

A Christmas Wish Come True

We almost all like a good story – which in this calendar year seems more important than ever – especially if it’s a story that makes us feel good. With all the fatigue of 2020, I hope that this story warms your heart and helps you believe that, even in the midst of many concerns, wishes do come true!

Edith Arey was a resident of Florida Avenue in the North Deering neighborhood of Portland. Thirty-five years ago she planted a small balsam fir sapling in her yard. There were other saplings there - all in hopes that one of them would someday be the perfect tree for the annual Monument Square Christmas tree in downtown Portland. Years went by and Arey made her wish known to the city; she was told that the list of those wanting to donate a tree was long. Arey passed away in June of this year, four days prior to her 95th birthday, without ever seeing one of her trees chosen.

The story of the tree’s origin and Arey’s wish were unknown to a forestry supervisor for the City of Portland when he came upon it earlier in November. What was once a little tree was now a 48-foot, 3,400 pound balsam. It was also towering over a nearby house, clearly having outgrown its space. Contact information was left for the homeowner with the hope that the city had found its 2020 tree.

This is where Nancy Arey Cohen, Edith’s daughter, comes into the story; she read a post on the Portland Downtown Face Book page: “This year’s tree is coming all the way from Florida ... Ave in Portland!” Cohen knew that her mom’s dream was going to come true. Sure enough, the home’s owners agreed to donate the tree. In a recent *Portland Press Herald* article, Cohen said of her mom, “Before she died, she commented that it was too bad it hadn’t happened because the trees were so beautiful and could bring so much joy. She was imagining all the children’s faces looking up at it.”

During the week prior to Thanksgiving, Nancy Arey Cohen drove to her childhood home to take photos of the tree in the spot where her mother planted it decades ago. She planned to bring a branch from the tree to her mother’s grave at Riverside Cemetery in Yarmouth.

As Cohen watched the tree go up in Monument Square, she commented, “It’s a Christmas miracle for me. My dad’s office is right there and my mom’s tree is right here and I feel like I’m with them for Christmas,” she said. “It was going to be a tough first Christmas and now it’s a celebratory first Christmas because she got what she wanted.”

May God richly bless your holidays with peace and grace, joy and hope, and, most of all, lots and lots of love.

God’s blessings,

Pastor Elizabeth

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Lay Leader

Thank you!

Evening
Circle

Outreach
Committee

And MUCH
more!

FINANCE NEWS

Every year the Finance committee must approve the Pastor's compensation package before it goes to the annual Church Conference for approval. Due to the size of the committee we were able to gather in person, following CDC guidelines of wearing face coverings and social distancing, and met on Nov. 4th to approve a salary of \$46,000 with \$3,200 for reimbursable accounts.

Earlier this fall we received word that the PPP loan that we received through the CARES Act was forgiven and became a grant. We are grateful for this wonderful news and thank Greg Shaw, our treasurer, for all his hard work and dedication in applying for the loan and completing the paperwork for the PPP Loan Forgiveness Request.

While we give thanks for the monies we received through the CARES Act, we need to remember that we have been unable to have any of our fundraisers this year. Our three annual fundraisers, on an average add \$11,000 to our yearly receipts.

While the promise of a vaccine is certainly welcomed news, 2021 will still be filled with much uncertainty. One thing is for certain; we will still have bills to pay. At our recent finance meeting we discussed ways on how to hold a fundraiser even during these uncertain times.

One idea we want to share with you is the possibility of an on-line auction. Many organizations have turned to this type of event to help with their fundraising efforts. The finance committee will be exploring this idea in the coming months. If you have any experience with on-line auctions we'd love to hear from you. Any auction, live or on-line, needs lots of items that would be of interest to potential bidders. Maybe you would like to purchase a gift card from a struggling small business or restaurant and donate it. Maybe you'd like to put together a themed basket; vacation, pet lovers, food, etc. Maybe with all the spent at home this year, you've been busy at your sewing machine or busy knitting or crocheting and created some beautiful pieces. Maybe you have a service you would like to donate; so many hours cleaning gardens in the spring, washing windows, moving the grass, etc. Please be thinking of what you may be able to contribute to make our on-line auction a success. More information will be available in the coming months.

Trudy Duval

Finance Committee

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10



OUTREACH

Due to Covid-19, this year the Outreach Christmas projects are going to be a little different. This year we are going to partner with the Lisbon schools to provide Christmas food boxes to local families. Students from the schools will be donating the canned goods and non perishables, while the church provides the turkeys, carrots and potatoes. If you would like to donate a turkey, please have it at the church by December 14th. Be sure to sign the sheet on the freezer if you drop off the turkey before that, so we can keep track of them. You can call me at 353-8124 to arrange a drop off.

Our other Christmas project will be donating gift cards to New Beginnings. New Beginnings has recommended \$5 or \$10 gift cards to Dunkin Donuts, \$20 gifts to Wal Mart, and any amount to the following stores: Hannaford, Shaw's, Subway, McDonald's, Burger King, Game Stop, Bull Moose, Dollar Tree and Family Dollar. You can either purchase cards directly or do a cash donation and Outreach will purchase the cards. All donations are due to Pastor Elizabeth by December 5th.

Outreach wishes everyone a Merry Christmas. Stay Safe!

Connie Earle,
Chairperson

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 | 22- | Amber Morgan |
| 4- | David Wile | 23- | Bud Cherry |
| 5- | Randy Jones | 27- | Brad Reed |
| 9- | Amy Dudar | 28- | Ryan Moore |
| | | 31- | Bob Underwood |



THANK YOU FROM SHELIA HARRINGTON

I'm sure many of you don't know me. I am not a member of your congregation but despite that, you have allowed me to use your space for many fundraising events. Most recently with the help of Gwen Rioux and Margaret Logan. We had a fun day in the kitchen baking Pumpkin Peanut butter dog treats to sell as a fundraiser for NEADS World Class Service Dogs.

Yesterday (11/6/20) I was so excited to get the call that I have been matched with a dog!! I started the process in December last year.

These pictures are my handsome boy! He was born April 7, 2019. Currently he is 27" tall and 72lbs.

In December I go to the NEADS training campus for two weeks, I get trained on all the things he has learned in his intensive training since birth.

Even though I have met the required goal of \$8000 that NEADS asks its clients to raise for their dog, my fundraising committee has decided we want to continue to fundraise and help other clients meet their goal. Feel free to join our Facebook group [Service dogs are SUPERHEROES](#) and follow all our fundraising events and adventures!

So thank you all so much for your continued support and prayers. I truly do appreciate all you have done for me.



EVENING CIRCLE

Our meetings will be on hold for now, with the church not having worship in-house. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who have helped us with the drive-thru bean suppers. November supper was the last one until spring. Without the help of all the volunteers, we would not have been able to accomplish this. By helping the Evening Circle, you are helping our church.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas!

Carolyn Jones, President



2020 CHURCH CONFERENCE

Report booklets from our 2020 church conference held in November are available; if you wish to have one, please contact the pastor and it will be mailed to you.

THANK YOU to Dean Logan who assisted with putting documents on the screen for us in our first-ever virtual conference. Your help was greatly appreciated!

CARD MINISTRY

Since May we have collected cards for residents of long-term care facilities and, thanks to your compassion and generosity, have collected over SIX HUNDRED cards. Our next date for collecting will be on December 16 – just in time for Christmas cards! We'll be in the parking lot from 1:00 to 2:00 pm to receive your cards.

CHRISTMAS EVE

As you are aware, we returned to “at home” worship on November 29 in an abundance of caution because of rising Covid numbers in our county and community. We will be taking this one week at a time.

That said, it is impossible to predict whether or not we can be in our sanctuary for worship on Christmas Eve. We will continue to communicate via mail, email, our website (www.lisbonumchurch.org), and with our Face Book page.

If it is a “go,” we may have to scramble to put up a few decorations and bring in a few poinsettias but we are confident that we can make it happen!



LUMC Mission Statement:

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

FROM YOUR LAY LEADER

Greetings from your lay leader!

Merry Christmas! Happy Advent! It is the season of joy and celebration. I can't believe it's already here!

Advent brings a time of anticipation. Perhaps in this crazy new time, our anticipation can be felt in our hearts and bodies in an intense way. Peace will be with us, through the love of God and neighbor. We look forward to relief from the anxiety of covid and a chance to be with one another in a calm setting. With God's help, we will be able to relax with one another. This does not mean that we can relax right now! In order to allow peace to come, we still have to do the creative work necessary to keep each other safe.

Hope is with us as we pray for a better time. We know that hope is real, because God sent Jesus to be with us. God will continue to give us hope through the Holy Spirit. Hope gives us the strength to carry on with patience.

Joy is all around us. We can experience the joy of our church and families. I feel such joy listening to my grandchildren talk about all their accomplishments and the babies saying "hi,hi,hi,hi..." on speaker phone. We can express joy through music and art, creating cards for our monthly distribution to nursing homes, and phoning our friends. And most of all, the coming of the Christ child.

Love surrounds us as we go about our daily lives. We are God's beloved children. God takes care of our hearts and souls. We truly understand God's gift of love at Christmas time. The baby in the manger reminds us that God loves us so much, God gave us God's beloved son. Jesus came to live with us so that we can understand God's love in a tangible way. Because we receive so much, we can't help but share it with others. Love of neighbor is love of God. Saint Theresa told us that we can see Jesus' face in every person we meet.

I recently watched a tribute to Ruth Bader Ginsberg. She was truly an amazing woman. She used her great intellect to help others, not only as a lawyer but as a friend, spouse, and parent. She was able to have a wonderful friendship with Justice Scalia through their love of opera. Even though they disagreed on many things, they shared the joy of music together. RBG felt the joy of music so much, sometimes her body trembled. As a patron of the arts she was invited to be an extra in some operas. In the video, you can see the smile start with her mouth and overtake her entire body. She also dispensed many words of wisdom. She liked to explain that politics and the law is like a pendulum, giving us hope that when things get too crazy the pendulum will swing back. You can find videos of RBG on Youtube. She was surely an inspirational child of God.

I have started attending the conference zoom bible study on Sunday night. It is called "It is Enough: a Racism Bible Study" by Rev. Michael C. Johnson. The first week was on The Sin of Discrimination. The scripture of that week was Numbers 12:1-2. The second week was "The Sin of Lynching. The third week will be "The Grace of Kindness", and the Fourth week will be "The Risk of Speaking Up & The Grace of Inclusion". The benefit of going to a conference wide study is the chance to hear the voices of people who are not in our little "bubble" here in Maine. There is always more to learn.

FROM YOUR LAY LEADER, CONT.

I have finished reading *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi. This book is a history/non history book (as the authors claim) explaining how we got to this place of systemic racism in the United States. I learned some things, and realized some things that I already knew. One of the basic ideas in the book is that if you hear something repeated enough by those in power, you come to believe whatever is being said. We, as a culture, have come to believe that black people are somehow less-than white people. We believe that black people are poor, criminals and drug addicts. I believe that people cannot be lumped into categories like that. I certainly wouldn't like it if someone told me that white older women have nothing to contribute to society. Oops, I think that may have happened at one time! While reading some parts of the book I felt shame and remorse for how my ancestors behaved. My people came over on the Mayflower. They treated indigenous people badly, and may have felt that they needed saving from being savages. This is the same way blacks were treated by some of the southern preachers and slave owners. While reading this book I noticed that we are not the only people who find all this confusing. Our founding fathers certainly lived contradictory lives. Thomas Jefferson wrote about equal rights, all the while keeping slaves because it was profitable. I learned some other tidbits that surprised me. Woodrow Wilson showed the racist film, "Birth of a Nation" in the white house. (This film was sponsored by the Klu Klux Klan.) The March on Washington by Martin Luther King had a guest list controlled by John F Kennedy. Black women, James Baldwin, and Malcolm X were excluded. The Black Power movement and the Black Panther Party for Self Defense worked for better housing, full employment, better education, the end of police brutality, juries of peers, peace, breakfasts for children, health care, and political education. Why did we only hear about insurrection and violence? Nixon used the code word "thugs" to describe blacks. Ronald Reagan ran on a law and order platform while crime was actually declining. As a result millions of black people were jailed for having 5 grams of crack, while whites went free while carrying 500 grams of cocaine. The term "crack baby" was coined during that time. Science has since disproved that addicted babies are destined to be inferior. Finally, in 2000, the science that all humans are the same under the skin, was accepted. It has taken a very long time, but we are getting there. Perhaps the next time you refer to someone as a "black sheep", or you talk about "blackballing" someone, or you note a case of "blackmail" you will think twice about your language and where it might have come from.

The next book I will be reading is *Caste: The Origins of our Discontents* by Isbel Wilkerson. I hope to get even more perspective from this book.

On the lighter side, did you hear about the owl in the Christmas tree? The tree that was set up in Rockefeller Center had a Saw-whet owl in its branches. The owl was named "Rockefeller" and was rehomed at a wildlife facility.

Country music fans will be glad to hear that Dolly Parton sponsored a Covid-19 vaccine. She donated \$1 millions dollars to covid research. Talk about loving your neighbor. She said, "I just felt so proud to have been part of that little seed money that will hopefully grow into something great and help to heal this world." She's the embodiment of Advent, for sure.

Peace, Hope, Joy, and Love to you all, *Sue White*

**Lisbon United
Methodist Church**

14 School Street
Lisbon Falls, Maine 04252
(207)353-4982

Sunday Worship Service

Sunday Worship
9:30 a.m.

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

Please speak with a greeter.

Office Hours: Monday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Other times available by appointment

Friday is the Pastor's Sabbath day

Office Phone Number: 353-4982

Parsonage Phone Number: 407-4406

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

Custodian: Shane Soiett
212-8316 ssoiett@roadrunner.com

Public Relations & Web Info: Monica McCusker
754-9569 mainefyfer@yahoo.com