

FIRST CHURCH NOTES

November 2017

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

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Church office: 657-4279
Church/Supper room: 657-3279
Email: grayfirst@securespeed.us
Website: www.grayfirst.org

Videos of Sunday Services on GCTV Cable Channel 2

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

Office Hours:

Tuesday & Friday 9:00 – 3:00
*Office hours subject to change.
Please call ahead.*

Here is how my weekly schedule usually goes:

Monday mornings I write up the sermon into printable form and send it to the office, to people who have asked for a hard copy, then I post it on my personal LinkedIn page, my Facebook page and the church Facebook page. Then I begin work on the next bulletin and the next sermon. Copies of the bulletin go well in advance to Carol our music director, Jane our choir director and Sue our deacon for suggestions, corrections, etc.

I work at Heaven and Earth Day Spa Mondays from 12 – 6; occasionally another shift. Tuesday is one of Dianne's day in the office so I am always in touch with her throughout the day.

Wednesday is a day on which I try to focus on other things.

Thursday I am at church for Bible study at 9:30 and usually for the rest of the day. Friday is the other of Dianne's office days and I am always in the office from about 9 onwards. Bend, Stretch and Breathe, a conscious movement practice very much like yoga, takes place from 5:30 to 6:30 in the church.

Saturday is a day to write a sermon; Sunday the day to lead worship.

Many Sunday evenings we meet for Christian education at Sally Johnston's house at 6.

I am always happy to talk by telephone. 714-9064 is my local number. I have not figured out how to set up voicemail on this line. As I am not likely to figure this out any time soon, you have to call my cell phone in order to leave a message: (202) 422-5598.

I am always happy to meet by appointment at the church or elsewhere at a time mutually agreeable. I love invitations to meet for coffee or lunch.

~ Pastor Richard



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

As we do every year, Women's Fellowship is looking to the congregation to help us have another successful year at the Holly Fair.

If you bake, think about contributing to the cookie trail or the baked goods room. If you knit, crochet, sew, etc., we'd love your items for our craft area. And we are not just looking to the ladies of the Church, but the men also – how about some handmade wooden items for us to sell or even helping out with the baked goods.

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Missions Committee

Joan Preston spoke for Neighbors in Need on Sunday, Oct 8th and suggested that contributors could designate their "Neighbors in Need" envelopes for local food pantry or hurricane victims in Florida or Puerto Rico.

Operation Christmas Child had an enthusiastic kick off on October 15th. Mary Googins, Sponsor, and Guest Speaker Lauren LaPlante shared highlights and set up a display table in the vestry. Lauren brought brochures and printed boxes which congregants can take and fill for children around the world. Deadline for return is November 13- 17.

Missions committee will again sponsor a White Elephant Room at the upcoming Holy Fair, November 18th. Bring your new or slightly used contributions to the Parish House the week of Nov. 13th; we especially like toys, Christmas decorations, and household items. No furniture or used clothes, thank you.

~Sally Johnston, Treas.

Lectionary Readings for

November 5, 2017

- Joshua 3:7-17
- Psalm 107:7, 33-37
- Thessalonians 2:9-13
- Matthew 23:1-12

November 12, 2017

- Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25
- Psalm 78:1-7
- Thessalonians 4:13-18
- Matthew 25:1-13

November 19, 2017

- Judges 4:1-7
- Psalm 123
- Thessalonians 5:1-11
- Matthew 22:1-14

November 26, 2017

- Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24
- Psalm 100
- Ephesians 1:15-23
- Matthew 25:31-46

Monthly Financial Report September 2017 Income and Expenses

Pledges	\$4,792.00
Loose Offering	270.00
Orphan Bills	17.31
Rental of Parsonage	1,450.00
Parish House Rental	115.00
Rental of Holly Fair Tables	30.00
Donations	<u>200.00</u>
Totals	\$6,874.31

Expenses for the month of September totaled \$9,910.41. To meet the budget for 2017, our monthly income should be \$9609.92. Payments for Parsonage taxes and UCC Insurance Board totaling \$3,683.75 brought the expenses up for this month.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Hutchings

ALL SAINTS' DAY

All Saints' Day will be observed during worship service on Sunday, November 5th. This is the day when we remember those who have died during the past year. If a family member or friend has died since last All Saints' Day (November 6, 2016) he/she will be honored in this service.

The congregation is asked to please submit names **ahead of time** by contacting Sue Pollard (657-4500) no later than Wednesday, November 1st.

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## Fall Evening Education Series

COME JOIN US!  
Sunday evening gatherings  
6-8 p.m. at 6 Fairview Ave.

**We got off to a lively start of the Fall series on Oct 15<sup>th</sup>! We shall not meet Oct 29<sup>th</sup>.**

We continue in November with a modified schedule of Joseph Campbell's of The Power of Myth [video interviews by Bill Moyers]:

Nov. 5 - #4 Sacrifice and Bliss – transcendence of death, "The Green Knight", following bliss, and "hidden hands" guiding life's work.

**We shall not meet Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>.**

Nov. 19 - #6 and last – Masks of Eternity – Identifying with the infinite, epiphanies, that which is beyond words.

**We shall not meet Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>.**

Richard Hyde leads a lively discussion after snacks, drinks, and the video. It is a great way for Bill Moyers and us to question our beliefs, solidify our faith, and bond with others. **We are open to other topics.**

~ Sally Q. Johnston

## You're Invited to Hear Rev. John Dorhauer

As you have probably seen, Rev. John Dorhauer, President and General Minister of the UCC, is going to be in Maine next week, and will be here at High Street for a conversation on the afternoon of October 29. We want to be sure to invite your folks to join us for that. The meeting is at 3:00 and Rev. Dorhauer will be talking on the theme "Whence Ministry." What does the future shape of ministry look like?

At 5:15 we have having a free community supper and would like to invite you all to join us for that, too. We were already planning to have this meal and when we were asked to host Rev. Dorhauer, we decided it would be great to run them together. So we hope you can come, hear what our Fearless Leader has to say, and then sit down and enjoy some "peasant stew" with us.

Peace,

Stephen Carnahan, pastor  
High Street Congregational Church  
Auburn, Maine



## AND AFTER THANKSGIVING COMES CHRISTMAS

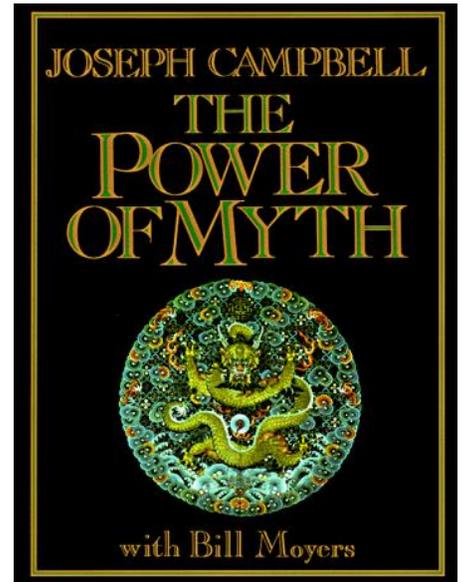
The Annual Hanging of the Greens will take place on Saturday, December 2 in the vestry and sanctuary.

We will have fun preparing our Church for the Advent Season. We will begin at 2:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome. There will be something for everyone to do. We will need a couple of individuals who don't mind climbing ladders.

## Adult Christian Education

We gathered on five different evenings last winter to watch Bill Moyers interview Huston Smith. We began our adult Christian education series with these programs because I had studied with Huston Smith and because I could vouch for the quality of the program and Huston's deep, underlying Christianity.

I chose to continue this fall with Bill Moyers interviewing Joseph Campbell, who was a friend of Huston Smith, much better known and whom I had met on several occasions. These interviews began Moyers' career on television and were extraordinarily and surprisingly popular. The response of those who have come to Sally's house has been mixed. Folks on October 15 liked the program and engaged in lively discussion. A completely different group gathered on the 22nd and were less enthusiastic.



While it is a stretch to consider Joe Campbell within the Christian fold, he was an important modern scholar who does a superb job of mapping the modern psyche, thereby helping us understand the world in which we proclaim the Christian Gospel. So for the moment, we will continue with the "Bill and Joe" show on the 5th and 19th of November. Let's see where we might go from there.

Here are some possibilities, beginning with liberal and conservative contemporary Christian teachers:

Diana Butler Bass  
Tim Keller  
Shelby Spong  
N. T. Wright  
Robert Barron  
Fleming Rutledge  
Carter Heyward

We could continue at some point with teachers from other traditions:

Contemporary world religion authority Karen Armstrong  
American Buddhist teachers Pema Chodron and Jack Kornfield  
Essayist Wendell Berry  
American Hindu teacher Ram Dass  
And many, many more.

I am familiar with the work of all of the above and can say that they are worth reading even if I do not agree with them. I have met N. T. Wright, Jack Kornfield and Ram Dass. They all appear in a variety of videos and have plenty of books out. This is a short list.

Please nominate some more candidates. Tell me about them. Send me a clip or a link to their writing or them talking.