**Canaan Union Church**

**314 Main Street**

# Canaan, Maine

**March 2-8, 2014**

**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**

**Over the years I have changed my view and definition on what describes beauty. I want to share some stories with you of people who have made an impact on my life and given me an opportunity to see beauty in lives of ordinary people. Irene is a special person. She and her husband, Ken, have spent many hours in our home helping to wrap Christmas presents for needy children and have come to our Christmas parties to share fun and games with co-workers. Irene has suffered many losses within her family, some who have died of cancer, yet she has always been willing to participate in whatever projects we have going for those less fortunate than we. On one occasion, I had given her some small stuffed animals, several bags of candy, ribbon and baggies to make gifts for veterans at the nursing homes. She was called to the hospital to be with a sick loved one. She took the project with her and worked on it while she waited to hear news about her family member who was gravely ill. A few months ago, her husband, Ken, died after being involved in a car accident. She didn’t have a chance even to say good-bye and it was a very difficult time for her. However, a few weeks ago, she came to our house on a Saturday morning to leave us many of Ken’s belongings. She wanted us to pass them on to someone who needed clothing, jackets, and footwear who couldn’t afford to buy them. It has brought her comfort to know that these things that Ken had are now helping others who have no money to buy necessities. She has a heart of love and her selflessness attitude is an inspiration to me and many others who know and love her.**

**In our congregation, there is a wonderful couple who attend services every Sunday. They have not enjoyed the monetary blessings that many families have because of Jim’s health issues. This happy couple inspires me as I see the way that they conduct their lives. The wife adopted a nearby elderly lady to share time with in the evenings. Night after night, she went to the home of the lonely woman and together they put puzzles together. When the lady passed away, Bonnie was there to help the family and comfort them with their loss. They enjoyed the stories that she shared with them because she had found time to spend hours building a friendship with a woman who had little to offer except love and time and that was priceless. The husband, Jim, reached out to an elderly neighbor down the road from where they live who also was lonely. Milton became a father figure to Jim who had lost his own dad a few years ago. Jim took Milton to doctor’s appointments, a ride to the restaurant to have coffee, and soon invited him to attend church with him and Bonnie and he enjoyed the services. Milton found friends and Christian fellowship in the house of the Lord and one Sunday after Jim dropped him off at his house following the morning service, Milton fell and was taken to the hospital. It was his last trip together with Jim, but what a beautiful friendship the two of them had for the duration of time. Milton’s family shared with us how much it meant to the family to hear how happy Milton’s last days were attending the house of the Lord. Jim and Bonnie never let the limitation of material resources interfere with their giving hearts. Jim enjoys helping out with a local soup kitchen also. He and Bonnie do what they can with what they have and God blesses their efforts.**

**A woman named Mary Frances opened her home to a young teenager who had become a ward of the state due to family neglect and unsafe conditions of the home. Carolyn was amazed at the cleanliness of the home, the beauty of the furnishings, the new Cadillac that Mary drove and all the wealth that surrounded her. She wondered if she would be able to please this woman and worried that she would be sent away if she didn’t meet expectations. She needn’t have been concerned for Mary loved her unconditionally. She exposed her to plays, wonderful movies and sightseeing around the countryside. She taught her table manners and praised her for her eagerness to learn new things.**

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**Mary took her shopping, bought her new clothes and had her hair styled. Carolyn began to feel special and responded to the love and kindness that Mary extended to her. One evening Carolyn had some thoughts she wanted to share with Mary so she went to Mary’s bedroom and found the door to be opened. She was shocked as she gazed into the room for Mary was sitting in front of her dressing table with her beautiful head of hair placed on a head manikin and she was completely bald. A large scar was visible around the back of her skull and Carolyn stood for a moment speechless. She hadn’t realized that Mary didn’t have any hair. Mary stood and wrapped her arms around Carolyn and told her that she had been sick and had to have a large tumor removed from her skull. She had been through some very difficult days and she had asked to have Carolyn come to her house so that she would focus on someone else rather than her own problems. She hugged Carolyn and told her that she loved her and just as she was overcoming the obstacles in her life, Carolyn would also be a champion. She had wanted someone to share her life with while she was recuperating. Carolyn basked in the love and beauty that surrounded her that summer. It has helped her to move forward and succeed with her life’s journey. Never give in; never give up; move forward and keep your focus on the good Lord and others and you will find fulfillment in your journey. Loving God with all your heart, soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself is the sum of the commandments. Oftentimes, people think if they are not able to do something spectacular or if they are not able to contribute large sums of money to society or to God, what they do offer has little value. Each one of the above stories has a common thread; each person gave something of themselves to people who were in need. The Bible tells us to provide food and clothing as we are able to those who lack basic necessities. It mentions visiting those who are in prison to encourage them. I believe that includes people who are in hospitals, nursing homes, and other places of confinement. They are lonely and need friendship. It is important to share the gospel of Jesus Christ whenever we have an opportunity so others may choose to follow the commandments of the Lord Jesus. God bless you as you minister to others in his name. Pastor Diana**