



HELPING OTHERS IS WHAT DEFINES OUR HUMANITY

FIRST UMC  PORTSMOUTH
AUGUST BEACON
2025



FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR BOB...

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ...a few weeks ago I read a familiar scripture story from Luke 10:25-37 that Jesus told about a severely injured and beaten Jewish man left alongside the road. A few people walked away, turned their heads, crossed to the other side of the road and offered no assistance to this man. It wasn't until a Samaritan man came along and had compassion and assisted this Jewish man. He tended to the wounds and bandaged them and then he put the man on his donkey and took him to an inn and cared for the man. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, two denarii, and told the innkeeper, ***“Take care of this man, if his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.”*** This story, this parable, that Jesus told is the story of the Good Samaritan. I shared a story from his book, *The Sign in the Subway*, written by Carveth Mitchell, titled “The Nearest Hand” that speaks to the actions of the Good Samaritan. I want to share that powerful story again.

Two women were sitting in church. One woman said to the other, “I've always wished that God would touch me, but I suppose that's too much to ask.” The other woman replied, “That sounds like a reasonable desire. Have you prayed about it?” “Well, no. Of course not.” “Why not? There's certainly nothing wrong with a prayer like that. You should pray about it.” “All right. Maybe I will sometime.” “Not sometime. Now. What better place to pray than here in the Lord's house?” Thus being persuaded, the woman reluctantly folded her hands, bowed her head and closed her eyes in prayer, asking that God would touch her. About ten seconds later the other woman gently laid her hand on the folded hands of the friend in prayer. She responded as most of us would do. She jumped up and said, “He did it! He touched me.” Then, after a moment's thought “But that felt an awful lot like your hand.” “It was my hand,” her friend replied. Disappointment was on her face. “I thought God had touched me.” “He did touch you. How do you think God touches people? That he comes down like a fog blanket or a pillar of fire. When God touches people he takes the nearest hand and uses that.” That sounds good, doesn't it? And it's almost right. Almost, but not quite. She left out ONE word. When God touches people he takes the nearest WILLING hand and uses that. The first nearest hand to the stricken traveler was the hand of the priest, but it wasn't a willing hand. The next nearest hand was the hand of the Levite, but it was not a willing hand, either. The last nearest hand was the hand of the Samaritan, so God took that hand and touched the stricken traveler in the ditch.

Jesus said of himself, ***“The Son of man came not to be served, but to serve.”*** Matthew 10:28. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we need to be that willing hand that God uses to bring light into a world that often is filled with darkness. That willing hand is YOU and as my friend Karen Cassidy said in her message on Sunday, July 27th...**You be the LIGHT**. One way that you are God's light is when you are that willing hand that wants to serve Him and His church. There are many ways to serve your church. If you need some help in deciding where your willing hand is needed...ask me. I will be glad to discern your calling with you.

Blessings my friends...See you in Church!
Pastor Bob



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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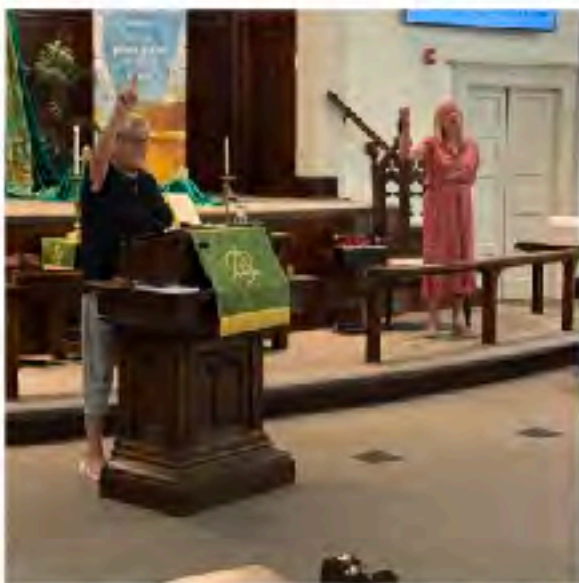
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KAREN CASSIDY – LET US BE THE LIGHT

JULY 27, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



ARE YOU MORE LIKE MARY OR MARTHA?

JULY 20, 2025

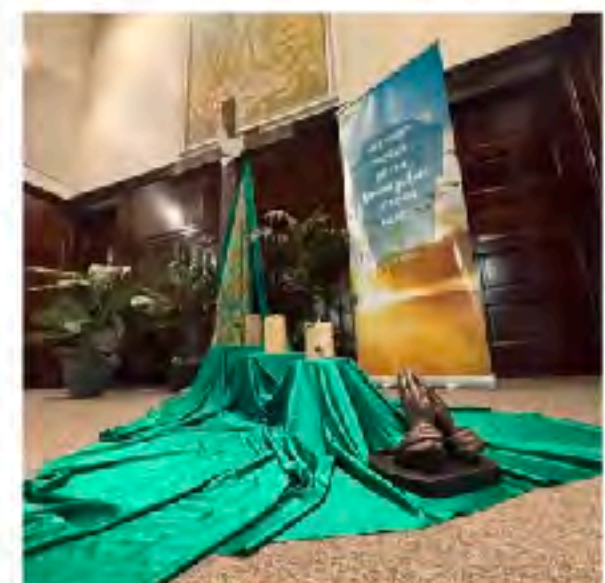
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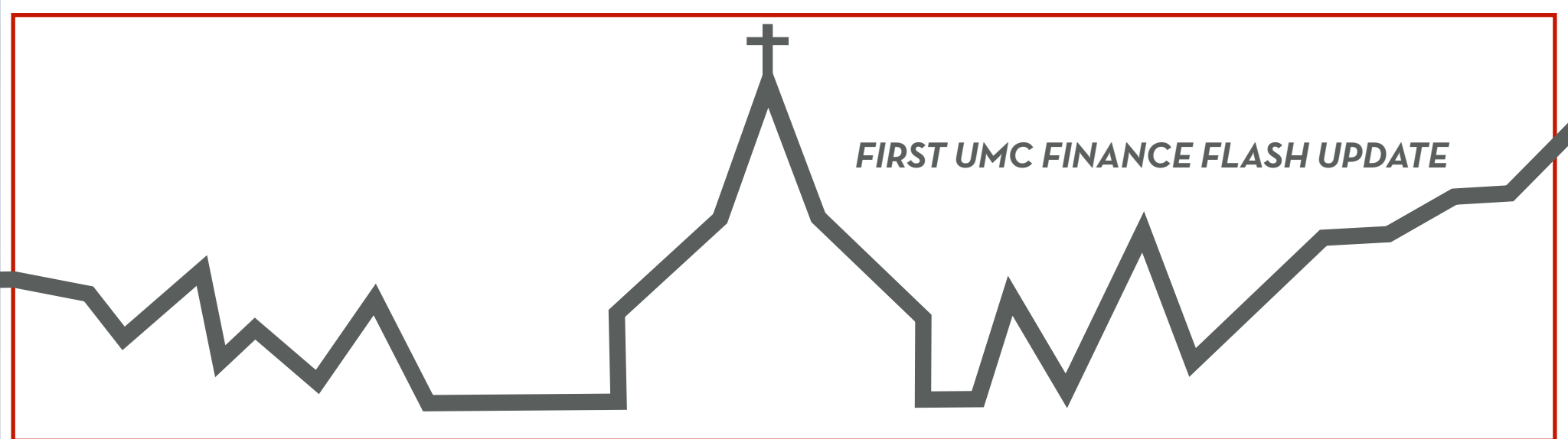


WE ARE CALLED TO FINISH THE STORY

JULY 13, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)





FIRST UMC FINANCE FLASH UPDATE

Church Family and Friends,

I'm happy to report that pledge offerings and identified giving (that's church-speak for generous gifts from members and FUMC partners that aren't a formal pledge) increased in June compared to May. Thank you for continuing to give, even when summer schedules pull us in all directions! Like many of you, my family has been busy with warm-weather commitments, but I try to keep the church close to my heart and in our regular giving, even when I can't make it to Sunday service.

Looking ahead to fall, our insurance payments will resume. One important note: as of our last Finance Committee meeting, a date for the **Church Conference** was not yet available, but keep an eye out. We expect it to be announced soon.

Our Mission Share amount for 2025 is \$24,993. Mission Shares are our church's financial contributions to support the ministry, outreach, and administrative work of our broader United Methodist connection locally, regionally, and globally. They're calculated based on church size, budget, attendance, and financial health. They reflect how we're part of something much bigger than just our own congregation.

Traditionally, our Pumpkin Patch fundraiser helps us meet our Mission Share obligation. Giving in the form of Pumpkin Patch volunteerism is a great way to support the cause without opening your wallet. Unloading pumpkins, working the booth, providing bake sale items, or even help with setup and consolidation after pumpkins are sold makes a direct impact on our ability to pay Mission Shares. To become involved please see Sue Richards and look for more details about these operations.

We're also launching a church cookbook fundraiser, so if you've got a favorite family recipe, or a photogenic casserole, this is your moment! In the coming weeks, The Worship Committee will be sharing how you can get involved. There will be lots of opportunities to contribute: whether you're a chef, photographer, or editor, we need your help! Penny Sue has agreed to help oversee this effort and I couldn't think of a more perfect person. After all, have you tried her macaroni and cheese?

Lastly, I'll be giving a **brief mid-year financial update** after the service on **Sunday, August 10th** in the sanctuary. All are welcome! (If spreadsheets make you squirm, feel free to head straight into Sanborn Hall, we won't take attendance.) The update will last less than 10 minutes and will offer the facts you need to understand the current fiduciary status of the church.

As we enjoy the blessings of summer, may we continue to sow generously, trusting in God's faithfulness through every season.

"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter... will never cease."
—Genesis 8:22

Airial Sillanpaa



FIRST UMC TRUSTEES UPDATE

WE HAVE MORE AIR MOVEMENT!

Thank you Wayne Rasch, and Sue Sarosiek for the assist in getting the new fans installed in both Sanborn Hall and the Sanctuary. Thank you to all of those who generously donated to the purchase of the new fans.





FIRST UMC WORSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE



Happy August my church family

Pinterest is one of my weaknesses however recently I came across this little angel reminding us that we need to worship everyday. One way I have started to do daily worship is to read the daily devotional in the Upper Room. This little book (located in the narthex or by the main entrance for FREE) gives the reader a scripture, a personal story from a Christian contributor (a person just like you and me) and a short prayer. I have to confess the Upper Room has been on the tables for as long as I've been in the church (yup since birth) and I never paid any attention to it until recently. Each day before I turn on my work computer, I sit and read that day's devotion. I try to take what I read and incorporate it into my life that day and in the days to come.

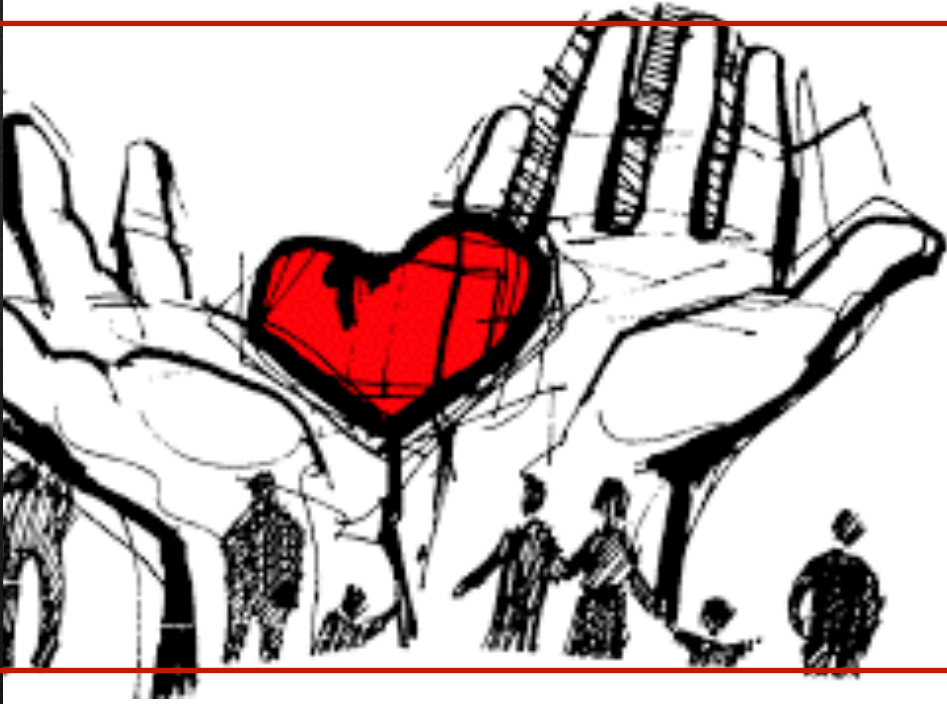
There are many ways to participate in worship on Sunday mornings from being a greeter/usher, liturgist, acolyte (yes adults can do this too!), coffee hour and the best worship experience is participating in Children's Church!!! It does not take a large time commitment - just a few hours reviewing the lesson for the week and a little prep. Teams are on a rotation. The lesson plans are all planned out we just need YOU to help lead the children in worship. I can tell you from personal experience that these kiddos are SMART and will AMAZE you. Please see Dave Richards, Stephanie Labadie or Pastor Bob.

The Worship Committee will soon be planning events for October, November and December.

Enjoy the warm days of summer!

Remember to WORSHIP the LORD EVERYDAY!

Peace in your Journey
PennySue Orr
Worship Chair



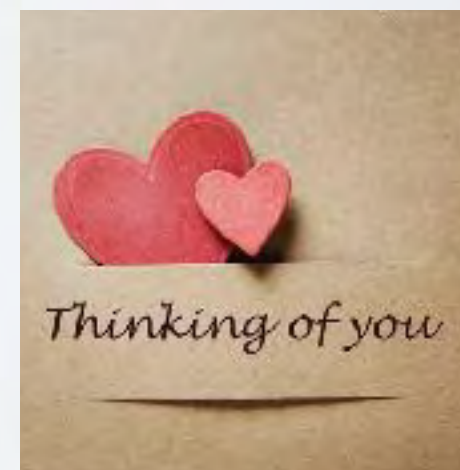
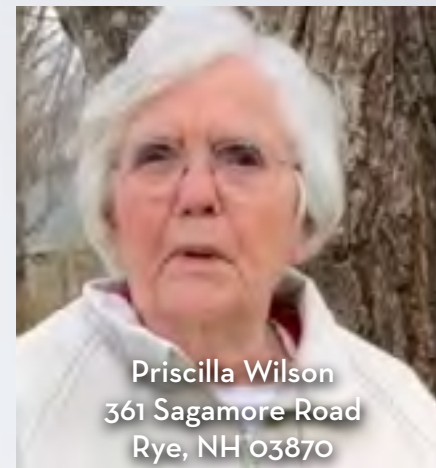
CHURCH FAMILY

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.



LOVE
IS CARING
FOR EACH
OTHER



WHATEVER YOU ASK FOR IN PRAYER, BELIEVE

| Mark 11:24 |

THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER!

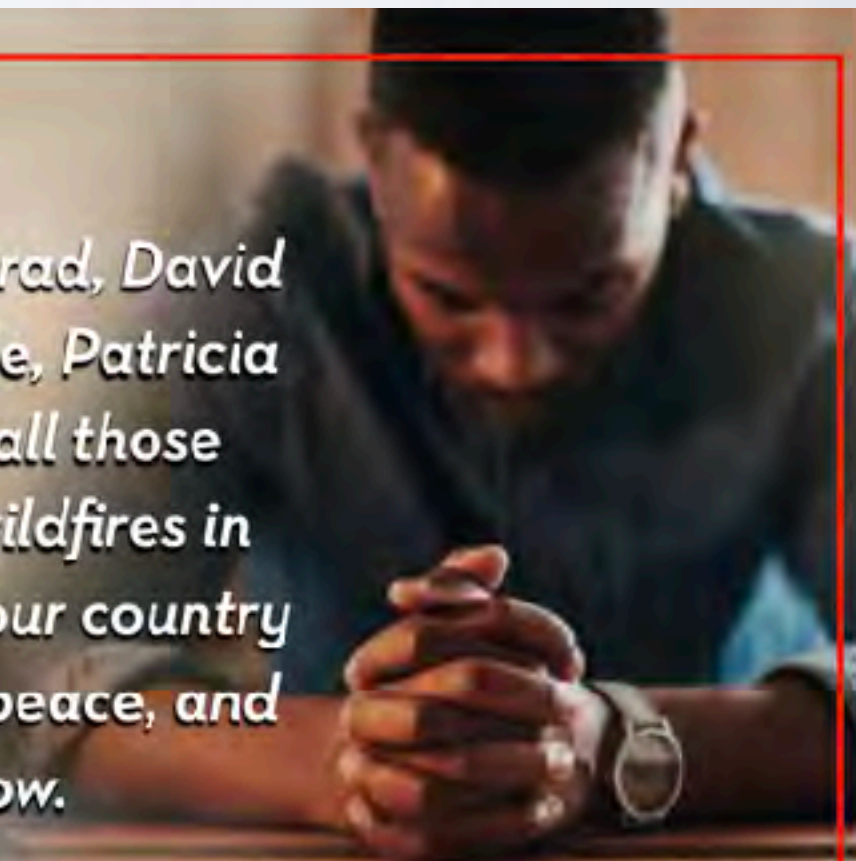
Through prayer, we can connect with God, seek His guidance, and intercede on behalf of others.

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:

Laighton Philbrick, Sally and Family, Brad, David Stebbins, Sharon Rhodes, Jan Cansdale, Patricia Ross and her son, travel mercies for all those traveling, all those impacted by the wildfires in Greece, the marginalized and scared, our country and the world as a whole, prayers for peace, and those we silently lift up right now.



AUGUST 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 or Happy Anniversary and a day filled with love, laughter and lots of cake!

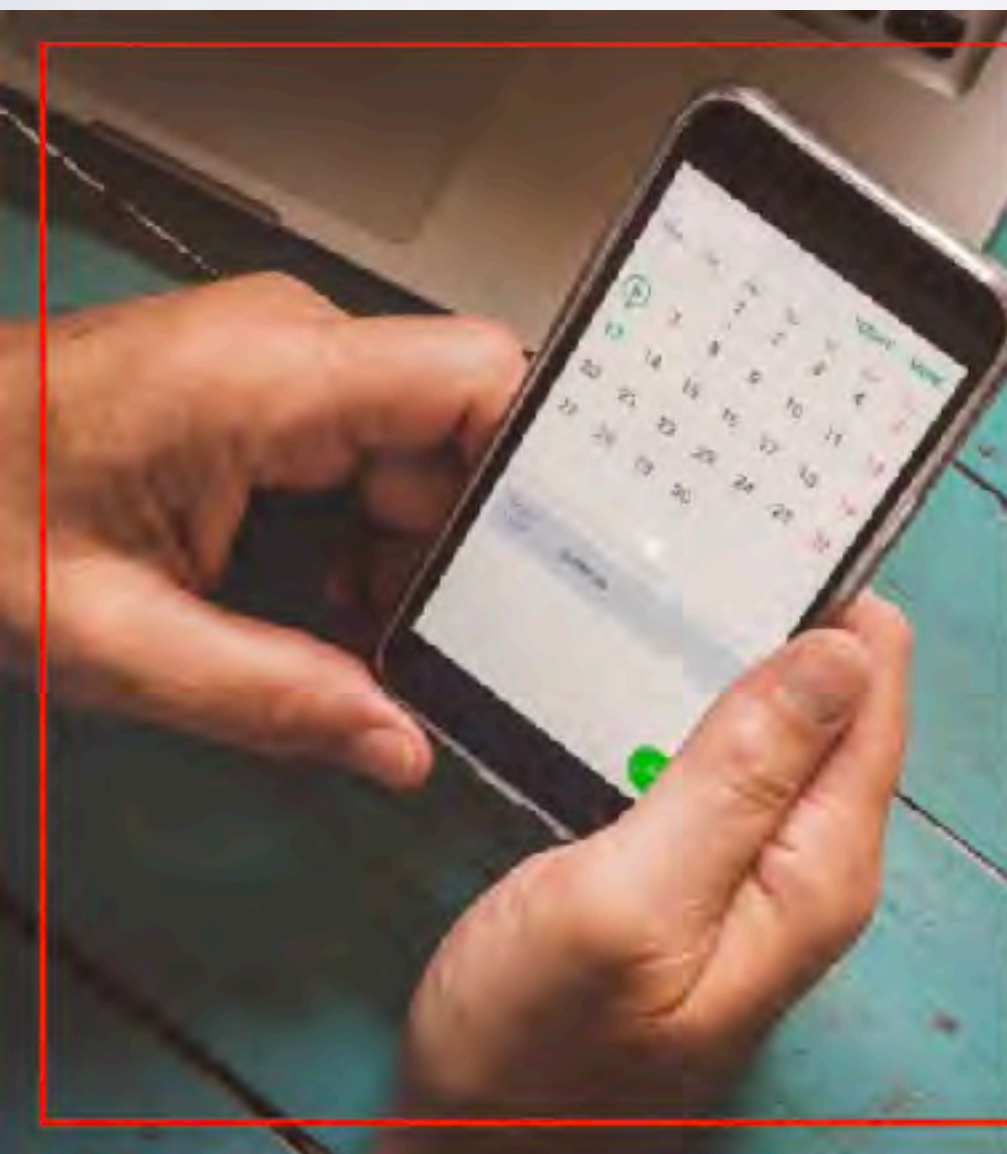
AUGUST BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

4 Steve Beckert	18 Priscilla Zoffoli
5 Pete Engel	20 Jesse Bennett
8 Anne Coffey	20 Suzanne Olbricht
10 Steve Langs	25 Bevan Bloemendaal
12 Art Munson	26 Linda Reiber
12 Sharon Stewart	27 Jan Cansdale
13 Pastor Sue Ellery	28 TJ Scott
13 Andrew Laux	

2 Bill & Connie Parsons
7 David & Sue Richards
29 Suzanne Olbricht & Kevin Fickenscher



MARK YOUR CALENDARS



UPCOMING MEETINGS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

**8/10 - Finance update after
worship service with Aerial**
**8/24 - Birthday lunch for Pastor
Sue Ellery after worship service**
9/14 - Nominations & Leadership
9/21 - Church Council
9/27 - Pumpkin Delivery
10/11 - Pumpkin Delivery
10/19 - Worship Committee

BE PART OF OUR FUTURE!

Are you interested in sharing your faith with the children of FUMC? Help guide their spiritual growth by volunteering to lead a small number of our Children's Church lessons in the upcoming year?

**BE PART OF THE
CHILDREN'S CHURCH
TEAMS THIS FALL.**



**SEE STEPHANIE
LABADIE OR PASTOR
BOB FOR MORE
DETAILS!**

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

See Pastor Bob to learn more about becoming a First. UMC Member.

Interested in

*M*embership?
Maybe NOW is the time!

HUNGRY?

The Planet Rangers kids have learned from the best chefs in Portsmouth and will treat you to some incredible eats! Come and see all of their cafes and restaurants on the church lawn!



COME AND SUPPORT THE KIDS AND THEIR “WORLD’S BEST CHEFS” FINALES

12:45 - 2:00

FRIDAY 8/1 & 8/8

Enjoy the food from “kid”
run cafes and restaurants!

RECOVERY CHURCH BAPTISMS

A beautiful July evening on the church lawn for the Recovery Church gathering. There were 148 people from the community attending and 24 individuals being baptized—God is Good!



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

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!





August 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
8/3/25	S. Stewart	Norah	Maria	D. Pierce E. Pierce	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	R. Groll
8/10/25	A. Lange	Dominic	Norah	M. Verrill D. Astbury	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	S. Lange S. Stewart
8/17/25	R. Buswell	Maria	Will	M. Giandomenico S. Bockert	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	Y. Griffin
8/24/25	M. Stebbins	Norah	Dominic	H. Groll R. Groll	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	D. Orr S. Sarosiek
8/31/25 (Labor Day - Reschedule)	D. Pierce	Will	Maria	S. Lange M. Stebbins	S. Richards	S. Scott	D. Richards	N. Chesser C. VanReenen



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.