

FROM YOUR PASTOR:
A Christmas Story

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This story was originally published in the magazine *Women's Day* in 1982 when the family gave permission for it to be used widely in order to share its inspiring message:

It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas --- oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it--overspending...the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and candy for Grandma---the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else. Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way.

Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was wrestling at the junior level at the school he attended; and shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church, mostly black. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes.

As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford. Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class.

Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids--all kids--and he knew them, having coached little league football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came.

That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed an envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me. His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year and in succeeding years.

For each Christmas, I followed the tradition --- one year sending a group of mentally -challenged youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on. The envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure.

ALL SAINTS' CELEBRATION

On Sunday, November 5th we celebrated All Saints' Day and remembered those we have loved and lost in the last year. Please continue to give God thanks for the life and love of these our saints:

Lorrie Meserve Calloway

Peg Cherry

Lilyette Cornish

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

Chris Earle

Ed Gayton

The Rev. Richard M. Hamilton

The Rev. Ralph L. Miller

Deborah Palmer Redfearn

Pete Reed

Roger "Pudge" Rines

Clyde Vasel

The Lewiston Shooting Victims

*"Oh give thanks to
the Lord, for he is
good, for his stead-
fast love endures
forever!"*

~Psalm 107:1

A TIME TO CELEBRATE

Our community of faith had lots of reasons to celebrate on Music Sunday, November 19. Besides singing many of our favorite hymns that day and enjoying (as always!) the music of our choir, we also took time during our coffee fellowship to recognize the retirement of Debbie Greim from her career in nursing with cards and cake and flowers.

Congratulations, Debbie! May God's continued blessings be yours in the days of relaxation ahead!



WORDS OF THANKS FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Our Finance Committee members: Dawn King, Verne Smith, Erica Soiett, Monica McCusker (Financial Secretary), Greg Shaw (Treasurer), Dean Logan (council chair), Martha Palmer (SPRC representative), Sue White (Lay Leader and Lay Member), and the pastor wish to express our sincere thanks to each of you in our church family who have contributed so generously to our general fund and special fundraisers in this calendar year. Your gifts and offerings – monetary as well as time and talents – make a HUGE difference in the ministry we can do for Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

As an example of your generosity, consider these amounts you have shared and worked for so far in 2023: Generosity Tree \$1,240.; Holiday Fair \$ 4,435 (with more still to be added in); Easter special offering \$1,110.; Moxie Days \$2,572.; our Spring Fling \$2,477.; and the autumn yard sale \$2,093. All of which total an amazing: \$13,927! Nearly fourteen thousand dollars!! We are grateful for the many ways you give from the abundance of your blessings.

Our committee wishes each of you the continued blessings of good health and happiness for the year ahead.

ADVENT WORSHIP: OUR WONDROUS LIGHT

In this holy season of Advent our thoughts will turn to Jesus Christ as the Light of the World with the theme of *Our Wondrous Light*. We will worship focusing on these themes:

The First Week of Advent *Our Wondrous Light: Surprising Hope*

The Second Week of Advent *Our Wondrous Light: Just Peace*

The Third Week of Advent *Our Wondrous Light: Fierce Joy*

The Fourth Week of Advent *Our Wondrous Light: Transforming Love*

In these days of chaos the world over and close at home, may this series remind you that our lives of faith are lived in the light of the Christ Child, God's greatest gift of hope, peace, joy, and love for each of us and our world.

























LUMC Mission Statement:

"The Lisbon United Methodist Church welcomes, nurtures, and serves all people with the love of Christ."



Advent Bible Verses

These Bible verses are the perfect way to countdown the days to Christmas and Christ's birth. They will help you reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

 <p><i>Day 1</i> Isaiah 9:6</p>	 <p><i>Day 2</i> Isaiah 7:14</p>	 <p><i>Day 3</i> Luke 1:26-28</p>	 <p><i>Day 4</i> Luke 1:29-33</p>	 <p><i>Day 5</i> Luke 1:34-35</p>
 <p><i>Day 6</i> Luke 1:38</p>	 <p><i>Day 7</i> Luke 1:46-50</p>	 <p><i>Day 8</i> Luke 1:51-55</p>	 <p><i>Day 9</i> Matthew 1:18-19</p>	 <p><i>Day 10</i> Matthew 1:20-25</p>
 <p><i>Day 11</i> Matthew 2:4-6</p>	 <p><i>Day 12</i> Luke 2:1-5</p>	 <p><i>Day 13</i> Luke 2:6-7</p>	 <p><i>Day 14</i> Luke 2:8-9</p>	 <p><i>Day 15</i> Luke 2:10-11</p>
 <p><i>Day 16</i> Luke 2:12-14</p>	 <p><i>Day 17</i> Luke 2:15-18</p>	 <p><i>Day 18</i> Luke 2:19</p>	 <p><i>Day 19</i> Luke 2:20</p>	 <p><i>Day 20</i> Luke 2:21</p>
 <p><i>Day 21</i> John 1:14</p>	 <p><i>Day 22</i> Matthew 2:1-2</p>	 <p><i>Day 23</i> Matthew 2:10-11</p>	 <p><i>Day 24</i> John 3:16</p>	

HOLIDAY FAIR AND SILENT AUCTION

Another successful holiday fair and silent auction was held on Nov. 10th and 11th. Our cashiers, Shane and Erica Soiett, heard many positive comments while folks were checking out. Folks loved the lay out, the idea of having cashiers, and the variety of items for sale. While money is still trickling in, profit is over \$4,200. Thanks to all who made this happen. A special thanks to Bud Cherry, Win Smith, Chris Crosman and Deano Logan whose creativity resulted in some very cute wooden crafts available for sale.

Thirty one local businesses generously donated an item for our silent auction. Notes of appreciation have been sent to all businesses. Several members of the congregation also donated items and we thank you as well. We had a total of 52 items for bidders to place their bids on. The total profit from the auction was \$1,875.

While we had a few “craft afternoons” time ran out and we were unable to finish some of the items we started. I appreciate all those who attended; and were very happy to find things to do for even those who say they aren’t crafty. Is anyone interested in continuing these afternoons to prepare for next year’s fair?

Once again, thank you to all who helped make this a very successful event.

Trudy Duval, Event chairperson



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES OF WORSHIP

December 24 will present a unique opportunity for our community of faith with the occasion to worship TWICE that day! We will gather at 9:30 am for our regular time of worship and celebrate the Fourth Sunday of the season of Advent. We bring this holy time to a close in order to celebrate the gift of Christmas.

At 6:00 pm that same day we will gather to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. The service will include the Scripture lessons of this holy time, the hymns and carols of the season, sharing the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and conclude with candlelight and the singing of *Silent Night*.

Please join us to pause in this hectic time of year to remember the very reason for the Christmas celebration and rejoice in God's gift of love.

Both services will be live streamed over our Face Book page as well.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

It's that time once again when lovely poinsettias and other flowers will adorn our sanctuary. Please share your plants with us for one or all of our services of worship on December 17th, 24th, and 31st. If you would like your flowers in memory of or in celebration of loved ones, please complete the form below PRIOR TO DECEMBER 14. Thanks!



Yes, I will be bringing flowers to worship

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

In memory of: _____

In honor of:

Given by: _____

DRAWING 2023 TO A CLOSE & LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEW YEAR

We will gather for worship at our regular time of 9:30 am on Sunday, December 31st to bring this year to a close with a Watch Night service which is a covenant renewal service and the singing of the hymns of the season.

Then on January 7 we will gather to celebrate Epiphany and the visit of the Wise Men along with the Sacrament of Holy Communion to draw another holy holiday season to a close.

As always, both services will be live streamed on our Face Book page.

A WINTER REMINDER

Don't forget that, if we must cancel worship on a Sunday morning for weather or other reasons, the cancellation will be found ONLY on WCSH, Channel 6. If that is the case and you are able, please turn to our church's Facebook page where worship will be live streamed from the parsonage dining room table as we did for many weeks during the pandemic!

FROM YOUR PASTOR, CONT.

The story doesn't end there. We lost Mike last year due to cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree, and in the morning, it was joined by three more. Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad.

The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation watching as their fathers take down the envelope. Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us.

May you and your family begin or perhaps continue time-honored traditions that celebrate the real reason for this holy season: God's gift of love in Jesus Christ, our Wondrous Light. May we find ways to help that light shine in the year ahead.

God's blessings,

Pastor Elizabeth



BIRTHDAY WISHES



Happy Birthday to the following church members celebrating a birthday in December!

(f you know someone to be added to our list please let Erica Soiett know)

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1- Linda Baldiga | 23- Bud Cherry |
| 4- David Wile | 28- Ryan Moore |
| 5- Randy Jones | |

FINANCE INFORMATION

<u>Newsletter Finance Information - as of November 2023</u>		
Annual Budget Amount	\$	138,160.00
Monthly Budget Amount for Operating Expenses	\$	11,513.33
Total November 2023 Income	\$	8,516.65
Total November 2023 Expenses	\$	7,113.37
Total YTD Income	\$	122,626.61
Total YTD Expense	\$	111,334.25



December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2-Breakfast w/ Santa, 8:30 a.m. Wreath Sales
3-1st Sunday of Advent worship in person & virtually, w/ Holy Comm. 9:30 a.m.	4-Widows' Fel- lowship, 11:30 Outreach Comm, 1:30	5-Choir re- hearsal, 6:30 p.m.	6	7	8	9
10-2nd Sunday of Advent worship in person & virtu- ally 9:30 Evening Circle after worship Deadline for New Beginnings Gift Cards	11	12-Choir re- hearsal, 6:30 p.m.	13	14	15	16
17-3rd Sunday of Advent wor- ship in person & virtually, 9:30	18-Outreach fills fruit bas- kets, 10:00	19-Choir re- hearsal, 6:30 p.m.	20	21	22	23
24-4th Sunday of Advent worship in person & virtually 9:30 a.m. Christmas Eve w/ Holy Comm, 6:00	25	26-Choir re- hearsal, 6:30 p.m.	27	28	29	30
31-Watch Night worship in person & virtually, 9:30						

NOTE: All meetings are held in the Hunnewell Room, unless otherwise noted

Office Hours: Monday 9:00 a.m.-noon (at home) & Thursday 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Friday is the Pastor's Sabbath Day

Other times available by appointment

**LISBON UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

14 School Street

Lisbon Falls, Maine 04252

(207)353-4982

Sunday Worship Service

Sunday Worship

(In Person and Live Stream on Facebook)

9:30 a.m.

*Experienced people are ready to provide nursery
care for infants.*

Please speak with a greeter.

Office Hours: Wednesday: Times Vary

Thursday 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Other times available by appointment

Friday is the Pastor's Sabbath day

Important Contacts:

Pastor: Rev. Elizabeth J. Bachelder Smith

pastor@lisbonumchurch.org

Organist & Choir Director: Debbie Greim

576-8527 dmusicnote@myfairpoint.net

Lay Leader: Sue White

sdwhite071154@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Erica Soiett

212-3713 esoiett@roadrunner.com

Public Relations & Web Info: Monica McCusker

754-9569 mainefyfer@yahoo.com