**Canaan Union Church**

**314 Main Street**

# Canaan, Maine

**February 03-09, 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**

**This ministry has been blessed with many friends and family who have supported this endeavor in so many ways. Thanks!**

**On the outskirts of the Louisiana border is a small stretch of road called Possum Trot. People from East Texas call it “back in the woods” and so it is. There are no paved roads and no traffic lights. You won’t find shopping malls or even a MacDonald’s restaurant for miles around, but there are some good hearted people who have their priorities in the right place that make up this little community. There is a little church called “Bennett Chapel” on the edge of town and the good pastor and his family serve the Lord and their community and are greatly respected by all who know them.**

**Donna, the pastor’s wife, was one of seventeen children and she had a very special mother. Her mother treated everyone of her children with loving discipline and lots of encouragement. She was the children’s rock for she never talked down to them or belittled them. Her love was unconditional and she taught them to love God and to care for each other.**

**When her mother died, Donna was heartbroken and grief stricken. She couldn’t stand the thought of going on with life without her mother. She had a wonderful husband and two children, but every day was filled with thoughts of her loss. One day after her husband had left for work and her children had gone to school, she sat down and sobbed, “Lord, I can’t take this anymore. Please help me to move forward.” She walked out the back door and sat under an old oak tree and started to rock herself back and forth, back and forth. Her crying subsided and she began to think about God and what he would have her do. Suddenly words entered her mind with these thoughts, “Think of all the children who don’t have what you had in a mother. I want you to give them that.” The folks that she and her husband ministered to in Possum Trot were all good, loving families. None of them had an abundance of wealth; they all worked in the flooring plant nearby or at Tyson Chicken over at the center. Most of them lived in double wide trailers on neatly maintained lots and not one of them drove an expensive vehicle, but they were a peaceful loving church going community and very close knit. Where would she find children that needed a mother?**

**Suddenly it came to her clear as crystal, “Adopt children from foster care.” She hurried back into the house, took down the phone book and found the number to call to sign up for Foster Care Parenting Classes. She would have to travel 60 miles to attend the classes and that evening she was so excited that she could hardly wait to share the idea with her husband and her sister. They were not as enthused as Donna with the whole idea, but with her encouragement, the three of them attended their first class a short time later. They heard horror stories of children who had been physically, emotionally and sexually abused. Stories of neglect and mistrust were exchanged and words of caution were expressed by the state case managers. Donna and her sister, Dianne drove twice a week to the meetings and after two months were certified to be foster parents. As the two families began to take children in and give them a home, over 100 church members began to show interest in getting involved with reaching out to children who needed a home and family. Donna made arrangements for the Child Protective Agency to give classes at their church at Possum Trot. As time went by 76 children were placed and many were adopted by the wonderful Christian community of Possum Trot. The families shared stories and gave each other encouragement and ideas and though there were troubled children who stole things, were disobedient and rebellious, the loving kindness of this congregation won them over eventually and all of them are doing well today.**

**It has been quite a few years now since the day that Donna felt despair and couldn’t seem to get past the death of her best friend, her mother. She has been an inspiration to the women in her congregation and has been a mentor when problems arose with the children who were placed in their community. Yet God has been faithful and the children have grown to become responsible adults. Many of them are attending college and some have plans to become social workers to help other children who need assistance. They have all graduated from high school and they have jobs at the flooring plant and at Tyson. Some have married and are raising children and attend the church where they grew up. Many people call it a miracle, but it was a two way miracle. The more love that was extended, the more love grew among them. The closer the congregation got to God and depended on him for guidance, the closer they were drawn to each other. “Every child is special and deserves to be loved.” Those words from Donna’s mother never left her and she carefully planted them in every one of the children’s hearts that were placed in the many homes at Possum Trot. It became the community that love built.**

**If you read and study the Word of God, one thing will come loud and clear. God doesn’t want us to focus on our losses; he wants us to focus on what we have left. If you bring your sorrows to him, he will turn it into joy. The heroes of the Bible all suffered great losses, yet when they trusted God, He blessed them with prosperity and abundance. Read the stories of Joseph, Leah who was the mother of the sons of Jacob, and the story contained in Exodus chapter 2 concerning the birth of Moses. Moses was taken from his mother and raised in the king’s palace. However because of his mother’s faith, God called him to be a deliverer of his people.**

**The mother I think of so often is Mary for she suffered great loss as she saw the abuse that her son, Jesus, suffered in his lifetime. She was in deep sorrow as she stood at the foot of the cross and witnessed his death. Yet, she was included in the Upper Room when the Holy Ghost fell on the believers. All nations call her “blessed” as Jesus provided salvation to the whole world.**

**Open your hearts to the Lord and allow his Holy Spirit to direct you in ways to bring glory to his name and to be a blessing to others. You will rise above the sense of loss and joy will fill your life as God opens doors for you to invest your talents into other people’s lives. Freely you have received! Freely Give! Matthew 10:8. What God has given to you, pass out to those around you!**