**Canaan Union Church**

**314 Main Street**

# Canaan, Maine

**October 07-13, 2012**

**Sunday School 9:30 AM**

**Sunday Morning Worship 10:15 AM**

**Pastor: Diana J. Perkins**

**Send your letters to: Canaan Union Church**

**P. O. Box 1642**

**Waterville, Maine 04903-1642**

**We are very thankful for the wonderful friends and family who support this ministry year after year. God bless you.**

**Today, I read a story about a family who had been awakened by a stranger who was passing by their house late one night and he saw smoke coming out of their house. It was Thanksgiving evening and everyone had gone to bed exhausted from the family celebration that day and the rooms were crowded with several family members who were visiting for the weekend. The stranger pounded on their door and woke the family and everyone escaped injury. However, with all the excitement and shock of the event, the man slipped away into the night and no one knew his name. The family owned a motel next to their house and the desk clerk told them that a man in a pick- up truck had stopped, ran into the motel and told the clerk to call the fire department and then he ran outside to alert the family and made sure that they were out of danger before leaving the scene. Every Thanksgiving since that day, the family gave a special blessing for the man who saved their lives and asked God to allow them to one day thank him in person. Twenty-five years passed and it seemed that they would never get an opportunity to know who the stranger was that cared enough to stop and alert the family of a fire. The couple retired, sold their home and motel and dedicated their time to traveling around the country side building churches, dormitories and camps. They volunteered their services and were most grateful to God for watching over their family. One year, twenty five years after they lost their home due to the fire, they were visiting their oldest son during Christmas Day. As had been their ritual for many years, they prayed for the man who had saved their family from death and asked God to bless him, his family and if it would be God’s will, please allow them to meet him so they could thank him also.**

**Later that week, they went to meet the carpenter who was the supervisor for the volunteer work that the couple had committed to be involved with. They went to Ray’s house to pick up a tool trailer and he invited them in for coffee and told them that he would like to get to know them better as they were all going to work as a team on a building project. They sat around a table drinking coffee and eating snacks and soon they were sharing experiences of their lives. Ray, the carpenter, began to share stories about building houses in Portland, Texas, some twenty-five years ago. The couple mentioned that they had owned a hotel, restaurant and home in that area at that time. Ray asked a few questions about the location of their business and the name of the hotel. He sat quietly for a few minutes and then he turned to his wife and said, “Bonnie, remember the story that I told you about the hotel that was on fire years ago?”All of a sudden it dawned on the couple that they were facing the very person who had taken the time to alert them of the fire that destroyed their home and had saved their lives. God answered their prayer after twenty-five years.**

**I thought of a time that I was visiting a home and for some reason we went into their barn. Scattered on the floor of the barn were slides, hundreds of little square negatives that were popular back in the 60’s and 70’s. I was surprised to see an opened carrying case with these slides strewn around on the barn floor. I asked some questions and learned that a man who had worked for a moving company had stolen the brief case thinking that it held valuables only to learn that it was the family’s keepsake slides. He had discarded it in the barn as it was not something that he could sell to make money. Several years had gone by and the case wasn’t valued by anyone. I asked if I could have the contents and there were several pages of notepaper enclosed that listed the names of people and places all over the world where the pictures had been taken.**

**We had a slide projector and when I realized it was a soldier’s brief case, I asked God to help me find the owners. When I left that day, I had hundreds of slides and the notes that went with the pictures, but it was a challenge to match up the pictures with the correct description. My children and I spent hours looking at beautiful scenes all around the world and we realized that this was a Christian family as there were quite a few pictures of baptisms and church events. The family consisted of six children along with the soldier and his wife.**

**On one page, there was an address listed in Massachusetts and I connected a name with it and sent a letter describing what I had and asked if there was a soldier who had lost his brief case when they had hired a moving truck. I enclosed a phone number and a couple weeks went by and one day my phone rang. My letter had arrived at the house of the soldier’s mother and she said the family was just thrilled to learn that someone had their slides. It represented years of serving in the military and travelling around the world. Their children’s pictures were all contained in that brief case. I packaged up them up and sent them on their way. Every year, I too received an update on the family and a beautiful Christmas card thanking me over and over for taking the time to find the rightful owners. They knew that their brief case had been stolen by the employee of the moving company, but they could only get the dollar value of the pictures and no money could replace the treasures that had been stolen from them.**

**A small act of kindness and compassion may seem like a small thing to the giver, but to those on the receiving end, it can mean a great deal. Jesus performed many miracles and it wasn’t hard for him to turn water into wine, but to the wedding host, it was very much appreciated. The wine was declared better than what had been served for the guests at the beginning of the evening. When Jesus healed the ten lepers, one turned back and came and fell at his feet to thank him. Jesus was pleased that one returned to say “Thank you” but he asked where the nine lepers were that also were healed. They didn’t bother to come back to say “Thanks.”**

**The Lord provides helpers to his people and many times we benefit from the kind acts of those who take time to lend a hand.**

**When you have an opportunity, be sure to respond to the needs of others that are around you. Life is sweeter and more meaningful when you take time to reach out to those who are in need of help and when it your turn to be on the receiving end, remember to say “Thanks.” Pastor Diana**