

LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT



December 2021
FIRST UMC BEACON

The background of the entire page is a deep blue night sky. A bright, multi-pointed star shines from the upper left, with a long, vertical beam of light extending downwards. Several smaller, four-pointed stars are scattered across the sky. At the bottom of the image, there is a dark silhouette of a city skyline with some buildings having yellow lights on. To the right of the city, there are two palm trees and a small, simple building.

Dear Friends,

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)

It seems to me that the world could use some light now days. There is so much bad news and so many negative ads in the media that I just want to ask, "Where is the good news?" Well, I am reminded regularly that it slides under the "news radar!" Christmas often brings out the best and the worst in people. We can experience stress, frustration, and greed, but we also see generosity, good will, and find ways that we can make a difference for others who are less fortunate.

If those things happen just during the Christmas season, though, we have missed the point of being "Light Bearers" which is our theme for Advent this year. Being Light Bearers means connecting with Jesus, the Light of the world and sharing that Light with the world. Of course, we can't reach out everywhere in the world and are not able to do everything. However, we all can do something, whether it's sending out cards, making phone calls to someone who is shut in, helping with our Kids First program, or staying in touch with someone who is alone. (You can fill in your own ideas, too!)

Christmas reminds us that Jesus came into the world to overcome the darkness. The Light of Christ shows not just at Christmas, but all year through us. As followers of Jesus, we help to keep that Light shining because of who we are and Whose we are. So, let's get shining!
And – Merry, Blessed Christmas!

Grace and peace, Rev. Deb

The background of the entire image is a dark, out-of-focus field of warm, golden-yellow and orange bokeh lights, resembling Christmas lights or candles. The lights vary in size and brightness, creating a festive and cozy atmosphere. A thin white border frames the entire image.

CHRISTMAS EVE — 5PM

Christmas Eve Service Time Change

This year, we will be holding our Christmas Eve candlelight service at 5:00 pm.
Please share this news with others and invite someone to attend with you!



ADVENT

On November 28th we began the first Sunday of Advent with our theme “LIGHT BEAERS” with many opportunities throughout the season to be a light bearer like the “Share The Joy” campaign with our KIDS FIRST program .

During Advent, the Seacoast UMC Collaborative [Eliot UMC, First UMC, and St. Mark’s Kittery UMC] will offer mid-week services on line every Wednesday - December 1st, 8th, 14th and 22nd at 7pm. People from all three churches will be participating, and it can be accessed through eliotumc.org. We hope you will “tune in” as part your Advent experience and find that this offers meaningful time for reflection, music, and prayer during the Advent season.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- December 1st - Advent on line service 7pm
- December 5th - Second Sunday of Advent - “LOVE” Isaiah 40:3-5, 11
- December 8th - Advent on line service 7pm
- December 12th - Third Sunday of Advent - “JUSTICE” Micah 6:8
- December 15th - Advent on line service 7pm
- December 19th - Fourth Sunday of Advent - “JOY” Matthew 2:1-12
- And Children’s Pageant - Modernized!
- December 22nd - Advent on line service 7pm
- December 24th - Christmas Eve - A service of Light 5pm
- December 25th - Merry Christmas

A bright, white star is the central focus, emitting a prominent cross-shaped diffraction pattern of light rays. The background is a deep black space filled with numerous smaller, distant stars of varying colors and sizes, creating a dense field of celestial bodies.

CHRISTMAS STAR

On December 21 – the winter solstice – the "Christmas Star" will appear in the sky for the first time in nearly 800 years thanks to the conjunction of two of the Solar System's biggest planets, Jupiter and Saturn. One source said it would be 45 minutes after sunset. Check on line for more information.

<https://www.farmersalmanac.com/jupiter-saturn-christmas-star>



ANNUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE

ANNUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE RECAP

Our Annual Church Conference was held in November with the Rev. Jim Mentzer presiding. The new slate of officers was elected, and we voted to combine the Church Council/Finance Trustees committees into one group and call it the Leadership Board. The annual report booklets were handed out, and anyone who did not receive theirs can pick it up at church or make arrangements to have it sent to them.

Here is the approved slate of Nominations:

One Board

One Board Chair: John VanReenen

Pastor: Rev. Deb Hanson

Lay Leader: Sue Sarosiek

Lay Member to Annual Conference: John VanReenen

Staff Parish Relations Chair: To be elected at first meeting in 2022

Vice Chair of Staff Parish: To be elected at first meeting in 2022

Church Treasurer: Linda Reiber

Finance Secretary: Nancy Chesser

Director of Music: Bevan Bloemendaal

Communications & Marketing Director: Bevan Bloemendaal

Nominations and Lay Leadership: Rev. Deb Hanson

Recording Secretary: Sue Richards

Church Historian: Evelyn Laux

Membership Secretary: Evelyn Laux

Nurture Team Chair: Marilyn Stebbins

Members at Large: Yvonne Griffin, Steve Langs, Aerial Sillanpaa, Kevin Fickenscher

Staff Parish Relations Committee

Pastor: Rev. Deb Hanson

Lay Leader: Sue Sarosiek

Ending: 2022 - Kevin Fickenscher, Christine Williams

2023 - Cathy VanReenen, Sue Richards

2024 - Linda Reiber, Yvonne Griffin

Leadership Team:

Rev. Deb Hanson, Bevan Bloemendaal,
Sue Sarosiek, Sue Richards, John
VanReenen

Christian Education Team:

Rev. Deb Hanson, Dave Atkinson, Rosie
Buswell, Kellie Langs, David Richards,
Sue Richards

Lay Servants:

Dave Atkinson, Kevin Fickenscher, David
Richards, Susan Sarosiek, and John
VanReenen

Committee on Lay Leadership and Nominations

Chair: Rev. Deb Hanson

Lay Leader: Sue Sarosiek

Ending: 2022 - Dave Atkinson, Rosie Buswell

2023 - David Richards, Evelyn Laux

2024 - Kellie Langs, TBA



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Thanks to the Sunday school children and teachers who are planning, practicing, and presenting "A Modern Christmas Pageant" on December 19th during our worship service. There will not be Sunday school on December 26th due to school vacation, but they will resume classes again on January 2.



BECOME A DIGITAL DISCIPLE!

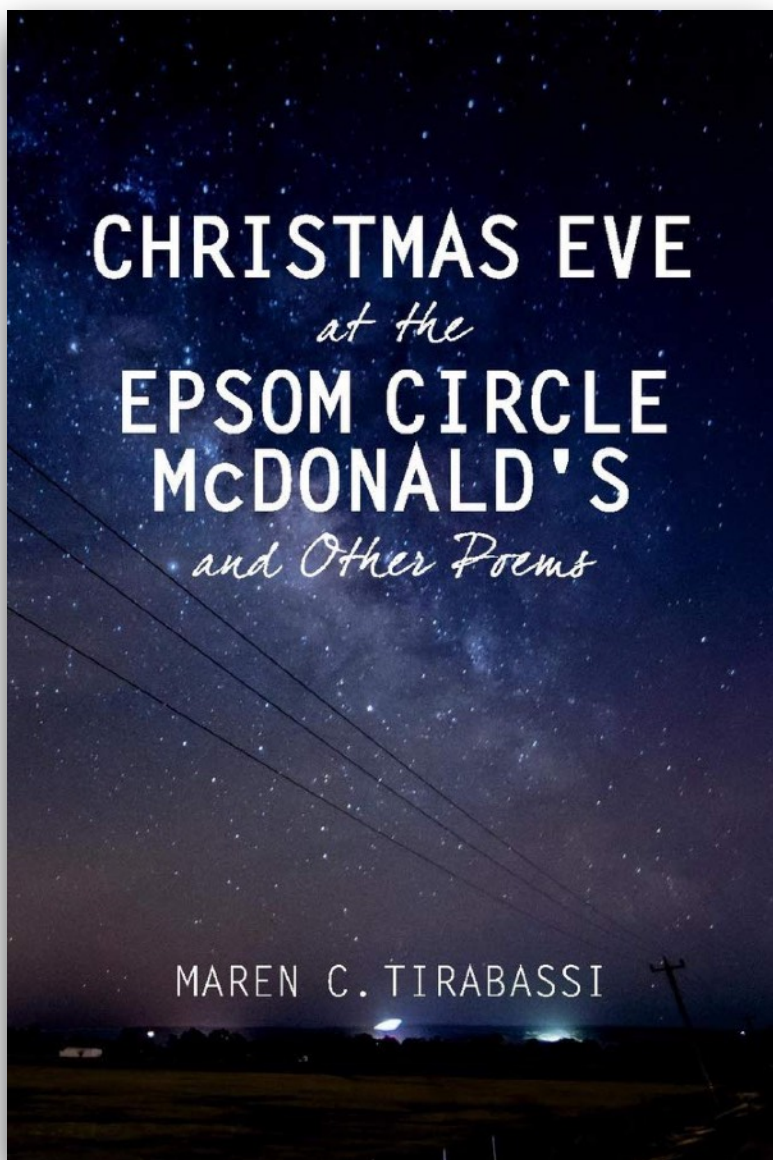
We all need to be part of reaching out into the community and world...you can do it by simply sharing our First UMC Facebook and/or Instagram posts. You can make a difference!

Be sure to visit our church website which is being updated weekly. fumcportsmouth.com



BE A LITURGIST

Rev. Deb continues to look for liturgists to help lead the worship services. The involvement of the Laity is important and meaningful in the life of our congregation. If anyone is interested in being a liturgist, please contact Rev. Deb.



WORKSHOP WITH REV. MAREN TIRABASSI

On December 4 at the Portsmouth Public Library from 9:30 - 11:30 am, Rev. Maren Tirabassi will share her newest book, Christmas Eve at the Epsom Circle McDonald's and Other Poems. Rev. Tirabassi has contributed to a number of worship planning publications, as well as written other books for reflection and inspiration. Everyone is welcome, and copies of this book will be available for purchase for \$14.95 (cash or check only). A Zoom option is available by contacting Liz Good at lgood60@comcast.net.



MEMBERSHIP AT FIRST UMC

Becoming a member at First UMC means entering a covenant with others who are members. The promise we make is to support the church with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. There are some who have actively been part of the church mission and ministry for a while, and the next step would be to make a formal commitment to being part of the congregation. For more information, please contact Rev. Deb.



CHURCH COUNCIL/FINANCE TRUSTEES JOINT MEETING

The Church Council/Finance Trustees joint meeting will be held in person on Tuesday, December 14 at 6:00 pm. Please let Rev. Deb know if you would like to join by Zoom.



REV. DEB ON VACATION

Rev. Deb will be on vacation from December 25 through January 1. Pastor Dawn DiManna will be covering during that time if there are pastoral needs. Call the Eliot UMC church office at 207-439-6593 or contact our church office and Sue Sarosiek will contact Pastor Dawn.



WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER

Juliann Smith
Charles Gilman
Rick Beebe
Phyllis Scott
Marilyn & Gil
Donna Smith

Sophia
Bobbie Noble
Dan Strange
Delores [Marilyn's sister]
Marion Collishaw
Mark & Sarah

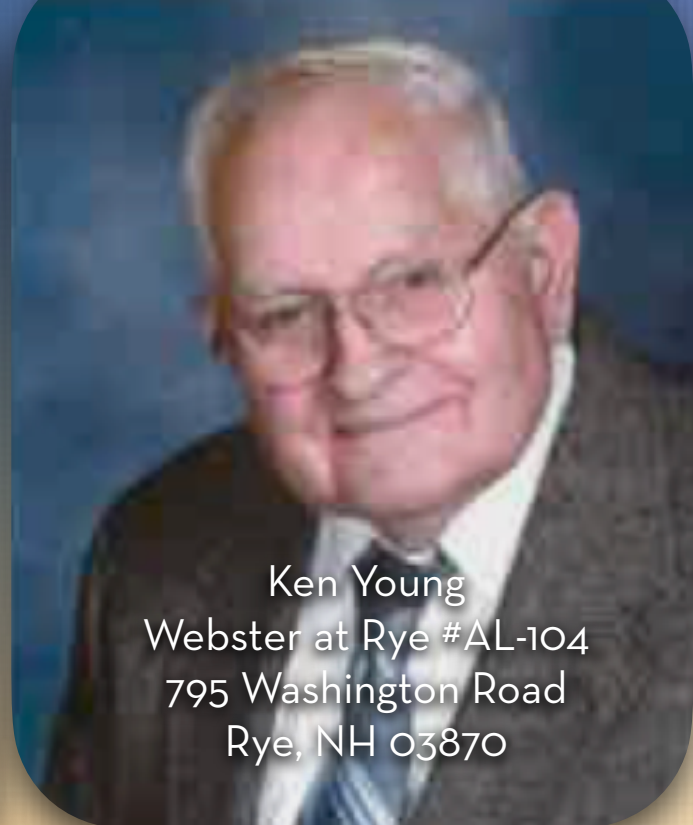
Airial and the Sillanpaa Family
Family & Friends of Patricia Grattan
John Hellenga
Terry Sessions
Christine & her parents
Those in nursing and assisted living care
Our Church family



Barbara Clement
Riverside Rest Home
276 County Farm Rd #304
Dover, NH 03820



Marion Collishaw
50 Old Colony Way
Scituate MA 02066



Ken Young
Webster at Rye #AL-104
795 Washington Road
Rye, NH 03870



Slater, Jim
75 State Street
Portland, ME 04101

OUR FAMILY

WHO CAN'T MAKE IT TO CHURCH

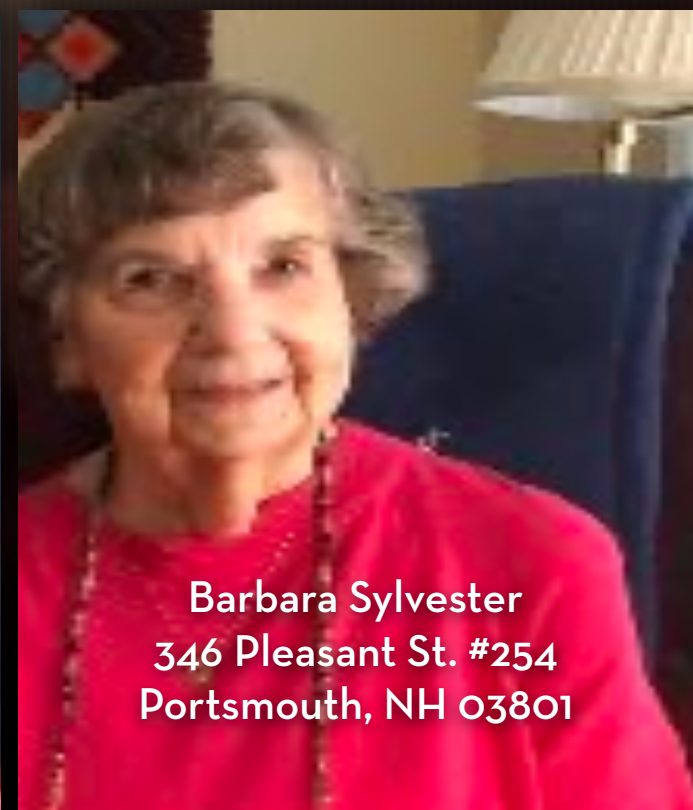
A card can make a big difference in someone's day!



Barbara Glidden
188 Jones Ave #101
Portsmouth, NH 03801



Gil Stebbins
9 Lewis Road, #104-2
Kittery, ME. 03904



Barbara Sylvester
346 Pleasant St. #254
Portsmouth, NH 03801



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3 Al Cansdale
4 Jaime Berry
10 Shirley Russ
13 Evelyn New
23 Priscilla Wilson
25 Kimberly Philbrick

4 WAYS TO GIVE, DONATE & TITHE



BY MAIL
First UMC
129 Miller Ave
Portsmouth, NH
03801



ONLINE
fumcportsmouth.com
"GIVE" button



IN PERSON
First UMC
129 Miller Ave
Portsmouth, NH
03801
Wednesday's 10-2pm



QR code
Point your phone camera
on the QR code to the
left to view the online
PayPal donation page



FUMC PORTSMOUTH

A RECONCILING CONGREGATION

We, the congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, are dedicated in worshipping, learning, and serving with all people as we embrace Jesus Christ's message of love and acceptance. As a United Methodist Church we stand fully behind the statement "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors". We celebrate our diversity and invite all persons regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital or socioeconomic status, nationality, physical or mental ability into full membership and participation in the life of this community of faith.

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**

