



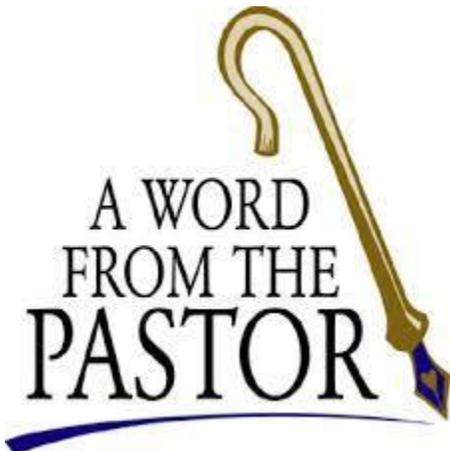
Union Church of Belgrade Lakes

United Methodist Church

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Union Rider March 2021 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 follow 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 – Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday. As opposed to the widely attended Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday services, these services are often sparsely attended, but by the most steadfast and devoted in their faith.

The season of Lent represents a lot of things, and 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 – and the Divine covenants God has made with God's people throughout Biblical history. As we move through the season of Lent just begun, we are reflecting on many of those Divine covenants, in order that we might first be restored, and

then renewed in the “Covenant Faith” that we so abundantly share.

In my Lenten devotional reading the other day, I encountered this quote attributed to Edward T. Chambers and found it very timely: “It is the fate of human beings to exist in-between the world as it is and the world as it should be... When these two worlds collide hard enough and often enough, a fire in the belly is sometimes ignited. The tension between the two worlds is the root of radical action for justice.” Radical action – we are witnesses to such action on many occasions in Scripture. And none more radical, perhaps, than that of the fishermen James and John, who “immediately” left the nets they were mending and their father Zebedee to follow Jesus.

As vocational fishermen, they were looking to net the best fish – big, juicy, meaty fish. That's where the money was then and is still today. That's the world we live in - a world of seeking out the best and using that to make a profit, using tools that need mending and constant upkeep. We live in this grind, although admittedly less so if we call ourselves “retired!” Jesus calls us out of this world as it is. At the sound of his voice, we might dare to let go, relinquishing systems we cling to for power, mechanisms we have created to accumulate wealth, the nets we have strung up

to make it through our day – our lives – but that potentially cause others to become tangled and struggling to live. In Christ, we can see it all for what it is and drop it like an old, torn, worn-out net. Jesus meets us in the world as we know it and calls us into the world as it could be – a world where we fish not for the healthiest, biggest, juiciest, but for the sick, tossed-aside, and culturally undesirable. We fish not for profit, but to do the fishing that allows all to flourish.

I look forward to our walk together through this season of Lent, and especially our journey together through Holy Week. Last year, our Lenten journey took a completely unexpected, drastic, and largely unwelcome turn, as the COVID-19 pandemic descended upon us, closed our church building for months, and changed completely the way we could safely gather for worship as a faith community. It is my most fervent prayer that this year will be different than last, even as it remains to be completely seen what that “different” will be like! Be blessed on the journey, my friends, wherever and however it takes us. Be blessed.

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



Worship Opportunities
During Holy Week

Holy Week provides opportunities to worship in purposeful and reflective ways. Scripture, special music, and visual symbols will help us to once again experience the passion of Christ and the joy of his resurrection. Our Holy Week worship services will be offered in-person and will be live-streamed. 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!

March 28 – Palm Sunday

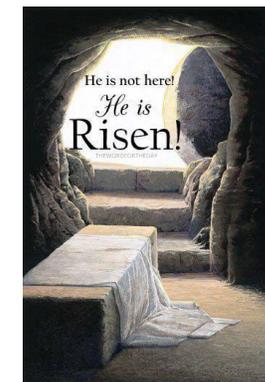


Thursday, April 1 – Maundy

Thursday: 7 p.m. service, with Holy Communion

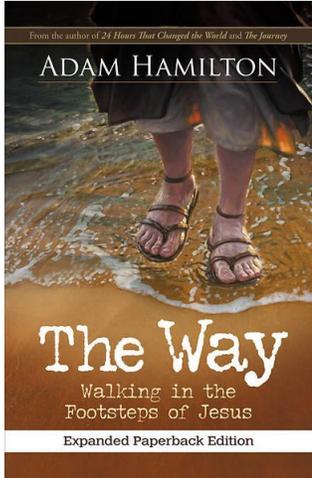
Friday, April 2 – Good

Friday: Resources will be made available for a Good Friday devotional time. Stay tuned!



April 4 – Easter Sunday!:

Sunrise Service, 6:00 a.m. at the Gazebo on the Village Green
Easter Sunday Celebration Service at 9:30 a.m., with Holy Communion – safely in-person and safely live-streamed on Facebook and the church website



Lenten Bible Study

Our Hope is that Lent will be a season of covenant renewal of our faith in God and our faith in one another as a community of Christian faith

**Come join us on Wednesdays @ 10 a.m.
Beginning February 24, 2021**

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.



Like Jesus

Bible in a Year:
Numbers 4–6
Mark 4:1–20

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

Romans 8:29

As a boy, theologian Bruce Ware was frustrated that 1 Peter 2:21–23 calls us to be like Jesus. Ware wrote of his youthful exasperation in his book *The Man Christ Jesus*. "Not fair, I determined. Especially when the passage says to follow in the steps of one 'who did no sin.' This was totally outlandish . . . I just couldn't see how God could really mean for us to take it seriously."

I understand why Ware would find such a biblical challenge so daunting! An old chorus says, "To be like Jesus, to be like Jesus. My desire, to be like Him." But as Ware rightly noted, we are incapable of doing that. Left to ourselves, we could never become like Jesus.

However, we're *not* left to ourselves. The Holy Spirit has been given to the child of God, in part so that Christ *can* be formed in us (Galatians 4:19). So it should come as no surprise that in Paul's great chapter on the Spirit we read, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29). God will see His work completed in us. And He does it through the Spirit of Jesus living in us.

As we yield to the Spirit's work in us, we truly become more like Jesus. How comforting to know that's God's great desire for us!

By: Bill Crowder

Reflect & Pray

What attribute of the fruit of the Spirit would you like to live out to a greater degree?

(see Galatians 5:22–23).

What will help you do so?

Father, I long to be more like Your Son but so often fall short in word, thought, or deed.

Forgive me, and help me to yield to the work of Your Spirit so that Jesus might be formed in me.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOR LUNCHEON



**Thursday,
March 11, 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



**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 2/21/2021: \$315**

Our yearly goal is \$2,500;



Meetings at a Glance: March 2021



Worship Committee:

3/3 @ 6:30 p.m. - online via Zoom

Missions & Outreach: 3/10 @ 11:15 via Zoom and in person

Prayer Shawl: 3/8 and 3/22 @ 1 p.m.

NOTE: They will be meeting in person. Knit one, Purl two - Yay

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 23rd 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 9th.

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 **February 17, 2021.**

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 27th 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 on **February 17, 2021.**

Neighbors Driving Neighbors, this local ministry program serving to help folks who would be otherwise home bound was supported with our **\$500 gift on February 17, 2021** 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 9th 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.**

Maine Home for Little Wanderers, Waterville, ME – On February 17, 2021 we sent \$1,000 in memory of Joan & Dick Tripp. All three of their children were adopted from this wonderful organization.

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



**RETURNABLE BOX
@BELGRADE
TRANSFER
STATION**

**Our Returnable Box
Has Yielded Much!**

The town has determined which boxes will remain at the Transfer Station – Rome/Belgrade Food Pantry, Belgrade Bible Church and Union Church of Belgrade Lakes during this year 2021.

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!



**Bread Of Life
Ministries**

Our Next Bread of Life Homeless Shelter Dinner will be March 16th

Please email us at 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 Julie, Tony, Gwen, Liza and Kathy for sharing in this ministry on February 16th.

We share a hot meal on the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

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

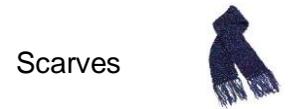


Twin size bed in bags



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:



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 \$38,650

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 this
Spring.

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



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

Union Church navigated 2020 remarkably well given the circumstances of a challenging year. The reason for its success was its ability to adapt to the situation with which we were faced and to maintain our composure and commitment to its mission and ministries in the face of adversity. Resilience was a key factor of that response allowing us to navigate a successful course of action in 2020. An external audit of Union Church's finances for 2020 is currently in progress.

As I am sure, we all realize we are not "out of the woods" yet, and 2021 will also pose its challenges. However, with nearly 2 months under our belt, Union Church is off to a good start. The balance sheet through January 31, 2021, is quite healthy. The unrestricted checkbook balance as of Feb 22, 2021, is \$9,490. Our cash flow or net operating income, i.e., the difference between our January income and expenses, was off by **\$1,065**. Income through January 31 was approximately 84% of projected and expenses were about 75% of expected. Importantly, our ministries are moving full steam ahead in support of local community projects thanks to YOUR continued and generous support.....THANK YOU!

It is, of course, critically important that we continue to support Union Church financially on a regular basis so that our commitments to a diverse group of projects continue to be supported in the months ahead. Despite the intrusion of this pandemic, it is imperative that Union Church continue to support those in our community in need of our assistance. Within

the pages of this monthly publication you will find a Mission & Outreach report delineating its financial support for a diverse group of community programs.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tony Mastromarino
Chair, Finance Committee

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



Food Pantry
Donations Needed



Madness

CHILI, HASH AND STEW

**FOR THE ROME/BELGRADE
FOOD PANTRY**

**ANY AND ALL PERSONAL
CARE ITEMS
ARE ALWAYS NEEDED**



**Empty
Bowls
Fundraiser**

In case you are wondering...

Empty Bowls has been a fundraiser at Messalonskee High School for the past several years.

Sadly, they will not be able to hold this event this year due to the Covid Pandemic.



**March 13,
2020**

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

Responding to Severe Weather



This week's winter storm--unofficially named Winter Storm Uri—led to winter weather alerts for 170 million people. The state of Texas has been hit particularly hard, resulting in power blackouts, loss of heat and broken pipes. As the snow and ice melts, flooding will be a significant problem.

UMC and other churches are serving as warming shelters and food banks.

Meanwhile, the same storm system spawned tornados in the Carolinas, destroying homes.

UMCOR, working with Conference Disaster Relief Coordinators, is providing immediate funding to assist annual conferences and will provide long-term support once the damage is fully assessed. Your help is needed, today. Please make a gift, today, to UMCOR U.S. Disaster Response

DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?

In the words of Pope Francis

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

pietrafitness.com



Shared by Julie Michelitch

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...