



December 2009

Volume 1, Issue 4

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

The executive committee had a great, if somewhat daunting, visit with the Deer Isle church folks December 3. The weather, not the church folks, was a tad daunting – the day of the big blow and heavy rain. As we crossed the famous Deer Isle bridge, tarps covering rails on both sides were so wind-whipped we feared one might blow loose and cover a windshield. Although Alice assured me the previous evening that water would not cover the causeway, alas, it apparently did at high tide. But by the time we adjourned, only spray from the ocean side showered at least my car.

The conversation was great as we learned about the passionate local mission focus of the Deer Isle church and heard suggestions about how the Association and Conference might be more supportive with resources. I already have ideas to take back to the Conference Proclamation, Identity and Communication committee as well as to the Next Generation committee with other thoughts for some future Association meeting programming.

Each time we meet with folks from a local church, we learn more. I hope others will take advantage of our offer to meet at their church. We shamelessly ask only for coffee and a muffin in exchange for good conversation that, I hope, provides yet another way to keep us all connected. Please email me at dgoodman39@myfairpoint.net if you'd like us to visit with your folks.

Wishing you all a meaningful Advent and blessed Christmas,

Denise Goodman

NEWS FROM CHURCHES

Elm Street Congregational Church, Bucksport, Maine

Concert Series: Our church had a concert series this year arranged by our Music Director. Each month brought a new group of people who performed various musical pieces. Groups included the Acadia Handbell Choir and Friends, Dr. Kevin Birch (Organist), Raw Chicken (bluegrass group), The Quintessential Winds, Voices of Peace, The Somerset Consort, Masanobu Ikemiya (Pianist), and in December we will be having the John Bapst Chamber Ensemble. The public was invited to attend these concerts with an attendance fee. Money raised from the concerts went into our building fund. Refreshments were served after each concert.

Sunday School: The Sunday School has been busy with mission projects. The children are collecting bottles and cans. Money raised will go into the building fund. Also, they are collecting soda tabs to help buy a prosthetic leg for a local girl. Finally, a dime and penny jar is placed in the sanctuary to collect money to be used for the Smile Train to help fix a child's mouth. These projects have been a huge success.

Prayer Shawl Knitters: This ministry continues to grow. The group has made over 100 prayer shawls and over 600 prayer squares. The shawls are available to anyone. The prayer squares are given to the troops overseas. This group had a display of their ministry at the Maine Conference, UCC annual meeting this year. The shawls are displayed on a wooden rack in the sanctuary and also in a wooden cabinet in the alcove section of the entryway to Brown Hall.

Bean Suppers: Each month our church held a bean supper to raise money for our building fund. The suppers also included casseroles, salads, rolls, and homemade pies. The cost was affordable and the public was invited to attend. A 50-50 drawing took place each time. Money raised went into our building fund.

Church Directory: Our church worked with the Olan Mills company to put together a new church photo directory. People were invited to participate in this event and the directory was a huge success. We had 51 photo sessions filled and the directory is now off to be published. We are excited to see the results from this event.

Christmas Fair: Our annual fair took place in November. The fair had food booths, booths with crafts and knitting items and there was also a white elephant room.

Food Basket: A basket is placed on a table in the back of our sanctuary to collect non-perishable food items for the Bucksport Community Concerns Food Pantry. Congregation members are encouraged to participate by bringing in canned goods and placing them in the basket. Each week the basket is taken to the food pantry for distribution. Our goal is to fill the basket to the top each week. This goal has been reached on many occasions throughout the year.

Hat and Mitten Drive: Now that colder weather has set in our church is collecting new hats and mittens for the Bucksport Community Concerns Food Pantry. A basket is available in the back of the church to place the items in. The hats and mittens will definitely help keep a child and/or adult warm this winter.

Blue Christmas Service: This service will be on Wednesday, December 16 at 7 p.m. This service is to help people who may be “blue” during the holiday season.

Christmas Eve Service: A candlelight service will be on Thursday, December 24 at 5 p.m. Juan Condori, cellist will perform during the service.

SOMESVILLE UNION MEETING HOUSE, UCC. SOMESVILLE

Christmas Eve Services: 4 pm - a family service, including the Youth Choir singing and the blessing of animals, present or in our hearts. 10 pm - Candlelight Service.

EDITOR’S MESSAGE

Wishing you and those who are close to you a most blessed and wonderful Advent and Christmas season. We are all very busy, shopping, baking, wrapping, mailing, decorating; but let’s not forget the true meaning of this time of year. May you each find a Sacred Space amidst all the activity, a place to be quiet, to think and pray, a place that I call a “thin space”, a place where the distance between you and God is not so far, a place of listening, deep within your heart.

During Advent:

LISTEN for the angel’s song, for the alleluias, for the brush of the angel wings;

LOOK for the stars above a forsaken stable, for a glimpse of eternity in a baby’s smile;

FEEL the comfort of the shepherd’s presence, the hope for peace, the warmth of the candle flickering in a darkened world.

Blessings and Peace to ALL! Pat Butler

Our next “Keeping Connected” issue will be before Lent and we will let you know the exact date.