**Canaan Union Church**

**314 Main Street**

# Canaan, Maine

**December 23-29, 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**

**Wishing all my friends and family a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful and prosperous New Year. Thanks for all the cards and letters we have received this holiday season. What a gift!!**

**It seems that Daisy Perkins’ always had a heart for children. She married David, her high school sweetheart. He was a sheriff and they made their home in Readfield, Maine. It seems like life has a way of setting up roadblocks and hardships are nature’s way of keeping things in balance. So it was for the Perkins’ couple. It was not meant to be that they would ever have children of their own. They were a wonderful, caring couple and they attended the Nazarene church every Sunday and stayed active in their community. Daisy taught a Sunday school class and worked at Hussy Hardware store for many years. Daisy began to notice a family nearby her home that seemed to need attention. There were nine children in the family and they looked disheveled whenever they met or if they walked by Daisy’s house. Daisy began to feel a nudge from the Holy Spirit to get acquainted with those children. One day she got her courage up enough to rap on the neighbor’s door. A tired looking woman answered the door and Daisy asked if she could pick up the children for Sunday school on Sunday mornings. The woman said that she didn’t care; she could use a few hours of peace and quiet. She asked if Daisy wanted all nine of them. The answer was “yes.” Daisy also asked for the children’s clothing and shoe sizes while she was there and she carefully wrote it down in her little note pad that she carried in her purse. Her wheels were turning and she began to calculate what time she would have to get up on Sunday morning to get these children presentable for Sunday school by 10:00 AM.**

**One night after work, Daisy and David went shopping for some clothing and shoes for the children. By the evening’s end, she had everything she needed to get nine children ready for church. The church was close by so she figured if she picked the children up by 7:00 AM then she would have time to get them bathed and dressed and into the classroom by 10:00. It took a bit of practice to get a routine so everyone was bathed and dressed and in the small bus every Sunday, but soon it became a pattern that the children knew and things went a lot easier. Some of the congregation picked up on the project and soon clothing was donated to Daisy and she cared for the children as though they were her own. The children began to call her “Ma Perkins.” She loved them and prayed for them daily asking God to protect them and give them an opportunity to have eternal life and a good life here as well.**

**When David passed away suddenly, Daisy suffered a great sense of loss. How would she ever fill her life without her beloved husband by her side? One day while she was working at Hussy’s Hardware store, she got a phone call. The Department of Human Services had been called in on the large family that Daisy had grown to love and the authorities were going to take the children away from their mother because of neglect. Daisy’s heart sank and then she had a thought. “I could quit my job at the hardware store and stay home and raise the family,” she thought. She could hardly wait to get home to start making phone calls. The director was kind, but rather skeptical when Daisy asked to take the whole family of children into her home. “Do you really know what you are getting yourself into?” she asked. You are a widow without children and you are interested in taking in nine children all at once from one family? Daisy told her how that she had been picking these children up every Sunday, bathing them, giving them food to eat and transportation to church and yes, she did want to finish raising them. There was a process that Daisy had to go through but before very long, all nine of the children came to live with her. Daisy did amazing things with these children. She had some rules that she enforced. Everyone went to church on Sunday morning unless they were ill. There were no exceptions. No drinking alcoholic beverages in her home and no smoking were allowed. Everyone had chores to do to keep the household running smoothly and laziness was not tolerated. Everyone was important in the house and felt needed and there was love and praise given for jobs well done. Over the course of her child raising career, she took in over 175 foster children into her home. One great memory of one of the men who was raised in her home was a trip that she saved for and planned for them so they could go to California on a bus. She took all nine children to California and they had the best time of their lives. Every Easter, she passed out presents to all the children in her care. There were always two new complete sets of clothing in those carefully wrapped packages. They were worn just to church, but every one of those children looked neat and well dressed as they walked down the aisle of the church to take their place in the pews. The wonderful congregation of the Nazarene church would leave bags and boxes of clothing on her doorstep following Sunday service. Daisy would carefully examine each item and if the clothing was in excellent condition, the children were handed articles to put in their dresser to wear to school. Most of the children who grew up with Daisy have become good citizens and are still faithfully attending church and bringing up their own children much the same way that Daisy brought them up. Her godly character and discipline paid well.**

**Gene, who works in our office, speaks highly of Daisy. Didn’t know what might have become of him if Daisy hadn’t reached out and insisted that the nine children stay together under one roof, her roof. What a wonderful gift she was to the children and they were to her. I expect that her reward will be great in the kingdom of God. Gene speaks about her with great pride and respect.**

**The calling that Ma Perkins stepped into was an act of faith. Not everyone would be able to fill those shoes, but she gladly stood up to the challenge and put on her servant’s apron and went to work.**

**When I see Gene working in our office, I think of the woman who raised him to accept responsibility, to work hard and to share with others who have less than we do. It didn’t surprise me when Gene told me that there was a family gathering just before Daisy died. The whole family decided to pool their resources together and to help the pastor’s family who had fallen on hard times. They had the best Christmas ever just watching the happiness that was expressed by the humble pastor and his family. God Bless all!**