

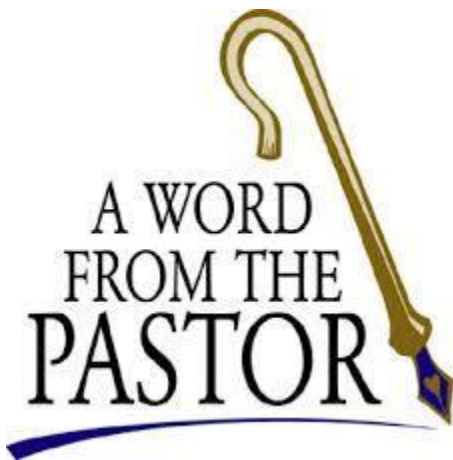


Union Church of Belgrade Lakes  
United Methodist Church

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](mailto:unionchurchmaine@gmail.com)  
Pastor's Email: [unionchurchumcbelgrade@gmail.com](mailto:unionchurchumcbelgrade@gmail.com) Website: [unionchurchmaine.org](http://unionchurchmaine.org)

## Union Rider

# December 2023 Newsletter

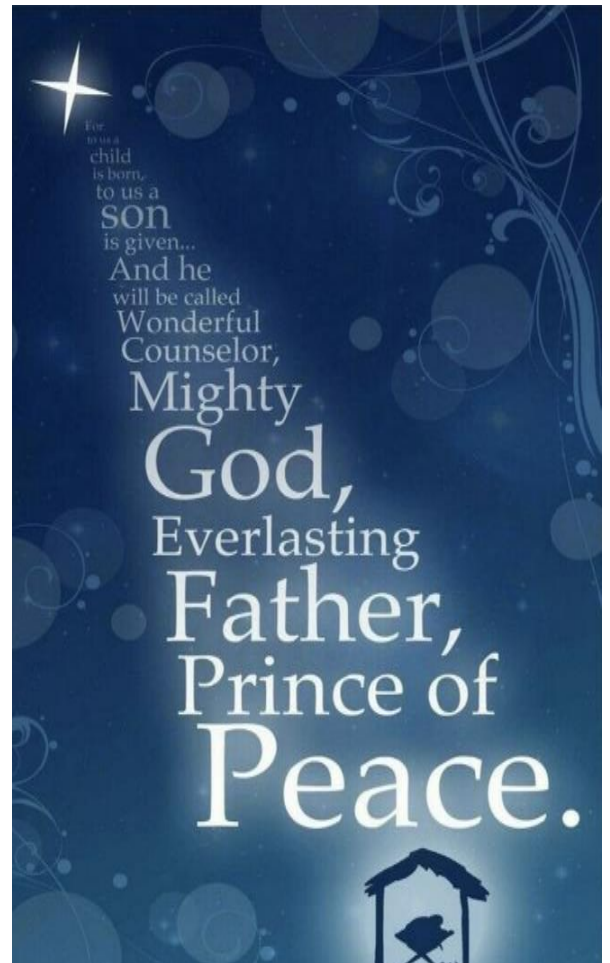


Dear Members  
and Friends of  
Union Church,

Greetings in the  
name of the One  
who is the "reason  
for the season!"

I am writing to you  
as we are about to

begin the Holy Season of Advent. I am also writing to you in the darkest days of the year – days on which my window candles at home, with their built-in light sensors, flicker on at 3:30 p.m. or so (and earlier on overcast days)! Especially at this time of year most of us curse the dark and wish for the light. Especially as we continue to grieve the arrival of the terror that is the "mass shooting" to Maine, in the tragic events that unfolded in Lewiston in late October. Especially as we share concern for innocent lives and prayers for peace in the nation of Israel and territory of Gaza. But we are about to enter a season of hopeful anticipation. It's the beginning of a new year in church time – God's time. It's a time to listen for prophetic voices, a time to seek a lasting light to illuminate our way forward through whatever this world might throw at us. It's Advent! Light is, of course, crucial to Advent. We light the candles on the wreath, not just to count down the weeks to Christmas, but also as a beacon to call us home. "We'll leave the light on for you" isn't just a motel chain slogan, but a Gospel promise that we will find our way



by the light that is Jesus Christ, and is now reflected in the body of Christ, the Church. The theme of our worship services in Advent is "He Shall Be Called," as we explore the words from Isaiah 9:6.

Mark and I are abundantly blessed, and thankful to be walking beside you all in ministry here at Union Church of Belgrade Lakes. We were overwhelmed by the various ways you showed us your love in "Pastor's Appreciation Month" in October. Thank you so much! We wish you a Blessed Advent Season, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

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



**Worship Opportunities in Advent  
and Christmas Seasons**

The Advent and Christmas seasons provide opportunities to worship in special ways and with special messages that help us remember the true “reason for the season.” What a great time to share in meaningful worship experiences, and to invite neighbors, friends, and family members, near and far, to share them with you as we live into our Advent theme, “*He Shall Be Called.*”

**Dec. 3 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent w/ Holy Communion: “Wonderful Counselor”**

**Dec. 10 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent: “Mighty God”**

**Dec. 17 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent w/ Holy Communion: “Everlasting Father”**

**Dec. 24 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent: “Prince of Peace”**

**Sunday, Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve:**  
5:00 p.m. Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols (in-person and livestreamed)  
11:00 p.m. Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols

**Sunday, Dec. 31 – New Year’s Service:**  
8 & 9:30 a.m. “Turn, Turn, Turn”



**Our 2023 “Joys and Celebrations”  
Offering Is Going to The Bread of Life  
Homeless Shelter and to the  
Belgrade-Rome Food Pantry.**

**Joys & Celebrations Total as of 11/26/23:**

**\$2,500 to Bread of Life and  
\$616.90 to Belgrade-Rome Food Pantry**

**Outstanding!!**



**Meetings at a  
Glance:**

**December 2023**

**Annual Church Conference:**

Saturday, 12/9 @ 1 p.m. at North Vienna UMC

**Worship Committee:** 12/12 @ 3 p.m.

**NOTE:** Change in Time

**Prayer Shawl:** 12/11 @ 1 p.m.



## Our Mission Ministries

Through the year, we highlight our mission projects and programs

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

**Support we've given so far in 2023:**

**Center for All Seasons After-School Programs and Summer Camp**

**Belgrade Rome Food Pantry**

**Kenneth Workman Youth Sports Program**

**Maine Justice Foundation, Augusta, Maine.**

**Messalonskee High School – the High School's Food Pantry**

**Bread of Life Ministries**

**Vernon Valley Lodge 99 A.F. & A.M. – the Bikes for Reading Program for local school children**

**Adaptive Outdoor Education Center – their annual Ski-A-Thon that supports programs that empower adaptive athletes**

**Neighbors Driving Neighbors**

**United Methodist Camp Mechuwana in Winthrop, ME**

**Pastor's Discretionary Fund**

**Prayer Shawl Ministry**

**Belgrade Central School**

**Belgrade Public Library**

**Belgrade Fire & Rescue**

**UMEM (United Methodist Economic Ministry, located in Salem & Howland, ME)**



# Bread Of Life Ministries

**Our Next Bread of Life Homeless Shelter Dinner will be Tues., January 16<sup>th</sup>**

Please email us at [unionchurchmaine@gmail.com](mailto: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. At this time they are housing around 50 residents.

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 such as: Wool Hats, Gloves, Hand and Feet Warmers. Please drop off at the church and we will deliver at our next meal delivery.

They are also always in need of pillows, bath towels and face cloths, and bed-in-a-bags (twin size). Bedding is important because the shelter clients take it with them when they move to apartments.

### **Bread of Life Soup Kitchen Wish List**

Bottled Water, Sandwich-size Zipper Bags, Coffee Creamers



Food Pantry Donations Needed

**MONTH of DECEMBER**

**“CHRISTMAS BASKETS”**

**CANNED CRANBERRY SAUCE, BOXED STUFFING MIX, GRAVY PACKETS**

**ADVENT BIBLE STUDY**  
**“Advent in Plain Sight”**  
by Jill Duffield

**Wednesdays 9:45 to 11 a.m.**  
**November 29th to**  
**January 17th**

Jill Duffield draws readers’ attention to ten ordinary objects that appear in the biblical narratives of the prophecies of a Messiah and the Incarnation – objects we encounter in our own lives. Through them, we will find new meaning in the biblical account of Jesus’s coming. We will be prompted to see the near kingdom of heaven on earth and ponder what that divine proximity enables and asks us to do and be.

**Everyone Welcome!**



**UNITED METHODIST**  
**WOMEN’S**  
**CHRISTMAS GIVING**  
**TREE**

**Beginning Sunday**  
**November 28th there**  
**is a tree in the**  
**Sanctuary full of tags**  
**with items listed on**  
**them that the children**  
**of the Belgrade**

**Central School are asking for Christmas**  
**gifts this year. On your way out from our**  
**Worship Service, please stop by and pick**  
**up 1, 2 or as many as you would like. Or**  
**stop by on Tuesday or Wednesday of each**  
**week to pick up some tags. Please have**  
**the gifts back to the Church by Sunday**  
**December 18th, preferably wrapped, but if**  
**you do not have the time to wrap Bobbi will**  
**wrap them for you.**

**Thank You!**



**Coffee Hour Social**  
**in December**

Hey everybody, we’re planning to have an old-fashioned coffee hour on December 10<sup>th</sup> after the 9:30 service. Nothing fancy, just a snack and coffee or tea to enjoy while we talk with each other. It will be hosted by the Missions & Outreach Committee.

Don Petersen  
Worship and Music Committee



**Saturday,**  
**December 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**4 to 7 p.m.**

Chowder/Soup  
Crafts, Bake Shoppe,  
Second-Time Around Christmas Decor

Set-Up on Friday, Dec. 1 at 11 a.m.

**THANK YOU!!!**

**Services Will be Held on Sunday, December**



**24 at 8 and 9:30 a.m., as we celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**Sunday of Advent.**

And then...

**We will hold our traditional Candlelight**  
**Service at 5 p.m. and another**  
**Candlelight Service at 11 p.m.**

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**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...