



The Witness

Winter 2012 Edition
January/February/March



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Pastor's Reflections

Like every season winter holds a beauty of its own. I love winter skies filled with bright stars, fluffy snow on the bare tree branches, frosted designs on window panes, and large and small footprints in the snow. There is much to wonder and be amazed at in the world of winter. Winter is usually less busy and more reflective, offering us space to read a good book or engage in a favorite indoor activity. Winter provides us with opportunities to slow down and refocus our directions. Winter is a time for resting, stretching and growing.

The church seasons of Epiphany and Lent come in winter and early spring. The season of Epiphany starts on January 6 with the celebration of the visit of the magi who are led by the light of a star to the Christ Child. Epiphany means the manifestation of Jesus to the world. We rejoice that in Epiphany God is revealed among us in unexpected places and people. The last Sunday of the season of epiphany is the festival of the transfiguration. Remember the story. Jesus is transfigured; his clothes become dazzling white and Moses and Elijah join him on the mountain top. A cloud overshadows them and a voice from the cloud says, "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him. Then Jesus along with his disciples Peter, James and John go down from the mountain and Jesus begins ministry. It starts with Jesus' 40 days of temptation in the wilderness. The season of Lent follows Epiphany and lasts for the forty days (minus Sundays) before Easter. Lent is a time for reflection and preparation for Easter.

The seasons of Epiphany and Lent give us time and opportunities for inner spiritual growth and movement and to know the presence of God is within and around us all.

You are all welcome to join us at church for times of study, growth and reflection during Epiphany and Lent.

It's winter! Come grow with us and be filled with the light and warmth of God's spirit.

Winter blessings,

Alice

WINTER EVENTS

- † Fish Chowder – January 13, 2012
- † Intergenerational Bingo January 22, 2012 in the vestry after Church
- † January 22 – February 19, after worship: Roxanne French will lead a study of the book *Whispering the Word, Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament*, by Jacqueline E. Lapsley
- † Annual Meeting, Sunday, January 29, 2012 in the vestry after Worship along with Pot Luck Luncheon
- † Fish Chowder – February 10, 2012
- † Ash Wednesday – February 22, 2012
- † February 26 – April 1: Rev. Alice will lead a Lenten Study after Church.
- † Fish Chowder – March 9, 2012
- † January or February: Joan Edwards will teach us how to paint the meditation stones for our Meditation Path at our church camp. Please look for dates and times.
- † Rev. Alice will lead Mid-Week Meditations in the Chapel on Thursdays at noon in March. We will gather together at 11:30 for our brown bag lunches.
- † Continuation of the Open and Affirming Process beginning with the movie, *For the Bible Tells Me So*. Check for time.
- † Prospective Members Class. If you are interested please let Rev. Alice know. Time will be announced.

From the Deacons

Turning the page to a new Calendar Year, the Church and Board of Deacons have a slight pause from the busy Advent and Christmas events before ramping up for upcoming Lenten and Easter events coming this Spring.

During this past Advent Season

- † Weekly Advent Meditations on Thursdays were well enjoyed by participants and attendance grew each week
- † Decorations in the Sanctuary were wonderful and meaningful as always – thanks to Marie Hatfield for arranging the Seasonal Decorations
- † A Dedication of the Memorial Tree occurred after worship on December 4th.
- † We decorated the Tree in the Sanctuary with Chrismons on December 11th.
- † The Church hosted the Lighting the Way Service in the Vestry on December 13th in conjunction with WAMA and the Funeral Home.
- † The Christmas Cantata on December 18th was delightful.
- † The Christmas Eve Service was very meaningful and wonderful
- † We had an enjoyable Christmas Day Worship Service
- † The Lay led Service on January 1st started 2012 off on a good note.



Dana Hall, Chair
Board of Deacons

CE MATTERS

The Christian Ed Committee has been working with Reverend Alice to get the children involved in church services. Most recently they participated in the Advent and Christmas Eve services by creating signs for the sanctuary, reading and lighting the Advent candles. They all did a great job and we hope you enjoyed the readings.

We are planning an intergenerational Bingo event for January 22nd right after church. We will be celebrating the Chinese New Year with decorations and food to fit the occasion. Hope you can join us!

Some of you may have noticed that we did not perform our usual pageant this year. We thought we would try something different and we are now preparing for a pageant to be performed on February 5th.



The Winthrop Youth Group has met a few times and seems to be growing. They are looking for community service opportunities. Please let us know if you are aware of any opportunities in the community.

As always, we need teachers and helpers in the Sunday School classes. Please let us know if there is a week that you are available to teach or help with the children. A sign-up sheet is posted outside the Sunday School Room door. We now have two classes and need nursery care for our youngsters. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Susan Mauro, Chair

Board of Christian Education

From the Trustees



We would like to thank all those who donate their time and talent in the maintenance and improvement of the church property including the camp. During the past year members of our church have donated their time to regularly clean the church, decorate the sanctuary, conduct minor repairs, maintain flower gardens, mow the lawn, plow the parking lot, shovel walks, clean snow from the church roof, paint the camp, dispose of trash, install and remove the camp dock, and rake leaves. Members also donated time to complete a significant renovation of the Chapel.

From the Treasurer

Based on my initial look at our year-end figures I am expecting to end the year with total income approximately matching total expenses. Income for the last quarter has been somewhat higher than expected in the categories of Pledges and Designated Gifts. Fuel oil expenses for the last quarter have been somewhat lower than I expected due to the warmer than normal weather. I will have a more detailed assessment in the annual report.

Just what is tithing?

Have you heard about tithing? Just what is it? Tithing is making a voluntary, systematic contribution of financial support to the church. It is voluntary because you choose to give out of love and gratitude for all God gives to you. It is a systematic plan to give a predetermined percentage of your income to the God's ministry at Winthrop Church.

It is scriptural. The Old Testament guideline for giving was a tithe or one tenth of total property. A tenth of possessions such as animals, grains (the best tenth of the first fruits) were to be set aside and offered to God in thanks for the blessings God gives. Leviticus 27:30 describes the custom of tithing: "All tithes from the land, whether the seed of the ground or the fruit of the tree, are the Lord's; they are holy to the Lord."

Jesus praised the widow for her generous gift. (Luke 2: 1-2). Paul wrote to the Corinthians. "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn..." (I Cor. 16:2)

Tithing is necessary. Our church has fixed expenses, which must be met every month: building maintenance, utilities, programs, and salaries. Through tithing the church can meet its practical responsibilities without putting a burden on just a few members.

So why should we tithe or put aside a specific contribution to the church? Tithing is an important part of our life in Christ. Through tithing we express our gratitude to God for the gifts and blessings we have received, we renew our faith and grow closer to God, we help our church remain strong and fulfill its mission of proclaiming the Gospel and helping those in need in our church, community and beyond.

So just what is tithing? It is giving a certain percentage (could be the traditional 10% or a percentage that works for you) of your income to support the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ through the church.

Hannaford Gift Card Sales

Hannaford gift card sales are going well and since the end of May, have earned \$1375.00 in income for our church at the closing of this year. It is an on-going fundraiser to support our church budget. Cards are always available for purchase and I have them on Sundays.



Thank you to all that continue to support this project.

Carol Ellingwood

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting this year is on Sunday, January 29th after worship. All are encouraged to attend this informative meeting, where important decisions will be made on our Church Budget. A pot luck meal will also be shared during this time.

WOMEN'S GUILD NOTES

Here is a summary of Guild happenings:

- ♥ The Guild met twice this fall with Marie Hatfield & Jean Doughty as hosts
- ♥ In December, members attended the Coda Chorus Christmas presentation at the Hope Baptist Church. Member Lee Gilman sang with the chorus and provided beautiful music with the Bell Ringers.
- ♥ Five clean-up buckets have been completed and await delivery.
- ♥ The Guild made a donation of \$100 to the Honduras project.
- ♥ A check for \$50 was sent to our sponsored child Hussam for Christmas. In the past, it has cost as much as the gift to mail an item.
- ♥ Prayer shawls continue to be given to those needing comfort from an illness or loss.
- ♥ A shawl was presented to Ruth Ann Burke at the time of her Baptism.
- ♥ At Christmas, the Sanctuary was decorated with wreaths and poinsettias and a tree on the Altar adorned white lights and ornaments. Choir members were given poinsettias in appreciation for all the wonderful music they provide us with and to those unable to attend church or going through difficult times.
- ♥ RADA cutlery is now available with black dishwasher safe handles. More dishcloths are available.
- ♥ A real tree at the back of the Sanctuary is collecting hats and mittens for our local school children. Delivery is planned for January.

Honduras Mission Trip

Plans are still underway for a Mission Trip to Honduras from Jun 20-Jun 30, 2012. Our group will consist of about 20 people associated with the Winthrop Congregational Church or the Brewer Congregational Church.

A joint planning meeting will be held Saturday, January 7th at the First Congregational Church in Waterville. Deposits have been received from Rev Alice, her sister Nancy Zimmerman and husband Clifford Clayton, Linda Ruman, Debbie Burns, Mike Burns, Cyndi Hall, Amy Tague, Ted LaCrone, Julia Tague-LaCrone, and Wendy Dennis. Other potential travelers are Tom Irwin, Cathy Irwin, Ann Mitchell, John Mitchell and Dr Jonathan Gasper.

Besides our sales of soap, eggs, casserole carriers and other miscellaneous items, we are accepting donations from returnable bottles. Redeemable containers can be placed in the cardboard bin in the church kitchen or taken to Hannaford by using special green plastic "Clynk" bags. The bags are tagged with bar codes with our church account number. A machine scans the bar code and the value of the contents gets credited to our account. Please see Ann Mitchell to obtain more information.

Another fundraising effort is being planned for this spring and involves hosting a site for recycling electronics. We would heavily publicize this one day event for a green recycling company. The company will provide a tractor trailer truck for the recyclables. Donations for disposal of electronics would be accepted for our Honduras trip.

Watch for upcoming information of this creative fundraiser event and other Mission Trip news.

THE WIDER CHURCH NEEDS YOU

By Joel Johnson

The image is of a stern, distinguished white-haired gentleman wearing a top hat adorned with a hatband of stars, a red hand-tied bow-tie, a blue coat, and a white goatee. Although the attire is fashionable, it is clearly old-fashioned and likely would have been considered so even when the image was first created. What is most noticeable is the intense directness of the gentleman's stare and his finger pointing right at the viewer. This image was first used as a magazine cover for Leslie's Weekly in 1916 with the question, "What have you done for preparedness?" However, most of you are no doubt familiar with this image and its later widespread use as a recruiting poster with the emphatic statement, "I want you for the U.S. Army (or Navy or some other branch of military service)." The man in the picture was "Uncle Sam" and James Montgomery Flagg's illustration captured a spirit of America.

Although we often speak of hearing or responding to the call of God, we don't have such an iconic image to graphically show this as created by Mr. Flagg. God is, however, issuing a call seeking those who would serve Him through the wider church in the form of the Kennebec Valley Association and the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ. He is pointing at you and saying, "I want you to serve the Wider Church."

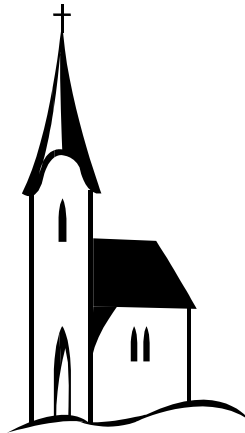
The Kennebec Valley Association during its spring meeting will be electing new people to serve as Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Scribe, Representative to the Coordinating Council of the Maine Conference, and Representative to the Commission on Witness Life of the Maine Conference. Although the Executive Committee has recently filled two lay positions on the Association Church and Ministry Committee, there continues to be one lay vacancy still yet to be filled. These are important positions that will help chart the direction of our Association and the Maine Conference. If you are interested or have questions, please contact your minister and/or your Association delegates. If they don't have the answers, they can direct you to those who do. Ministers should be aware that they can have an essential role in making the finger of God be that much more apparent to those whom God is calling. Important work needs to be done and God needs you.

January Birthdays		January Anniversaries	
2	Kelly deWolfe	1/31/76	Alan & Carol Ellingwood
3	Helena Muller		
7	Brint Darlington		
17	Derek Hall		
18	Tom Dressler		
21	Korynne Eldridge		
24	Gerry Edgar		
28	Martha Hewett		
29	Sarah Dressler		
February Birthdays		February Anniversaries	
1	Jason Ridley	2/19/77	Ron & Nancy Dyer
3	Tom Irwin		
5	Kristin Morgner		
6	Brett Hiendlmayr		
8	Nora Conrad		
10	Dina Blodgett		
11	Irma Rice		
12	Anna Brown		
14	Pat Culp		
20	Debbie Burns		
15	Milton Hadley		
	Jonathan Whittier		
27	Cindy McDonnell		
March Birthdays		March Anniversaries	
3	Peter deWolfe	3/5/88	Peter & Lisa deWolfe
10	Kris Hatfield	3/20/92	Dina Blodgett & Sandra Smith
11	Wilma Sorenson		
	Barbara Enman		
15	Mike Burns		
25	Kristin Brown		
28	Carol Ellingwood		
29	Ruth Emerson		

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