

**NOW THE LORD IS THE SPIRIT,  
AND WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS,  
THERE IS FREEDOM.**



FIRST UMC  PORTSMOUTH  
JULY BEACON  
2025



## **FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR BOB...**

Friends, in just a few short days we will celebrate Independence Day 2025. Sometimes holidays come and go each and every year and we lose sight of what they represent. It was on July 4, 1776 that America was born. Next year will be a monumental year as we celebrate 250 years as a nation.

There have been many patriotic songs written for and about our country. Some of those patriotic songs are even part of our United Methodist Hymnal. Hymn #696 America the Beautiful and on the very next page #697 is America (My Country, 'Tis of Thee). I want to share a verse from each of these hymns so we perhaps can see the connecting theme for our nation.

From America the Beautiful #697: ***O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain; for purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain! America! America! God shed his grace on thee and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.***

From America (My Country, 'Tis of Thee) #697: ***Our fathers' God to thee, author of liberty, to thee we sing; long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light; protect us by thy might, great God, our King.***

If you read and even sing these lines from these two beautiful hymns we can see that God is at the very heart of our country. It is through God's grace that we are afforded the freedoms we experience today. God's grace is His underserved love that never quits. The prophet Micah wrote in chapter six, verse eight... **"This is what the Lord requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."**

As I said at the start of this message...often we lose sight. Let us not lose sight of God's Amazing Grace that has shaped us and our country. Let freedom ring and let's praise God for our freedoms. Thank you God!

Happy Independence Day my friends. I hope to see you in church. When we are in church and worshipping together this is part of walking humbly with our God and praising his amazing Grace.

Shalom,  
Pastor Bob



# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SUNDAYS  
10am



## FIRST UMC LIFE

### WORSHIP, FUN, AND FAITH IN ACTION AT FIRST UMC

Our Church website [fumcportsmouth.com](https://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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#### WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

JUNE 22, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



#### FATHER'S DAY & TRINITY SUNDAY

JUNE 16, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



#### PENTECOST SUNDAY

JUNE 8, 2025

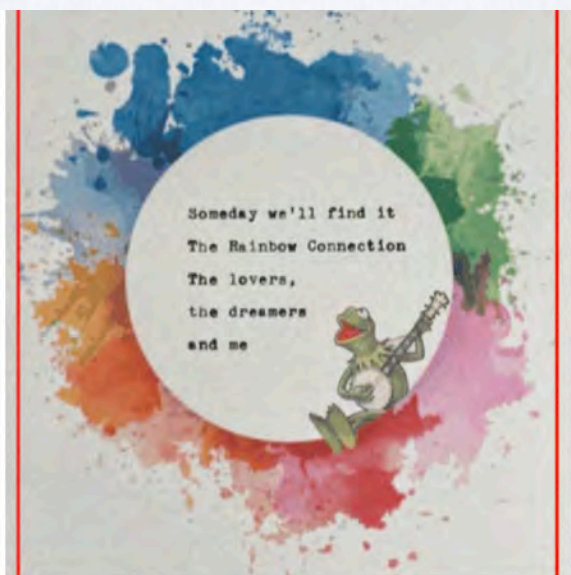
[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



#### "LET'S TELL THE STORY"

JUNE 1, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



#### MEMORIAL DAY SUNDAY

MAY 26, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)

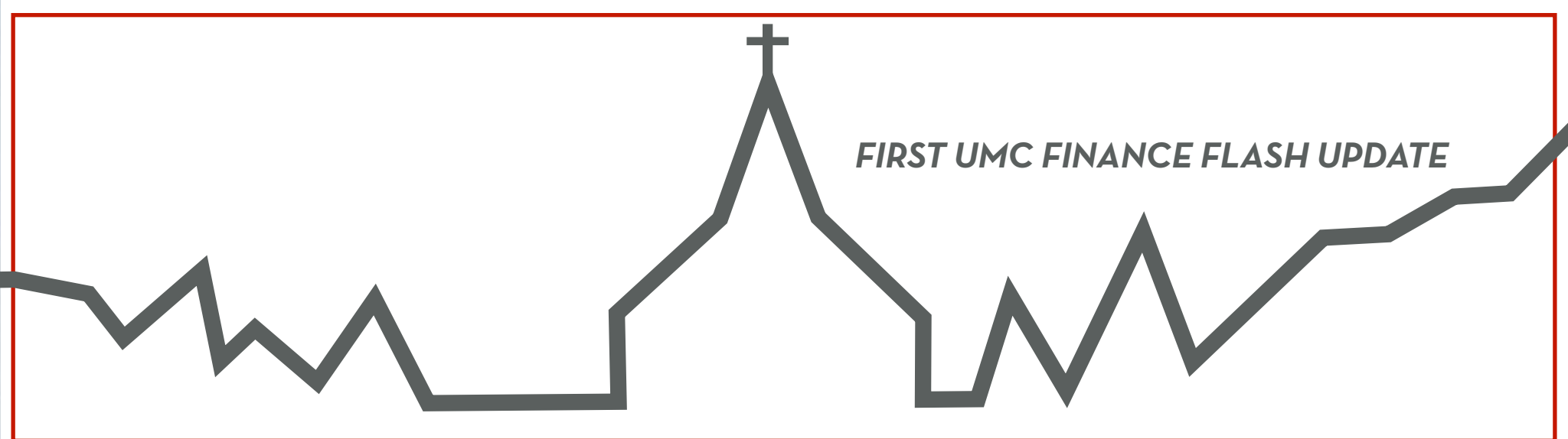


#### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION SUNDAY

MAY 18, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)





## FIRST UMC FINANCE FLASH UPDATE

As we enter the fourth quarter, I'm glad to report that the church has covered its expenses for the first half of the year. While we're not in a surplus position, we're holding steady, which is a reflection of your continued generosity and commitment.

Looking ahead, we won't see property insurance payments resume until September, and our heating costs are down, offering some welcome relief.

I am excited to share a tangible example of generosity in action: as Pastor Bob Stewart recently announced, \$2,000 worth of chicks was donated to Heifer International which is an incredible gift, and lots of feathers, that will support families and communities in building sustainable futures.

As we turn toward fall (yes, it's coming!), I'm reminded of **1 Peter 4:10**: *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."* That spirit of service and stewardship is what powers our annual Pumpkin Patch fundraiser. It's one of our biggest events of the year and entirely run by volunteers...proof that when we each bring our time and talents, amazing things happen. Please think ahead to how you might help.

If you're interested in learning more about how the church manages its resources, or even in serving on the Finance Committee, we'd love to have you. You're also welcome to sit in on a meeting. Just reach out to Aerial Sillanpaa or Pastor Bob Stewart for more information.

Thank you for all the ways you continue to support our church community, with your gifts, your energy, and your heart. Let's carry that spirit into the season ahead.

Aerial Sillanpaa



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REMINDER:

You can use our on-line  
"giving" tab tool on  
[fumcportsmouth.com](http://fumcportsmouth.com)





## ***FIRST UMC TRUSTEES UPDATE***

### ***GETTIN' IT DONE!***

Thank you Wayne Rasch, Steve Scott, Sue Sarosiek, Nikki, Reno, and Susan Battye for all the work done on Saturday, June 28th. From installing the new shades in Sanborn Hall, replacing tile and cleaning carpets!







## **FIRST UMC WORSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Happy July my church family!!!

It's hard to believe it is July already! June was a busy month for our church.

- Pentecost was celebrated on 6/8. The altar was ablaze (thank you Sharon and Stephanie) with shades of reds, orange, yellows representing the Holy Spirit. Members of the congregation were dressed in red!
- Children's Day and Fathers' Day celebrations were held on the same Sunday. The children participated in the service including the Children's Time which featured Norah reading a poem and the others holding up signs that spelled out FATHER! They are an AWESOME group of kids!
- The walkway to the church was lined with white flags with messages and dedications to fathers and father figures! It was recently shared that a member of one of the AA groups was moved by the tributes and it made his day as he is currently away from his family! Our simple acts make HUGE IMPACTS on others lives.

As we move into summer let us remember to worship God no matter where our summer journeys take us. If you are on Facebook - remember EVERY Sunday our trusty camerawoman Sue Richards has the camera rolling for Facebook live! You can join live or watch the service later. I know I watch from my home away from home on Sunday!

"Take Time to be Holy, speak oft with thy Lord;  
Abide in him always, and feed on his word.  
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,  
Forgetting in nothing his blessings to seek"  
Hymn 395 UMH

Stay cool my friends!

Peace in your Journey

PennySue Orr  
Worship Chair



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





## **SEACOAST FAMILY PROMISE UPDATE**

Good news on the Joshua House! The new waterline is in, and we were granted occupancy to the new side of the building a couple of weeks ago. Furniture is in and families and staff are now sleeping/living on the new side of the building as of mid-June. With the move to the new side, we have more bedrooms again! At this stage, we will be able to shelter 4-5 families at a time again. Construction will begin immediately on the new kitchen, followed by construction on the remaining portion of the existing house.

Currently, we will be operating out of a temporary kitchen. Families have access to the refrigerators, a countertop toaster oven, air fryer, microwave, and kitchen/food supplies as normal. They also have storage space to keep their own food items but have very limited storage space overall. There is currently no oven/stove. So, when preparing food, please bring it to the Joshua House already fully prepared and warm in disposable containers.

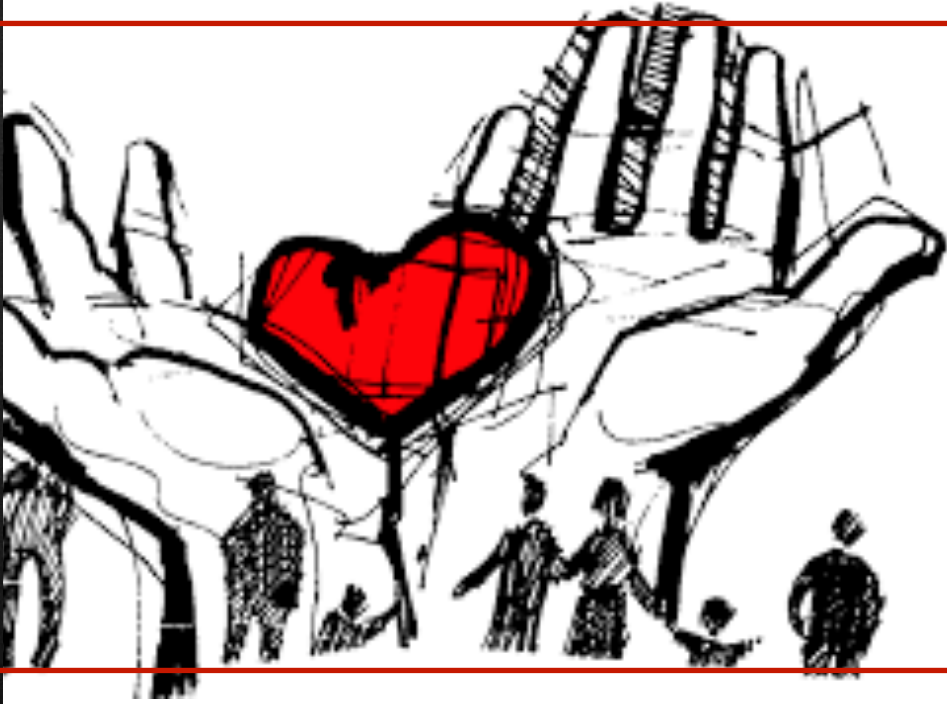
We are currently at 4 families, but updated family numbers will be provided just prior to our next rotation. Our next rotation for providing meals for the families at Joshua House is August 14 - 16, 2025. Please contact Jen Berry at [jen\\_b76@yahoo.com](mailto:jen_b76@yahoo.com) if you would like to help.

Another positive update – the coordinators and volunteers have raised almost \$6000 in Pati's name for the Joshua House construction! Woo Hoo! God is good!

Jen Berry







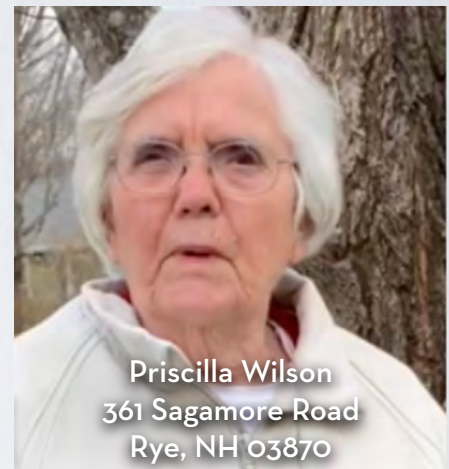
# CHURCH FAMILY

## CARING FOR EACH OTHER

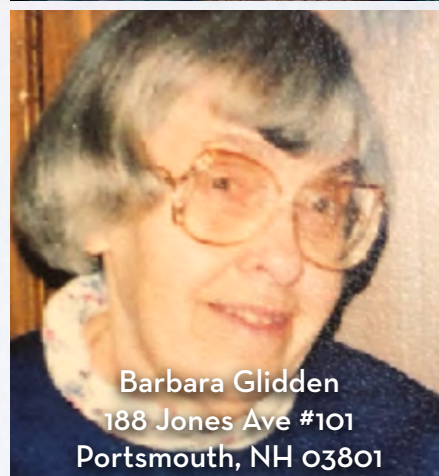
At our core, we are a FAMILY. We recognize that some members may not be able to attend church regularly or participate in activities at First UMC. They are always in our thoughts, and prayers, cards, calls, or visits are always appreciated.



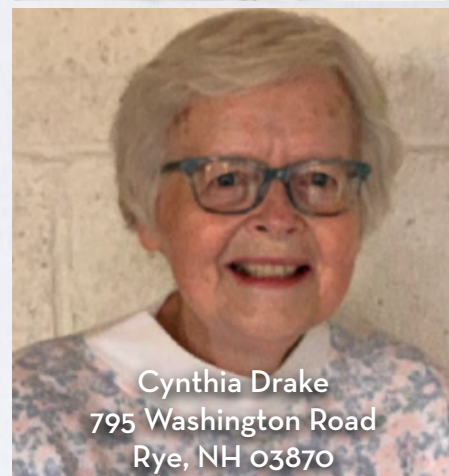
Jim Slater  
75 State Street  
Portland, ME 04101



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



On June 8th we welcomed new Members Dianne and Emily Pierce, Wayne Rasch, and Steve Beckert to the First UMC Church Family!



# God answers prayers.

## **THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER!**

Through prayer, we can connect with God, seek His guidance, and intercede on behalf of others.

Building on the prayers lifted up through our Sunday **Red Prayer Hearts**, we are launching a new initiative called the **First UMC Prayer Ministry**—providing a structured way for our community to support one another and amplifying the power of prayer.

Marilyn Stebbins will be leading this ministry, and we thank all those who have signed up to be part of the First UMC Prayer Ministry as Prayer Warriors. We will be launching the program very soon so stay tuned for more info to come.

## **WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER:**

*Lt. Colin Seeley and his crew, Mark G, Crystal Bruzzese, Dick Cassidy, for the vision of our church, for family situations, prayer of Joy for Devin.Scott, Addie, Donna, Isabel, Elliot, Victoria, Becky, Mike Talbot, Shirley Bourke, Russ, Jean, Sharon Rhodes, Brad, Kathy, Patricia Ross and her son, Steve VanReenen, travel mercies for all those traveling, the marginalized and scared, our country and the world as a whole, Prayers for Peace, and those we silently lift up right now.*







# UPCOMING EVENTS

*INDEPENDENCE DAY JULY 4th*



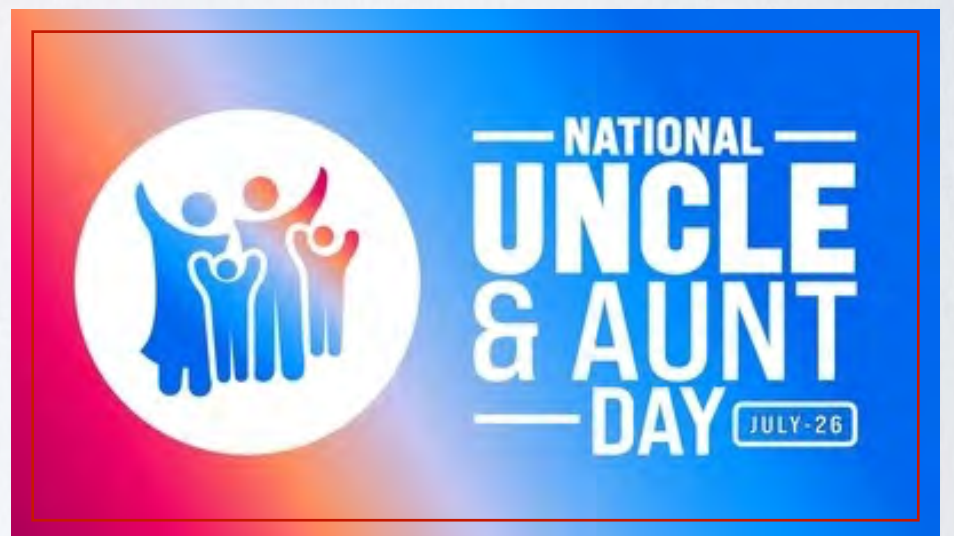
*GLOBAL FORGIVENESS DAY JULY 8th*



*GIVE SOMETHING AWAY DAY JULY 15th*



*UNCLE AND AUNT DAY JULY 26TH*



*PARENT'S DAY JULY 27th*



*FRIENDSHIP DAY JULY 30th*





## ***JULY BIRTHDAYS***

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

# **JULY BIRTHDAYS**

**8 Hollen Groff**

**18 Susan Sarosiek**

**19 Norah Arcadipane**



# **Trustees** *Meeting*

**July 13th after Worship**



## LIKING A POST



You

Your Friends

Your Friends, Friends

## SHARING A POST



You



Your Friends



Your Friends, Friends

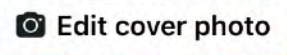
## SHARING IS PART OF OUR OUTREACH!

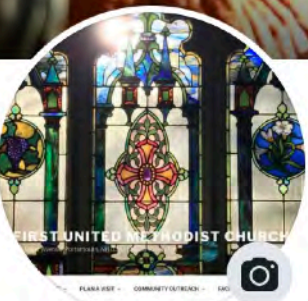
Did you know that when you “like” our Facebook post, you show support. But when you “SHARE” it, you help spread the message to even more people! Sharing can make a real difference for someone who just might need it today. Thanks for helping us by clicking “share”!

## 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!







### Fumcportsmouthnh Church

331 friends



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# Planet Rangers

## **PLANET RANGERS GRAND FINALE - WIZARDS & WANDS**

We are so fortunate to partner with the Planet Rangers team that brings kids from all around the Seacoast to experience their after school programs. Here are some photos of their finale.







July 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  | COFFEE HOUR                |
|---------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| 7/6/25  | M. Stebbins | Dominic      | Maria             | VanReenen Family        | S. Richards   | S. Scott     | D. Richards | R. Buswell<br>Y. Griffin   |
| 7/13/25 | R. Groff    | Georgia      | Lilly             | S. Lange<br>M. Stebbins | S. Richards   | S. Scott     | S. Sarosiek | A. Sillanpaa<br>N. Chesser |
| 7/20/25 | S. Langs    | Rosie & Will | TBD               | H. Groff<br>R. Groff    | S. Richards   | S. Scott     | S. Sarosiek | J. Berry<br>M. Lindgren    |
| 7/27/25 | N. Chesser  | Liam         | Dominic           | Langs Family            | B. Labadie    | S. Richards  | S. Sarosiek | S. Olbricht<br>PS. Orr     |



YOU ARE LOVED  
ACCEPTED &  
CELEBRATED  
JUST AS YOU ARE



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.