



Union Church of Belgrade Lakes  
United Methodist Church

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## Union Rider

# January/February 2025



Dear Members and Friends of  
Union Church,

God's blessings to you in this season of Epiphany – this time that begins on the 12th Day of Christmas (Jan. 6) and ends on the Sunday before Lent begins (Transfiguration Sunday, we call it). This year, it's a long season, because the date of Easter is just about as late as the formula for it allows. Which gives us an extended period of time to savor the truest message of Christmas, for not just a day or a season, but as a way of life. We find the overarching message in Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward [men.]" (KJV). Peace and good will. Both of them sure seem to be in short supply in our world right now, but let us not be afraid of that seeming reality!

For their Advent focus, our Bible Study group used a resource by Rick Warren, titled *The Purpose of Christmas*. Christmas is, he teaches, a time for celebration, yes, and also a time for salvation and a time for reconciliation. That's where peace and good will enter the picture. Reconciliation is when a broken relationship is restored. Reconciliation is the basis of "peace on earth, good will toward [men]."

Here is truth, spoken by Rick Warren: "There will never be peace in our world until there is peace in nations. There will never be peace in nations until there is peace in communities. There will never be peace in communities until there is peace in families. There will never be peace in families until there is peace in individuals. There will never be peace in

individuals until we invite the Prince of Peace to reign in our hearts." Ah! As the beloved song goes, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." But what is peace? Again, we learn from Rick Warren that "Peace with God is spiritual peace. The peace of God is emotional peace. Peace with others is relational peace."

In other words, God has given us both a ministry and a message, and the message is reconciliation. The ministry is helping people find peace with God and peace with each other. And yes, it must indeed begin within each of us. Reaching in – into our minds and hearts, into our relationship with God, into our relationship with Christ. And then reaching out – to our siblings in Christ, with whom we share a faith community that is or is not centered in a particular church. Reaching out to our family members and friends – those who are dear to us. Reaching out to community members. Reaching out to those we may not know, but we know to be in need. It may not necessarily be easy, but it doesn't sound impossible, either! And if you are reading this, you should know that in it all, and through it all, you are loved and uplifted by a host of fellow Christ-followers who are here for you.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward all." It's our message to share and it's our ministry to which God has called us.

Let us never forget that we are... Together In  
Christ's Love and Service,

*Pastor Eleanor Collinsworth*



If you would like to participate in our worship services by reading Scripture, please sign up on the clipboard hanging on the double doors in Friendship Hall!



**Our 2024 “Joys and Celebrations” Offering went to the Belgrade-Rome Food Pantry and the Good Shepherd Food Bank.**

**Total for the Full Year was \$3673.00:  
\$1836.50 to Belgrade-Rome Food Pantry  
and \$1836.50 to Good Shepherd Food Bank.**

**The recipient of our 2025 “Joys and Celebrations” offering will be determined at the Church Council Meeting on Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>.**



**Meetings at a Glance:**

**January - February**

**Knitting Group:** 1/26, 2/10, 2/24 @ 1 p.m.

**Finance Committee:** 1/27 @ 6 p.m.

**Missions & Outreach Committee:** 2/12 @ 11:30 a.m.

**Worship Committee:** 2/10 @ 4:30 p.m.



**Finance Committee Update**

Let us give thanks and praise to God for being with us throughout 2024. We finished the year with an unrestricted checkbook balance in excess of \$12,322 and with each of the escrow accounts financially sound. However, the challenge of meeting the “faith line” in our budget remains – that is, the difference between our income and our expenses. The **Budget vs Actuals** through the end of 2024 shows an operating deficit. Income totaled \$158,375. Expenses for the same period totaled \$176,021. The net operating income was a negative \$17,646. This “faith line” actual was better than the budgeted “faith line” of a negative \$23,156. For all of that, we are grateful.

Union Church is ever thankful and grateful for your continued financial support as well as your commitment of time and talents.

Blessings for the year ahead!

Carol Johnson

Chair, Finance Committee



## 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 gave in 2024:**

**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**

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



## Bread Of Life Ministries

**Our Next Bread of Life Homeless Shelter Dinners will be Tues., Jan. 21 and Feb. 18**

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

## MONTHS of January/February

**MOST-NEEDED ITEMS:**  
**Boxed Mac & Cheese, Peanut Butter,  
Canned Beef Stew, Chicken Noodle &  
Tomato Soups**



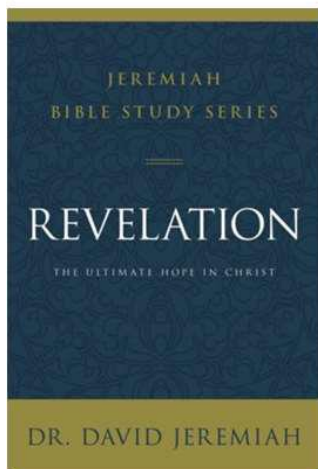
### Coffee Hour Social in February

Hey everybody, we're planning to have an old-fashioned coffee hour on February 9<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 Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC).

Don Petersen  
Worship and Music Committee

## BIBLE STUDY

On Wednesday, January 8, we resumed our weekly Bible Study. The study will last until Lent begins. We meet for a time of prayer at 9:45 a.m., before beginning Bible Study. All are welcome!



### A Call To Remain Faithful

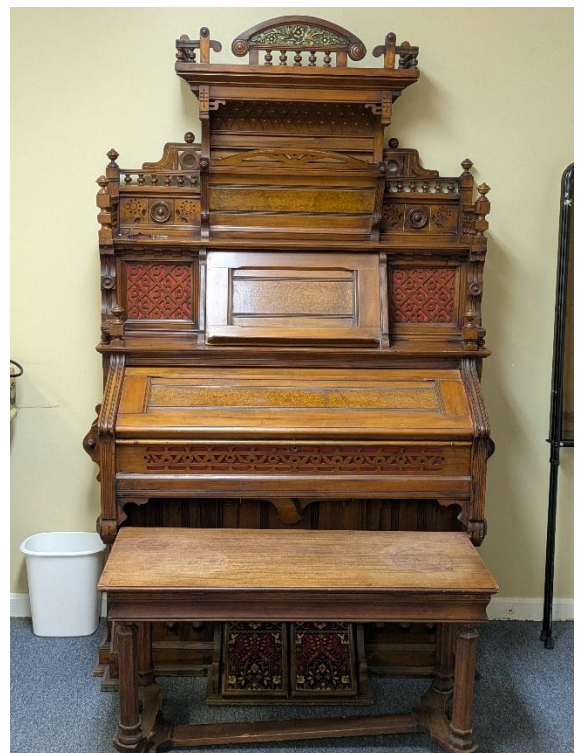
By the time John, the "beloved disciple," wrote the book of Revelation, he was an old man living in exile on the isle of Patmos in the Aegea Sea. He had been imprisoned there by the Romans for the "crime" of preaching the gospel.

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.

## Pump Organ – Free to a Good Home!

This pump organ is currently stored in our meeting room/choir room. The Trustees are willing to re-home it. They are investigating a few possibilities and would like your help in that effort. Please share widely with anyone/everyone who might be interested in it. Many thanks!



# Christmas Stroll

**Many thanks to all who helped make this event successful and fun!**

