

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.

January 2016

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

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:

As I write this column 2015 is drawing to a close and I am thinking about the New Year. Do you have any New Year's traditions? For example, my husband and I have continued our families' tradition of eating black eyed peas on New Year's Day for good luck and prosperity. David and I also started our own New Year's tradition, about fifteen years ago, of taking a beach walk on January 1. There is something about going to the ocean that is renewing and invigorating.

However, I have not very often made a New Year's resolution, mostly because:

- 1) This was not something my family of origin did.
- 2) I have not had good success with keeping the few resolutions I have made.

But I have been thinking about making a resolution for 2016, and here is why: I am not a good letter writer, to put it mildly, and for years I felt guilty that I didn't write my in-laws in Texas more regularly. I knew my letters telling about the doings of their beloved son and grandchildren were important to them, but life was very busy, and I only managed to write them about once a month. When my father-in-law died some years back, I knew that had to change. I resolved to write my mother-in-law at least once a week.

I have actually managed to keep that resolution, and my mother-in-law has told me over and over again how much my frequent letters mean to her.

As I have thought about this during the past week, it has reminded me that setting out to improve one's behavior in a particular way can bring blessing to oneself and others; and knowing that I have kept at least one resolution in my life has given me hope that I might be able to do it again!

So, yes, I am going to make a resolution for 2016. I am still working on what it will be. And I invite you to consider making one as well, if this is not already a part of your usual practice. Don't worry—there is no need to disclose your resolution to someone else. I figure such resolutions are like the pledges we make to our church—something between oneself and God.

Blessing and peace and joy in 2016. –Pastor Annette

Lectionary Readings for January 2016

January 3, 2016

- Jeremiah 31:7-14
- Psalm 147:12-20
- Ephesians 1:3-14
- John 1:1-18

January 10, 2016

- Isaiah 43:1-7
- Psalm 29
- Acts 8:14-17
- Luke: 3:15-17, 21-22

January 17, 2016

- Isaiah 62:1-5
- Psalm 36:5-10
- 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
- John 2:1-11

January 24, 2016

- Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
- Psalm 19
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
- Luke 4:14-21

January 31, 2016

- Jeremiah 1:4-10
- Psalm 71:1-6
- Luke 4:21-30

Monthly Financial Report

November Income and Expenses

Pledges	\$7,942.90
Loose Offering	501.00
Parsonage Rental Nov.	1,450.00
Parish House Rental	165.00
Coin Jar	31.71
Donation (Pantry)	100.00
Organ Fund	100.00
Of which \$50.00 was in memory Of Agnes Stansfield	
Totals	\$10,290.61

Expenses for the month of November totaled \$6,910.99. To meet the budget for 2015, our monthly income should be \$9,008.24. Thank you to those people who keep their pledges up to date.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fran Hutchings

Missions Committee

"The Christmas family's project was again bountiful. Oh the gifts came in plus more, and all went out to grateful parents. Sheri Wilbur, Ann Arsenault and I had the pleasure of sorting gifts and greeting parents. Jan M. was key in transporting gifts from church to parish house as last year. Judy Hascall did last minute shopping for toys. Someone also sent in handmade hats, mittens and scarves so we gave out most of those. A few went to the food pantry room. Sherri brought in extras and spread those around to the four families and nine children. One young family from our church gave each of the recipients a \$50 Walmart card, and Missions gave each family \$25 Hannaford card toward Christmas dinner.

Thanks to all." Sally Johnston for Missions Committee

Annual Meeting January 24th Following Worship Service

All members and attendees of the First Congregational Church of Gray are encouraged to attend the annual meeting on January 24th. Each and every person is important to the life of God's church.

Voting privileges: If you are a covenant member, you may vote on all matters on the table. If you are a financial contributor of the church, but not a member, i.e. you regularly give to the offering or pledge, you may vote in matters of financial affairs, i.e. budgets/spending.

“I Was There to Hear Your Borneing Cry” composed by **John Ylvisaker**

In many churches, this song is sung with each infant baptism. This beautiful hymn, written by John Ylvisaker illustrates not only the nurturing love that we have for our children, but also the nurturing love that God has for us, His children.

I Was There to Hear Your Borneing Cry

¹I was there to hear your borneing cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.

I was there when you were but a child,
with a faith to suit you well;
In a blaze of light you wandered off
to find where demons dwell.

²When you heard the wonder of the Word
I was there to cheer you on;
You were raised to praise the living Lord,
to whom you now belong.

If you find someone to share your time
and you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme
from dusk 'till rising sun.

³In the middle ages of your life,
not too old, no longer young,
I'll be there to guide you through the night,
complete what I've begun.

When the evening gently closes in,
and you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been
with just one more surprise.

I was there to hear your borneing cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.

HELP WANTED:

The church is in need of someone to fill the position of Church Clerk. Our current clerk, Sally, is having thumb surgery and is unable to fulfill these duties. Our former clerk, Laurie is also unable to fill the position due to family responsibilities.

Clerk duties are as follows per the church's bylaws.

CLERK. The Clerk shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Church from the **covenant** membership. The Clerk's responsibilities shall be:

- keep a faithful record of the Church's Annual Meetings, specially called meetings, and the Church Council meetings
- keep a register with the addresses of the members of the Church, with dates and modes of their reception and removal
- issue letters of transfer and dismissal as voted by the Diaconate
- preserve on file all official communications and written reports
- notify all persons elected to offices, boards, and committees
- give legal notices of all meetings when such notices are necessary
- perform other duties as prescribed by law

Looking Backward: By Miriam Bisbee

Learning to cook on the old black iron stove was not quite as simple as just following the directions in the cook book. You had to know how to tame the beast first. And the kitchen stove we had in my childhood was a decrepit beast indeed. It came with the house and they were a good match. For those of you who never had to cope with a cast iron cook stove let me give you a bit of description. The firebox took up one end of the stove; beside that was the oven, then a space, then a water tank. The top of the stove was two or three inches above the top of the oven, allowing the smoke to pass over the oven to the stovepipe and chimney. To heat the oven you had to get the fire drawing well and then adjust a damper that directed the smoke and heat around and under the oven. With a tight stove and well-made chimney this would have worked well. A stove with warped covers connected to a chimney built by someone who changed his mind half way up assured that I learned to cook in a smoke screen.

Learning under my mother's tutelage assured that I would learn to be flexible. We used to kid her that she only looked at a recipe to be sure she didn't accidentally do what the book said: "It calls for a cup of butter but we can use sour cream," was my mother's philosophy. Cooking this way produces varied results, but after a lifetime you learn what works and what doesn't.

Miriam Bisbee

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP MONTHLY MEETING

A wonderful time was had by all who attended the annual Christmas Party this year at Rose's Restaurant. The food and camaraderie were superb, as usual. We were blessed to have our friends from the New Gloucester Congregational Christian church join us this year.

As is our tradition, we will meet immediately following worship service on the second Sunday of each month down in the supper room during the cold winter months. Due to a scheduling conflict, this month's meeting, however, will be on January 17th. At this time we will be electing our new officers for the upcoming year. Please plan to attend.

Drop-In Craft Night

Beat the winter blahs by joining up with our open craft night group. We have several people from the community who come to craft and would love to have some from our church join us.

We have a great time and really enjoy ourselves. We work on anything and everything from sewing to card making to scrapbooking. We will be looking into having some guest instructors this winter to teach us some new tricks. It is a great way to spend those endless winter hours with some great people. Come join us at 6:30 at the Parish House on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month.

If you are even remotely interested in joining us from time to time, please send Rose a note at grayfirst@securespeed.us so that I can keep everyone updated if there are closings or cancelations.

