

For the first few months this year and occasionally after that, I will note in this space some of the “whys and wherefores” of our faith and Christian practice. This idea came from multiple conversations and will include a sermon series during part of Lent. Though many books have been written about these subjects, what I write here will be a mere slice of what could be said. If you would like to read more or if you have questions, do be sure to ask me.

This month, the topic is communion and, in particular, why communion is conducted the way we do. Holy Communion, also known as the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist, is not only a recounting of God's saving actions in history and of the last meal Jesus had with his disciples prior to his death. Communion, as one of the means or ways to receiving God's grace, is an opportunity to meet God and to enter into Christ's saving work in our world. The simple elements of bread and juice (or wine) not only recall Jesus' experience but point to the accessibility of God's grace for all. This is why Methodists observe an open table at communion. Beyond being mere memorialists (belief that communion is about retelling or recalling a story from the past), we believe that a person can encounter God and even come to faith through the experience of communion, just as a person could through, for example, personal witness, preaching or music. To limit those who can participate in communion limits one of the ways God can work in people.

The elements themselves are based on what Jesus used at the last supper, though he would have actually used unleavened bread and wine. In our culture we are much more likely to use leavened (with yeast) bread and grape juice. Grape juice became widely used in Methodist and a number of Protestant churches as a result of prohibition in the early 20th century and continues to be used in part out of concern for those who want to avoid alcohol. Wine is permissible and there are churches that make use of it. There are other cultural variations across the world (for example using rice cake or crackers in some Asian countries). Increasingly, you will see alternate elements for those with allergies or food sensitivities. For the table to truly be open, people have to have ways to safely participate. I encourage options that approximate what Jesus did as closely as possible using ordinary, staple items. It follows then that using Coke and potato chips, unless that is all a person can consume, is not a good option. If you are reading this and cannot participate for a food related reason, do speak with me and we will explore options.

Most Christian traditions (though not quite all) provide that an ordained or licensed clergy person consecrate the communion elements. However, anyone can serve the elements. This is one reason, for example, we are able to “extend the table” by having home communion servers. We have had fascinating conversations in Worship Committee about who serves communion during worship. Suffice it to say, there is not a one right way. Though the use of a communion rail in the United States was most associated with Methodists, various churches will use intinction, common cup, serving in pews and other methods. Many churches make use of multiple stations, sometimes with different methods or elements at different stations to take into account different needs and preferences. I am sometimes asked why I take communion last. I do this to symbolize serving others before being served. Other pastors have good reasons for approaching this differently.

On the American frontier a pastor (for Methodists, this was the circuit rider) might only be able to get around to a church once every quarter or so. Although this pattern of quarterly communion developed for practical reasons, it remained the widespread practice until the late 20th century when most United Methodist churches switched to having communion monthly. Some, again with the understanding of communion as a means of grace, have moved to communion as often as weekly. Indeed Methodist founder John Wesley practiced what he called, “constant communion,” seeking to have it daily when possible.

In some ways this is but a sampler plate of communion theology and practice. There is much more that could be said. I would encourage you to reflect on what you have observed and experienced in worship about communion, what makes communion meaningful for you, why different people approach communion in varied ways and what is fundamentally important when the church observes Holy Communion.

Grace and peace,
Rev. Tim

A great series that explains communion along with a wide variety of worship and church related terms in an easy to understand way in 3-6 minute segments is “Chuck Knows Church.” You can find the original series of Chuck Knows Church at www.chuckknowschurch.com or through the Board of Discipleship part of umc.org, the main website of the United Methodist Church.



Caribou Clock

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Date: January 2018
Church Office: 498-2103
Website: <http://www.bgmumc.com>

Greetings from the Church Office!

On behalf of the Worship Committee, I wish to thank all of the individuals who participated in the Advent series "Angels Among Us" by playing the various "characters" in the dramatic scripture readings. I also want to thank Pat Dobson for her help in making the "Angel Keychains" that were used to visually represent the Angel theme.

As another year closes and a new one begins, please accept my appreciation for everyone's support. I wish each and every one of you a blessed New Year!

If any of your information changes (mailing and/or physical address, phone number, email address, etc.) PLEASE contact the church office so we can update our records! I have received a number of returned newsletters in recent months due to an incorrect address! I am also emailing the Newsletter to many people - if you do not get your Newsletter through email, just let me know and I will add you to that list! In recent months, several previously used email addresses no longer work, so I have had to mail hard copies of this Newsletter. If the address label on this Newsletter is in red - that means you!

Until next month.....

Bobbi Pelletier
Church Secretary



December Prayer Concerns

Prayer Concerns: Debbie, Lu & Dale Sharp, Judi McKee, Phil Turner, Don Collins, Reta Haley, Emily Stuart, Phyllis Sykes, Paul L'Heureux, Janie Lidey, Dr. August Wells, Mary Bear, Johnny Peterson, Rodney & Dustin Nichols, Florence Gallagher, Jean Bedard

On Family Death: The family of Donald Winston; the family of August Wells; Bill & Liselle Campbell & family (Death of Bill's mother)

Other: Nations of Israel, Palestine, Syria; All who serve in harm's way;

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PROVIDE A MAILING ADDRESS FOR PEOPLE OR FAMILIES YOU PUT ON THE PRAYER LIST SO WE CAN SEND THEM A NOTE FROM REV. TIM. WE OFTEN HEAR FROM RECIPIENTS ON HOW TOUCHED THEY ARE THAT WE OFFERED PRAYERS FOR THEM!

REMINDERS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LITURGIST</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>	<u>COUNTER</u>	<u>COFFEE FELLOWSHIP</u>
Jan 7	Kathleen Forbes	Shirley Bowman & Duska Franklin	Jean Cashman	Education Committee
Jan 14	Diane Fitzpatrick	Mary Anderson & Gwen Ellinwood	Jean Cashman	Missions & Evangelism
Jan 21	Bob Ellinwood	Josselyn & Adam Langworthy	Jean Cashman	Finance/Stewardship
Jan 28	Samuela Manages	Joelene Boucher & Debbie Barnes	Jean Cashman	Worship Committee

January Usher Coordinator: David DeMerchant

January Communion Stewardess: Ruthann Weeks

Organists: Jan 7-Margaret Cyr; Jan 14-Susan Clark; Jan 21-Margaret Cyr; Jan 28-Judi Greenier

Acolytes: Jan 7-Friedrich & Alden Wilcox; Jan 14-Darrell Adams; Jan 21-Friedrich Wilcox; Jan 28-Lauren Craig

Child Care Volunteers: Jan 7-Jennifer Craig; Jan 14-Diane Fitzpatrick; Jan 21-Meagan Irving; Jan 28-Diana Locke

Each individual or committee is responsible to make arrangements for changes to these various calendars.

Please contact the church office if any changes to these lists are made so the weekly bulletins are correct!

* * January Birthdays & Anniversaries * *

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

Remember your birthday & anniversary by making a special offering each year.



2	Colleen Harmon	15	Parker Stallings
3	Jennifer Branscom	16	Julie Ordway
4	Jennifer Espling, Betty Fowler, Jennifer Norsworthy	18	Phil Brown, Francis Cyr
5	Elizabeth Cochran	20	Tanner Sterner
7	Anthony Morrow, Katie Smith	23	Jean Cashman, Carter Irving, Ken Peters
10	Aaron Greenier	26	Sheila Belyea
12	Steve Belyea, Lauren McHattie	27	Paul Pangburn
13	Sheila Pelletier, Bessie Thornton	29	Winnie Brown, Katie Pelletier
14	Michelle Nichols, Alan Pangburn	30	Louis Greenier, Michael Scott, Phil Turner
		31	Mona Johnson



8	Elsie & Ken Doody	22	Norma & Bob Thompson
	26	Tammy & Ken Albert	

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.



Worship Attendance and General Fund Offerings:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Operating Fund Offering</u>
Dec 3	105	\$5,233.50
Dec 10	83	\$3,690.00
Dec 17	107	\$2,769.08
Dec 24 (10am)	87	\$3,957.07
Dec 24 (4pm)	115	\$ 479.25
Dec 31 (will be reported in next month's Newsletter)		

Needed to meet 2017 Budget: \$3,770.20 weekly		

Capital Account Seed Money:

We continue to receive donations for the "Capital Account Seed Money" account and as of December 24th, the balance in the account is \$38,650.06.

Changes to November 2016 Church Directory (January 2018):

No changes received

We received a letter from the American Red Cross of Aroostook County regarding their annual "Real Heroes Breakfast" and the nomination form for us to submit a deserving individual. Deadline for nominations is **January 15, 2018 and the breakfast is scheduled for Friday, May 18th. Please notify the church office if you wish to obtain a copy of the nomination form.**

Pictures from our Worship Services!
(photos by Dale Sharp, unless otherwise noted)



Our "Advent Altar", including a few angels!

The sanctuary was adorned with Christmas plants, an "Angel Tree" with many gifts surrounding it and evidence of "Angels Among Us" (check out the feathers!)



Other Kodak Moments!



*Wendy Bossie created a beautiful Library display of "Christian Monograms" with monogram cross-stitch designs made by Pat Winters and explanations for each.
Thank you Wendy!*



Making Sense of God: Explaining Our Faith to Unbelievers

As we grow in Christ, we become more fully human, gain meaning in life and a firm hope in the face of death and of injustice. Yet many today deny these benefits, asserting that our faith stifles us, makes us less free, less tolerant, and that, practically speaking, we are better off not believing in God at all.

In a six-week discussion course, beginning January 7th at 8:45am in the Church Library, I will demonstrate how we can effectively answer these anti-Christian arguments. I will be using as my primary source evangelist Timothy Keller's Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical, but this is not a course "by the book", no text is required, and your input would be very much welcomed.

Richard Clark

Would you like to receive the Sunday afternoon email newsletter summarizing events at worship and upcoming events for the next week? Also, special bulletins, notices of changes of events, etc.? Send an email to Ruth & Emmett at rneross@maine.rr.com or contact the church office.

A message from Rev. Tim: I would like to wish and pray for a meaningful and Spirit-filled 2018 for everyone!!!



CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES 11-30-17

ATTENDEES: Diane McDonough (Chair), Claire Hodgkins, Tamara Wilcox, Debbie Barnes, Kathie Forbes, Lee Frost, Bobbi Pelletier, Susan White, Stephen Cashman, David W. DeMerchant, Judi Greenier, Mary Lou Brown, and Rev. Tim Wilcox.

The meeting came to order at 6:35 PM in the church kitchen with a brief prayer given by Diane McDonough. The minutes of the past meeting were approved as published and printed. The following Chairs gave their reports:

CLUSTER: Bill Thomas sent a summary of the meeting in which he reported that the Cluster met Nov. 2nd to finished plans for Cluster Thanksgiving service. It was decided that offering this year would go to replenish cluster funds were getting low. We had a small group, not may pastors can meet in Sat. so it was decided to go back to Thursday meetings @9:30. Again we would like more laity to attend cluster, the more we have the more we can do. Next meeting will be Jan. 4th 2018. Then from the minutes of the meeting: OLD BUSINESS: Social Action Award Leona brought the plaques – they are ready for the Thanksgiving Service. Thank you, Leona for taking care of that. Please be thinking about nominations for next year's Social Action Award. Akeley Scholarship The 2016-2017 recipients will receive their \$750 scholarship awards at the Cluster Thanksgiving Service. (Erica Hemphill & Taylor Skinner) Please encourage congregants to apply for next year's scholarship awards.

Thanksgiving Service will be November 19th at 4:00pm at Grant Memorial UMC in Presque Isle. As decided in October, the service will be held in Presque Isle in order to include both the Social Action Award and the Akeley Scholarships. The offering will be received for the work of the church in our Cluster, potluck to follow with hot dishes and drinks provided by the host church with persons from the other churches to bring other desserts, salads, or whatever. CHRIS – PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU NEED HELP/PARTICIPATION/ETC. Mission Opportunities for the Year We will revisit this when our coffers are less bare. Online Giving Leona asked if churches are using this form of giving in their churches.

Share something that is working in Your Church & Sharing Joys and Concern Mapleton UMW did pumpkin painting at Leisure Village. Mapleton monthly free luncheon is ongoing. Limestone is hosting a once a month evening meal in neighborhood. Third Friday of the month Grant Memorial provides meal at Martha & Mary's (takes about 4 people).

Laity at Cluster meetings Leona reminded us to continue to encourage laity to participate in Cluster meetings/activities. Focus for Meetings 2017-2018 Leona asked that we bring to the table ideas and questions to share.

Other topics- Simple Church idea shared by Leona (from Cheryl). Informal gathering that included time to share, communion, a meal and prayer. A way to include folks from all walks of life on days other than Sundays. Leona will bring more information to the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: Possible Change of Meeting Day With few clergy present it was decided to return the meeting to Thursdays.

Various Church Activities: November 7th – 5:00 – 6:30pm Limestone UMC Public Chicken Pie Supper. Take-outs will be available at 4:30pm.

The next meeting is January 4, 2018. Meetings have been changed back to Thursdays.

EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRIES: Christmas tree sales begin December 2-3 and be held the next two weekends. The hours are from 9-4:30 PM on Saturdays and 12-4:30PM on Sundays.

Movie Nights went well so we are planning 4 more movie nights per year. The next movie night will be held in late January, 2018. We are discussing the possibility of starting a teen program after school in the fall of 2018, meeting 1-2 times a month. Transportation is an issue to solve.

Our Committee and Rev. Tim are working together to put together a team of 3-5 teachers for adult Sunday school to relieve Rev. Tim of some of this responsibility and still offer this program. This year's Christmas theme will be "Angles in Advent" beginning Sunday, Dec. 3.

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP: Tamara Wilcox reported the October offerings as follows:

Regular offerings	\$13,638.74
From Other sources	69.00 for an anniversary
Total Operating Fund income	13,707.74
Reimbursements	109.90
Special Funds for Church Use	2,448.78 as follows:
Coffee Fellowship	50.53
Fuel Oil	545.00
Capital Acct Seed Money	1,442.00
Cookie Booth	411.25
Special Funds Not for Church Use	220.00 as follows:
Jeff Cyr Mission	50.00
Ecumenical Food Pantry	50.00
World Communion Sunday	120.00
Total Offering for Oct.	\$16,486.42

Bobbi Pelletier reported on the checkbook figures for October as follows:

Beginning Balance	\$488.84
2017 Operating Income	13,707.74
Interest	.87
Less EFT fee	(19.20)
Less Expenses	(13,183.59)
Ending Balance	994.66

Bobbi reported that the \$25,000.00 given the Memorial Garden which was invested with Thompson/Hamel LLC at a fee of \$1,073.78; as of October 31st, the on-line report shows an ending value of \$24,525.47.

The Special Funds for Church Use shows a total of \$17,135.68 as of October 31st. The Capital Acct. Seed Money had a beginning Balance of \$36,400.85. There were deposits of \$1,443.62. No money was spent so the total came to \$37,844.47. A total of \$13,183.59 was spent but we have \$8,201.85 in unpaid bills which includes three months of Mission shares and pastor travel expenses. A weekly average of \$3,770.19 is needed to meet the Budget. The total expenditures for the year as of 10-31-17 is \$159,531.16 or 79.837%. The Dead River Balance as of 10-31-17 was \$2,424.00 for the church and \$799.62 for the Parsonage.

Debbie Barnes reported that the October Target Budget was \$166,516.67. Tithes & Offerings amounted to \$136,387.25. Total expenses were \$159,531.16, and unpaid expenses were \$8,201.85. Average attendance for October was 88 and the average attendance YTD was 88. The Audit is almost complete, and the Committee will present the findings at the December meeting. Debbie Barnes requested that the annual Italian dinner be put on the calendar for April 7th.

MEMORIALS: We held a (very) brief meeting to get a consensus that Diane will, when she has time, combine the savings into the checking account. It used to create a bit of interest earned with the savings account, but at about \$1. a month, it seems like a lot of work keeping two balances and statements.

Diane also provided current balances and advised nothing donated and nothing withdrawn for a while.

MISSIONS & EVANGELISM: Committee currently focusing on preparation for the Angel Tree project. Ruth Ross has worked with the appropriate city office to obtain families for our gift giving effort. We have a total of 23 families (that have 56 children!) plus one senior citizen and a veteran. The committee will meet at 2pm on Saturday, December 3rd to place the angel tags with the gift names on the Christmas tree and put donation envelopes in the pews. The committee has asked for a \$25 limit on each gift. All gifts must be brought to the church by Sunday, December 17th. The committee will gather again on Saturday, December 23rd at 9am to put all the family gifts together. Deliveries will begin at 1pm that day. Volunteers wishing to help make these deliveries are welcome! Just let someone on the committee know and plan to be here on December 23rd at 1pm.

SPRC: The SPRC did not meet in November due to scheduling issues. The Committee will meet Dec. 14th to work with Rev. Tim as requested by the Superintendent to prioritize and possibly reduce some of his commitments and responsibilities at the

local, Conference and District levels. The Committee continues to search for a fulltime organist/pianist, but so far all leads have failed to pan out. We will be working with the Worship Committee to discuss options should there be any Sundays which would not be covered by an organist/pianist.

TRUSTEES: Mary Lou Brown read the following Treasurer's report:

Local Accounts as of 11:28-17:

Organ Fund	\$2,531.31
Clock Account	527.95
Steeple Maintenance	1,006.75
Pastor's Moving Acct.	2,001.48
Board of Trustees Checking Acct.	5,125.53
Trustees CD	10,104.63
Heating System Fund	0.00
Holding Account (Moved to Checking)	0.00

The Audit is complete.

The United Methodist Foundation money's third quarter interest payment was \$985.89 with the checking acct. interest for Oct. @ \$.24 and Nov. @ \$.26 brought deposits in the checking to \$986.39.

The Trustees paid S.W. Collins \$1,535.00 for LEXAN to cover the stain glass windows on the East side Triple window of the church. Work is almost completed except for a couple of small places.

Mary Lou paid Noah Yoder \$105.00 for repairs and restoration of the clock in the sanctuary for which she will be reimbursed. The clock is back in the Sanctuary. Mr. Yoder estimates that the tower clock repairs and restoration will cost approximately \$1,500.00 which would include labor, supplies, and parts. The clock will need at least 3 new bushings which may cost \$40 or more each. Mr. Yoder would start work with an initial payment of \$500.00. The remainder will be due upon completion of the work. The proposal states he would begin 10 days following acceptance of his proposal.

The Council discussed some possible ways to raise the funds to pay for this, but no final decision was reached. Mary Lou will discuss these options further with the Trustees and Rev. Tim.

******Mary Lou has put a note on the Sanctuary clock warning ushers there is a wire protruding from a hole in the face of the clock which must never be touched or the clock will stop.

Sullivan's Flooring has made a proposal to lay new flooring in the church dining room for a cost of \$13,968.00. The UMM group would remove and discard the old carpeting and make repairs to the sub-flooring making certain it is securely fastened to the concrete. Also they would remove all furnishings. Jacob Beaupre is also interested in giving an estimate. The survey to find out which kind of flooring should be laid showed most members wanted the vinyl plank flooring. Some were concerned the flooring might present a slipping hazard upon entering from the stairs or elevator so parts of the floor will have replaceable carpet squares to satisfy that issue. The next step will be to choose the colors for the flooring.

The electrical issues with the elevator are temporarily addressed for the time being. A technician from Maine Accessibility found a switch mechanism that allows the outer door to open was not working properly. Another electrical connection in the same box was also faulty. New parts are on order. Mary Lou showed Bill Thomas how to avoid problems so he needs to be sure other ushers know this as well.

As part of the UMW Auction, Dead River donated a gift certificate and we will use it to pay for cleaning of the parsonage furnace when the time comes.

The organ will not be tuned until March due to an error in an e-mail address which caused the company not to get the request in time. The Trustees gave the Wilcox family a list of this year's parsonage repairs. Included were projects that might be on a list for 2018.

Mary Lou announced at our meeting that for reasons of her health, she is resigning as Chairman of the Trustees as soon as someone can fill her place. She also wishes to possibly come off the Trustees in the near future.

UMM: David DeMerchant reported that the men met for breakfast on Oct. 28th which included eggs, ham, home fries, home-made toast, orange juice, and coffee. The guest speaker was Jeff Cyr who spoke to the group and showed a slide presentation of his mission calling to the Black Forest Academy.

UMW: The UMW raised \$1,155.00 for Jeff Cyr in their auction. The November luncheon plans were finalized and the dessert was changed to baked apples. Attendance was low but we made enough to cover the cost of food. Our members are getting older and it is getting difficult to find people to help with projects. We are sending out a survey to members of both circles to see what projects people want to work on. If new members are not found we may not be able to continue at the same level as

we have been. We plan to present 5 pins at a December service to be announced later. A recognition card has been purchased in memory of Thelma Mockler. We plan to discuss having a RADA catalog party at our New Year's Eve Day Coffee Fellowship at the next meeting. This is similar to Pampered Chef.

WORSHIP: Worship Committee met on November 2nd and discussed the upcoming Sundays:

Nov 5 - All Saints Day; honoring Thelma Mockler with a single candle on the altar; a table of tea lights will be placed in front of the altar railing so that people can write the name of a deceased love one on a slip of paper, come forward to light a candle as Rev. Tim reads the name(s)

Nov 12 - Organ & Tissue Donor Sunday; Dean Cote from Cary Medical will speak

Nov 19 - Thanksgiving Sunday; people with donations of fresh/canned vegetables can bring them forward to the altar during the service.

Nov 26 - Christ the King Sunday - special offering for UM Student Day; previewed the two "Angel Among Us" videos

Dec 3 - First Sunday of Advent; Theme is Hope; Zechariah & Elizabeth will receive a visit from an angel; feather keychains will be given out to people after they receive communion

Dec 10 - Second Sunday of Advent; Theme is Peace; angel appears to Mary

Dec 17 - Third Sunday of Advent; Theme is Joy; angel appears to Joseph

Dec 24 (10am) - Fourth Sunday of Advent - Theme is Love; angel appears to shepherds

Dec 24 (4pm) Christmas Eve Family Service with Communion; three angels appear to share "The Story"

Dec 31 - Epiphany Sunday; angel appears to Joseph

Jan 7 - Baptism of the Lord Sunday with Communion

The committee will meet at 1pm on Saturday, December 2nd to decorate the sanctuary for Advent. Next meeting is December 7th at 6:30pm.

PASTOR'S TIME: Rev. Tim reported that there are 21 people in 2 Disciple IV classes which are ¼ complete. Tim met with Pastor Chris Dare and Noel from Grant Memorial in Presque Isle to plan for a joint confirmation class. Tim is working with Richard Clark and Steve Cashman on developing a team of teachers for the Sunday morning adult class.

Tim is working with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and the district superintendent on evaluating all my commitments at conference, district and local levels with a goal of reducing some at each level. He expects decisions to be made after the December SPRC meeting.

We just completed the spiritual gifts worship series. The class on spiritual gifts will continue another 3 weeks. Upcoming series include "Angels Among Us" during Advent, "Things Overheard" between Epiphany and Lent and a tentative series on why we do the things we do for some portion of Lent.

Tim has begun Track 2 of the Creating a Culture of Renewal continuing education program. The focus this year is on leadership.

The Fruitful Congregation Journey team is currently presenting a series of short mission moments detailing some of our major activities and learnings. They are also encouraging people to complete a spiritual gifts inventory and submit their top 3 results to the church office or place in the offering plate. They will use these results as one important element to guide our conversations in the New Year. At each of our sessions we are reminded that Gray Memorial's mission statement is the same as that of the denomination, "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." We are using this mission to guide our work and encourage committees and groups to do the same.

OTHER: The Council briefly discussed the possibility of some type of ongoing sponsorship for Jeff Cyr's mission. A couple of ideas were floated. One would be a free will offering on a quarterly basis. The other was the possibility that one or more Committee fundraising projects could designate part of their money to Jeff Cyr, or a combination of things. Nothing was settled. There being no further business the meeting adjourned following a prayer by Diane McDonough. The next meeting will be Dec. 21st at 6:30 PM in the church Kitchen.

Respectfully submitted by Claire Hodgkins Secretary

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

12-21-17

ATTENDEES: Diane McDonough (Chair), Claire Hodgkins, Mary Lou Brown, Kathleen Forbes, Debbie Barnes, Tamara Wilcox, Rev. Tim Wilcox, Lee Frost, Bobbi Pelletier, and David W. DeMerchant

Diane McDonough called the meeting to order in the church kitchen at 6:34 PM. Rev. Tim said a brief prayer and the Council voted to accept the minutes of the last meeting as printed. Next, Diane called for Committee reports as follows:

CLUSTER: No Report (no meeting this month)

EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRIES: No Report (no meeting this month)

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP: Debbie Barnes reported that the Audit has been completed and the auditors created a booklet to help the church perfect procedures to assist the church in becoming more efficient with record keeping. Debbie presented the 2018 Budget proposal which is a 3.81% increase to \$207,440.50. There was discussion of the Church Utilities line which has remained at \$15,000.00 in the Trustee Budget although the actual expense has been almost half that for the past 3 years. It was decided to allow it based on the possibility that in any given year a price hike in fuel oil, as was seen in 2014 when we paid over \$20,000.00 for fuel oil, could happen. Also, if we did not spend the money nothing would be lost. The budget was passed when Dave DeMerchant moved to pass and it was seconded by Kathleen Forbes.

Tamara Wilcox went over the November Tithes & Offerings as follows:

Regular Offerings	\$18,113.00	YTD	\$152,870.25
Reimbursements	287.75	YTD	641.95
Special Funds for Church Use	4,270.24	YTD	50,249.38
Special Funds Not For Church Use	342.00	YTD	2,918.34
Total Tithes & Offering for Nov.	23,012.99	YTD	206,679.92

Bobbi Pelletier reported the following checkbook figures:

Beginning Balance	\$994.66
2017 Operating Income	18,113.00
Chicken BBQ SF	2,327.17 (pay 1 month's Mission Shares)
Interest	.92
Less EFT fee	(19.20) VANCO fees (EFT deposits)
Less Expenses	(20,319.54)
Ending Balance	1,097.01

Bobbi reported that Friedrich Wilcox turned in \$362.99 to the Youth account money he had left after his trip to Taize which brings the current balance in the Youth account on Nov. 30th to \$3,743.15.

The beginning balance in the Capital Account Seed Money Fund was \$37,844.47. There was a deposit of \$411.59 and no expenditures bringing the total balance on Nov. 30th to \$38,256.06. Bobbi was able to pay three months of Mission shares leaving the church 1 month behind in Mission shares on Nov. 30th. The Dead River balance for the Church as of 11/30/17 is \$2,275.81. The Parsonage balance is \$938.18.

Debbie Barnes reported on the November line in the 2017 Budget as follows:

The Target for November was set at \$183,133. Tithes & Offerings amounted to \$54,645.25 while total expenses were \$173,976.02. The unpaid expenses amounted to \$2,327.17 (November Mission Share). The average attendance for November was 83 and the average attendance YTD was 88.

MEMORIALS: No Report (no meeting this month)

MISSIONS & EVANGELISM: Angel Tree gifts were all received, grouped & deliveries started today. Overwhelming response from the congregation for all the families - each family received a food gift certificate for \$75.00 from Sleeper's. Each family received fresh fruit and candy. Each child received a gift. We had many wonderful volunteers who worked on this project and the "angels" who came this afternoon to deliver them all were amazing!

SPRC: SPRC met on Thursday, December 14th. At this meeting the committee worked with Reverend Tim to begin to prioritize his local commitments, as well as his commitments at the district and conference levels. This meeting helped Reverend Tim to prepare for an upcoming meeting with the District Superintendent. As we move into 2018 the committee will continue to work with Reverend Tim as he prioritizes his work schedule to meet all of his responsibilities as the pastor of Gray Memorial.

TRUSTEES:

The following items are still in the works toward completion:

1. The Seth Thomas tower clock has been taken out and is now being repaired by Mr. Noah Yoder of Fort Fairfield. There are more parts deteriorated than we saw on first view. We expect that it will be 1-3 months before repairs are complete. Meanwhile it is important to keep the tower lighted for airplane identification.
2. Last week our custodian Linda Richards fell on the ice in the dark while taking the trash to the building outside. She did not break any bones but is very lame in her shoulders, back and pelvis. We provided a flashlight for her immediate use. We have talked with Kevin Smith about installing a light at the back door area for everybody's protection. In the spring we will install a new door as the present one is rusted out and the casing is rotting.
3. Maine Accessibility notified us of the cost of the mechanism that allows the outside door to open. The unit is \$462.20 + shipping; labor and travel is \$650.00 (two hours labor at \$335.00/hr., total estimate = \$1,132.20). We will be notified when the parts arrive.
4. The air circulating fan in the sanctuary has stopped completely. Kevin Smith has been notified. Question will be whether we have to use staging to work on the fan or if the On/Off switch is the cause of failure.
5. The fellowship hall flooring survey indicated vinyl plank flooring commercial grade as top preference. Jacob Beaupre carpenter will be at church December 22 at 10:00am to upgrade his estimate from one year ago. *Added 12/26: The color of the vinyl wood planking has been chosen, #9812, Senora, made by Tarkette, with a ¼ inch underlayment, glued down. The product has been ordered. **We need a team of men to move all the furniture, book cases, tables, chairs out of the dining room and nursery area after coffee fellowship on January 14, 2018 to prepare the room for work to be done. Mr. Beaupre estimates being finished with the reconstruction work in 7-10 days. Please be patient as things will be upset for this period of time and some programs will need to be relocated temporarily. The old carpet will be removed first, the underlying plywood and timbers checked for rot, replaced as needed and secured to the concrete. If needed, a ¼ inch of new plywood would be laid to stiffen and level the surface before the vinyl planking is applied. The Trustees appreciate the congregation's input and help to complete this project and the generous donations that have been made to fund it. We trust the church will have a floor that will last as many years or more than our old carpet had.***
6. The parsonage has a leak in the upstairs bathroom radiator and a leak in the kitchen refrigerator. In addition the microwave (purchased June 10, 2016 from Lowes) has been shorting out and now has stopped completely. Rev. Wilcox family are using a microwave of their own from storage for the present.
7. Cary Medical Center (Beth Singer, November 1, 2017) has instructed the Rev. Wilcox family in the use of a rope ladder for egress of the second floor rooms in case of fire.
8. Question has come up as to who shovels and sands the parsonage sidewalks and steps as well as the church back door to the trash building. This is part of our contract with Mr. Cowett's company. They are to be notified immediately when work needs doing.
9. Sunday, 12/17/ 2017, the System 2000 furnace stopped completely. Dead River installed a new coupler from fuel system to furnace and it is running well just now. We have asked Dead River to run an energy audit on both of the furnaces in the church as soon as they have someone available to do so. Hopefully they will be able to recommend flushing the whole system so the radiators will heat more efficiently.
10. The Triple windows on the east side of the church have been partially covered with new Lexan except for the very top where there are three small diamond shaped windows that will be covered as soon as the weather permits. Another sheet of Lexan will need to be ordered and the man lift returned to the church to permit completion. (Please keep in mind that summer 2018 we will remove the Lexan and paint the window frames and replace any rotten wood to stabilize the future of the windows.)
11. We are finding rotten wood in the frames of some of the windows when one of our carpenters did an overview of the church building, particularly on the west side and the north side in the sills. Also the old entrance on the south side of the building the ceiling is rotting as well as some of the clapboards.
12. We provided Friedrich Wilcox with copies of both the parsonage and church deeds so that he could research and develop a history of the parsonage from before it was owned by Mr. & Mrs. A.V. Goud who sold the home to the People's Methodist Episcopal Church in 1912.

UMM: Dave DeMerchant reported that the UMM met on Dec. 2nd for a breakfast of breakfast casseroles, muffins, fruit, orange juice, and coffee preceded by an opening prayer led by Prelate Richard Clark. Richard read 1 Peter 2:4-5 and Romans 12:2 with commentary after the meal. There being no guest speaker the meeting became a planning session. The men collected money for Jeff Cyr and combined with money that was turned into the church, \$1100.00 was raised for Jeff's mission. The men voted to pay dues for 1 year to the General Commission of Methodist Men. They also discussed their following projects: the Living Nativity, the Tree of Lights project, and the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper to be held February 13th. Lastly, Del Ramey briefed the men on the Trustees' project to replace the flooring in the dining hall.

UMW: No Report

WORSHIP: Committee met on December 7th; discussed Advent "Angels Among Us" series. Calendar of upcoming Sundays was also discussed. Margaret & Bobbi plan to meet in near future to decide on new paraments for Lent and we will present a request to the Memorials Committee to see if they are willing to pay for them. We now have a new microphone on the liturgist stand - very powerful; it's centered so it should eliminate problem of hearing the liturgist read from one side of bible and not the other. Might even eliminate need for the headpiece! We will also get a new microphone for the pulpit, as it will be ordered.

PASTORS TIME: Rev. Tim reported that PBC Sound of Bangor came to work on the sound system and assess possible upgrades. The computer is not strong enough for the needs. The lectern microphone has been replaced and one has been ordered for the pulpit.

The Fruitful Congregation speakers have been beneficial. It is hoped to have an all church meeting to discuss what has been identified and what comes next. There are 2 more sessions set for February and April. After the New Year, Richard Clark will be leading the adult Sunday school with help from Steve Cashman, Jean Cashman, and Tamara. This will free up Rev. Tim to pursue other projects, get set up for the Sunday Service and mingle with the congregation. Also, the District Superintendent would like us to canvas to see where we are on Mission Shares.

OTHER: Mary Lou reported that Trustees hope to start work on the dining hall floor by the third week in January. This will mean activities would have to be reworked to other areas of the church while the floor is being redone. We hope to have it finished by the Feb. 13th Shrove Tuesday Supper.

There being no more business the meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for January 18th at 6:30 PM in the Church kitchen.

Respectfully submitted by Claire Hodgkins, Secretary

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JANUARY 2018!!!!

Monday	01	<u>FEDERAL HOLIDAY - NEW YEAR'S DAY - CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED</u>	
Wednesday	03	1:15pm	Disciple IV Bible Study
		4:30pm	Barbershop Group Practice
		6:00pm	Handbell Choir Practice
		6:15pm	Disciple IV Bible Study
		6:30pm	Senior Choir Practice
Thursday	04	6:30pm	Worship Committee Meeting at Church
Saturday	06	8:30-9:30am	Moms in Prayer Group

Sunday	07	8:45am	Sunday School and Adult Study
		10:00am	Worship - First Sunday After the Epiphany; Baptism of the Lord
		11:30am	GMUMC Fruitful Congregation Team Meeting in Library
Monday	08	6-8pm	Girl Scout Troop in Fellowship Hall & Kitchen
Tuesday	09	9:30am	UMW Meeting at Church
		1:00pm	Caregivers Support Group in Fellowship Hall (date change)
		6:00pm	Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry Board Meeting at Pantry
		6:30pm	"Terrific Tuesdays Ministry" with Michele
Wednesday	10	1:15pm	Disciple IV Bible Study
		4:30pm	Barbershop Group Practice
		6:00pm	Handbell Choir Practice
		6:15pm	Disciple IV Bible Study
		6:30pm	Senior Choir Practice
		6:30pm	Crown of Maine Quilters at Gray Memorial UMC, Caribou
Thursday	11	6:30pm	SPRC Meeting at Church
Saturday	13	8:30-9:30am	Moms in Prayer Group

Sunday	14	8:45am	Sunday School and Adult Study
		10:00am	Worship - Second Sunday After the Epiphany; Human Relations Day (Special Offering)
		11:30pm	Education Committee Meeting in Library
Monday	15	<u>FEDERAL HOLIDAY-BIRTHDAY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.-OFFICE CLOSED</u>	
Tuesday	16	6:00pm	Trustees Meeting in Library, Kitchen or Chapel
Wednesday	17	1:15pm	Disciple IV Bible Study <u>IN KITCHEN</u>
		4:30pm	Barbershop Group Practice
		6:00pm	Handbell Choir Practice
		6:15pm	Disciple IV Bible Study <u>IN KITCHEN</u>
		6:30pm	Senior Choir Practice
Thursday	18	6:00pm	Finance/Stewardship Committee Meeting in Kitchen
		6:30pm	Church Council Meeting in Kitchen
Saturday	20	8:30-9:30am	Moms in Prayer Group

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JANUARY 2018 (continued)!!!!

Sunday	21	8:45am	Sunday School and Adult Study
		10:00am	Worship - Third Sunday After the Epiphany
Tuesday	23	6:30pm	"Terrific Tuesdays Ministry" with Michele (may be in Kitchen)
Wednesday	24	<u>DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER INPUT</u>	
		1:15pm	Disciple IV Bible Study (may be in Kitchen)
		4:30pm	Barbershop Group Practice
		6:00pm	Handbell Choir Practice
		6:15pm	Disciple IV Bible Study (may be in Kitchen)
		6:30pm	Senior Choir Practice
Saturday	27	8:00am	UMM Breakfast & Meeting
		8:30-9:30am	Moms in Prayer Group

Sunday	28	8:45am	Sunday School and Adult Study
		10:00am	Worship - Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany
Tuesday	30	6:30pm	"Terrific Tuesdays Ministry" with Michele
Wednesday	31	4:30pm	Barbershop Group Practice
		6:00pm	Handbell Choir Practice
		6:30pm	Senior Choir Practice