



# Union Church of Belgrade Lakes

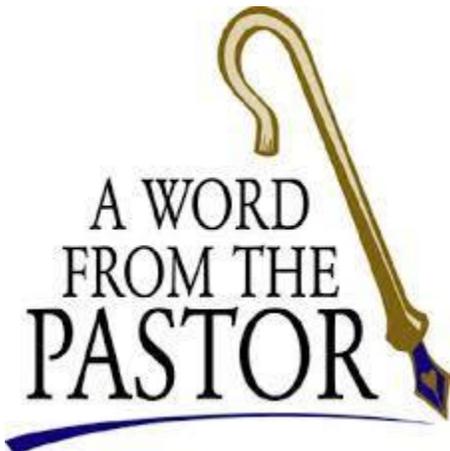
## United Methodist Church

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## Union Rider

## January 2021 Newsletter



Dear Members  
and Friends of  
Union Church,

Greetings in the  
name of the One  
who holds our  
lives for all  
eternity!

I ended my column in the January 2020 newsletter with the words, "Happy 2020!" This jubilant wish was offered with the excitement and hope of a new decade, and a new year that had great numerical symmetry. Well!! What unfolded, of course, was a year unlike anything nearly all of us had ever encountered. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us into quarantining at home, and closing our church doors for a time. It ushered in the age of live-streamed worship services, bring-your-own elements with which to share Holy Communion, and masks – everywhere and always, masks.

And, in the face of immensely daunting challenges, the Church – this church – rose to every one of those challenges! Praise and thanks be to God! In addition to the hurdles

overcome in offering live-streamed worship experiences, we as a church – as a faith

community – were able to reach out to our neighbors in all places in new, and renewed ways. Praise and thanks be to God!

Elsewhere in this newsletter, I encourage you to read about how Union Church has overcome financial hurdles to ensure that we enter 2021 fiscally strong. And how we must continue our commitment to our ministries and missions into a year that is likely to be equally as financially challenging. Elsewhere in this newsletter, I encourage you to read about "Our Mission Ministries" – the good work done in our local, regional, and global communities. In fact, just yesterday I received the following words of thanks from our District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Karen Munson: *"Good Morning Eleanor, As 2020 draws to a close, would you please convey my deep gratitude to the folks at Union Church of Belgrade Lakes for completing mission shares 100% this year? I am encouraged by your leadership in making this happen. Well done all!"*

Indeed, the biggest testimony I can give to the greatness of God's love and God's presence in the midst of a global pandemic is this... As each of us were navigating our own way

through the fear, frustration, confusion, despair, and grief wrought by COVID-19, together, we were able to come “together” to do good and wonderful works of mission! Members of Union Church have been a huge part of keeping the Belgrade-Rome Food Pantry open and serving those in need. Monies received from our Returnables Box at the Belgrade Transfer Station were used to support specific needs at all the schools in RSU 18, and in a special effort to show our appreciation to the 66 teachers, staff members, and bus drivers at Belgrade Central School, each was given a \$10 Hannaford gift card just before Thanksgiving. Again, I encourage you to read about all “Our Mission Ministries” further on in this newsletter. Your pledges and generous financial gifts will continue to enable us to do God’s good work as the hands, feet, and heart of Christ in our community and in our world!

God is holding our lives, and we believe. As we explore some of the Psalms in the season between Epiphany and Ash Wednesday, we will lift up how God has been holding the lives of the faithful for countless generations. We enter the new year 2021 as a hopeful people – hopeful that Coronavirus vaccines will become increasingly available to all...hopeful that our nation can enter a time of healing...hopeful that we will continue to be fruitful in our ministries and missions, all while giving the thanks, praise, and glory to God! And these words from last January remain the same: “I can’t think of a better way to welcome a new year than to be walking in God’s Way alongside all of you!”

Together in Christ’s Love and Service,  
*Pastor Eleanor Collinsworth*



Mark and I thank you for thinking of us with your Christmas wishes, cards, and gifts. How blessed I am to have been called (first by God and secondly by Bishop Devadhar!) to walk and serve and live among you as your Pastor. How blessed we are to be serving and walking and living among you in such a beautiful, loving, faith-filled community! Many, many thanks!

*Pastor Eleanor and Mark*

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**What does it really mean to glorify God?**

In my three and a half decades as a pastor I certainly have taught on the

glory of God. I can tell you the meaning of the Hebrew word; it has the idea of something that is weighty, that has substance, value, and great worth.

I can point to the fact that when we glorify something or someone, we reveal things about them that makes them more fully known and enhances their reputation.

I understand the biblical passages that talk about the work of Christ in creation and redemption **“to the glory of God.”** I can recite the commands **“to glorify God with your**

**bodies” or “in everything you do glorify God.”**

But it wasn't until the last few days—during this worldwide time of “shelter in place”—that the Holy Spirit has linked that *cognitive knowledge* in a simple and profound way with the *language of my heart*.

After days of isolation and staring at screens, I've been taking long walks near my home. Like never before, I have been noticing the beauty of flowers bursting with color, the majestic hills keeping watch over the trails, the deer leisurely laying in tall grass, and the sound of wild turkeys gobbling in the distance.

As I've walked and prayed and wondered what the Creator of the universe is up to in this COVID-19 season of world history, I heard Him whisper something to me distinctly. **“Look at Me!”**

***“All this beauty, all this order, all this magnificent design... I AM the artist, I AM the designer. Look at Me!”***

That's when it struck me. That's what it really means **“to glorify.”** When we glorify something or someone what we're really saying is *look at this, or look at that, or look at him, look at her*.

At the more personal level, when we say by word or action or inference, “look at me,” we are glorifying ourselves. Of course, as followers of Christ we have learned to say “look at me” in a thousand different ways to disguise coming out and saying it quite that bluntly. It's that insightful tweet that says “look at me”—how clever and bright I am.

It's the Facebook post that says this is my normal and amazing life. It's the, “I'm so humbled to receive this great honor” post on social media that says “look at me.” It's us caught up in a culture that makes “me” the center of attention in my home, my work, my church, and my mind. It's **SELF** on the throne.

I've discovered this **SELF**-glorification tendency can reach an even more subtle and nearly unconscious level. It's me interrupting others to make sure they know how important my day was, or to let everyone know I have a story that's better than the one they're sharing. It's me over-explaining why I did something, or why I didn't do something, so that everyone understands the purity of my motives and the humility of my character.

Long periods alone, without distractions, with limited interaction, have forced me to see myself more clearly than I did before. As much as I hate to admit it, there is way too much “look at me” still woven into the core of my character.

***By contrast all creation is God shouting to a deaf world, Look at Me!***

When a would-be disciple questioned the validity of Jesus being Messiah, he received the invitation to “come and see.” In other words, **“look at Him.”**

The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, told the Colossian church to **“look at Him”** because “in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form...He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Colossians 2:9, 1:17). Jesus!

Maybe I'm late to the party, or have not been very self-aware; but today I realize that to glorify God is not all that complicated. *It's simply living one's life and speaking one's words to say, “look at Him.”*

It reminds me of Philippians 2:3-4. **We are commanded** to “do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.” (The King James Version uses the term “vainglory”!) The passage goes on to say “Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” What a need this is right now during COVID-19.

It makes me wonder: ***Has God in His severe mercy allowed at least some of what is***

***occurring today to shake us from our preoccupation with ourselves (vainglory) and from the multitude of distractions, to encourage us to push pause on a world gone mad?***

*Is it possible that He wants to use this global pandemic to call us back from our failing gods of science, technology, and narcissism, and ask us to “look at Him”? To hear Him say “I love you, and I want to help you?” “Look at Me in my Word!” “Look at Me” as you help one of the least of these.*

The “glory of God” has always been a very important yet somewhat nebulous concept to get my mind around, let alone my heart. Today, it got a lot simpler.

With every word, with every action, and with every post, I simply need to ask, ***is this a “look at me” moment or a “look at Him” moment?*** Thank you for helping us point “to Him” at a time when people are so open to hear. Your prayers and gifts are making a difference!

Let’s keep pressing ahead,,

Chip Ingram  
Living on the Edge



**NEW BIBLE STUDY**

**Beginning Wednesday, January 6th we will be studying the Book of 1 John.**

**Time: 10 a.m.**

**All Welcome; please join us**



**FRIENDS  
AND  
NEIGHBOR  
LUNCHEON**

**Thursday,  
January 14, 2021 from 11:30 to 1pm.**

**While we are unable to share this time together; while you are eating your lunch, pray for those who usually join us for lunch on this day for fellowship**



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

**Bobbi and the UMW Women's Group are grateful for all the gifts you purchased this year. You made**

**many children smile on Christmas Morning!**

**THANK YOU!**



# Good Shepherd Food-Bank

Feeding Maine's Hungry

**Our 2021 Global Mission Initiative will continue to be donated to the Good Shepherd Food Bank (donations will be sent to them quarterly)**

**Joys & Celebrations Total**  
**As of 12/27/2020:**  
**\$2,242.02**

**Our yearly goal is \$2,500;**



**Meetings at a Glance:**  
**January 2021**

**Worship Committee:** 1/12 @ 6:30 p.m.  
 online with Zoom

**Prayer Shawl:** 1/11 and 1/25 @ 1 p.m.



## 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 2021 contributions from Missions and Outreach through your support received in our weekly worship offerings, pledges and special giving.***

### The Good Shepherd Food Bank

We will continue to support this work that provides food to local food banks throughout Maine. "Feeding families living with food insecurity makes an impact that goes beyond a nutritious meal." (At our February 23<sup>rd</sup> Church Council Meeting it was approved our Joys and Celebrations monies will be sent to this organization through 2021)

**The Belgrade Rome Food Pantry** with special monthly "Wish List" donations; January through December we will be fillin' our shopping cart. - Many thanks. January we are accepting donations of Toothpaste, Toilet Paper and Shampoo.

### 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. \$150 was donated on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

**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 March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Messalonskee High School – In December we sent \$500 to support the High School’s Food Pantry.** Each year their empty Bowls project supports our local Food cupboards and the Food Cupboard at the High School we will continue to contribute and will share information of this year’s project in March as it becomes available . In June we look to provide leadership and participation in their Baccalaureate program for new graduates.

**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 2021. In Late December we sent a donation of \$500. Our Christmas Eve Offering this year again was sent to the Bread of Life Homeless Shelter. As of Sunday, December 27<sup>th</sup> we have received \$805! Thank you!

**Waterville Homeless Shelter** – In late December we shared with them a donation of \$500

**Vernon Valley Lodge 99 A.F. & A.M.** – We sponsored the Bikes for Reading Program for local school children by sharing with them \$200. Jim Webster is a key member of this group

**Belgrade Historical Society** – We shared \$200 for their Townhouse restoration project in which they will be opening up to the public in

the future. Preserving Belgrade History for Future Generations

**Maine Adaptive Sports – We will again support this program in 2021** 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 in February.

**Neighbors Driving Neighbors,** this local ministry program serving to help folks who would be otherwise home bound was supported with our **\$500 gift in February 2020** and through the engagement of those offering to serve as drivers, and part of the programs leadership

**Winthrop, Maine: United Methodist Camp Mechuwana.** Due to Covid they were unable to hold camp weeks; however the Camp put together a Food Program to share meals with those in need. Many folks/students stepped to help with this. On September 9<sup>th</sup> 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 2021.** Each specific in their own way are able to be a means of God’s Grace in troubling times.

**Prayer Shawl Ministry.** This group meets twice a month 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 2021**.

The Committee will continue to schedule monthly mission giving in 2021. We will update the above listing monthly as these occur.

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### RETURNABLE BOX @BELGRADE TRANSFER STATION

**Our Returnable Box Has  
Yielded Much!**

The town has yet to determine which boxes will be in place during 2021; we will keep you posted. We are hopeful we will be able to continue to have ours in place at the Transfer Station; however, if we aren't voted in we can always place it at the Church.

**We continue to be grateful to Ernie for continuing to transport these to Damon's in Waterville!**

All proceeds have gone towards needs in the community. In late December we donated \$1000 to the Belgrade Rescue and Fire Department towards their being able to purchase thermal imaging equipment. We also shared \$500 with the Messalonskee High School Food Pantry.

**THANK YOU!**

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## Bread Of Life Ministries

**Our Next Bread of Life Homeless Shelter Dinner will be January 19th**

Please email us at [unionchurchmaine@gmail.com](mailto:unionchurchmaine@gmail.com) for those of you wanting to designate your participation in this ministry. 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 30 residents.

Thank you to JoAnn, Sharron, Julie, Lynn & Kip, Tony, Pastor Eleanor and Kathy for sharing in this ministry on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

**We share a hot meal on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month.**

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**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 the following items. 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.

Also now that winter months are coming, they are looking for donations of:



Gloves

Scarves



Hats



**Thank you!**



### **“Pathway to Tomorrow” – Union Church Capital Campaign**

Last Summer I announced that the church was embarking on a year-long Capital Campaign to raise \$45,000. The funds are to be used to make several improvements to our church facility including the brick walkway, new signage and new lighting in front of the church; new decking on the ramps and stair landings and an enlarged and paved parking lot in the rear of the church. I am pleased to announce that to date we have received gifts and pledges totaling \$37,650

I want to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to those who have already contributed and invite everyone else to make

If you would like to contribute, please make out a check to Union Church and write “Capital Campaign” on the memo line. Put it in the offering on Sunday morning or send it to the church office. Union Church of Belgrade Lakes, UMC, P. O. Box 133, Belgrade Lakes, ME 04918.

Thank you,  
Lynn Matson  
Chair, Staff Parish Relations Committee

**The parking lot light is in place now and we look forward to the lot being paved next Spring.**

**Watch for more information to be shared in the near future.**



### **Maple Syrup**

**We are now all sold out!**

**Thank you all!**



## United Methodist Economic Ministry

They have kicked off their own Stronger Together Capital Campaign Program. The purpose of this campaign is to complete long-needed capital improvements that will allow us to continue to serve our communities for years to come. With a successful campaign, UMEM will install a new roof over the Salem Thrift Shop, convert the Salem bunkhouse for four season living, and build designated storage/sorting buildings at our Salem and Howland locations.

In late December we sent them a donation in the amount of \$1,000 from the Missions & Outreach Budget Line Item.



## Finance Report

Despite the challenges we all faced in 2020, Union Church weathered the storm well although it was not without some uncertainty during the year. The congregation as a whole warrants a debt of thanks for its sustained commitment of support throughout 2020. In addition to meeting our more mundane obligations of maintaining our facilities and salary support, Union Church continued to meet the needs of our community through numerous contributions to ministries in our

immediate area and some more distant outreach projects.

Although the financial reports for the year ending December 31, 2020, have not been finalized as of this writing, there is every indication that our income, when supplemented by the good fortune of having received a PPP loan of \$14,700 in April, will exceed our expenses. This is very good news! A summary of our 2020 budget will be presented in next month's Newsletter.

On December 15<sup>th</sup> the Church Council endorsed the Finance Committee's recommended Church budget for 2021. Although it is far from a balanced budget, it is reasonable and it is anticipated that the congregation's generosity and faithfulness will once again see us through the year. In short, income for 2021 is projected to be \$141,200. This total consists of 43 pledges totaling \$101,860, loose offerings projections of \$28,000, fundraisers of \$10,000, in addition to \$1,200 from miscellaneous sources. By comparison, we received 51 pledges in 2020 totaling \$103,072, and through early December, 2020, loose offerings were in excess of \$35,000. Overall, our projected income for 2021 is quite similar to 2020. Expenses are projected to be \$168,040, an amount that is 0.53% or \$889 less than that in 2020. At first glance one is drawn to the disparity between the income and expenses, an amount in excess of \$26,000. Careful planning and monitoring of expenses as well as the continued generosity of our members will see us through 2021.

Many thanks to Kathy Gerard, our Treasurer, and Cheryl Cook, our Financial Secretary, for their dedication and commitment in overseeing and maintaining a transparent fiscal process.

Additionally, Union Church owes all of its members a debt of gratitude for your consistent

financial support throughout the year. YOU made it possible to successfully ride out the uncertainties of 2020.

With your continued financial support we look forward to being able to serve our community and meet its needs in 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tony Mastromarino  
Chair, Finance Committee

**May God richly bless our efforts to be good stewards of ALL God has entrusted to us!**

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### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Renewal of Vows



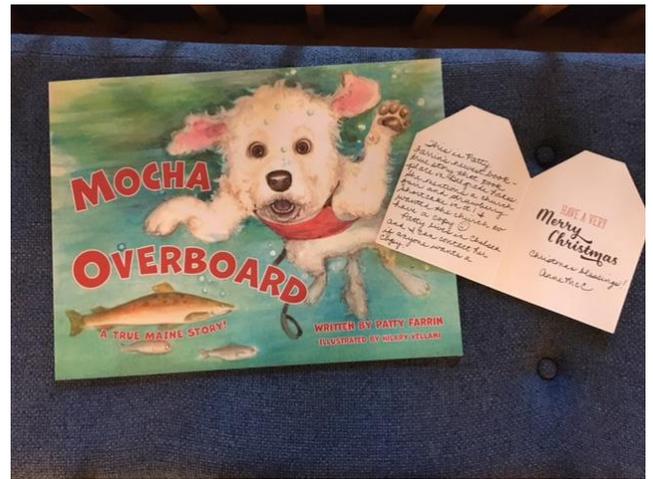
On Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> Gail and Frank Rizzo renewed their wedding vows at the Village Green Gazebo.

With a few of their closest friends in attendance; Pastor Eleanor

officiated. It was a beautiful service.

Congratulations Gail and Frank!

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Anne McCandlish gifted the church with a copy of this book at Christmas.

Her dear friend, Patty Farrin created this book which is a true story that took place in Belgrade Lakes. She mentions a church fair and strawberry shortcake event in it.

If you would like to purchase a copy, please contact Anne and she will contact Patty for you.

Such a delight! Thank You Anne!

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### FRESH START



Food Pantry  
Donations Needed



**MONTH OF JANUARY**

**FOR THE ROME/BELGRADE**

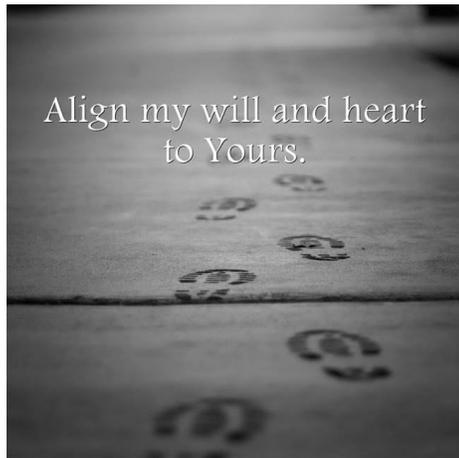
**FOOD PANTRY**

**TOOTHPASTE, SHAMPOO  
TOILET PAPER**

**PERSONAL CARE ITEMS ARE  
ALWAYS NEEDED**



**Christmas Star Picture taken on 12-22-2020 shared by Sharron Burnell's Daughter Amy from the Butler University in IN; truly amazing!**



**Align My  
Life With  
Yours  
NEW  
YEAR'S  
PRAYER**

**Dear Lord,**

**I want to grow in you and have more of you in my life. I pray that you will strengthen me in using me and my talents to glorify you. I thank you for loving me and forgiving my sins each day, every day. I pray you will reveal yourself in my life. Give me your wisdom as to what I should do in every situation and strengthen my obedience in what you ask of me. Show me the right path**

**to travel and correct my ways if I stray. Show me ways to show and spread your love to those around me. Clear my mind to receive crystal clear clarity when you speak. Help align my heart and mind in their purest form to be an imitation of you. Thank you for answering all my prayers in your perfect timing with your perfect answer, even though I may not always understand. In your name, I pray. Amen.**



**Christmas Eve Offering, Designated to the Bread of Life Ministry, Augusta**

Given that the Christmas Story is all about a displaced/homeless family, our Christmas Eve Office will again go to the Bread of Life Homeless Shelter!

They provide shelter, long term housing, food, and case management/life skills coaching. They are currently in a shelter expansion project were their goal is to Never Say No Again to those seeking shelter.

**This Christmas Eve's Offering Donation amounted to \$805; God Bless You For Your Generous Giving!!!**

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...