



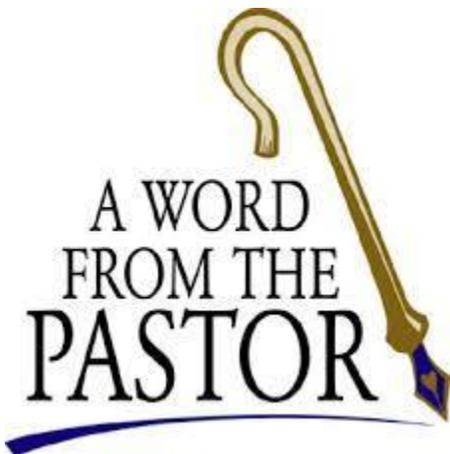
Union Church of Belgrade Lakes

United Methodist Church

Location: 67 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, Maine
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 133, Belgrade Lakes, Maine 04918
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Union Rider

March, 2020 Newsletter



Dear Members
and Friends of
Union Church,

Greetings in the
name of the One
we are called to
follow on our way
through this life,
and even to the
Cross as we are

now walking together through the season of Lent. The special services at the beginning and end of Lent are some of the most personally impactful services I plan and lead, in fulfilling my responsibilities as your pastor – the Ash Wednesday Service we shared just days ago, and the Holy Week Services to come in early April. As opposed to the widely attended Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday services, these services are sparsely attended, but often by the most steadfast and devoted in their faith. Last year, on Ash Wednesday morning, I discovered this devotional, written by Pastor Mary Luti. It completely expresses why the Ash Wednesday service is so powerful for me, and so I share it with you...“Halfway through the line I almost lost it. Until that moment I'd been in a ritual groove, looking my parishioners in the eye, dusting them with ashes, calmly delivering the ancient admonition: "Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return." One by one they came, listened, received. But

halfway through, I faltered. It wasn't that I suddenly realized the gravity of what I was telling them, that they were breathtakingly fragile, that at any moment they could dissolve into elemental bits, that someday they would. I'd been feeling the heft of that truth all evening. So no, it wasn't that I was giving them fatal news. It was that they wanted to hear it. It was that they'd lined up to hear it of their own free will. They knew exactly what the message was going to be, and still they inched their way towards the messenger. My knees went wobbly as water. I wanted to wave them off, to tell them they didn't have to come, they could go sit down. But I knew no one would. That was the most stunning thing: even if I'd said it, I knew no one would. So I regrouped, kept tracing charred crosses, kept saying the old words. And they kept coming, one after another, offering me their foreheads with the trust of a child. And when I told them they would die, some nodded. Some said amen. Some even smiled; they said thank you, as if instead of sentencing them to death, I'd showered them with stars.”

The season of Lent represents a lot of things to each of us, and perhaps different things to each of us. But above all, it represents hope in the Divine promise, the Divine covenant that God makes with us, through Jesus Christ. Throughout the season of Epiphany just ending, and into the season of Lent, we have been pondering, and will continue to ponder

passages from Matthew's Gospel. Matthew shows us a Jesus who speaks great truths that carry forward from Old Testament prophets into the realities of our complicated world. Jesus speaks words that greatly challenge each of us personally, and words that challenge us together as a community of faith. Let us not shy away from those challenges, and let us walk together into them.

I look forward to our walk together through this season of Lent and into our first journey together through Holy Week. Be blessed on the journey, my friends. Be blessed.

Together in Christ's Love and Service,
Pastor Eleanor Collinsworth

What's the Latest on the United Methodist Church "Path Forward"??

There is much talk of church splits as the next global gathering of the United Methodist Church approaches, in May. Here in New England Conference, options are being considered and evaluated proactively by a group established at the New England Annual Conference session last June, called the Open Spirit Task Force. The New England Delegation to the 2020 General Conference and the Open Spirit Task Force (OSTF) have been moving forward with their work, and at this gathering facilitators from the OSTF and delegation will share the options that will be presented at the Annual Conference in June 2020 and provide educational materials that will help facilitate congregational conversations about these options.

Our district's meeting with these facilitators is scheduled for **Sunday, March 8, from 2-4 p.m. at Green St. UMC in Augusta.** If you want to know the latest, and how Union Church might be impacted in all of this, please plan to attend. Pastor Eleanor will be attending, and

carpools can be arranged. Please let her or Kathy know if you would like to attend and need a ride!



OPEN SPIRIT TASK FORCE MID-MAINE MEETING

The [New England Delegation to the 2020 General Conference](#) and

the [Open Spirit Task Force](#) (OSTF) are moving forward with their work and are planning to give presentations in each district in advance of the 2020 New England Annual Conference session. At these district gatherings, facilitators from the OSTF and delegation will share the options that will be presented at the Annual Conference in June 2020 and provide educational materials that will help facilitate congregational conversations about these options.

WHEN: Sunday, March 8, 2020 at 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM [Add to my calendar](#)

WHERE: Green Street UMC, 13 Green St Augusta, ME

[View map](#) →





Worship Opportunities in the Season of Lent

The season of Lent will be here soon. It provides opportunities to worship in purposeful and reflective ways. Special music, candles, visual symbols, and special sermons will help us prepare to again experience the passion of Christ and the joy of his resurrection. What a great time to reconnect with your faith community, share in meaningful worship experiences, and invite neighbors, friends, and family members to share them with you! Here is what's ahead:

March 1 – First Sunday of Lent and Scout Sunday: we will host area Scouts, who will assist us in our worship service, and we will begin our “Boot Camp for the Soul”

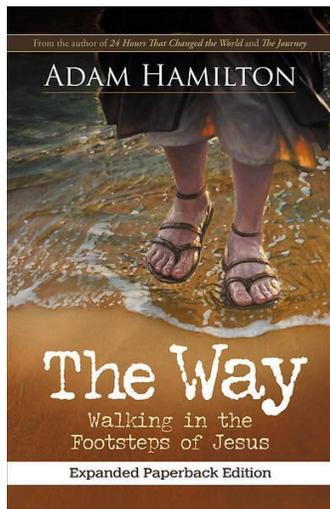
Week of Monday, March 2 – Bible Study Sessions Begin – Sign-up sheet posted in Friendship Hall

Lenten Bible Study

Come join us on Tuesdays @ 7 p .m. and/or Wednesdays @ 10 a.m. March 3rd through April 8th

The third volume in Adam Hamilton's Bible study trilogy on the life of Jesus.

Travel with Adam Hamilton as he retraces the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Fascinating video from his personal travels to



the Holy Land give you a “first-person” experience while his biblical wisdom and historical knowledge provide thoughtful and insightful commentary. Especially fitting as part of a 40-day churchwide emphasis during Lent and Easter. The Paperback includes devotions for each chapter and photos from Adam's trip to the Holy Lands.

Pastor Eleanor will also share pictures of her trip to The Holy Land.



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. **The first Class will be Sunday, March 8th @ 11; right after our morning Worship Service.** It will be a time of informal information-sharing and conversation. There will be at least one more Class if not two; dates for those will be announced soon. 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!



Need Help with Relationships? Here's the Secret!

By Chip Ingram

Every movie you watch, every advertisement you see, every hit song you listen to has a message about relationships, don't they? How to look and act if you want one, how to keep it going, how to end it, how to recover and try again.

You're also smart enough to figure out just how successful the advice these sources offer is, too. We're surrounded by people who, despite Google searches or self-help books or talk shows or therapy, are still unhappy with their relationships. Maybe you're one.

What advice do I have? And why should you listen?

I'll be frank. Just because I've lived through a lot doesn't mean you should hang on my words. No, the only wisdom I might offer you is from God's Word.

And the number-one relationship principle from God's Word, the Bible, is this: everything begins with God. That may sound simplistic but it's the secret weapon you've been seeking! Let's look at it.

God is the Creator. He created you. He created me. And He created relationships. He designed romance and friendship and marriage and families. He knows how intimacy between us best work and how to fix it if it's broken.

So, if we want to tap into His knowledge and power and love, we need to tap into Him! If we want to understand love better, we need to understand the source of Love better. That means we must start at the very beginning.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

“Fear” here means reverence and awe and humble worship. It means humbling ourselves and submitting to God by recognizing we're the creatures and He's the Creator. It's that attitude that opens us up to God's wisdom, which He is eager to share. He says if you will seek Me and My Word and if you commit in advance to do whatever I tell you, I'll show you what to do.

The road He will send you on is like a winding road on which He's installed guardrails—commands and warnings that keep us on track and safe. Travel it and you'll end up on the top of the mountain, with healthy relationships with people you love.

But remember. Because God is the Creator of it all, you and I have to be willing to turn left if He says “Left!” We have to decelerate if He says “Slow down!” We must slam on the breaks if He says “Stop!” If we pretend we're in charge, we may find ourselves going off a cliff.

So, embrace your relationship secret and get moving. You've got an amazing journey ahead!

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:11-13).





FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOR LUNCHEON

Soups, sandwiches, desserts and More...

Thursday, March 12, 2019 from 11:30 to 1pm.

We will have a trivia quiz for you



Their regular meetings are on Saturdays from 9AM to 10:30AM in Friendship Hall.

2020 MEETINGS

March 21st – Regular Business Meeting

(Their 2020 Program Calendar is on the Welcome Table in Friendship Hall and in the Vestibule)



Matthew 25 Ministries Empty Pill Bottle Recycling

The United Methodist Women's Group will be collecting empty, label free pill bottles.

There will be a box specific for this project placed in Friendship Hall in the near future

In developing countries, medicines—when actually obtainable—are often dispensed into hands, pockets, leaves or any other available container.

Matthew 25 Ministries accepts donations of basic medical supplies such as empty pill bottles to help improve health care quality in developing nations. Donations of clean, unlabeled pill bottles help the poorest of the poor in many ways: Medicine can be distributed in sterile containers. Pill bottles that are not appropriate for shipping are recycled for cash that goes towards Matthew 25:Ministries' programs.

This plastic recycling program keeps thousands of bottles out of landfills each year. Placing a nickel, dime or quarter in each pill bottle helps with shipping costs to send the bottles to developing countries.

Matthew 25: Ministries accepts the following types of empty pill bottles:

- Prescription pill bottles
- Large and small pill bottles
- Pill bottles with and without child resistant caps
- Over-the-counter pill bottles.

You can help improve the quality of health care in hospitals and health clinics in developing countries by saving and donating basic medical supplies such as pill bottles.

Acceptable collection items include:

- Prescription and over-the-counter pill bottles
- Large and small pill bottles

- Pill Bottles with and without secure caps (child-resistant): **Caps are a must!**

Pill bottles that are not appropriate to include with shipments of medical supplies are recycled and may generate revenue that supports Matthew 25: Ministries' programs. If you wish to prepare bottles for shipment rather than recycling, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Bottles included in shipments of medical supplies must have an all plastic lid.
- Sort bottles by color and type.
- Remove labels, leaving no glue or residue.
- Wash bottles in very hot water and dish soap.
- Rinse and dry thoroughly.
- Replace lids on clean, dried bottles.
- Place clean, recapped bottles in large ziplock bags marked "Clean Bottles." These will be blended with medical supplies.

THANK YOU!!!



The United Methodist Women's Group is also collecting glasses you are no longer able to use; either readers or prescription. We have a basket for them to be placed in on the stairs in the Sanctuary. They will be delivered to the local Lion's Club.

Thank You!

Our 2020 Global Mission Initiative will be donated to the Good Shepherd Food Bank (donations will be sent to them quarterly)

**Joys & Celebrations Total
As of 2/23/2020: \$377**

Our yearly goal is \$2,500; Our first quarter goal is \$625; Weekly Goal \$50



**Meetings at a Glance:
March 2020**

Prayer Shawl: 3/9 and 3/23 @ 1 p.m.

Trustees: 3/30 @ 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." (At our February 23rd Church Council Meeting it was approved our Joys and Celebrations monies will be sent to this organization)

The Belgrade Rome Food Pantry with special monthly "Wish List" donations; January through December we will be fillin' our shopping cart. - Many thanks. "March Madness": Chili, Hash and Stew

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.

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 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. 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. 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
April 8th @ 11:15 a.m.**



Bread Of Life Ministries

**Our Next Bread of Life Homeless
Shelter Dinner is scheduled for
March 17th**

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 JoAnn McElvaine, Marcy Decerb, Chery Cook, Hilary Tatem, Tony Mastromarino and Kathy for the wonderful dinner delivered on February 18th. We received a lovely thank you from the Attendant on duty that night; see below:



**Thank You Note
Received
Tuesday,
January 18th**

“Thank you so much for all the great food

brought into the shelter tonight! People in both shelters have been enjoying it for the last two hours (including me!) and there's plenty of leftovers.

Thank you for your long time commitment to providing these meals for the shelter!”

Jeff
Shelter Attendant

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.

Thank you!



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 Gifts of any occasion!



Please pray for the following...

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

Rev. Dr. Karen Munson, DS

March 1 Southport UMC, Strong UMC, Thomaston Federated Church, Trinity UMC, Union Church of Belgrade Lakes

March 8 UMC of Auburn, UMC of Minot, Unity UMC, Vassalboro UMC, Waldoboro UMC

March 15 Wayne Community Church, West Cumberland UMC, Wilton UMC, Winthrop UMC



The Finance Committee last met on Oct 22, 2019 to finalize a budget for 2020 which was

presented and approved at our last Church Council meeting, Nov 24, 2019. The Finance Committee will be meeting on Tuesday morning, Feb 25 at 9:00 am.

Thank you all for closing out 2019 on a positive note. Despite some ups and downs during the year, we managed to end 2019 with an unrestricted checkbook balance of \$84.42 after M/O distributed its year-end gifts. The other Escrow accounts were strong and we went into 2020 with \$10,400 in prepaid pledges.

Our net operating income for 2019 was a negative \$8,256; that is, our expenses of \$160,330 (which was 93% of projected expenses) were \$8,256 in excess of our net income of \$151,074 (98% of projected income). Of the latter figure, 88.4% of pledges were received (\$102,871), fund raisers brought in \$8,716 (87% of projections), and loose offerings accounted for \$37,855 (145.6% of our projection).

Our anticipated goal for 2020 pledges was \$112,540, as reflected in the approved church budget. Unfortunately, all that we had anticipated and hoped for were not received. We received a total of 52 pledges for 2020 (that is one more than in 2019) totaling \$104,788 which is \$11,552 less than in 2019 and \$7,752 less than our budget projections. Accordingly, it will require vigilance and PRAYERS that we receive contributions in excess of what has been pledged, that loose offerings remain strong, that our fund raisers exceed our projections, and that we monitor our expenses carefully.

At the end of January, the checkbook balance was \$13,122 (including prepaid pledges). Our income totaled \$14,853 and expenses totaled \$12,661. Our net operating income was \$2,192.



“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



Empty Bowls Fundraiser

Empty Bowls has been a fundraiser at Messalonskee High

School for the past several years. The purpose of this project is to raise money for local food pantries. It's also about raising awareness about some of our community members who are struggling to provide food for their families.

Students and faculty members of Messalonskee High School, under the direction of ceramics teacher Sherrie Damon, have been crafting ceramic bowls to be sold as part of the dinner. The menu for the evening consists of homemade soups, salad, bread and desserts. The pottery bowls will be on display for diners to choose and take home with them as a reminder of the event and what it represents.

This year's Empty Bowls Dinner will be on Friday, March 6th from 5 to 7 p.m. in the high school cafeteria.

Cost is \$10 for adults and \$8 for seniors and students. This year we will have a silent auction for people to bid on.

Diners can complete the evening by attending The Tempest, performed by the Messalonskee High School Players. Tickets for the play may be purchased at the door.

For more information contact Susan Perrino at 465-9135 or email Sherrie Damon at sdamon@rsu18.org.



March 8, 2020

Set your clocks ahead Saturday night so you aren't too late for church!



Operations Giving Tree

This giving tree is located in Friendship Hall on top of the Hope Chest. It has been there for some time now. However; this seems to have become a not so known opportunity for us to give in another way. Ever wonder how you might help keep our church operating like a well-oiled machine?... We place envelopes that list areas of our everyday operating expenses with a suggested amount (you may donate any amount you wish), such as Office Supplies, Electricity, Fuel Oil, etc. As we all know these expenses seem to increase each and every day. Your donations are a gift to help with our budget in a way that pledges may not.



Thank You!

RELIABLE
RESPONSIBLE
FUN



Need a nanny for the summer?

Contact Hannah Shafer now at hannahp.shafer@yahoo.com with questions!

AVAILABLE FROM EARLY MAY
TO LATE JULY
LOCATED ON GREAT POND

PRICE: OPEN TO NEGOTIATION

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...