

## **Friends of Penn Central Testimonial – St. John's, Boalsburg**

Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ – where congregations passionately declare and demonstrate the courageous love of Christ!

St. John's United Church of Christ in Boalsburg demonstrates the courageous love of Christ in many ways. One example is our annual Community Picnic and Backpack Giveaway held in August. In June, we begin collecting school supplies and backpacks for students in Pre-school through grade 12. We utilize all the free advertising available in our area to invite the community to participate by contributing school supplies. We leave a plastic, red bin at the covered entrance doors for donations.

After the worship service on the first Sunday in August, we fill the backpacks with school supplies and divide them into age groups: Pre-school, Elementary school and Middle School/Senior High. The next Sunday, we have an outdoor worship service on our side lawn under the trees. After worship, we set up for our Community picnic, which includes hot dogs, several kinds of salad, watermelon, dessert and drinks. During lunch, we have several games for the children and an old-fashion cakewalk. After lunch, we invite students and parents to come inside our fellowship hall to choose a backpack.

This community event allows us to connect with people in our community who may never come to a worship service and people who may be looking for a church home. It demonstrates to our community that we care about the people outside our church walls. It allows us to provide school backpacks and supplies for families without the funds to purchase these items. And we all have a lot of fun!

