Meeting
		7:00pm	Caribou Choral Society Practice at Caribou United Baptist Church
Wednesday	12	10:00am	NOW Committee Meeting (note date change)
Thursday	13	10:30am	Worship Committee Meeting (note date change)
		1:00pm	SPRC Meeting
		3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service (all are welcome!)
Saturday	15	11:30am	Senior Choir Practice
		4:30-6pm	Harvest Supper (all proceeds go towards Operating Budget)

Sunday	16	10:00am	Worship; Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost (Senior Choir sings)
		12:00pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study (class #1)
Monday	17	10:00am	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study (class #1)
Tuesday	18	10:00am	<u>DEADLINE FOR THANKSGIVING DINNER RESERVATIONS</u>
		1:00pm	Trustees Meeting
		7:00pm	Caribou Choral Society Practice at Caribou United Baptist Church
Thursday	20	10:00am	<u>DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWSLETTER INPUT</u>
		1:00pm	Church Council Meeting
		3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service (all are welcome!)
Saturday	22	8:00am	UMM Breakfast & Meeting
		11:30am	Senior Choir Practice

Sunday	23	10:00am	Worship; Christ the King Sunday; Thanksgiving Sunday
		12:00pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study (class #2)
Monday	24	10:00am	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study (class #2)
Tuesday	25	7:00pm	Caribou Choral Society Practice at Caribou United Baptist Church
Thursday	27	<u>FEDERAL HOLIDAY - THANKSGIVING DAY - CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED</u>	
		1:00pm	Thanksgiving Dinner - Free Will Offering Accepted; Reservations Required
Saturday	29	1:00pm	Worship Committee & NOW Committee - Prepare Sanctuary for Advent

Sunday	30	10:00am	Worship; First Sunday of Advent; United Methodist Student Day (special offering)