



Do no harm.

Do good.

Stay in love
with God.

~ John Wesley



From the Pastor's desk

Pastor Larry Holman

PastorLarryHolman@gmail.com

Dear brothers, sisters in Christ.

As I mentioned in one of my recent sermons, as part of my journey in the Lay Servant Ministries program, I took a class titled "Called To Preach". During the class, each student chose one scripture, that they identified with, from a list and used that scripture throughout the course to develop a sermon on. I chose Exodus chapter 3 - Moses struggling to understand and questioning why God had chosen him to stage an uprising in Egypt and lead the Israelites into a new, promised land. I identified with Moses - an older man, questioning his skills and abilities. After the class was over, I felt pretty good about putting a sermon together once in a while to cover the pastor's vacation, but take on being in a pastoral role? Nope - not on the radar! Needless to say, God had a good chuckle I'm sure and then put me on the path that is planned for me. The path of servant leadership.

While that may sound boastful - it isn't. The truth is that we are all called to be servant leaders. As a follower of Christ, we are called to be in service to all of God's people; especially those who are marginalized, outcast, injured, dying, homebound, traumatized or people we might not like personally. As followers of Christ, we are called to lead, not drag, others to Christ. We work to develop our faith and spirituality so that we can help others discover, or even rediscover, theirs. We walk this leadership path so that we all grow in our relationship with Christ and each other.

While it sounds easy - it isn't. Others we meet have different backgrounds and stories. Others we meet may not believe in the things we do or the way we practice our faith. This is very evident with religious denominations and was the primary reason for the split in the Methodist denomination just a couple of years ago. That split still has far reaching impacts on church congregations today. We argue over the how and not the why.

Thankfully, through God's grace and love, we have been given spiritual gifts and different callings so that we can work together to bring God's Kingdom of heaven to the Kin-dom of people in our communities. We may have completely different gifts and callings from others or we may share some in common. The good news is that God loves and trusts us enough to be servant leaders. But even if we stumble or fall, we lift each other up and carry on. Our founder John Wesley said it best. Love God, Love each other and do no harm. If we do that, the rest will fall into place.

Peace and blessings my friends.

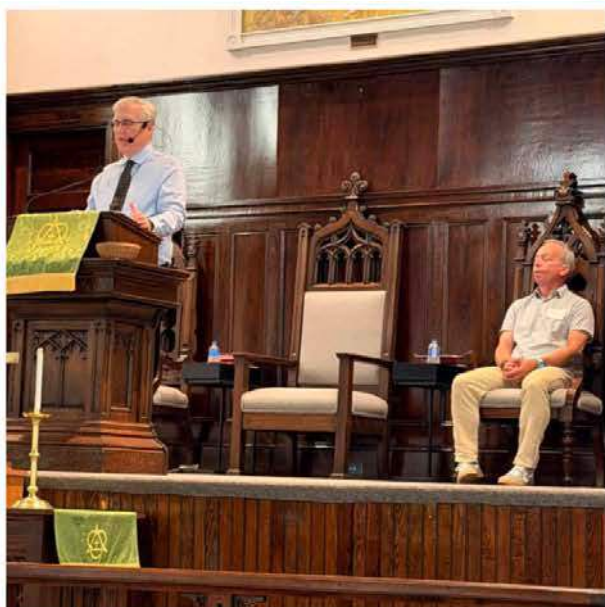
Pastor Larry



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/>



POWER OF THE PEOPLE THROUGH THE POWER OF GOD

AUGUST 23, 2026

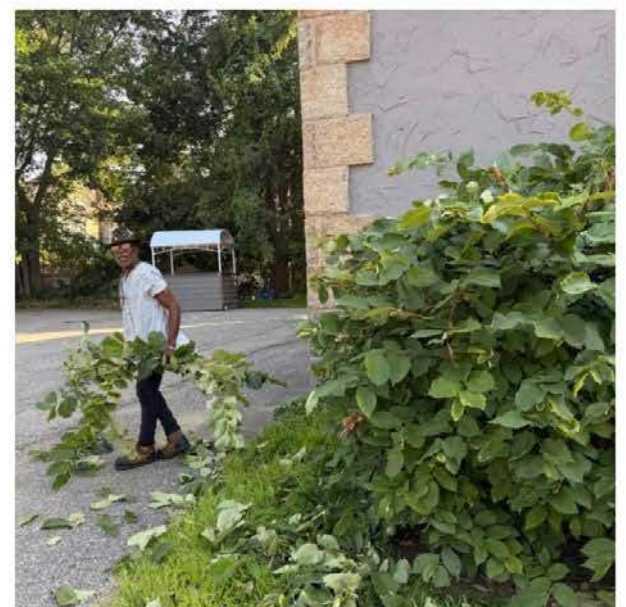
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DO YOU STILL NOT UNDERSTAND?

AUGUST 16, 2026

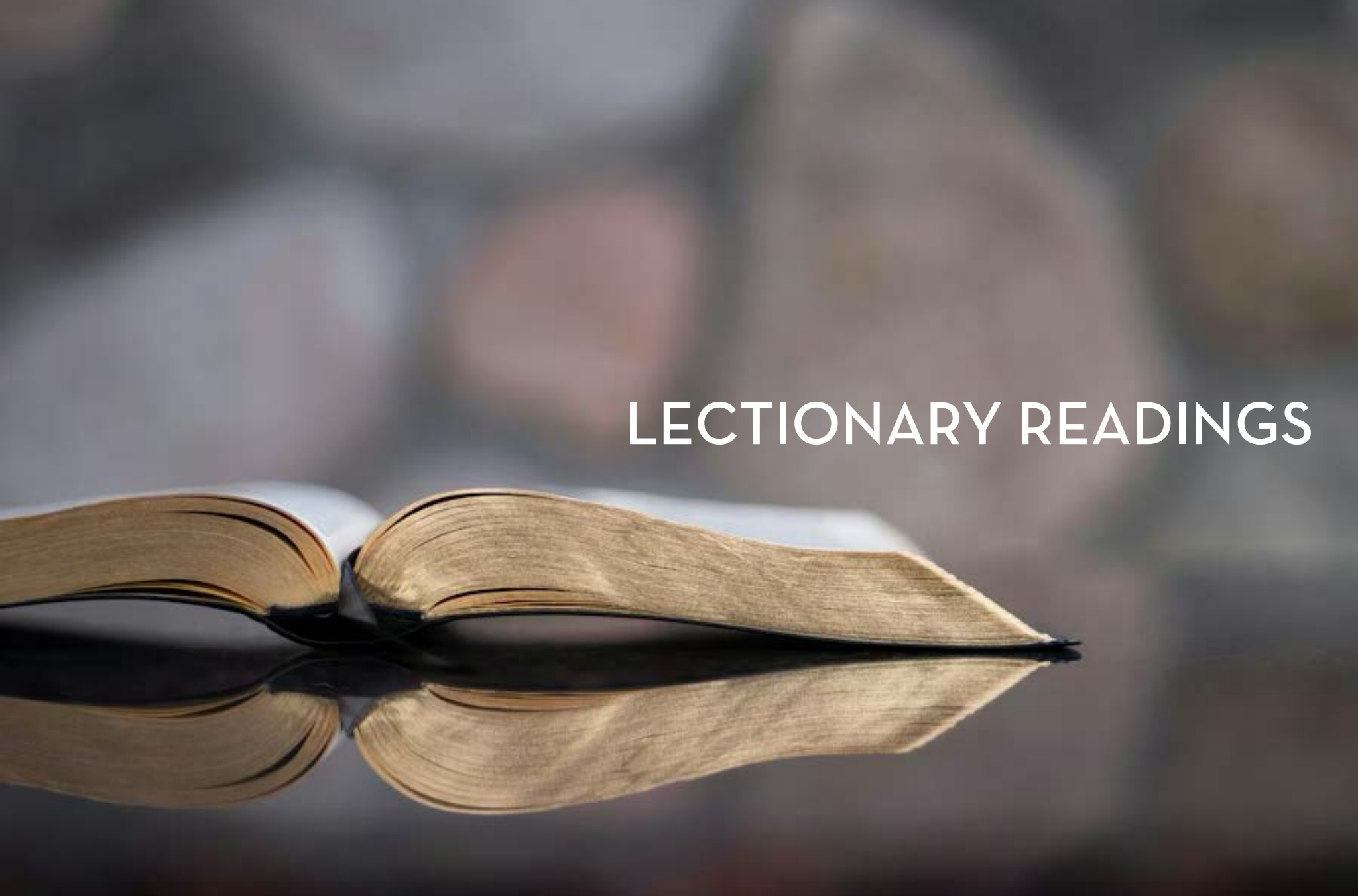
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CLEAN UP AND FIX IT DAY

AUGUST 12, 2026

[VIEW PHOTOS »](#)



LECTIONARY READINGS

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER:

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, September 6, 2026

Exodus 12:1-14, Psalm 149, Romans 13:8-14, Matthew 18:15-20

Sunday, September 13, 2026

Exodus 14:19-31 & Psalm 114, Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21, Romans 14:1-12, Matthew 18:21-35

Sunday, September 20, 2026

Exodus 16:2-25, Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45, Psalm 78, Acts 1:14-21, 33-35, Matthew 20:1-16

Sunday, September 27, 2026

Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16, Acts 3:1-19, Matthew 21:23-32



FIRST UMC LEADERSHIP

FIRST UMC COMMITTEE 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

FIRST UMC COMMITTEE 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)
Linda Reiber Treasurer (1 year term ending 2026)
Jen Berry - Financial Secretary (3 year term ending 2028)
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)
Steve Scott - (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 (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



Finance Update

Airial Sillanpaa
Chair, Finance Committee

Hello Church!

Fall is always a busy and prayerful season in the life of our church, and this year brings both a familiar tradition and something new.

Church Conference will be held November 10, 2026, but I'm told it will look a little different this year. Rather than gathering only as our individual congregation, we will join other area United Methodist churches for a shared conference. The New England Conference describes this year's format as "Holy Conferencing," with the necessary business of the church incorporated into a time of worship and shared ministry. Typically, I don't always embrace change, but this sounds really innovative.

While we will gather together, each church will still conduct and report its own business. Our congregation remains responsible for its own leadership, finances, reports and decisions. Think of it less as several churches becoming one conference and more as neighboring congregations coming together to do the work of the Church in the same room.

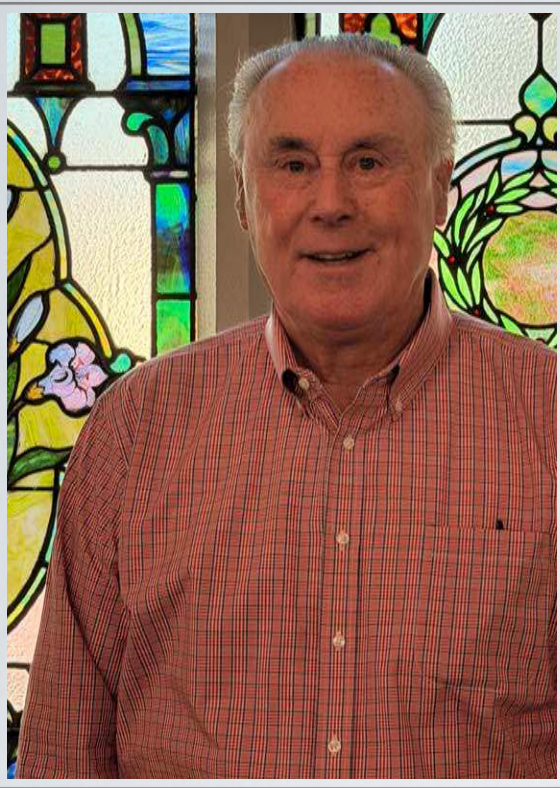
For Finance, Church Conference is also our annual opportunity for accountability and oversight. I take both of these mechanisms very seriously. The Finance Committee will complete the required financial reports, including information concerning our church finances, fund balances, payroll obligations, and payments. As Chair of Finance, I will work with our Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Pastor and Finance Committee to make sure our reports are complete and that we can clearly present the financial position of our church. Prayers for myself and the rest of the finance committee are welcome!

Before we get to November, however, we have pumpkins. Lots of pumpkins. Pumpkin Patch, our largest fundraiser of the year, is coming up quickly. It takes many hands to make the Patch successful, whether you can give several hours or just lend a hand for a shift. Please see Sue Richards to find out how you can volunteer. The money raised through Pumpkin Patch helps support the work and ministry we undertake together throughout the year, and most importantly pay our mission shares. If you don't know what mission shares are, please ask and I'm happy to explain.

There is a wonderful line in 1 Peter that feels especially appropriate for this season:

"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." 1 Peter 4:10

Stewardship isn't only about what we put in the offering plate. It's what we do with our time, our abilities, our resources and, don't forget, an extremely impressive quantity of pumpkins.



Trustee Update

Mike Coffey
Chair, Trustee Committee

Hello Church Family and Friends,

While we haven't completed any major maintenance projects this summer, there has been plenty happening around the church properties, thanks to the generosity and willingness of our volunteers to step up and lend a hand.

A special thank you to:

- Jay and Wayne, who rebuilt the handicap ramp. Now we are looking for a few volunteers to help get it painted before the snow flies. Could that be you?
- Chels, for taking on the flower beds and creating a plan to help ensure our church property continues to be a natural habitat for nature and a beautiful part of our community.
- Grayson, D, and Bevan, for helping with cleanup, weed whacking and trimming around the property.
- Steve B, for repairing the community bench outside.
- Wayne and Jim, for replacing the toilets in both of the downstairs main entrance bathrooms.
- Sue, for redoing the parsonage gardens.

These may seem like small projects, but they make a big difference in how our church looks, feels and welcomes visitors looking for a new church family, our congregation and the broader community.

We will also be planning a "Fall Clean Up" day, bringing together our friends from Planet Rangers, AA, Recovery Church and First UMC volunteers. We've had a busy summer, with lots of incredible activities and opportunities to be a Church At Work in our community. Now it's time for us to come together, roll up our sleeves and get our church property ready for the fall season. More details will be coming soon, and we hope you'll join us!

Looking ahead, the Trustees are keeping several larger maintenance projects on our docket:

- Repairing or replacing the stairs leading into Sanborn Hall
- Resurfacing the parking lot
- Replacing the parsonage roof

Each of these projects represents a significant investment in our church property and will require multiple quotes and careful review before we move forward.

As we look toward year-end giving, you may want to consider making a gift specifically toward the ongoing care and stewardship of our church properties. Every donation, gift or bequest, regardless of size, is deeply appreciated and helps us continue to maintain God's house. Gifts can be made through the church office.

Thank you to everyone who continues to give their time, talent and resources...it takes a village.



Worship Committee Update

PennySue Orr
Chair, Worship Committee

Where did the summer go?!? After the extremely hot summer days the cooler fall weather is inviting. The kiddos return to school and lives settle back into routines. Hopefully taking time to worship is part of the normal routine. Not only on Sunday morning but throughout the week.

Daily devotion is part of my normal routine now. Reading the Upper Room with my morning iced coffee (yup I'm an iced coffee lover even in the winter). The devotions for each day are written by people like you and me. Based on a scripture that has inspired them and usually the author adds a personal experience. I find that starting my day with this simple 2-5 minute routine gives me a positive start to the day and a scripture to think about throughout the day.

Prayer, Singing are easy ways to worship as well. Each day before you pick up that smart phone say a prayer for someone, say the Lord's Prayer or recite a scripture. Maybe sing a verse or two from a favorite hymn throughout your day. These simple acts can change your outlook on the day.

The Worship Committee will be meeting on Sunday September 20 after service to start planning for Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas! More updates to come post that meeting.

We are always looking for volunteers to be Acolytes, Bell Ringers, Greeters/Ushers. The sign up clipboards are available for you to sign up on the Sundays that work best in you.

Also in the coming months be on the lookout for the 2027 Vigil Light sign up. For those who are new to worship each month one can sign up to sponsor the light that is located on the organ. It can be in memory, honor or celebration for that month via a free will donation. The light is lit 24/7.

Until I see you on Sunday
Peace in your Journey

THE
**UPPER
ROOM**
DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE



Sunday School Update

Stephanie Labadie & David Richards
Co-Superintendents

Hello everyone!

The 2026-2027 Sunday School program begins on Sunday, September 13th with our first lesson during Worship Service, directly following Children's Time.

In the third installment of Cokesbury's Celebrate Wonder one-room, all-ages curriculum, all youth are welcome to participate! Each lesson will be based on a Bible story, and include crafts, games, and other hands-on projects.

Older youth may act as teaching assistants to help younger children complete lesson activities, or may take on a more formal role as a member of one of our teaching teams - please speak to Stephanie or David about joining a team if interested!

Thank you to our wonderful volunteer instructors who will be leading our lessons this year! We'll meet briefly with our teaching teams following service on September 13th at 11:30am. Please plan to be there if you can!

See you in Church!

Sunday School
Rally Day

13 SEPTEMBER



SPRC

Brock Labadie
Chair

Church family and friends,

As we move into the fall season, SPRC is beginning to prepare for our upcoming Church Conference. SPRC will be attending to several areas of ministry, including:

- Preparing the necessary materials and reports for our fall Church Conference.
- Reviewing staff roles and responsibilities to ensure they continue to serve the needs of our congregation.
- Beginning conversations about personnel priorities and needs for the coming year.

As we prepare for the Church Conference and the year ahead, we are grateful for the many people who faithfully give of their time, gifts, and energy to make our church's ministry possible. We look forward to the opportunities God will place before us in the coming year.





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.

August was a busy month at SFP. We currently have 5 families in the program totaling 6 adults, 4 teenagers and 3 younger children. One family transitioned out of the program to live with family members and is doing well and another family in the program was notified they were approved for housing. They have now completed their paperwork and are waiting for available housing. We're all hoping something becomes available soon as they have done a great job in the program.

SFP also had their annual "Back to School Bash" on August 22, providing school supplies, backpacks, and gift cards for clothing to the children both currently in the program and our past families. It gets bigger every year!

Our team continues to provide dinners for families currently staying at the Joshua House. Families now prepare their own meals on Wednesday and Saturday evenings, using leftovers on Wednesdays. Our responsibility is to provide meals on Thursdays and Fridays during our assigned weeks, while our partner, Temple Israel, will cover Sundays through Tuesdays. We provided meals on August 14 and 15 and our remaining dates for 2026 are:

November 12 & 13
December 31 & January 1

Thank you to everyone who has supported this outreach this year!

If you are interested in supporting this meaningful outreach, please contact me @ 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 is preparing to begin its seventeenth school year, continuing a legacy of serving local children and families. Where has the time gone? The program remains strong thanks to the unwavering dedication of its volunteers and the generosity of the community, who consistently contribute both cash and food donations.

Sadly, food insecurity persists as a critical issue in the United States. An estimated one out of every six children in New Hampshire faces food insecurity, with many experiencing hunger daily. I find that statistic both shocking and heartbreaking. No child should have to go to bed hungry, especially in a country blessed with such abundant wealth and resources. We will continue to help as many children as possible through this program, feeding them so they can thrive and learn the way they should.

Reflecting on the impact of the program, a note received from a grateful parent in the early years continues to inspire me. The parent wrote, "It's not just the food you provide, but the knowledge that someone cares enough about us to keep providing it week after week that gives me hope." This message serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of our mission. Together, let us continue to bring the light and hope of Jesus to the Portsmouth community.





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

Sue Lange
100 Hahnemann Trail
Apt 150
Pittsford, NY 14534



Coffee Hour Update

Yvonne Griffin
Coordinator

Hello Family and Friends,

If you haven't stayed for Coffee Hour after worship, you're missing an important part of the continued energy and spirit of our Sunday morning together. The love, hugs, smiles, laughter and conversations continue long after the final hymn, creating a wonderful sense of community and reminding us that we all have different gifts and talents to share in glorifying God.

A special thank-you goes out to all of our Coffee Hour Angels who make this time together possible each Sunday. Their generosity, time and willingness to serve give all of us a chance to gather, connect and enjoy a little fellowship after worship.

The next time you're at Coffee Hour, take a moment to thank one of our Coffee Hour Angels and consider making a donation to help keep it going. And, of course, we are always looking for more volunteers! If you would like to join the Coffee Hour team, please reach out to me at yvonnegriffin217@comcast.net or 603.531.4514.

Come for worship. Stay for Coffee Hour. You just might leave with a fuller heart and a few more hugs than you came with!





PUMPKIN PATCH UPDATE

Sue Richards
Chair

It's hard to believe that our lawn turns orange at the end of the month!!

We have **lots of volunteer opportunities for almost all ages and physical abilities** and it "takes a village" to make it happen. Please spread the word to family and friends and especially on social media. You can sign up online, after church on Sundays, by texting/calling me at 603-749-4169 or emailing me at mksrichards@comcast.net.

Saturday, Sept. 19 from 9 a.m. until noonish: Help move pallets onto the lawn and/or put up signs.

Saturdays, Sept. 26 and Oct. 17 from 10:30 until early afternoon: 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.

Daily from Saturday, Sept. 26 - Friday, Oct. 31:

-Sign up to help finalize customer purchases in the Booth. New volunteers will work with an experienced person who will show you how easy and fun it is...and how happy our customers are! We have heard many times that people wait until we open and only buy from us because they love how much we help our community!

-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.)

On Tuesdays (starting Sept. 29) and Fridays (ending Oct. 30) from 9 a.m. - Noonish: Come be part of our Pie Team to make and bake yummy pies to sell. No experience needed!

Sun., Nov. 1 around 11:30ish: Come help move pallets off the lawn and/or take signs down.

Any amount of help is greatly appreciated! Thanks for your continued support.

Love and Hugs, 😊 Sue Richards, Grateful Pumpkin Patch Coordinator



I GOT BRIDGED

An invitation for everyone to come and enjoy the comedy night and auction - September 18th from 6 PM - 9 PM - Portsmouth Elks Lodge.



★ Hosted by ★



\$25,000 WORTH OF AUCTION ITEMS!



SEPTEMBER 18, 2026



PORTSMOUTH ELKS LODGE

COMEDY PLUS & APOLLO

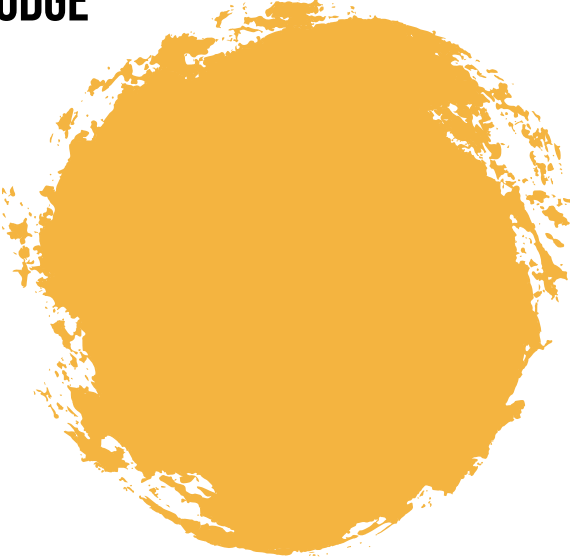


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SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

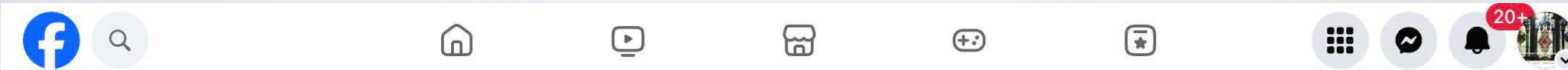


3 Nancy Chesser
7 PennySue Orr
13 Veronica Bennett
24 James Batten
27 Kellie Langs
29 Dianne Crisp

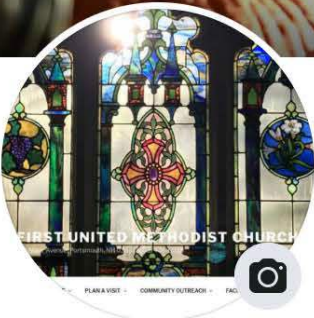
6 Kellie & Steve Langs
7 Melanie & Mike Lindgren
14 David & Carol Bovee

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!



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.

- 9/13 - Sunday School RALLY DAY!
- 9/19 - Pumpkin Patch setup @ 9 am
- 9/20 - Worship Committee meeting after worship service
- 9/26 - Pumpkin Patch delivery @ 10:30 am
- 10/17 - Pumpkin Patch second delivery @ 10:30 am
- 11/10 - Church Conference

 FIRST UMC WORSHIP SCHEDULE
September 2026

DATE	LITURGIST	ACOLYTES	9:55 BELL RINGERS	GREETERS & USHERS	FACEBOOK LIVE	WORSHIP TECH	SOUND TECH	COFFEE HOUR
9/6/26	D. Golt	K. Fickenscher	Will & Rosie	R. Groff H. Groff	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	S. Olbricht S. Holman
9/13/26 Rally Day	M. Giandomenico	D. Thompson	T. Thompson	K. Conley J. Conley	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	R. Buswell D. Richards
9/20/26	R. Groff	Maria Norah	Dominic	Langs Family	S. Labadie	S. Richards	D. Richards	J. Berry S. Beckert
9/27/26	D. McMillion	Sillanpaa Family	Sillanpaa Family	A. Coffey M. Coffey	S. Richards	S. Scott	D. Richards	J. Lima 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 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.

THANK YOU FROM THE PORTSMOUTH YOUNG PEOPLES AA GROUP

Tuesday August 25th, 2026

Greetings,

This is Cullen C.
of Portsmouth Young Peoples
meeting on tuesdays. Thank
you for allowing to host
our meeting in your church
space to have our meetings.
It's very beneficial for
the young people in our
area to get sober.

Enclosed in this Envelope
is \$300 cash for the rent that
is due at the end of August.
This is the rent for September,
October, and November of
2026.

If you have any further
questions or concerns
you are welcome to call
or text me at this
number (207) 351-6904.

Best Regards,

- Cullen C.

RECOVERY CHURCH - PORTSMOUTH THREE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

What an incredible evening celebrating the Recovery Church 3 year anniversary on August 26th. Over 295 people came to celebrate with food, message, song and games. Thank you to all those who helped make this happen to include the Recovery Kitchen who made all the incredible food.

Recovery Church happens every Wednesday night with a dinner at 6pm and service at 7pm - come and be part of it...all are welcome!





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.