

FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN!
ISAIAH 9:6



DECEMBER 2023
FIRST UMC BEACON

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JACKIE



“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” Isaiah 9:6.

Dear Friends, It's the most wonderful time of the year! Advent and Christmas are upon us and for most of us it is a time to reconnect to our faith, celebrate with our families, and give gifts. I trust that you all have your own traditions with family and friends, just as I know that Portsmouth First UMC has traditions that help us all get into the holiday season. A few weeks ago, Aerial spoke to us about Share The Joy, your tradition of sharing gifts with children and families in need. With all of your holiday traditions, have you carved out special moments to spend in adoration for God? We have only to look at the Nativity sets in our homes and communities to visually remember the miracle of Christ's birth and incarnation.

Can you imagine that God loved us so much that God came down to live among us; not as a King but as a vulnerable Jewish baby? Reflecting on that alone will fill you with the joy of the season.

I am sure that most of us are very busy at this time of year. We spend a little more time with family and friends. We are shopping for gifts. We share holiday parties and events with friends. Perhaps you, like me, will attend community events as well. This year, I am taking my mom to Strawberry Banke for the evening candlelight stroll. With all that you are busy doing, it is tempting to forget the significance of Christmas and the gift of love and light that Christ is for us and for the world. may I suggest that the world is in desperate need of the light and love of God and we as God's ambassadors, need to be even more purposeful in our worship and our witness?

I would encourage you to spend a bit of extra attention to God this season and remember that this is the best time to invite family and friends to attend church. Who does not love good music and candle light? I look forward to worshipping our God together in this holy season. may the light of Christ be reflected in all that you say and do.

Christmas blessings, Pastor Jackie

A child wearing a red hoodie and a red Santa hat with a white pom-pom is standing with their back to the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

share the joy

Christmas traditions are wonderful memories for most of us but that anticipated celebration for some local kids is simply out of their families reach. The numbers of Seacoast kids needing help is staggering as this year has again been challenging in countless ways.

As a Christian caring community we are reminded of that family traveling to Bethlehem who had nothing, but through the kindness of an innkeeper they were given a place to stay and is where the light of the world was born.

Donate today and “share the joy” @
<https://fumcportsmouth.com/id-like-to-make-a-donation/>



share the joy

OUR TREE IS UP IN THE NARTHEX
AND YOU CAN HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE
THIS CHRISTMAS
FOR LOCAL CHILDREN!

*Take as many stars as you want and bring your
unwrapped gifts to the church office by 12/13*



CAN YOU HELP?

We need donations of Christmas wrapping paper,
tissue paper and bows...

And we need Wrapping Angels that to help wrap all the wonderful gifts for our
local children 12/13 and 12/16 @10:30am in Sanborn Hall

Thank you!



Spread joy this season by supporting our church staff Christmas gifts.
Your generosity honors their hard work and dedication all year round.

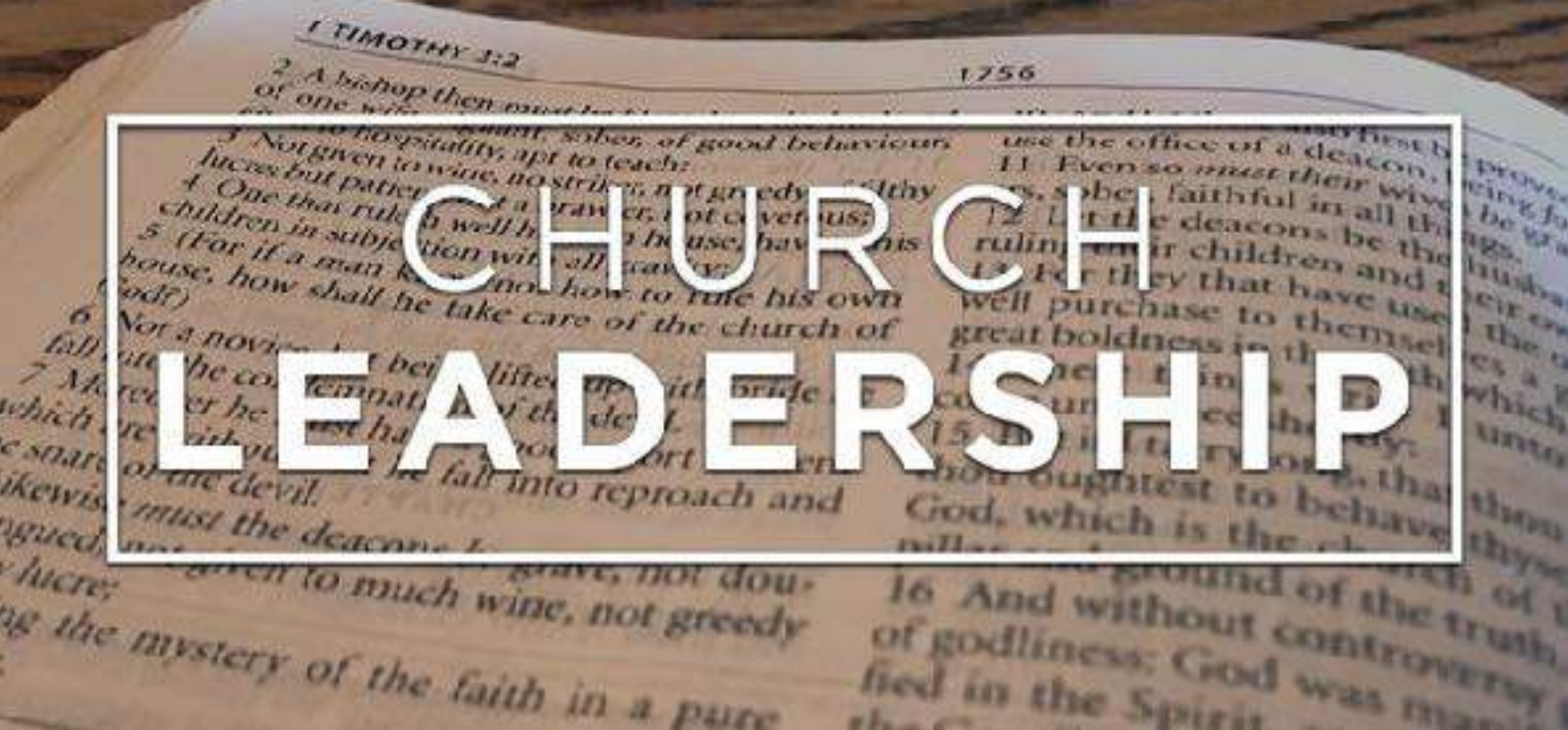
See Sue Richards for details or drop off your donation in the church office.





God
BLESS US,
every one!

THE REDEMPTION OF SCROOGE
DECEMBER WORSHIP SERIES - COME JOIN US!



CHURCH LEADERSHIP

FINANCIAL REPORT [John VanReenen]

Our Annual Church Conference was conducted on November 13 and presided over by our District Superintendent Taesung Kang. A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to the review and approval of the ten recommendations from the Financial Task Force. These actions were formulated over the last two-plus months, following several meetings with our United Methodist Foundation consultant Herb Taylor.

Each of these recommendations was presented at Church Conference with required background information followed by varying amounts of discussion and reflection. The meeting minutes contain the discussion content and more detail regarding the recommendations themselves.

Each one of the recommendations was approved with the exception of item #4, which was considered to be in-process and had been approved previously by the Leadership Board. It should be noted that, as of this week, the conversion from oil to gas is complete with both boilers now using natural gas only. Our minimum savings for this effort is expected to be \$10,000 per year starting with this heating season. With an oil bill for last winter of over \$21,000, this should provide a welcome reduction in the church's overall fixed costs.

FINANCIAL REPORT CONTINUED

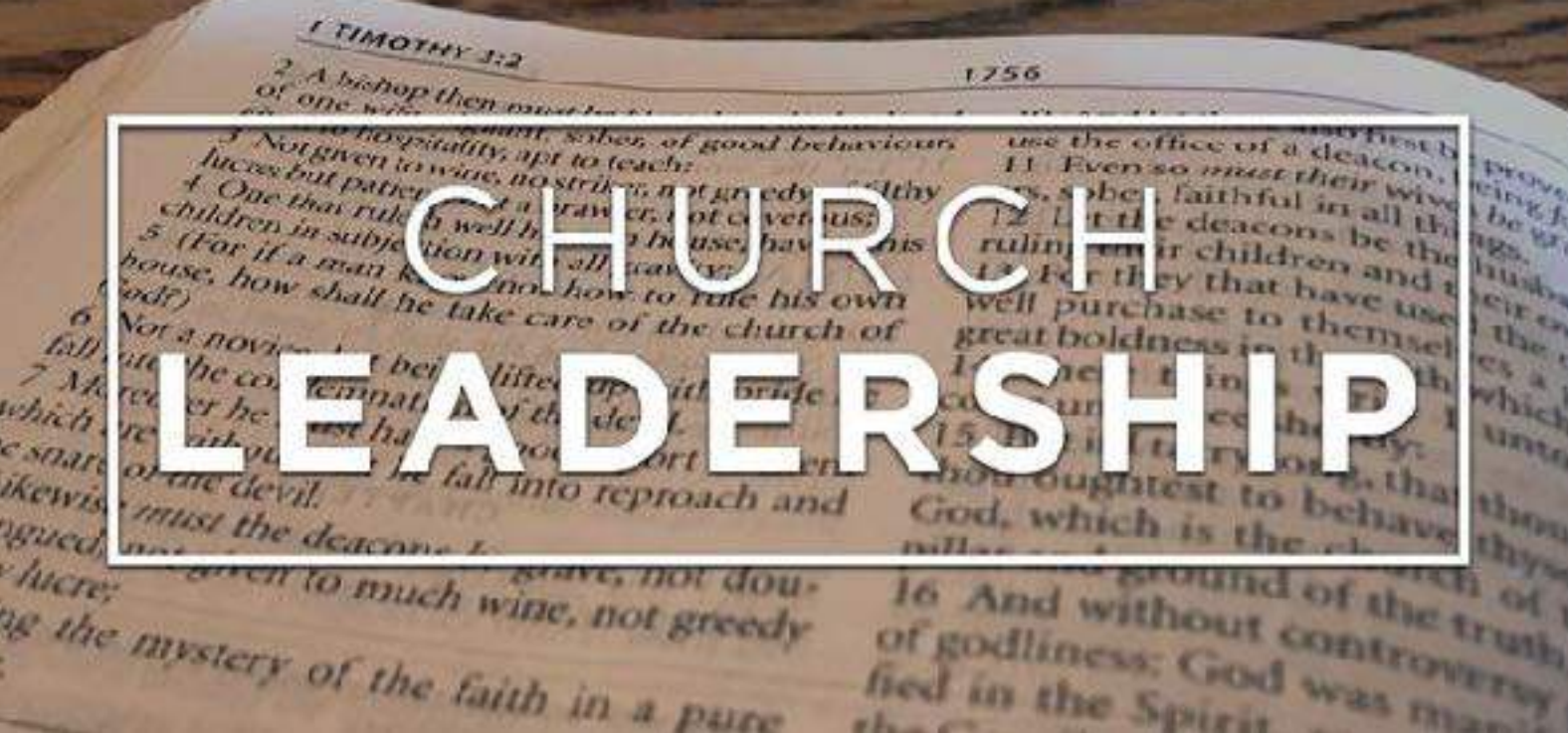
Although the initial charter for the Financial Task Force is complete with this body of work, the realization of the benefits of each one of these initiatives will require much additional effort on the part of the FTF, the Leadership Board, the new Finance and Trustees committees, the FUMC congregation and our Portsmouth community partners. The list of recommendations follows below.

The Financial Task Force is recommending the following to the congregation as next steps toward resolving our deficit spending issue:

1. Engage the services of a commercial and residential real estate agent to access all church property rental and sale possibilities.
2. Explore the possibilities of inviting another church to share our building for their services.
3. Explore the possibility of a solar partnership to reduce electric costs.
4. Complete the conversion of the boilers to natural gas from oil to reduce heating costs.
5. Reduce current budget expenses by reducing the Director of Marketing position's salary from \$25,000 to \$10,000 with accordingly reduced responsibilities and hours.
6. Initiate a vigorous stewardship program for the Spring to increase giving.
7. Initiate a capital campaign to re-pave the parking lot and replace the handicap ramp.
8. Invite current missional partners who use the church building to increase their giving.
9. Pursue appropriate grants that may help us finance our missional purposes.
10. Hold a special event to discuss estate planning.

You can learn more about us by using your camera on your phone and this QR code





COMMUNITY REPORT [Sue Sarosiek]

Our Pumpkin Patch was a big success. The outreach that took place during this time was phenomenal. Ask Sue Richards to share a story or two. Three women from Recovery Church helped at the pumpkin unload and worked several shifts at the pumpkin booth. Three volunteers from Cross Roads also worked during Pumpkin unload. These relationships developed with FUMC's partnership with I Got Bridged and Recovery Church.

Kellie from Center for Wellbeing dropped off a donation for End 68 Hours of Hunger. In conversation, mentioned that they would help with our Share the Joy tree. They have a network of employees who will collect toys and gift cards and deliver to FUMC.

Shelley, FUMC's friend from Gather, donated a high chair so that one of the young children at Recovery Church has a seat.

FUMC's friend Molly, dropped off several items for use for our Share the Joy Christmas project.

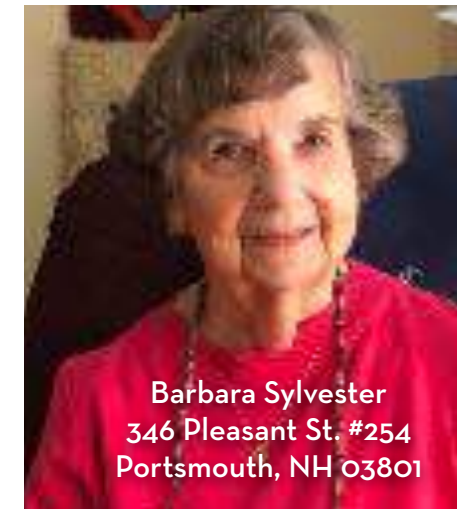
Thank you to Aerial who is coordinating the families in need from New Hampshire Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.



CARING FOR EACH OTHER

PRAYERS, CARDS, CALLS OR VISITS

We are a FAMILY first and foremost...and there are some who are not able to make it to church on Sundays or be part of the activities that are happening at First UMC. There are others that we may not know but what a blessing it is to be lifted up in prayer.



PRAYER IS POWERFUL

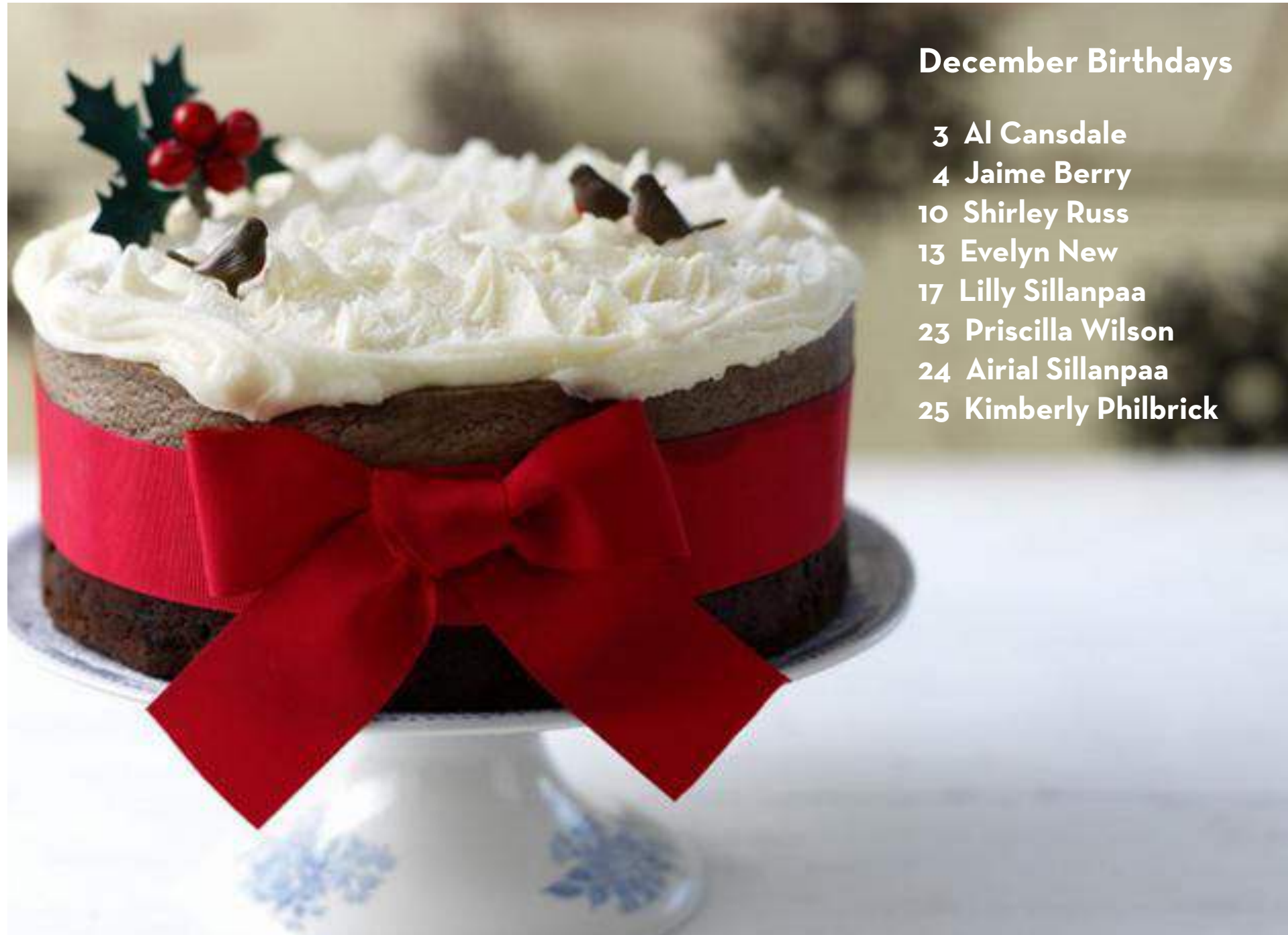




UPCOMING EVENTS

1] December 17th join us for a potluck luncheon after church and Christmas Caroling in our community...all are welcome!
2] If you can't make it in person on Sundays join us via Facebook live
3] We wish all of our First UMC family celebrating a birthday or anniversary this month one that is filled with love, laughter and fond memories.

JOIN US FOR
LIVE STREAMING
WORSHIP ON OUR
facebook page



December Birthdays

3 Al Cansdale
4 Jaime Berry
10 Shirley Russ
13 Evelyn New
17 Lilly Sillanpaa
23 Priscilla Wilson
24 Airial Sillanpaa
25 Kimberly Philbrick

WINTER IS COMING!

Helping the community stay warm.

We continue to provide cold weather packs to our community with gloves, hat, socks, scarf.

Are you looking to make a donation?...please drop them off at the church office on Wednesdays from 10am - 2pm, or come visit us on Sunday at 10am for worship service.

THESE ARE NOT LOST...
IF YOU NEED THEM,
PLEASE TAKE THEM.

THEY ARE A GIFT...
STAY WARM.
YOU ARE LOVED!



You can learn more about us by using your camera on your phone and this QR code

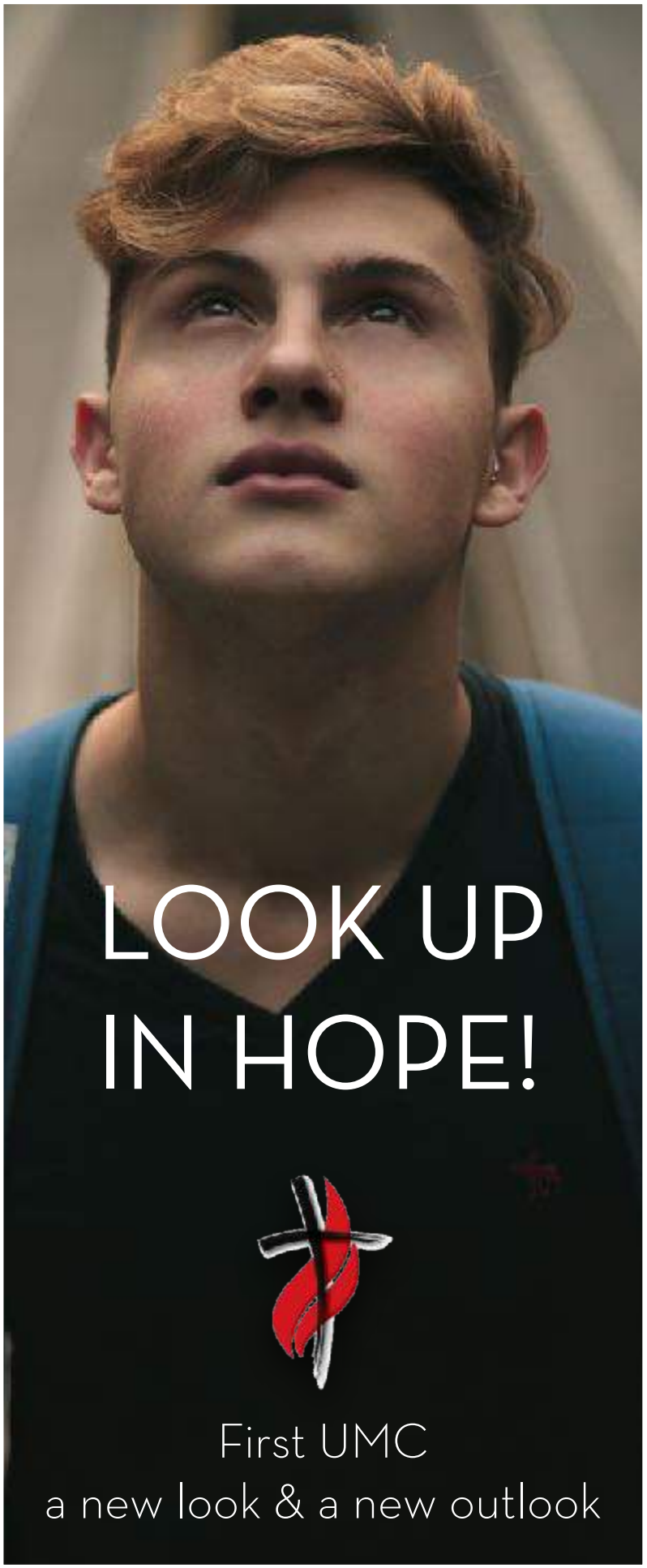


COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Putting our First UMC Purpose of “transforming lives through unconditional inclusion, empowering actions to make a difference” is seen with the collaboration with our incredible partnership with the non-profit I Got Bridged serving the community in bridging the gap for people in need on the Seacoast.





LOOK UP
IN HOPE!



First UMC
a new look & a new outlook

Our New Purpose



"TRANSFORM LIVES"

There is strength in numbers. We believe in collaborating and through the power of kindness, compassion, empathy and action we will equip our community with knowledge, resources and opportunities to make positive transformations.

"UNCONDITIONAL INCLUSION"

We will meet NO ordinary people in our lives as everyone has something amazing to offer. Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy.



"To transform lives through unconditional inclusion, empowering actions to make a difference."



"EMPOWERING ACTIONS"

With our clear purpose we will shift from telling everyone what to do or doing nothing at all, to empowering others to join the movement and take ownership in making greatness happen.

"MAKE A DIFFERENCE"

Believing that what we do matters and will make a difference in people's lives. We don't have to save the world in one stroke but we can make a difference one person at a time.



THIS IS US!

A CHURCH WITH A COMMUNITY MISSION

We, the congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, are a Reconciling Congregation living our purpose and 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.



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

MORE WAYS AND WHY'S TO GIVE *YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPACT RIGHT HERE*

Tithing, gifting, donating both your time and financial resources help our church to continue to be that beacon of light in the community. Those gifts you so graciously give help us meet the monthly bills that keep our doors open for so many...not just on Sunday mornings but all week. We are a church AT WORK...everyday is Sunday for First UMC!

Because of you...WE are stronger – Thank You!

WE SAVED A SEAT FOR YOU...
SEE YOU IN CHURCH ON SUNDAY @ 10am



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES:

Advent Worship Series -
God Bless Us Every One!
The Redemption of Scrooge

Sunday December 17th Potluck Luncheon and
Christmas Caroling following worship

Wrapping Angels meet in Sanborn Hall on
12/13 and 12/16 at 10:30am