

# Union Church Newsletter

## Fall 2018



### **A Message From Your Pastor...**

It has now been more than a year since I was called to serve as Pastor at Union Church. For me, it has been a year filled with much joy and a sense of deep satisfaction in coming to know many of the members and friends of this vital and dedicated worship community. These recent summer months have been busy and filled with many good things.

Back in May, Paul Schlaver and I kicked off the “One to One’s” at the church. This allowed folks to spend time with another person from the church and come to know them a little better. We heard many positive stories from these gatherings, especially because it allowed people to learn more about others whom they see often at church. We hope to re-visit

this in October for those who are interested. I encourage you to reach out to someone you'd like to know better from our church community and invite them to coffee or lunch or to share a walk together. It's a nice way to strengthen the bonds within our church community.

We held the Semi-Annual meeting in late June which also went well; reports were shared and it was handled efficiently. People were very positive about all that had been accomplished since January.

During the summer, the Speaker Series committee worked very hard to bring another successful series to the church with interesting speakers who represented a variety of genres. Eileen Foley generously donated a beautiful painting to auction off with the proceeds donated in honor of Anita Shreve to a Boston writer's program. We are deeply grateful for the hard work of the many folks who make this such a successful event. The profits will once again benefit the outreach work of our Mission Committee and the many lives which are touched by the love and support of Union Church.

In late July, we offered a gathering on Yoga, Mindfulness Meditation and Relaxation at the BPCC, with the leadership of Katherine Blaxter, an experienced yoga instructor. About a dozen people showed up for a great introduction to each of these relaxation techniques.

In August, we held a joint event with the Episcopal church in Biddeford Pool. I coordinated a Kid's Yoga intro, again with the wonderful help of Katherine Blaxter. This was then followed by the decorating of cookies which were donated to the In a Pinch Meal at Seeds of Hope.

We welcomed many new and returning visitors to the church over the summer months with larger groups of children in attendance week to week. It certainly brought renewed energy to our time of worship. I really enjoyed meeting some of our summer regulars and had the opportunity to visit with several on an individual basis.

I also continued to support the Pastoral Assistants and the Helping Hands groups. The Pastoral Assistants have been great in offering additional visits to members of our church. Helping Hands have provided meals to those who have wanted some meals delivered and continue to be ready when such needs arise. There have been a number of people from the church who have been dealing with particular challenges, many connected to health concerns, among other things. I have been meeting regularly with a number of people and have reached out to offer visits and support to folks who may need some individual care. We continue to keep them in our prayers.

On September 8<sup>th</sup>, we had a lovely wedding at the church for a local Biddeford couple. The groom serves as a police officer in town so it was nice to meet him and others from the community. We have another wedding scheduled for next June. I am grateful to Ken and Anne Murray who joined me on the morning of the wedding to offer support to the family and guests, as well as me.

Along with our dedicated Deacons, we will be looking ahead to Thanksgiving and the Season of Advent and Christmas. I recently met with a small group to begin planning a retreat for the coming months called "The Long and Winding Road: A Spirituality for the stages of our lives." Earlier in the summer, a meeting was held to discuss developing safety plans in the event of weather, fire, medical concern or other threats to our church community. We are developing a safety plan which we will soon share with the community and we intend to hold an announced fire drill before the weather gets cold.

It continues to be both a privilege and a pleasure to serve as Pastor of Union Church. As we move into the autumn months, I hope that we may all take time to enjoy the beauty of the changing seasons and continue to feel enriched, renewed and supported by our special connections to one another through this wonderful church. If I may be of support to you at any time, I do hope you will reach out and set up a time when we can meet. My very best to all of you.

Blessings,

Pastor Paula

## **News notes from the Union Church Moderator**

By Paul Schlaver

***The start time for our Sunday Worship Service will change from 9:30AM to 10AM beginning with Sunday, October 7<sup>th</sup>. Please take note of this annual transition for the fall and winter seasons.***

The Executive Committee of the church recently met as we begin to review the church's finances in anticipation of developing a budget for 2019. We want to urge all that made a financial pledge for this current year to continue to strive to fulfill that pledge. The Committee also endorsed a developing plan for church safety preparations that can effectively address any potential emergency from a medical emergency in the church, a fire, or an unexpected behavior challenge during the service. We are welcoming the development of a leadership team to step up as needed following some training. Anyone interested should let Pastor Paula or me know of your willingness to be a part of this team.

The Executive Committee is also on the lookout for someone to assume the overall leadership position for the Speaker Series. This person would not be expected to lead other regular program activities in Union Church as the Easter Breakfast, Mardi Gras, Cinco de Mayo., and the annual picnic. Our Fellowship Team of Eileen Foley and Chris Sorrentino are leaders for some of

those events but individual volunteer leaders for some of these gatherings would also be very welcome.

The volunteer efforts of so many in Union Church are so appreciated, and demonstrate constantly what a strong community we have developed here. The calls for cookie bakers by the Mission Committee; helpers at the Saco Meals Program; work crews for the Animal Blessing event; the Speaker Series nights; Sunday Coffee Hour Teams; visitation and meals for people in need and in so many other ways are continually fulfilled by dozens of our church family. The Church leadership team and Pastor Paula cannot ever sufficiently express our appreciation.

Pastor Paula and I would like to re-introduce the **ONE TO ONE Program** in October. We believe it is a fun way to get to know each other a little better because it randomly invites us to have a conversation with someone.....someone we may only know in passing or someone we really have never gotten to know well or about their life outside of church. So for just October and November, on the second Sunday we will let you voluntarily put your name in the basket and then after the service ends pull a name out of the basket. You could simply connect right on the spot during coffee hour and spend some time talking One to One. Otherwise in the days ahead you can connect and choose to meet for coffee, lunch or whatever. Some of us, during the summer, fell behind, meeting our connection duties (me included). Hopefully the fall months will work easier for us to connect.

## **Missions Committee News**

**By Ken Murray**



**The beloved pets of Carol and Bob Sherman, Muffin and Buttercup**

The Union Church Missions Committee has several events scheduled for the Fall that I would like to tell you about:

The annual Blessing of the Animals Service will be held on Sunday, September 23, 2018. In a change from previous practice, the Blessing of the Animals will be held on our church lawn after our regular church service. Worship will be at 9:30 a.m., followed by coffee hour and then the Blessing of the Animals service at 11:30 a.m. It will include...

- Individual Pet Blessings by the Union Church Pastor, Rev. Paula Norbert.
- Each pet will receive a special blessing gift.
- An opportunity to briefly share your pet's story.
- Snacks and water for pets only!



- Opportunity to donate pet food and/or supplies. \*
- Monetary donations to benefit Lucky Pup Rescue and the Animal Welfare Society.  
Checks may be made out to Union Church or to the individual organizations.



Pets must be friendly and either on a leash (dogs), in a carrier (cats), a cage (birds or small mammals) or in fish bowls or terrariums.

\* Towels, blankets, dog beds, pet toys, food and treats.

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Pastor Paula made a special home visit in late August to bless the three ducks and two chickens that Cotton has at his Grandpa Paul Schlaver's home in Saco.

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On Tuesday, November 13, we will provide a light supper meal for the participants in the In-a-Pinch program at Seeds of Hope Neighborhood Center. In-a-Pinch is a non-food pantry program held at Seeds of Hope two Tuesdays a month from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. Different community organizations take turns providing a light meal to those who participate. As we get closer to that time, we will put out a call for volunteers who might like to help cook or bake cookies. Watch for that!

We will also be collecting non-perishable healthy snacks for the 40+ students of the English as a Second Language Classroom at Biddeford Primary School.

And, in December, as we enter the holiday season, we will be providing special holiday celebrations for the students and staff of the Alternative Pathways program of Biddeford High School, as well as for the participants in the Saco Meals Program.

In the meantime, we continue to provide regular financial support to a number of organizations that serve our community and to support two students, one in the country of Belize and one in the country of Kenya. They are in regular touch with us and both students are doing well.



**New Seeds of Hope Housing Initiative:** One of our mission partners, the Seeds of Hope Neighborhood Center, has launched a new initiative aimed at tackling one of the biggest hurdles facing low income individuals who are seeking to rent or find better quality, more stable living space -- the inability to pay up-front the first month's rent plus a security deposit. To address this problem, Seeds of Hope has established a security deposit revolving loan fund, which is funded entirely by grants. Loans for security deposits are offered to eligible individuals who must enter into agreements to repay the loans, at zero interest, over a reasonable period of time. The General Assistance Offices of the cities of Biddeford, Saco and Old Orchard Beach determine an applicant's ability to repay the loans; the Biddeford Saco Savings Institution helps participants establish bank accounts and also provides credit counseling. Seeds of Hope administers the fund and oversees programs on financial literacy and how to be a good tenant. The program started in June. Six security deposit loans have been issued so far and repayments have begun on one of the loans.

**Save the Date – Seeds of Hope Benefit Brunch:** Seeds of Hope’s major annual fundraiser – the Give Thanks ~ Give Hope Benefit Brunch, Silent Auction and Raffle will be held at The Nonantum Resort in Kennebunkport on **Sunday, November 18, 2018** from 10 AM – 2 PM. Tickets for this popular event (\$30 each or \$210 for a table for 8) will be available on-line at [www.seedsofhope4me.org](http://www.seedsofhope4me.org).

***Interested in helping out?*** Would you consider using your creativity and skills to put together a basket or offer a class or adventure for the silent auction or raffle? This could be a fun way to participate even more directly in the event! If you have any questions or for more information, please contact Debbie Lamb (207-475-8505 or [dlamb4711@gmail.com](mailto:dlamb4711@gmail.com)).



For about a week on Facebook, Mona Jerome of Ever After Mustang Rescue in Biddeford, slowly revealed the special story of a horse in her care named Jazz, a 19-year-old horse surrendered to the rescue years ago. Jazz’s secret, which Mona has kept until now, is that he’s



totally blind. Ever After held an open house on Sunday, Sept. 16 for the public to meet Jazz and hopefully raise money to build Jazz a permanent shelter.

A video on the Ever After Mustang Facebook page shows a volunteer guiding Jazz from his stall to an outdoor area. In the evening he's brought back. Sometimes Jazz hits his head. Other times transporting him to an unfamiliar area can be upsetting to him. A new shelter, estimated to cost between \$6,000 and \$7,000, would mean Jazz would have a safe place to live out the rest of his life.

"He didn't go blind right away," Jerome said, adding that his behavior and hesitance to go under saddle indicated that something was wrong.

"When we realized he was going blind, a mule named Grant stepped in to be a very special friend to Jazz."

Grant guides Jazz and sticks by his side.

"Animals are incredible," Jerome said, adding that Grant will live in the new shelter with Jazz.

"You never isolate a horse."

"I couldn't separate them," she added. "Grant feels an obligation to Jazz. It's a very special job." Ever After is located at 363 West St. in Biddeford.

## **Trustee Report**

By Bob Sherman

Landscaping care this year has been overseen by Jan Hryniewicz on the Remembrance Garden and Nancy Bancroft on the front right side of the church grounds. Both areas have been helped by the new sprinkler system installed in the Spring and by care, attention and love from these two special people who have been helped by several church members. Nancy also cut back the growth into the handicapped walkway, enabling full use of these areas for the church services and especially the Speaker Series. Cris Hudson has done a great job in overseeing the care of the two entry planters.

Beginning in Spring, the filter on the basement dehumidifier has been replaced on a monthly schedule rather than a quarterly basis.

Also in the Spring, Paul Brady repaired the damage the hardy-plank siding that occurred over the winter on the north side of the church building. A special thanks to Peter McPheters for helping to make this happen. Thanks to all who helped to set up the church for our Speaker Series.

Tom Craven keeps up with the periodic checks on our defibrillator, has lowered the key lock box to improve accessibility and has made arrangements for Dead River to inspect our heating system prior to the upcoming winter season. A special thanks to Tom for all of his efforts.

No major capital improvements or projects are planned for the remainder of 2018 or for 2019.

A final thanks to the Good Lord regarding the tree which fell near the Remembrance area recently did not do any damage to our Church!

### **Music:**

We continue to be grateful for our wonderful Music Director, Michelle Currie and the work that she does every week behind the scenes to help bring the gift of music and song to enrich our weekly worship. We thank her for a wonderful Music Sunday in August and we thank all of the members of our Church Choir, and their Director, Patricia Mulholland, who grace us with their special contributions each month. Other wonderful musicians will be joining us in the coming months. I know how many of our community appreciate the incredible music that we enjoy at worship each week. This is a very special part of Union Church.

**Michelle Currie's music schedule** for September @ The Front Porch Piano Bar & Restaurant/OGT, ME

WED - 12, 19 & 26 6-10pm;

THURS - Every Thurs. 6-8pm

SAT - Every Sat. 5-9pm;

### **News from Church Member Denise Kinney-**

We congratulate Denise who served as a speaker at the End Alzheimer's Walk in Portland in September. She shared the following with our church recently...

I participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer's on September 22nd. I was diagnosed in April 2017 with dementia.

I was one of the speakers in Portland for the walk. To learn more and to support these efforts, please visit: <http://act.alz.org/goto/DeniseKinneyTeambraintstorm>

## Summer Speaker Series 2018

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Speaker Series was another huge success. With Courtney Sullivan, we were enchanted by her scintillating and funny storytelling. With Bill Roorbach, we were intrigued by his clever short stories. With Richard Foerster, we were moved by his raw and beautiful poetry. With Noah Isenberg, we were entertained by his “front row seat” exploration of *Casablanca*. Although the numbers aren’t yet in, we anticipate our characteristic \$12,000 - \$14,000 in proceeds that will benefit our mission partners.



A hearty round of thanks goes to anyone who

purchased program ads, and to the men and women who worked so hard elevate our Series as one of the best around: Cynthia and Gary Archibald, Nancy and Tom Bancroft, Carol Bassett, Deborah Burke, Jenny Comeau, Jon and Will Couture, Anita Coupe, Tom Craven, Barbey and Ned Dougherty, Eileen Foley and Chris Sorrentino, Cris Hudson, Doug McCrae, Eve and Peter McPheeters, Joyce Morrisette, Katrina and Gary Richardson, Elaine and Lamar Robinson, Bob Sherman, Carole Troy, Bonnie Tallignon, special thanks to Joyce Kennedy, *Coffee* Speaker Series at for her speaker recommendations. thanks to Paula Dutko at volunteers her time and schleps

If rumors are correct, 2019 is Speaker Series! Please see Comeau or Anita Coupe if you’d in this wonderful enterprise on programs.



### ANITA SHREVE SCHOLARSHIP RAFFLE

Here’s the result of the raffle of an Eileen Foley original oil painting to benefit a scholarship set up in Anita Shreve’s name for emerging writers at Grub Street Creative Writing Center in Boston:

**Number of tickets sold: ~ 341.**

**Gross: \$2,900.00.**

**Ecstatic winner: Denise Kinney, who claims (until now), “I never win anything!!”**



and Maureen White. A chair of the *Books & Concordia University*, And a very special Nonesuch Books, who the books year after year.

going to be one amazing Deborah Burke, Jen like to become involved behalf of our mission

You might want to try this practice for 30 days – in your circles, in your meetings, in your own heart. Here are some of my favorite questions that were offered on over the last year:



## Donate some healthy snack items please!

The Union Church Mission Committee has decided to expand the collection of healthy snack for kids promoted during Lent last spring. Starting October 1<sup>st</sup> and for the entire school year we ask asking the Union Church family to bring healthy snack items to church on Sunday and place them in a plastic bin in the front side pew. The focus will be on the first Sunday of each month, communion Sunday. After that service whatever collected will be taken to the Biddeford Primary School on the following Monday. You are welcome to bring in items other Sunday if you cannot attend on the first Sunday.

In the 2017-2018 school year there are 44 kids in the 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade that are in this special program for kids learning English since they speak another language as their first language. The special education teachers we have connected with at this school report that many of these kids come to school hungry and are so happy to receive a healthy snack item to supplement their school breakfast and lunch. The teachers have been using their own cash for these snack items until we connected with them to help.

## **Reflections on Gratitude and Other Important Spiritual Matters....**

You may wish to use the following questions as a focus for prayer and reflection in the coming days...

- 1.What am I grateful for?
- 2.Who can I forgive today?
- 3.What does the dark allow me to see?
- 4.How can I add beauty to life today?
- 5.What is grace?
- 6.What is ending in my life now? How can I hold it with love and compassion?
- 7.If I spoke tenderly to my fear, what would I say?
- 8.What are my recent dreams telling me?
- 9.How have the difficulties in my life helped me to know my resilience?
- 10.What connects me to a sense of the sacred?
11. How can I balance inner work with social action, ever grateful for opportunities to do both?
- 12.What is it that kindles fire within me?
- 13.What do I stand for?
- 14.What would gratefulness whisper in my ear right now?
- 15.What questions am I living into right now?
- 16.Where is that special place in the world that makes you feel peaceful and calm, and that you can carry everywhere in your thoughts?
- 17.What adds delight to my life?
- 18.What does my curiosity want me to follow?
- 19.What kind of experiences leave me in awe?
- 20.When has collaborating with others made something better?
- 21.What are some of my privileges? How might I use them in service of my dreams for the world?
- 22.What would gratefulness “do” right now?

- 23.What vulnerability needs my compassion right now?
- 24.How would my life change if I believed everything is happening for my learning?
- 25.What makes me hopeful?
- 26.What do I learn from moments of awe?
- 27.What has inspired me today?
- 28.What sounds of life nourish me?
- 29.What really matters to me?
- 30.What have I received from my ancestors?
- 31.What opportunity is calling me to be fearless?
- 32.What is one memory for which I am forever grateful?
33. What would I love to do?

(Shared by Anne Murray)

### **Mission**

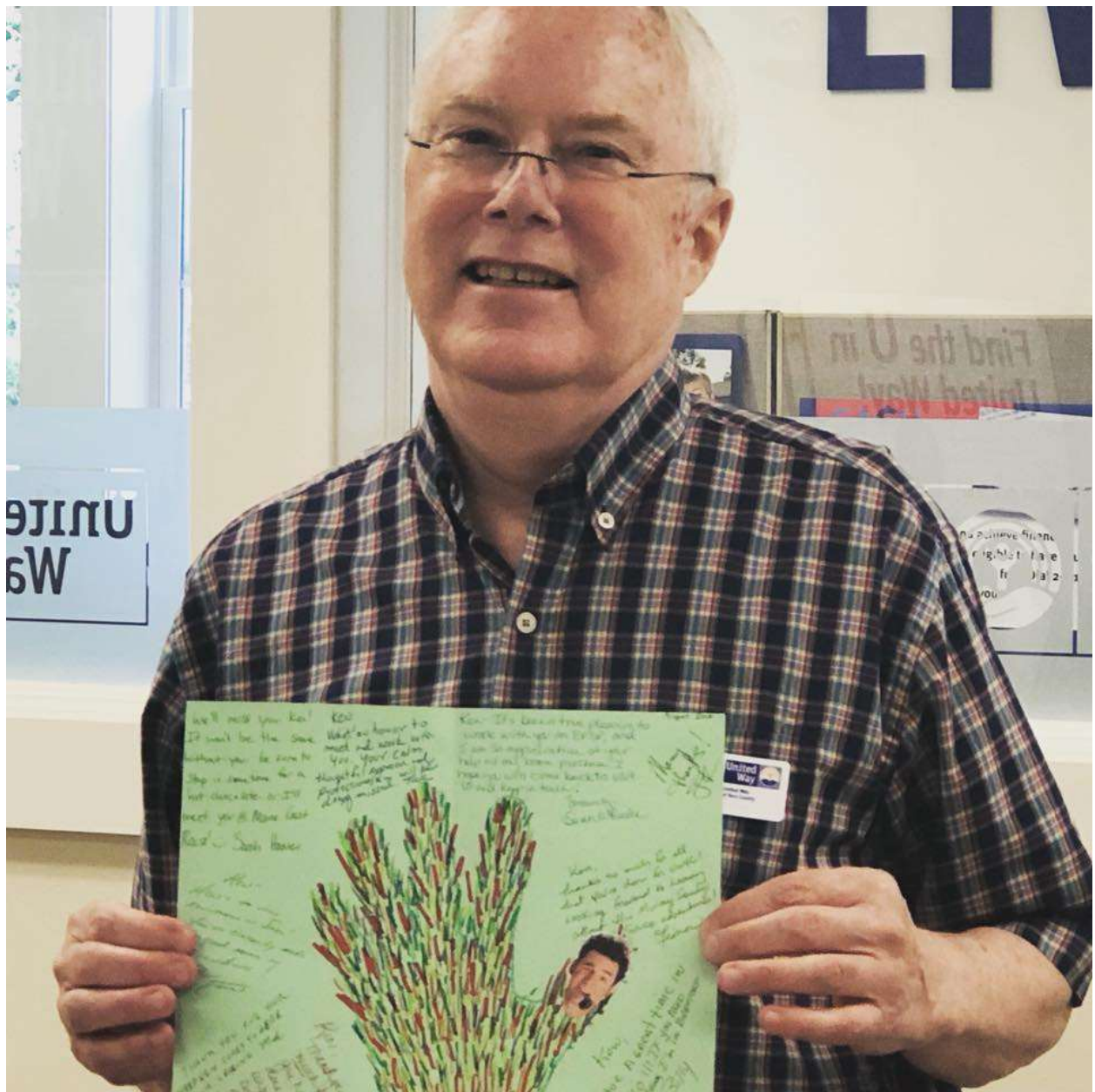
The Knit Wits will be returning to the Alternative Pathway Center every other Wednesday from 10:00 am- 11:30 in the months ahead. They join the students enrolled there in a variety of activities and are a much-appreciated presence of care and love, in addition to the crafts and activities they share. On the off Wednesdays, they will continue to knit at the church office.

Please see attached article and photos from a recent Pie Baking at the Alternative Pathways Center. If you would like more information or wish to help out, please contact Carol Sherman.

### **Summer Activities**

Ken Murray completed his volunteer service at United Way-United Way of York County and was feted him with a lovely potluck luncheon on his final day of regular volunteering there.







APPRECIATE

BUILD  
SOMETHING

CONNECT



DO WHAT IS  
DIFFICULT



EXPLORE



FORGIVE



GATHER



HONOR



IGNORE  
THE SKEPTICS



JUST BE



KNOW YOU  
ARE LOVED



LISTEN



MAKE



NOURISH  
BODY AND SOUL



OBSERVE



PLANT A  
SEED



QUESTION



READ



STRETCH



TRY SOMETHING  
NEW



UNPLUG



VOTE



WONDER



EXPRESS YOUR  
GRATITUDE



SAY YES TO  
ADVENTURE



GET ENOUGH  
ZZZZZ

