**Canaan Union Church**

**314 Main Street**

# Canaan, Maine

**January 06-12, 2013**

**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**

**Welcome to the New Year 2013. We pray that this New Year will bring blessings to you and your family.**

**Lately I have been watching how people relate to children around me. Since the story hit the newspapers concerning the little children who were gunned down in Connecticut, I have pondered much about our society and the way that children are viewed in our culture.**

**When I was recuperating in the hospital years ago when I had my babies, I recall a young girl who had to be coaxed to feed her baby, to hold her baby or to even spend time with the little one. I remember thinking how strange for I was thrilled to have a baby and every child that I brought into this world, the nurses would ask me if it was my first child. I thought of them as a special gift from God and I spent every minute that I could care for them. I often wondered how the little baby fared whose mother ignored her needs and had to be coaxed to sit up and tend to the baby.**

**Over the years I have seen parents who were indifferent to their children’s needs and treated them as “property” rather than an inheritance from the Lord.**

**Last week, Leroy and I went to a local restaurant and every table was filled with people. We were seated by a window and could view everything that was going on around us. My eyes were drawn to a corner where a young couple sat and a gray haired lady also was seated with them. There was a baby that I guessed to be less than six months old, but not a newborn. As soon as they all were seated and had given their order to the waitress, the older lady whom I guessed to be the grandmother, reached over and took the baby from the carrier and held him close to her face. She kissed his cheeks and began to coo and talk softly to him. He immediately began to coo back and swing his little fists and arms and kick his legs in delight. Soon it was if they were the only two in the room for it was a joy to watch the interaction between the two of them. Grammy continued talking to him and he responded so positively to her voice. There was a love relationship that was being nurtured and I imagine it will be there for the rest of the lady’s life. I wondered if she was thinking back to her own son when she held him in her arms at that age. I thought of her as an energetic young mother who was nervous about caring for the first baby and hoping that she was doing everything right. Perhaps she even took childhood classes or read books about raising children, but now she snuggles up to the grandson with confidence for she has spent many hours tending to children over the years.**

**This baby boy was wanted, loved and is being raised to know that he is important to the family that God placed him in.**

**As I pondered about the blessing that I received watching a loving interaction between a small baby and his family, I wondered what kind of world we would have if every child was treated in this manner. If every baby was loved, nurtured and cared for by loving parents and the extended family took responsibility for the upbringing of their offspring, how different our world would be.**

 **If every father and mother loved each other and raised their children to be loving, kind, and caring individuals, we would all enjoy safer communities and happier families.**

**When the communities were settled over 200 years ago, the church was a vital part of the planning. A church was placed in the center of the town and the community was built around it. The people looked to the parson to preach the Bible and give them instruction on how to live their lives and how to raise their family to be God-fearing. Slowly but surely the Bible has lost its importance to a lot of people and the educational institutions no longer regard it as sacred or important to their lives.**

**Too many people look only to satisfy their own wants and desires and God has no room in their busy schedules.**

**I well remember the day that our daughter invited a young teenager to live with them and welcomed Tiffany into our family as one of us. Tiffany was a bright young woman but had not had the opportunity to have good positive role models in her life. Sonja immediately started working on building a solid foundation into this girl’s life and even though years had gone by and the neglect and lack of parental expertise were evident in her mannerisms, it didn’t take too long for some new growth to be seen. Love and kindness, acceptance and praise sprinkled with discipline and boundaries started taking root and soon she was blossoming into a wonderful Christian young lady. Within a few years she married a sweet tempered young Christian man and he also became part of our family. Both of them have been nurtured and guided by the loving hands of Sonja and David. I realized how much they mean to all of us this year when the day before Christmas Eve, Tiffany became ill and had to be hospitalized. Our grandchildren didn’t want us to celebrate Christmas without her and Chris. Tiffany called Sonja for comfort and encouragement. Even though she had endured an operation, Tiffany begged to be released so she could be home with all of us for Christmas. The doctor released her and it amazed me how much she was willing to endure just to be home for Christmas.**

**Some of the best gifts I received were the hugs that I got from my family and extended family. I got teased about the plaid wrapping paper that I bought on sale so many years ago and because it was so cheap, I bought many rolls of it in various colors. Everyone knows who the present is from just from the purple, blue, red and green plaids that display the word SCOTCH on the inside. It has been a trademark of mine with the grandchildren for the many years that I have used it on their gifts. Tiffany and Chris always give us notes that thank us for being a Mammy and Pepe to them and they say we are the best in the world. Memories like these are a blessing and as we watch the children grow older and the grandchildren grow up to be adults, I can’t help but wonder, “Have I done my very best to raise our family to be desirous of being citizens of heaven?” I’ve learned that love increases and multiplies and it never goes out of style. May God place love in your hearts so you will be able to spread the light of his nature to all who come in contact with you. AMEN**