

FOR HE HIMSELF IS OUR

PEACE

EPHESIANS 2:14

FIRST UMC  PORTSMOUTH

FEBRUARY BEACON
2025



FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR BOB...

In Ephesians 2:14 Paul writes, ***For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us.***

I read a story in the Upper Room a couple of days ago where this mother who was raising two daughters and when they were younger they shared a room. She said on most days they thought they were being punished by having to share a room. The girls had reached their boiling point one day and took a roll of gray duct tape and placed it on the floor to divide the room in half. When the mother entered their room and saw the tape she proceeded to remove the tape dividing wall and reminded her daughters that they are part of one family - even in disagreements, we are still one, she said.

The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, like this mother with the two daughters, reminding them that Jews and Gentiles have been reconciled together through Jesus Christ. Even when we disagree with each other...we are still ONE family. We are One in the Body of Christ and when Jesus went to the cross on Calvary he brought peace to humanity and reconciliation with God. Often Jesus preached that God's kingdom, His kingdom is not of this world. Friends, when we start becoming of this world, we begin to see the hostility and the separation from God. Stay alert and when we begin to see that perhaps we are leaning towards the way of this world and losing sight of the kingdom of God, do what I say and do so often... ***“Get behind me Satan!”*** Satan wants us to move away from God. He wants us to be at odds with each other. He wants us to put up those barriers and dividing walls with each other and when we do...Satan wins! As children of God, may we remain in harmony with each other. May we tear down the dividing walls of hostility and any barriers that are separating us from each other and separating us from God. Remember this, United we stand...Divided we fall. Love conquers all and as Captain and Tenille said in their chart-topping hit song...**LOVE WILL KEEP US TOGETHER!**

God loves you...I love you and there ain't nothing you can do about it.
See you in church,
Pastor Bob

God speaks to you through His personal love letter, the Bible.



LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY:

It is truly remarkable how reading God's word draws people closer to Him as He speaks through the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit reaches out to connect with us even before we fully receive the Spirit in our hearts. Through the conviction of Scripture, we will often discover a need we may not have previously recognized, drawing us closer to God. Enjoy getting closer to Him!

February 2

*Jeremiah 1:4-10, Psalm 71:1-6,
1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Luke 4:21-30*

February 9

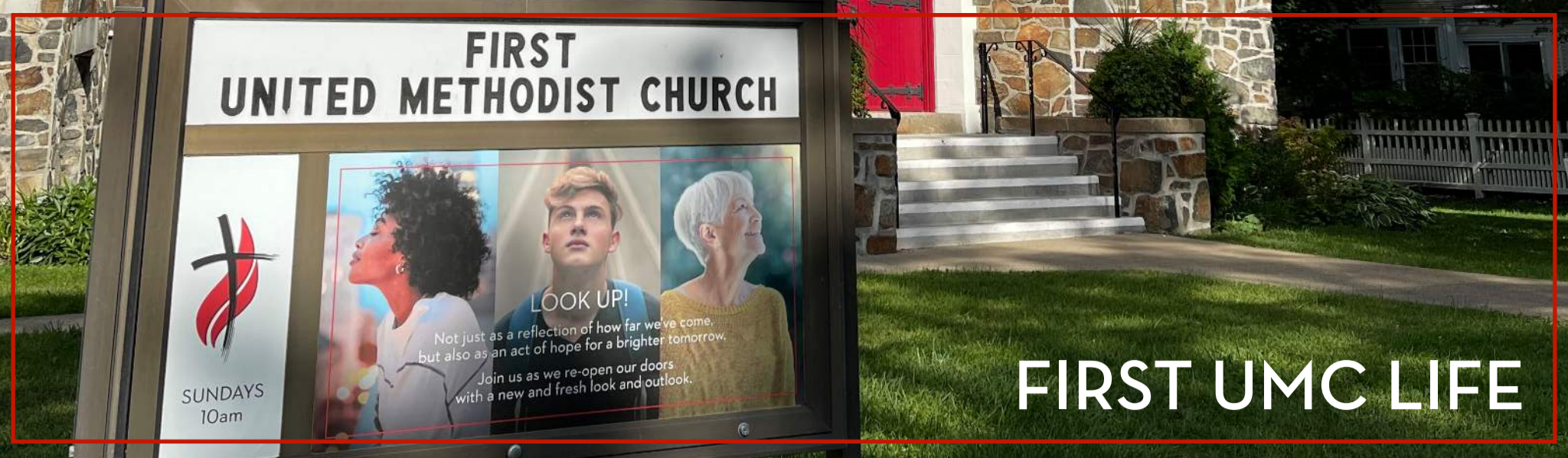
*Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13], Psalm 138,
1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Luke 5:1-11*

February 16

*Jeremiah 17:5-10, Psalm 1,
1 Corinthians 15:12-20, Luke 6:17-26*

January 26

*Genesis 45:3-11, 15,
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40,
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50,
Luke 6:27-38*



FIRST UMC LIFE

WORSHIP, FUN, AND FAITH IN ACTION AT FIRST UMC

Our Church website fumcportsmouth.com is a great place to remind ourselves of the amazing work we are doing supporting each other, our community in making a difference by sharing our faith in God. Check out the photo galleries here - <https://fumcportsmouth.com/photo-galleries/>



First United Methodist Church

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AS WAS HIS CUSTOM

JANUARY 26, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS](#) »



A TRANSFORMATION IN PROGRESS

JANUARY 19, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS](#) »



THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE WATER

JANUARY 12, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS](#) »



EPIPHANY SUNDAY

JANUARY 5, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS](#) »



LAST SUNDAY OF 2024

DECEMBER 29, 2024

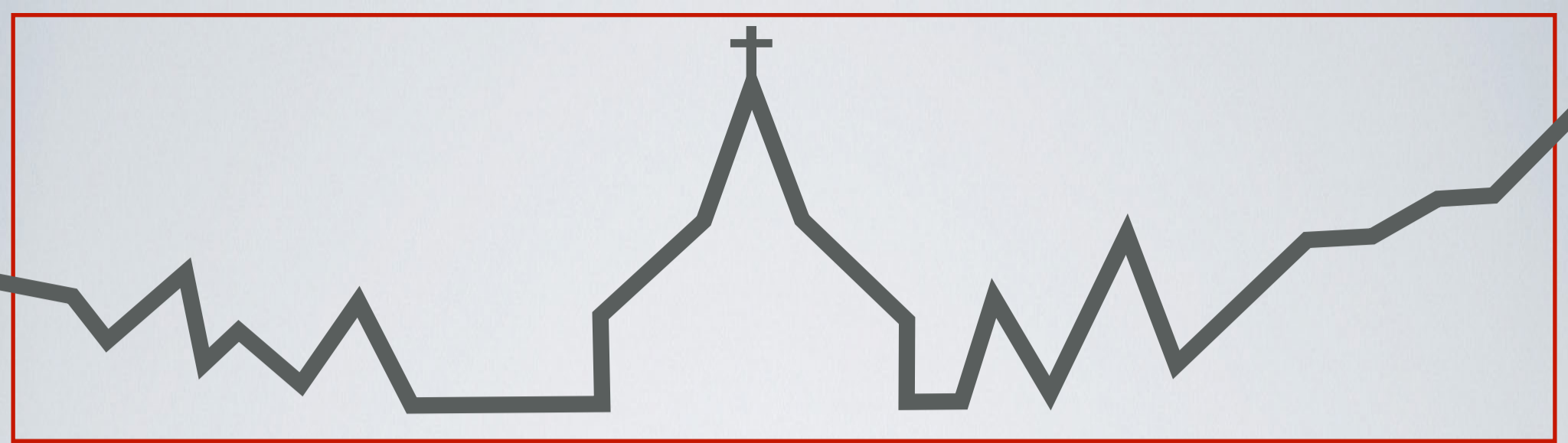
[VIEW PHOTOS](#) »



CHRISTMAS EVE

DECEMBER 24, 2024

[VIEW PHOTOS](#) »



FINANCE FLASH FROM AIRIAL SILLANPAA - FINANCE CHAIR

As January comes to a close, I'm reflecting on FUMC's 2024 fiscal year with a sense of optimism for 2025. We've made significant strides in the past year—our revenue has increased compared to 2023, with pledge offerings up by 3.7%, and identified giving tripling over the course of the year.

FUMC's largest revenue source continues to be our annual Pumpkin Patch, followed by donations and building use contributions from a diverse group of community partners. While we won't be holding our church yard sale in 2025, we're already planning "Spring Patch" and the sale of flowers and homemade lasagna in celebration of Mother's Day. And yes, if you're wondering whether the homemade lasagna is as delicious as it's claimed to be, just ask any of the Sillanpaa kids—they give it two enthusiastic thumbs up!

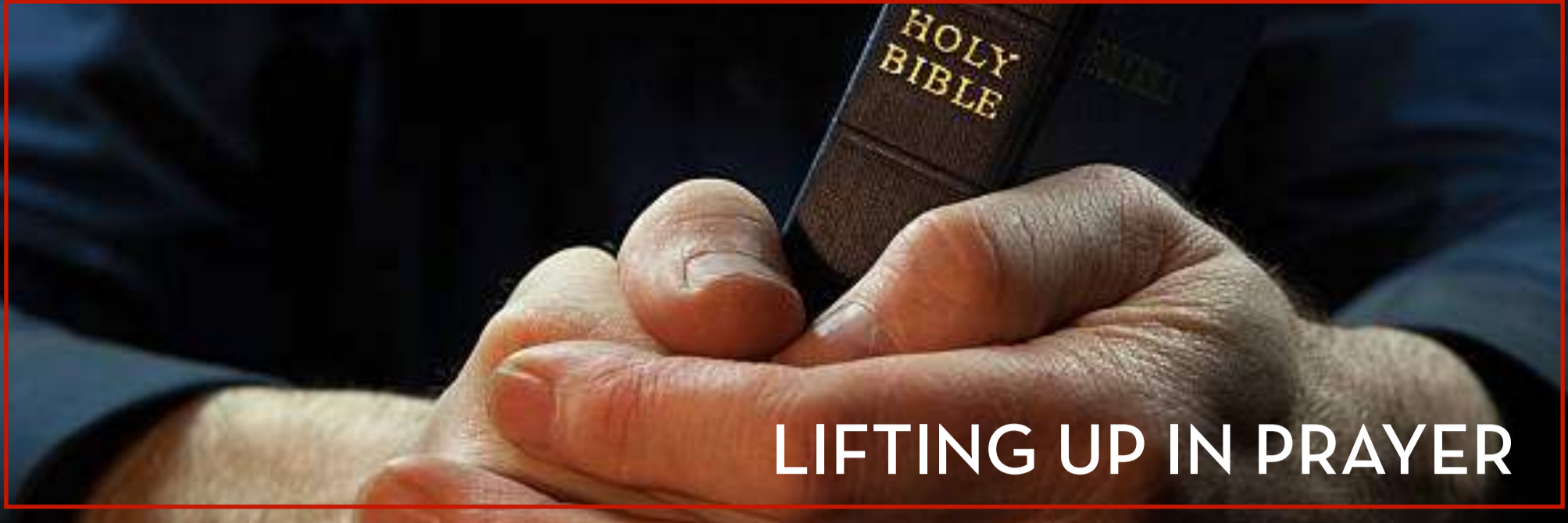
Looking ahead, 2025 also marks the first winter with our new heating system. The Finance Committee is closely monitoring the impact on heating and utility costs, ensuring we continue to manage our resources wisely.

As many of you are aware, a deficit budget for 2025 was approved during our annual church conference in November. While we are committed to working toward a balanced budget, there are numerous ways for each of us to help bridge the gap. In addition to financial giving you can:

- Volunteer at our booths during Spring Patch or Pumpkin Patch (Contact Sue Richards)
- Bake goods for sale at Spring Patch or Pumpkin Patch (Ask any of our leadership team)
- Help assemble the Mother's Day lasagnas
- Join holiday pie-making sessions and invite a friend to help
- Keep an eye out for community grant opportunities (Reach out to Pastor Bob or Aerial Sillanpaa)
- Assist with grant applications (We recently received a \$1,000 grant for Recovery Church!)
- Volunteer to serve on a board or committee
- Stay informed by auditing a board or committee meeting (Talk to the committee chair)
- Offering your help with new fundraising ideas (Contact Pastor Bob or Aerial Sillanpaa)
- Embrace the importance of term limits and encouraging new leadership and volunteers

Speaking of leadership, it's worth noting the importance of replenishing our volunteer pool. The Finance Committee has a treasurer and key volunteer who have generously served beyond the typical volunteer terms, and it's crucial we prevent burnout. This responsibility rests with all of us. In addition to the treasurer's term ending some time ago, my own term will conclude in December 2026. It's essential that we all think about who might step into these leadership roles—perhaps that someone is you?

Sincerely,
Aerial Sillanpaa



LIFTING UP IN PRAYER

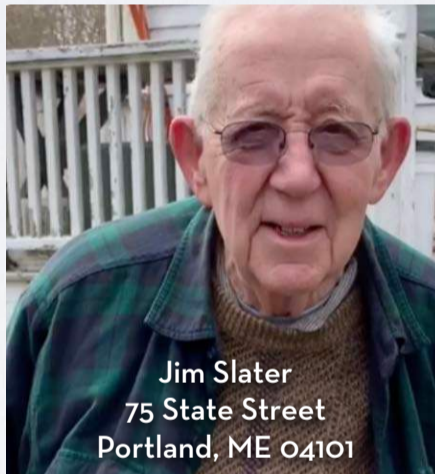


*WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER
Ginger Ellenwood, Michael,
Mark Giandomenico, Steve Scott,
Erika Richards, Harold,
Everyone impacted by flight #5342,
Those seeking employment,
The marginalized and scared,
Our Country, and Our Church*

CARING FOR EACH OTHER

At our core, we are a FAMILY. We recognize that some members may not be able to attend church regularly or participate in activities at First UMC. They are always in our thoughts, and prayers, cards, calls, or visits are always appreciated.

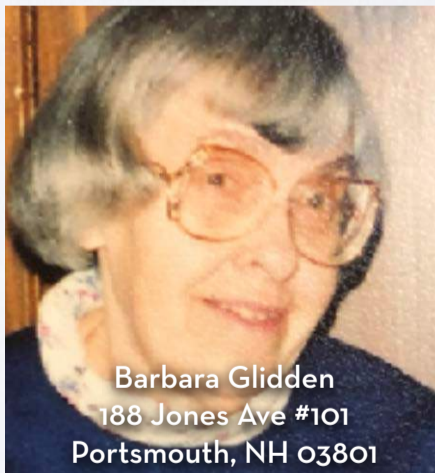
We also lift up in prayer the names that have been shared with us, asking that God wrap them in His loving embrace as they face their own challenges.



Jim Slater
75 State Street
Portland, ME 04101



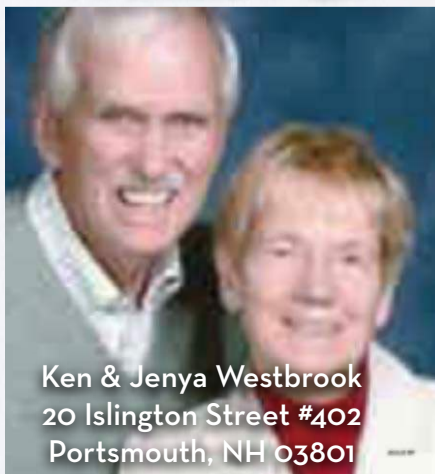
Priscilla Wilson
361 Sagamore Road
Rye, NH 03870



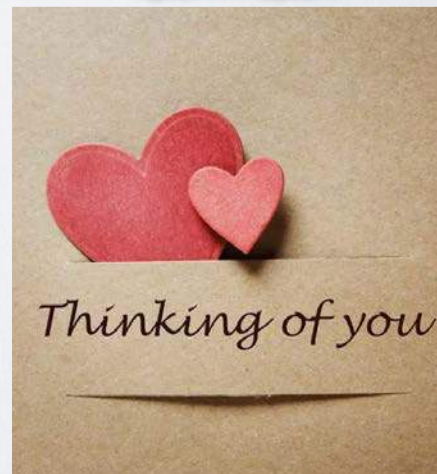
Barbara Glidden
188 Jones Ave #101
Portsmouth, NH 03801



Cynthia Drake
795 Washington Road
Rye, NH 03870



Ken & Jenya Westbrook
20 Islington Street #402
Portsmouth, NH 03801



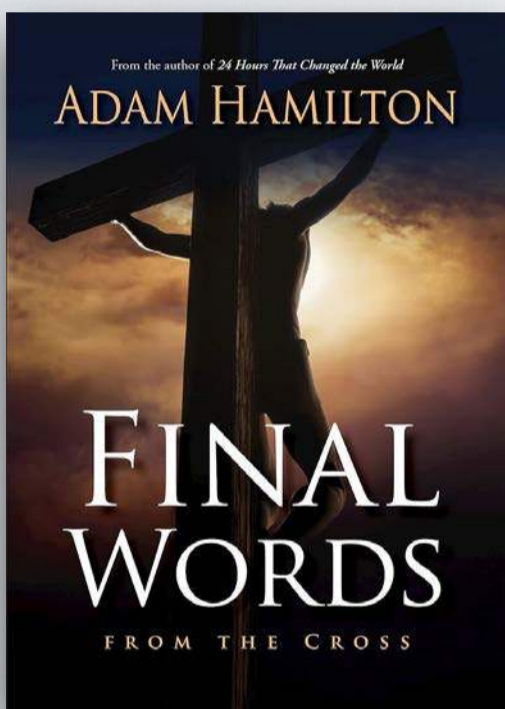


UPCOMING EVENTS

WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

February 9th - 11:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary


LENTEN BIBLE STUDY




Join Pastor Bob for a meaningful Lenten Bible Study as we explore *Final Words from the Cross* by Adam Hamilton.

Each chapter begins with a biblical account, followed by a first-person narrative from the perspective of someone present at the crucifixion. The study then delves into the significance of Jesus' final words and their relevance to our lives today. A postscript also reflects on Jesus' words after His resurrection, including His final spoken words on earth.

The study begins on **Ash Wednesday, March 5th**, with two opportunities to participate:

 **In-person:** Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. at the church

 **Online:** Saturdays at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom

For more details or to sign up, please see Sharon Stewart.

POTLUCK & BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION



You're invited to a Potluck Lunch after church on **Sunday, February 16th** as we bring back an old tradition—celebrating everyone's birthday!

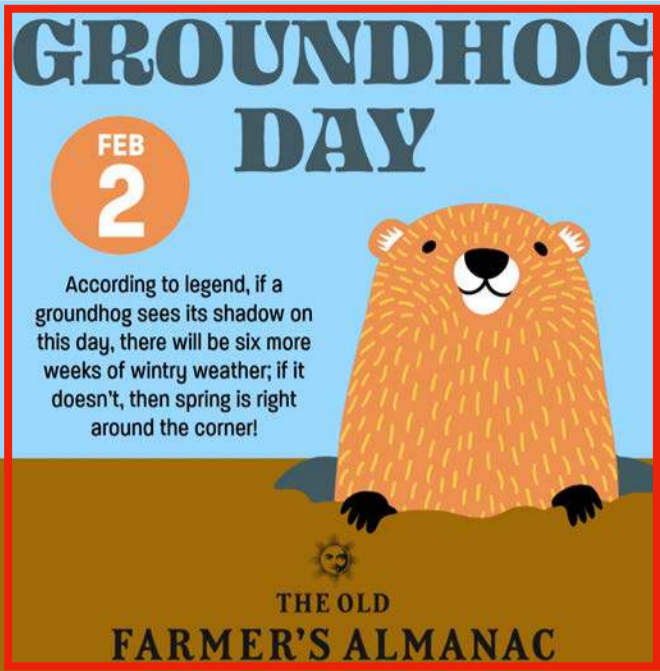
We'll have 12 tables, one for each birth month, so you can sit with others who share your month.

For fun, enjoy a FUMC History Trivia contest, a possible scavenger hunt, and special guest storytellers.

We need 12 volunteers to bake a "Birthday Cake du Month." Sign-up sheets are on the kitchen counter for potluck dishes and each table's birthday cake.

Hosted by your Church Council—we hope to see you there! (P.S. Even if you don't cook, please come—there's always room at God's table!)

FEBRUARY OBSERVANCES



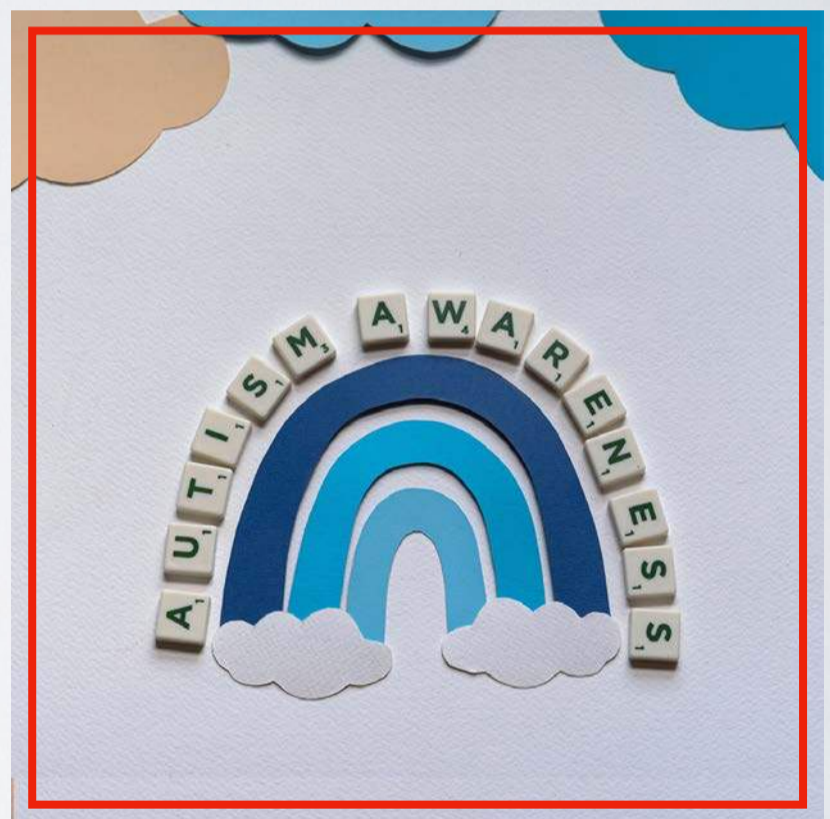
GROUND HOG DAY 2/2



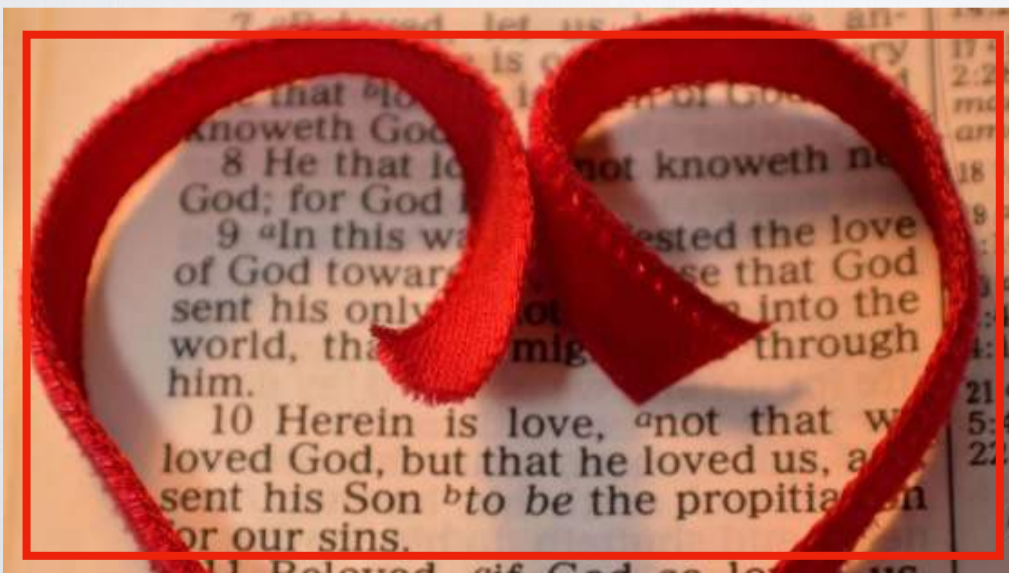
WORLD CANCER DAY 2/4



PAY A COMPLIMENT DAY 2/6



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS 2/9



VALENTINE'S DAY 2/14
WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US!



PRESIDENT'S DAY 2/17

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 & ANNIVERSARIES

10 Steve Scott

11 Isabella Sillanpaa

12 Rosanne Groff

13 Connie Parsons

13 Jenya Westbrook

23 Kevin Fickenscher

25 Mark Giandomenico

25 Cian Philbrick

10 John & Judy Griffin

24 George & Jessie Bennett

25 Art & Nancy (Chesser) Munson



FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH



In 2025 we celebrate Black History Month with a theme of African Americans and Labor.

The 2025 Black History Month theme, African Americans and Labor, focuses on the various and profound ways that work and working of all kinds - free and unfree, skilled, and unskilled, vocational and voluntary - intersect with the collective experiences of Black people.

Learn more here - <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/moments/black-history-month>

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



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

HELPING THE COMMUNITY STAY WARM

We continue to provide cold weather packs to our community with hat, gloves, socks, and scarf. We have kept over 63 people warm already this winter!



I GOT BRIDGED

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



RECOVERY CHURCH

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/>



WITH GRATITUDE

THANK YOU - 2024 PUMPKIN PATCH SUCCESS

Dear Church Family and Friends,

I want to once again express my heartfelt gratitude for all the hard work, joy, and outreach we shared during the 2024 Pumpkin Patch. It was truly a team effort, and I'm so grateful for each and every one of you.

Below is an award we received—one that belongs to all of you. Thank you for making this event such a success!

With appreciation,

Sue Richards

Pumpkin Patch Coordinator

*First Place in Pumpkin Sales
for New Hampshire*

Awarded to

*First United Methodist Church
Portsmouth, NH*



Pumpkin Patch Fundraisers

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Mary Richards", written over a horizontal line.

BEING A DIGITAL DISCIPLE IS AN IMPORTANT ROLE FOR ALL OF US!

WHY BE DIGITAL DISCIPLES?

- Builds relationships and reaches new visitors
- Spreads the message of God's love
- Shares our Church's message
- Builds community and connections
- Grows our church physically and spiritually
- Facilitates prayer and support
- Recruits volunteers and collaborations

YOU CAN HELP BY: SHARING - VISITING - INVITING - PROMOTING - LIKING OUR POSTS AND WEBSITE

LET'S BE FRIENDS ON FACEBOOK!

Facebook is a fantastic way to stay updated on events, prayers, daily inspiration, and to connect with Church family and friends. We appreciate it when you "like" our posts, but we absolutely LOVE it when you share them too!



Edit cover photo



Fumcportsmouthnh Church

331 friends



+ Add to story

Edit profile





February 2025

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	9:55 BELL RINGERS	GREETERS & USHERS	FACEBOOK LIVE	WORSHIP TECH	SOUND TECH	SUNDAY SCHOOL	COFFEE HOUR
2/2/25	S. Rhodes	R. Buswell & Will	Maria	Langs Family	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	R Buswell, M Gable, P Paisley	PS. Orr, D. Pierce
2/9/25	PS. Orr	Angilini Family	Dominic	R. Buswell S. Russ	S. Richards	S. Scott	D. Richards	J. Berry, H. Groff	N. Chesser, A. Sillanpaa
2/16/25	M. Arcadipane	Daphne & Jack	Greyson	J. Cansdale A. Cansdale	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	D. Richards, S. Labadie	S. Olbricht, C. VanReenen
2/23/25 PS Orr Preaching	Y. Griffin	Lilly	Georgia	R. Groff H. Groff	Labadies	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	Pastor B. Stewart M. Stebbins	S. Labadie



First UMC is a Reconciling Congregation dedicated to worshipping, 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.

**DON'T
STOP
PRAYING**



FIRST UMC  PORTSMOUTH

FEBRUARY BEACON
2025