**Canaan Union Church**

**314 Main Street**

# Canaan, Maine

**August 25-31, 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**

**I always look forward to picking up the mail at the post office. Thank you so much for sharing with us in this ministry. Your letters of encouragement mean a great deal.**

**A short while ago, a friend gave me a stack of “Guideposts” magazines. I was happy to take them as I love reading them though it has been a few years since I bought annual subscriptions. As I started reading the short stories, my thoughts went back many years ago when I saved every Guidepost magazine and read them over again and used the recipes that were included from time to time to make treats for my children. The stories gave me ideas for lessons that I later used to teach the Bible to my Sunday school class. I never felt like I could part with any of my stash. One day I learned that my niece, Priscilla Bingham, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She was only 35 years old and she had two young children who would be without a mother in a short time. Since Priscilla lived in Las Vegas and I lived in Maine, the only way I could communicate with her was by phone or e-mail. I talked to her about spiritual matters and we shared Scriptures back and forth by e-mail on the computer. I started saving the e-mails because I wanted to make sure her little girls had some memories of their mother and I planned on sending them when she was no longer with us. When the time was right, I sent them to Priscilla’s husband to save for her children. One day I received my copy of Guidepost in the mail and the whole magazine was faith building and contained stories of how people coped with health issues through prayer. I thought of Priscilla and decided to send the book on to her. When she received it, she immediately wrote that she read it from cover to cover and it had lifted her spirits. I thought about my large stash of the magazines that I had in my closet and decided to send her a few at a time to give her mail and let her know that I was thinking of her. It wasn’t long before I received the note, “Auntie, thanks for the magazines. I have a little basket in my bathroom that I put them in so when I am sick I can read them. They help me a lot.” After I sent a few “care packages” to her, I received this note: “Auntie, how thoughtful you are! I am putting baskets around my house. I now have one on the kitchen counter, one near my favorite chair, and I will put one in my bedroom. I read the stories every day and it helps me think about positive things and gets my mind off my problems for short periods of time.” I read every one that you send. They lift my spirits and give me hope.**

**A couple days went by that I didn’t hear from Priscilla and when I phoned her house, I was told that she had been taken to the hospice hospital because she didn’t have much time left. When I asked for prayers for her at church, the congregation gave me a gift of money that was enough to buy a plane ticket to be with Priscilla. How surprised she was when I walked into her room. I didn’t recognize her for she had been sick for a long time. When she opened her eyes and saw me, she announced that she needed to go home to be with me. The nurses got her ready and she and I spent a week together with her family. I spent hours telling them about God and what heaven is like according to Scriptures. I wheeled her in a wheel chair around the neighborhood and made sure that she enjoyed the spiraling sprinkling system that one neighbor had watering his luscious lawn. Pushing her through the spray of water that day was wonderful for on the other side, a rainbow had formed right in front of us. I reminded Priscilla that God promised to never destroy the earth with water again and his rainbow in the sky is a reminder for every generation that He keeps his promise. The Lord Jesus Christ promised that He was going away to prepare a place for us and if he went away, he would come back and receive us that where he is, there we may be also. Death is not the end; it is the beginning of eternity with the Saints of God and our Lord Jesus Christ who have gone on before us. He promises to return in the clouds and every eye shall see him and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Just as sure as the rainbow in the sky is God’s covenant to his people, he has promised many things to all people who believe and trust him as their Lord and Savior. Priscilla smiled all over when we talked about the land that is fairer than day. By faith we can see it afar. And the Father waits over the way; to prepare us a dwelling place there. In the sweet by and by, we will meet on that beautiful shore. I sang to her and she hummed along. One of her favorite songs was called “Peace in the Valley”. I never hear that song without thinking of Priscilla and the peaceful countenance she had when I said “goodbye” to her for the last time. God allowed me to walk with her through the valley of the shadow of death and she didn’t have any fear for she was not alone. God didn’t choose to heal her on this side of life, but I am sure she is in a better place where she is waiting for her loved ones to join her in eternity.**

**Everyone has something to offer others if they take the time to consider their gifts. Often I cook food to share with our church family for it brightens their day and they look forward to spending time together. Other times I include a short note for those who receive the bulletins. It takes a bit of time, but it means a lot to those who are in prison to get a personal note.**

**I often share my books that are precious to me. I love to gain knowledge and books are my friends. If someone can benefit from a book that I have enjoyed, I pass it on to them. It may seem like a small thing that comes to your mind, but to the person to whom you extend kindness and friendship, it could mean a great deal.**

**The more you think of others and extend a helping hand, the more blessings will come back into your own lap. When you take your mind off your own problems and focus on lifting others up, the better you will feel and the happier you will be. There is a song that says, “Blessings after blessings keep on following me.” I can testify to the fact that this is true. My mailbox brings me happiness every week for when I send the word of God to you, so many of you send special greetings back to me. Thank you!**

**May God richly bless your life and may you keep investing in the kingdom of God for you will receive rewards here in this life and you will discover that rewards will be waiting on the other side. Invest your time wisely for it is a great gift from God and it is too precious to waste. Pastor Diana**