

Sunday Services on GCTV

Sunday: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m.
Monday-Friday: 2:30 p.m.
Saturday: 9:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m.

March 2016

First Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 155
Gray, ME 04039

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Church/Supper room: 657-3279
Email: grayfirst@securespeed.us
Website: www.grayfirst.org

Office Hours:

**Rev. Annette: Tuesday &
Thursday with open office
hours 2:00-4:00 on Thursday.**

Rose's Office Hours:

Tuesday & Friday 9:00 – 3:00

*Office hours subject to change.
Please call ahead to be sure.*

First Church Notes

From Pastor Annette:

I thought this month I would share with you some gleanings from my devotional reading this Lenten season. In addition to reading the 2016 United Church of Christ devotional booklet, I have been reading some entries from my collection of prior Lenten booklets. One I have particularly enjoyed revisiting has been the “2011 Lenten Reflections” booklet produced by the First Congregational Church UCC in Bridgton, a church where I served as Interim Pastor for 15 months. The church had a custom of producing its own devotional booklet for Lent, with the various entries written or contributed by members and friends of the parish. One story about heaven and hell, contributed by Kern Cate, immediately caught my eye, because I recognized it as a story that my mother had shared with me when I was a young girl. I had never known the story’s source, nor had I ever come across it again till I read it the Bridgton booklet more than fifty years after first hearing my mother tell it. Kern Cate attributed this story to the Jewish Hasidic tradition:

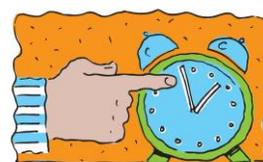
“I will show you Hell,” the Lord said to a rabbi, and led him to a room of famished, desperate people sitting around a large circular table. In the center was a pot of stew, enough for everyone. Yet no one ate. All they had was a single spoon—long enough to reach the stew, but too long to then get the food into one’s own mouth. “Now I will show you Heaven,” said the Lord. The rabbi entered another room, identical to the first. They had the same table, same stew, and the same long handled spoon. Yet everyone was full, flourishing, and exuberant. “I don’t understand the difference,” said the rabbi. “It’s simple,” said the Lord. “You see, the people in this room have learned to use the spoon to feed each other.”

I also enjoyed reading Art Hamblen’s list of “Things I Have Learned,” particularly these two pearls of wisdom:

“I’ve learned that a smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.”

“I’ve learned that love, not time, heals all wounds.”

MARCH 12th



SET YOUR CLOCKS

Ahead!

Lectionary Readings for March 2016

March 6, 2016

- Joshua 5:9-12
- Psalm 32
- 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
- Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

March 13, 2016

- Isaiah 43:16-21
- Psalm 126
- Philippians 3:4b-14
- John 12:1-8

March 21, 2016 (Palm Sunday)

- Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
- Luke 19:28-40
- Isaiah 50:4-9a
- Psalm 31: 9-16
- Philippians 2:5-11
- Luke 22:14--23:56

March 24, 2016 Maundy Thursday

- Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14
- Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- John 13:1-17, 31b-35

March 25, 2016 Good Friday

- Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12
- Psalm 22
- Hebrews 10:16-25
- John 18:1 to John 19:42

March 26, 2016 Holy Saturday

- Job 14:1-14
- Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16
- 1 Peter 4:1-8
- Matthew 27:57-66

March 27, 2016 (Easter)

- Isaiah 65:17-25
- Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
- Acts 10:34-43
- 1 Corinthians 10:1-13
- John 20:1-18 or Luke 24:1-12

Monthly Financial Report

January 2016 Income and Expenses

Pledges	\$6,843.20
Loose Offering	338.00
UCC Dues	411.00
Initial Envelopes	106.00
Orphan Bills	264.07
Parsonage Rent	1,450.00
Rentals	115.00
Supper	535.00
Coin Jar	46.10
Donations/Gifts	2,450.00
(includes \$1,500. for Organ repair, \$500 for Repair of Cross at Parish House, Floral Fund \$200.00, Floral Fund \$250.00 from a friend, Misc. For Adult Education 200.00	
Total	\$12,758.37

Expenses for the month of January totaled \$10,207.29. To meet the budget for 2016, our monthly income should be \$9,046.74.

Nice to see so many gifts given to the church in January!

Respectfully submitted,
Fran Hutchings

From Pastor Annette (continued from pg. 1)

Thinking ahead to Easter (which falls on March 27 this year) I also enjoyed re-reading a true life story from the 2014 UCC Lenten booklet. E.B. White and his wife Katherine were well known literary figures and Maine residents. Katherine was also an avid gardener, who did not let illness and approaching death dampen her gardening fervor, nor her hope and planning for a spring she would not herself see. Remembering how Katherine had continued to plan garden beds and plant bulbs in the fall, right up to the end, her husband wrote these words: "As the years went by and age overtook her, there was something comical yet touching in her bedraggled appearance on this awesome occasion—the small hunched-over figure, her studied absorption in the implausible notion that there would be yet another spring, oblivious to the ending of her own days, which she knew perfectly well was near at hand, sitting there with her detailed chart under those dark skies in the dying October, calmly plotting the resurrection."

A blessed Lent and joyous Easter to you all!

Looking Backward

By E. Miriam Bisbee

In this day of ubiquitous blacktop pavement you may be too young to remember when mud time was a real season that had to be dealt with about this time of year. We actually had a mud time vacation from school to spare the school bus the rigors of the mud-wallows that some of our rural roads became in March. The Whitney Road was no problem for the school bus, however; it wasn't on the bus route. We had to hoof it, fall, winter and spring, and you needed a good pair of water-proof boots in mud time. Four buckle arctics were a good choice and you'd better have them buckled not flapping. Otherwise an especially deep rut might suck them right off your feet. Count on it, those ruts were made by horse-drawn vehicles, not cars or even trucks. And pity the poor horse that drew the wagon that made them.

The ruts were full of water and we kids used to make channels from one rut to the next by dragging our boots in the mud, always with the aim of running the water to the edge of the road and off into the weeds. Eventually the road crew would come through pursuing the same purpose with more efficient tools. After many days the mess would dry up and the Road Commissioner would send a horse-drawn drag down the road to level it out once more. Then it once more qualified as a travel route rather than a booby trap for unwary motorists.



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

March 20: 10:00 a.m. Palm Sunday Service with Children's Procession of Palms

March 24: 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service with Holy Communion and Tenebrae (A Service of Shadows)

March 25: Noon Good Friday Service (joint service with the New Gloucester Church, held here)

March 27: EASTER

7:00 a.m. Easter Son Rise Service, held on Colley Hill

8:00 a.m. Easter Breakfast in the Supper Room

10:00 a.m. Festival Easter Service in the Sanctuary