

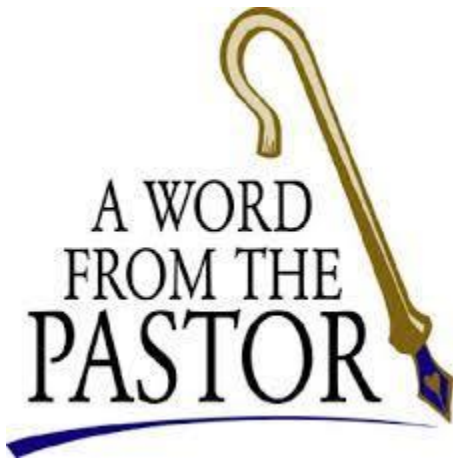


Union Church of Belgrade Lakes
United Methodist Church

Location: 67 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, Maine
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 133, Belgrade Lakes, Maine 04918
Phone: 207-495-3599
Church Email: unionchurchmaine@gmail.com
Pastor's Email: unionchurchumcbelgrade@gmail.com
Website: unionchurchmaine.org

Union Rider

AUGUST 2023 Newsletter



Dear Members
and Friends of
Union Church,

Greetings in the
name of the One
who teaches us
not only how to
survive in the
world we inhabit
on this side of

heaven, but also how to thrive!

Thriving in this world that is so full of challenges and potential pitfalls might seem to be impossible. Most days, we are content to settle for “surviving,” and we count ourselves blessed. But we are called by God and by Jesus to so much more. In the words of an exuberant praise song by Matthew West, “We were made to thrive!” It’s true, but it’s not easy, is it? The obstacles preventing it loom large, and are seemingly insurmountable. In order to thrive, they must be eliminated. Nothing less than perfect conditions are required to truly thrive, right? Right... Father Richard Rohr affirms that “everything belongs,” both the good and the bad, and it takes discernment to learn how to hold the paradox, and to seek to thrive in the midst of both good and bad:

The spiritual gift of discernment shows how seemingly good things can be recognized as sometimes bad things, and seemingly bad things can also be

seen to bear some good fruit. Darn it! This kind of discernment invites people into yes/and thinking, rather than simplistic either/or thinking. This is the difference between merely having correct information and the true spiritual gift of wisdom. Once we have learned to discern the real and disguised nature of both good and evil, we recognize that everything is broken and fallen, weak and poor—while still being the dwelling place of God: you and me, our countries, our children, our marriages, and even our churches, mosques, and synagogues. That is not a put-down of anybody or anything, but it actually creates the freedom to love imperfect things. As Jesus told the rich young man, “God alone is good” (Mark 10:18). We cannot wait for things to be totally perfect to fall in love with them, or we will never love anything. Now, instead, we can love everything!

This sure sounds to me like a recipe for thriving! Later in this newsletter, you will find an introduction to our 2024 Stewardship

Program. (Yes, it's that time of year already.)
The theme for our program this year is "Thrive," and it's not just our own (Union Church's) thriving that will be lifted up. It's also the thriving of several missions and ministries that we support and/or with whom we partner.

The financial stewardship of our own assets and our beloved Union Church's assets are challenging at any time, and no less so in these current times, as we face great volatility in the prices of just about everything we have the need to consume. And Yet! We find ample opportunities to recognize where God's grace has been both sufficient and abundant in enabling Union Church of Belgrade Lakes UMC to "Thrive!" The process by which we perennially prepare financial forecasts and craft an annual operating budget for the church is what Oswald Chambers calls "gracious uncertainty." And he describes it this way: "Most of us look upon uncertainty as a bad thing. We think we must reach some predestined goal, but that is not the nature of spiritual life. The nature of our spiritual life is that we are certain in our uncertainty...Certainty is the mark of the commonsense life – gracious uncertainty is the work of the spiritual life...We are not uncertain of God, just uncertain of what He is going to do next."

Even and especially in the midst of what is imperfect and uncertain, let us be encouraged to remain faithful to God. We may be gloriously and graciously uncertain of how God will come in – but we can be certain that God will come, and God will enable us to "Thrive!" God is so good!

Together In Christ's Love and Service,
Pastor Eleanor Collinsworth



"A life devoted to things is a dead life, a stump; a God-shaped life is a flourishing tree."
(Proverbs 11:28, *The Message*).

To "flourish" means to grow well, or to thrive. In this verse from Proverbs 11, "flourishing" refers to the idea of thriving and growing in a positive way. And so, "**Thrive**" has been chosen as the concept we lift up to guide us as we decide how we will support the ministries and missions of Union Church of Belgrade Lakes UMC going forward into 2024. What a great time this is to celebrate the ministries/missions with which we partner, those with whom we serve all God's children. And so our 2024 Stewardship Program will feature some of them, and the ways we here at Union Church are helping them to "**Thrive**," in our worship services on August 13, 20, and 27. Our Stewardship Program will culminate in Covenant Sunday on August 27. Please be watching your mail, our church e-mails, and Facebook page for more information.



Prayer and Transformation

Bible in a Year:

- [Psalms 16–17](#)
- [Acts 20:1–16](#)

They cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.
[Psalm 107:28](#)

Today's Scripture & Insight:
[Psalm 107:23-36](#)

In 1982, pastor Christian Führer began Monday prayer meetings at Leipzig's St. Nicholas Church. For years, a handful gathered to ask God for peace amid global violence and the oppressive East German regime. Though communist authorities watched churches closely, they were unconcerned until attendance swelled and spilled over to mass meetings outside the church gates. On October 9, 1989, seventy thousand demonstrators met and peacefully protested. Six thousand East German police stood ready to respond to any provocation. The crowd remained peaceful, however, and historians consider this day a watershed moment. A month later, the Berlin Wall fell. The massive transformation all started with a prayer meeting.

As we turn to God and begin relying on His wisdom and strength, things often begin to shift and reshape. Like Israel, when we cry "out to the Lord in [our] trouble," we discover the God who alone is capable of profoundly transforming even our most dire predicaments and answering our most vexing questions (Psalm 107:28). God stills "the storm to a whisper" and turns "the desert into pools of water" (vv. 29, 35). The One to whom we pray brings hope out of despair and beauty out of ruin.

But it's God who (in His time—not ours) enacts transformation. Prayer is how we participate in the transforming work He's doing.

By: Winn Collier

Reflect & Pray

When have you seen God do something transformative?

What's the connection between His actions and our prayers?

*Dear God, I need Your transforming work.
Please change what only You can change.*



Our 2023 Global Mission Initiative Is Going to The Bread of Life Homeless Shelter

Joys & Celebrations
Total as of 7/23/2023:
\$1,756.50



**Bread of Life
Homeless Shelter**

Our yearly goal is
\$2,500

**Meetings at a
Glance:**

AUGUST 2023



Worship & Music Committee: 8/22 @ 4 p.m.

Missions & Outreach: 8/16 @ CFAS End of Summer BBQ

Prayer Shawl: 8/14 and 8/28 @ 1 p.m.

Belgrade Senior Resource Meeting: 8/28 @ 6 p.m. at the Town Office

Church Council – 8/27 @10:45



Our Mission Ministries

Through the year in this Newsletter we highlight our mission

projects and programs where we serve God through Christlike compassion, mercy and transformation; reaching out, lifting up, building up.

We will list some of the ways during 2023 contributions from Missions and Outreach through your support received in our weekly worship offerings, pledges and special giving.

Center for All Seasons Summer Camp –

As the school year has begun, we will once again support by providing and/or after school activity supplies. On 3/17 we provided funds (approximately \$225) for the kiddos and 3 counselors to go bowling due to bad weather and the Center being utilized for voting. On April 19th we sent a check in the amount of \$1,420 from the Returnables for them to purchase a picnic table for the North Belgrade Community Center. The picnic table is now in place! On 8/16 we will hold the annual end of camp season BBQ with the theme being crazy hat! Anne McCandlish will be providing hats for the members of the M&O Committee to wear and Dan will have a crazy hat craft day so the kids will wear them too!

The Belgrade Rome Food Pantry with special monthly “Wish List” donations; January through December we will be fillin’ our shopping cart. -Many thanks. Look for Wish List later in the NL.

Kenneth Workman Youth Sports Program -

Ever notice the sign at the **Belgrade Ball Park**? Our donation each year supports this local youth program and shares our active presence in the community in Christ’s service. \$200 was donated on April 19th.

Maine Justice Foundation, Augusta,

Maine. We supported this work that serves the LGBT, gay community those of whom are among the poor and vulnerable among us, facing issues of employment and housing discrimination, domestic violence, homelessness. In this manner we extend our church Welcoming Statement into the community beyond our own worship doors. Our \$500 donation was sent on **February 8, 2023.**

Messalonskee High School – On April 19th we sent \$150 to support the High School’s

Food Pantry. A food pantry is located at MHS to serve their students and families. They also hold an event each year called Empty Bowls project which supports our local Food cupboards and the Food Cupboard at the High School. This was to add to the \$350 shared at the Empty Bowls Dinner to make our total donation \$500.

Bread of Life Ministries. Through the year, each month we provide a Tuesday evening meal for the residents of the temporary Shelter Program. It’s been a blessing to meet folks there and see how this ministry gives them both shelter and a boost to what is next as they move forwards in life by God’s grace. We will again contribute to this program in 2023. In December we will be sending a donation of \$500 to support their Christmas Wish List for their residents. Our Christmas Eve Offering this year again will also be sent to the Bread of Life Homeless Shelter. We also donated \$15 Gift Certificates (\$375) for Hannaford the week of Christmas to the 25 Volunteers at their Soup Kitchen.

Vernon Valley Lodge 99 A.F. & A.M. –

We again are sponsoring the Bikes for Reading Program for local school children by sharing with them \$200; and will be sending this

donation in early December. Jim Webster is a key member of this group

Adaptive Outdoor Education Center – We again supported this program in 2022 as an affirmation of their annual Ski-A-Thon that supports programs that empower adaptive athletes towards a healthy, active and rewarding life. A \$100 donation was sent on **February 8, 2023.**

Neighbors Driving Neighbors, this local ministry program serving to help folks who would be otherwise home bound was supported with our **\$500 gift on February 8, 2023** and through the engagement of those offering to serve as drivers, and part of the programs leadership

Winthrop, Maine: United Methodist Camp Mechuwana. They are back to holding in person camp outings! If you have children/grandchildren who would like to attend, please sign them up soon; their camping sessions are filling up fast. On April 13th we sent a \$500 donation towards this much needed program. The year-round camp and youth programs happening there transforms lives of children and youth.

Pastor's Discretionary Fund – With generous donations we are able to assist families with urgent housing needs; **and will continue helping through 2023.** Each specific in their own way are able to be a means of God's Grace in troubling times. To date \$2,104.67 has been expended.

Prayer Shawl Ministry. This group meets twice a month (2nd and 4th Monday @ 1 p.m.) and distributes prayers shawls to both women and men who are dealing with health issues and or hospital stays.

Belgrade Central School – The Mission and Outreach Committee at their August meeting found that the school could use donations of snacks and school supplies and will be working

closely with the School Administrators as to their **needs in 2023.** In June we donated \$ towards their music program which were proceeds from the Anne Meyer's Memorial Concert presented by Tom Mueller, organist.

Belgrade Public Library – On May 17th we sent a donation of \$100 to the Sandra Fuller Fund (Collection of Children's Classical Book)

Belgrade Fire & Rescue – A donation in the amount of \$200 was sent to support the volunteers who have provided recent CPR Classes

Furnace Cleanings – in 2022 we donated \$990 to Bruce Galouch who generously volunteered to clean furnaces for those who were unable to afford to have this done themselves.

Preacher's Aid Society – At our September 21st meeting it was approved to send a donation in the amount of \$500.

UMEM – In early December we sent a donation in the amount of \$1,500 to support their ministry of helping folks who need assistance with heating and/or electrical expenses



**Bread Of Life
Ministries**

**Our Next Bread of Life Homeless
Shelter Dinner will be AUGUST 15th**

Please email us at
unionchurchmaine@gmail.com for

those of you wanting to designate your participation in this ministry; we are looking for many volunteers. Signing up is important so that we are aware of what you will bring so that we can complete planning for whatever else needs to be prepared and donated. Thank you!

We would like to encourage as many volunteers as possible to help donate items for this dinner.

At this time they are housing around 50 residents.

Thank you to Pam, Louise, Betty, Sharron, Susan, Anne, La La, Lynn, Colleen, Tony, Carrie and for sharing in this ministry on July 17th.

We share a hot meal on the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

In addition to providing the Bread of Life Homeless Shelter with a hot meal every month; we have learned that they are in need of Warm Clothing including the following items: Wool Hats, Gloves, Hand and Feet Warmers. If you are interested in donating, please drop off and we will deliver at our next meal delivery.



Pillows

Bath Towels



Face Cloths

Twin size bed in bags



Bedding is so important to us because the shelter clients take this with them when they move into their own apartments

Soup Kitchen Wish List



Bottled Water



Sandwich Ziplock Baggies



Coffee Creamers

MONTH OF AUGUST



Food Pantry Donations Needed



DINNERS ON THE GRILL

MUSTARD

KETCHUP

RELISH

FOR THE ROME/BELGRADE FOOD PANTRY

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS NEEDED:

TOOTHBRUSHES (INDIVIDUAL)

TOOTHPASTE (REG SIZE)

DEODORANT (GENERIC)

SHAMPOO (GENERIC)



Finance Committee Update

As we prepare for the start of our annual stewardship campaign this month, let us be reminded of our responsibility and commitment as Christians to our calling and priorities as stated in Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." Our actions speak louder than words!

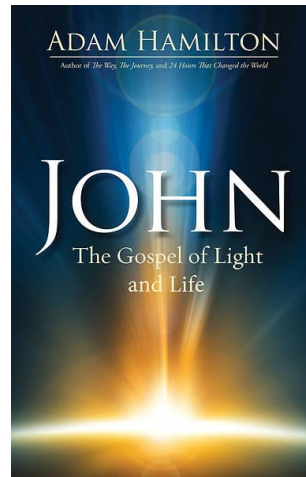
This scripture verse clearly defines the *raison d'être* as a disciple of Christ. We each have a responsibility to serve and to meet the needs of those in our community. We each have been chosen to share our God-given gifts gratefully and in response to the abundance that we have received. Union Church has important ministry goals. With your continued support we can and will continue to be the hands and feet of Christ in our church, in our community, and beyond.

We have been blessed and we invite you to impart those blessings to others through our shared ministries. We do more than survive; we **THRIVE** and our prayer is that our community continues to thrive as well.

Through the first six months of 2023, our Balance Sheet is strong. Our unrestricted checkbook balance is a healthy \$47,368, and each of the escrow accounts are well funded. We recently invested \$60K in a 1-year CD that will pay 4.85% interest. Our total income through June 30, 2023, was \$75,771 which is essentially on target. Pledges and loose offerings continue to be strong. Total expenses through June 30 were \$80,472, leaving a net operating income of a negative **\$4,661**. Nevertheless, with the July 4th fundraiser and continued summer visitors, revenue and expenses should realign soon!

In brief, as a Church, we continue to meet our expectations and with the renewal of your continued support for the 2024 fiscal year Union Church will continue to **THRIVE**. Thank you for your previous support and we encourage you to prayerfully consider your commitment to the 2024 Stewardship Campaign.

Blessings,
Tony



BIBLE STUDY "JOHN THE GOSPEL OF LIGHT AND LIFE"

WEDNESDAYS
9:45 TO 11 A.M.

The Gospel of John is the most deeply spiritual of the four gospels. This writing is filled with rich images and profound truths, but John notes that his aim in writing the gospel is that readers will not only believe in Jesus Christ, but that they "may have life in his name."

Adults, youth, and children alike can experience a season of spiritual growth and life-changing renewal in Adam Hamilton's six-week, DVD-series, John: The Gospel of Light and Life. You'll follow the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus through the Gospel of John and understand the context of some of the best-known verses in the New Testament. Everything you need to lead small groups of all ages is available for this special study including the entire Gospel of John in the CEB translation printed in the book.

EVERYONE WELCOME!

Coffee Hour Socials in July & August



Hey everybody, we're planning to have an old-fashioned coffee hours every Sunday after the 9:30 service. Nothing fancy, just a snack, and coffee or tea to enjoy while we talk with each other. It's been far too long since we've shared fellowship after worship, so I hope you will plan to spend a few minutes catching up with your church friends. Thank You Endowment Committee (Gary & Bobbi) for hosting 7/23 & 7/30.

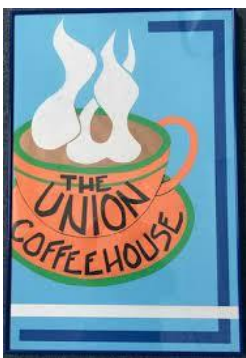
Hosts in August are:
Mission & Outreach 8/6 & 8/13
Trustees 8/20 & 8/27

Mark your calendars to make time to stay for fellowship each Sunday these next two months.

Don Petersen
Worship and Music Committee

bring us an assortment of old and new sounds from many folk traditions. The Buttermilk Hill Band will accompany interweaving harmonies with fiddles, banjo, wooden banjo, button accordion and guitar, as well as a few surprises. Whether they are crooning a poignant ballad or delivering a rollicking fiddle tune, their unique arrangements are especially engaging and often go along with anecdotes of historical or humorous content. With their infectious spirit and sparkling musicianship, the Buttermilk Hill Band has earned a beloved place in the delighted hearts of varied audiences throughout Maine.

Please show your support for this wonderful Union Church community outreach program by coming to the **Coffeehouse on the Green** and bringing your friends. The concert will begin at 6:30 PM with the featured performers starting the show. Since we will be outside, please bring your own chairs and refreshments. Be sure to stay for the serendipitous group of performers who show up for the Open Mic time immediately following the Buttermilk Hill Band. We look forward to seeing you as we close out the 17th year of the Union Coffeehouse. If you have any questions, please contact Don Petersen. (In case of rain, the Coffeehouse will be held in Friendship Hall.)



Union Coffeehouse in August

Coffeehouse On The Green Coming in August

Our season-ending Union Coffeehouse will be a

Coffeehouse on the Green to be held on

Saturday, August 19, at 6:30 PM on the **Belgrade Village Green**. It will feature a rousing concert by the **Buttermilk Hill Band** comprised of John and Ellen Gawler, and Stu McConnell. They will



Belgrade Bean Hole Supper at the Center For All Seasons

August 5th - 5 to 7 p.m.

Bean Hole Bean Supper to benefit and is sponsored by the Belgrade Fire & Rescue Association.

We are once again planning a Bean Hole Bean supper.

Meal includes: Baked Beans cooked overnight in the traditional way using a wood burning fire pit, Hot dogs, coleslaw, rolls, brown bread, homemade desserts and drinks. Admission Adults- \$12.00 Children 5-12 \$5.00 under 5 years old eat free.

Meal will be served at the Belgrade Center for all seasons located at 1 Center Drive, Belgrade ME 04917. Thank you all for the support!

They are looking for desert donations, pies, sheet cakes, cupcakes and/or brownies, etc. Please drop of any deserts at the Lakes Fire Station or The Community Center before 5:00pm day of the event. They are also looking for volunteers to help serve.

Thank you for supporting Belgrade Fire Dept.



2023 Craft Shows

The Town of Belgrade will host a series of craft shows at the Village Green. The shows will be on the last Sunday of the month from May to September, with an additional show on Saturday, Oct. 7 (Harvest Festival Day). (July 30, August 27, September 24)

Each show will be from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Rain or Shine) and will feature wares created by local artists and crafters.

YARD SALE



SATURDAY
AUGUST
5TH

8 A.M. TIL
2 P.M.

BRING US ALL THE TREASURES
YOU NO LONGER WANT; THAT
OTHERS WOULD LOVE TO HAVE



YUMMY GRILLED HOT
DOGS/SAUSAGES
AND STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKES
WILL BE SOLD



On Sunday July 2nd we celebrated that Pastor Eleanor and Mark will be with us another year.

Congratulations to them and to Union Church!



Union Church of Belgrade Lakes
United Methodist Church
67 Main Street
P.O. Box 133
Belgrade Lakes, Maine 04918

Our Mission is to live our experience of God's love
in all that we say and do...

Our Vision is to be a growing spiritual faith community in the
manner of Christ, where all are welcome and cared for...