Wishing you and your loved ones a Thanksgiving filled with blessings, love, and gratitude.

FIRST UMC PORTSMOUTH

NOVEMBER BEACON

2026



From the Pastor's desk

Pastor Larry Holman
PastorLarryHolman@gmail.com

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

And just like that – October has come and gone. By the time you read this, the FUMC Pumpkin Patch will be closed again; but not before having had another very successful year. Thank you to Sue Richards for her leadership of this very important fundraiser and community ministry outreach. Thank you also to all those who worked very hard helping friends, families and community supporters find their perfect pumpkins and gourds. I know everyone who stopped in was met with smiling faces and helping hands from our volunteers. The pumpkin patch is so much more than a fundraiser. It is truly a community ministry as it brings families together to share some fun time and make memories with each other as they wander around the patch and take family pictures in the big pumpkin photo stand. Commercial businesses also stop here to purchase pumpkins used in their business because they know the money is used for supporting the ministries of the church rather than going into a corporate pocketbook. The funds from our sales help pay our mission shares; which in turn, enable the greater Methodist Church to support ministry projects and serve those in need both locally and globally. The love and hard work that goes into the pumpkin patch finds its way back into the world in so many ways. It is truly a blessing.

As we begin November, we celebrate and give thanks for the lives of those saints who have passed since our last church conference season with All Saints Day on November 1. As a community of faith, we come together to share our grief, our love and our memories of those who have walked with us in both our life and our faith journey and who now rest in the loving presence of God. What saint has made an impact in your life?

On November 10 we will be hosting the six churches that make up the "Oceanside Cooperative Parish" for a combined church conference. The churches are: Portsmouth First United, Rochester First United, St. John's (Dover), Rochester Bethany, Hampton UMC, and Greenland UMC. The evening will start with a light meal at 5:30pm and at 6:30pm the church conference will begin. I encourage you to attend for two reasons. First, this is your opportunity to vote on important matters of your church, such as: pastor's compensation, 2027 budget, 2027 nominations for leadership positions and the affirmation of those in the Lay Servant Ministries program. Secondly, this will be a great opportunity to meet with others from our United Methodist Cooperative Parish Connection.



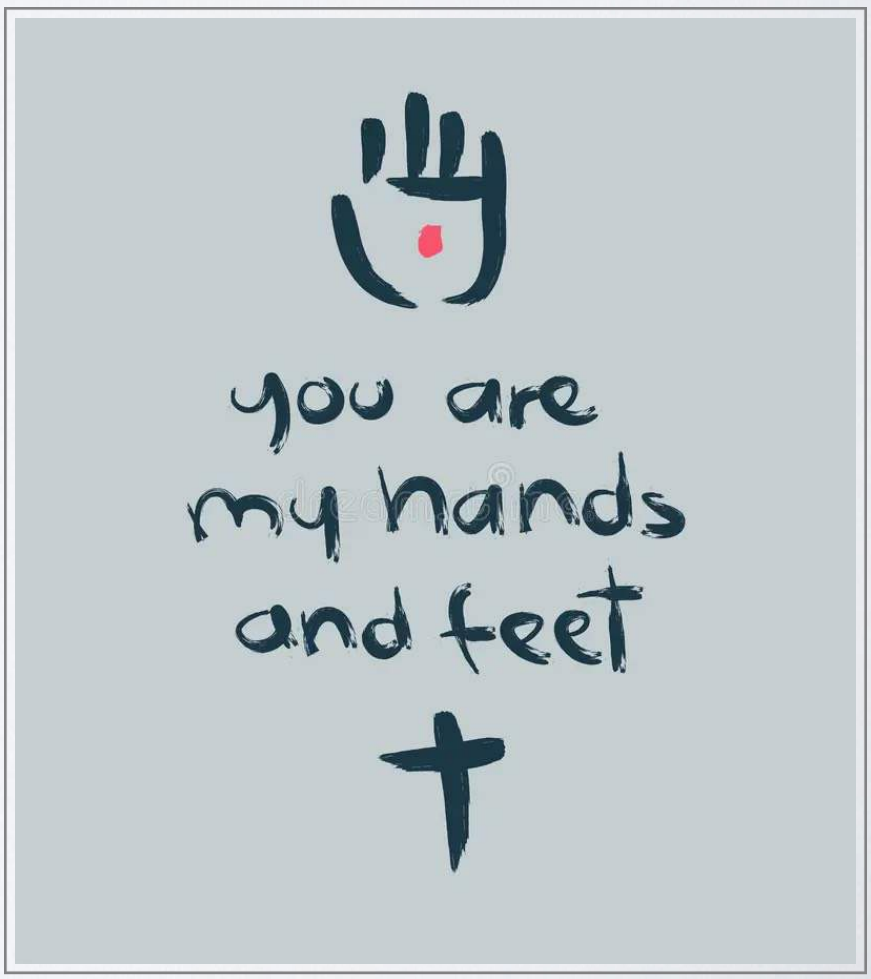
From the Pastor's desk [continued]

Pastor Larry Holman
PastorLarryHolman@gmail.com

As we look ahead to the end of the month, the season of Advent will begin on Sunday, November 29. We will start an Advent study based on the book "Voices Of Advent" by Matthew Skinner beginning that day and it will run for four weeks. Tentative class time will be 11:30am – 1pm. Signups will be available shortly.

Lastly, I wanted to thank everyone for the words of support during the recent pastor appreciation day. Thank you also to Brock Labadie, your Chairperson of SPRC, for the support and sharing of my work during worship on pastor appreciation day. The past four months have passed very quickly since being assigned to FUMC in July. As Brock mentioned, a pastor never only works on Sunday. There are also church meetings, mentor meetings, Cooperative Parish leadership meetings, liturgical research, newsletter articles, administrative reports, continuing education, sermon planning and writing, and handling any special or emergency requests for pastoral visits or support that comes up that has to be done as well. Sometimes, it can be a real challenge to funnel all of that into a time constraint of a half time position. So I want to thank you now, again, for your continued grace and support as we journey together in ministry. As we strive together to be the hands and feet of Jesus in this world so that others may come to know Jesus and be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into the people that God calls them to be.

Peace and blessings my friends. Pastor Larry

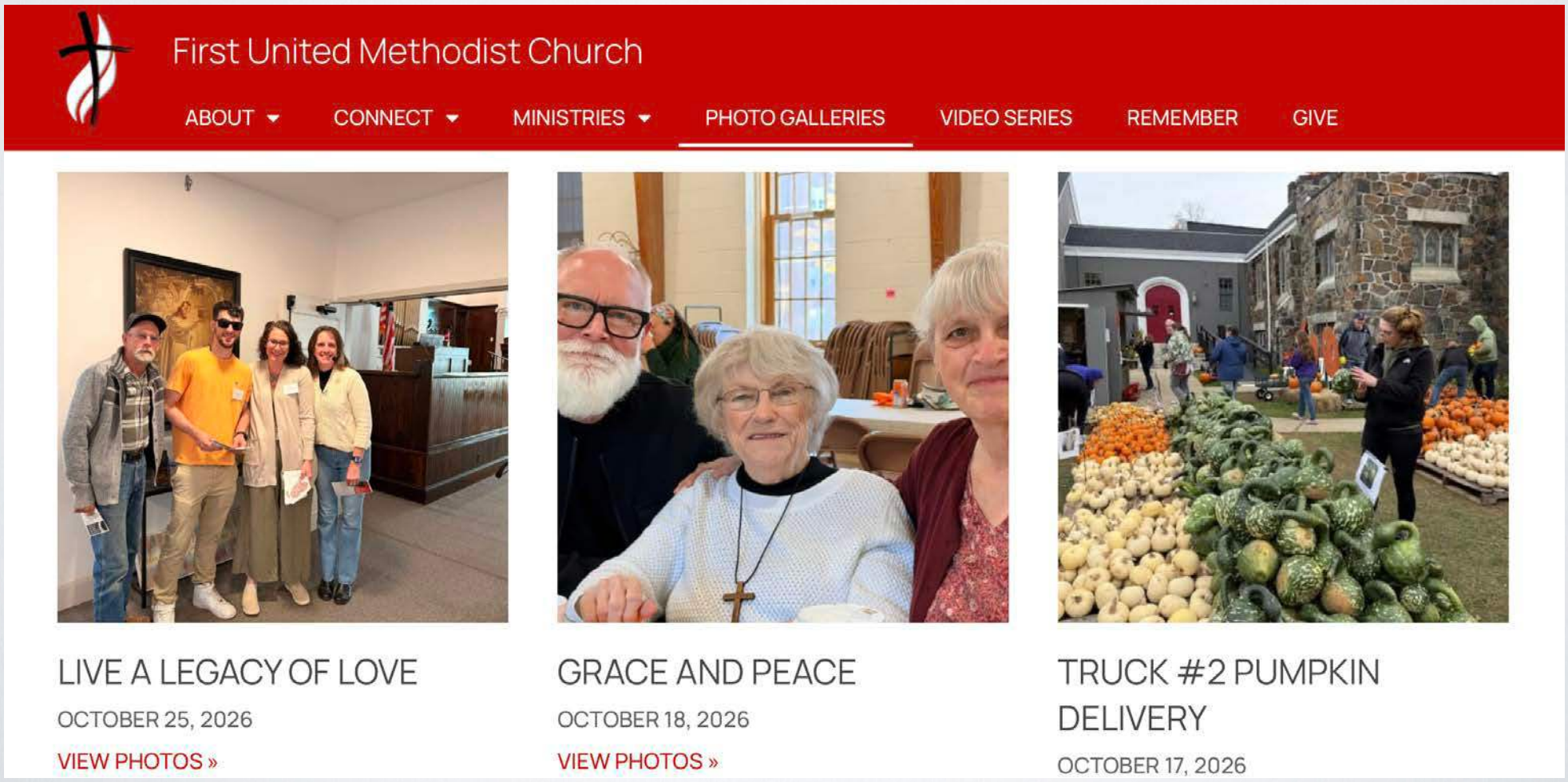


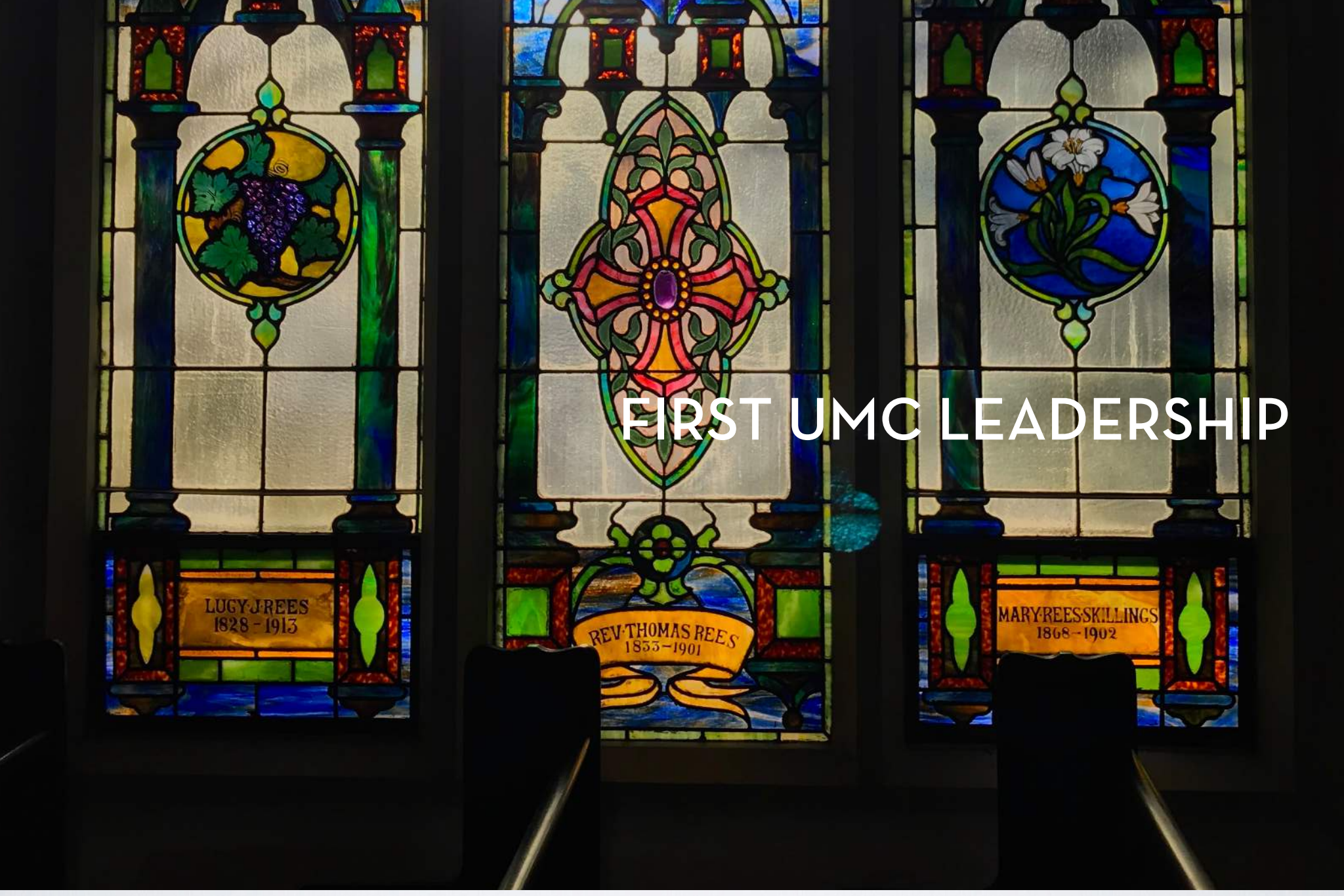


FIRST UMC LIFE

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/





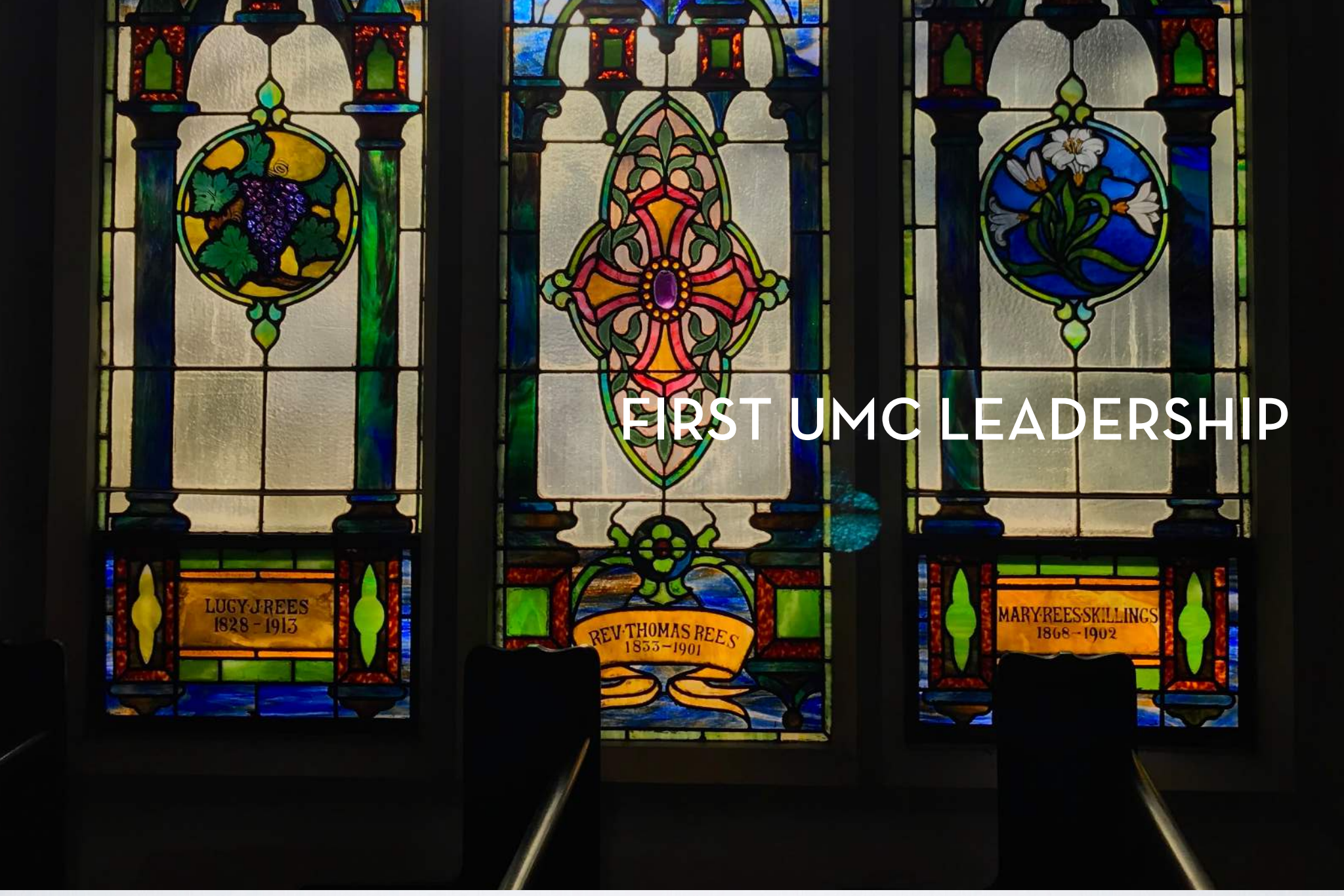
FIRST UMC LEADERSHIP

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: Airial Sillanpaa
Financial Secretary : Jen Berry
Church Treasurer: Linda Reiber
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 (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)
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!

Faith, Finances, and a Little Chili

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” — Galatians 6:9 (NIV)

Our annual Church Conference is coming up on November 11 at 6:30 p.m., and everyone is invited! We'll gather in Sanborn Hall at 5:30pm for chili, sandwiches, and fellowship with members of our neighboring churches and church leadership. It's a wonderful opportunity to catch up with familiar faces, make a few new acquaintances, and enjoy some good food before getting down to church business.

And speaking of church business, let's talk about everyone's favorite subject: the budget.

The Finance Committee has completed its work on the proposed 2027 budget. Unfortunately, have not discovered a way to convince Eversource to accept prayers in lieu of payment. We are proposing a deficit budget for 2027.

As you may recall we approved a deficit budget last year. Yet here we are, still worshiping, paying a wonderful staff that deserves to be compensated, and somehow still paying the electric bill. However, a deficit budget deserves serious attention, thoughtful stewardship, and a willingness to consider how we can strengthen our church's financial future. The faith of this church has shown, it is not a declaration of impending doom.

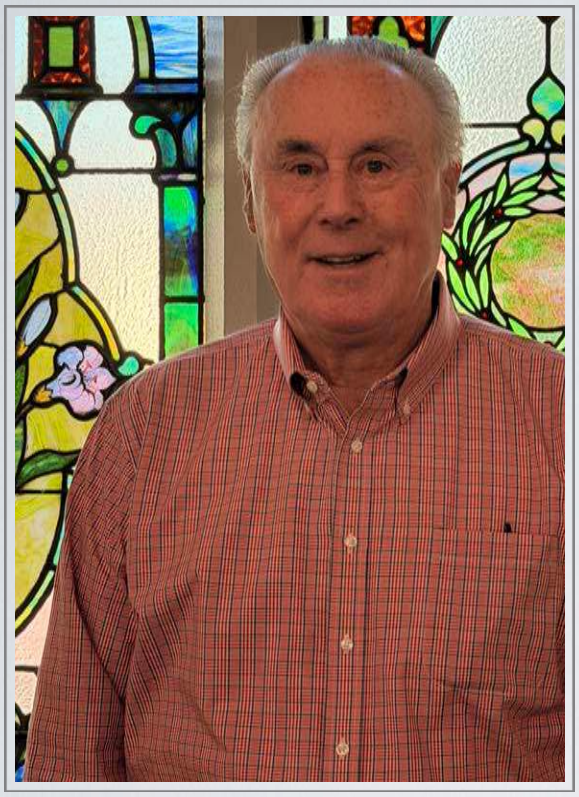
I'm happy to provide a copy of the proposed budget to any interested congregation member before Conference. I'd much rather answer questions ahead of time than have anyone spend the Conference worried that we're about to sell the pews. I can be reached at 603-969-1705, garyairial@aol.com or please approach me anytime at church.

Money is an important part of stewardship, but it is certainly not the only part.

One of our greatest needs as we look toward 2027 is continued participation in church leadership and fundraising efforts. Committees are how much of the work of the church gets done, and that work cannot continually fall to the same handful of people. We need people willing to contribute ideas, take responsibility, and follow through. There is no shortage of things that someone ought to do. What we could use are a few more people willing to be that someone.

I hope you'll join us on November 11. Please see me, or Pastor Larry if you would like to attend but transportation is a barrier.

Conversations surrounding finances aren’t always easy, although a good bowl of chili certainly makes discussing them more pleasant.



Trustee Update

Mike Coffey
Chair, Trustee Committee

Church Family and Friends

It's hard to believe November is already here! October was relatively quiet around the Church, with just a handful of maintenance issues that needed attention.

Once again, our thanks go to Gary Sillanpaa for coming to the rescue to repair a leak in the Sanctuary roof. Gary replaced a shingle loosened during the last windstorm and, while making the repair, discovered and sealed a crack in the copper flashing.

As mentioned in the October Beacon, the kitchen dishwasher was on its last legs. The Trustees voted to replace it, and we thank Wayne Rasch for removing the old unit and installing the new one. The dishes have never looked cleaner!

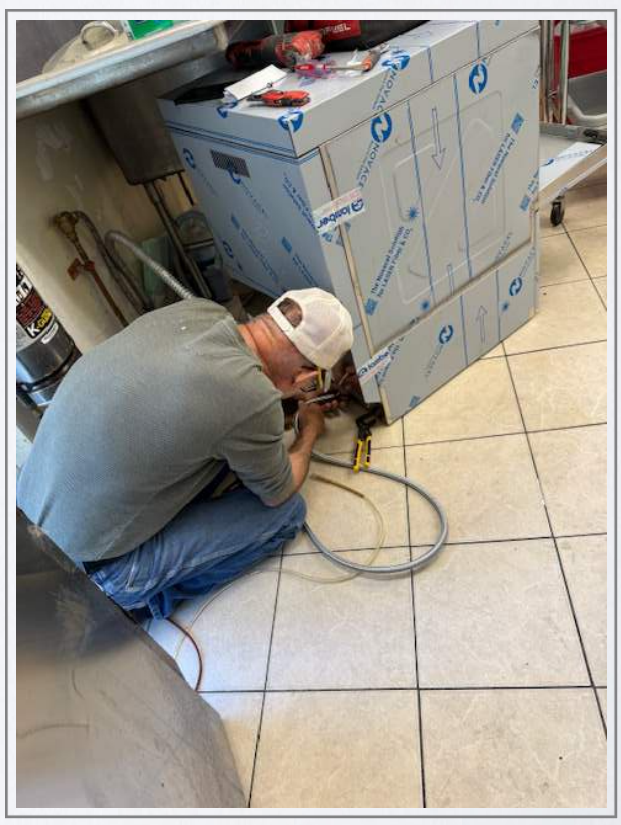
The water heater in the upstairs bathroom also developed a leak, requiring repairs by Jim Golter Plumbing. Thank you to Dave Richards for securing the unit until repairs could be made.

Sue Richards brought to our attention that the stove's pilot lights were not working properly. A technician has been called in to address the issue.

Finally, as we head into the colder months, a friendly reminder to everyone to use extra caution around the Church grounds. Frost and changing temperatures can quickly create slippery surfaces.

Thank you to everyone who helps keep our Church safe, welcoming, and running smoothly!







Worship Committee Update

PennySue Orr
Chair, Worship Committee

Happy November my beautiful church family

We begin this season of Thanksgiving with the remembrance of our church members who passed since last All Saints' Sunday. On November 1st we will remember Perry McKinney, David Brown, Barbara Glidden, Donald Twombly and Catherine VanReenen.

Each week from November 1-22 we are encouraging everyone to bring in nonperishable food items (no glass containers please) for the Salvation Army Food Bank. A display will be started in the altar area with the items that are donated. Let's make this a mountain of Thanksgiving!

Preparations are underway for the Advent season which will be here before we know it. On November 22 after church the Worship committee members will be decorating the sanctuary and EVERYONE is encouraged to help!

It's CLIPBOARD time! Beginning November 1st, I will be circulating with the Liturgist and Acolyte sign ups as well as the Vigil Light for 2027. Anyone can be a liturgist or acolyte. In January 2027 I will be offering a brief training for these duties as well as ushers/communion assistants. Whether you are a seasoned pro or a rookie, I encourage you to attend a session.

As a reminder the Vigil light can be sponsored for a month (free will donation) in memory or honor of someone. The light burns 24/7.

As always do not forget to fill out a Red Heart for joys and concerns each week.

May you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving season. Remember to thank GOD everyday for all the blessings you have been given.





Sunday School Update

Stephanie Labadie & David Richards
Co-Superintendents

Hello everyone!

Throughout October we completed our exploration of FAITH through the stories of Abraham and Sarah who finally celebrated the birth of their long-awaited son Isaac when God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled, and onto the next generation when Isaac and Rebekah welcomed twin sons Esau and Jacob who would grow Abraham's descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. At the end of the unit, our students worked together to create a handmade blanket that was delivered to a member of Recovery Church to lift their spirits during a hospital stay.

In November we will explore God's BLESSING of Esau and Jacob and their family at different points in their lives, as we remember to slow down, pay attention, and recognize when God is leading us and showing us a new way.





SPRC

Brock Labadie
Chair

Church family and friends,

SPRC met with DS David Palmer earlier this month to perform the parsonage inspection, reviewed church forms and discussed the church conference.

We shared how thankful and appreciative of Pastor Larry and all that he contributes to FUMC as we celebrate pastor appreciation month, and we're proud of how much we've accomplished this year.

We're looking forward to a new style of church conference where we will host many other nearby churches and learn how we might collaborate to help our communities together.





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.

SPF 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

Seacoast Family Promise®









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

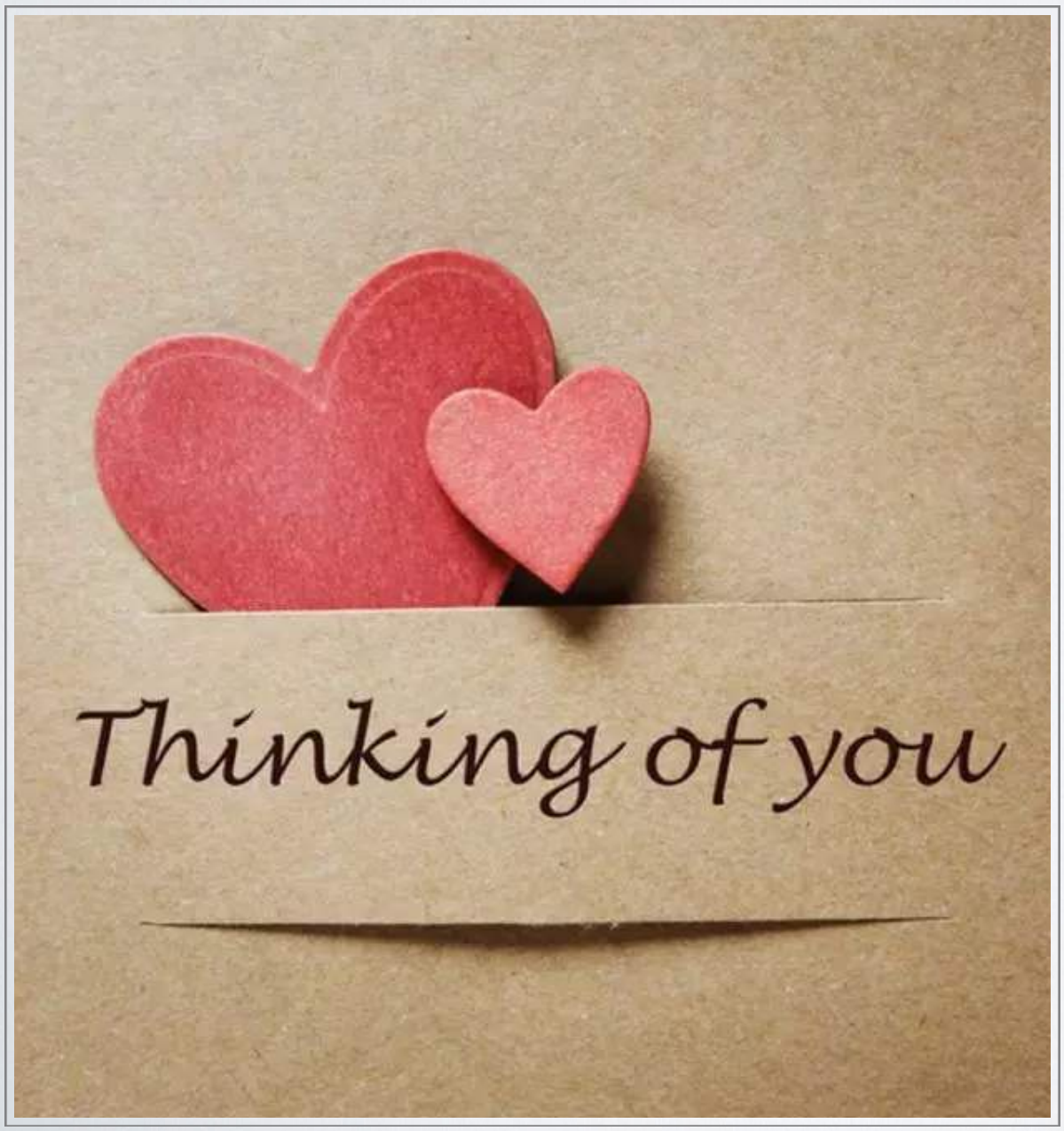
Marilyn Stebbins
Chair

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.



Jane Richards
1131 Washington Road
Rye, NH 03870

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 to everyone!

The coffee hour sessions appear to be going nicely and I am happy with the responses we have received.

If anyone is thinking they would like to join us as a "Coffee Hour Angel" please either email me: yvonnegriffin217@comcast.net or call me @ 603-433-2612. We can use all the help we can get. There are Sundays when team members are on vacation or not feeling well or recovering from surgery. Extras that could be called to assist would really be nice. Just helping out would be a BIG HELP! Let me know if this is something you would be willing to do.

To all my current team members: THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR WONDERFUL OFFERINGS TO COFFEE HOUR!





PUMPKIN PATCH UPDATE

Sue RIchards
Chair

Hello Church!
We have had another successful Pumpkin Patch thanks to church and community volunteers! Final figures will be known in early November.

Frozen Thanksgiving “Take’n’Bake” Pies can be ordered on the Sunday signup sheet or by talking with or texting Sue Richards at 603-749-4169. Apple, Blueberry, Cherry and Pumpkin are $20.00 and Pecan is $22.00. Pick up dates are on Sundays 11/15 and 11/22 from 11:30-12:30; and Wednesdays 11/18 and 11/25 from 10-2. Cash, check, card (including Apple Pay or Google Pay), and Venmo are accepted.











THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THE PUMPKIN PATCH ANOTHER HUGE SUCCESS!










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.

11/10 - Church Conference - 5:30 reception - Conference @ 6:30 in Sanborn Hall

11/17 - Church Council @ 6:30 pm at parsonage

11/22 - Greening of the Church

12/1 - Finance Meeting at the parsonage

FIRST UMC WORSHIP SCHEDULE

November 2026

DATE	LITURGIST	ACOLYTES	9:55 BELL RINGERS	GREETERS & USHERS	FACEBOOK LIVE	WORSHIP TECH	SOUND TECH	SUNDAY SCHOOL	COFFEE HOUR
11/1/26	PS. Orr	Daphne/Jack	TBD	Langs Family	S. Richards	S. Scott	B. Labadie	D. Richards, S. Labadie, M.	D. Richards J. Lima
11/8/26	R. Buswell	D. Richards	TBD	R. Groff H. Groff	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	J. VanReenen, M. Arcadipane, P. Larry	S. Beckert, D. Pierce, PS. Orr
11/15/26	N. Chesser	Dominic	TBD	VanReenen/ Arcadipane Families	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	K. Langs A. Langs	J. Berry R. Buswell
11/22/26	S. Beckert	PS. Orr	TBD	M. Stebbins W. Rasch	S. Richards	S. Scott	S. Sarosiek	D. Richards, S. Labadie, M. Verill	R. Groff H. Groff
11/29/26	C. West	E. Pierce	TBD	M. Giandomenico S. Beckert	S. Richards	S. Scott	D. Richards	J. Berry, H. Groff, M. Stebbins	S. Holman Y. Griffin

RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

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.

YOU ARE INVITED!

Sign up to show everyone your amazing talent or come for the entertainment on November er 7th at 6pm in Sanborn Hall.




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.