



For I KNOW the plans
I HAVE for you...
plans to give you
HOPE
and a
FUTURE

July 21, 2019
FUMC Portsmouth, NH

We Gather for Worship

Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light

Gratitude Moments

***Call to Worship**

L: You call us to be here today, God.

P: We have come to worship our God.

L: Sometimes we don't hear what it is you are telling us.

P: Help us to listen and seek your word for us.

***Hymn:** "We Are Called" TFWS #2172

A Time for the Child in all of Us

Prayer (unison)

Patient God, there are times when you call us to a task, to some kind of ministry in your name. Yet, we may ignore it or are too busy to notice. Other times we decide that we feel inadequate to do the work you ask us to do. Today we seek to recognize your call in our lives. Help us to trust you and to follow your direction as we strive to be faithful disciples who continue the work of Jesus in our world. Amen.

Sung Response: "I Love You, Lord" TFWS #2068

Ministry of Music

We Proclaim the Word

Reading the Word: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 4:1-11

L: The Word of God for the People of God.

P: Thanks be to God.

Message: "Defiant Prophet"

We Respond to God's Word

***Hymn:** "Trust and Obey" UMH #467

We Respond to God's Word

Prayers of the People

Silent Prayer and Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not in temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

***Doxology:** (*Please join in singing the following:*) UMH #94
Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***Prayer of Dedication** (unison)

Giving God, we offer these gifts out of our abundance, asking that you would use them to help others and to make a difference to those who most need them. Amen.

We Go Forth to Serve

***Hymn:** "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations" UMH #569

***Choral Benediction** (*Congregation encircles the Sanctuary*)

May the Lord, gracious God bless and keep you forever. Grant you peace, perfect peace, courage in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and seek His face, and His grace forever. May the Lord, mighty God bless and keep you forever.

***Pastor's Charge**

Postlude

**Please stand as you are comfortable*

*TFWS = The Faith We Sing UMH = United Methodist Hymnal
Large print bulletins are available from the greeters*

Welcome!

Whether you are joining us for worship for the first time or after many years of attending here at First UMC, we want you to know that you are welcome!

We are an inclusive community that invites everyone to be part of our church fellowship. Thank you for being here, and we hope that you have had a meaningful experience of worshipping our God so you leave this place feeling that you have been blessed to be a blessing. Please join us again!

Rev. Deb Hanson



Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson
Pastor's Assistant - David Richards
Liturgist - Dave Richards
Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek
Acolyte - Marilyn Stebbins
Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal
Greeters _ VanReenen Family
Ushers - Al & Jan Cansdale
Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek
Worship Service Tech - Sue Richards
Photographer - Dave Atkinson

**Happy Birthday, to my Mom,
Sue Sarosiek**



WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER...

Gayle Gardei
Marion Collinshaw
Sue Goodhue
Hunter Pinkley
Sylvia Bartlett
Brian Thompson
Malia Broe
Gil Stebbins
Rev. Bill Gardei
Woodie Lange
Roseanne
Rev. David Kerr
Jim New
Bobbie Noble
Pastor Sue Ellery
Judy Doyon
Charles Gilman
Diederich Family
Our Church Family
Barbara & Jim Slater
Barbara Sylvester
Pauline Boynton
Barbara Millar
Irene Derosier
Barbara Clement
Joette MacKenzie
Vicky Fernandez
Alissa Fernandez
Jessie
John Richards
Dotty Prince
John Erickson
Maria Fernandez
Anne & Mike Coffey



UPCOMING EVENTS

Summer Sunday School

Sunday school will continue for the summer. The children will be watching DVD's on the "Ten Commandments" as well as learning about some of the biblical stories we will be focusing on during our worship time. All are welcome, and if there are those who would be willing to give the regular teachers a break, even if it is for one Sunday, please let Rev. Deb know.

Church Council meeting on July 23, at 6 pm in the church office.

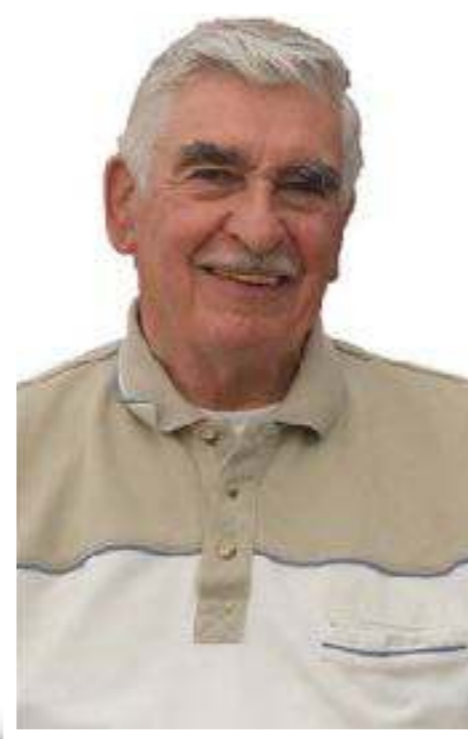
SPRC scheduled for July 28, 2019 will be rescheduled.

The **Finance Trustees** and **Church Council** will have a combined meeting on August 13, at 6 pm in the church office.

11th Annual Golf Tournament will be held on Weds., September 11 at Pease Golf Course. For more information check in the office or this month's Beacon.

Just a friendly reminder, please try to keep your pledge up to date so we can meet our financial obligations as a church. Thank you for your faithful giving!

CRASE (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events) will be held on Saturday 8/24; 10-12 at FUMC. The Portsmouth police department is conducting training for businesses, schools, churches, and community members for direction what they should do if confronted with an Active Shooter event. It provides strategies, guidance, and a plan. This is a church-wide training. All are encouraged to attend.



This past Saturday 7/20/19 we celebrated the life of Fred Pettigrew. Fred was many things... a husband, father, friend, realtor, serviceman, justice of the peace, lay leader, photographer, writer leaving lasting memories of an incredible loving man.

"Come With Me" is just one of his many writings that was shared while celebrating his life and his family wanted to share it with each and every one of you.

Come With Me by Fred Pettigrew

Come with me as we watch the sun rise from the sea
With its glowing promise of a new day

And come glide over a mountain lake at sunset
with all the day's glory reflected upon its glassy surface

Come out and sit with me here in this nightly cathedral
and lean back to look with awe at stars too numerous to count

Walk along with me through fields, woods, and country lanes
accompanied by song birds, squirrels, chipmunks, and butterflies

And, as we walk, smell the rich dark earth, fresh cut hay, wet
leaves, and the heady tang of pine and spruce

Feel the sun's warmth upon your face, the breezes in your hair,
and the ever changing path beneath your feet

Come hear the sound of rain pattering through leaves, the sigh of
wind through the pines, the bubbling chuckle of a brook, and the
rumble of thunder

Stand with me at the ocean's edge where waves curl and break
and gulls wheel and cry while dancing among sea breezes

And look far across sun sparkled waves where sky and water
meld to mist as together, we touch the hand of God



FUMC PORTSMOUTH A RECONCILING CONGREGATION

We, the congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, are dedicated in worshipping, learning, and serving with all people as we embrace Jesus Christ's message of love and acceptance. As a United Methodist Church we stand fully behind the statement "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors". 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.



New England Annual Conference Tri-State District

The Rev. Sudarshana Devadhar, Bishop

The Rev. James McPhee, District Superintendent

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

129 Miller Avenue - Portsmouth, NH 03801

Office Phone 603-436-6038 office@fumcportsmouth.net

Pastor office hours - Tuesday and Thursday 9 am - 12 pm

[call to ensure availability]

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Check out our website at www.fumcportsmouth.com

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SERMON TRANSCRIPT GIVEN BY
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

“A Defiant Prophet” – July 21, 2019
First UMC – Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

SCRIPTURE: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 4:1-11

THEME: God calls us to share our faith.

My husband, Dave, and I were married in February of 2006 while I was serving the Hampden Highlands UMC. When early spring rolled around, I was pretty confident that I wouldn't receive a call from a District Superintendent asking me to move that year, particularly since Dave and I were newlyweds and still adjusting to sharing life together. It didn't even cross my mind. One day in March, the phone rang, and the voice on the other end said, “Hi, Deb, this is Jan Davis.” I cheerfully said, “Hi” even though I was trying to search my mind about why I knew the name Jan Davis. Her next words were, “As you know . . .”

Suddenly, it dawned on me that I knew Jan's name because she was a District Superintendent. For the next few minutes, I didn't hear anything she had to say. Ultimately, she was asking me to move to southern Maine to serve two small churches that were being yoked. They were very different in personality and ministry: one was the Goodwins Mills UMC in farm country in the Lyman, Maine area, and the other was in West Kennebunk, which is part of the popular Kennebunk vacation area, made famous by the presence of the Bush family in Kennebunkport. Since I had grown up in farm country and also lived on Cape Cod for eleven years, the cabinet thought that I would have some background to work in both environments, as well as have effective ministry in both congregations, even though they both had issues to deal with.

After several weeks of talking first with Dave, then with the DS's (there were two), and being in prayer, I said I would move. But, I have to tell you, I was a little – maybe a lot – like Jonah. I didn't want to go. Of course, I didn't run away and jump aboard a ship to try to escape, and I wasn't thrown overboard because of a storm, swallowed by a big fish and spit out on the beach. But I did have some internal kicking and screaming going on.

Jonah was like that. God told him to go to Ninevah, the capitol of Assyria. Jonah's response was, “What? Are you kidding?” Ninevah was one of the most wicked cities around, and it wasn't even part of Israel. The residents were gentiles, and their armies had invaded Israel, killing many of the Israeli people, taking some of them into exile, and clearly, were enemies of Israel. Jonah, in his own mind apparently, was a prophet for Israel – NOT Assyria. He didn't want to go, so he ran away. However, after being thrown off the ship, swallowed by a very large fish, and spit out on the beach, Jonah reluctantly, and even defiantly, trudged to Ninevah.

According to the story, the city was SO big that it was a three-day walk. Jonah shuffled into the city, started walking, and as he trudged along, he hollered out only eight words, “Forty days more, and Ninevah shall be overthrown!” God would destroy the city and all that was in it, according to Jonah. Much to Jonah's surprise, the people, including the king, believed him and repented. They put on the symbols of repentance: sack-cloth and ashes and prayed that God would spare them, and God did.

Jonah had been successful! But he wasn't happy. In fact, he was mad! He stomped outside the city wall, plopped himself down on the ground at the corner of the wall and pouted. He was

miserable and even prayed to die. Even then, God was trying to take care of him and caused a gourd to spring up as a bush to provide shade for the unhappy prophet, but the next day, the bush died, and Jonah became even madder, continuing his lament and gripe. He was angry about the bush dying and he was angry that Ninevah had been spared.

Finally, God had enough. “Jonah, what does it matter to you what I decide to do. You were called to prophecy only, not to judge the people or decide what should be done to them or for them. And you didn’t cause the bush to grow or to die, so just get over yourself!” One commentator called it, “Jonah’s ‘stinginess of spirit.’” (*Janet Howe Gaines, found under the commentaries for this scripture passage at Text This Week*) In other words, human beings don’t decide who is worthy of God’s mercy; only God does that. God’s grace isn’t always fair, and God doesn’t always call us to do what we want to do, but God is gracious and offers a way to turn things around. We are followers of Jesus Christ, those whom God always calls to do what needs to be done in working for the Lord, and we need not be stingy in spirit toward those whom God offers grace and mercy.

Years ago, when I was going through the discernment part of trying to decide if God really was calling me to be a pastor, I visited with a very wise woman who had been a local pastor for many years. She told me that, whenever she was asked to move, be reappointed to a different church, she prayed and worked at discovering where God wanted her to minister in that congregation. She said that sometimes it took a while, but she knew that she had something to offer, and the congregation needed something she could do in her ministry. That came back to me as I began serving at Goodwins Mills and West Kennebunk.

There were times when I would describe the situation as schizophrenic because what I thought would work with one congregation didn’t, but when I tried it with the other congregation, it worked! I never knew how something would be received. And it was just like having two very different children, I had minister to them according to who they were, not who I thought they should be. It was not easy, but we persevered in spite of sometimes sitting under our own bush and pouting. God had a reason and a ministry for me to share with them, and that is what I tried to do in spite of the challenges Dave and I faced in his finding a job, finding time for our life together, learning what the two churches needed, and where to set boundaries, since I was half time in each church.

After about five years, things began to settle down, and we were growing spiritually, and somewhat in numbers. There was more outreach, as well as “inreach” (nurturing each other). At the end of the ten years I was there, I was able to retire, thanking God for leading me – leading us – to a new place where I would grow in my own faith journey, and the congregations would be healthy and stable when I left.

I’m very fortunate to be serving here where such powerful ministry is happening, even well before I arrived. I’m still learning, and I see places where we can continue to build on what we already have and places where we can grow spiritually as well as in numbers. We have opportunities here at First UMC for powerful ministry to continue, and I look forward to being part of it for as long God calls us to be together. When we keep our eyes on Christ, and recognize God’s presence, we will be in ministry for God.

Jonah teaches us that God is leading us, and God's grace is big enough for everyone, even us! Jonah teaches us that WE aren't really in charge, but we are God's prophets, priests, and servants who are carrying on the work of Christ in this area and beyond. Jonah teaches us to turn our eyes to God and let go of our own egos, our own judgmentalism, our own expectations, and align ourselves with the heart and mind of Christ. And Jonah teaches us to live our faith for all to see. One of my favorite sayings (which I have mentioned previously) is from St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel to all the world; use words if necessary."

Where is God calling us? Individually and as a church? As individuals, we may sometimes feel a nudge to do something, but push it aside and not consider it again. Or we may feel ill equipped to do whatever task we think God may be asking us to do. Maybe something has crossed our mind, but we didn't recognize it or take time to discern whether or not it was something God was telling us we could do. One person recently told me that she couldn't do much, but she could call people, send cards and pray for others. Her health has kept her at home most of the time, but she found a different way to be in ministry in the church and in serving God.

As a church, we have many things happening for a congregation this size, and we are always considering more about where God is calling us to serve. Maybe we can't do lots of things alone as individuals, and maybe we can't do lots of things as one church, but we can do something. Edward Everett Hale wrote: "*I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.*" (https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/8183.Edward_Everett_Hale)

Our ministry as children of God, as a church is a call to discover what we CAN do and follow God's guidance in accomplishing it. We can try to live as Christ asks us to live and learn to recognize those events and circumstances that don't reflect Christ to the world. Attitude is everything. Jonah's attitude was one of resentment and anger because things didn't go the way he wanted them to go.

By trusting God's wisdom and letting go of his need to have things "his way," he would have recognized that God's way was one of grace, acceptance, and mercy. It might be helpful even to ask ourselves where we feel resistance to God's call in our lives. Maybe, just maybe, by following through and moving through the resistance, we may discover that we are stronger in faith and blessed because of the perseverance, as I found when I moved to southern Maine.

The next time we feel like we want to run away from something God might be calling us to do, maybe we can stop, and ask, "Okay, God, what is it?" If we don't think we can do it, talk to others have been involved in a similar task, served on that committee, worked in the community wherever they were able, or whatever the opportunity may be. We might just find that the very thing we pushed so hard against doing was the very thing we are supposed to do. Opportunities abound! God calls us and doesn't just throw us into the fray and expects us to figure it out on our own. God goes with us and sends companions on the journey. We are not alone! Thanks be to God!

Let us pray: Jesus, our Teacher and Savior, you taught us to love our enemies and to be gracious and not stingy in spirit toward others. Help us to repay evil with good, to speak words of affirmation rather than retribution, and to offer kindness instead of spite. May we accept that call and not run away from it, and may we call on our brothers and sisters in our faith community to help us journey together. Lead us and guide us to discover where you call us into ministry to serve you in our world. Amen.

