

Dear Gray Memorial UMC Family,

Grace & Peace!

The New Year is upon us! Even as I look back at the lessons, challenges, and blessings that came with 2025, I have a growing sense of anticipation for what's to come in 2026. Gratitude is the defining word for the present moment, whether reviewing the past or looking forward, since God is ever faithful and present to lead the way, through it all. Proverbs 3:5–6 states, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” As 2026 begins, we'll be exploring joy through simplicity and generosity through a four-week study based on Adam Hamilton's teachings in the book *Enough*, which will meet in the parsonage on Wednesdays at 3pm, beginning January 7th. Additionally, I am happy to announce the opening of a second cohort to take up study of the book *Redeeming Conflict: 12 Habits for Christian Leaders*, by Ann M. Garrido, with a meeting time planned for Thursdays at 6:30pm in the parsonage, beginning January 15th. Please find additional information on each of these studies below. As February rolls around, we'll begin a Lenten Series called *Houses of Peace*, which applies the wisdom we can learn from the story of Jesus' sending of the 70, found in chapter 10 of Luke's gospel.

As one year draws to a close and the next one begins, I invite you to pray the Wesleyan Covenant prayer with me, which has been a Methodist practice at the New Year since the founding days of the movement.

Wesley's Covenant Prayer

“I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.”

Wherever your New Year's reflections bring you, whether reviewing what has passed, or looking forward to the future, remember this for your present: you are blessed, highly favored, and deeply loved, in Christ.

Deep Blessings,

Pastor Ben



The Caribou Clock

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

Date: January 2026
Church Office: (207) 498-2103

Greetings from the Church Office!

My trip to Massachusetts for my family Christmas party and my “Girls Trip” to New York City was fabulous. Nothing like spending time with family for the holidays! NYC was very cold, but so wonderful!

I will take a long weekend in January (9th-12th) to go back to Massachusetts to celebrate my niece’s retirement! She’s been such a big part of my life for her entire life, but even more so since her mother passed away in 2012. Just can’t miss this special time for her!

Still working on coming up with a new directory – pray that I find the time to finalize it in the new year! I also need to take all my AARP tax preparer certification tests in January!!! Tax season begins for me on Tuesday, February 3rd and that will be here before you know it! 😊

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 Monday, January 26th!!!*

Until next month.....

Bobbi Pelletier
Church Office Administrator



December Prayer Requests

Prayer Concerns: Dale, Lu & Debbie Sharp; Leland Frost, Sylvia Akeley, Jeff Franklin, Richard Carde, Shirley Bowman, James Stuart, Peter Doody, William Autrey, Cameron Doody, Carol Stone, Debbie Sawvel, Betty Spencer, John Kavin, Christian Gunderson, Aldea, Donna Barnes, Blane Hartley, Kara Thayer, Dan Robertson, Ruth Ross, Dean & Diana Rauch, Steven Davis, Melonie & Erika Carlson, Brad Hewitt, Ethel Lloyd, Rob Wright, John Nicols, DeDe Nichols & children, Elida Frederick

Deaths: Family of Matthew Milliard; Family of Dickie Smith; Family of Keith Steeves

Others: Homeless people; People in Washington State (floods); People in Australia & Brown University impacted by mass shootings; travel mercies for all heading home after holidays; prayers for the world

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>
Jan 04	Diane Fitzpatrick	Hymnal CDs	Richard Clark	Cheryl Martin	Trustees
Jan 11	Roy Alden	Mari-Jo Hedman	Diane Fitzpatrick	Mary Ouellette	NOW Committee
Jan 18	Gwen Ellinwood	Judi Greenier	Cheryl Martin	Mary Ouellette	Education Committee
Jan 25	Dave DeMerchant	Mari-Jo Hedman	Deborah Nichols	Mary Ouellette	Worship Committee

Usher Coordinator for January ~ Bruce Fitzpatrick
Communion Stewardess for January ~ Diane Fitzpatrick
Communion Bread for January ~ Diane Fitzpatrick

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

Akeley, Sylvia – new address: 6 Dewberry Dr., Apt. **128C**, Presque Isle ME 04769 (correction to Apt. #)
Bossie, Wendy – new mailing address: 877 Main St., Apt. E5, Caribou ME 04736
Nichols, DeDe – new address; 24 Bald Mountain Drive, Bangor ME 04401
Rego, Richard & Karen – new address: 149D Fairmount Street, New Bedford MA 02740

* * January Birthdays & Anniversaries * *

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

Remember your birthday & anniversary by making a special offering!



2	Colleen Harmon	16	Parker Stallings
3	Aaron Doody	18	Phil Brown
4	Betty Fowler	23	Jean Cashman, Carter Irving, Ken Peters
7	Pam Thompson	24	Jeffery Cyr
10	Aaron Greenier	26	Sheila Pelletier
13	Sheila Pelletier	27	Paul Pangburn
14	Michelle Nichols, Alan Pangburn	30	Judi Greenier



1 Linda & Paul Pangburn

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

Worship Attendance and General Fund Offerings:

Date	In-Person Attendance	*On-Line Attendance	+ Operating Fund Offering
Nov 30	52	19	\$2,365.26
Dec 07	53	23	\$5,831.00
Dec 14	57	35	\$5,898.63
Dec 21	49	26	\$1,739.00
Dec 24	72	Will report next month	\$ 980.45
Dec 28	49	Will report next month	\$1,453.63
Dec 31	No worship service		Year's Final Deposit (report next month)

+ 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 \$31,193.09. Since then, we received interest of \$1.30 and did not have any payments. Our balance as of December 29th is \$31,194.39 (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.



The Worship Committee has resumed 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 did not receive any donations in November or December, so proceeds remain at \$1,337.80! Please remember that these donations help offset our operating budget 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.

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Here are the links for our January services on Sundays at 10:00am:

Jan. 4 - <https://youtube.com/live/UCvK-WgwWG4>

Jan. 11 - <https://youtube.com/live/IRDukXNIrYU>

Jan. 18 - <https://youtube.com/live/LYtQeRiU2dw>

Jan. 25 - <https://youtube.com/live/ZfrsfxcKaNE>

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 your own meal(s) or eat-in. Deliveries are made to Rose Acre residents or those in town (Caribou).

UPCOMING EVENT:

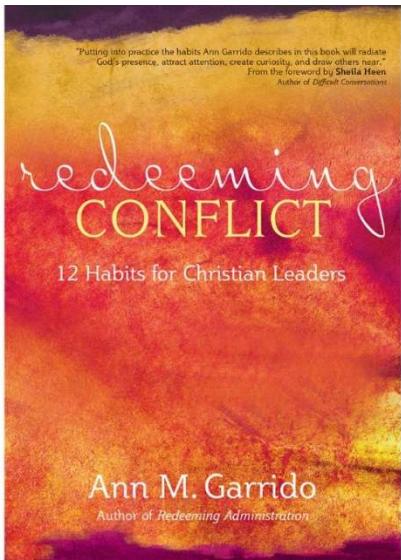


The NOW Committee is hosting a "Souper Supper with Salads & Sweets" on Saturday, January 13th from 4:30-6pm. There will be a variety of soups to choose from, along with salads and desserts. Cost is \$10 per adult and \$5 for children 10 and under. Come and enjoy a hearty meal & fellowship!

PICTURES FROM CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE (photos taken by Melonie Carlson)



December 24th – a view of the altar area, adorned with many Christmas plants. Dave Belyea read the Advent Litany as Bobbi Pelletier lit the Advent candles.



Pastor Ben is adding a second class for a book study using the book “Redeeming Conflict” by Ann M. Garrido. This class will meet on Thursdays at 6:30pm in the parsonage beginning January 15th. If you are interested in joining this new group, please go on-line to order your book (there are many used book options to choose from that would be less expensive than a new book).

Yes, I am interested in attending this Redeeming Conflict Book Study! Please turn in this form by Sunday, January 11th!

Name: _____

Phone # _____

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 Report

December 18, 2025

Members Present: Roy Alden (chair), Pastor Ben Daggett, Diane Fitzpatrick, Debbie Barnes, David DeMerchant, Mary Lou Brown

Pastor Ben opened the meeting by playing his guitar and having us sing together, “Seek Ye First”.

Open Discussion Question: Roy asked us to reflect on this past year at Gray Memorial and to highlight the celebrations we have experienced. All agreed that the arrival of Pastor Ben has been wonderful! We look forward to his ministry here with us! The “pray ground” for the young children is working well and has been beneficial for the children. We rejoice in the help we were able to provide for Pastor Rich and Karen in their move. Hearing the organ being played is a real joy! Pastor Ben expressed his thanks for all the support he has had in preparing to go before The Board of Ordained Ministry. His acceptance as a candidate for ordination is a result of hard work by him and many prayers offered on his behalf.

Financial Statements: Debbie Barnes presented the financial reports for the month of November. We began the month with a \$5, 814.69 deficit in the operating balance. Debbie reviewed the deposits of regular and special funds that we have received. We are eight months behind in paying our Mission Shares. Discussion was held on what we can do to catch up. Questions were raised as to why our church has to pay so much in Mission Shares. Roy suggested that we meet with D.S. Rick McKinley for an explanation. Pastor Ben will research this and report back. Dave reported that the Trustees will request the use of interest money from the Permanent Fund to pay the Mission Shares. If there is not enough money to cover what we owe, then perhaps the rest could be taken from the Trustee bank account. The end of November checkbook balance shows a deficit of \$4,639.52 in the operating budget.

Committee Reports:

- **Trustees:** \$50,000.00 will be needed to get a solar heating program started. A special fund should be established to cover the cost of the regular tuning of the pianos and organ. The railing on the staircase outside the church office needs to be brought up to code. A plowing contract for the 2025 -2026 season is estimated to be \$4,470.00 and will be done by Jennifer Michaud. The parking lot will be paved at the end of the season. The video replacement equipment is still being worked on. Repairs need to be made on the folding doors in the fellowship room and on the new front door. It is suggested that all church committee meetings be held on one day in order to conserve on heat. Pastor Ben is willing to have some committees meet in the parsonage. It was suggested that Dave DeMerchant, Jud Drake, and Bobbi Pelletier meet with Pastor Ben to work out a meeting schedule. In the meantime, folks using the church will be encouraged to keep certain doors closed, lights turned off after meetings, heat turned down after meetings are held, etc. in order to help with expenses.
- **NOW Committee:** Pastor Ben reported on Melonie’s behalf that she and Elise from the Children’s Museum have met and discussed ways in which our church can support the museum and its programs. The January 7th meeting of the NOW Committee will be held at the museum so that members may get to see all that the museum has to offer. An invitation has been extended for others to join them! Denise Hamlin was overjoyed with our Angel Tree contributions and extends her thanks to our congregation.
- **Stewardship Campaign:** Plans are in the works to begin in early January. Pastor Ben and Ellen Cleaves will be leading a study on Adam Hamilton’s book, Enough. Several books for use in the study have been donated. This book will be used as a guide for the financial campaign. Roy suggested that those who will be involved in the study could reach out to other members of the congregation with knowledge they have acquired through this study.
- **SPRC:** Pastor Ben extended sincere thanks to Debbie Barnes for her leadership of the committee for the past six and one-half years. Her leadership has been deeply appreciated!
- **UMM:** On behalf of Neal Genz, Roy expressed thanks for the generous support given by our congregation to the Tree of Lights project. It was very successful! Neal has also set the date of February 17th for the UMM Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper.

The tentative date for the next meeting is set for January 22nd at 1:00pm.

Diane Fitzpatrick, Secretary

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

Education Committee Minutes

December 10, 2025

The meeting came to order with the following members present: Pastor Ben, Cheryl Martin (chair), Diane Fitzpatrick, Melonie Carlson, Alaina Pethick and Mary Theriault.

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Pastor Ben.

The November minutes had been approved via email and sent to Bobbi for the newsletter.

❖ Pray-Ground

- Discussion was held about volunteers covering some Sundays at the Pray-Ground in order to help Debbie Barnes so she isn't covering every Sunday. Cheryl distributed a sign-up sheet for those who would like to help out.

❖ Children's Moment

- Cheryl also had a sign-up sheet for those who would like to help Pastor Ben with the Children's Moment. This can be assisting him or doing a lesson alone.
- Pastor Ben shared a variety of resources that provided activities/lessons for this special time with children and other members shared resources/ideas as well.

❖ Visitors

- A new young family attended last Sunday and discussion was held about the importance of connecting with visitors, making them feel welcome, and making sure they receive a visitor's bag.

❖ Stewardship Program

- Pastor Ben asked for input on the upcoming Stewardship program. He shared the book *Enough* by Adam Hamilton which will be offered as a book study. It focuses on generosity and stewardship while offering a practical approach to financial wisdom.
- The committee brainstormed ways to better integrate the Stewardship drive. These ranged from using a holistic approach, making the drive more engaging/fun, not just focusing on the financial portion of stewardship, sharing ways in which members of the congregation are good stewards, etc. Many good ideas were shared and now the next step will be deciding how to implement them.

❖ Handbells

- Alaina shared that the children have Christmas music prepared and will be playing during the evening service on the 24th or Sunday the 28th.

The meeting was closed with a prayer from Melonie.

Our next meeting will be held on January 14th at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Theriault

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP REPORTS:

From Financial Secretary:

The following is the total church offering for November:

Regular Offering	\$13,771.52
Loose Offering	456.25
Subtotal-Regular Offering	\$14,227.77

Other Sources Operating Fund:	.00
Total Regular Offerings	\$14,227.77

Reimbursements: .00

Special Funds for Church Use:

Prayer Shawl Ministry	90.00
Coffee Fellowship	79.25
Worship Committee	50.00
Community Support	170.00
Harvest Supper	1,491.00
Thanksgiving Dinner	400.00
UMM Tree of Lights	55.00
Angel Tree	200.00
Security	10.00
<u>NOW Committee</u>	50.00
Subtotal Funds for Church Use	\$2,595.25

Special Funds Not for Church Use:

Ecumenical Food Pantry	200.00
World Communion Sunday	25.00
UM Student Day	10.00
<u>St. Apollonia Festival of Trees</u>	370.00
Sub-Total Funds Not for Church Use	\$605.00
Grand Total:	\$17,428.02

From Treasurer:

Beginning Balance	(5,814.69)
2025 Operating income	14,227.77
Harvest Supper Proceeds	1,408.10
Thanksgiving Dinner	400.00
Interest	1.16
Less EFT fee	(34.36) VANCO fees (EFT deposits)
<u>Less Expenses</u>	<u>(14,827.50)</u>
Ending Balance	(4,639.52)

Total "Special Funds for Church Use", which included many lines for various donations, total \$29,877.02. The "Special Funds NOT for Church Use" total \$335.08. 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 December 2, 2025, on-line report shows ending value = \$26,352.87.

The Capital Account Money is as follows as of November 30th: Previous Balance - \$31,194.39; Deposits - \$1.30; Expenses = 0.00; Current Balance - \$31,194.39. (Includes funds earmarked for Furnace Fund - \$5,397.33; Emergency Fund Donations = \$21,104.23).

Expenditures for November 2025:

Programs:

Education	\$ 70.00
Worship	112.39
Office	136.87
NOW Committee	50.00
Programs Sub-Total	\$ 369.26

Trustee Expenses:

Church Utilities	\$1,219.98
Parsonage Utilities	846.32
Telephone/Internet	447.90
Property Insurance	1,394.87
Maintenance/Cleaning	237.83
Trustee Sub-Total	\$4,146.90

Staff-Parish Relations Expenses:

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

Choir Director	200.00
Treasurer	166.67
Church Office Administrator	833.33
Custodian	1,625.00
Maine PFML Deductions	(37.48)
Total Other Salaries	\$2,787.52

Other Expenses:

Guest & Substitute Staff	\$200.00
FICA	216.11
Workman's Comp	66.64
Total Other Expenses	\$482.75

Sub-Total SPRC Expenses \$ 9,479.10

New England Conference:

Pastor Pension Benefit	\$832.24
NEC Total	\$832.24
Grand Total Expenses	\$14,827.50

Note: Dead River bills for church also include charges for propane deliveries. Balances as of Nov 30: Church = (\$1,681.46); Parsonage = (\$1,809.43)

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

Mission Shares = \$2,387.33/mo. As of EOM November, 8 months behind - \$19,098.64 (2 months of Mission Shares paid in March; one month paid in August)

2025 YTD REVIEW – November 2025

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

Target = \$204,138.27; Beginning Operating Fund Balance (Jan only) - \$924.51; Operating Fund Income from F/S YTD - \$159,595.98; Special Funds Used for Operating Fund Expenses YTD = \$20,281.71; Total Expenses YTD - \$185,081.69; Unpaid Mission Shares = \$119,098.64.

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

NOW Committee – Meeting of December 3, 2025 at 10am

Melonie, Bobbi, Kathy, Charlotte, Ben, Cheryl, and Sandy (Alaina and RuthAnn are traveling. Aurora is in school.)

10:07 – Melonie called the meeting to order, and Cheryl offered the opening prayer, with John 15:5

Minutes from last meeting: Bobbi motioned to accept, Cheryl seconded

Treasurer's Report: Cheryl Martin

There was a discrepancy noted between the two reports, the final number of last month's report and the top number on this month's report. After discussion, the \$294.87 was identified as being the cost of the turkeys donated. Cheryl will correct the report.

See attached amended report.

Bobbi motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report as amended: Kathy seconded, all approved

St Apollonia Christmas tree

Melonie, Erika, and Cheryl set up the tree yesterday at NMCC in Presque Isle with other members of the cluster. Pictures were distributed to the group, and all remarked at the beauty of the tree and its ornaments. Thank you, Sandy and Melonie, for applying your creativity to quilling ornaments of fruit! Gift card donations amounted to \$2,000+ among the cluster churches. Make a general announcement on Sunday during the service. Sunday is the last day and the event ends at 2pm that afternoon if people still want to attend.

The Committee has an invitation to go to NMCC Thursday 12/4 before the event officially begins, along with other sponsors and their families. There are 76 trees in total.

Make a general announcement to the congregation about the days the event will take place.

Angel Tree

For next year, it will be important to place only Angel ornaments on the tree first, so that people can find them easily. There was discussion on the process of the congregation choosing an ornament and signing up for it, since folks take ornaments and don't sign up.

Denise from the school needs the Angel Tree presents the week of December 14th (the earlier the better), so that she can distribute them. Presents need to be here by the 14th. There was discussion on why there is a limit on the amount spent (\$25) on the presents. One year there was a family that received a bicycle, and another received hand cream.

Status Reports –

Food pantry – there have been very generous donations, the meat freezer is now full. December is Gray's month at the food pantry. A request for volunteers should be made on Sunday. Vol's need to be able to lift up to 50lbs. 8-11, Tuesdays and Thursdays in December.

Photo class – Sandy reported that participants took beautiful photographs, and that there will be a display set up in January on the back windowed doors of the sanctuary. Each participant will have three photos up, matted, with artist statements. Sandy would like to meet with Melonie and Ben after today's meeting to discuss some adjustments to the plan for artist statements.

Penpal – Melonie will reach out to Denise in this regard, since this year the penpal program has yet to "find its rhythm." There is a family that would like to sponsor a family in town, Bobbi has put them in contact with Denise for her to give them a name.

Coffee Fellowship, December 14, 2025

Children's Museum – Melonie and Elise Browning (museum director) are planning to meet for coffee to discuss how members of the church might be able to support the museum's efforts. Bobbi would have liked to have heard how the museum allows children to engage with the various displays, and have a hands-on sense of what they would do as grown-ups in career-oriented realms of life. Sandy wondered about the age range of children that the museum focuses on. For Melonie's meeting with Elise, some questions to ask: does the museum have brochures? Might there be an opportunity for GMUMC members to go on a tour of the museum, to have a sense of the experience that a child would have in visiting it? The museum exposes children to what's available in Aroostook County for careers.

Winter event – Options for what to do? Discussion around what has been done in the past. Having a movie night in the past did not draw too many people. Italian food? The committee decided to hold a soup and salad event: soups and chilis. Cheryl offered an idea to have games out for the afternoon, and then dinner. Charge per person? \$10 proposed (\$5 for children aged 10 and under). Variety of different soups, chilis, salads, and desserts.

Noted: Sandy's Kentucky Butter Cake is "to die for."

A name for the event in January?

Souper Supper (with salads and sweets) January 17th, from 4:30-6:00pm

A list went around the table for committee members to sign up for different elements of the meal

Agenda items for the January meeting, on 01/07/26 at 10am –

Souper Supper

Children's Museum

Follow up on St. Apollonia and Angel Tree

Opening Prayer for next meeting: Sandy

Melonie offered the Closing Prayer, meeting adjourned at 11:25am

Minutes originally submitted by Pastor Ben Daggett

Edited according to committee input by Alaina Pethick

NOW Treasurer's Report December 3, 2025

**Amended 12-4-25*

*Beginning Balance	\$2,164.80
*11-13-25	Caribou Ecumenical
	Food Pantry / turkeys *(\$294.87)
	(Check #558)
12-1-25	Deposit
12-1-25	Deposit
12-1-25	Cash withdrawal
	(\$900.00)
	(Check #559 voided. Hannaford
	was unable to handle gift card purchase
	with \$900.00 check)
*11-29-25	Credit Interest
	*\$0.44

Note:

- We decided on the \$900.00 amount through an e-mail based on church donations of \$420.00; matching brought us to \$840.00, we decided to round up our donation an additional \$60.00 to equal the \$900.00.

- Following this decision an additional \$50.00 was given to the NOW committee to offset the NOW committee donation, reducing the total we needed to reach \$900.00 to \$430.00
\$420 church, \$50 donation, \$430 NOW committee = \$900
- Three \$300.00 gift cards were purchased on December 1, 2025 to be placed under the St. Apollonia tree on behalf of GMUMC.

Deposit Details:

12-1-25 \$420.00 GMUMC donation for St. Apollonia tree
\$50.00 individual donation for St. Apollonia tree

*Balance 12-3-25 *\$1,440.37

*Amendments were made due to omission of Food Pantry payment, also bank statement with credit interest for 11-29-25

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Martin

Trustee Meeting
October 21, 2025

Present: Del Ramey, Richard Clark, Colleen Harmon, Pastor Ben, David DeMerchant, and Judi Greenier.
The meeting was called to order at 1:07 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. Treasurers report was accepted.

OLD BUSINESS

PLOW CONTRACT: for 2025-2026 will be done by Jennifer Michaud for an estimate of \$4,470. Approved by Trustees.

PAVING OF PARKING LOT: DJ Paving will do the job at the end of the season and only charge us for the equipment. No figure was given but won't be much because the job is a small one. APPROVED BY Trustees

VIDEO EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT: Still working on it. Roll-up screen will be \$5,000. No need for a projector.

SOLAR PROJECT: There is a need to decide immediately in order to keep the price at \$50,000. After much discussion it was approved to go ahead with the project.

2026 BUDGET: Final figures for the trustee share of the budget are as follows: Church Utilities - \$15,500; Parsonage Utilities - \$9,500; Telephone/internet/cell phone-\$2,600; Property Insurance-\$16,800; Snow Removal/Mowing-\$6,270; Maintenance/Cleaning- \$6,000; Technology- \$500; Real Estate Taxes-\$3,500

SCHEDULE ORGAN MAINTENANCE – Some discussion about whether this needs to be done, in view of the fact that we have no organist. And the organ needs to be regularly played if it is to be maintained in working order. Dave proposed that it be put to sleep until we can find a full-time organist. This could be done by applying graphite that

could later be removed. This would only be done if the cost of repairing the organ is prohibitive. In the meantime, an appointment with the Andover Organ CO. should definitely be arranged. It was moved and approved that Judson schedule this. Colleen suggested that when this happens, church members should be invited to come, ask questions, and get answers.

FOLDING DOORS AT SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM/DINING HALL: The folding door locking mechanism needs repair. This item was tabled.

The new hammer for the bell tower has been installed and the bill given to Judi.

NEW BUSINESS

The front doors in the narthex have been replaced and since has been damaged. Someone reefed on the door and pulled the screws that hold the locking mechanism at the top of the door.

Funds have been requested to keep the church open (\$27,000). *Note from Bobbi – this request for money was in reference to unpaid Mission Shares, not to keep the church open.* This was tabled until we get more information from Finance.

Discussion from the floor – will be another Trustees' meeting next week.

Closing prayer given by Pastor Ben

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM

Richard Clark

Gray Memorial United Methodist Church
United Methodist Men's Club Meeting
Dec. 6, 2025

1. Call to order and opening prayer:

- Members gathered at 0830 at kitchen/fellowship hall for breakfast of eggs, ham, home fries, toast, fruit, juice, and coffee.
- Opening Prayer was led by Richard Clark.
- Meeting was called to order at 0900 by Pres. Neal Genz. Members present were: Neal Genz, Richard Clark, Dave Belyea, Conrad Walton, Jay Bullard, Roy Alden, Bruce Fitzpatrick, Pastor Ben Daggett and Del Ramey.

2. Program: Today's program was an inspiring presentation by our Pastor Ben. After a hymn sing he shared his beginning faith journey on a mission trip to Brazil. We look forward to hearing more!

3. Prelate's message: Richard gave another exceptional message based on familiar passages from Luke 16 about the shrewd manager, and John 3:16.

4. Old Business:

Secretary's Report: copies of our last meeting minutes – October 26, 2025 draft were emailed and passed out. Accepted as presented.

5. New Business:

Treasurer's Report: Checkbook balance as of November 30, 2025: \$ 668.00. Accepted as presented.

6. Other Business:

- Voted to sponsor the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper on February 17, 2026. There was discussion on the cost, menu and presale of tickets. Dave B. will look back at minutes from previous years to see what we did.

- Discussed next meeting dates for November and December. Voted to have one meeting on Dec. 6th.
- President Neal thanked the members for their continued support of the coffee fellowship and noted next years' schedule is not out yet.
- The setup for the Tree of Lights was set up after our meeting.

Next meeting: January 24, 2026

David Belyea
Secretary

Worship Committee Minutes
December 4, 2025

Members Present: Bobbi Pelletier (chair), Pastor Ben Daggett, Diane Fitzpatrick, Claire Hodgkins, Gwen Ellinwood, Cheryl Martin, Beth Alden, Mary Lou Brown

The meeting was opened by Bobbi at 10:30am.

Devotions were offered by Diane with a reading from What Do You Want for Christmas? by James W. Moore. The greatest gift of Christmas is Jesus Christ, who we need to invite into our hearts every day of the year.

The minutes from the November 13th meeting were reviewed. Claire moved and Cheryl seconded to accept the minutes which were previously published in the December newsletter. All were in favor.

Old Business:

- Bobbi reported that a bill from the Red Cross for approximately \$2,900.00 has been received for the training that was given to those wishing to work with the children of our church. Bobbi reviewed the bill with Colleen and questioned some charges. Colleen contacted the Red Cross and they will issue a new bill that will be approximately \$1,500.00.
- Since the Trustees haven't met recently, there is no official word on the status of the replacement of our old projector.
- The Advent devotionals were distributed on November 23rd and 30th, and we have a few remaining.
- Bobbi thanked all who came in to help prepare the sanctuary for Advent. Thanks were given to Cheryl and Diane for changing the color of the Advent candles.
- The Christmas Eve service is set for 4:00pm on December 24th. Members of the committee remained after the meeting to check the batteries and bulbs in the candles that will be used on Christmas Eve. We need to ask for some batteries.
- An insert for Christmas plants will be in the bulletin beginning on December 7th. People will be asked to purchase their plants and have them here at the church on Friday, December 19th from 9am – noon, or at 1:00pm on Saturday, December 20th. Bobbi, Gwen, Cheryl, Beth, and Diane volunteered to arrange the plants at 1:00pm on the 20th.
- Bobbi mentioned that the Mission Shares money has not been authorized by the Trustees because they have not met recently.

New Business:

- A schedule for Advent wreath candle lighters on Sundays was developed:
 - Nov. 30th: Aurora and Gwen Barnum
 - Dec. 7th: Cheryl Martin and Beth Alden
 - Dec. 14th: Diane Fitzpatrick and Gwen Ellinwood
 - Dec 21st: Bobbi Pelletier and Pam Thompson
 - Dec. 24th: Mary Lou Brown and Bobbi Pelletier

- The Advent adornments will be removed from the sanctuary following our Worship committee meeting on January 7th. The NOW Committee will be asked to remove the Angel Tree at the same time. Bobbi has suggested that for next year, only the angel ornaments for needy children will be on the tree for the first Sunday in Advent. The other ornaments will be placed for the following Sunday.
- Bobbi expressed thanks to Mary Lou Brown, Judi Greenier, and Mari-Jo Hedman for providing music for our worship services. Mary Lou will play on Christmas Eve. Bobbi will be contacting Mari-Jo to see if Bella Albert might be ready and willing to play for us in the near future. Bobbi also mentioned that Mari-Jo has been practicing on the organ at times and hopes to someday play the organ during a worship service!

Upcoming Sundays:

- January 4th: Epiphany Sunday
- January 11th: Baptism of the Lord Sunday
- January 18th: Human Relations Day

Pastors Time:

- Pastor Ben suggested a book study on Adam Hamilton's book, Enough, to go along with our Stewardship Campaign beginning in 2026. He suggested that Ellen Cleaves would lead the study for women, and he would facilitate the study for men.
- Pastor Ben asked for feedback on our 5th Sunday service with Elise Browning speaking about the new Children's Museum here in Caribou. Many positive comments were received from those attending the service. Bobbi mentioned that Melonie will talk with Elise about the possibility of a private tour of the museum for members of our committee. Volunteers from our church will be welcomed to partner with Elise in providing assistance with the experiences children will be offered. Beth offered a wonderful suggestion for a 5th Sunday speaker – perhaps on March 29th – our next 5th Sunday. She suggested that Abby Claire, director of The House of Comfort, speak on the services that are offered there. Pastor Ben added that it would be fitting to have her speak during Lent.

Other Business:

Mary Lou Brown spoke to our committee about a “dream” she has to hold an organ concert in the summer to celebrate our beautiful pipe organ and to enable the community to learn about this treasured instrument. She suggested that the Andover Organ Company has a list of church pipe organs they service in Maine or other vicinities that we could invite to travel here and share in this event. Perhaps Mari-Jo knows of people she could invite to play (we named a couple we could invite – Lukas Lagasse, Ryan Slocum). Mary Lou envisions having a luncheon that could be catered by Ruska’s during the celebration. She also sees this as a wonderful opportunity to recognize and celebrate those who have played the organ in the past and those who may play it in the future. Diane suggested that we could ask WAGM to come here to do a story on our organ a week or so before the concert. This would provide people from our community and surrounding communities to learn about the concert and hopefully attend. The committee agreed that this is an event that needs to be promoted!

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 8th, at 10:30am. Beth volunteered to offer devotions.

Diane Fitzpatrick, Secretary

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JANUARY 2026!!!

Thursday	01	<u>FEDERAL HOLIDAY - NEW YEAR'S DAY - CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED</u>	
Sunday	04	10:00am	Worship; Epiphany Sunday
Monday	05	10:00am	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Wednesday	07	10:00am	NOW Committee Meeting
		1:00pm	Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting
		3:00pm	"Enough" Book Study (first of four sessions)
Thursday	08	10:30am	Worship Committee Meeting
		1:00pm	SPRC Meeting
		3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service (all are welcome!)
Saturday	10	11:30am	Senoir Choir Practice
Sunday	11	10:00am	Worship; Baptism of the Lord Sunday (Choir sings)
Monday	12	10:00am	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Tuesday	13	6:00pm	Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry Board Meeting at Pantry
Wednesday	14	9:30am	Education Committee Meeting
		3:00pm	"Enough" Book Study (second of four sessions)
Thursday	15	3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service (all are welcome!)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study (first session for new class)
Saturday	17	11:30am	Senior Choir Practice
		4:30-6pm	NOW Committee's "Souper Supper with Salads & Sweets"
Sunday	18	10:00am	Worship; Second Sunday after the Epiphany; Human Relations Day (special offering)
Monday	19	<u>FEDERAL HOLIDAY-MARTIN LUTER KING JR. DAY-CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED</u>	
		10:00am	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Tuesday	20	1:00pm	Trustees Meeting
Wednesday	21	3:00pm	"Enough" Book Study (third of four sessions)
Thursday	22	1:00pm	Church Council Meeting
		3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service (all are welcome!)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study (second session for new class)
Saturday	24	8:00am	UMM Breakfast & Meeting
		11:30am	Senior Choir Practice
Sunday	25	10:00am	Worship; Third Sunday after the Epiphany (Choir sings) Preaching: TBD
Monday	26	<u>10:00AM DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWSLETTER INPUT (NO EXCEPTIONS)</u>	
		10:00am	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Wednesday	28	3:00pm	"Enough" Book Study (fourth/final session)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study (third session for new class)
Thursday	29	3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service (all are welcome!)

Note: Pastor Ben will be away January 23rd - 27th.