

There is

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING, AND A SEASON
FOR EVERY ACTIVITY UNDER THE HEAVENS:

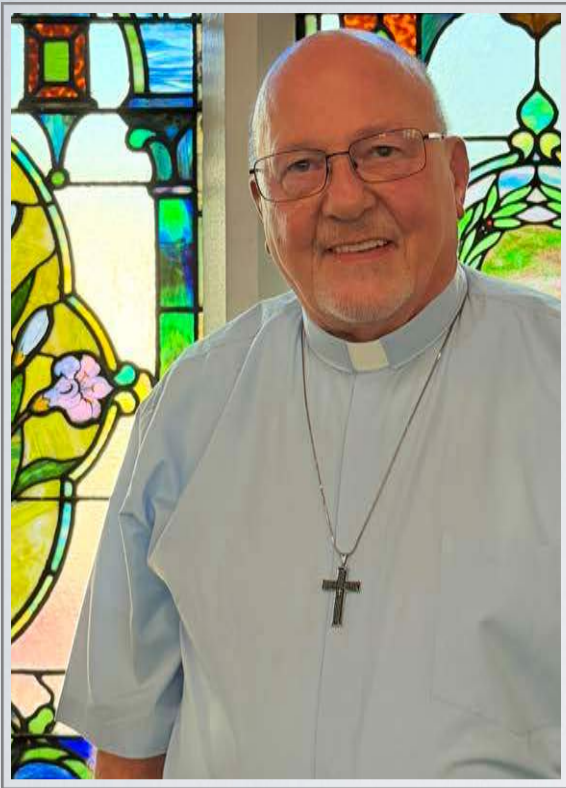
A TIME TO BE BORN AND A TIME TO DIE,
A TIME TO PLANT AND A TIME TO UPROOT,
A TIME TO KILL AND A TIME TO HEAL,
A TIME TO TEAR DOWN AND A TIME TO BUILD,
A TIME TO WEEP AND A TIME TO LAUGH,
A TIME TO MOURN AND A TIME TO DANCE,
A TIME TO SCATTER STONES AND A TIME
TO GATHER THEM, A TIME TO EMBRACE
AND A TIME TO REFRAIN FROM EMBRACING,
A TIME TO SEARCH AND A TIME TO GIVE UP,
A TIME TO KEEP AND A TIME TO THROW AWAY,
A TIME TO TEAR AND A TIME TO MEND,
A TIME TO BE SILENT AND A TIME TO SPEAK,
A TIME TO LOVE AND A TIME TO HATE,
A TIME FOR WAR AND

a time for peace

FIRST UMC  PORTSMOUTH

JUNE BEACON

2026



From the Pastor's desk.

Pastor Robert Stewart
pastorbobstewart@gmail.com

My Dear sisters and brothers in Christ there is **A Time for Everything...**We read in Ecclesiastes 3:

1 For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. 2 A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest. 3 A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up. 4 A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance. 5 A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away. 6 A time to search and a time to quit searching. A time to keep and a time to throw away. 7 A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak. 8 A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace.

My siblings in Christ...this will be my last writing to you via the Beacon Newsletter. I find that in Ecclesiastes 3 it reminds us there is always a time or season of change in each of our lives. For Sharon and me it is a time we say good-bye until our paths cross again sometime in the future.

I thank you, the members and friends of First United Methodist Church, for the love and support you have shown us while we ministered among you. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. I ask forgiveness for mistakes I have made and if I have offended anyone during our time together. As we leave, we carry with us all that we have learned here. We will cherish all the memories we have shared together. I encourage your continuing ministry here and will pray for all of you and your new pastor, Larry Holman. I know that I leave you in good and capable hands. I know you will support Pastor Larry as you supported me since arriving here in Portsmouth. Together we have accomplished some great ministry and as a congregation we have built and strengthened relationships with many of the groups that use our facilities. Continue to shine the light of Christ.

In Isaiah 43:18-19 the Prophet Isaiah writes: ***“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”***

Friends, there will be change coming as there was change when we arrived here two years ago. Give the change(s) a chance and embrace it because it could lead to a stronger relationship with God and with each other.



From the Pastor's desk.

Pastor Robert Stewart
pastorbobstewart@gmail.com

We have a busy few weeks ahead until we depart on June 28, 2026. That will be our final Sunday together. We have three upcoming baptisms and on Sunday, May 31st we welcome another member to our church family. We welcome Demedeiros McMillion. We have come to know Demedeiros simply as "D" and I think the "D" represents "Disciple" of Jesus Christ. One thing that "D" has said to me is that he feels the Holy Spirit in this place! Please be sure to welcome Demedeiros to our loving church family.

I close our time together with this prayer from The United Methodist Book of Worship:

Eternal God, whose steadfast love for us is from everlasting to everlasting, we give you thanks for the cherished memories and commend one another into your care as we move in new directions. Keep us ONE in your love forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We love you!

Pastor Bob & Sharon Stewart

SHALOM





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/>



PENTECOST SUNDAY

MAY 24, 2026

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



Mother's Day

MAY 10, 2026

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



COME THIS WAY!

MAY 3, 2026

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



LECTIONARY READINGS

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE:

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, June 7, 2026

Genesis 12:1-9, Psalm 33:1-12, Romans 4:13-25, Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

Sunday, June 14, 2026

Genesis 18:1-15 (21:1-7), Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19, Romans 5:1-8, Matthew 9:35-10:8 (9-23)

Sunday, June 21, 2026

Genesis 21:8-21, Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17, Romans 6:1b-11, Matthew 10:24-39

Sunday, June 28, 2026

Genesis 22:1-14, Psalm 13, Romans 6:12-23, Matthew 10:40-42



FIRST UMC LEADERSHIP

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT LAY LEADERSHIP 2026

Church Council (Leadership Board)

Leadership Board Chair: Kellie Langs (3 year term ending 2027)

Pastor

Lay Leader: Sue Sarosiek

Lay Member to Annual Conference: Dave Richards

Staff Parish Relations Chair: Brock Labadie

Trustee Chair: Mike Coffey

Finance Chair: Aerial Sillanpaa

Financial Secretary : Jen Berry

Church Treasurer: Steve Scott

Recording Secretary: Sue Richards

Church School Superintendent(s) (Sunday School): Dave Richards and Stephanie Labadie

Sunshine Chair: Marilyn Stebbins

Church Historian: Evelyn Laux

Worship Chair: PennySue Orr

Members at Large: Yvonne Griffin, Bella Sillanpaa, Melanie Lindgren

Staff Parish Relations Committee

Brock Labadie (3 year term as chair ending 2026)

Kellie Langs, Christine Williams (3 year term ending 2026)

Sue Richards, Kevin Fickenscher, Anne Coffey (3 year term ending 2027)

Rosie Buswell (3 year term ending 2028)

Rhonda Royal, Steve Beckert (3 year term ending 2029)

Lay Leader: Sue Sarosiek

Pastor



FIRST UMC LEADERSHIP

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT LAY LEADERSHIP 2026

Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development

Stephanie Labadie, Melanie Lindgren (3 year term ending 2026)
Sue Richards (3 year term ending 2027)
Marilyn Stebbins (3 year term ending 2028)
Lay Leader: Sue Sarosiek
Pastor

Finance Committee

Airial Sillanpaa - Chair (3 year term ending 2026)
Steve Scott - Treasurer (3 year term ending 2028)
Jen Berry - Financial Secretary (3 year term ending 2028)
Linda Reiber (1 year term ending 2026)
Jane Richards (1 year ending 2026)
Dave Richards (3 year term ending 2028)
Rosanne Groff (3 year term ending 2028)
John VanReenen (3 year term ending 2028)
Lay Leader: Sue Sarosiek
Pastor

Staff (paid)

Pastor: Bob Stewart
Music Director: Bevan Bloemendaal
Custodian: Pete Engel
Digital Outreach Coordinator: Bevan Bloemendaal

Worship Committee

PennySue Orr - Chair (3 year term ending 2027)
Marilyn Stebbins (3 year term ending 2027)
Michelle Verrill (3 year term ending 2027)
Yvonne Griffin (3 year term ending 2027)
Stephanie Labadie (3 year term ending 2027)
Dave Richards (3 year term ending 2027)
Hollen Groff (3 year term ending 2028)
Debbie Astbury (3 year term ending 2028)
Toby & Diane Thompson (3 year term ending 2028)
Demedeiros McMillion (3 year term ending 2029)
Bevan Bloemendaal (Consultant)
Lay Leader: Sue Sarosiek
Pastor: Bob Stewart

Board of Trustees

Mike Coffey - Chair (3 year term ending 2027)
Gary Sillanpaa (3 year term ending 2026)
Steve Langs (3 year term ending 2026)
Steve Scott (Trustee Treasurer) (3 year term ending 2028)
Mark Giandomenico (3 year term ending 2027)
Wayne Rasch (3 year term ending 2027)
Steve Beckert (3 year term ending 2028)
Karl Duval (3 year term ending 2028)
Jayson Lima (3 year term ending 2029)
Lay Leader: Sue Sarosiek
Pastor: Bob Stewart



Finance Update

Aerial Sillanpaa
Chair, Finance Committee

Hello Church Family - **Building for the Future,**

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?" – Luke 14:28

As Finance Chair, I spend a surprising amount of time thinking about roofs, parking lots, and concrete. It's not exactly what drew me to church, but caring for our buildings is part of caring for the ministry that happens inside them.

These larger projects are known as **capital improvements**, which are significant investments that maintain or improve church property beyond ordinary repairs and day-to-day expenses.

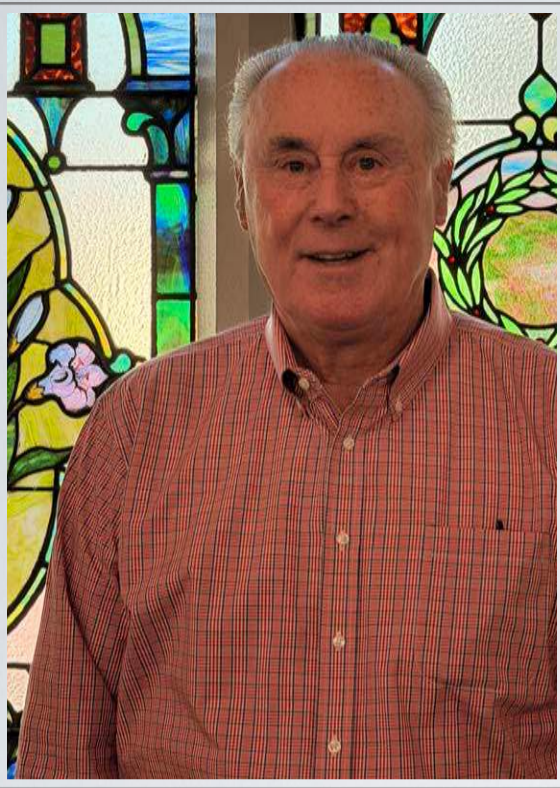
In the coming years, we have several projects on our horizon. Such projects include replacement of the parsonage roof, which will likely need to happen later this year or next spring. We are also actively discussing repaving the parking lot and exploring ways to make our front entrance and steps more welcoming and accessible to all who enter.

While oversight of these projects falls to the Trustees, the Finance Committee works alongside them to identify funding sources and plan for the financial side of these improvements. Together, we try to answer the age-old question: "How do we pay for this?"

One of the answers is fundraising. Many of you may remember church cookbooks from years past. At Pastor Bob's suggestion, the Finance Committee discussed bringing one back as a way to begin building resources for future capital projects. The cookbook fundraiser is currently seeking an additional volunteer to serve in a leadership capacity. This person would work alongside the existing project coordinator to assist with planning, sponsorship outreach, organization, and project management. Bringing a second leader into the effort will help ensure the project benefits from a variety of skills and perspectives while distributing the workload across a small team. Fundraisers like the cookbook are more than fun projects. They are an important part of how we prepare for major expenses that cannot simply be absorbed into our annual budget. If we want to replace roofs before they become skylights and improve our facilities before they become emergencies, these efforts matter.

The good news is that this congregation has never been afraid of rolling up its sleeves. Time and again, people have stepped forward with their talents, energy, and generosity. I have every confidence we'll do the same as we plan for the future.

Thank you for your continued support of our church and its mission. With thoughtful planning, diverse fundraising, and perhaps robust cookbook sales, we are one step closer to ensuring our church remains a welcoming place for generations to come.



Trustee Update

Mike Coffey
Chair, Trustee Committee

Hello Church Family and Friends,

We are getting some much needed church maintenance accomplished, thank you to all who have contributed their time to making First UMC a better place.

The lower level men's room toilet has been installed and is now operational. The ladies room toilet will be completed soon as the concrete floor had to be cut to allow for a pipe repair. Thank you Wayne Rasch for your assistance.

Thank you North Hill Nursery for the beautiful flowering planters that grace both entrances of First UMC. They really look great.

Our sanctuary sound system has aged out and a new Mackie digital mixer is required for it to be operational. The wonderful news is that we have received a generous donation that will cover the replacement cost.

A couple of pending projects are:

1. power washing the parsonage exterior and deck. Wayne Rasch has requested several quotes for the work and once those are received the work will be done this summer.
2. the 25 year old parsonage roof has been assessed and needs to be replaced. Estimates have been requested and once agreed to the work be accomplished this year.





Worship Committee Update

PennySue Orr
Chair, Worship Committee

Hello my church family

Welcome JUNE!!!

THANK YOU to the MEN of the congregation for taking over coffee hour on Mother's Day! What a feast! Because they did such a fantastic job several of the men will join the rotation! Thank you again.

Over the next few weeks you will see the “passing of the clipboards”. Over the past 2 years Sharon has been dedicated to passing around the clipboards to get liturgists lined up, pot luck supper attendance, Vigil light and many more. Marilyn Stebbins and myself will be taking over the clipboard duties. So don't run away from us if you see us coming! Remember we know where you worship and “sit” on Sundays :-)

Several of the Worship Committee members will oversee the behind the scenes items that Sharon made sure were completed. Stephanie Labadie will be sure the paraments are changed, Yvonne Griffin will be sure the bread and juice are provided so Jessie Bennett can do her magic, Hollen Groff will be sure the altar candles are changed when needed so they never go out (unless there is a gust of wind). Thank you to these members for taking on these important tasks.

Here are a few upcoming events in worship:

June 14th - Children's Sunday - Please come and celebrate our kiddos as they officially end the Children's Church year. The kids will share self portraits and three things they love about church. Pastor Bob will try to guess who the portrait belongs to! The service will conclude with an ice cream social!!

June 21st - Father's Day - Come let us celebrate all the male influences in our lives. Bring a photo to to display

June 28th - Pastor Bob and Sharon's final Sunday with us. Come and celebrate this special Sunday as we say “Farewell”.

As the summer months are upon us and many take that much needed vacation - please remember no matter where you are there are opportunities to worship. Each Sunday the service is broadcast live on our Facebook page. If you miss it live you can watch it later as it is saved for 30 days. Pack an Upper Room. You can find a copy outside the office, they are small, light weight and FREE. Sing favorite hymns around a campfire or fire pit. Worship and Thank God for all the living things when you are on a nature walk or hike.

Peace in your Journey. .



Children's Church Update

Stephanie Labadie & David Richards
Co-Superintendents

Dear Church Family & Friends,

Happy June!

We are approaching the end of another year of Children's Church, with our final session taking place on Sunday, June 7th.

We will then celebrate Children's Sunday on June 14th when the kids will help lead Sunday Service as greeters, bellringers, acolytes, and ushers; we will have a youth liturgist, the kids will design a special message for Pastor Bob in God's Mailbox, and they will provide a joint message for the week's sermon. Don't miss it!

Children's Church will then be on summer break until September.

See you on Sunday!
Stephanie & David





SPRC

Brock Labadie
Chair

Church family and friends,

The SPRC has completed a report on Pastor Bob for the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. This committee is the local, district-level body responsible for evaluating, mentoring, and overseeing individuals discerning a call to licensed, ordained, or certified lay ministry. SPRC gave Pastor Bob a glowing review and we know that he will do a wonderful job as he continues to preach at Suncook.

As Pastor Bob and Sharon prepare for their next appointment in Suncook at the end of June, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude for the incredible impact they have made on our church family and community. Through their energy, passion, and unwavering love for people, they have helped nurture growth within First UMC.

Pastor Bob and Sharon have given so generously of their time, empathy, encouragement, and faith-filled leadership. They have led with heart, humility, and a genuine desire to make a difference, reminding us all what it means to serve with grace and love. While we will deeply miss their presence at First UMC, we are confident in God's plan for their next chapter of ministry in Suncook.

Please join us in thanking Pastor Bob and Sharon for all they have poured into our church and community, and in wishing them continued success in their new appointment.

They will always hold a special place in the heart of First UMC.





Seacoast Family Promise Update

Jen Berry
Chair

Hello!

Seacoast Family Promise provides temporary housing, meals, and shelter to families through a structured, trauma-informed program that includes employment support, housing search assistance, financial education, parenting resources, and other proven tools. These services help families regain stability and move toward a place they can once again call home.

We are pleased to share that the Joshua House expansion and remodel is now complete and additional families can now be supported. Over the course of 2026, SFP's goal is to increase funding sources so they can hire the additional staff that will be needed to support the maximum number of families at the Joshua house, which is expected to be 8-10 depending on family sizes. Currently, they can handle 5 - 6 families. Unfortunately, homelessness among families continues to rise due to the ongoing lack of affordable housing in the Seacoast area, making this work more important than ever.

Our team continues to provide dinners for families currently staying at the Joshua House. We extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported this outreach over the past 6 months—your generosity truly makes a difference!

Families now prepare their own meals on Wednesday and Saturday evenings, using leftovers on Wednesdays. Our responsibility will be to provide meals on Thursdays and Fridays during our assigned weeks, while Temple Israel volunteers will cover Sundays through Tuesdays.

Our remaining dates are:

June 25 & 26

November 12 & 13

August 13 & 14

December 31 & January 1

If you are interested in helping with this outreach, please contact me - Jen Berry - 603-801-3886 or jen_b76@yahoo.com





End 68 Hours of Hunger Update

Jen Berry
Chair

Church Family and Friends,

End 68 Hours of Hunger - Portsmouth continues to thrive as we move through the school year. It's hard to believe that we only have 2 weeks left and the school year will be complete! That will make 16 school years that we've been providing food to children in need in the Portsmouth school system. It's truly unbelievable how times flies! In that time, we have delivered approximately 3,000 bags with over 20,000 meals in them. When this church started this program back in 2010, I never envisioned it still going strong 16 years later, but here we are.

We will take a short break in July and August. During the summer, Gather food pantry takes care of our kids, providing meals for them as part of a summer lunch program. Then we'll gear up again to start the next school year, since unfortunately food insecurity for both children and adults continues to be a serious problem in the US. I praise God that he brought this idea to us via Pastor Deb Shipp and continues to make a way for the success of this program in Portsmouth! We are definitely making a difference in the lives of these children.





Sunshine Outreach Update

Marilyn Stebbins
Chair

Hello Church Family and Friends,

We're continuing our effort to stay connected with members of our church family who are no longer able to join us in person each Sunday, and your support truly makes a difference.

Thank you to everyone who takes a few moments to write a note. These simple gestures of care and encouragement are deeply appreciated and help remind each person that they are remembered and still very much a part of our community.

As a reminder...on the second Sunday of each month, notecards will be available at the entrance to Sanborn Hall. A short message can go a long way in brightening someone's day and helping them feel connected.



Jenya Westbrook
20 Islington Street #402
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Cynthia Drake
5 Huntervale Avenue
Rye, NH 03870

Priscilla Wilson
361 Sagamore Road
Rye, NH 03870



Coffee Hour Update

Yvonne Griffin
Coordinator

Hello church family and friends.....

Getting together on Sunday mornings after church is such a nice time for us all to share our time and get to know each other better.

The volunteers who provide the food do a wonderful job with their weekly presentations for us to enjoy. Currently we have 10 volunteers on the team. However, I am still looking for additional ones to help out. (MEN, THAT INCLUDES YOU, TOO!) With summer coming soon, there will be a drop in volunteers as they take "vacation" time. Please see me any Sunday after church if you would like to join us. OR, just let me know if I could count on you to contribute occasionally if I needed a helping hand. We currently have three church friends who are available to the team right now who do exactly that.

I am so happy that our coffee hour has become so successful. Your attendance and donations are MUCH appreciated. Thank you!!





“Heavenly Favorites”

First UMC Cookbook Fundraiser

PennySue Orr
Project Lead

Church Family and Friends,

We have 175 recipes and the next phases of the project are in the development stages

We are looking for someone in the congregation to be assistant coordinator, marketing (contacting restaurants etc to help promote or buy advertising space to help off set the cost of printing) and to assist me with coordinating. If interested please see Aerial Sillanpaa

We are currently looking at options for a printed book and ebook. If you are interested in a printed copy please see me after church or email psorr@comcast.net

Peace in your Journey





PRAYER

THE MOST POWERFUL
WEAPON
OF A BELIEVER

THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER!

Through prayer, we connect with God, seek wisdom, and hold others in love and faith. We lift up in prayer:

Healing prayers for Marilyn's friends Rosa & Marilyn, Mark's brother's family as they deal with a breast cancer diagnosis and mourn the loss of his sister-in-law's brother, continued healing prayers for Al & Jan Cansdale, prayers for the family of Tom Yeaton, prayers for Justine, prayers of thanks for those who gave their lives for our freedom this Memorial Day weekend, prayers of thanks for the continued healing for Mike Coffey as he is now home, and a thank you for all the prayers for Pastor Bob as he met with the D-Com this past week with an approval of continuing as a Pastor.

AN INVITATION

At both church entrances, you'll find red hearts where you can write the names of those you wish to lift up in prayer, as well as any joys you'd like to share. Please give those hearts to one of the ushers or Pastor Bob.



**PRAYER
IS POWERFUL**

JUNE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

5 Alexa Langs
5 Mike Lindgren
13 Jack Labadie
28 Christopher Laux

3 Toby & Diane Thompson
19 Hollen & Rosanne Groff

Take a moment and get a card in the mail or send a quick text or email to wish these church family members a day filled with love, laughter and lots of cake!



Edit cover photo



Fumcportsmouthnh Church

331 friends



[+ Add to story](#)

[Edit profile](#)

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!



UPCOMING EVENTS

LOOKING AHEAD!

Here are the upcoming events, and the month's worship schedule.

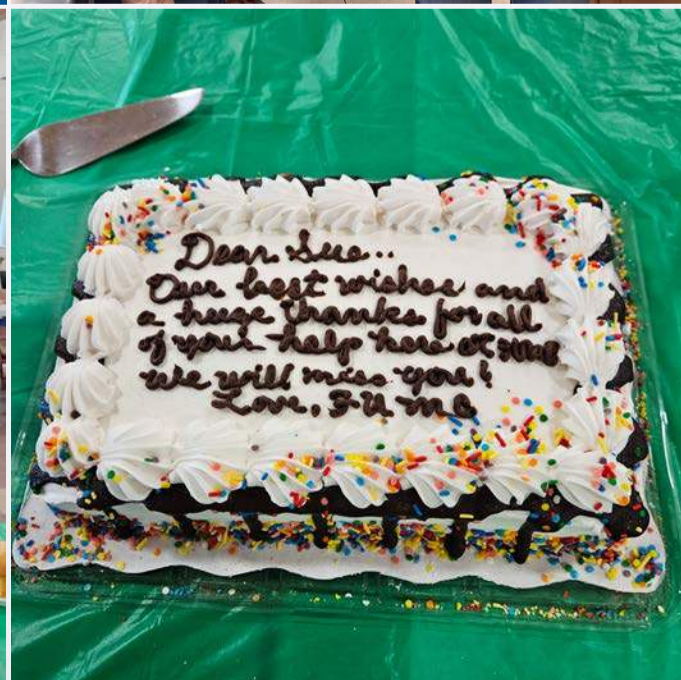
- 6/14 - Children's Sunday
- 6/21 - Father's Day
- 6/28 - Pastor Bob's last Sunday

FIRST UMC WORSHIP SCHEDULE *June 2026*

DATE	LITURGIST	ACOLYTES	9:55 BELL RINGERS	GREETERS & USHERS	FACEBOOK LIVE	WORSHIP TECH	SOUND TECH	SUNDAY SCHOOL	COFFEE HOUR
6/7/26	Art Munson	TBD	B. Labadie	S. Beckert D. McMillion	S. Richards	PS. Orr S. Labadie	B. Labadie	S. Labadie D. Richards	J. Berry N. Chesser
6/14/26 <small>Children's Sunday</small>	Maria Arcadipane	TBD	J. VanReenen	R. Royal M. Giandomenico	TBD	PS. Orr	S. Sarosiek	----	S. Olbricht Y.Griffin, S. Labadie
6/21/26	Nancy Chesser	TBD	D. Richards	PS. Orr J. Lima	PS. Orr	S. Richards	D. Richards	----	R. Groff
6/28/26 <small>Pastor Bob's last day</small>	Sharon Stewart	TBD	S. Scott	Lang Family	PS. Orr	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	----	D. Pierce Y. Griffin



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





ABOUT US

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.



RECOVERY CHURCH - PORTSMOUTH

You are invited to join the Recovery Church every Wednesday at 6 p.m. for dinner and 7 p.m. for worship service.



HOMEMADE LASAGNA

**There are a few still available!
Connect with Sue Richards in
person or call/text
603.749.4169 to get your
frozen 8" x 8" Take & Bake
lasagna dinners, for \$20 each.**



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SUNDAYS
10am



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.