**Canaan Union Church**

**314 Main Street**

# Canaan, Maine

**March 16-22, 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**

**We are very grateful for the wonderful letters and cards that we receive from those who are on our mailing lists. Thanks for your support of this ministry.**

**Life is all about taking risks. Those who are afraid of taking risks never reach their full potential in life. Fear of making mistakes keep many people from stepping out of their comfort zones. There will be times that things don’t work out the way you plan, but the experience of trying something that is a challenge builds self-confidence and makes life interesting to those who dare to take a chance. I hope you enjoy the following story.**

**This morning as I was driving to work, I passed a dead skunk that had just been hit by a car when it attempted to cross traffic on the interstate. The smell was overwhelming and it filled my car with the stench of skunk perfume. I immediately thought of my friend, Stephanie, who called me last week anxious to share a story with me. It seems that Steph was ready for work and she started to walk towards her car one morning and as she got close to her automobile, she noticed a skunk walking around her yard as if it was in a daze. Her first thought was that it could be rabid so she ran back into the house to get assistance from her husband. Because he was still getting ready for work, he told her just be on her way and he would take care of the skunk before he left for work that morning. Steph walked back to her car and it was then that she noticed that the skunk had a Styrofoam cup on its head that covered its eyes. Evidently his curiosity had gotten the best of him and he stuck his head into the cup looking for food and then realized too late what kind of a fix he was in. He then walked across the road and wound up in Steph’s driveway. He was disoriented and because he couldn’t see where he was going, he was stumbling around in circles. Steph tried to reach down and pull the cup off the critter’s head, but it was stuck on very tight. She hadn’t noticed that the driveway was icy so as she followed the skunk kept trying to remove the cup from the skunk’s head, she lost her balance and fell and when she looked up she was eye balling the skunk’s tail. She was a bit concerned about getting sprayed, but the desire to help the skunk out of its predicament overruled the worry of consequences. Rising to her feet, she once again tried to grab the cup off the skunk’s head and because of the ice, she slipped again. This time her nose almost touched the skunk’s tail end. She said a prayer asking God to help her get the cup off the skunk’s head and also to protect her from getting sprayed with the perfume that is so dreadful from that beautiful creature. As she bent over the skunk, she gave a pull on the cup and this time the skunk’s head was released and he was able to saunter towards the woods free of the cup. He now could see where he was going. Steph said she wanted to give him a good luck pat on the back, but she was afraid that she might be pushing her own luck a bit if she did. She was able to go to work with a chuckle and a story to share and happiness in her heart that she had come to the aid of one of God’s creatures that was in trouble and needed her assistance. I told her that the only thing missing was a video camera so we could watch the comedy as I am not sure I would have stuck around to help regardless of what distress a skunk was in. Good intentions are not always rewarded with good results. I loved her story and knowing Steph, she would be there for the next episode if it happened again, but I have a feeling this might be a “once in a lifetime experience.”**

**Recently I read a story that I could relate to. A young girl took a book out of the library not realizing that her mother would not approve of her reading a book with the word “Mistress” in the title. The cover had caught her attention. It was a picture of a castle and a pretty young lady sitting on a white iron bench in the yard. She couldn’t wait to read it. As she snuggled down with a lap quilt in the comfortable chair next to the fireplace, she hardly heard the footsteps of her mother. Suddenly the book was snatched out of her hands and with a frown on her face, she was hustled right back to the library where she had borrowed the book. Embarrassed, the child watched as her mother handed the book to the librarian stating that she would not have her daughter reading such trash. The librarian quietly invited the mother to sit down and wait while she took the girl to the back of the library, handed her a book and spoke gently, “This is my favorite book and I think you will enjoy reading this.” The child looked at the title “I Capture the Castle” by Dodie Smith and thought, “It probably will be about as exciting as playing “King on the Mountain”. However, she signed the book out and her mother seemed pleased that she had managed to get her point across to both the young librarian as well as to her daughter.**

**To the child’s surprise the book captured her attention and just as the librarian had promised, the book became a favorite that was the inspiration that sparked the desire in the young girl’s mind to become an author herself. She never forgot how the beautiful young librarian had been able to handle the bad situation with her mother.**

**When those who collected taxes for the temple confronted Jesus’ disciples about whether or not Jesus paid taxes, the answer was clear. Jesus didn’t owe taxes as he was the son of God, yet because he didn’t want to offend anyone, he told Peter to go fishing and the first fish that he caught would have a coin in its mouth and the money would be enough to pay taxes for him and his disciples. Jesus turned a bad situation around and gave Peter an amazing experience. He obeyed the word of the Lord, threw his line into the sea and sure enough, there was a fish with a coin in its mouth. See Matthew 17:24-27. Peter, the seasoned fisherman, learned much from following Jesus. He watched as Jesus took a little boy’s lunch of two fish and 5 small loaves of bread and after he prayed, he broke the bread and fish into pieces and 5000 plus people were fed. The disciples gathered 12 baskets of fish and bread that was left over after everyone ate all they wanted. See Matthew 14:13.**

**Like the skunk that Steph helped, we often get ourselves into situations where we go around in circles and can’t see how to solve our problems or situations. However if we will trust in the Lord with all our heart and not lean on our own understanding, he will direct our path. (Proverbs 3; 5) He sees clearly when we can’t.**