



Union Church of Belgrade Lakes

United Methodist Church

Location: 67 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, Maine

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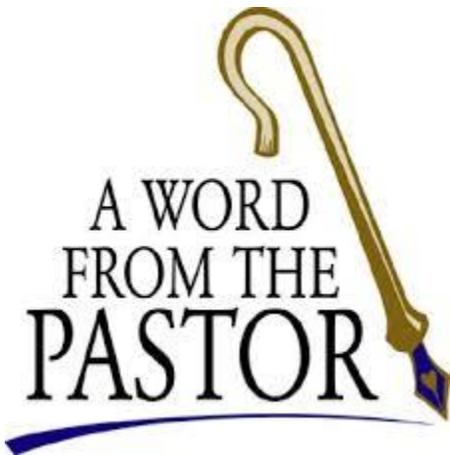
Church Email: unionchurchmaine@gmail.com

Pastor's Email: unionchurchumbelgrade@gmail.com

Website: unionchurchmaine.org

Union Rider

January, 2020 Newsletter



Dear Members
and Friends of
Union Church,

Greetings in the
name of the One
whose promises
are for all
eternity!

I write to
you as we are crossing from season to season,
traveling through these winter days that seem
dark and dreary unless and until we remind
ourselves of Christ's light and warmth that
dwell within our hearts, radiate outward from
us, dwell among us, and extend from our
community of faith to all God's children
wherever and however we might encounter
them.

I am thankful for the many ways I've felt
the presence of God with me in the seasons of
Advent and Christmas just past. The first
Advent and Christmas in a new ministry setting
present pastoral challenges and opportunities.
I am thankful for the many ways you all
provided care and concern, support and love to
Mark and me! Hope and joy and peace and
love were abundantly evident! The wonder
and unexpected surprise so often found in the
Advent and Christmas season came upon me
in powerful ways this year as together we
explored what it means to have, and share,
peace in the midst of conflict, love in the midst

of hate, joy in the midst of despair, and hope in
the midst of hopelessness.

As we are about the annual "business"
of contemplating and perhaps making New
Year's Resolutions, I am reminded of an
important truth of our faith. And so, I will do my
best to remind you as well... It may be a new
year, but God's promises remain the same. So
instead of buying into what is too often the
media "hype" of "New Year, New You," in this
new season of Epiphany, we will remember
that in God's eyes, it is "New Year, Same
Promises." On Epiphany Sunday (January 5th),
we will explore the meaning of the word
"Epiphany." On following Sundays, we will look
at several of God's perennial promises – new
life in God, God's faithfulness, God's call to
ministry, God's blessing, God's guidance,
God's growth. So let me expand the saying in
this way – "New Year, Same Promises, Made
New in You!"

I can't think of a better way to welcome
a new decade than to be walking in God's Way
alongside all of you! Happy 2020!

Together in Christ's Love and Service,

Pastor Eleanor Collinsworth



Mark and I thank you for all your Christmas wishes, cards, and gifts. How blessed I am to have been called by God to walk and serve and live among you as your Pastor. How blessed we are to have been called by God to walk and serve and live among you in such a beautiful, loving community! Many, many thanks!

Pastor Eleanor and Mark



Exploring Church Membership

If you have been attending Union Church for a while now, and if you like what you have experienced as part of this worshipping and serving community of Christian faith, then you are invited to join Pastor Eleanor in a couple of informal gatherings to explore becoming a member of Union Church. She hopes to gather a group in mid- to late January for informal information-sharing and conversation. These gatherings could be on two Sundays

following the 9:30 a.m. worship services, or another time that is convenient for all those interested. If you would like to be part of these gatherings, or if you know someone who might be interested, please contact Pastor Eleanor, or one of our Lay Leaders (Kathy Gerard and Carol Johnson). This is an exciting time of new growth at Union Church, and we welcome those interested in having a part in it!



TODAY'S READING

Matthew

22:1-10

Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find. - Matthew 22:9 (NIV)

Ellis Anne, our six-year-old granddaughter, was being taught by her parents that playdates are by invitation and require parental approval. When Grand and I made our 259-mile trip to visit, Ellis Anne greeted us with the question, "Were you guys invited?" Grand explained that we were invited, and we are family.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus was often invited to the homes of others for meals, weddings, and parties and to visit the sick and dying. Many of his parables are about invitations to banquets and parties. The Gospel of Luke is full of examples, and we also see banquets in the story of the Last Supper and the post-resurrection meals in the Gospel of John.

When we look at the Gospels and think about Ellis Anne's question, we can see that everyone is invited to come to God's table. That is the good news. All are God's children, and God's desire is for all to come to the banquet — life in fellowship with all of God's children and God's creation. As servants of God, we have the privilege and the commission to tell everyone to come and share in fellowship as God's family.

TODAY'S PRAYER

Dear God, help us to share your love through our words and deeds. May we show all your children that they are invited to live in fellowship. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

All people are children of God,
and all are invited.

PRAYER FOCUS

To welcome all to God's table

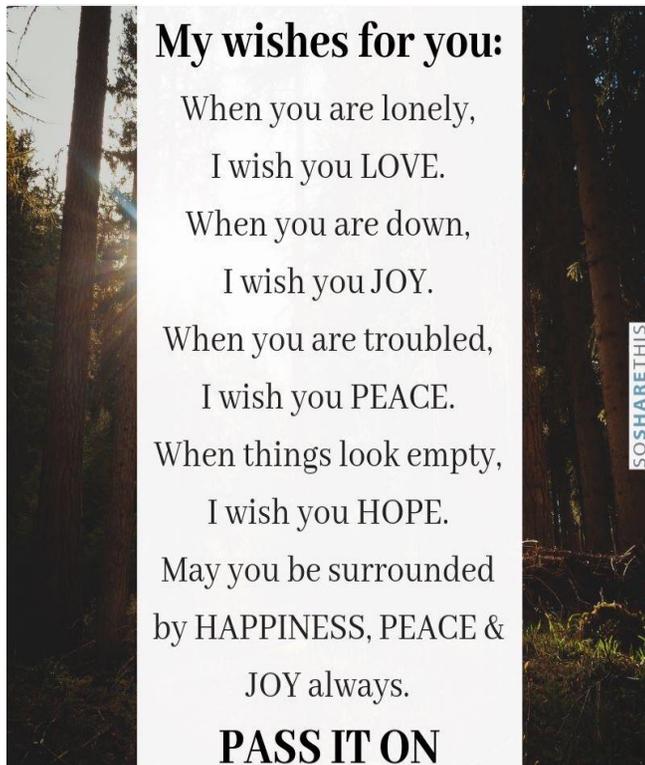


FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOR LUNCHEON

Soups,
sandwiches,
desserts and
More...

Thursday,
January 9, 2019
from 11:30 to 1pm.

Don and Linda will
be showing the
movie "Parental
Guidance".



My wishes for you:

When you are lonely,
I wish you LOVE.

When you are down,
I wish you JOY.

When you are troubled,
I wish you PEACE.

When things look empty,
I wish you HOPE.

May you be surrounded
by HAPPINESS, PEACE &
JOY always.

PASS IT ON

SOSHARETHIS



Their regular meetings are the third Saturday
of the month from 9AM to 10:30AM
in Friendship Hall.

2020 MEETINGS

January 18th – First Meeting of the New Year

(Watch for their 2020 Program Calendar
to be posted soon)

Our 2018/2019 Global Mission Initiative is happening right in our backyard with the United Methodist Economic Ministry in Salem Township, Maine

<https://www.umeconomicministry.com/>

**Joys & Celebrations Total
As of 12/29/19: \$2,530**

Thank you for helping to meet and exceed our goal!



United Methodist Economic Ministry Program Include:

Salem & Solon Thrift Shops
Salem, Solon and Howland Food Cupboards
Maple Syrup
Backpacks and Sneakers
Emergency Heating Assistance
Fire Victims Assistance
Warming Center (Jan – April)
Prom Shop
Christmas Shoppe
Community Garden

Summer mission groups provide home repair, accessibility ramps and winter weatherization with efficient windows and doors.

Their vision is to support healthy communities that adapt to the changing environment in the region. They are providing both educational and material support towards self sufficiency in this region of severe economic challenge. With dignity and grace, they are working to build sustainable communities.

Monthly we will provide updates to the various programs of their ministries.



**Meetings at a Glance:
January 2020**

Worship: 1/6 @ 1:30 p.m. (Taking Down Greens)

Special Church Conference: 1/12 @ 10:45
Acceptance of Barbara Sheble's Bequest

Prayer Shawl: 1/13 and 1/27 @ 1 p.m.

Trustees: 1/20 @ 6:30 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 2020 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 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."

The Belgrade Rome Food Pantry with special monthly "Wish List" donations; January through December we will be fillin' our shopping cart. - Many thanks.

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.

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.

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.

United Methodist Economic Ministry in Salem Township (UMEM); Weekly Joys and Celebrations contributions in 2018 was **\$2,658.** And our contributions in 2019 was \$towards this two-year **Global Mission Initiative**

We have Pints of Maple Syrup still available - again this year for your Summer enjoyment and purchasing. With Fair Trade pricing 100% of the purchase price goes to assist their ministry programs that transform lives in here in Maine; \$600.

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 2020. **Our Christmas Eve Offering of \$487 was mailed to them December 30th**

Maine Adaptive Sports – We will again support this program in 2020 as an affirmation of their annual Ski-A-Thon that supports programs that empower adaptive athletes towards a healthy, active and rewarding life.

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

Winthrop, Maine: United Methodist Camp Mechuwana. Scholarship support of campers will be forwarded in **May of 2020.** 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 2020** Each specific in their own way where we were 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 2020**

The Committee will develop a schedule of monthly mission giving in 2020. We will update the above listing monthly as these occur.

Our next meeting is scheduled for February 12th @1:15 a.m.



Bread Of Life Ministries

Our Next Bread of Life Homeless Shelter Dinner is scheduled for January 21st.

There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall for those wanting to designate their 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.

They now house as many as 50 folks. This means we need to step up our game and provide them with more items to share for a hot meal on this date and every 3rd Tuesday of each month.

Thank you to Tony, Marcy Decerb, JoAnn McElvaine, Sharron Burnell and Kathy for the wonderful dinner delivered on November 19th!



Maple Syrup

**\$12 per pint
We only have
pints left**

We support the ministry at the **United Methodist**

Economic Ministry in Salem Township, as we extend the grace of God outward regionally. 100%, all of the funds raised from sales go

directly to the Economic Ministries that help folks, that equip them for work readiness and life; Home Repairs, Thrift Shop, Food Cupboard, Christmas Gifts, Winter Clothing (New Coats and Boots), Backpacks (school supplies, essential clothing) Program, Life Skills, work.

Pick Some up for New Year Gifts!



Please pray for the following...

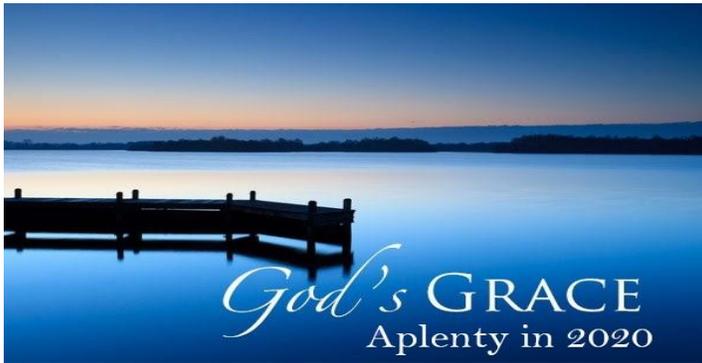
**Bishop
Sudarshana Devadhar**

Rev. Dr. Karen Munson, DS

January 5 Centenary UMC, Church of Good Fellowship, Community UMC, Cox Memorial UMC, Cushing Broad Church.



The Spirit gives each of us a special gift to bring. Each gift leaves an imprint that blends together to empower the church's mission!



God's Grace Aplenty in 2020 2020 Stewardship Update:

Finance Report: 2020 Church Budget

At the Church Council meeting on Sunday, Nov 24, 2019, the Finance Committee recommended acceptance of a proposed 2020 Ministry Needs Church Budget that passed unanimously. The budget presented projected expenses totaling \$169,254, which is a 1.56% decrease compared to the current year's budget. **On the income side, the Church has received a total of 50 pledges as of Dec 22 (including 8 new pledges....THANK YOU) totaling \$102,072.** The committee anticipates the pledge total for 2020 to reach \$112,540 by year's end. That total is \$3,800 less than the current year and represents approximately 75% of the Church's income stream. The total income from all sources is anticipated to be \$150,940. You don't have to be a math wiz to see that the Church has approved a deficit budget in which expenses exceed income by \$18,314, a figure that is nearly identical to this year's 'Faith Line'. Being a faith-based budget, we **trust** that the deficit will be met by income in excess of the projected total while spending less than anticipated.

To date, that is, through Oct 31, 2019, despite having a net operating income of a negative \$4,974, the Church's unrestricted checkbook balance was a positive \$4,832. Any additional year-end contributions will only augment that

balance, are encouraged, and would be greatly appreciated.

The Church Council also endorsed donating all of the unrestricted funds received at the Christmas Eve service to the Bread of Life Ministry in Augusta where they will be put to good use. In the spirit of the season, be generous!

Your consistent generosity has once again gotten us through the first 10 months (unofficially 11 months) of the year. **Our vision of the future remains optimistic.** Thank you all for your faithful and generous giving of not only your treasures, but of your time, and talents as well throughout the year. The Church's commitment to Mission & Outreach will increase in 2020 by \$1,500, from \$6,500 to \$8,000, speaking volumes for who we are and what we are about in our community and beyond.

In closing I would like to thank each of the members of the Finance Committee and, on behalf of the Church, express thanks and appreciation to Kathy Gerard, our Church Treasurer, and to Cheryl Cook and Louise Young, our Church Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary, respectively for their unstinting dedication and commitment in maintaining the Church's financial records and insuring transparency and good stewardship of the Church's finances. Finally, a huge THANK YOU to the entire congregation; the ability to serve in the community, to support numerous ministries, to provide a nurturing environment, etc, etc, is wholly due to your generosity and to the success of the fundraisers during the year, a critical element in the income stream of this Church's budget! **Let's insure that there is 'Grace Aplenty in 2020'!**

Respectfully submitted,
Tony Mastromarino, Finance Chair.



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.

We were able to send them \$487 from this most generous offering.

Thank You and God Bless You All!



“Pathway to Tomorrow” – Union Church Capital Campaign

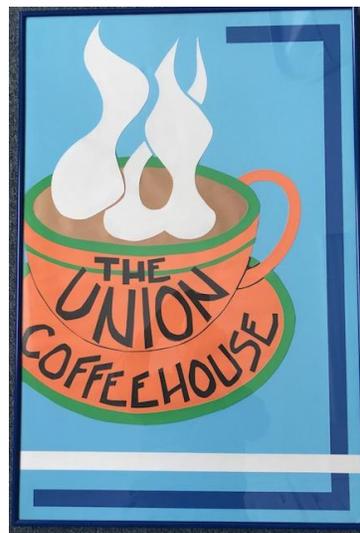
Last Summer I announced that the church was embarking on a year-long Capital Campaign to raise \$45,000. The funds are to be used to make several improvements to our church facility including the brick walkway, new signage and new lighting in front of the church;

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

That means we need to raise \$7,350 to reach our goal. 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



Save the Date – Union Coffeehouse Mid-Winter Blahs Concert February 8

We have big doin’s planned to get you out of your Maine winter doldrums this coming February. **Martin Swinger** will be headlining the

Union Coffeehouse Mid-Winter Blahs concert! He is just the tonic you’ll need to propel you into the second half of our long Central Maine winter. Not only is Martin a superb musician, he’s truly entertaining, introducing his songs with amusing anecdotes and insights. He is a veteran performer who has appeared at both the Boston Folk Festival and the Kerrville Folk Festival as well as at

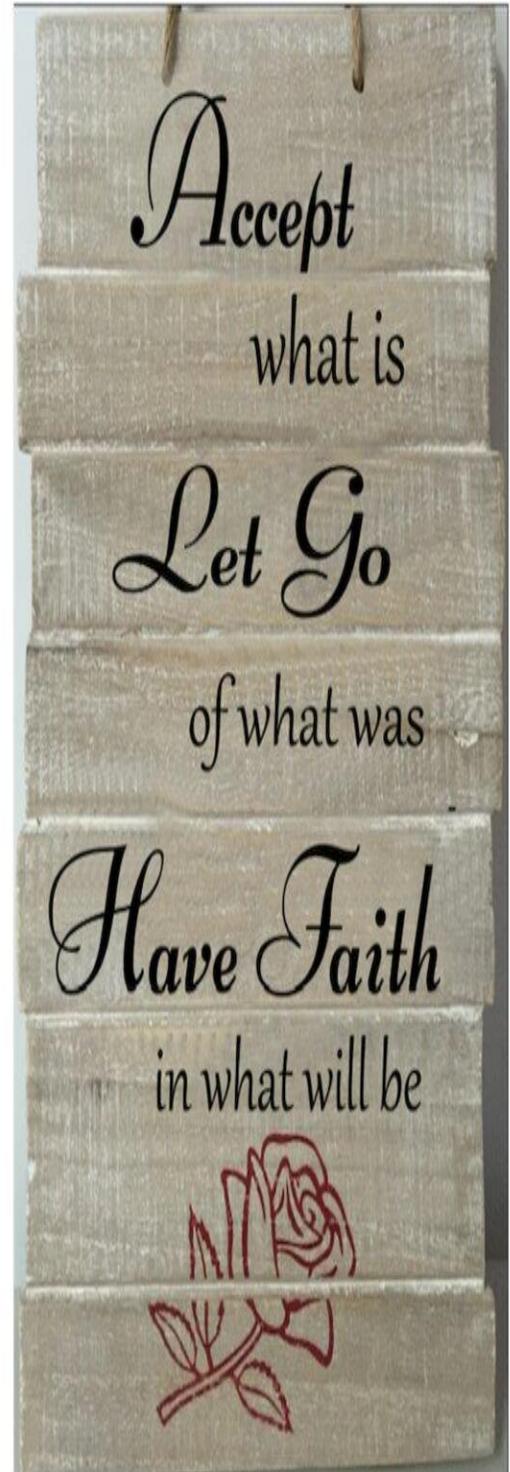
numerous venues in Maine including brilliant performances here at the Union Coffeehouse. Martin is known for his sterling performance and vocal range, surprisingly diverse repertoire, brilliant songwriting and engaging stage presence. This concert is guaranteed to lift you out of your winter ho-hums and put a smile on your face and a tap in your toes.



As always, an Open Mic hour will follow our featured entertainer. Enticing goodies baked by the Union Church Bakers Corps will be available to satisfy your munchy cravings. You can wash them down with coffee, tea, lemonade, or “Arnold Palmers” as you enjoy the entertainment.

Be sure to mark February 8 at 7 PM on your calendar so that you won’t miss an outstanding evening of wonderful music and delectable snacks at the Union Coffeehouse.

Hope to see you there!



GOD KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!

HAPPY & BLESSED NEW YEAR!

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...