



FIRST UMC  PORTSMOUTH
FEBRUARY BEACON
2024



Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God and saying, " The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news". Mark 1:15

Dear Friends,

It seems as if we have just celebrated Christmas and we are already invited into the Lenten season. Yes, Lent is early this year and begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14th. I can't say for you but I am not sure I am ready to make the emotional switch from incarnational joy to Lenten repentance. And yet, we know that Jesus came not to remain that sweet baby in the manger but to lead us to a life of repentance and salvation.

The Christmas joy is not about the birth of a baby but that the Savior of the World is now among us. And that fact alone should bring us to repentance for surely none of us is worthy of that kind of love. Still, it is that unconditional love that Jesus offers each one of us. Those of us who are more prideful than we should be, may wonder about a God that would humble us by asking for our repentance but that would be the wrong interpretation of what God is asking of us. God does not need our repentance for God's sake, God offers the act of repentance for our sake. It is in the act of repenting of our sins, that we find freedom and eliminate the barrier that we have erected between ourselves and God (as well as others).

Ash Wednesday is a solemn occasion when we recall that we are indeed not God but human. We bring our repentance into God's presence and as we receive the ashes that remind us of our mortality, we find freedom in also accepting the gift of grace that God has freely given us. For me, this service is one of the holiest of the year. So, I invite you to step into Lent this year on Valentine's day at 6:30 as we remember the love that God has for each of us. I believe that it will initiate you into a Lent that is meaningful and emancipating. Don't forget to also join us for Bible study on Wednesday February 21 at 6:30 and our lenten creative spiritual discipline on Sunday the 18th following coffee hour.

I look forward to being with you for all of these Lenten events with even more poignancy knowing that it will be the only one we will have together as we all breathe into the news that I will be appointed as the interim District Superintendent for the Granite District as of July 1, 2024. Our time together will be shorter than we might have expected but this makes it all the sweeter. Getting older has taught me not to take for granted the moments we have but to make the most of them. With that in mind, may God bless you in this holy season,

Pastor Jackie

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SUNDAYS
10am



FIRST UMC LIFE



A NEW YEAR

Pastor Jackie's sermon series took us on a journey of Bread, Bath & Beyond this month.

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



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SUNDAYS
10am



FIRST UMC LIFE



OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART, LORD

The children's time led by David Richards was about the human senses and everyone learned a new song titled "open the eyes of my heart."

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



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SUNDAYS
10am



FIRST UMC LIFE

ASH WEDNESDAY

Join us on February 14th @ 6:30pm in the sanctuary to begin our Lenten journey together.



ASH WEDNESDAY

BEGINS THE SEASON OF LENT

Join us on February 14th @ 6:30pm

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





FIRST UMC LIFE



MEET PASTOR ROBERT [BOB] STEWART

Pastor Bob will be joining First UMC as our new Pastor on July 1, 2024. Here is Pastor Bob's bio.

I am married to Sharon Stewart, and we celebrated our 51st wedding anniversary on September 30, 2023. We have two children, Jaime and Jeffrey. They are both married, and each have three children. Our oldest grandchild, Quinn, is 17 and a senior and will be graduating this June from Pembroke Academy. Our youngest grandchild, Gabriella, is in third grade in Pembroke, NH.

We moved to New Hampshire from Michigan in 1989 as a result of a promotion as a corporate Training Director with the company I was employed. In my career before becoming a Pastor, I was in the college bookstore business for twenty years employed with Follett Higher Education Group. My last position with Follett before retiring June 30, 2017, was as the Director of the Boston College Bookstores.

Ten years ago while I was still employed with Follett, I began my ministry journey being part of a team with 3 other men from Bow Mills UMC. We served North Charlestown UMC in North Charlestown, NH. I then became a Licensed Local Pastor in 2017 and have served St. Paul's UMC - Manchester with a 3/4 time appointment. I will be retiring June 30, 2024 after 7 wonderful years of ministry with that congregation.

Sharon and I have always been looked upon as a team. We serve God and we serve in ministry together. Sharon has many gifts and while we were at St. Paul's, she would always transform the altar and other areas of the church with her visual arts gift. Together we both do sacred dance which is an act of worshipping God. When we were members of Bow Mills UMC we had a large adult dance choir, and two children dance choirs. All three choirs were directed by Sharon. I also like to make a joyful noise to the Lord by singing in the choir.

I am currently a member of the Manchester Clergy Association. My clergy brothers and sisters serve various denominations in the Greater Manchester area. Together we have a Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service, and this past year St. Paul's was the host church. We, as a group, jointly serve in Mission by having events to support Families in Transition of Manchester. I am very much involved in developing our spiritual life. We accomplish that through our worship services, developing our prayer lives and through Bible Study. I am currently doing two Bible studies at St. Paul's after completing a study ... 52 Weeks With Jesus. Yes ... we spent 52 Weeks With Jesus. I offer the studies in-person and also via zoom for those who work. It is always my desire to insure everyone has an opportunity to study God's Word.

Outreach and Mission is another high priority of mine. We need to be active in our community and help those in need. Jesus often said, I did not come to be served but I came to serve others. That is what we as a church need to do too.

The children of the church is close to our hearts. We love the children, and they love us. I love their hugs and look forward to them every week. We are doing a Children's church now at St. Paul's and the children are dismissed to learn about Jesus after I have children's time with them. God has a mailbox at St. Paul's and sends the children a weekly message which is yet another opportunity to build their spiritual life. We had our first VBS last year and we had 7- 8 children in attendance.

I look forward to being in ministry with First United Methodist Church - Portsmouth. One thing that I have always emphasized in my career over the years, including ministry, is that there is no "I" in the word "TEAM." It will take a team to build and grow the church. We need to do it together as a team. I hope you want to serve alongside of us.

"I can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4: 13 NRSV



WE REMEMBER

Harold "Whitey" Whitehouse, Jr. age 95, beloved son of Portsmouth, NH, lifelong resident of the South End, US Navy Veteran of WWII and the Korean Conflict, passed away peacefully in his home on January 4, 2024 following a period of declining health. He was the husband of the late Ruth (Kent) Whitehouse, who passed away in 2011.

Harold was born in Portsmouth on July 1, 1928, son of the late Harold & Grace (Berry) Whitehouse. He was a graduate of Portsmouth High School. He faked his age to get into the Navy to serve during WWII, having fought in two wars by the time he was 22, receiving an honorable discharge in 1952. He served on the USS Missouri, USS Macon, and the USS Kula Gulf. Whitey worked at the Portsmouth Herald for 28 years as a pressman and linotype operator, until 1968 when an opportunity to work at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard came about. He worked as a carpenter there until his retirement in 1992.

As a prominent citizen of his beloved Portsmouth, Whitey was known as a treasure of the city, and role model and mentor for many. He served the city in many capacities for decades on various committees and was a leader of local government for over 30 years. He was a 16-year member of the School Board beginning in 1973. He also served on the city council from 1988-89, and 1998-2007. He was elected to the Police Commission from 1994-96. He has been on the Parking, Traffic, and Safety Committee since it was formed, serving until after his 95th birthday. He was also a long-time member and Trustee of the Association of Portsmouth Taxpayers. Whitey was very appreciative and humbled when the former Marcy St. Bridge in the South End was re-named in his honor in 2018 as the Harold "Whitey" Whitehouse Bridge.

Harold was also involved with various organizations in the area, St. John's Masonic Lodge of Portsmouth, Scottish Rite Bodies, Valley of Portsmouth & Dover; NH Consistory 32nd degree of Nashua; Bektash Temple Shrine of Concord; 45-year member and past-president of Patrol C; member, director and past-president of the Portsmouth Shrine Club; USS Missouri Association. Whitey was a Life Member of the VFW Emerson Hovey Post #168 of Portsmouth and lifetime member of the D.A.V. Chapter #4, Newington; and the Benevolent Protector of Elks BPOE Post #97, and the Rotary, where he once received the Rotary "Paul Harris Fellow" award; he was also a member of the former Central NH Model T Club, being the proud owner of a 1926.

Above all, Harold was a dedicated family man, and loving husband, father, and grandfather. He is survived by his son, Brian Whitehouse of Rye; his daughter, Karen McKearney, of Exeter; two granddaughters, Alyxandra Whitehouse of Hampton, and Kylie Whitehouse, of Rye; a sister, Audrey Foster of York, ME; sister-in-law, Rena Sandven; brother-in-law, Richard Kent, both of Portsmouth. He was brother of the late Gene Whitehouse, Barbara Matthews, and June Brower.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SUNDAYS 10am



FIRST UMC LIFE



February 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	BELL RINGERS	GREETERS & USHERS	FACEBOOK LIVE	WORSHIP TECH	SOUND TECH	COFFEE HOUR
February 4	Jen Berry	Maria & Dominic	Sofianpau's	Jane Richards Linda Reiber	Sue Richards	Steve Scott	Sue Sarasiek	Siljanpa Family
February 11	Stephanie Labadie	Lilly & Georgia	LaRadie's	Al Cansdale Jan Cansdale	Bella	Steve Scott	Sue Sarasiek	Jen Berry Melanie Lindgren
February 18	Sue Richards	Ellu	Rosie & Will	Anne Coffey Mike Coffey	Suzanne Olbricht	Steve Scott	Sue Sarasiek	Stephanie Labadie
February 25	John VanReenen	Liam	Arcadipone's	Yvonne Griffin Marilyn Stebbins	Sue Richards	Steve Scott	Sue Sarasiek	Linda Reiber Nancy Chesser

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

February 14th @ 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Service

February 18th @ 6:30pm Lenten Creative Spiritual discipline after coffee hour

February 20th Church Leadership meeting

February 21st @ 6:30pm Bible Study - books available at the church office

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.



Your storms are
only temporary,
but the blessings
of God last forever.

dall'oro.com

*We are all
made of stories*

We would love to hear yours!

A POEM ABOUT JOY

Steve Scott shares this beautiful poem by Harry Baker with you as it has a lot of meaning for him and hope it will for you too. He also wanted to share a progress report on his sister, Elaine.

JOY

Joy does not arrive with a fanfare on a red carpet strewn with the flowers of a perfect life.

Joy sneaks in as you pour a cup of coffee watching the sun hit your favorite tree just right.

And you usher Joy away because you are not ready for it.

Your house is not as it must be for such a distinguished guest.

But Joy cares nothing for your messy home or your bank balance or your waistline you see.

Joy is supposed to slither through the cracks of your imperfect life; that's how joy works.

You cannot invite her, you can only be ready when she appears and hug her with meaning.

Because in this very moment, Joy chose you



We've been holding in prayer, my sister, Elaine, for a while now. She's going through breast cancer treatments and has been doing so for nearly 18 months. This past Tuesday she had a PET Scan. The PET scan provides an image using radiation which provides a better indicator of how areas of the body are functioning. After having the PET Scan, her doctor mentioned that he saw no indication of cancer in her body. That is not to say that she is cancer-free, but at this moment, there was no indication of the cancer.

This is amazingly good news that I wanted to share with the congregation. As she continues in her recovery, she will have to have a PET scan annually for a while until she is deemed cancer-free. With each future scan that she has will come the nervousness of whether or not the cancer has returned.

For now, though, we dance in the happiness of the progress that Elaine has made in her cancer journey and in the comfort that the communal prayer of our congregation brings to a woman that you only know by name...Elaine.

Thank you for sharing the power of prayer.

Steve Scott

*We are all
made of stories*

We would love to hear yours!

A STORY OF HOPE AND RECOVERY



RECOVERY CHURCH

A Church Created BY the Recovery Community
FOR the Recovery Community
129 Miller Ave, Portsmouth

At the Recovery Church service this past Wednesday Jim shared an emotional story of gratitude, love and hope.

GRATITUDE for our Lord and Savior for leading him to First UMC as we were the only church open during COVID for AA meetings saving him from ending his life. LOVE for his community and HOPE for a better tomorrow as he continues his journey of recovery.

Jim has written a short book of his story and wanted First UMC to know that he is very thankful. If anyone would like to read his story, the book is in the church office for anyone to read.

Share Your Story!

Send it to Bevan at bbloemendaal@comcast.net and we will put it in next month's Beacon!



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

HELPING THE COMMUNITY STAY WARM

We continue to provide cold weather packs to our community with hat, gloves, socks, and scarf. We are in need of mens gloves if you can donate!



I GOT BRIDGED

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

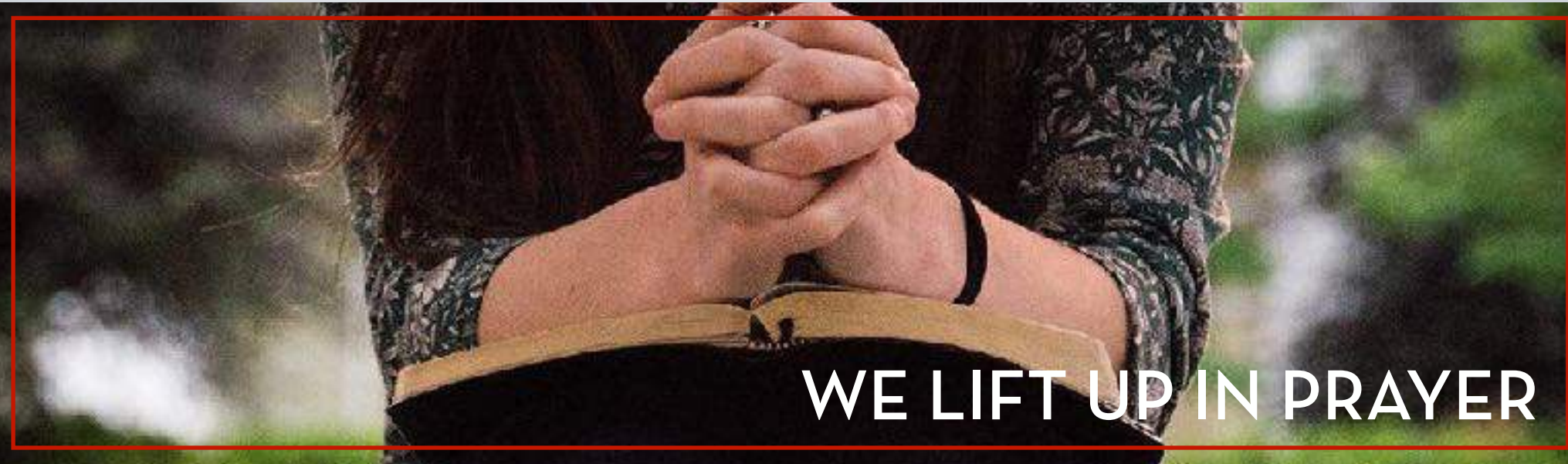


RECOVERY CHURCH - NH'S FIRST AT FIRST UMC

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, Glenn,
Pastor Jackie's Mom and
son Matthew, The Family of
Tonya, The Family of
Dorothy Walton,
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!

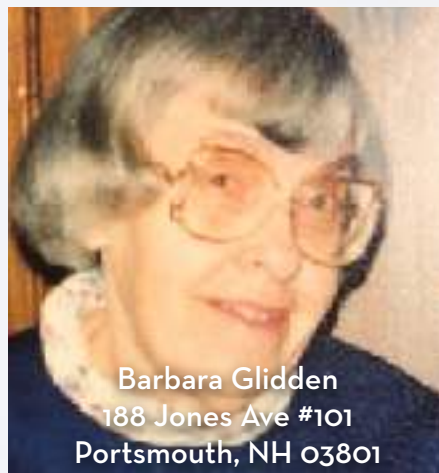
We also lift up in prayer those names that have been shared with us a community as they go through their own challenges and we ask that God cradles them in His loving arms.



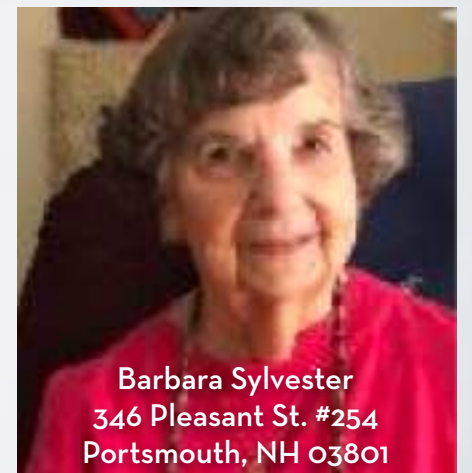
Ruth Griffin
479 Richards Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801



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

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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!



February Birthdays

10 Steve Scott

11 Isabella Sillanpaa

13 Connie Parsons

13 Jenya Westbrook

23 Kevin Fickenscher

25 Cian Philbrick

February Anniversaries

10 John & Judy Griffin

24 George & Jessie Bennett

25 Art & Nancy (Chesser) Munson



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/>



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

