

WELCOME

To our community

PASTOR LARRY & SUE

FIRST UMC  PORTSMOUTH

JULY BEACON
2026



From the Pastor's desk

Pastor Larry Holman

PastorLarryHolman@gmail.com

Warmest welcome my fellow followers of Christ..

I can say, without a doubt, that you never know where God may guide your footsteps. Some might say that God moves in mysterious ways. True enough; but, I might add that God moves US in mysterious ways!

My wife Susan and I have been married for almost 43 years and active members of St. John's United Methodist Church, in Dover, for 38 of those years. During that time, we've been active in the many different ministries and committees of the church. Through the years though, God put people and circumstances in my path to, ever so gently, nudge me closer to where God wanted me to be. In 2021 I became a Certified Lay Servant. In late 2023 I began to work on discerning what was next in my life and in early 2024, I began the process of becoming a Certified Lay Minister (CLM). Perfect! I thought. As my term for being Lay Leader was ending, this training would allow me to be a better resource for the pastor and help ease his burden - kind of like being an associate pastor. In 2025 I completed my training and was recognized at Annual Conference as a newly minted CLM. I began my work as a CLM thinking I would just stay put at St. John's and do my ministry there.

But God had something else in mind; and one afternoon a couple of months ago, the District Superintendent called me and asked if I would consider becoming the pastor at FUMC. I felt like Moses - What? Me? For all the reasons I thought I shouldn't do it, God showed me reasons I could and should. As I read the FUMC church profile, looked at the website, saw the pictures of all the happy people, saw how the church committees were full and read about all the special programming that goes on here, I decided to say "YES". The SPRC team was wonderful and made me feel welcomed when I met them for the first time. Everyone was warm, friendly and had a good sense of humor. I felt at home already. Any anxiety I had just melted away.

What does the future hold for First United Methodist Church? Only God knows; but God is good (all the time) and God's ways are good. With that promise in our hearts, I truly believe this church will continue to grow and thrive. This church has made some amazing connections in the community and other churches can learn from you.



From the Pastor's desk [continued]

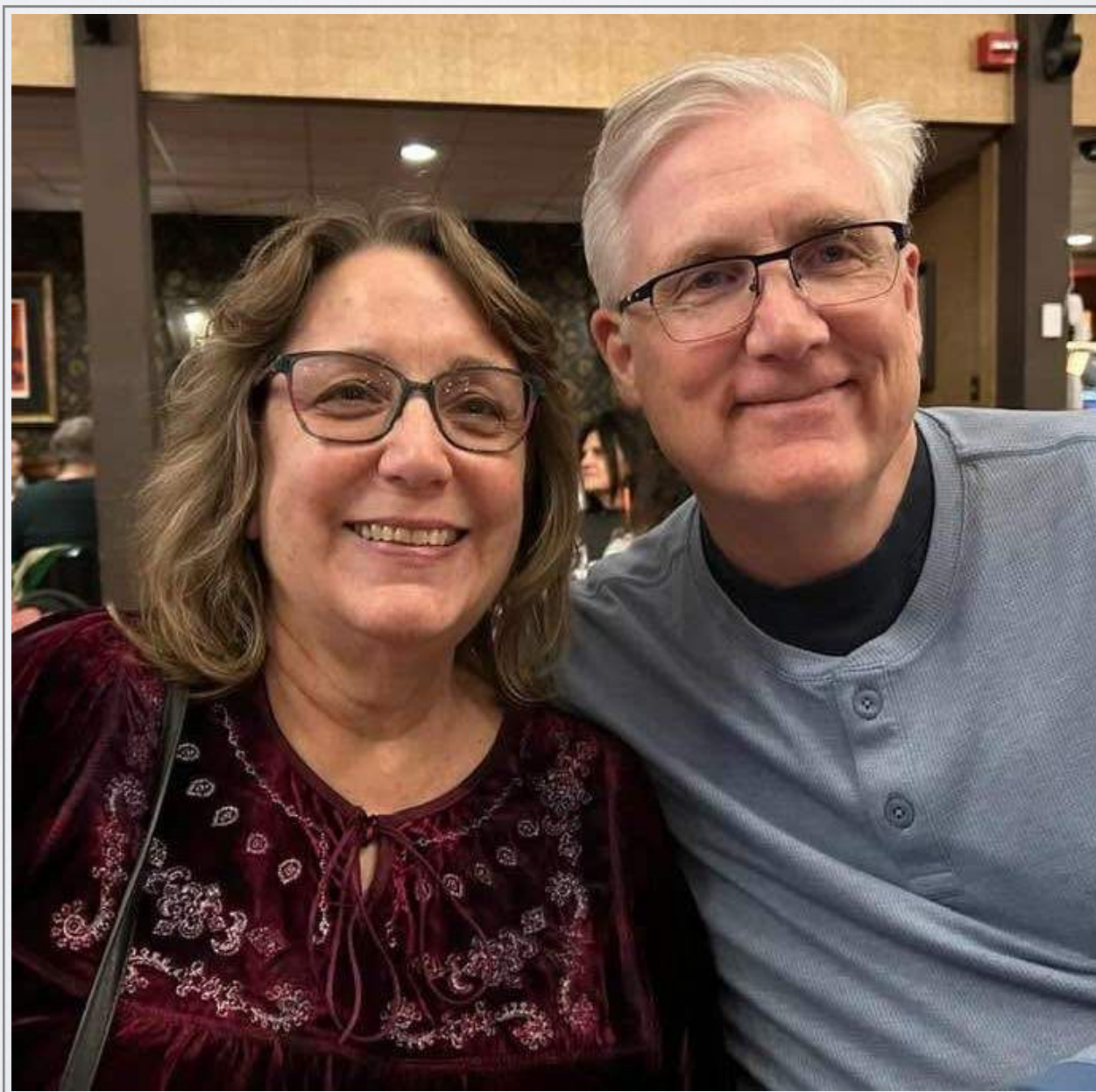
Pastor Larry Holman

PastorLarryHolman@gmail.com

Which leads me to also share that while Susan and I are excited to be a part of this amazing worship community, I am also excited about the opportunities that are finally developing within the United Methodist Church for churches to work together as “Cooperative Parishes”. This is not the UMC’s way of merging and closing churches; but rather, a way for churches to really define their mission and gifts in order to work collaboratively with other churches – to share resources, people and ministry so that we aren’t all trying to replicate the same programming. It is about making the most out of what everyone brings to the table in order to be stronger hands and feet of Christ in our communities. Just as Pastor Bob and I each have different gifts and talents that we bring to a congregation, we share common goals. God calls all of us to work together, as one body with open hearts and open mind, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, to shine bright and be a beacon to the world.

In His Service,

Pastor Larry & Sue





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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VIDEO SERIES

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PASTOR BOB AND SHARON'S LAST SUNDAY

JUNE 28, 2026

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



FATHER'S DAY

JUNE 21, 2026

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



CHILDREN'S DAY

JUNE 14, 2026

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



A Thank You from Bob & Sharon Stewart

My Dear brothers and sisters in Christ...

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 the Apostle Paul writes, ***“Be THANKFUL in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”***

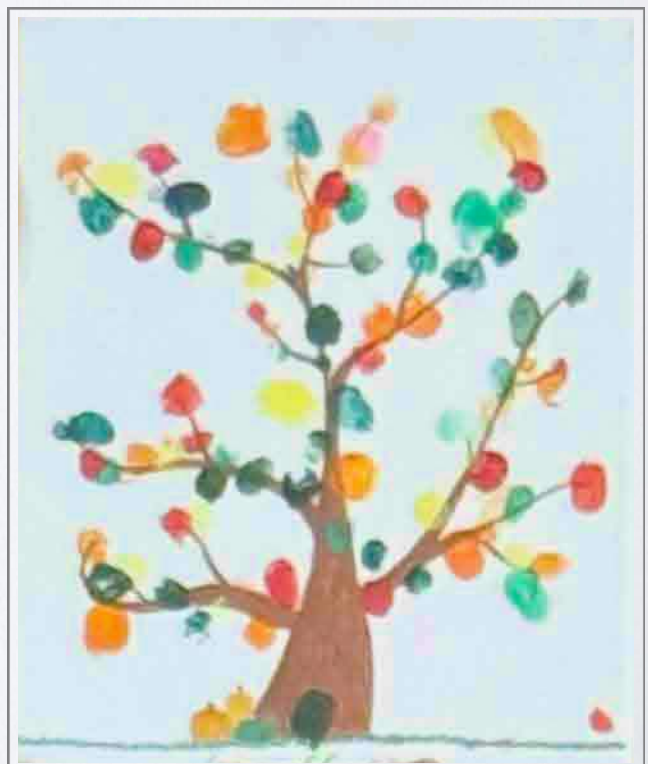
This past Sunday [6/28] was an amazing day and for our final day together we are truly thankful and grateful for everything. I am thankful for each of you at FUMC. I am thankful for those who are part of Recovery Church. I am thankful for the Planet Rangers friends that were with us on Sunday. I am thankful for those from our previous church that came for our final day. We felt God’s love for us through each of the 108 people that gathered to say good-bye and for this we are truly thankful.

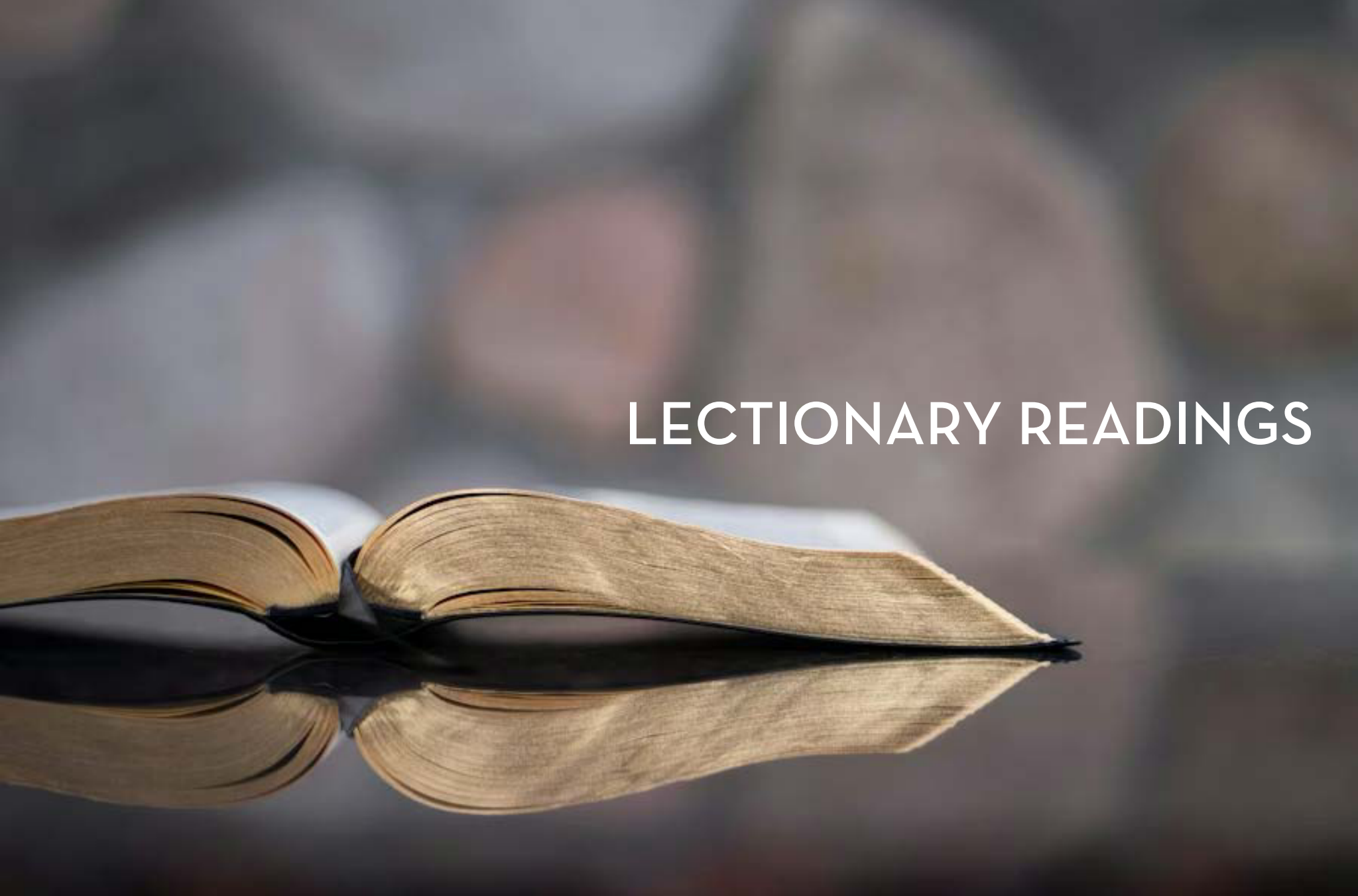
We want to take a moment so say thank you for the gifts that were given to us yesterday. Thank you for the beautiful luncheon. Thank you to Yvonne and her coffee hour angels who prepared the nourishment to our bodies. Thank you for the tree painting with your fingerprints...for us this is part of our **“Tree of Life.”** The Forever Hug t-shirts with the children’s handprints on the back of the shirt is also a part of our **“Tree of Life.”** Your forever love and support for us while we were together for the past two years is a part of our **“Tree of Life.”**

We want to thank you for all the beautiful cards and handwritten messages of love. We are thankful for the gifts, the gift cards and the generous check that represented your generous giving from your generous hearts. We want to thank Bevan for putting together the pictures of our time together in ministry at FUMC. ALL these memories are part of our **“Tree of Life.”**

This morning we remember Paul’s words...“Be THANKFUL in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” Thank you ALL for being a part of our **“TREE OF LIFE!”**

Grace, Peace & LOVE from Bob and Sharon





LECTIONARY READINGS

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE MONTH OF JULY:

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, July 5, 2026

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67, Psalm 45:10-17, Romans 7:15-25a, Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Sunday, July 12, 2026

Genesis 25:19-34, Psalm 119:105-112, Romans 8:1-11, Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Sunday, July 19, 2026

Genesis 28:10-19a, Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24, Romans 8:12-25, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Sunday, July 26, 2026

Genesis 29:15-28, Psalm 105:1-11, 45b, Romans 8:26-39, Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52



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: Larry Holman

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: Larry Holman



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: Larry Holman

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: Larry Holman

Staff (paid)

Pastor: Larry Holman
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: Larry Holman

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)
Jayson Lima (3 year term ending 2029)
Lay Leader: Sue Sarosiek
Pastor: Larry Holman



From the desk of Granite District Superintendent

Rev. Dr. David Palmer

Welcoming, Supporting, and Sharing Ministry Together

Across the Granite District, many churches are entering a season of transition. New pastors have arrived, new relationships are forming, and congregations are adjusting to change. In moments like these, Paul's words remind us of an important truth: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."

Pastoral transitions help us remember that ministry unfolds in seasons. No one leader carries the whole story. Each person contributes to the work of the church, and God brings the growth. That perspective invites us to move forward with trust and faithfulness.

For many congregations, the season of saying goodbye has ended. The next step is the Entry period, which focuses on building relationships. New pastors are learning the stories, traditions, and culture of their churches. Congregations are getting to know their new pastor and how they lead. Conversations, shared meals, committee meetings, and regular communication all help build trust.

SPRC chairs and lay leaders have an important role during this time. They can support the new pastor and encourage healthy boundaries that allow new pastoral relationships to develop. Giving the new pastor space to provide care and leadership strengthens the congregation over time.

Patience is also essential. Everyone is adjusting to something new. This is a season for listening, asking questions, and communicating clearly. In cross cultural and cross racial appointments, taking time to understand one another's experiences can deepen trust and connection.

Some challenges are a natural part of any transition. Differences in expectations or leadership styles often emerge. These moments can become opportunities for growth, understanding, and stronger ministry together.

Through every season, we hold onto Paul's reminder. Leaders may come and go, but God remains the source of growth, transformation, and new life. May this be a season marked by patience, grace, and strong relationships. Support one another, trust God's work among you, and remain open to the Spirit's leading.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Dr. David Palmer

Granite District Superintendent





Finance Update

Airial Sillanpaa
Chair, Finance Committee

As we begin a new chapter First United Methodist Church, I'd like to again thank Pastor Bob and Sharon for their years of faithful leadership and service. While we will certainly miss them, we wish them every blessing as they begin the next chapter of their ministry. We also warmly welcome Pastor Larry and his wife, Sue, to our church family. Our new pastor's wife happens to share her name with two wonderful and well-established members of our congregation, so I have a feeling we'll all be asking, "Which Sue?" from time to time.

As Finance Chair, I'm also happy to share some stupendous financial news. The church recently received a generous gift through the donation of 28 shares of stock, which were liquidated for \$10,319.90. This unexpected blessing gives FUMC an opportunity to look ahead as we plan for several significant capital improvement projects in the coming years. We are incredibly grateful for gifts like these that help ensure our church remains a welcoming place for generations to come.

Financial gifts are incredibly important. They keep the lights on, support our ministries, care for our facilities, and make it possible for our church to serve others. Every gift matters, and no amount is too small.

But stewardship isn't measured only in dollars.

Scripture reminds us, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:4, 7)

Every person has something meaningful to contribute. Some give financially. Others give their time, talents, experience, encouragement, or simply a willingness to lend a hand. No gift is too small when it's offered in service to God.

A perfect example is our newly rebuilt handi-capable ramp at the front entrance. Wayne Rasch generously shared his carpentry expertise (along with what others have described as every specialized tool known to mankind), while Jayson Lima contributed his own impressive carpentry skills, versatility, and knack for solving whatever challenge was in front of him. Together they completed a project that will benefit every person who enters our church through those doors. Their work is a wonderful reminder that some of the most meaningful gifts aren't written on a check. They are measured in hours, effort, craftsmanship, and a servant's heart.

I'm also happy to report that the transition to our new Financial Secretary and Treasurer continues to go smoothly. I feel incredibly blessed to serve alongside people who care so deeply about this church and are willing to share their time and talents to keep it running. Volunteers truly are the backbone of FUMC, and there is always room for more. If you've ever wondered what happens behind the scenes, or you've secretly dreamed of joining the thrilling world of church finance, I'd love to talk with you.

Please mark your calendars for our next Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday, July 14, held both via Zoom and at the parsonage. All are welcome.

Finally, my family will be hosting Coffee Hour on Sunday, July 12 as we officially welcome Pastor Larry and Sue. We'll be serving lunch after worship, and we hope you'll stay for food and fellowship.

One final Coffee Hour disclosure: I've volunteered to prepare lunch. Just not the deviled eggs. I can cook just about anything, but perfectly peeled hard-boiled eggs remain my culinary nemesis. Luckily, God bestowed that gift to others. Yvonne Griffin, I'm looking at you.

As we welcome Pastor Larry, I look forward to seeing how God continues to use the many gifts within our congregation in this new season of ministry. Thank you for your continued generosity, whether through your financial gifts, your talents, your time, or your prayers. Each one strengthens the ministry of First United Methodist Church, and together they allow us to continue sharing God's love with our community.



Worship Committee Update

PennySue Orr
Chair, Worship Committee

Happy July my church family and Welcome Pastor Larry and Sue!

As I was thinking about my article for this month - sparklers came to mind. I have fond memories as a child of lighting sparklers in the front yard with my brothers and parents after watching the fireworks.

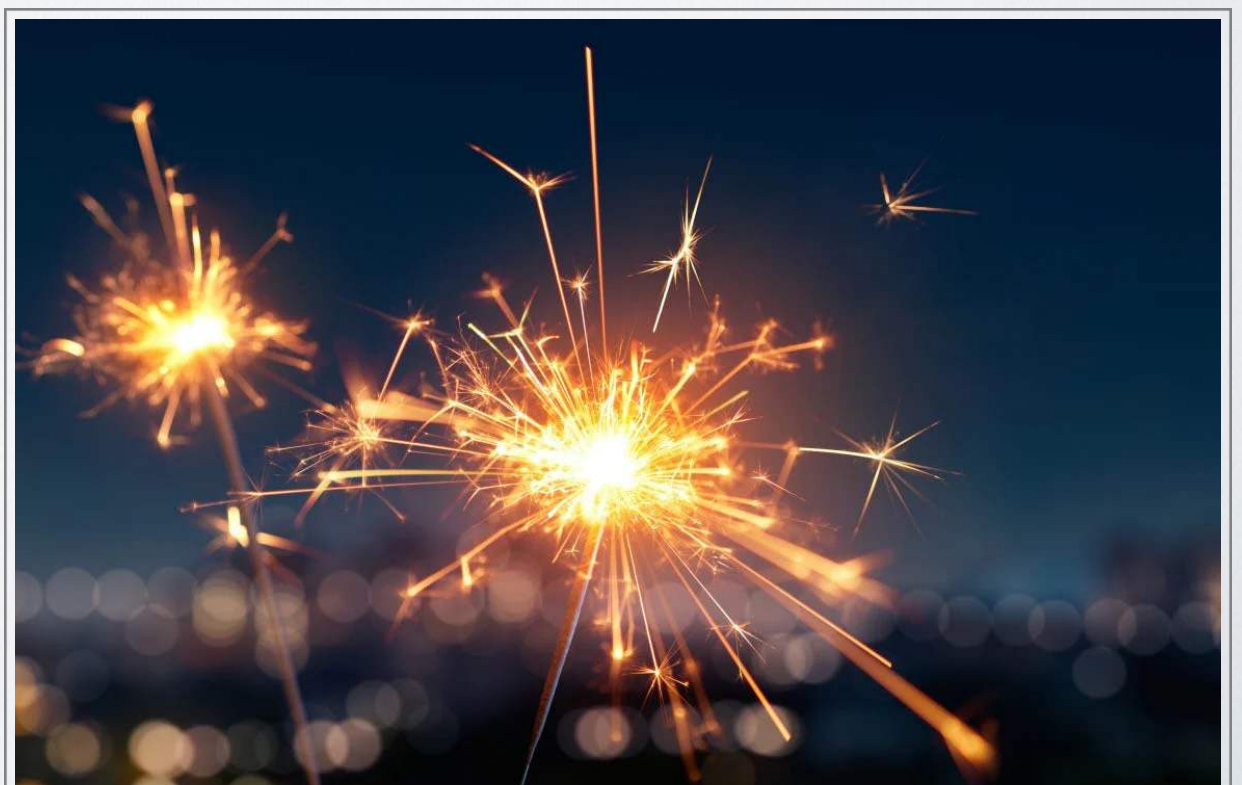
I was amazed at the brightness of each spark and how they gave off a "sizzling" sound. Now that I am many years older I see sparklers in a different way. The first verse of the hymn "Pass It On" describes the spark. "It only takes a spark to get a fire going. And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing. That's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it. You'll spread His love to everyone. You'll want to pass it on".

Let us each be a SPARK! Spreading God's love to everyone we meet.

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or more are gathered in my name, there I am with them" Worship takes place everywhere we are when we invite Christ. As the summer months take many of us on vacations remember to gather in His name and be the SPARK that gets the fire going!

Have a safe 4th of July.

Peace in your Journey





Children's Church Update

Stephanie Labadie & David Richards
Co-Superintendents

Dear Church Family & Friends,

We will kick off the next year of our Children's Church Sunday School program in September - stay tuned for more details!

We have been blessed with a huge village of volunteer instructors for our program, and hope to keep this new tradition going strong into next year.

If you are interested in being a part of this important ministry, please let Stephanie, David, or the church office know!

Happy July!
Stephanie & David





SPRC

Brock Labadie
Chair

Church family and friends,

On behalf of the first UMC community we would like to extend a warm welcome to Pastor Larry and Sue! After meeting him in May I am confident that FUMC will continue to grow and thrive with their leadership.

SPRC and the transition team are excited to begin a smooth transition, share our history, and usher in a new era of FUMC when they officially join us July 1st from their current placement in Dover.

We want to thank Pastor Bob and Sharon for all that they have done for us, and wish them the best with their new beginnings at Suncook UMC.

WELCOME



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:

August 13 & 14

November 12 & 13

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





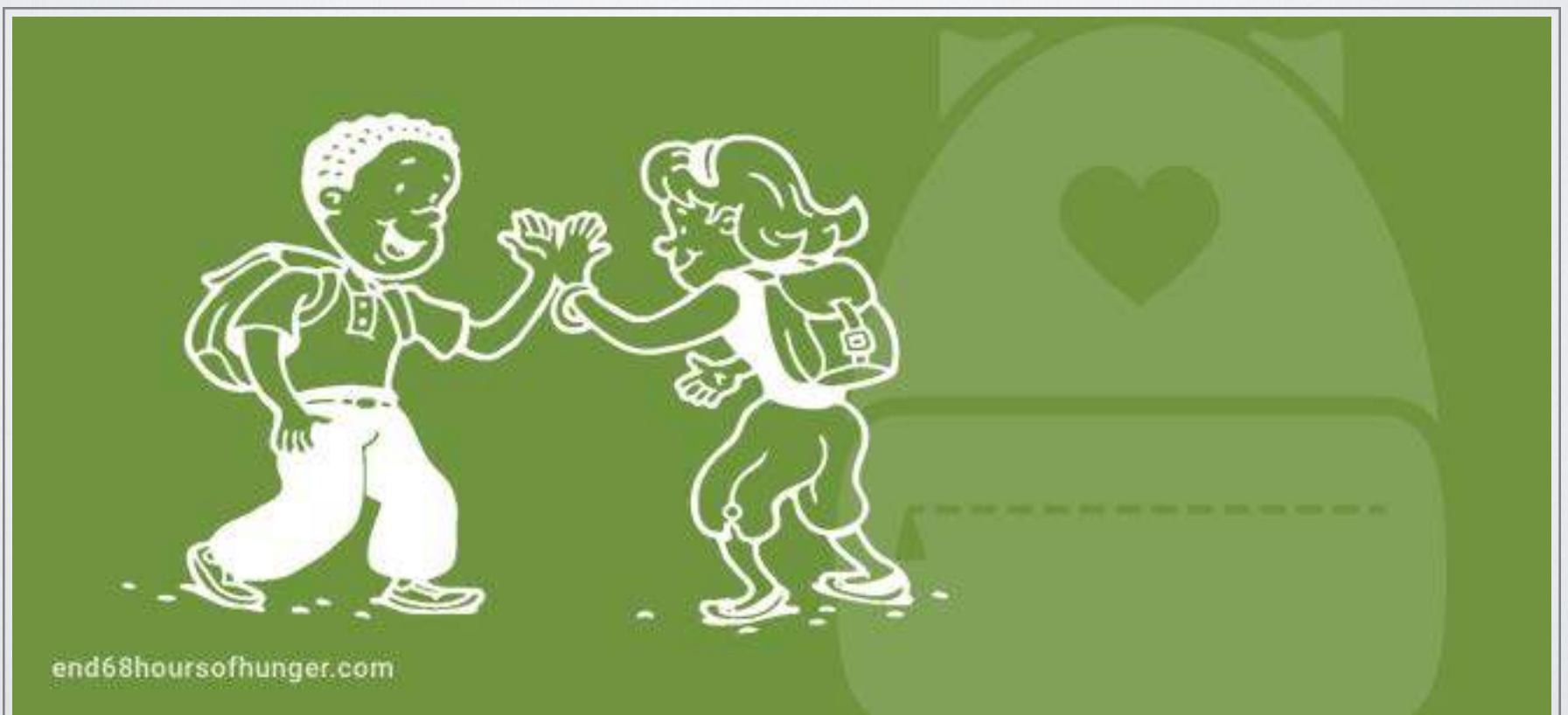
End 68 Hours of Hunger Update

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

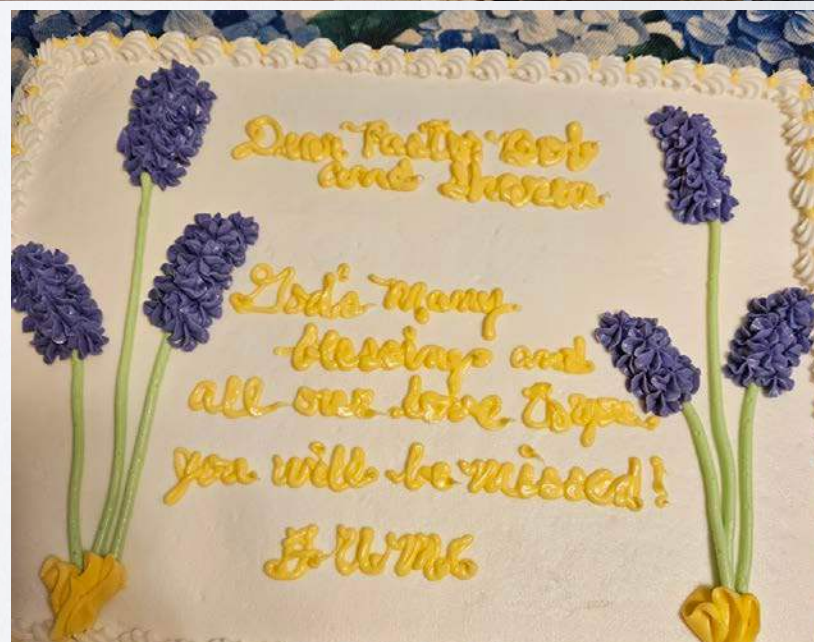


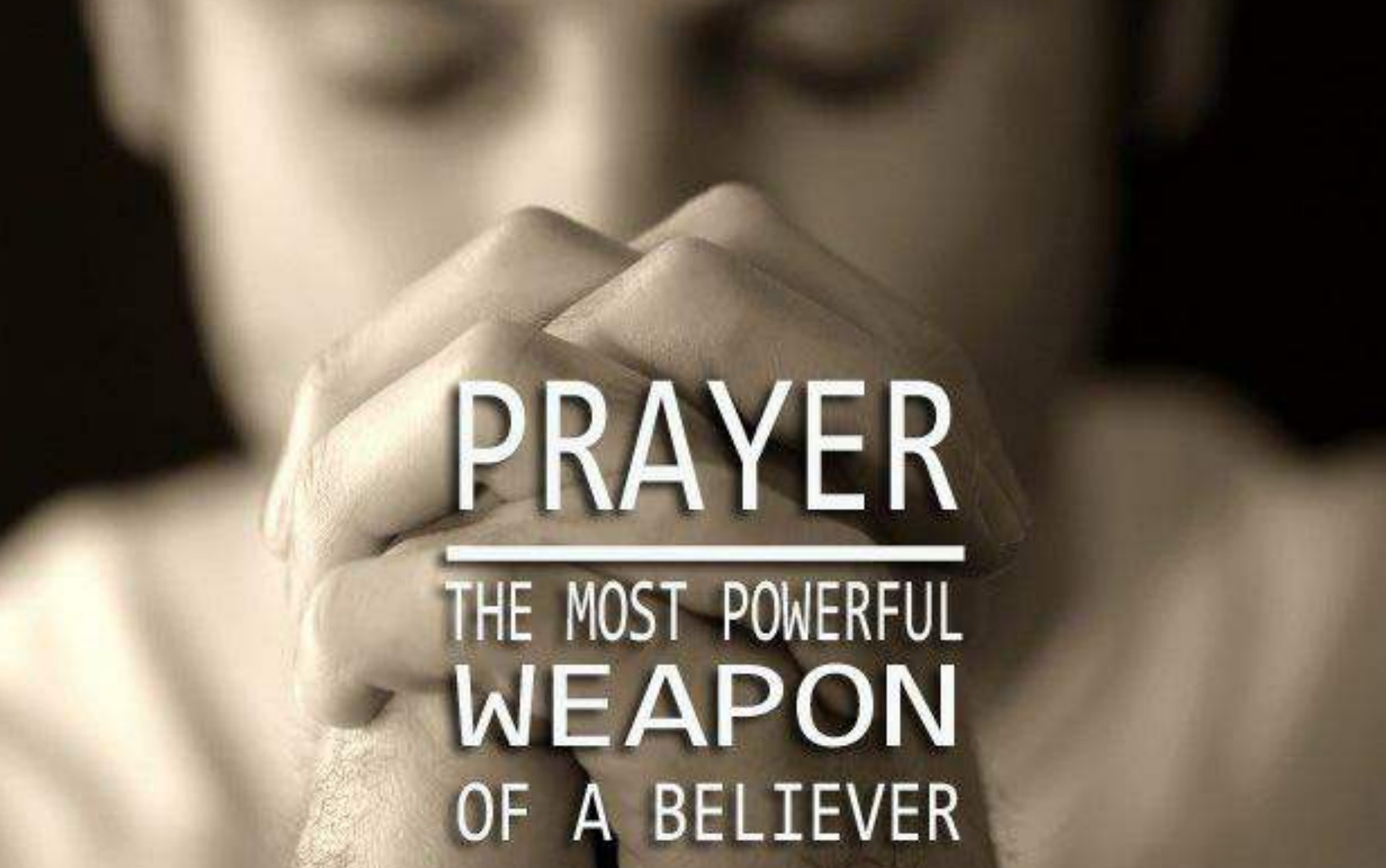
Coffee Hour Update

Yvonne Griffin
Coordinator

Hello everyone! Summer has finally arrived. Most summer Sundays see less people attending church, which also means less people at coffee hour after the service. However, coffee hour goes on! The teams are happy to do it!

I have not heard from any of the men yet, personally, but I am looking forward to adding you! Any new ladies would also be welcomed. The schedules for June and July have already been set up. Any new additions to the teams will be in August and September. Please reach out to me. I'll be anxiously waiting to sign you up!





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:

Cynthia Drake recovering from a fall this past Sunday, Pastor Sue recovering from a virus, for the people of Venezuela, for Peter and family as they face a challenging brain cancer diagnosis, for Jean and Thalia, Family of Perry McKinney, for the family and friend of Janus Titus, prayers for all clergy, CLM's that are moving to new congregations or retirement, prayers of thanksgiving for having a loving church by Steve Scott and D sending prayers of divine protection and unconditional love.

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 Larry.



PRAYER IS POWERFUL

JULY BIRTHDAYS

8 Hollen Groff

17 Debbie Golt

18 Susan Sarosiek

19 Norah Arcadipane



HELP CELEBRATE!

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!



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.

- 7/5 - Pastor Larry and Sue Holman join the First UMC Church Family and Community
- 7/12 - Welcome Luncheon for Pastor Larry and Sue after worship
- 7/14 - Finance Meeting at church parsonage @ 6:30pm
- 8/26 - Recovery Church 3rd anniversary dinner @ 6pm service @ 7pm

 FIRST UMC WORSHIP SCHEDULE
July 2026

DATE	LITURGIST	ACOLYTES	9:55 BELL RINGERS	GREETERS & USHERS	FACEBOOK LIVE	WORSHIP TECH	SOUND TECH	COFFEE HOUR
7/5/26	S. Beckert	TBD	TBD	R. Royal M. Giandomenico	PS. Orr	S. Richards	D. Richards	PS. Orr R. Buswell
7/12/26	J. Lima	Sillanpaa Family	Sillanpaa Family	Sillanpaa Family	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	A. Sillanpaa
7/19/26	D. Richards	Daphne & Jack	B. Labadie	R. Groff H. Groff	S. Richards	S. Scott	B. Labadie	S. Labadie
7/26/26	PS. Orr	TBD	H. Groff	M. Stebbins J. Lima	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	R. Groff



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



It is with profound sadness that we share the passing of former First United Methodist Church Choir Director, David Brown, on June 10, 2026, shortly after celebrating his 70th birthday. We extend our heartfelt prayers and deepest sympathies to Kathy and the entire Brown family during this time of loss. Kathy has expressed her sincere gratitude for the many prayers, cards, and expressions of love and support she has received from our church family. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial gifts be made to the Wounded Warrior Project or to a charity of your choosing in David's memory. If you would like to send a card to Kathy, it may be mailed to: Kathleen Brown, 7811 Aston Park, San Antonio, TX 78253-7353. To read David's full obituary, please visit the [REMEMBER](#) page on our First UMC website.



ABOUT US

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.



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.



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.