



Union Church of Belgrade Lakes
United Methodist Church

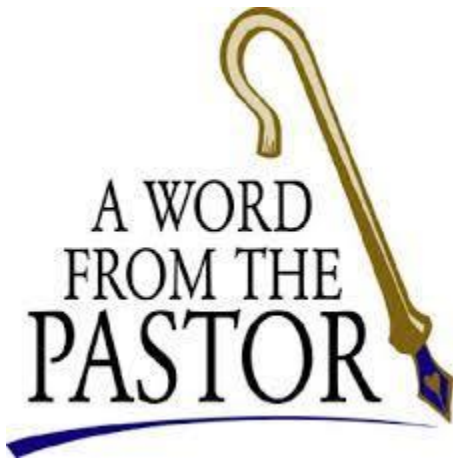
Location: 67 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, Maine
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 133, Belgrade Lakes, Maine 04918
Phone: 207-495-3599
Church Email: unionchurchmaine@gmail.com
Pastor's Email: unionchurchumbelgrade@gmail.com
Website: unionchurchmaine.org

Union Rider

September 2023 Newsletter



**Grounded in Faith,
Growing to Serve**



Dear Members
and Friends of
Union Church,

Greetings in the
name of the One
who teaches us
not only how to
survive in the
world we inhabit

on this side of heaven, but also how to thrive!

Indeed, "Thrive" has been the theme of our 2024 Stewardship Program that is now wrapping up. And when we seek to thrive, it's not just Union Church of which we are mindful. On each of the three Sundays in our Stewardship Program, we heard from some of our ministry partners, about how we assist them to thrive as well. We heard about our efforts to support the children of our community and region (through Belgrade Central School, Center for All Seasons programs, Sheble Campership Fund); our efforts to support the Bread of Life Ministries in Augusta (Homeless Shelter and Soup Kitchen); and our efforts to support UMEM (United Methodist Economic Ministries) in Salem and Howland, ME. If you have not yet returned your pledge card that captures your covenant to support the mission and ministries of Union Church of Belgrade Lakes moving forward into 2024, I am praying

for you as you prayerfully consider that. And for those who have returned a pledge card, many thanks for the covenant you are making.

While we are on the subject of thriving, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity that our church leaders are giving me in September to pursue a time of spiritual and ministry renewal, in order that I might more effectively thrive as your pastor. Back in April, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and our District Superintendent Rev. Arlene Tully approved my request for a four-week renewal leave, from September 4 – October 1. Our United Methodist Book of Discipline describes such a leave this way: "A clergy member's continuing education and spiritual growth program shall include professional formation leaves at least one week each year and may include at least one month during one year of every quadrennium [a four-year period]. Such leaves shall not be considered as part of the ministers' vacations and shall be planned in consultation with their charges..." In fifteen years of pastoral ministry, this will be my first "one month" professional formation leave. I have been prayerfully and intentionally making plans for this time away from day-to-day

pastoral duties. I have selected books to read, and I've identified innovative ways of "doing church" that I would like to explore, guided by the visioning work that we as a church did two summers ago. I am hoping to renew my commitment to physical wellness with regular exercise, as well. I am delighted to share that our worship services will be led by Rev. Richard Waddell on September 10, Rev. Dr. Wesley Palmer on September 17, Pastor Neil Gastonguay on September 24, and Rev. Arlene Tully (our District Superintendent) on October 1. Our Co-Lay Leader Carol Johnson and Jayne Shontell will be leading the 8 a.m. services on these weeks. I am grateful to all of them. This is very much a case of "practicing what you preach!" It's my hope and my prayer that I will return from this leave refreshed, renewed, and re-invigorated for impactful and vibrant ministry alongside you all.

And finally, in these weeks in which we say "Farewell" to our seasonal friends, I do wish for you that you would "fare well" in these months in which we are apart! Please know that I hold you close in prayer, and I pray for all of us together as we seek to thrive and grow, staying connected to God, and connected as our beloved Union Church community of faith.

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

Tom Kelly featured in local newspaper during the Yard Sale held in August~



"A life devoted to things is a dead life, a stump; a God-shaped life is a flourishing tree."
 (Proverbs 11:28, *The Message*).

To "flourish" means to grow well, or to thrive. In this verse from Proverbs 11, "flourishing" refers to the idea of thriving and growing in a positive way. And so, "**Thrive**" has been chosen as the concept we lift up to guide us as we decide how we will support the ministries and missions of Union Church of Belgrade Lakes UMC going forward into 2024. What a great time this is to celebrate the ministries/missions with which we partner, those with whom we serve all God's children. And so our 2024 Stewardship Program will feature some of them, and the ways we here at Union Church are helping them to "**Thrive**," in our worship services on August 13, 20, and 27. Our Stewardship Program will culminate in Covenant Sunday on August 27. Please be watching your mail, our church e-mails, and Facebook page for more information.



Something Deep and Binding

Bible in a Year:

- **1 Chronicles 16–18**
- **John 7:28–53**

God created mankind in his own image.
Genesis 1:27

Today's Scripture & Insight:
Genesis 1:26–28

Amina, an Iraqi immigrant, and Joseph, an American from birth, attended a political protest on opposite sides. We've been taught to believe that those who are separated by ethnicity and politics carry unbridled animosity toward each other. However, when a small mob accosted Joseph, trying to set his shirt on fire, Amina rushed to his defense. "I don't think we could be any further apart as people," Joseph told a reporter, "and yet, it was just kinda like this common 'that's not OK' moment." Something deeper than politics knit Amina and Joseph together.

Though we often have genuine disagreements with one another—substantial differences we often can't ignore—there are far deeper realities that bind us together. We're all created by God and bound together in one beloved human family. God has created each of us—regardless of gender, social class, ethnic identity or political persuasion—"in his own image" (Genesis 1:27). Whatever else might be true, God is reflected in both you and me. Further, He's given us a shared purpose to "fill" and "rule" God's world with wisdom and care (v. 28).

Whenever we forget how we're bound together in God, we do damage to ourselves and others. But whenever we come together in His grace and truth, we participate in His desire to make a good and flourishing world.

By: **Winn Collier**

Reflect & Pray

Who seems to be completely different from you?

What would it be like to spend time with them, sharing what you have in common?

God, the way the world is right now, it's hard to believe that because of You every person shares something deep inside. Help me see this truth.



Our 2023 Global Mission Initiative Is Going to The Bread of Life Homeless Shelter

**Joys & Celebrations
Total as of 8/20/2023:
\$1,974.50**

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



**Bread of Life
Homeless Shelter**

**Meetings at a
Glance:**

SEPTEMBER 2023



Worship & Music Committee: 9/12 @ 4 p.m.

Missions & Outreach: 9/13 @ 11:15 a.m.

Prayer Shawl: 9/11 and 9/25 @ 1 p.m.

Finance Committee: 9/26 @ 10 a.m.

Belgrade Senior Resource Meeting: 9/25 @ 6 p.m. at the Town Office



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 2023 contributions from Missions and Outreach through your support received in our weekly worship offerings, pledges and special giving.

Center for All Seasons Summer Camp –

As the school year has begun, we will once again support by providing and/or after school activity supplies. On 3/17 we provided funds (approximately \$225) for the kiddos and 3 counselors to go bowling due to bad weather and the Center being utilized for voting. On April 19th we sent a check in the amount of \$1,420 from the Returnables for them to purchase a picnic table for the North Belgrade Community Center. The picnic table is now in place! On 8/16 we will hold the annual end of camp season BBQ with the theme being crazy hat! Anne McCandlish will be providing hats for the members of the M&O Committee to wear and Dan will have a crazy hat craft day so the kids will wear them too!

The Belgrade Rome Food Pantry with special monthly “Wish List” donations; January through December we will be fillin’ our shopping cart. -Many thanks. Look for Wish List later in the NL.

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. \$200 was donated on April 19th.

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 8, 2023.**

Messalonskee High School – On April 19th we sent \$150 to support the High School’s

Food Pantry. A food pantry is located at MHS to serve their students and families. They also hold an event each year called Empty Bowls project which supports our local Food cupboards and the Food Cupboard at the High School. This was to add to the \$350 shared at the Empty Bowls Dinner to make our total donation \$500.

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 2023. In December we will be sending a donation of \$500 to support their Christmas Wish List for their residents. Our Christmas Eve Offering this year again will also be sent to the Bread of Life Homeless Shelter. We also donated \$15 Gift Certificates (\$375) for Hannaford the week of Christmas to the 25 Volunteers at their Soup Kitchen.

Vernon Valley Lodge 99 A.F. & A.M. –

We again are sponsoring the Bikes for Reading Program for local school children by sharing with them \$200; and will be sending this

donation in early December. Jim Webster is a key member of this group

Adaptive Outdoor Education Center – We again supported this program in 2022 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 8, 2023.**

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 8, 2023** and through the engagement of those offering to serve as drivers, and part of the programs leadership

Winthrop, Maine: United Methodist Camp Mechuwana. They are back to holding in person camp outings! If you have children/grandchildren who would like to attend, please sign them up soon; their camping sessions are filling up fast. On April 13th 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 2023.** Each specific in their own way are able to be a means of God's Grace in troubling times. To date \$2,996.61 has been expended.

Prayer Shawl Ministry. This group meets twice a month (2nd and 4th Monday @ 1 p.m.) 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 2023.** In June we donated \$ towards their music program which were proceeds from the Anne Meyer's Memorial Concert presented by Tom Mueller, organist.

Belgrade Public Library – On May 17th we sent a donation of \$100 to the Sandra Fuller Fund (Collection of Children's Classical Book)

Belgrade Fire & Rescue – A donation in the amount of \$200 was sent to support the volunteers who have provided recent CPR Classes

Furnace Cleanings – in 2022 we donated \$990 to Bruce Galouch who generously volunteered to clean furnaces for those who were unable to afford to have this done themselves.

Preacher's Aid Society – At our September 21st meeting it was approved to send a donation in the amount of \$500.

UMEM – In early December we sent a donation in the amount of \$1,500 to support their ministry of helping folks who need assistance with heating and/or electrical expenses



Bread Of Life Ministries

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

Please email us at unionchurchmaine@gmail.com for those of you wanting to designate your participation in this ministry; we are looking for

many volunteers. Signing up is important so that we are aware of what you will bring so that we can complete planning for whatever else needs to be prepared and donated. 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 50 residents.

Thank you to Velma, Cheryl, Alice, Pam, Betty, Mary F., Colleen, Tony and Carrie and for sharing in this ministry on August 15th.

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 Warm Clothing including the following items: Wool Hats, Gloves, Hand and Feet Warmers. 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

Soup Kitchen Wish List



Bottled Water



Sandwich Ziplock Baggies

Coffee Creamers



MONTH OF SEPTEMBER



Food Pantry Donations Needed



PACKING UP FOR SCHOOL

Granola Bars, Cookies, Individual Servings of Fruit

FOR THE ROME/BELGRADE FOOD PANTRY

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS NEEDED:
TOOTHBRUSHES (INDIVIDUAL)
TOOTHPASTE (REG SIZE)
DEODORANT (GENERIC)
SHAMPOO (GENERIC)



Finance Committee Update

In Matthew 25:45, Jesus tells us that “what you do for the least of these, you do for me.” Union Church is committed to serving our community through its ministries. Your support, that is, your commitment of time, talents, and treasurers, makes that possible. During the recent stewardship campaign for 2024, you heard about three ministries: community youth programs, the Bread of Life, and the United Methodist Economic Ministry, that **THRIVE**, at least in part, because of Union Church’s ongoing involvement and support. Additionally, our mission shares, sent monthly to the New England Conference, support regional and global ministries.

If you have already returned your pledge card, THANK YOU! If not, we would encourage you to consider doing so as soon as possible to facilitate the finance committee’s responsibility of drafting a church budget for next year.

Through the first 7 months of 2023, the unrestricted checkbook balance was a robust \$40, 969, and the escrow accounts were also robust. **Through July 31, 2023, our total income was \$95,931** which is 104.5% of projections. Pledges received totaled \$70,265 or 73.2% of total income and 105.1% of projections. Loose offerings totaled \$20,606 or 21.5% of total income and 135.8% of projections. The July 4th fundraiser brought in \$3,639, nearly 4% of total income.

Total expenses for the same period totaled \$96,195 which is 91.2% of projections. Although the net operating income was a negative **\$264**, the church’s finances appear to be healthy.

Thank you for your continued support. Your consistency and generosity are much appreciated and we are looking forward to a strong second half of 2023.

Together we can and are making a difference in our community!

Blessings,
Tony



BIBLE STUDY SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

During the Month of September we will read the Upper Room Devotionals and Hold Discussions

UPCOMING BIBLE STUDY in October

Beginning October 4th

The core idea of the book of Romans is that we are saved from sin by the grace of Christ. The apostle Paul unpacks the power of grace in a way that can completely change your life...

Max Lucado welcomes you and your group into the knowledge and freedom of grace with his exploration of Paul's letter to the Roman church. Throughout the study, you'll explore the book of Romans with Max to gain a deeper understanding of its context and content, focusing on central truths such as:

- The extent and power of sin.
- The amazing reality and availability of God's grace.
- The battle we're still in, and the hope we have despite the lies of the enemy.
- The grand story—from creation to restoration—that we're all a part of.
- The call to live in fellowship with each other and with Christ.

When we truly understand the power of grace, it sets us free from *having* to do good, so that we *can* do good. A true understanding of grace should not shackle us to works but liberate us to live in the presence of Christ.

EVERYONE WELCOME!

Coffee Hour Socials in September



Hey everybody, we're planning to keep holding our old-fashioned coffee hours every Sunday in September after the 9:30 service. Nothing fancy, just a snack, and coffee or tea to enjoy while we talk with each other. We hope you will plan to spend a few minutes catching up with your church friends. Thank You!

We will be looking for folks to sign up to host on a Sunday they are available to do so. Please see sign up sheet in FH.

Mark your calendars to make time to stay for fellowship each Sunday these next two months.

Don Petersen
Worship and Music Committee



**Our Choir is taking
some time off
to give their angelic
voices a rest.**

**They will not be singing
the month of September**

**We look forward to
their return in
October**

New Meeting Owl Available For Meetings



The Union Church Technology Committee has purchased a Meeting Owl device that allows remote attendees on Zoom meetings to see and hear all the other folks at the meeting without the moderator having to turn the laptop computer around. The Meeting Owl sits in the center of your meeting and zooms in on whomever is speaking. You can now include your remote committee members equally during your meetings with technology that captures everything using a 360-degree camera with auto-tracking, microphone, and speaker to give everyone an immersive experience. With more of our seasonal members taking an active role in various church committees, this amazing new device will enhance their participation during the times they are not in the local area. It will be available for meetings starting in September. Please see Don Petersen for information on how to use it.

2023 Craft Shows



The Town of Belgrade will host two more craft shows

at the Village Green, Saturday, September 24 and Saturday, Oct. 7 (Harvest Festival Day)

Each show will be from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Rain or Shine) and will feature wares created by local artists and crafters.



**MISSIONS AND
OUTREACH
HOSTED BBQ AT
THE CENTER FOR
ALL SEASONS**



On August 16th the Mission & Outreach Committee hosted a End of Summer BBQ for the kiddos and staff at the Center For All

Seasons.

We had many volunteers including a couple of master grillers on hand. It was such a fun time and the weather cooperated giving us a nice day. We fed around 85+; they had full/happy tummies by the end of the BBQ.



Dan McGlashing, Recreation Director and Callie Fontaine are doing a great job with this kids! They were all very polite and appreciative of yummy hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, juice, watermelon and of course ice cream!

Thank you to all who devoted their time to make this wonderful ministry



happen.

Fantastic time had by all! Special Thank you to Anne McCandlish, who unfortunately was unable to attend, for sharing all her crazy hats with us. The kids loved that we wore them!



**HARVEST
FESTIVAL
2023**

Fall is arriving way too soon; I am sure we can all agree!

Octoberfest will be held on October 7, 2023 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Be thinking about ways you can help out - many hands needed! Lots of volunteers needed to make this a success again this year. Hoping that each and every one of you will come join us in the fun and fellowship as we share in our preparations. It is a great way to connect with old friends, meet new friends and get incorporated into the life of the church and community.

Craft Table – If you have any crafts you would like to share, please feel free to bring them to this event.



Bobbi will hold a Craft Day at her home on Saturday, 9/9 @ 10 a.m. And will provide you with lunch!

Bake Shop – We are grateful for any and all donations 😊. We have observed that the small breads (pumpkin, apple, spice, etc.) go very well. And smaller cakes and pies. Also,

cookies other than chocolate chip (most everyone makes them); Folks are looking for your grandma's favorite recipe cookies.

Harvest Kitchen – Looking for homemade soups for the freezer (soups of all kinds that we will provide containers for). Canned goods, jams and jellies, pickles, etc. If you are having a hard time finding jam jars; Carol may have plenty to share; please contact her at vicromeo@aol.com

Silent Auction – Carol will again chair this portion of our HF; it will again be online and we will have to be selective of the items we do place on the auction as we will be incurring fees associated with this way of holding it this year. Please consider a donation; thank you.

Brats and Hot Dogs – We are looking for Grillers! We would like a few volunteers to cook and serve these during the day so no one is at the grill the entire time.

In the meantime; save the date, start canning, crafting, woodworking, picking out your recipes for baked goods and soup for the freezer. If you know any shopkeepers; see if they would be willing to donate something to our Silent Auction. Or check with family and friends to see if they would donate an item. Look for "really good" things in your attic or basement that you can donate to the auction, or make something using your special talents. Please contact Christine Emmons (Chair) at Christine.emmons@mainegeneral.org or Carol Johnson at vicromeo@aol.com (Chair of Silent Auction) if you have any comments, or questions/ideas and would like to step up and volunteer.

Thank you and God Bless!

BAPTISMS



On August 6th at our 9:30 Worship Service; Olivia

(Livvy) Jesski; daughter of Russel and Amanda was baptized.



On August 17th, two of Bill & Jane Shontell's Grandchildren; Natalie McKenna and Nathan James were baptized at their summer home



on Great Pond.



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...