

On Letting Go

Last week I returned to Caribou from a trip to England, having traveled throughout that country together with our Bishop, a group of fellow ordinands, and other church leaders from the New Hope Episcopal Area. Over the span of about ten days, 29 of us were brought to visit and reflect on sites significant to the story of the Wesleys and Methodism. It was a profound experience for us all, and I will be unpacking all that I saw and heard, tasted and touched in those travels for a long time to come. What a gift!



Among our various stops, we visited a place called Pill Harbour, near the city of Bristol. Pill is significant in the story of Methodism because it is the port from which Francis Asbury set sail to come to the American colonies in 1771. After having served for four years as an itinerant preacher in England, Asbury stepped up to help lead the nascent movement of Methodists on this side of the Atlantic. He was commissioned to lead in this way by John Wesley. Later, Asbury would become the first Methodist bishop in the United States. Asbury was just 26 years old when he set out from Pill. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, “Asbury crossed the Alleghenies 60 times and traveled an average of 5,000 miles a year on horseback. The early growth of the church was largely the result of his strenuous efforts; when he arrived in America there were only three Methodist meetinghouses and about 300 communicants. By the time of his death there were 412 Methodist societies with a membership of 214,235.”¹ Asbury never returned to England.

Last Friday, while we American Methodists all stood at Asbury’s point of departure from his native land of England, Bishop Bickerton asked what we were prepared to let go of for the greater work of God to be revealed in our lives, noting that after the initial “yes” to God there is still more to do:

1. Get on the boat
2. Let go of the mooring
3. Lose sight of the shore
4. Sail on perilous waters
5. Go on the deck each day
6. See the shore on the horizon

God is preparing wonderful things for us here at Gray Memorial! How is the Spirit calling you to step onto the boat and set sail for those new horizons of faith that await you, await us, on our journey together?

Pastor Ben

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Francis-Asbury>



The Caribou Clock

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Church Office: (207) 498-2103
Website: <http://www.bqmumc.com>

Greetings from the Church Office!

Please consider joining us for our Holy Week Services at noon and then our evening services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, both at 6:30pm. Our Easter Sunrise Service will begin at 5:55am at the Caribou Rehab & Nursing Center.

Links to our Holy Week Ecumenical Noon-Time Services:

Monday, March 30 - <https://youtube.com/live/Zta9RKnCDdQ>

Tuesday, March 31 - <https://youtube.com/live/dk-dc0iTcoo>

Wednesday, April 1 - <https://youtube.com/live/HnRmkX8C9lk>

Thursday, April 2 - <https://youtube.com/live/puK9GkBTaXk>

Friday, April 3 - <https://youtube.com/live/T5DCUOSoEvo>

As the tax season draws to a close, I look forward to returning to my "normal" work schedule here at the church - Monday through Friday - from 9am to noon. I will start with the regular hours on Wednesday, April 15th.

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, April 23rd!!!*

Until next month.....

Bobbi Pelletier
Church Office Administrator



March Prayer Requests

Prayer Concerns: Dale, Lu & Debbie Sharp; Leland Frost, Sylvia Akeley, Jeff Franklin, Richard Carde, Ruby Philbrick, Shirley Bowman, Kelly England, James Stuart, Peter Doody, William Autrey, Gloria Autrey, Ellen & Malcolm (death of a family member), Wendy Hewitt, Ed Ouellette, Paul Anderson & family, Larry Ward, Alexis & Arlene Ward

Deaths: Family of Derald Curless; Family of Audrey Craig

Others: Prayers for members of the Armed Forces; people of Iran; prayers for the victims & families devastated by the tornadoes in SW Michigan and elsewhere; Pastor Ben - safe return from England; Neal Genz - safe travels home from England and for healing from his accident)

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/Music</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	<u>Counters</u>	<u>Coffee Fellowship</u>
Apr 5	Richard Clark	Hymnal CDs	Mary Ouellette	Diane & Ruthann	No Coffee Fellowship
Apr 12	Duska Franklin	Hymnal CDs	Bobbi Pelletier	Cheryl & Diane	NOW Committee
Apr 19	Mary Ouellette	Mari-Jo Hedman	Del Ramey	Cheryl & Debbie	Education Committee
Apr 26	Diane Fitzpatrick	Mari-Jo Hedman	Aurora Barnum	Mary & Debbie	Worship Committee

Usher Coordinator for April ~ Neal Genz
Communion Stewardess for April ~ Diane Fitzpatrick
Communion Bread for April ~ Dave Belyea

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

NO CHANGES THIS MONTH! The new directory is nearly completed!

* * April Birthdays & Anniversaries * *

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

Remember your birthday & anniversary by making a special offering!



4	Greg Anderson	21	Sally Carde, Bruce Hagelstein
6	Teelyne Herbert	24	Richard Carde, Debbie Jordan
11	Diane DuBois	26	Austin Felix
14	Debbie Barnes	27	Shirley Bowman
18	Bryant Clyburn, Larry Conrad, Peter Edgecomb	28	Margaret Cyr, Mary Ouellette
19	Laura Hoepstine	30	Walker Doody



7 Diana Locke & Dave Wakana

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

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


 Finance &
 Stewardship
 Committee

Worship Attendance and General Fund Offerings:

Date	<u>In-Person Attendance</u>	<u>*On-Line Attendance</u>	+ <u>Operating Fund Offering</u>
Feb 22	45	28	\$2,342.00
Mar 1	47	29	\$3,750.63
Mar 8	36	33	\$5,200.00
Mar 15	27	23	\$1,207.63
Mar 22	37	45	\$1,960.00
Mar 29	47	(will report next month)	\$2,346.63

+ 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 \$31,197.07. Since then, we received interest of \$1.21 and did not have any payments. Our balance as of March 26th is \$31,198.28 (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 \$32.40 in March, so proceeds increased to \$1,380.80! 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.

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

- April 5 - <https://youtube.com/live/OUwhd7qmxwY>
- April 12 - <https://youtube.com/live/h28JGg-Q6HA>
- April 19 - <https://youtube.com/live/-CBUkpEw2Oc>
- April 26 - <https://youtube.com/live/BQJvr3dwxr0>

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).

PHOTOS FROM OUR WORSHIP SERVICES



March 1st – Pastor Ben’s sister, Leanne Steinhook, led the Children’s Moment and taught the children and the congregation how to sign “God Loves Me”.



March 8th – Pastor Ben and children during the Children’s Time. He asked the children how we get water into a pitcher and then into a glass.

A message from the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)

In the United Methodist denomination, one of the several tasks placed under the care of SPRC (of any sized church) is to work at building healthy relationships with staff (paid positions) and with the congregation. It has been and is the desire of Gray Memorial's SPRC to help build relationships which lead to better communication, mutual caring and a deeper trust among people.

Gray Memorial's SPRC has been meeting monthly and is working at carrying out all of its responsibilities, certainly with our eyes upon Jesus and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

With thoughts upon the **I AM** statements of Jesus found in the Gospels, the committee is using inspiration drawn from John chapter 10 where Jesus identifies himself as The Good Shepherd. Who, among us, is not drawn toward any picture of Jesus watching over the sheep and especially the picture of Jesus carrying a sheep on His shoulder? We, the SPRC members, are striving to renew the quiet, yet caring, ministry of a Shepherding program. Some folks in the congregation may recall this ministry from years past. For now, each member of the SPRC has a list of names of those who worship in person. Each SPRC member is acting as a shepherd to several of those on this list. This quiet ministry is not intended to be burdensome or attention-drawing. This is simply a step at caring better for one another and for growing in our own awareness of 'seeing' one another. It is our hope that you, yourself, will feel uplifted and cared for by an occasional act of communication--a special greeting, a note in the mail, an email, etc.

With all of this, we still know that some of our sheep are missing from our lists because we do not have the names of those of you who watch Gray Memorial's online worship services. Having your name and a form of contact information from you would be very helpful. So, I invite you, as an online attendee of this congregation, to send me an email with your name and contact information so we may include you in our caring attempts. You may contact me at ellmac1999@gmail.com Please put 'Gray Memorial' on the subject line and I will identify it as important.

Gray Memorial's SPRC members include: David Belyea, Penny Shaw, Pam Thompson, Kathy Panaro, and Ellen Cleaves (chair). Melonie Carlson serves in the position of Lay Leader and Cheryl Martin serves on the committee as Lay Member to Annual Conference. Pastor Ben is also always present at meetings. We want you to feel that you can reach out to any one of us with questions/joys/concerns.

I invite you to join us in prayer in this endeavor as we seek ways to reach out, care for and develop stronger relationships with one another.

In peace, Ellen

From the SPRC -- Do you possess the gifts and talents necessary to provide coverage in the church office when the secretary is on vacation or when the secretary may need emergency coverage? Such needed gifts and talents include being comfortable with the computer work and photocopying, answering the church telephone and taking messages when necessary.

The computer programs used, primarily, are Microsoft programs, Excel and Word. The email is Outlook. You may obtain more information by seeing Bobbi Pelletier in the church office or speaking with SPRC chair, Ellen Cleaves (325-1282). Please join us in praying that volunteers will step forward as the work done in the church office is very important in the life of the church, as is giving our church secretary time off for self-care and renewal.



Spaghetti Supper

All proceeds to benefit the Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry
Take Outs Only

SATURDAY – May 2, 2026

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Tickets: FREE!!!

Free-will donations accepted

Caribou Assembly of God Activity Center
Use Back Entrance
Sweden Street, Caribou

Menu includes salad, spaghetti, garlic bread, and dessert



The Church Council did not meet in March

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

**Aroostook Cluster Council of United Methodist Churches
Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2026**

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

Victor welcomed everyone. Mary led us in a Lenten devotion she has been doing referring to Diana Butler Bass' online offerings. Mary shared "The Blessings of Jesus" read by poet John Philip Newell (the beatitudes written in an inspirational fashion that causes one to think deeply about their meanings). She shared from a personal experience regarding a discussion about the homeless in Houlton and how it is important to enlarge our understanding of how we can open our hearts more as followers of Jesus. Mary closed with a prayer from "The Book of Common Prayer."

Secretary's Report

The minutes of the February 5th meeting as well as the February 26th planning meeting for the May 3rd service (thank you Nicholas) were presented. Motion to approve both sets of minutes as presented was made by Sue M. and seconded by Mary. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Paula reported no activity on our account. The current checkbook balance remains at \$477.36. Motion to approve the report was made by Sara. and seconded by Ben. Motion carried unanimously. Thank you, Paula.

2025 St. Apollonia Festival of Trees

Tabled until May. Please come with ideas for a theme.

Service with Bishop Bickerton

The service with the Bishop has been necessarily moved to May 3rd at Grant Memorial UMC at 10:30am with other cluster churches attending (or livestreaming if that is not an option for folks). Choir piece from Lidstone/Gray. Bell Choirs from Houlton and Grant. Worship dance led by Joyce. Find ways to incorporate children throughout the service. Waiting to hear from Bishop's office regarding Scripture/liturgy. Theme? "Faith for our Future: Loving Boldly" (Conference theme) might be an option. Tone should be celebration of our collaborative ministry here in the County. Grant Memorial will provide hot dishes and will solicit salads and desserts from the other churches in the Cluster. Rough estimate of number of folks from each church would be helpful the Wednesday prior to the service. It was decided to bring items (primarily for babies) that can be delivered to the Hope and Justice office. Sue M. provided a "needs list" that can be shared with all of our congregations. (Monetary gifts or other items from their "wish list" can be given for Hope and Justice as well.) Each church can pass out envelopes to receive their regular Sunday offering.

Pulpit Exchange

Pulpit exchange was scheduled for May 17th. However, given the change in date for the service with the Bishop, it was felt that perhaps we should forego pulpit exchange so soon thereafter. We can reschedule for the fall or next spring. We will table this discussion until we meet in September.

Sharing Mission and Outreach Ideas

Ben reported on the prayer vigil held in Caribou on Feb. 25th. There were 13 persons who gathered to pray for our immigrant neighbors, Sen. Collins, ICE agents. The office rep was welcoming and came out during the vigil. It was an act of faith in the political realm...an expression of hope for God to lead us in these difficult times.

Nicholas added that the language used in these vigils is important – not to be partisan or inflammatory, etc. making sure that folks on both ends of the spectrum feel welcome as peace and change are sought. The focus is praying for *everyone* in this broken system.

A date has not yet been set for a March prayer vigil at Senator King’s office in Presque Isle and Rep. Golden’s office in Caribou in April.

Mary reported on the prayer vigil held at the Houlton UMC. It was focused mostly on ICE actions and immigrants who are being detained and/or terrorized. There will be another prayer vigil tomorrow night (March 6th) at 5:30pm The Church of the Good Shepherd in Houlton.

John shared that folks have been “dropped off” in the middle of the field somewhere in Fort Fairfield by agents and left to find their way. He and some others are putting together health type kits to provide these folks when they are found.

Sara Hill reported on the fire victims in Patten. The building has been torn down but there is a great need for the victims to reconnect. Several Patten area churches are beginning to hold monthly teas/luncheons specifically for the former residents to provide a place for them to be together.

Conference Board of Church and Society

Nicholas reported that they continue to try to form an advocacy group in Maine. He encouraged all of us to consider getting involved in this state level advocacy group (pastors and laity). Nicholas is working to get volunteers to be part of this group before another meeting is scheduled.

New Business

Sue B. asked that someone else step forward to take on the role of secretary which she has held for 10 years. Victor asked that folks think about this and get in touch with him or Sue.

Spring Gathering

Please come to the March meeting prepared to discuss a gathering and date.

Joys and concerns

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

Next meeting: Thursday, April 2nd via Zoom at 9:00am

Devotions for next meeting: John

Meeting adjourned at 10:03 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Brown

Sue Brown

Secretary

Aroostook Cluster Council of United Methodist Churches

Education Committee Minutes
March 13, 2026

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

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Pastor Ben.

The February minutes had prior approval from the committee via email and were sent to Bobbi. They were reviewed once again with no new changes noted.

❖ PrayGround/Children's Moment

- Cheryl shared the flannel board/figures along with a table easel that had been purchased for use for the PrayGround as well as the Children's Moments. They will make a nice addition for our children's programs.
- Members looked over some materials that Mary had found that could be used at the PrayGround as well as being put in the Children's Welcome Bags. (Bible verse coloring books, God's love message lacing cards, Personalized bendable Jesus cards) It was in agreement to have these ordered.
- It was mentioned that it would be nice to have a welcome brochure included in the Children's Welcome Bags. This brochure could have pictures of the children's involvement in the church such as participating as an acolyte, working at dinners, Children's Moment, etc. Alaina will check with Aurora to get her input on other items that might be nice to have included in the bags.

❖ Stewardship Program

- The Stewardship Program meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 7th at 1:00.

❖ Easter Egg Hunt

- There will be an egg hunt for the children on Easter Sunday again this year. Cheryl said many eggs have been filled but there are more to be filled. Please let her know if you are interested in helping.
- Anyone that would like to help hide eggs can meet at the church on Saturday, April 4th at 1:00.

❖ Additional Items

- Diane mentioned that she had some inspirational eggs that would work nicely with the Children's Moment on Palm Sunday.
- Trustees are working on a day to declutter the church. It was discussed that it would be nice if the Education Committee participated in this event and worked cleaning up the children's areas. No date has been set yet.
- Pastor Ben stated that his book study covering the book Recovering the Sacred Center by Howard E. Friend Jr. will now be held after Easter. It will be held in person as well as virtually on Mondays at 10:00 and Wednesdays at 3:00. Dates have not yet been set.

Pastor Ben closed with prayer.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 8th at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Theriault

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP REPORTS:

From Financial Secretary:

The following is the total church offering for February:

Regular Offering	\$14,368.63
<u>Loose Offering</u>	<u>41.00</u>
Subtotal-Regular Offering	\$14,409.63

<u>Other Sources Operating Fund:</u>	<u>.00</u>
Total Regular Offerings	\$14,409.63

Reimbursements:

Church Utilities	\$ 42.42
<u>Parsonage Utilities</u>	<u>100.80</u>
Subtotal-Reimbursements	\$143.22

Special Funds for Church Use:

Prayer Shawl	\$ 1,141.00
Coffee Fellowship	91.00
Bottle Redemption	9.85
Ash Wednesday Offering	186.00
<u>Community Support</u>	<u>230.00</u>
Subtotal Funds for Church Use	\$ 1,657.85

Special Funds Not for Church Use:

<u>Ecumenical Food Pantry</u>	<u>\$ 215.00</u>
Sub-Total Funds Not for Church Use	\$215.00
Grand Total:	\$16,425.70

From Treasurer:

Beginning Balance	8,885.04
2025 Operating income	14,409.63
Bottle Redemption	9.85
Suncatcher	15.00
Ash Wednesday	186.00
Interest	1.35
Less EFT fee	(32.55) VANCO fees (EFT deposits)
<u>Less Expenses</u>	<u>(18,210.36)</u>
Ending Balance	5,263.96

Total "Special Funds for Church Use", which includes many lines for various donations, total \$18,022.43. The "Special Funds NOT for Church Use" total \$91.08. 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 30, 2026, on-line report shows ending value = \$26,789.31 (will update next month).

The Capital Account Money is as follows as of January 31st: Previous Balance - \$31,197.07; Deposits - \$1.21; Expenses = 0.00; Current Balance - \$31,198.28 (Includes funds earmarked for Furnace Fund - \$5,397.33; Emergency Fund Donations = \$21,104.23).

Expenditures for February 2026:

Programs:

Education	\$ 63.28
Worship	7.59
Office	106.89
<u>NOW Committee</u>	<u>91.50</u>
Programs Sub-Total	\$ 269.26

Trustee Expenses:

Church Utilities	\$1,908.75
Parsonage Utilities	814.38
Telephone/Internet	215.00
Property Insurance	1,394.87
Snow Removal (Sanding)	745.00
Maintenance/Cleaning	7.56
Trustee Sub-Total	\$5,085.56

Staff-Parish Relations Expenses:

Pastor's Salary	\$4,416.66	
Health Insurance	3,577.66	(January & February paid in Feb)
Pastor's Total Comp	\$7,994.32	

Choir Director	\$ 200.00
Treasurer	250.00
Church Office Administrator	833.33
Custodian	1,625.00
Maine PFML Deductions	(37.88)
Total Other Salaries	\$2,870.45

Other Expenses:

Guest & Substitute Staff	\$200.00
FICA	191.89
Workman's Comp	51.97
Total Other Expenses	\$443.86

Sub-Total SPRC Expenses \$11,308.63

New England Conference:

Pastor Pension Benefit \$ 1,546.91 (January & February paid in Feb)

Grand Total Expenses \$18,210.36

Note: Dead River bills for church also include charges for propane deliveries. Balances as of Feb 28: Church = \$913.14; Parsonage = (\$1,142.27)

Weekly Average Needed for 2026: \$4,429.75 (52 Sundays)

Mission Shares = \$2,264.25/mo. As of EOM February, Owe two months of Mission Shares - \$4,528.50

2026 YTD REVIEW – February 2026

Annual Budget	\$230,347.29
Required Monthly	\$19,195.61
Required Weekly	\$4,429.76

Target = \$38,391.22; Beginning Operating Fund Balance (Jan only) - \$1,961.71; Operating Fund Income from F/S YTD - \$34,855.89; Special Funds Used for Operating Fund Expenses YTD = \$211.60; Total Expenses YTD - \$31,702.76; Unpaid Mission Shares = \$4,528.50.

An aggregate of in-person and virtual attendance shows monthly average of 77 and 75 YTD. (No services on Jan 11th and 25th)

NOW Team Meeting - March 4, 2026
Nurture - Outreach - Witness

This meeting was held at the Caribou Room of the Caribou Library.

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

Opening Prayer - Pastor Ben

Kathy will do the opening prayer next month.

Acceptance of Minutes -

Sandy made a motion to accept the minutes from the January meeting. Bobbi seconded. The motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report - Cheryl

NOW Treasurer’s Report - March 4, 2026

Beginning Balance		\$1440.71
1-16-26	Seed Money for Souper Supper	(\$100.00)
1-20-26	Souper Supper Proceeds	\$315.00
1-20-26	Seed Money	\$100.00
1-20-26	Sunday Fellowship Souper Supper leftovers Donations	\$102.00
1-31-26	Credit Interest	\$0.32
2-24-26	Photo Class	\$20.00
Balance 3-4-26		\$1578.03

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Martin

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

Ruthann Weeks - Ecumenical Food Pantry

Ruthann had an exciting update to share regarding the food pantry. First, she said that the pantry is in good shape financially. Then she told us about the startup of a new program to benefit homebound seniors. Every second Tuesday of the month, participants can request a box of food. The boxes will be put together on Wednesday and delivered on Thursday. Right now, there are 9 participants. She could use one volunteer to help put the boxes together once a month.

At this time, Bobbi and Pastor Ben also spoke about the need to have a meeting of the various organizations throughout Caribou that assist the public to get an idea of what they all offer and who they are serving. They had had conversations with someone from the city and were hoping they city would head up that effort. Some follow-up will take place.

Souper Supper

Overall, we were pretty happy with the outcome of the Souper Supper. Attendance was lower than we had hoped, but there was bad weather that weekend. There was a lot of fellowship between those in attendance.

Holy Week/Easter

Bobbi is working on coordinating a schedule of visiting pastors for the Holy Week services, but is still waiting for confirmation from a number of them. The NOW Team will definitely provide refreshments for Friday. If there are days throughout the week that do not have coverage, we will also provide refreshments those days.

There was some discussion about the possibility of an Easter event. For the past couple of years there has been an event planned around Easter and the NOW Team has had a perennial plant sale, but that is during the Citywide Yard Sale in May. Due to a lack of planning time and our other commitments this month, we decided not to plan an Easter event.

Camp Mechuwana

Alaina shared that Aurora and Gwen are interested in attending Camp Mechuwana again this year. Last year the NOW Team sponsored both of the girls, but the UMM had expressed an interest in sponsoring one of them also. Also, the Education Committee has sponsored campers in the past as well. The cost of each camp is \$550. Alaina will contact the UMM and the Education Committee. Bobbi made a motion for the NOW Team to sponsor one of the camps. Ruthann seconded. The motion passed.

Children's Museum of Aroostook

Elise had reached out to Melonie last month because she was in need of some volunteers to cover a day they did not have anyone. Will Barnum, Alaina, Cheryl and Melonie were able to help out. Two families attended the museum that day. Elise was very grateful for the coverage and is hoping that there may be more routine coverage by volunteers from the church. They are short by one employee and need volunteers for 1-2 Saturdays or Sundays per month. Melonie, Cheryl, Bobbi and Alaina were willing as their schedules allow. Melonie will send out the list of days needed to everyone.

Perennial/Yard Sale

The Trustees are planning a de-clutter day for the inside of the church, but do not have a date yet. This may provide items that could be sold during the City-Wide Yard Sale. Melonie will bring this up at the Church Council meeting to gauge interest.

Bobbi shared that there is not a contractor for this garden right now. So, it is possible there won't be plants from the garden for the sale. *Bobbi spoke with Del Ramey and he will try to find a contractor to take care of the garden.* The City-Wide Yard Sale dates are May 15-17. We would likely have our sale on Friday and Saturday (15/16). Kathy and Cheryl will put together the Rada cutlery too.

Further discussion will take place at our next meeting.

Status Reports

- Penpals
 - Melonie sent out a schedule for penpal letters for the remainder of the year.
- State Auction Boxes and Dinner
 - Bobbi is working on a list of churches from each of the states to invite to participate in this event. We will need to draft a letter to send and decide what to do with the proceeds. There was much discussion of possible ideas. The group seemed to favor sponsoring families to go to the Children's Museum. We will need to talk with Elise about what their needs are. Timing of this event would likely be mid to late June. Melonie is going to send out a copy of the materials we received from the Willow UMC in Alaska when we were invited to participate in their event as reference.
- Pie and Bake Sale?
 - Bobbi is going to ask the Prayer Shawl ministry if they are interested in doing their Pie Sale again this year. This is usually around July 4. If so, the NOW Team will plan on doing a bake sale with them again. *The Prayer Shawl Ministry decided to have the pie sale on Friday, July 3rd (no exact time decided).*

- Pastor Ben
 - Pastor Ben received a letter from a Professor Emeritus regarding a request for care for someone at NMCC with a disability. He will share the letter with the committee via email.

Coffee Fellowship

There was a reminder that the NOW Team has Coffee Fellowship on Sunday, March 8.

Closing Prayer - Melonie

Our next regular meeting was moved to April 15 at 10 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Alaina Pethick
NOW Team Recording Secretary

Worship Committee Minutes March 11, 2026

Members Present: Bobbi Pelletier (chair), Pastor Ben Daggett, Diane Fitzpatrick, Cheryl Martin, Richard Clark, Beth Alden, Mary Theriault

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Cheryl.

Minutes from the February meeting were reviewed. Cheryl moved to accept, Richard seconded, and all were in favor.

Old Business:

- Bobbi will speak with Mary-Jo Hedman about a Summer Musicale. She will ask about possible dates and what we need to make it happen.
- February Black History Month – Bobbi created the bulletin board pictures, bios, and quotation questions for the bulletin inserts. She thanked Wendy and Diane for displaying them on the bulletin board in the library. Bobbi has had positive feedback on the quotation guessing contest each week!
- The Ash Wednesday Prayer Vigil times were all covered, and the noon service was well attended. Kudos to Pastor Ben for burning his own ashes for the service!
- The March 29th Palm Sunday African Crosses have been ordered and received. They will be handed out to folks as they arrive for the service. Bobbi has ordered the altar arrangement and palm fronds. She will pick them up on Saturday, March 28th. We will split the palm fronds before the service on Sunday morning and they will be handed out after the service.
- Holy Week will be March 30th – April 3rd. Bobbi has been working on scheduling guest preachers. The commitments we have thus far are:
 - Monday: Father Dave Raymond, Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Caribou
 - Wednesday: Isaiah Lopez, 7th Day Adventist Church, Caribou
 - Thursday: Pastor Mark Kalata, High Street Baptist Church, Caribou
 - Friday: Pastor Ben Daggett, Gray Memorial UMC, Caribou

Bobbi will continue trying to get a guest preacher for Tuesday. The NOW Committee will provide refreshments on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Bobbi will speak with Mari-Jo to see if she will be available to provide music for the services. Pastor Ben suggested that his father, Rich Daggett, may be available if he is not committed at Grant Memorial.

- There will be a Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday, April 5th. Time and place will be determined. Bobbi has asked that Easter plants be delivered on Friday, April 3rd from 9am until noon, or on Saturday at 1:00pm. Diane and Bobbi will arrange the plants on Saturday at 1:00pm.
- Bobbi asked Pastor Ben about the status of the origami doves for Easter. Pastor Ben will let us know after he has had a chance to speak with Steve Jones.
- There will be no coffee fellowship on Easter Sunday.

New Business:

- Pastor Ben will be holding both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services at 6:30pm. Holy Communion will be offered on Maundy Thursday and a Tenebrae service will be held on Good Friday. Pastor Ben will check with his father to see if he will be available to play the piano at both services.
- Sunday service on May 3rd will be held at Grant Memorial UMC in Presque Isle. Bishop Bickerton will be speaking. Our choir will be singing with the Lidstone choir, with Mari-Jo playing the piano. Our congregation will be notified that they should have their own offering envelopes from our church (their own or one with the church's name on it), as the offering will be sorted by church. We will also be asked to bring either salads or desserts. Gifts will be accepted for the Hope and Justice Project (primarily for babies). There is a list of needs that the Cluster members have sent via email on March 9th and will be published for the congregations' use.
- Bobbi asked that volunteers meet with her after Easter and before our next meeting to select gifts to be ordered for Mother's Day.

Other Business:

- The Trustees have not yet set a date for the church clutter clean-up day. Bobbi has suggested that it be held before the city-wide yard sale on May 15-17 in case there are things in the church that could be sold. We will notify the congregation they can also donate things from their homes.
- Saturday, May 2nd from 4:30 to 6:00pm will be the Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry's Spaghetti Supper at the Assembly of God Activity Center. There will be no charge for the tickets, but free-will donations will be accepted.
- The Caribou Choral Society Spring Concerts, songs from Stage and Screen, Act II, will be held on Friday, May 15th at the Caribou Performing Arts Center and on Saturday, May 16th at Grant Memorial UMC. Both concerts will begin at 7:00pm.
- The Aroostook County Community Band will be holding a concert on May 11th at the Presque Isle Middle School at 7:00pm.

Pastor's Time:

- Pastor Ben announced that the **Recovering the Sacred Center** study will be offered after Easter. He will invite the participants from the **Enough** study to join in. The date will be announced.
- Richard Clark will be preaching this Sunday, March 15th.
- Pastor Ben will be participating in a Chaplaincy Training with the Caribou Fire Department. Date to be determined.

Our next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, April 8th, at 11:00am.**

Richard will offer devotions.

Diane Fitzpatrick, Secretary

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING IN APRIL 2026!!!

Wednesday	01	12:00pm	Ecumenical Holy Week Service
Thursday	02	12:00pm	Ecumenical Holy Week Service
		6:30pm	Maundy Thursday Service with Communion
Friday	03	12:00pm	Ecumenical Holy Week Service
		6:30pm	Good Friday Tenebrae Service
Saturday	04	11:30am	Senoir Choir Practice

Sunday	05	5:55am	Easter Sunrise Service at Caribou Rehab & Nursing Center
		10:00am	Worship; Easter Sunday
Tuesday	07	1:00pm	Stewardship Meeting
Wednesday	08	9:30am	Education Committee Meeting
		11:00am	Worship Commiittee Meeting (new day & time for Feb/Mar/Apr)
Thursday	09	1:00pm	SPRC Meeting
		3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service with Communion (all are welcome!)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Saturday	11	11:30am	Senior Choir Practice

Sunday	12	10:00am	Worship; Second Sunday of Easter
Tuesday	14	5:30pm	Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry Board Meeting at Pantry
Wednesday	15	11:00am	NOW Committee Meeting
Thursday	16	3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service with Communion (all are welcome!)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Saturday	18	11:30am	Senior Choir Practice

Sunday	19	10:00am	Worship; Third Sunday of Easter; Native American Ministries Sunday (special offering)
Tuesday	21	1:00pm	Trustees Meeting
Thursday	23	10:00am	<u>DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWSLETTER INPUT!!!</u>
		1:00pm	Church Council Meeting
		3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service with Communion (all are welcome!)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
Saturday	25	8:00am	UMM Breakfast & Meeting
		11:30am	Senior Choir Practice

Sunday	26	10:00am	Worship; Fourth Sunday of Easter
Thursday	30	3:00pm	Weekly Prayer Service with Communion (all are welcome!)
		6:30pm	"Redeeming Conflict" Book Study
