



Union Church of Belgrade Lakes
United Methodist Church

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Union Rider

December 2024



Dear Members and Friends of
Union Church,

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

I am writing to you as we are about to celebrate Thanksgiving, and only days after, the beginning of 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 (even earlier on overcast days)! Especially at this time of year, most of us curse the dark and wish for the light. Especially as we navigate our way through the aftermath of a fiercely contested, and too-divisive presidential election season. Especially as we share concern for innocent lives and prayers for peace in the nation of Israel, the territory of Gaza, and throughout the Middle East. In the midst of it all, we are about to enter a season of hopeful anticipation. In the midst of it all, it's good for us to be reminded of the phrase of assurance that contains the most-repeated words in the Bible – "Do not be afraid." I've heard it said that it occurs at least 365 times – once for each day of the calendar year! We find these words in every book of the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. And some of the most awe-inspiring expressions of this message appear in the Gospel stories leading up to Jesus' birth. Angelic beings appear several times preceding the birth of Christ to those who are affected leading up to that blessed event – whether they are aware of its advent or not. Each time, these angels bear the same message: do not be afraid. And so, in



the face of much in our world that might cause us to fear, the theme of our worship services in Advent is "Calling All Angels." Considering the angels' messages, perhaps as people of faith we should adopt this question in this Advent season: "What would we do if we weren't afraid?" What in our life, and maybe even in our world, would change? This Advent, may we find that courage through the stories of the angels and those who received their messages. See the article on the next page for more information about our special worship opportunities in this holy season.

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, "**Calling All Angels.**"

Dec. 1 – 1st Sunday of Advent w/ Holy Communion: "Zechariah's Angel"

Dec. 8 – 2nd Sunday of Advent: "Mary's Angel"

Dec. 15 – 3rd Sunday of Advent w/ Holy Communion: "Joseph's Angel"

Dec. 22 – 4th Sunday of Advent: "The Shepherds' Angel"

Sunday, Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve:
7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols (in-person and livestreamed)

Sunday, Dec. 29 – 1st Sunday After Christmas: "The Holy Family's Angel"



Our 2024 "Joys and Celebrations Love Offering" Recipients are Belgrade-Rome Food Pantry & Good Shepherd Food Bank.

Joys and Celebrations total (as of 11/24/24) is \$2358.65. Our yearly goal is \$3,500.



Meetings at a Glance:

Worship & Music Committee: 12/2 @ 430pm

Missions & Outreach Committee: 12/11 @ 11:30am

Knitting Group: 12/9 & 12/23 @ 1pm

Annual Church Conference: 12/21 @ 9am, at Union Church of Belgrade Lakes





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, building up. We are led in our efforts by the Missions and Outreach Committee.

Organizations Supported So Far in 2024:

- **Maine Justic Foundation, Augusta, ME**
Serves the LGBTQ community and the poor and vulnerable, facing employment & housing
- **Adaptive Outdoor Education Center**
Supports programs that empower adaptive athletes towards a healthy, active and rewarding life.
- **Neighbors Driving Neighbors**
Serves folks who are homebound and unable to get to doctor's appointments, shopping, errands, etc.
- **Belgrade Central School**
Monthly donations of snacks and school supplies
- **Kenneth Workman Youth Sports Program**

Organizations Supported in 2023:

- **Bread of Life Ministries**
- **Vernon Valley Lodge 99 A.F. & A.M. – the Bikers for Reading Program for local school children**
- **United Methodist Camp Mechuwana in Winthrop, ME**
- **Center for All Seasons After-School Programs and Summer Camp**
- **Belgrade/Rome Food Pantry**
- **Pastor's Discretionary Fund**
- **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

- **Belgrade Public Library**
- **Belgrade Fire & Rescue**
- **UNEM (United Methodist Economic Ministry, located in Salem & Howland, ME)**



Bread Of Life Ministries

Our Next Bread of Life Homeless Shelter Dinner will be December 17th

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. 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

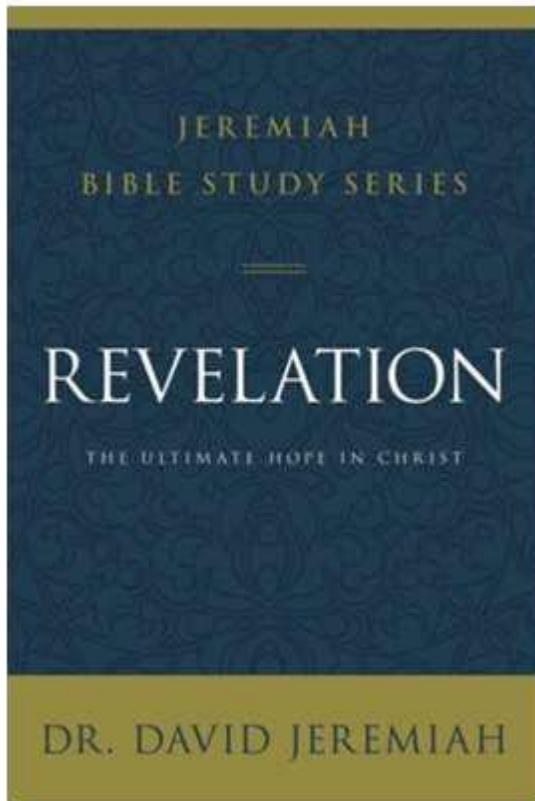
MONTH of DECEMBER

“CHRISTMAS BASKETS”

BOXED STUFFING MIX, GRAVY PACKETS

BIBLE STUDY

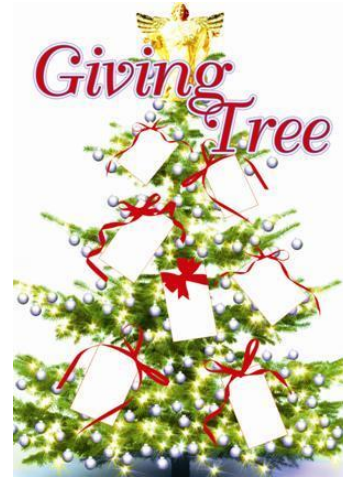
On Wednesday, September 18, 2024, a new Bible Study started. The study will last into the new year. We meet for a time of prayer at 9:45 a.m., before beginning Bible Study. All are welcome!



A Call To Remain Faithful

By the time John, the "beloved disciple," wrote the book of Revelation, he was an old man living in exile on the isle of Patmos in the Aegea Sea. He had been imprisoned there by the Romans for the "crime" of preaching the gospel. But if the authorities thought exile would silence him...they were sadly mistaken. For it was on Patmos that John received a

vision of startling events to come when Jesus returned for His church and God executed His final judgment on earth for sin. Today, John's words provide hope to all followers of Christ. While in this world we will face pain and persecution, our trials will only be temporary. For this reason, we must stand firm and never compromise. We must remain ever faithful to our Lord so we can experience eternal life with Him and witness His ultimate triumph over evil.



UNION CHURCH CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

Beginning Sunday December 1, 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 15th, preferably wrapped, but if you do not have the time to wrap Bobbi will wrap them for you.

Thank You!

Annual CHURCH CONFERENCE

Sunday, December 21

9 a.m., here at Union Church

Committee Chairpersons are strongly encouraged to attend. All others are welcome to attend!



**Saturday,
Dec. 7th
4 to 7 p.m.**

Chowder/Soup
Crafts
Bake Shoppe
Gift Shoppe
Second-Time Around Christmas Décor
One-of-a-Kind Gifts

NEW THIS YEAR!

Lobster Lasagna, from Holly of H. J. Blake's

THANK YOU!!!



**Tuesday, December 24 we will hold our
traditional Candlelight Service at 7 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...