

FIRST UMC  PORTSMOUTH
JANUARY BEACON
2024



"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."
— Joshua 1:9

Dear Church Family,

Happy New Year! I pray and hope that you are filled with the love and light of Christ and will bring that light into every encounter you have in this new year. Each year, I spend the last week of the year, reflecting on the year past and praying about the year to come. I ask God to share a scripture with me to inform my actions in the year ahead and the scripture above is what I was given this year. I find that this spiritual practice helps me to remain focused on the path that God has for me and keeps me from going off on tangents. I don't like to waste the precious time I have been given nor do I want to live my days divorced from the will of God.

What are your spiritual practices that keep you faithful and connected to our Lord? This year, I invite you to join a bible study to start the year off right. I had offered two different choices and so far, the one that has garnered your attention is Long Story Short by Josh McNall. It will be a six-week study of the Bible. Please see me for more details about the timing of this study.

I would also like to invite you to consider being part of a focus group to help the church set its intentions for the year ahead. We have a Finance Committee who is helping us get a better handle on finance matters since the Task Force has given us a path to explore. Now the other side of the coin, is to work on growing the church, your previous visioning committee outlined a two pronged approach; helping members grow spiritually and outreach to the community to help bring new members to Christ. It is time to work on that goal. Please let me know if you will be on a short-term focus group to solidify those plans.

The other important area that I would like to lift up to begin this new year is our children and youth programming. We are so blessed to have young people in our church family, and we need to honor them by providing great Sunday School and youth programs. To start with, we need you! Please see me or Dave Richards to volunteer what every gift you may bring.

Let us start the new year as close to Christ as we can. I know that the year will be EPIC if we do! I hope you will come out to Recovery Church on January 10th. I will be baptizing several new folks into Christ's family. It will be a joy!

Be blessed,
Pastor Jackie



FIRST UMC LIFE

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Pastor Jackie started the December worship series The Redemption of Scrooge - God Bless us, Every One with dramatic readings and kids help decorate the altar.

Visit our website to see all the photos - <https://fumcportsmouth.com/photo-galleries/first-sunday-of-advent/>





SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The redemption of Scrooge worship series continued with an amazing group of actors...who knew?!

Visit our website to see all the photos -<https://fumcportsmouth.com/photo-galleries/second-sunday-of-advent/>



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SUNDAYS
10am



FIRST UMC LIFE

SHARE THE JOY

Through your loving donations you made a difference this Christmas for 49 Seacoast kids...the wrapping angels were busy for 2 afternoons wrapping everything...thank you all!

Visit our website to see all the photos -<https://fumcportsmouth.com/photo-galleries/share-the-joy-2023/>





FIRST UMC LIFE



CHURCH POTLUCK

Food and Fellowship...an amazing way of celebrating the third Sunday of Advent with everyone's favorite goodies!

Visit our website to see all the photos -<https://fumcportsmouth.com/photo-galleries/third-sunday-of-advent-and-potluck/>





FIRST UMC LIFE



CHILDREN'S PAGEANT CHRISTMAS EVE DAY

The kids did an amazing job with their Christmas Eve day pageant with lessons, acting and singing. Thank you to everyone who was part of the production and to the kids...thank you for reminding us all to have fun and be joyful! Visit our website to see all the photos - <https://fumcportsmouth.com/photo-galleries/christmas-eve-sunday-10am-5pm/>



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SUNDAYS
10am



LOOK UP!
Not just as a reflection of how we were called,
but also as an act of hope for a brighter tomorrow.
Join us as we re-open our doors
with a new and fresh look and outlook.

FIRST UMC LIFE

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE


A beautiful 5pm service filled with lessons, carols, and special music. We ended the service with the lights dimmed and holding candles forming a circle of love and light around the sanctuary.

Visit our website to see all the photos -<https://fumcportsmouth.com/photo-galleries/christmas-eve-sunday-10am-5pm/>





FIRST UMC LIFE



January 2024

FIRST UMC WORSHIP SCHEDULE

NOTE - If you are unable to meet the proposed schedule please let the office know immediately and we will reschedule.

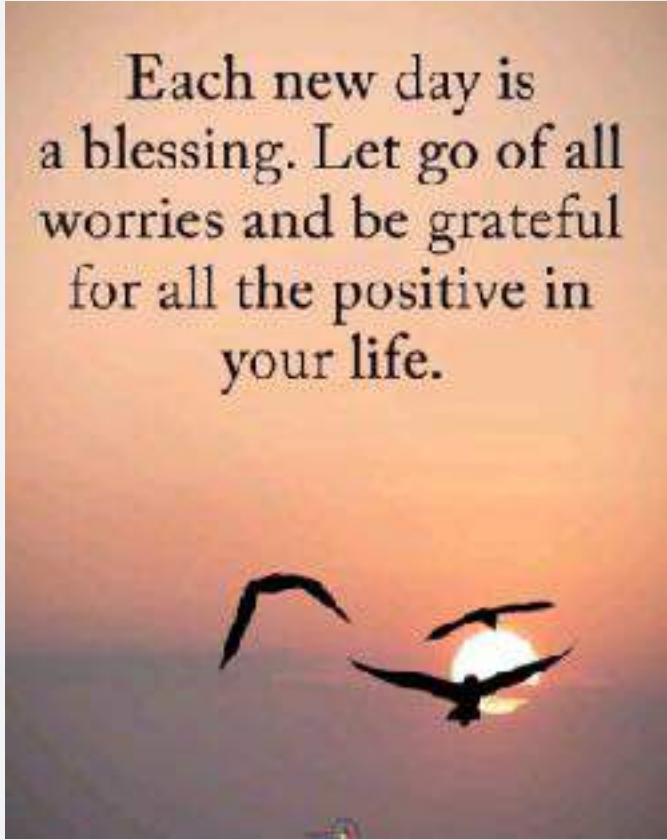
DATE	LITURGIST	ACOLYTES	GREETERS & USHERS	WORSHIP TECH	SOUND TECH	COFFEE HOUR
January 7th	Breck LaBadie	Liam S.	Marilyn Stebbins Yvonne Griffin	Steve Scott	Sue Sarosiek	Christine Williams
January 14th	Christine Williams	Maria & Dominic A.	Jane Richards Linda Rieber	Steve Scott	Sue Sarosiek	Yvonne Griffin Cynthia Drake
January 21st	PennySue Orr	Lilly & Georgia S.	Jahn VanReenen Cathy VanReenen	Steve Scott	Dave Richards	Sue Richards Kellie Langs
January 28th	Cathy VanReenen	Bella S.	Anne Coffey Mike Coffey	Steve Scott	Sue Sarosiek	Cathy VanReenen Rosie Buswell

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

January 7th after church service we need volunteers to take down and store the Advent decorations.

January 19th @ 6pm in the Randall Room - Church Leadership Board meeting. A zoom invite will be provided if you cannot meet at the church.

Any Wednesday from 10-2 come and visit Sue S. and Sue R. in the church office there is always something to do like filling cold weather packs, emergency packs etc.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

HELPING THE COMMUNITY STAY WARM

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



I GOT BRIDGED

Learn more about Freddy Petrone and how I Got Bridged is bridging the gap for people in need.

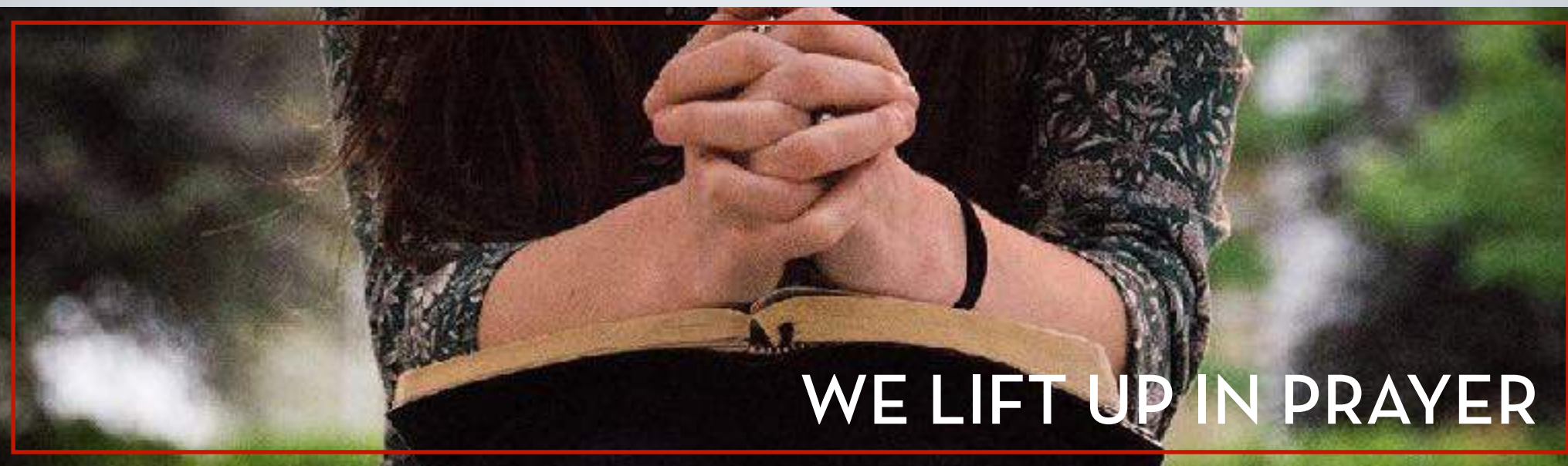


RECOVERY CHURCH - NH'S FIRST AT FIRST UMC

Every Wednesday @ 6pm for food & fellowship and service @7pm creating a bridge between addiction and faith in the community.



Do you want to learn more about how you can help call the church office @ 603.436.6038 or visit:
First United Methodist Church - Portsmouth <https://fumcportsmouth.com/>
I Got Bridged <https://www.igotbridged.com/>



WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER



Elaine, Jessie, Bobbie,
Irlene, Juliann, Charles,
Dwight, Reginald, Ben, Tim,
Mark, Billy, Art & Nancy,
Michael, Gary,
Pastor Jackie's Mom and
son Matthew,
our Church Family, Friends
and Community

CARING FOR EACH OTHER

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. Prayers, cards, calls or a visit are always welcome!

We also lift up in prayer those names that have been shared with us a community as they go through their own challenges and we ask that God cradles them in His loving arms.



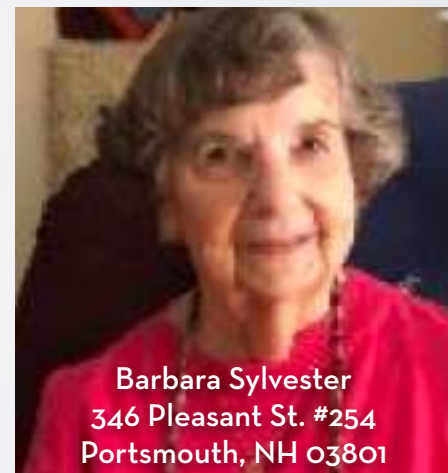
Ruth Griffin
479 Richards Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801



Jim Slater
75 State Street
Portland, ME 04101



Barbara Glidden
188 Jones Ave #101
Portsmouth, NH 03801



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



UPCOMING EVENTS

SEACOAST NAACP MLK BREAKFAST

January 15, 2024 @ South Church - 292 State Street. Pancake breakfast begins at 8:30am for more information call 603.436.6099



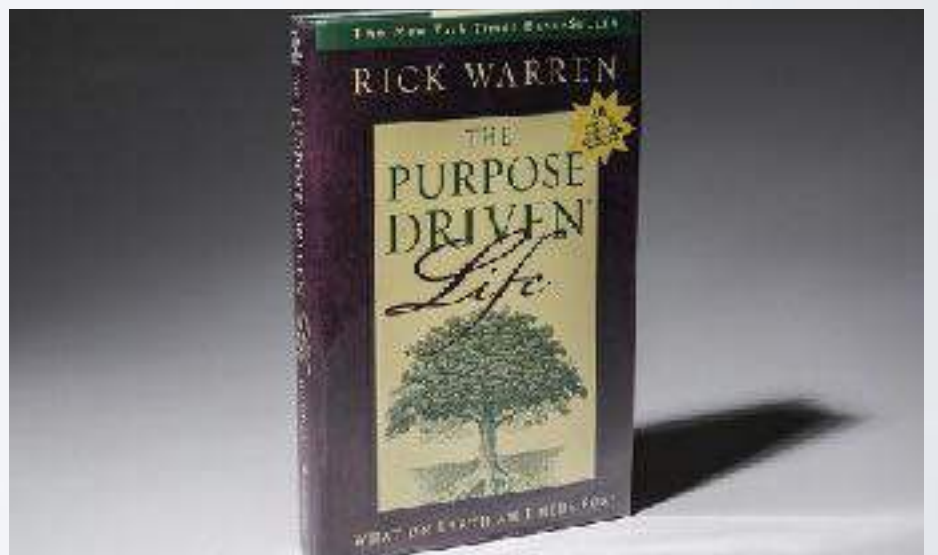
PAJAMA SUNDAY DECEMBER 31st

No you aren't dreaming about going to school in your PJ's...wear them to church! PennySue Orr will be leading a fun worship service of song.



GROUP BOOK DISCUSSION

Every Thursday from 9am-10am in the Randall Room at the church - 129 Miller Ave



To learn more about Martin Luther King and how you can celebrate the MLK day of service visit - <https://www.dosomething.org/us/articles/martin-luther-king-jr-day>



UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Get a card in the mail or send a quick text or instant messenger to wish these church family members a Happy Birthday day filled with love, laughter and lots of cake!

- 3 Stephanie Labadie
- 6 David Richards
- 6 Gary Sillanpaa
- 9 Maria Arcadipane
- 11 Cathy Martin
- 18 Pastor Jackie Brannen
- 23 David Bovee
- 25 John VanReenen
- 31 Tim Orr
- 31 Karin Scott
- 31 Yvonne Griffin





DIGITAL DISCIPLES

In our interconnected world, technology plays a crucial role in spreading the gospel message. Social media platforms and smartphones have made digital discipleship an influential method for global discipleship. You can be part of it!



JOIN US FOR
LIVE STREAMING
WORSHIP ON OUR
facebook page



share

you can help us grow please like and share our posts!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

fumcportsmouth.com

THINGS CHANGE WEEKLY

Want to learn more about the importance of Digital Discipleship check out this website @ <https://orangeleaders.com/2023/01/12/why-digital-discipleship-matters-for-student-ministry/>



WITH GRATITUDE

Dear Church Family,

Thank you all for your card and Christmas gift. I appreciate the love that went into it. I'm praying for an awesome New Year for all of us!

*Blessings,
Pastor Jackie*

Dear First UMC Congregation,

Thank you very much for the card and Christmas check.

Pete Engel

Dear Church Family,

I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for the thoughtful Christmas gift your generosity and kindness have as always touched my heart.

The love and support of First UMC means the world to me and your presence in my life is a constant reminder of the true spirit of Christmas - the spirit of giving, love, and togetherness. Your thoughtfulness has filled my heart with joy, and I feel truly blessed to be a part of this community.

Wishing everyone a New Year filled with happiness and the love of family and friends.

*Love and hugs,
Bevan*

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

PASTOR'S REPORT REV. DR. JACKIE BRANNEN – 12/19/23

As you know, United Methodists are connectional in nature and one of the ways we are connected is through our governance. Each church belongs to a district and a Conference, a jurisdiction and then the denomination. The leader of the Conference is the Bishop assigned to that area. District Superintendents and Bishops supervise pastors and make sure that churches are following the guidelines given to us from the Book Of Discipline. This collaborative structure allows us to move together toward the goals that are set for us as a denomination. In much the same way as our US government structure, the Denomination is made up of both laity and clergy and these representatives determine what the goals of the denomination are. Each church is represented at the Conference level as well. With all that in mind, the District Superintendent and Bishop give goals to pastors and SPRC/church leadership at the beginning of new appointments.

The following missional challenges were given to me/us when I became your pastor.

- 1. Work with the Transition Team to make the change of pastoral leadership as smooth as possible. Meet all members within the first 12 months in small groups or individually in their homes.*
- 2. Work with consultant Betsy Waters and First UMC's Outreach and Organizational Development Task Force to develop a strategic plan for the church.*
- 3. Help the congregation to make the spiritual growth of members and development of accountable discipleship a priority.*
- 4. Oversee administrative matters and ensure that church structure, procedures, and governance are in compliance with the Book of Discipline and in the best interest of the congregation.*
- 5. Guide the congregation to adopt a sustainable level of spending. Help the church develop a strong stewardship program to support a balanced budget and to pay 100% of Mission Shares.*
- 6. Challenge and inspire the congregation for the ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Portsmouth, the United States, and around the world, through preaching, teaching, and worship.*

We are now almost at the 6 month mark of this appointment. I have not worked with a transitional team as of yet since none was organized by the SPRC. I have done some of the work of that team on my own and other tasks like visitation are yet to be accomplished. We are just now starting the discussion around working with Betsy Waters. I hope to be able to start this goal in earnest in 2024.

I have attempted to encourage the congregation's spiritual growth through worship, mid-week reflections and have offered a Bible study for adults and confirmation classes for youth. To date, there have only been a few who have stated they are interested in the Bible study. It may be that the timing for a Confirmation class is not going to be this winter. While the congregation is very motivated in service, there is more of a hesitation in spiritual growth. I will continue to offer opportunities. I have spent the bulk of my time in administration and financial accountability. There is movement in both of these areas with much more to do but the pieces are in place to continue in this work. The church is very motivated to be good neighbors to the community of Portsmouth. The area of growth still needed is to help the church connect these ministries to our purpose; to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

This month has been very busy. While some tasks such as the work of the Financial Task Force have been behind the scenes, preparing for Christmas and concentrating on our children and youth have taken center stage. Our Sunday School program is still not quite where we want it to be. We need more adults to step into this area so that we can accomplish what we envision for our children. While almost everyone agrees that children are the future of the church, it is difficult to get volunteers in this area. We will continue to encourage folks to set this as personal priority.

There are still many in the congregation who have gifts to be used and perhaps would step into new roles if asked. It had been wonderful to see so much energy and volunteering around the worship service. The recent potluck was an amazing witness to the fact that our congregation is hungry for fellowship, and good cooking! Let's do more of that!

CHURCH LEADERSHIP



FACILITIES REPORT - SUE SAROSIEK - 12/19/23

As noted in the community report, Jim Golter, our heating wizard, has completed the installation of the new boiler and conversion of our oil burner to gas. He was instrumental in receiving approval from the City of Portsmouth and Unitil, and oversaw the completion of the install of a larger gas pipe to meet the heating needs of the church building.

As the oil tanks were full of oil at boiler oil to gas conversion time, a quote was received to remove the oil for \$1400. Sam Bovee also gave an estimate of removing the oil and tanks (100 gals at a time) in exchange for the oil itself.

The City of Portsmouth Health Department conducted a surprise kitchen inspection. The kitchen passed with a grade of 94. The noted concerns have been corrected and noted in Inspector's return visit.

COMMUNITY REPORT - SUE SAROSIEK - 12/19/23

The Share the Joy tree is up and several of FUMC's community partners have taken stars from the tree to fill Christmas wishes of children in need. Also, new this year, the Center for Wellbeing has also partnered with FUMC to provide gifts. A total of 49 children and families have been helped this Christmas. The wrapping angels included congregation members, previous church members, AA folks, and community folks. Thank you all for your help!!

Jim Golter, our plumber, stopped into the office to check in. He checked in at church every single day, for two weeks, since installing our boilers to check on their functioning. He noticed and commented on all the good FUMC does in the community. He observed FUMC's commitment to the community Every Single Day!

A big thank you to Kristin Wiggin, at North Hill Nursery for providing our beautiful Christmas wreaths again this year. FUMC is thankful for our partnership with Kristen!



First UMC is a Reconciling Congregation dedicated to worshiping, learning, and serving with ALL people embracing Jesus Christ's message of love and acceptance.

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.

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

