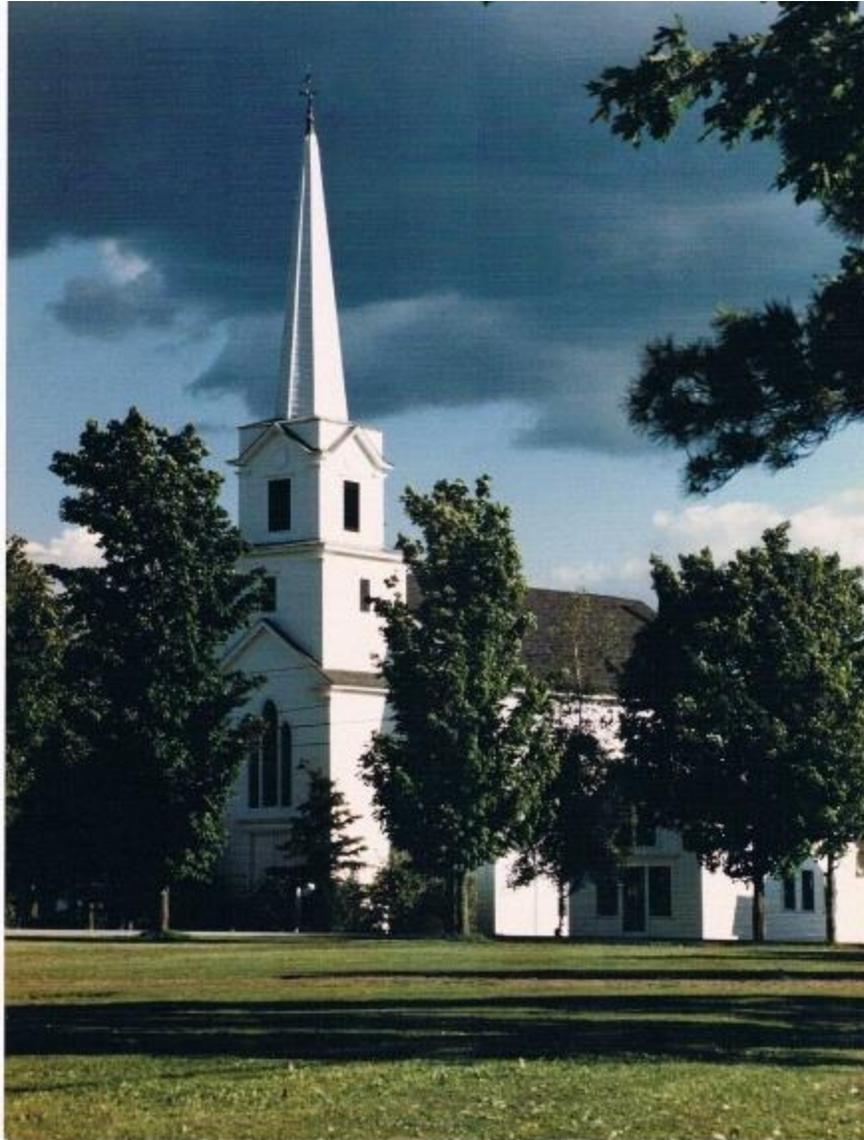


# The Irasburg United Church Newsletter



**Irasburg United Church  
November-December  
2019**

## Pastors Corner



As we look forward to our Holiday seasons, I pray that each who read this knows the joy of thanksgiving: thanking God for all He has done and will continue to do in our lives, with our families and friends and in our communities. It is hard to give thanks when there are areas that are not going well, when pressures abound, and when sickness and death intrude into our lives. Yet Thanksgiving is a time to remember that our forefathers suffered in their journey as well and learned from strangers how to survive and eventually how to thrive. We give thanks because none of us is worthy of the gifts we receive. We are all like little children opening our gifts at Christmas amazed and overjoyed at abundance and grace. When we remember the humility of God coming to earth as a baby in a manger to poor, unwed parents we remember that grace and truth and joy surprise us in unlikely ways and in unlikely circumstances. May you each be surprised anew by an unexpected visit from our God who delights in our joy, who died for our freedom, and who waits for our response with an undying love for each of us. Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas. Love in Christ, Avril



## EXECUTIVE BOARD SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER MEETINGS

The September Executive Board meeting was held at the home of the Johnsons on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. Those present were Ken & Bev Johnson, Bonnie Locke, Louie Piette, Evelyn Kennison (representing the deacons,) and Michelle Wilson.

The minutes of the previous month's meeting was read and approved.

Bev reported that we had \$120.72 in the regular checking account and all current bills have been paid. The Shepherd's Fund had \$1602.54 and the Special Fund had \$3552.51 at this time.

Ken told us that he had installed the lock with a code card on the garage door and those needing to bring things for the auction could contact either he or Louie Piette to make arrangements.

The Church doors had arrived at Colton's and would be delivered when Gary gets home from Alaska.

Ken also reported that he and Gary went over to inspect the problem concerning the dirt and ice that occurs by the side door during inclement weather and they think they solved it by replacing a screen in the gutter that was clogged with leaves.

Evelyn stated that the deacons had been approached about locally sponsoring the Dolly Parton Imagination Library which would see that every new baby born in the town would receive a book every month from age one month until 5 years old. After discussing this, the deacons voted to do it. The money from the Ladies Aid would cover the cost and Mickey volunteered to manage it.

The recipient of the September Shepherd's Fund was discussed and decided upon.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Michelle Wilson, Secretary.

The October meeting of the Executive Board took place on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Members of the board in attendance were Ken and Bev Johnson, Bonnie Locke, Gary Johnson, Louie Piette and Avril Cochran. Deb Johnson represented the Deacons and Missions committee.

Discussions included:

The elevator signs have been moved to the entry door to the elevator room and Ken will be posting a set of operating instructions on the door of the elevator.

Gary reported that the pantry closet in the room next to the kitchen is in progress and should be done soon. Anyone wishing to offer their painting services would be greatly appreciated. He is also waiting for the glass for the transom above the new entry doors in the front of the church.

Bonnie is working on selecting a shrub for the garden on the east side of the church steps. She has funds donated by Danny and Will young in memory of George and Ruth. She may wait until spring if she cannot find a suitable tree soon.

There was discussion of installing a laminate floor in the choir section of

altar where there is currently linoleum and the remains of the chair rail. This was tabled until the next meeting.

The bathroom floor has been damaged by a water leak and there is the possibility of repairing it at the same time that the State Correctional crew is here to paint and repair the entryway of the church.

It was decided to wait to pressure wash the church until next spring.

The Board considered a suggestion that we advertise the newly painted Sanctuary as a wedding venue. Members of the board will start to investigate Wedding websites, prices, etc.

It was suggested that David Kennison search for at least one more tent for the church to use at the fair and also as an outdoor addition to a wedding venue.

The Comfort Fund will send out three packets this month.

It was also agreed to contribute to the shipping of almost 200 donated computers to EVCOAfrica which sets up computer labs in schools and villages in Ghana.

Deb suggested that as soon as possible the church should move to using recyclable and biodegradable products for our kitchen.

Deb asked for permission to have two more chairs re-caned and this was approved.

Avril is going to work with Adam Johnson to record and post her sermons for the church website.

Good news and good expressions of our Christian mission in the community.

Submitted by Gary Johnson

## **DEACON'S REPORT**

**Deacons' Meetings September and October 2019**

**The September meeting was held on August 31, 2019. The deacons decided to sponsor the Dolly Parton Imagination Library for the Town of Irasburg. In this program, children receive one book each month from birth to age five. Mickey will be the person to contact the DPIL representative.**

**In October, further steps for participation in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library were done. The Town Hall Holiday Craft Show was also talked about. Craft items and cookie plates will be sold.**

**Thanks to Gary Johnson for all his work on the new front doors and the beautiful cupboard in the office area.**

**Visits by Pastor Avril were discussed and suggestions were offered.**

**Evelyn Kennison**



### **New Mission Endeavor**

Pastor Avril and the Deacons recently took on an exciting community outreach mission endeavor - ***The Dolly Parton Imagination Library!***

Pastor Avril was first approached by Ed & Adrien Helm, Barton, about the Irasburg United Church spearheading this initiative. After thoughtful and prayerful discussion it was decided that we indeed wanted to do the program and reach out to Irasburg children as another form of community mission. Mickey was elected to be the point person for the Athens, GA, based DollyWood Foundation and continue the conversations with Ed & Adrien Helm.

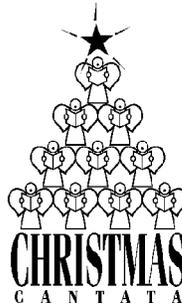
***The Dolly Parton Imagination Library*** will provide every Irasburg child enrolled in the program one new book per month from birth to the age of Kindergarten. The cost is approximately \$31.00 per year per child. The two books in the photo show the very first book to be received and the final book at Kindergarten age. The Helms gave a generous bequest in the name of Adrien's sister, Carol Waller Youmans, who died six months ago and is buried with her husband and other family members in the Irasburg Cemetery. This bequest will be the initial start-up funds. In addition, Mr. Helm has graciously offered to do a fundraiser for the program and the church in the spring or summer. He presents a one-man show as Mark Twain which has been successfully presented around the country.

As in all things there is process to follow and Mickey is now involved in completing the necessary paperwork with the Dollywood Foundation. Once all of that is in place an enrollment form and cover letter will be sent to all eligible Irasburg families. **MANY THANKS** to Evelyn for all of her work at the Town Clerk's Office obtaining names of eligible Irasburg children.

The Deacons and Pastor Avril all agree that this outreach is a blessing to "our" children and our hope is to encourage a love of reading and know that the Irasburg United Church cares about each and every one of them. How exciting is it to know that every month a child will receive his/her very own book to keep and treasure!

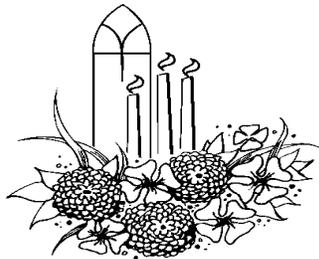
**We are at the early stages but be assured that as more information comes along I will put updates in the Newsletter. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask any of the Deacons or Pastor Avril.**

Thanks be to God for this opportunity to serve our community's youngest citizens. The scripture, Matthew 5:16 comes to mind, *"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven"*.  
*Submitted by Mickey Richards*



On Saturday, December 14th, members of several area church choirs, including three from Irasburg United, will be bringing Christmas Presence: A Gathering of Hope, Peace, and Love, a cantata by Pepper Choplin. It will be held at Barton United Church under the direction of Catherine McMasters (a former director of music at Irasburg United and several other churches) on that Saturday afternoon. Hope you can join us to unwrap HIS presence during the holiday season.

submitted by  
Brad & Cori Dudley



It is time again to start thinking about the Christmas Season. That means the decorating of the church for the season. Cori Dudley announced that there will be a short meeting directly after church on November 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss this.

If you have any ideas or suggestions about what might be done this year please attend this meeting. And if you are willing to help with the actual decorating, your efforts will be greatly appreciated, so please mark the date and attend.



For the 16<sup>th</sup> year the Annual Holiday Craft Fair will again be held in the Irasburg Town Hall on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Once again we have a variety of outstanding artists and crafts people participating. It is a great place to get some different one of a kind Christmas gifts for those special people on your list and the great thing is the prices are well within your budgets. The show runs from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and the church will be having a table with their famous Homemade Christmas Cookie plates and craft items. Lunch will be available from the kitchen which will also be run by the church. A table is available to take a break from shopping, chat with friends and enjoy a cup of coffee or some hot soup or sandwiches.

**HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR**  
**Irasburg Town Hall**  
**Saturday Nov. 23rd 2019**  
**9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

**Handcrafted gift items by local Crafters, Photography, Hand Turned Wood Items, Unique Xmas Ornaments and Decorations, Native American Jewelry, Handmade Fresh Wreaths, Maple Syrup, Jellies, Homemade Breads, Pies, Candy & Plates of Fancy Homemade Christmas Cookies, Quilted items, some Alpaca Products, As well as some new items never offered locally before .**



## **Chicken and Biscuit Dinner Another Big Success**

**For two days the church kitchen was a beehive of activity as a small group of dedicated volunteers cut, chopped, peeled, cooked and baked squash, potatoes, chicken, biscuits, coleslaw and cranberry sauce for the big event. And on Saturday night October 19<sup>th</sup> this tired but active crew was joined by more volunteers that bustled around the dining room serving the multitudes that showed up.**

**The 5 pm sitting was full to capacity and some without reservations had to wait until the 6pm sitting, but everyone went home full, happy and raving about the meal. There can never be enough praise and “thank you’s” to all of those who come forth and volunteer for these events. This dinner which is one of our two fund raisers for the year cleared a little over \$1600.**

## **JOY TO THE WORLD.....a BABY BOY IS BORN!**

This little child of humble birth was the greatest gift the world could have ever gotten. A gift that goes on forever to any who are willing to receive it.

The carpenter and his very young bride-to-be had no way of knowing what their son's destination was meant to be. Even though the Angel sent from God had come to her saying "GREETINGS, you who are so highly favored. The Lord is with you." Here was a girl, totally confused, trying to understand what was being told to her. Besides that she was probably frightened as well. How does she explain her pregnancy? Who would believe her? Even her prospective husband doubted her story. If she couldn't convince him how would she convince the villagers?

Joseph, out of the kindness of his heart and his love for her decided to send her away to have this baby. Certainly he could not marry her since she must have been with another man. But God, who found so much favor in this pious girl whom he had chosen above all others, sent an Angel to Joseph to reassure him that his bride-to-be was indeed as chaste and pure as he had believed her to be. She was destined to be the bearer of the greatest honor and greatest miracle of all time.

How hard this must have been for them to continue to live in this small village among the suspicious eyes and whispering tongues as they waited out this miracle. Not only Mary, but Joseph and his grown children from a previous marriage must all have felt the humiliation that the villagers heaped upon them. But their undying faith in God the Almighty, guided them, sustained them, and protected them throughout it all. This miracle, this innocent little child grew up to fill the role God sent him to fulfill. Even to the point of dying for our sins.

So not only during the Christmas season each year, but every day of our lives we should thank the Lord for the most wonderful gift we could have ever received. And thank that little innocent baby who was willing to give his life for us.

So let us all do as the well-known spiritual says..."GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN, JESUS CHRIST IS BORN!"

**By Michelle Wilson**



Greetings to all of the readers of the Irasburg United Church Newsletter. May you all know the peace and love of God as you praise and worship Him each day.

We have been blessed in so many ways over the last few months as we have transitioned from living in our 4,000 square foot house to our 350 square foot home on wheels. We have traveled from Northern Vermont to Seal Beach California without incident. God has blessed our travels and we are grateful for all that He is doing in our lives. Our latest trip was 1453 miles from Littleton, Co to Seal Beach, Ca. Pat and I took 2 weeks to make that trip and stopped in a number of places to enjoy the scenery and learn about the history of the area. Here is a picture of our departure from Littleton, Co: We had pulled our trailer about 50 miles before parking it here in Littleton Co at Chatfield State Park. We were a bit nervous about heading out on a trip that was almost 1500 miles for the first time.



But God is good and here we are all set up in Seal Beach Ca.:



For those of you who like to check these things out on either Google Maps or Google Earth, we are at the Navel Weapons Station, Seal Beach Ca. You can look that up and have a satellite view of the campground that we are in. It is really nice and we are enjoying our stay here. We are about an hour from the kids and that grandson of ours. Looking forward to spending more time with him. In addition to all of this, I did not want to be in a position where if I was not well that we could not continue to travel, so I asked Pat to think about how she might be comfortable driving with the camper. She was a trooper and drove about one third of the time coming out here. She got real good and pulling in and out of rest areas and truck stops. She felt comfortable behind the wheel and did a great job driving. We are also grateful for Facebook where we can keep up with many of you and you can keep up with us. Thanks for all your posts, comments and likes as we travel around the Southwest United States. It is good to see all the wonderful things that are happening in your lives. It also reminds us to pray for each of you as we spend time in daily devotionals.

At the beginning of Oct we spent a week in Winterville, GA visiting my parents and my brother and his family. We had a nice time and all are doing well. We had an odd situation with our carry on bag on this flight. I had put it in the overhead bin and when we got to Atlanta it wasn't there. We are not sure what happened to it, but it was lost for most of our time in Georgia. When it was found the Lost Baggage Attendant said it was on the plane....somewhere. So, we have to improvise during our stay in Georgia, but it all worked out.

One thing that many of you may not be aware of is how difficult it is to find a church once you have been a pastor. It is hard to sit in the seat and listen to someone else preach. But in God's providence he has lead us to the Providence Orthodox Covenant Church in Englewood Co. where we have been welcomed with the love of Christ and with a preacher who preaches the word. We are grateful for this church. Here in California we will attend Grace Community Church, which is the church where John MacArthur preaches; and The Church in the Canyon, which is a Presbyterian Church of America where Pastor Bob Bjerkaas preaches. He was the pastor of Trinity Church in St Albans for 8 years. So we have something in common. We may also find a church here near Seal Beach to attend when we are not with our family in Reseda, Ca.

We plan to be in this area through Christmas. As a matter of fact, our daughter Monika is coming out for Christmas and Pat's sister Jane and her family are coming out as well. We have rented an AirB&B that will hold 12 people. So we are all going to be together for Christmas. We are looking forward to that. We are going to spend Thanksgiving with Justin and his family here in Reseda, Ca. Even though it might be a bit early, we wish you all a Blessed Holiday Season. We do have much to be Thankful for and we can never celebrate the birth of Jesus too many times. May you be blessed over the Holiday season.

Pat and I remember the Irasburg United Church everyday in our prayers. We pray for physical and spiritual growth as you come together the worship our savior, Jesus Christ. May you be blessed in that. We look forward to hearing from you from all as you have time and I will do my best to get an article in the Newsletter each time that it goes out.

Blessings to you all.

Love from California.

Rick and Pat Shover

## IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN



**Be sure to remember to turn your clocks back before you go to bed on Saturday November 2<sup>nd</sup> because Daylight Savings ends at 2 a.m. on Sunday November 3<sup>rd</sup> and if you forget it could be a long (and cold) wait outside of church that morning!**



The Prayer Books made by the students to hold the Bible Psalms they read every week

## **Tuesday School at the Irasburg United Church**

**Every Tuesday since September 3, 2019 the school bus drops off eleven elementary school students who come to participate in Tuesday School, a Sunday School program that is held on Tuesdays at the Irasburg United Church. The children rush in for a quick snack before we begin our worship service.**

**The candles on our worship center are lit and the children settle in for a prayer of thanksgiving for the blessings in their lives. Next we read together a psalm written in language that is easy for children to understand. Our prayers are followed by songs of joy, “Shout to the Lord”, “Every Move I Make”, “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”, and “Jesus Loves Me”.**

**Each week we watch a part of a Bible story DVD. This year we’ve seen “Noah’s Ark” and are now watching “David and Goliath”. Keeping with the Bible story theme, we create an art project each week . We’ve painted our own arks, made rainbow mobiles, painted portraits of all the different people God loves,**

**(which of course is all of us), made prayer books to hold the psalms we read each week, and are painting pumpkins that let their light shine. Although it is early to be thinking about Christmas, we will cover it next, so the children remember the meaning of the holiday.**

**Each week Ryan Moulton, a high school sophomore, comes with his brother Seth, and is a great help, as is Dani Dudley, who faithfully attends to help, and is wonderful with the children. Cheryl Stelter and Evelyn Kennison have been substitute helpers when Dani couldn't make it.**

**Tuesday School has been a lot of fun for me and I will miss it come November when I leave for the winter. I am so grateful that the church supports our activities and this program!**

**DEB JOHNSON**

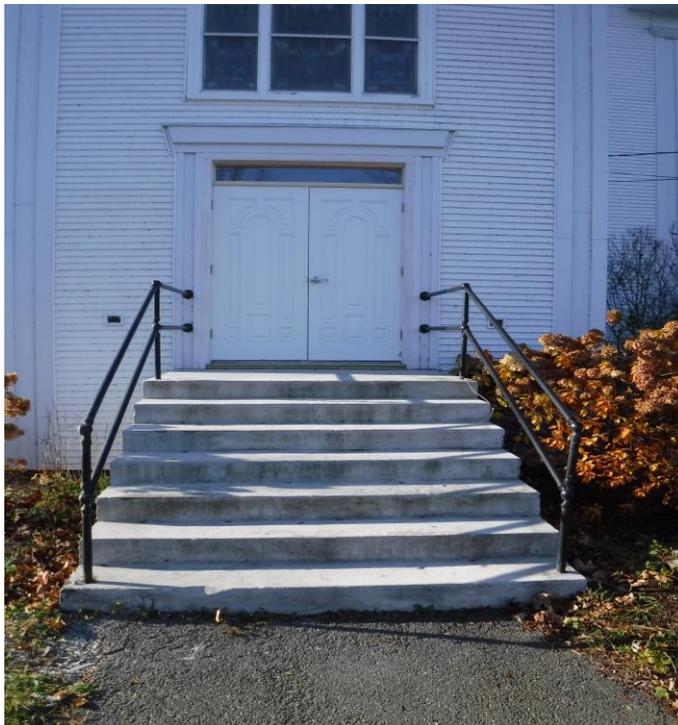
**AND .....LET'S NOT FORGET.....**

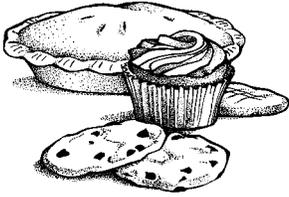


**NOVEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>**



**LOOK AT US!!! Thanks to Gary Johnson our new front doors are installed and we have a new large closet in the office to store all the miscellaneous items that were stored on the stage and throughout the hall. Maybe now we won't be shivering from the drafts (and we can save on the fuel bills) and we will not have to send out a search party when we go look for something. We'll know where it is.**





**We will be needing people to bake some Christmas Cookies to make up our Cookie Platters for the Craft Fair and for the Christmas shut-ins. This usually entails either baking two different times, once for the Craft Fair church table and again in time for the Christmas Shut-in plates that we distribute. However, many have found that by baking a double recipe they can cover two jobs at one time. Just bring them in separate marked bags and we can freeze one batch for the later Christmas Shut-In Plates. Our fancy cookie plates have become well known over the years and every year we have people coming to the Craft Fair specifically to buy these for themselves or for gifts. They always sell out before the fair ends.**

**If you are willing to bake some for either or both of these events check with Evelyn for the details as she is the one that usually organizes the “putting together” of these packaged plates. And just as important is the fact that we need volunteers to assemble these packages. Some years they have been done on a Sunday after church and with three or four volunteers the job goes quickly as they form an assembly line.**

**As the time gets closer we will be announcing the dates and times in the church bulletin.**



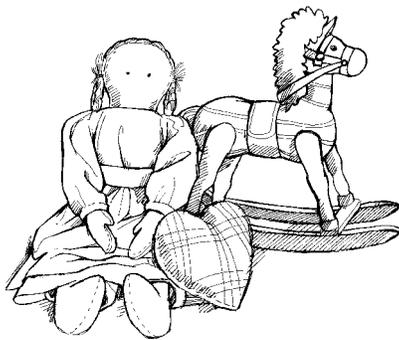
**Several years ago when we first started the “FOOD SHELF” basket the idea was for people to bring in an item on Communion Sunday to put in the food basket. Over the years the custom sort of got forgotten, but**

**after watching a local program on how many more families are facing hunger I wondered if perhaps we could reinstate the original purpose. Food shelves are finding that they are running out of food before they can help everyone. No child should be hungry anytime of the year, but at this time especially when so many of us have so much to be thankful for maybe it's time to start again.**

### **GOT ANY OLD ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREES?**

**Once again, David and Kathleen VanGelder are collecting unwanted artificial trees (and stands if you have any) to provide to families who would not otherwise be able to afford a tree. Kathleen is provided the names of some of these families through the school system where she works. They provide a string of lights for each tree and deliver them to the families. Last year they were able to make the children in five different families very happy.**

**If you have a tree you are willing to donate they will come pick it up. You can call them at 754-2021. They will be gone the first week in November but you can call me (Michelle) at 754-2281 and I will take all the information and give it to them when they return.**



### **THE CHRISTMAS SHOE BOX MISSION**

**This is the third year that our church has agreed to participate in the “Shoe Box” gifts for underprivileged children in other countries. In the past they have gone to children in places like Africa and South America. The idea is to fill each box with gifts (except no food or candy) and then**

**we seal the boxes and deliver it to the Albany Church which is organizing this project. Items such a pencils, crayons, small games or books, toys, and items such as socks, hair clips, etc. to name just a few items are all welcome. It's surprising how many items you can fit into those boxes and how thrilled the children are that receive them.**

**After you get the box stuffed attach a label on the front designating if it is for a boy or a girl and the appropriate age level. The cost for shipping is \$9.00 which we each provide for the box we bring in. What a good feeling it is to know that some child somewhere is experiencing the joy of a gift all of their own.**

**The deadline to have these boxes at church is NOVEMBER 17<sup>th</sup>. Please put them on the table in the Fellowship Hall along with your check or money for the shipping costs. If paying by check make the check out to Irasburg United Church and Bev will then make one blanket check for the total amount . Mickey has graciously volunteered to take the to the Albany Church that Sunday.**



## Up Coming Events

Please remember to pray for all the upcoming events that are on the calendar. We greatly appreciate it as we continue to do the work and will of God

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### NOVEMBER

2<sup>nd</sup> =TURN BACK YOUR CLOCKS

3<sup>rd</sup> - Communion,  
Christmas Decorating mtg.,  
Deacon's & Missions mtg.

5<sup>th</sup> – Board mtg.

11<sup>th</sup> - Veterans Day,  
Paula Dufort (B)

14<sup>th</sup> - Odessa Sanville (B)

20<sup>th</sup> - John Reick (B)

23<sup>rd</sup> - Christmas Craft Show at Town Hall  
David & Kathleen VanGelder's (A)

28<sup>th</sup> – Thanksgiving

### DECEMBER

1<sup>st</sup> -Communion

Deacon's & Missions mtg,

4<sup>th</sup> – Tom Stelter's (B)

10<sup>th</sup> – Cori Dudley (B)

19<sup>th</sup> – Mickey Richards (B)

24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve Service

25<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Day

26<sup>th</sup> Mark Buckley – (B)

28<sup>th</sup> – Avril Cochran (B)

31<sup>st</sup> – New Years Eve

SO A HAPPY THANKSGIVING< HAPPY BIRTHDAY< MERRY CHRISTMAS< AND HAPPY  
NEW YEAR TO ALL!!!!

