

Dear Gray Memorial UMC Family,

Grace & Peace!

The winter months tend to invite reflection. Many of our activities cease altogether for want of warmer weather and softer, thawed out earth. Already this year, we have found ourselves snowed in, our familiar paths iced over while the plows rumble past. While things may speed up for some folks (like those who clear snow and spread salt, or tend to power lines) during the winter months we often must slow down. We have more time in our living spaces and even in our thoughts, if we choose to go there. In the first two weeks of February, we'll lean into winter's invitation for us to slow down a bit and look within, with a sermon series based on Pastor Adam Hamilton's teachings in his book, *Enough*. He contends that many Americans are afflicted with *RHS*, or Restless Heart Syndrome. We are beset with messages that buying and consuming more stuff will fill the void in our hearts that really, only God can fill. We'll explore some practical steps we can take in the life of our faith to help us to align our hearts with God's own heart. As Hamilton writes: "When we simplify, we are content; and when we are content, we simplify." The series will bring the insights of *Enough* into a conversation on stewardship and giving more broadly, and making a pledge to Gray Memorial.

Additionally, some of you have expressed curiosity about "what's next" for me in my journey toward ordination as an elder in the United Methodist Church. God willing, the New England UMC Annual Conference will be holding a service of ordination on Saturday, June 6th, in Manchester, NH. During this service, the other ministers and I who are taking this step, both deacons and elders, will be asked Wesley's historic questions of self-examination, which have been asked of those being ordained from the beginnings of the Methodist movement. After that, the bishop and other church leaders will lay on hands and pray for us. This milestone represents the culmination of 12 years of ministry preparation for me: master's degree study for three years, bi-vocational work as a pastor and hospital interpreter for three years after that, and then fulltime pastoral ministry since 2019. As much as it is a culmination, it is also a new beginning. I stepped into this realm of service within the church in fear and trembling those years ago, and I continue to be humbled and blessed at every turn. The Lord has carried me through beautiful and difficult days to reach this milestone: picking me up, dusting me off, and setting me back on the way, sometimes in spite of my best efforts to do my best. He has kept me going, all by his grace and steadfast love, just as he promised he would do. And how many gracious, genuine, and long-suffering folks has God placed in my path to help me find the way and walk it with my shaking knees? Let me say: it takes a village to raise a pastor.

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire," Hebrews 12:28-29.

God's ways are so much better than our ways.

With Love in Christ Jesus,
Pastor Ben



The Caribou Clock

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

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

Greetings from the Church Office!

Starting Monday, February 2nd, the church office hours will change to 9am - 2pm on Monday/Wednesday/Friday each week until mid-April. I am volunteering with the local AARP Tax-Aide Team on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays as we offer a free tax preparation service at the Caribou VFW through April 14th.

February is Black History Month, so beginning on Sunday, February 8th, the Worship Committee will honor 6 different famous black people and sponsor a weekly "guess who said this" segment during the services. We hope this will help you come to know these individuals a little better!

Please remember that the church has an account at the Bennett Drive Redemption Center. I picked up donations yesterday and it was just \$.75. These donations help offset our monthly operating expenses. Call me if you are unable to bring in your own bottles!

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 Friday, February 20th!!!*

Until next month.....

Bobbi Pelletier
Church Office Administrator



January Prayer Requests (January 4th & 18th)

Prayer Concerns: Dale, Lu & Debbie Sharp; Leland Frost, Sylvia Akeley, Jeff Franklin, Richard Carde, Shirley Bowman, Claire Hodgkins, James Stuart, Peter Doody, William Autrey, Elida Frederick, Diane Fitzpatrick, Fred Bell, Benedict Zappone, Lenny McAuson

Deaths: Family of Ethel Lloyd; Family of Linda Wood

Others: Prayers for Venezuela

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

DATE	Greeter	Pianist	Liturgist	Counter	Coffee Fellowship
Feb 01	Roberta Walton	Hymnal CDs	Mary Ouellette	Ruthann Weeks	SPRC
Feb 08	Sally Carde	Mari-Jo Hedman	Bobbi Pelletier	Ruthann Weeks	NOW Committee
Feb 15	Dave Belyea	Hymnal CDs	Del Ramey	Ruthann Weeks	UMM
Feb 22	Debbie Nichols	Judi Greenier	Aurora Barnum	Elsie Doody	Worship Committee

Usher Coordinator for February ~ Conrad Walton
Communion Stewardess for February ~ Diane Fitzpatrick
Communion Bread for February ~ Gwen Ellinwood

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

Berg, Beverly – delete; passed away on January 9, 2026

Cyr, Margaret – new home phone number: (207) 467-3500

McKenzie, Lawana* – add! Address: 605 Van Buren Road, Caribou; Phone: (207) 227-0441;
email: mckenzie1369@gmail.com

* * February Birthdays & Anniversaries * *

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

Remember your birthday & anniversary by making a special offering!



1	Vince Bell, Miles Collier, Judi Greenier, Carl Soderberg	19	Kelly Wardwell
18	Barbara Dee	22	Jeff Franklin



06 Ginger & Caleb Buck

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:

<u>Date</u>	<u>In-Person Attendance</u>	<u>*On-Line Attendance</u>	<u>+ Operating Fund Offering</u>
Dec 24	72	24	\$ 980.45
Dec 28	49	22	\$1,453.63
Jan 04	34	32	\$5,369.00
Jan 11	00 (service cancelled)	33 (video)	\$.00
Jan 18	43	33	\$12,041.63
Jan 25	00 (service cancelled)	00	TBD

+ Needed weekly to meet 2026 Budget: \$4,429.75

* 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 \$31,194.39. Since then, we received interest of \$1.34 and did not have any payments. Our balance as of January 28th is \$31,195.73 (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 received \$.75 in January, so proceeds increase to \$1,338.55! Please remember that these donations help offset our operating budget expenses each month!



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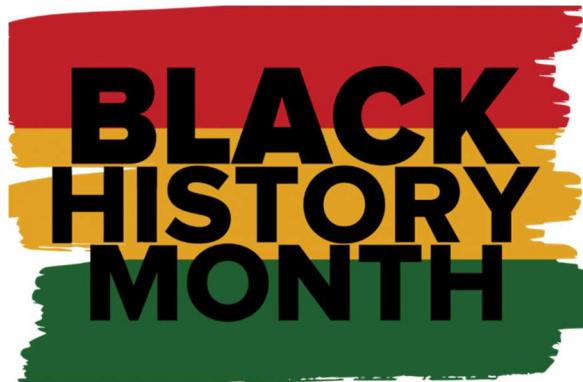
Here are the links for our February services on Sundays at 10:00am:

Feb. 1 - <https://youtube.com/live/2YnIzOTC3i0>
Feb. 8 - <https://youtube.com/live/iaVMSxFYbA4>
Feb. 15 - <https://youtube.com/live/pmoPgZcyKOU>
Feb. 22 - https://youtube.com/live/uD_NsfLKjIw

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 EVENTS:

The Worship Committee is recognizing Black History Month during February. The library bulletin board will show pictures and short biographies of several famous black people. Each Sunday beginning February 8th, two quotes from one of these individuals will appear in the bulletin. During the service, you will then have an opportunity to guess who said the noted quotes! We hope this helps us recognize and honor these famous people!

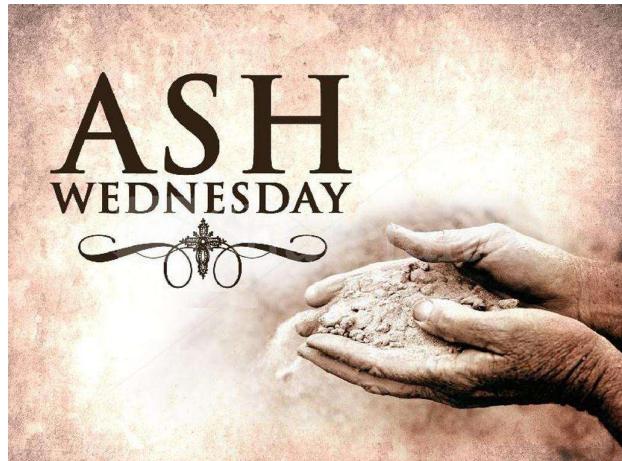


SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER



The United Methodist Men are sponsoring a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 17th from 4:30 – 6pm. More information will be available after the UMM meeting on Saturday, January 31st.

The Worship Committee is hosting an Ash Wednesday Prayer Vigil on Wednesday, February 18th from 6am to noon. There are 30 minutes slots available for individuals or families to reserve the Chapel (choir room) or sit in the sanctuary. The sign-up poster will be available beginning Sunday, February 1st. We will have an Ash Wednesday Service at noon.





Church Council Minutes

January 22, 2026

Members Present: Roy Alden (chair), Pastor Ben Daggett, Diane Fitzpatrick, David Belyea, Melonie Carlson, Cheryl Martin, Bobbi Pelletier, Debbie Barnes

Before officially opening the meeting, Roy reported that he had received some concerns about church services being held on Sunday, January 25th. The temperature is going to be extremely cold and people should not try to go out of their homes. The committee unanimously agreed to cancel services and Bobbi will send out a notice. In the future, Pastor Ben, Roy, Jud, Dave DeMerchant, and Melonie will make the decision regarding cancellation of services due to predicted storms.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Pastor Ben.

Open Discussion Question: Roy asked what goals we have in mind for the future of our church that we can make happen in 2026. Suggestions were as follows:

- Establish a “10% Plan” by getting 10% more people to attend worship, increase giving by 10%, become 10% more involved in our community. We need to let the world know what we are doing and help people feel more engaged and devoted to programs in our church.
- Talk to the congregation about our financial needs. It was suggested that perhaps Pastor Ben could give a testimony one Sunday on the Mission Shares and how it helped him and how they can also help the local church.
- Declutter the church! Roy suggested that we work in conjunction with the Trustees to set a time when people could be asked to come in to help organize and declutter our church.

Financial Statements: Bobbi and Debbie shared information on the status of our financial situation which will be published in the February newsletter (see the “Finance & Stewardship Reports” section for all the information). Special note – the Trustees withdrew money from one of the Foundation funds that covered the balance of the Mission Shares we owed for 2025!

Committee Reports:

- **NOW Committee:** Melonie reported that the committee met at the Children’s Museum this month and had a tour of the building to view the various activities available for children. They talked with Elise about the needs that the museum has. Volunteers are needed! Bobbi suggested to her that perhaps the members of our Prayer Shawl Ministry could offer a basic knitting class to middle school aged children. Bobbi also reported that the Ecumenical Food Pantry has received an anonymous donation of \$50,000.00!!
- Dave presented a report on behalf of Ellen Cleaves, chair of SPRC, who was not able to attend the meeting: The SPRC met on Thursday, Jan 8. 2026 Pastor Ben and all members of the committee present. This was the first meeting of the new slate of members. Ellen offered devotions and Pastor Ben led the group in singing “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus”.

This meeting was for the purpose of orientation for new members. This time also provided some initial training for new members along with experienced members reviewing some of the important aspects of the ministry they have been engaged in, to and for the local church. There were good and helpful conversations--especially given that the chairperson for 2026 is also one of the new members to the committee.

The committee will plan to meet Thursday, Feb 12, at 1 pm at the church, where more SPRC training will take place. The committee is using the pamphlet Guidelines for SPRC members provided through the UM General Board of Discipleship. The committee plans to follow the overview of the year for SPRC members as provided by this pamphlet. The overview is broken into four quarters.

The new chairperson is grateful to the outgoing chairperson, Debbie Barnes, for her efforts in helping make this transition as uneventful as possible.

Grace and Peace

Respectfully submitted, Ellen Cleaves

- Cheryl reported that the Christian Education Committee will be asking the congregation to help with presenting Children's Moments during the worship services. She also asked for volunteers to help Debbie out with the Pray Ground. It was suggested that Welcome Bags be made to give to children who may be visiting. Bobbi was asked to continue printing the Children's Bulletins.

Other Business:

We are doing better with reducing church use by having committees meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Also, Pastor Ben holds meetings in the parsonage as well.

It was requested that the doorbell be repaired or replaced. We need to be able to know that people are at the door when meetings are being held and the door is locked.

The Stewardship Campaign is in process. A letter will soon be mailed with information. Pastor Ben will be using the study of the book, Enough, to set the campaign in motion at our services on February 1st and the 8th. He is asking some people who have been participating in the study to share something about what they have learned through this study. We will consider how these practices can be used by the Church Council.

Pastor's Time:

- Pastor Ben talked about a Lenten series based on the book, Houses of Peace, a discipleship resource that came from Brazil. It will involve forty days of praying and fasting for specific folks. Pastor Ben will be inviting the congregation to be involved in a two and a half- day retreat to be trained to become Sowers of Peace.
- The Ministry Team continues to take online courses to remain certified. Since there is a charge for the courses, it was asked if there is a line item in the budget that could be used for off-setting the cost for the team. Bobbi suggested that within the "Special Funds for Church Use" there is a line item called "**Our Journey in Faith**" that could be used to reimburse the Lay Servants for 2026. A motion was made by Dave and seconded by Debbie and all were in favor.
- Pastor Ben will be away for training from January 23rd through the 26th. The pastor from Grant Memorial will cover emergencies while he is away.

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 19th at 1:00pm.

Diane Fitzpatrick, Secretary

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

Aroostook Cluster Council of United Methodist Churches Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2026

The meeting came to order at 9:00 am with the following present via Zoom. Victor Han, Paula Lilley, Sue Michaud, Joyce Kang, Ben Daggett, Nicholas Perez, Mary Miller, and Sue Brown.

Victor welcomed everyone and Mary led us in devotions with a reading that was a poignant reminder of the importance the real work of Christmas - living out feeding the hungry, finding the lost, making music in the heart and other calls on our lives. Following the Advent candle tradition, she will continue to light a candle as a reminder of the claim that we are called to be the light of Jesus to our world. Mary closed with an Epiphany prayer of light.

Secretary's Report

The minutes of the October 30th meeting were presented. Motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Sue M. and seconded by Mary. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Paula reported that the offering from our service in Houlton was \$450.00. A check was sent to Anderson Soares to support his new Brazilian street ministry to further their work (a small fee was used to send this gift). The tree for the St. Apollonia Festival cost \$32.64. Our current checkbook balance is \$477.36. Motion to approve the report was made by Sue B. and seconded by Sue M. Motion carried unanimously. Thank you, Paula.

2025 St. Apollonia Festival of Trees

The Festival of Trees was a huge success with \$197,000 raised to provide dental care for children around Aroostook County. Sue B. asked if someone might be willing to chair this mission project next year. Sue M. is considering taking it on.

Fall Cluster Service

We shared our thoughts on the Cluster service in Houlton UMC on November 2nd. Mary shared that many comments were heard around the love/joy/community in this service. Victor and Joyce both shared similar responses, many from community members that were not necessarily part of the church family. This was the first time we have specifically invited groups from the community to also participate. Ben shared that

Anderson was deeply appreciative of the offering provided for their new ministry group that he has formed. Ben will share a newsletter he has received from Anderson. Thank you, Ben.

Pulpit Exchange

As we have a Cluster Service the first week after the Lenten/Easter season, we talked about waiting until May to have the Pulpit Exchange. It was decided to plan on May 17th. We will discuss more at a later time.

Sharing Mission and Outreach Ideas

Sue M. mentioned that Lidstone is doing a short-term project to provide personal care items for Hope and Justice. She asked that perhaps each church might have a baby shower for Hope and Justice and bring all items to the April 12th Cluster Service.

Joyce asked that we also consider helping the folks who lost everything in a fire in Patten. She will be attending a meeting with regarding this and will report back to us at the next meeting regarding how we United Methodists can help in this endeavor.

Ben shared a bit about the folks living in the garage across from the street, the difficulty presented by the ongoing drug problem and the roadblocks that are presented by those addictions. He will be working with the folks at Gray to begin a time of prayer and fasting based on Luke 10 as they seek to understand what/how/if their role in this situation. There will also be a training session on how to be sowers of peace and how that may inform their ongoing work.

New Business

Service with Bishop Bickerton

After some discussion, it was decided to hold our spring Cluster service at Grant Memorial UMC (thank you, Nicholas). If it works for the bishop, perhaps set the time of the service at 4:00pm. At our next meeting we will discuss service time and refreshments based on when Bishop Bickerton is available.

Joys and concerns

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

Next meeting: Thursday, February 5th via Zoom at 9:00am

Devotions for next meeting: Sue B.

Meeting adjourned at 10:04 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Brown

Sue Brown

Secretary

Aroostook Cluster Council of United Methodist Churches

Education Committee Minutes January 21, 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 and then the committee enjoyed singing "Tell the People I Love Them" accompanied by Pastor Ben on his guitar.

Melonie moved to accept the minutes of the December meeting with Diane seconding the motion.

❖ Pray-Ground

- Discussion continued about volunteers covering some Sundays at the Pray-Ground in order to help lighten Debbie Barnes' load. It was mentioned that volunteers might want to sit and observe her one Sunday to see how she interacts with the children while involving them in the service.
- Volunteering will be opened up to the congregation and Cheryl will be posting a sign-up schedule in the library near the Pray-Ground area.
- It was brought up that the children's bulletins will be discontinued because the children aren't using them in church. Alaina mentioned that her children bring them home and enjoy doing them there so it was agreed that we should at least finish out this subscription and revisit it in the future.
- SPRC will be exploring coverage for families with infants age 4 and under since the Pray-Ground would not be meeting their needs. This prompted conversation about the importance of welcoming new families and making sure they receive a welcome bag. Melonie agreed to be responsible for this with Diane and Mary covering on Sundays when she is singing in the choir. She also mentioned how nice it would be if we had children's welcome bags available also to make them feel included. Ideas were shared of what these bags might include (a pocket prayer shawl, a children's bulletin with crayons, pictures of youth participating in church activities, etc.). Mary will check with Bobbi to see what resources are available to order children's items for the children's welcome bag as well as for the Pray-Ground area.

❖ Children's Moment

- Children's Moment coverage was revisited and ideas were shared as well as different resource books that are available. Cheryl offered to put these resource books in a basket in the library along with a sign-up sheet.
- Diane volunteered to do a Children's Moment one Sunday.

❖ Stewardship Program

- Pastor Ben would like to have information/testaments shared from members of the book study Enough by Adam Hamilton during church services on the 1st and 8th of February. He feels this will be a way to bring the information learned during this study to a broader audience. He will be mentioning this to the group during their next meeting.

❖ Houses of Peace

- Pastor Ben shared that the Houses of Peace concept is taken from Luke 10 where Jesus instructs disciples to find people in the community to meet with, pray and experience God's presence. A Sowers of Peace retreat will be offered at some point for those interested in being trained.

Pastor Ben closed with prayer.

Our next meeting will be held on February 11th at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Theriault

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP REPORTS:

From Financial Secretary:

The following is the total church offering for December:

Regular Offering	\$15,215.26
Loose Offering	687.45
Subtotal-Regular Offering	\$15,902.71

Other Sources Operating Fund:	.00
Total Regular Offerings	\$15,902.71

Reimbursements:

Upper Room	\$11.00
Education – Discovery Guide	5.00
Subtotal-Reimbursements	\$16.00

Special Funds for Church Use:

Coffee Fellowship	\$ 78.00
Community Support	110.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	300.00
UMM Tree of Lights	665.00
Angel Tree	270.00
Security	10.00
In Memory: Everett Milton	50.00
In Memory: Bertha Blackstone	50.00
In Memory: Ralph & Gwen Ferguson	100.00
Subtotal Funds for Church Use	\$1,433.00

Special Funds Not for Church Use:

Ecumenical Food Pantry	200.00
Sub-Total Funds Not for Church Use	\$200.00
Grand Total:	\$17,551.71

From Treasurer:

Beginning Balance	(4,639.52)
2025 Operating income	15,902.71
2025 Mission Shares (Trustees)	21,486.00
2025 Operating Budget (from SF)	7,422.32
Interest	1.23
Less EFT fee	(33.00)
Less Expenses	(38,178.03)
Ending Balance	1,961.72

Total "Special Funds for Church Use", which includes many lines for various donations, total \$19,801.64. The "Special Funds NOT for Church Use" total \$245.08. 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 January 2, 2026, on-line report shows ending value = \$26,545.82.

The Capital Account Money is as follows as of December 31st: Previous Balance - \$31,194.39; Deposits - \$1.34; Expenses = 0.00; Current Balance - \$31,195.73 (Includes funds earmarked for Furnace Fund - \$5,397.33; Emergency Fund Donations = \$21,104.23).

Expenditures for December 2025:

Programs:

Education	\$ 65.00
Office	282.93
<u>NOW Committee</u>	<u>80.50</u>
Programs Sub-Total	\$ 428.43

Trustee Expenses:

Church Utilities	\$1,398.97
Parsonage Utilities	842.54
Telephone/Internet	215.00
Property Insurance	1,394.87
Snow Removal (Sanding)	1,085.00
<u>Maintenance/Cleaning</u>	<u>357.72</u>
Trustee Sub-Total	\$5,294.10

Staff-Parish Relations Expenses:

Pastor's Salary	\$4,420.00
Social Security	500.00
Health Insurance	1,788.83
Pastor's Total Comp	\$6,708.83

Choir Director	100.00
Treasurer	166.63
Church Office Administrator	833.37
Custodian	1,625.00
<u>Maine PFML Deductions</u>	<u>(36.98)</u>
Total Other Salaries	\$2,688.02

Other Expenses:

Guest & Substitute Staff	\$150.00
FICA	223.76
SPRC Miscellaneous	300.00
<u>Workman's Comp</u>	<u>66.64</u>
Total Other Expenses	\$740.40

Sub-Total SPRC Expenses \$10,137.25

<u>New England Conference:</u>	
World Missions (1)	\$5,868.00
New England Missions (2)	7,146.00
Ministerial Support (3)	8,472.01
<u>Pastor Pension Benefit</u>	<u>\$832.24</u>
NEC Total	22,318.25
<u>Grand Total Expenses</u>	<u>\$38,178.03</u>

Note: Dead River bills for church also include charges for propane deliveries. Balances as of Dec 31: Church = (\$1,490.58); Parsonage = (\$2,212.71)

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

Mission Shares = \$2,387.33/mo. As of EOM December, Mission Shares all paid up! (2 months of Mission Shares paid in March; one month paid in August; 9 months in December)

2025 YTD REVIEW – December 2025

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

:

Target = \$222,696.29; Beginning Operating Fund Balance (Jan only) - \$924.51; Operating Fund Income from F/S YTD - \$175,498.69; Special Funds Used for Operating Fund Expenses YTD = \$49,190.03; Total Expenses YTD - \$223,299.72; Unpaid Mission Shares = \$0.00.

An aggregate of in-person and virtual attendance shows monthly average of 79 and 81 YTD.

NOW Team Meeting - January 7, 2026

Nurture - Outreach - Witness

This meeting was held at the Children's Museum in Caribou.

In attendance: Ruthann Weeks, Kathy Panaro, Alaina Pethick, Bobbi Pelletier, Pastor Ben Daggett, Melonie Carlson, Sandy Pethick, Cheryl Martin

Opening Prayer - Sandy

Acceptance of Minutes -

Bobbi made a motion to accept the minutes from the October meeting. Cheryl seconded. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report - Cheryl

NOW Treasurer's Report - January 6, 2026

Beginning Balance	\$1440.37
12-23-25 Pastor's Discretionary Fund (Check #560 to GMUMC)	(\$300.00)
1-6-26 Credit Interest	\$0.34
Balance 1-6-26	\$1140.71

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Martin

Ruthann moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Bobbi seconded. The motion passed.

Souper Supper

A sign up sheet for setup/serving/clean-up and food items was passed around. Final discussions of menu and setup details took place. Sandy is working on the flyers. The proceeds from this event will support the NOW Team's mission projects. Room setup will be on Friday, Jan. 16 at 1 pm. Meal prep will begin on Saturday, Jan. 17 at 3 pm. The supper will be from 4:30-6:00 pm.

Status Reports

- Penpals
 - Letters are due by this Thursday (1/8/26). Students were excited and grateful for the Christmas gifts they received.
- Angel Tree
 - \$270 in donations was received as well as the gifts. Overall, it went well. We hope to have more names next year. (There were only 12 this year.)
- Photo Class
 - Sandy reported that the class is completed. They are working on creating a display of their photos for this Sunday and possibly during the Souper Supper.
- Food Pantry
 - The needs are greatly increasing. 32 families were served the day before this meeting. A \$50,000 donation was received and the pantry is very grateful. They have yet to determine how they will use these funds.

Coffee Fellowship

There was a reminder that the NOW Team has Coffee Fellowship on Sunday, Jan. 11.

Tour and Discussion of the Children's Museum

Elise Browning and her business partner, Marie, gave us a very nice, informative tour of the museum. There was much discussion about what the museum has to offer, their goals and their needs. It is an incredible place. The main takeaways were helping to get the word out that the museum is there and what it has to offer, and the need for volunteers. They are open on Saturdays 10-4 and Sundays 12-4 and are looking for people to volunteer for 2 hour shifts. There is no shortage of ideas for future programming, services and exhibits. But, they need people to help facilitate these ideas. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Elise or Marie at the museum.

Our next regular meeting will be February 4 at 10 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Alaina Pethick

NOW Team Recording Secretary

Trustee Meeting
December 16, 2025

Present: Del Ramey, Colleen Harmon, Pastor Ben, David DeMerchant, and Judi Greenier.

The meeting was called to order at 1:14 p.m.

Opening prayer was given by Pastor Ben.

Secretary's report was presented. Regarding the October meeting minutes it was noted that an error was made in the statement about 'keeping the church open' which should have been "to pay the Mission Shares". Motion was made to accept the report without corrections by Bobbi. This will be addressed at the next meeting. Report approved as presented.

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 \$4470. Approved by Trustees. I have not seen the contract. Do we really have one?

PAVING OF PARKING LOT: DJ Paving will do the job. Has the job been done and did we get a bill?

VIDEO EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT: Still working on it. Roll-up screen will be \$5000. 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

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

NEW BUSINESS

The front doors locking mechanism has been fixed. 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 pay the Mission Shares. After discussion it was voted to request the interest from the Permanent Fund. Any shortfall will be paid by the BOT Checking account.

There was an attempt to steal propane from the tank on the north side of the church. The plow driver smelled the gas and called the Fire Department. Jud was notified. McNeal's was also there to pick up the trash and also called authorities. A motion was made to purchase gift cards for these individuals for going above and beyond to report this.

Any discussion from the floor.

Closing prayer given by Pastor Ben
Meeting adjourned at 3:08 PM

by David W. DeMerchant

Worship Committee Minutes January 8, 2026

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

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

Beth offered devotions with a lovely reading called "A No Fear New Year". We should remember that no matter what each day brings, God is with us 365 days a year!!

Minutes from the December meeting were reviewed. Beth moved and Claire seconded to approve the minutes as published. All voted in favor.

Old Business:

- There is still no official word on what will replace the old projector. There could potentially be two large TV screens mounted in the sanctuary.
- Bobbi has put the Christmas Eve candles away and the NOW Committee removed the Angel Tree following our service on January 4th. The Advent paraments, garlands and other adornments will be removed by our committee members following our meeting today.
- Bobbi expressed thanks to all who participated in lighting the Advent candles along with the liturgy during our worship service each Sunday.
- The Mission Shares were paid in full after receiving a check from the Trustees last week.
- Mari-Jo has provided a couple months of the dates that she will be playing for our services. She will meet with Judi to see which Sundays she will be willing to play. Mary Lou has resigned from playing and Bella Albert is not yet comfortable with playing for our services. There may be Sundays when we will be using the hymnal CDs for our music.
- Discussion was held on Mary Lou's request for a celebration of our pipe organ this summer. Details will need to be worked out over the next few months. Beth suggested forming a committee to plan the event and ask Mary-Jo Hedman's advice. The committee will review the type of concert Mary Lou envisions. Bobbi suggested a joint meeting of our committee with the Trustees to ascertain the amount of playing time our organ can provide in its present state. Bobbi will contact the Andover Music Company about possibilities for our organ concert.
- Bobbi reported that the NOW Committee held their meeting on January 7th at the Children's Museum. After being given a tour of the museum and viewing the current exhibits, the committee talked with director Elise about suggestions for how members at Gray Memorial could help. Bobbi suggested that the Prayer Shawl Ministry might offer a knitting class where children could learn to knit and create something small to take home with them. Bobbi encourages our church members to volunteer.
- Bobbi mentioned a suggestion made from a few members of the Enough study group on the possibility of using wine in addition to grape juice during Communion services. Diane asked if our Book of Discipline addresses this. Pastor Ben will research and report back.

New Business:

- Pastor Ben will be away at Rolling Ridge from January 23rd to the 27th to participate in retreat number four of the Gateways to God training he is involved in. Pulpit supply for Sunday, January 25th has not been determined at this time.
- Bobbi asked if we wish to observe Black History Month in February. The committee members agreed that we should. The Maple Grove Church was mentioned by Claire as being part of the Underground Railway that provided assistance for black people wishing to get into Canada so many years ago. Beth mentioned that Roy may have more information on the church and its services. It was also suggested that we talk to Wendy Bossie to see if there are any files on Black History Month that were used for the library bulletin board from previous years that could be used again. Bobbi will reach out to her. Pastor Ben suggested a follow-up meeting on January 22nd at 12:00 to finalize a plan for our observance.
- February 8th will be Scouting Sunday. Bobbi will ask Dave Belyea to invite Scouts to the service.
- The UMM will hold a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on February 17th.
- Ash Wednesday will be on February 18th. We will hold a Prayer Vigil from 6:00am until 12:00 noon and will utilize both the Chapel and Sanctuary. A service will be held at noon in the Sanctuary. Beth will make a sign-up poster for those wishing to participate in the Prayer Vigil.
- The first Sunday of Lent will be on February 22nd.
- Pastor Ben mentioned having a Lenten series on Casas de Paz (Houses of Peace) which is based on Luke 10. During this study, we will prayerfully consider people who are struggling. He would like to hold a two-day retreat on April 10th and 11th to train people to become "Sowers of Peace".
- Palm /Passion Sunday will be on March 29th. Holy Week will be March 30th through April 3rd. Bobbi will contact other clergy to preach each day, with Pastor Ben preaching one of the days.
- Easter Sunday will be on April 5th.

- At last month's meeting, we discussed asking Abbey Clair from The House of Comfort to speak on March 29th, the fifth Sunday of the month. Since that day is Palm Sunday, we will wait until May to invite her to speak.
- A dedication of prayer shawls will be held during our service on February 1st.
- Bobbi reported that the children are no longer interested in using the Children's Worship Bulletins so we will suspend the use of them.

Pastor's Time:

Pastor Ben mentioned that the Service of Holy Communion last Sunday followed the liturgy in the hymnal. There was some confusion on the part of the ushers as to procedure. Since we wish to continue this practice, Pastor Ben will work with the ushers to explain the flow of the service. At the present time, Pastor Ben is serving Communion to several of our shut-ins. Perhaps at some time, we will be able to restart the Home Communion program that has been practiced for several years until recently. He also mentioned his concern about the bread leaving many crumbs on the

floor during its distribution to those who partake of Communion. It was decided that the silver tray be placed on a stand in front of him so that the crumbs will fall into the tray and not onto the floor.

The next three months will have a change in our meeting days and times, since Bobbi will be helping with tax preparation. Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, February 11th at 11:00am**. Diane volunteered to offer devotions. Meetings in March and April will be held on the second Wednesday at 11:00am as well.

Diane Fitzpatrick, Secretary

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING IN FEBRUARY 2026!!!

Sunday	01	10:00am	Worship; Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany; Prayer Shawl Dedication
Monday	02	10:00am	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Wednesday	04	10:00am	NOW Committee Meeting
		1:00pm	Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting
Thursday	05	9:00am	Aroostook Cluster Meeting via Zoom
		3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service with Communion (all are welcome!)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Saturday	07	11:30am	Senoir Choir Practice
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Sunday	08	10:00am	Worship; Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany; Scouting Sunday (Choir)
Monday	09	10:00am	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Tuesday	10	5:30pm	Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry Board Meeting at Pantry
Wednesday	11	9:30am	Education Committee Meeting
		11:00am	Worship Committee Meeting (new day & time for Feb/Mar/Apr)
		3:00pm	"Enough" Book Study (extra session)
Thursday	12	1:00pm	SPRC Meeting
		3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service with Communion (all are welcome!)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Saturday	14	11:30am	Senior Choir Practice
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Sunday	15	10:00am	Worship; Transfiguration Sunday
Monday	16	<u>FEDERAL HOLIDAY - PRESIDENTS' DAY - CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED</u>	
		10:00am	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Tuesday	17	1:00pm	Trustees Meeting
		4:30-6pm	UMM's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Wednesday	18	6am-12pm	Ash Wednesday Prayer Vigil (Chapel and Sanctuary)
		12:00pm	Ash Wednesday Service
Thursday	19	1:00pm	Church Council Meeting
		3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service with Communion (all are welcome!)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Friday	20	10:00am	<u>DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWSLETTER INPUT (NO EXCEPTIONS)</u>
Saturday	21	11:30am	Senior Choir Practice
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Sunday	22	10:00am	Worship; First Sunday in Lent
Monday	23	10:00am	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Tuesday	24	5:30pm	Caribou Choral Society Practices begin for Spring Concerts
Thursday	26	3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service with Communion (all are welcome!)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Saturday	28	8:00am	UMM Breakfast & Meeting
		11:30am	Senior Choir Practice
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