

**I AM WITH
YOU
ALWAYS,
TO THE END
OF THE AGE.
-MATTHEW 28:20**

FIRST UMC  PORTSMOUTH

OCTOBER BEACON
2025



FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR BOB...

There is a Christmas song titled *It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year.*" I would agree with that sentiment that Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But I also think one of the most wonderful times of the year is the fall season. I am always in awe when I see God's colorful masterpiece in all the leaves on the trees. The colorful trees are so inspiring for me. I recently saw a picture of colorful fall leaves falling from the trees and the caption for the picture was ***Jesus never leaves...even when the leaves fall!*** Wow...there is a sermon in that statement. Friends, Jesus never leaves us, as he promised many times throughout his short time with us. ***"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*** (Matthew 28:19-20).

We are living in a world that seems very dark at times. We hear words of hate. We hear and see war. We hear and see violence. We hear words of revenge. We hear words of division. But through it all I choose not to lose hope because of Jesus' words written in Matthew 28: ***"And remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*** Jesus never leaves.

Our fall stewardship campaign this year will be our opportunity to support Jesus and our church when we explore six (6) areas or six steps to a generous life as we continue being Committed To Christ. Jesus promised he will never leave...we too can promise that we will not leave Jesus. The six steps or areas that we will explore together are: Prayer, Bible Reading, Worship, Witness, Financial Giving and Service. Our stewardship campaign will be starting in October and on Sunday, November 16th we will celebrate offering our commitments to Christ through First United Methodist Church. What can you do to prepare for this important part in the life of our church? Reflect on the six steps listed above. A lot to think about in the days ahead. Happy **REFLECTING!**

Blessings.

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

ABOUT ▾

CONNECT ▾

MINISTRIES ▾

PHOTO GALLERIES

VIDEO SERIES

REMEMBER

GIVE



LIVING A GOD-LIKE LIFE

SEPTEMBER 28, 2025

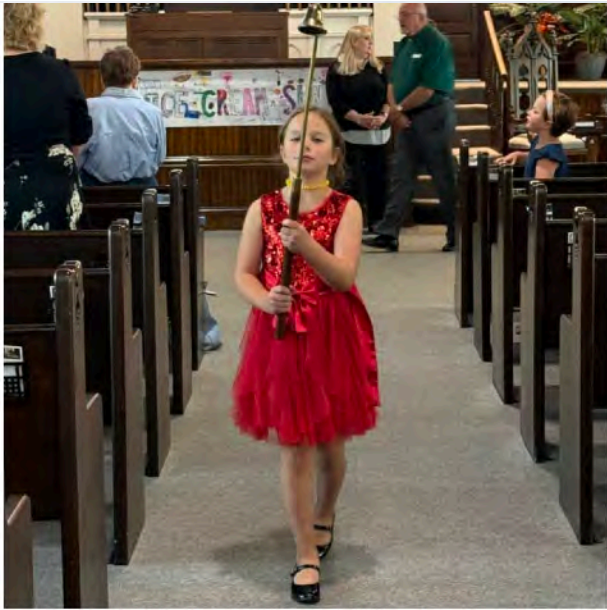
[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



PUMPKIN UNLOADING

SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



YOU GET TO CHOOSE!

SEPTEMBER 22, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



RALLY SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 14, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



MOLD ME AND MAKE ME

SEPTEMBER 7, 2025

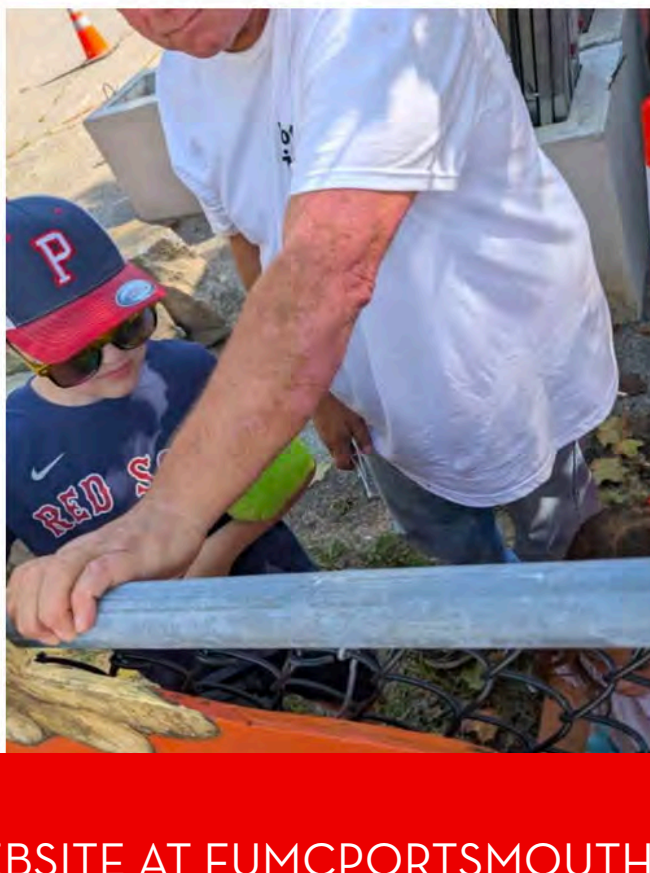
[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



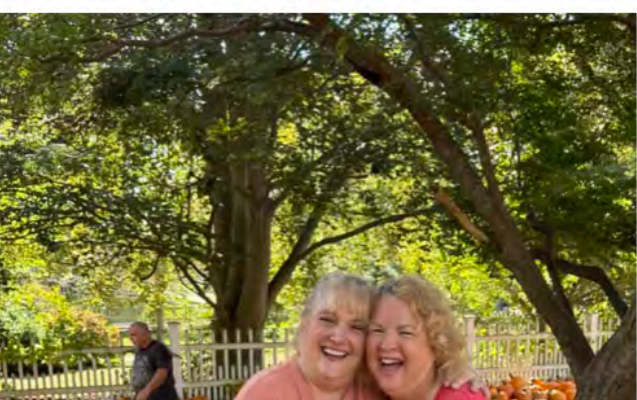
DINNER IS SERVED

AUGUST 31, 2025

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT FUMCPORTSMOUTH.COM - CLICK PHOTO GALLERIES AND SEE ALL THE SHARED PHOTOS FROM EVERYONE!



God speaks through Scripture



LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER:

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!

Sunday, October 5, 2025

Lamentations 1:1-6, Psalm 137, 2 Timothy 1:1-14, Luke 17:5-10

Sunday, October 12, 2025

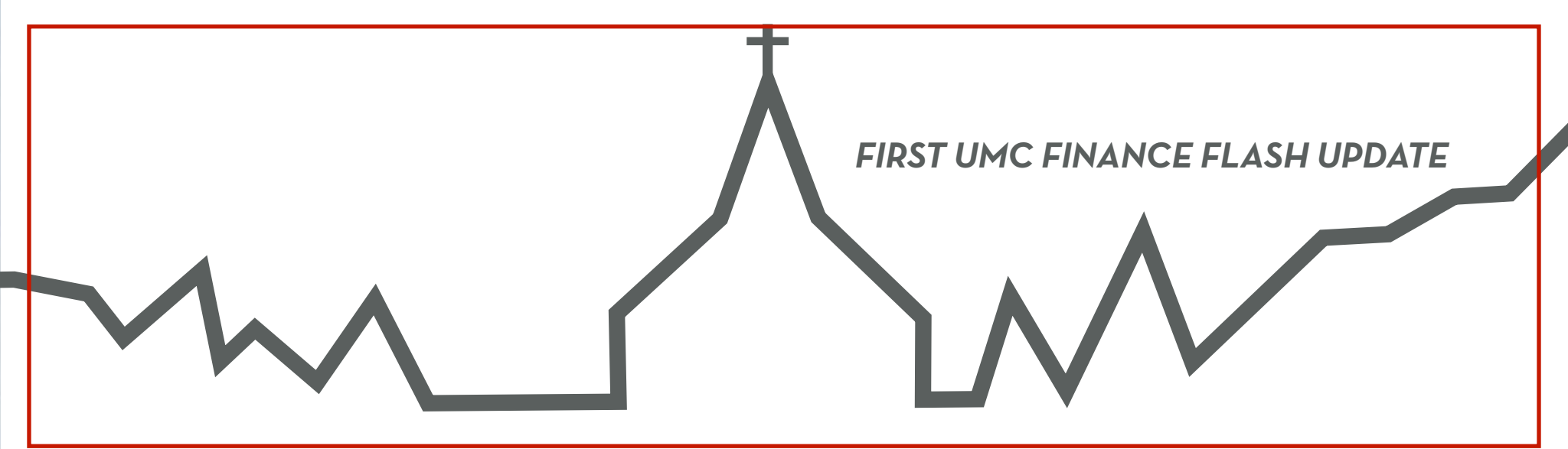
Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7, Psalm 66:1-12, 2 Timothy 2:8-15, Luke 17:11-19

Sunday, October 19, 2025

Jeremiah 31:27-34, Psalm 119:97-104, 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5, Luke 18:1-8

Sunday, October 26, 2025

Joel 2:23-32, Psalm 65, 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-1, Luke 18:9-14



FIRST UMC FINANCE FLASH UPDATE

FUMC's annual Pumpkin Patch is underway! We encourage everyone to volunteer their time to work a shift at the patch and, if you enjoy baking, to donate baked goods for sale at the patch table.

The Pumpkin Patch is our largest annual fundraiser, supporting some of our most important obligations, including payment of mission shares. I'd like to share some pumpkin details with you that you might now already know:

Q: What are mission shares?

Mission shares are the financial contributions that each local church makes to support the wider mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church. Think of it as *shared giving*: every congregation contributes, and together those gifts sustain ministries that no single church could accomplish alone. Mission shares are payable to the Annual Conference.

For 2025, our expected mission share contribution is about \$25,000.

Q: Where does FUMC get all these pumpkins?

Our pumpkins are grown by Navajo farmers in New Mexico and delivered to New Hampshire by truck. The sales directly support the growers by creating jobs and helping preserve open farmland among the Navajo Nation. In fact, 60% of every pumpkin dollar goes right back to the growers.

That means we need approximately \$62,500 in gross pumpkin sales just to meet our mission share obligation.

Q: Who at the church can I see about helping to pull off this outstanding initiative?

In addition to others, Sue Richards has given selflessly for many years to ensure the success of the pumpkin patch. She can help guide you as to the best ways for you to volunteer your time or resources. She can also help you sign up to work a shift or two at the pumpkin booth. No experience needed! We make a commitment to the grower to be open for regular business hours and there are LOTS of shifts to cover.

Q: Is that a lot of pumpkins?

Yes... yes, it is. 🍂

But with everyone's help...volunteering, baking, and spreading the word... it's possible! Thank you for supporting the Pumpkin Patch and helping FUMC continue its mission both here at home and around the world.

As said in Matthew 9:37 (NIV) "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." Don't let our our annual pumpkin patch be a reminder of this truth. Every volunteer who gives of themselves in time, donations of baked goods, or pumpkin purchases is answering this call. We can turn pumpkins into mission support, fellowship and abundant blessings for our community.

Airial Sillanpaa
Finance Chair

FRIENDLY REMINDER...:

You can use our on-line "giving" tab tool on our website @ fumcportsmouth.com



FIRST UMC WORSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE



Hello my church family! Happy October!!!

Recently my brother Brian and my niece Hannah took me to an escape room for my birthday. What a great time we had working as a team to solve the puzzles and perform tasks to find the Scarab of Life to escape the curse of the tomb before the hour time was up. I'm happy to report we did escape with 4 minutes to spare!

This experience got my mind thinking about our Sunday morning worship. As you know we have a team of volunteers who assist Pastor Bob each week. Just like the escape room he cannot perform all the tasks/puzzles alone.

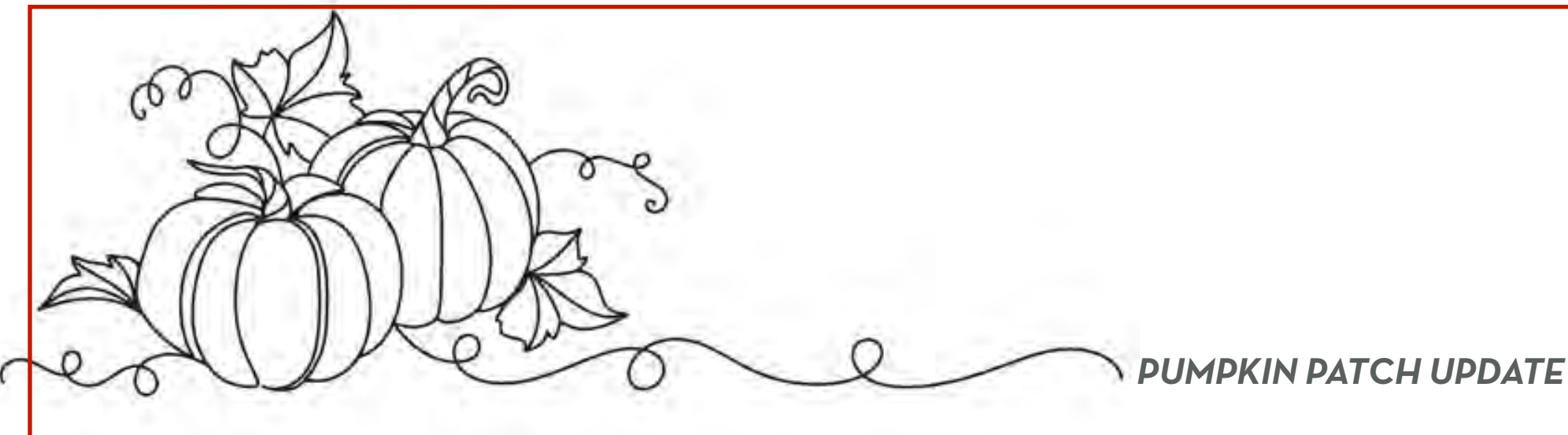
While he is at the door to greet as many worshipers as possible he gets called away to solve last minute puzzles for the service - this is where the greeters/ushers come into play! Smiles, hugs and laughter while handing out bulletins (or "your ticket" as Jayden calls them) to each worshiper. Once inside the sanctuary one may hear the tower bell toll 10+ times to say "The Lord's hour has begun" - thank you to all the kiddos who LOVE this task. The prelude (Thank you Bevan) starts and the acolyte(s) make their way to the altar carrying the Light of Christ to light the candles (thank you all my acolytes Daphnie, Jack, Maria, Norah, Dominic, Will, Georgia, Lily, Liam, Greyson!). With these puzzle pieces solved the next puzzle leads us to the liturgist. How wonderful it is to see new people stepping up to fill this important position. Leading us in the Call to Worship, Opening Prayer, Scripture reading and assisting on Communion Sundays by offering up the bread and "wine" to those who wish to partake. What would our hour be without music! This task is solved by Bevan and his amazing talents - with some Sundays others offer their musical talents. Important tasks that are always completed by Sue R (Facebook Live). How wonderful it is for those who need to worship digitally can log onto Facebook and watch live or later as it is posted for 30 days. Sue S (sound tech) if we do not have this puzzle solved each week we would never escape! Steve Scott (worship tech) it is so nice to have the slides advance each week giving us the answers to some of the clues (aka what's happening next).

One of the biggest tasks is the meditation. Thank you Pastor Bob for delivering a meaningful and thought provoking message each week. Oh and the funny story at the beginning of the service!

With all the puzzles solved and tasks performed by the team we are able to enjoy our worship experience and on some Sundays even "Escape" before the hour is up and enjoy Coffee hour as our reward! Thank you to all who volunteer so our bellies are full after our spirits have been filled in worship. Yvonne Griffin helps make sure this task is covered each week by rotating teams.

We are always looking for additions to the team. No experience required - we will train. Questions? Please ask Pastor Bob, myself or anyone of the Worship Committee.

Peace in your Journey
PennySue Orr - Worship Chair



Hello Church Family and Friends!

The Pumpkin Patch set up and first pumpkin truck unloading were the quickest to date this past Saturday 9/27 THANK YOU! We are halfway to filling all the Booth shifts so if you haven't already please sign up at the church office or on line @ <https://signup.com/go/ZcKdLWb> Please spread the word to family and friends and especially on social media we have so much fun engaging with the community!

We are always happy to have you bring in homemade goodies ready to sell in plastic wrap or baggies like cookies, bars, whoopie pies, fudge, and flavored breads. (Cookies and bars sell for \$1.00.)

Next pumpkin delivery is on Saturday Oct. 11 from 10:30 until early afternoon:

All ages can help move pumpkins and gourds from large cardboard bins and small boxes onto pallets, finalize customer purchases in the Booth, and/or bring in homemade goodies to sell like cookies, bars, whoopie pies, fudge, and flavored breads.

On Tuesdays (starting Sept. 30) and Fridays (ending Oct. 31) from 9 a.m. – Noonish:

Come be part of our Pie Angel Team to make and bake yummy pies to sell. No experience needed! We have added 3 new angels to the team too!

Sunday, Nov. 2 around 11:30ish:

Come help move pallets off the lawn and/or take signs down.

Any and all help is greatly appreciated! Thanks for your continued support...we are going to have a record breaking year!

Love and Hugs,

Sue Richards,

Grateful Pumpkin Patch Coordinator





CHILDREN'S CHURCH UPDATE

The current Children's Church year kicked off with the first lesson the week after Labor Day on September 7th, and an official "Ice Cream Sunday" celebration - including "Ask Pastor Bob" during Children's Time - on September 14th. Thank you so much to our 16 wonderful volunteer instructors for sharing your time and talents with our children this year!

Planning has already begun for this year's Christmas Pageant, which will be performed on Sunday, December 21st - the Sunday before Christmas Eve. Families are receiving a copy of the script for "Joy Story" so the children can request their favorite roles prior to the start of rehearsals after Thanksgiving!

Come down and visit the Kids Church classroom...here is their Pumpkin Patch door!

Stephanie Labadie





SEACOAST FAMILY PROMISE UPDATE

Seacoast Family Promise - Volunteers needed

As one of the founding churches for Seacoast Family Promise, First UMC has been assisting families experiencing homelessness for 20+ years now. The families used to come to our church to stay, but since COVID hit in 2020, they have been staying at the Joshua House in Greenland. However, the network of churches involved in this ministry still provide dinners for the families every day. First UMC, along with our partner in this work, Temple Israel, are responsible for providing dinner 5 - 6 weeks per year. Below are the remaining dates for 2025 that FUMC is responsible for providing dinner:

October 9, 10, 11

November 13, 14, 15

December 21, 26, 27 (21st is a Sunday - Temple traded days with us so they will provide dinner on Christmas Day.)

Volunteers cook the meal and deliver it to the Joshua House in Greenland ready-to-serve.

Updates to previous articles:

Joshua House - the new addition to the building is complete except for the kitchen stove and we have 4 families currently staying there (13 people). Renovations on the original house are in progress, and we hope to have them completed by the end of the year. I did a tour of the building a month ago and it is really impressive. This program has come a long way since its beginning.

Donations for Joshua House in honor of Pati Frew-Waters - donations so far to honor Pati total \$15,982.50!

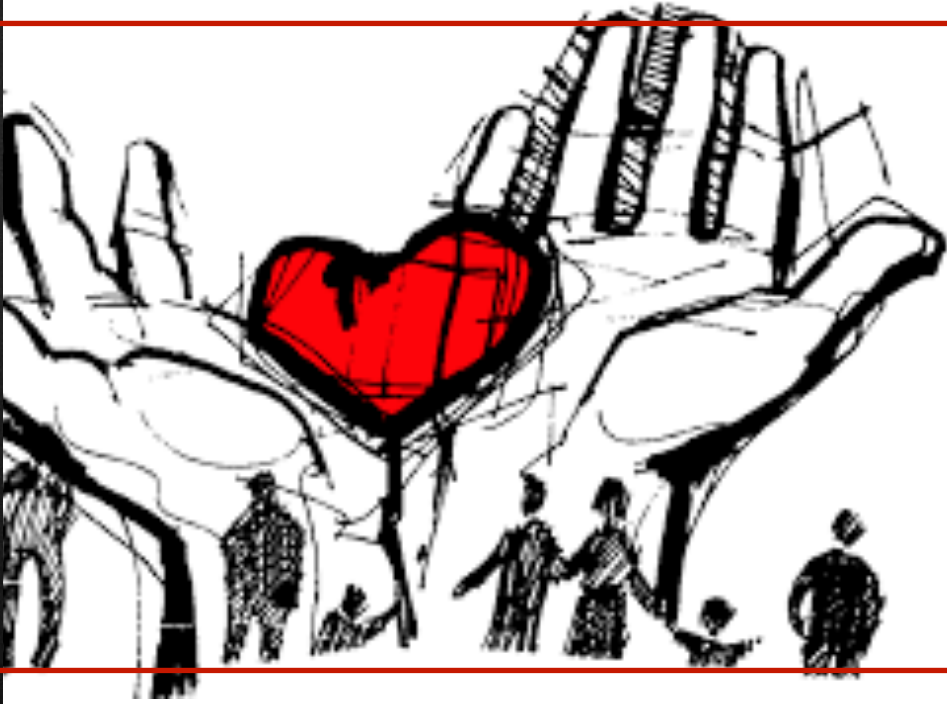
This ministry has been an important one for this church since 2003 and I hope people will volunteer so we can continue to be a part of such important outreach. This program changes lives forever. See <https://www.seacoastfamilypromise.org/> for more information.

Jen Berry

Jen.berry76@gmail.com

603-801-3886





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.



is caring for each other

Jenya Westbrook
20 Islington Street #402
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Priscilla Wilson
361 Sagamore Road
Rye, NH 03870

Barbara Glidden
188 Jones Ave #101
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Cynthia Drake
5 Hunterville Avenue
Rye, NH 03870



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



Dear Church Family and Friends,
With heavy hearts, we share the news that our beloved Ken Westbrook, a cherished member and part of our First UMC family, passed away last week. Ken's presence was truly an inspiration and blessing to so many and he showed us daily how to "live our dash".

Ken's Celebration of Life service will be held on November 1, 2025 @ 11 a.m. at First United Methodist Church.

Please keep Jenya and the Westbrook family in your prayers during this difficult time. For those who would like to send cards Jenya's address is: 20 Islington Street #402 - Portsmouth, NH 03801

The Dash

by Linda Ellis

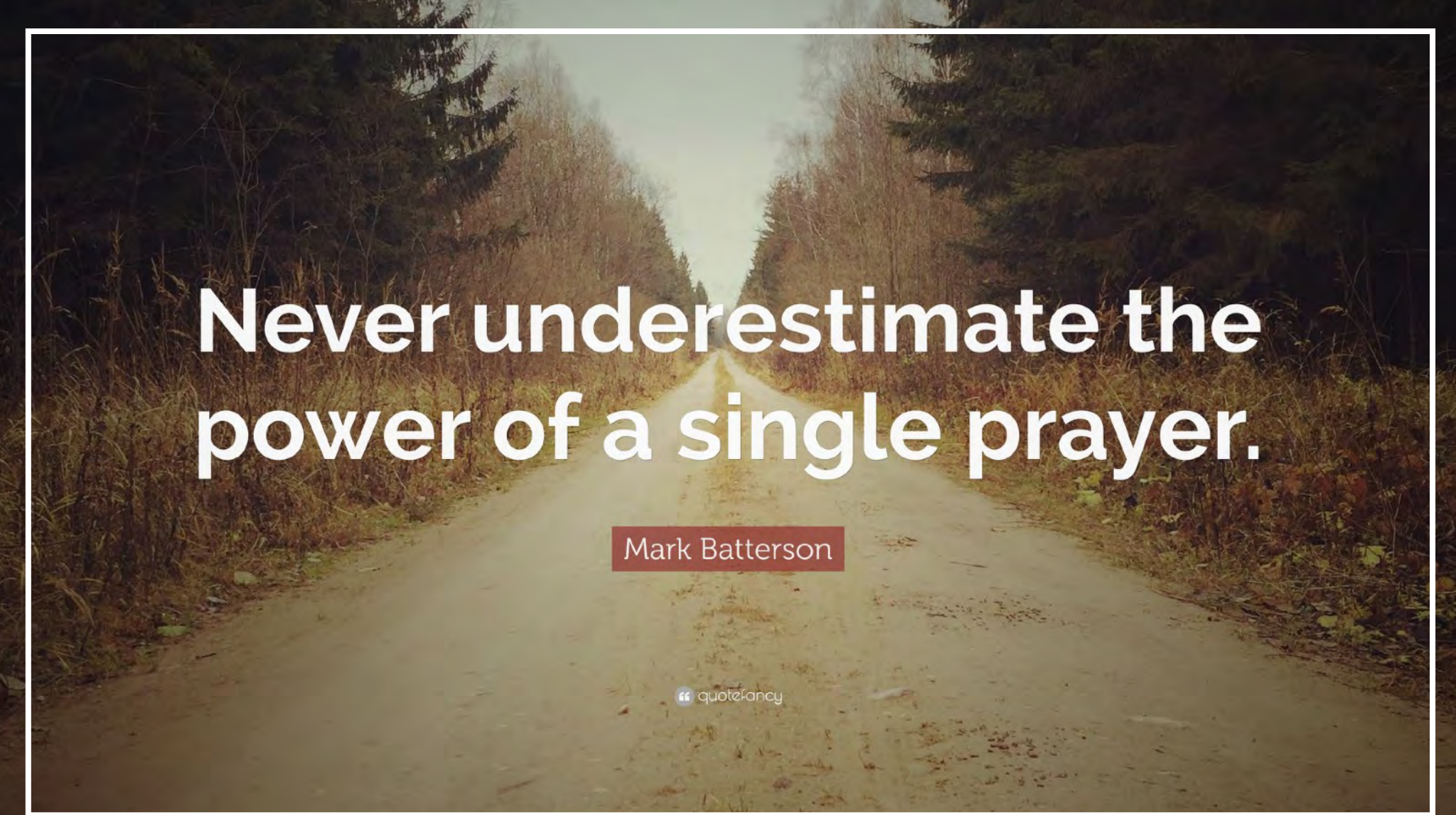
I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning...to the end.
He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears,
but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time they spent alive on earth
and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not how much we own, the cars... the house... the cash.

What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.
So think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left that still can be rearranged.

To be less quick to anger and show appreciation more
and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.
If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile...
remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.
So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash,
would you be proud of the things they say about how you lived your dash?



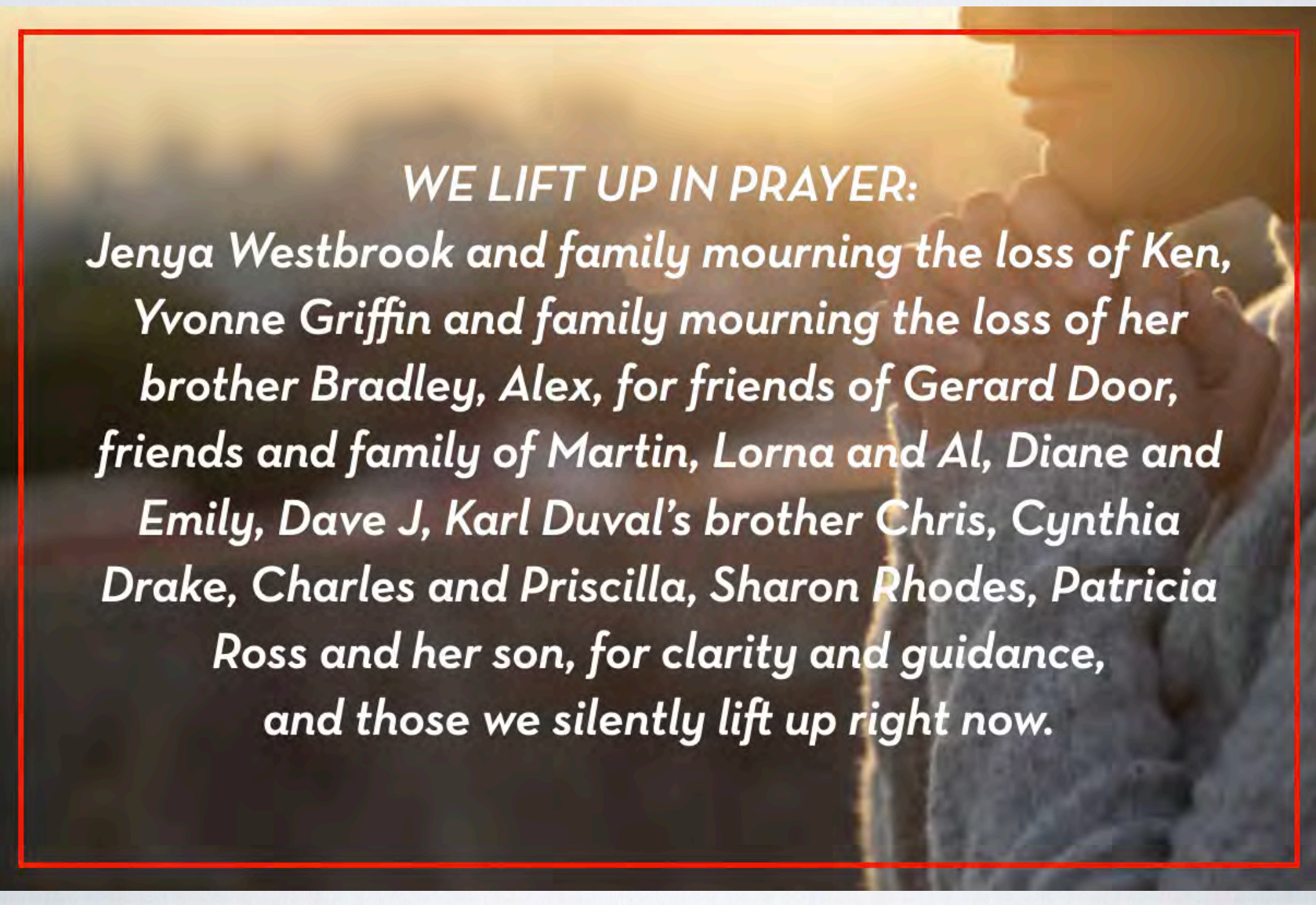
Never underestimate the power of a single prayer.

Mark Batterson

quote fancy

THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER!

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



WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER:

Jenya Westbrook and family mourning the loss of Ken, Yvonne Griffin and family mourning the loss of her brother Bradley, Alex, for friends of Gerard Door, friends and family of Martin, Lorna and Al, Diane and Emily, Dave J, Karl Duval's brother Chris, Cynthia Drake, Charles and Priscilla, Sharon Rhodes, Patricia Ross and her son, for clarity and guidance, and those we silently lift up right now.

OCTOBER 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!

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

3 Rosie Buswell
8 Kaya Sarosiek~Adoption Day
9 Grayson Sillanpaa
12 Cynthia Drake
16 Sue Lange
18 Carol Bovee
21 Barbara Glidden

7 Al & Jan Cansdale
8 Steve & Karin Scott



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

10/5 - Trustee's meeting
10/9, 10, & 11 - Seacoast Family Promise dinners
10/11 - Pumpkin Delivery
10/12 - Worship Committee meeting
10/19 - SPRC meeting
10/24 - Pumpkin Carving 5-8pm
11/1 - Ken Westbrook's Celebration of Life @ 11 a.m.
11/11 - Church Conference - potluck @ 5:30, SPRC meets with DS @ 6 pm and Conference @ 7pm
11/13, 14, & 15 - Seacoast Family Promise dinners
11/16 - Commitment Sunday
12/21 - Children's Christmas Pageant
12/21, 26, & 27 - Seacoast Family Promise dinners
TBD - Jim Slater's Celebration of Life



October 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
10/5/25	M. Stebbins	Lilly	Georgia	M. Giandomenico S. Lange	S. Richards	PS. Orr	S. Sarosiek	J. VanReenen C. VanReenen	S. Lange S. Stewart
10/12/25	S. Langs	Grayson	Rosie & Will	M. Verrill D. Astbury	S. Richards	PS. Orr	S. Sarosiek	J. Berry H. Groff	Y. Griffin S. Olbricht
10/19/25	C. VanReenen	Maria	Norah	R. Groff H. Groff	S. Richards	PS. Orr	S. Sarosiek	K. Langs A. Langs	R. Buswell N. Chesser
10/26/25	R. Buswell	Georgia	Lilly	A. Coffey M. Coffey	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	S. Stewart M. Lindgren	PS. Orr C. VanReenen



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.

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!



The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook profile for "Fumcportsmouthnh Church". The profile picture is a circular image of a stained glass window. The cover photo is a large image of a church building with a sign that reads "UNITED METHODIST CHURCH" and "LOOK UP! Not just as a reflection of how far we've come, 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." The church is surrounded by pumpkins, suggesting a fall festival or event. The profile has 331 friends and includes buttons for "Add to story", "Edit profile", and a dropdown menu.

Fumcportsmouthnh Church
331 friends

[+ Add to story](#) [Edit profile](#)



FIRST
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

