



FUMC PORTSMOUTH A RECONCILING CONGREGATION

We, the congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, are dedicated to 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

Like and Follow Us On:   

With All Your Heart Lenten Series 2019

"Preparing"

**April 14, 2019
FUMC Portsmouth, NH**

We Gather for Worship

Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light

Celebrations

***Call to Worship**

L: Children of God, Rejoice! Sing out in celebration, God's people! Your King is coming to you, humble, riding on a donkey, on a donkey's foal.

ALL: Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one who comes in the Lord's name. Glory to God! Hosanna!

***Hymn:** "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" UMH #277
(Children process up the aisle with palm leaves)

A Time for the Child in all of Us

Prayer (unison)

Giver of light, your steadfast love endures forever. Open our hearts to the Blessed One who comes so humbly, on a borrowed colt. Open before us the gates of your justice, that we may enter, confessing in heaven and on earth that Jesus is Lord. Amen.

Sung Response

"Breathe on Me, Breath of God", v. 1 UMH #420

Ministry of Music

We Proclaim the Word

Reading the Word: Isaiah 45:4-9A; Philippians 2:5-11

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

P: Thanks be to God.

Message: "Preparing", Luke 19:28-40 Rev. Deb Hanson

We Respond to God's Word

***Hymn:** "At the Name of Jesus" UMH #168

Concerns and Joys

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!

***Prayer of Dedication** (unison)

As we offer our gifts this day, God of salvation, remind us that we are called not just to parades, but to serving in the streets; not just to waving palm branches, but offering our hands to those in need; not just to days of celebration, but into the hearts that suffer and cry out for help. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

We Go Forth to Serve

***Hymn:** "O How He Loves You and Me" TFWS #2108

***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*

UMH = United Methodist Hymnal TFWS = The Faith We Sing

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 - John VanReenen
- Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek
- Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal
- Acolyte - PennySue Orr
- Greeters - Marilyn Stebbins, Anne & Mike Coffey
- Ushers -Yvonne Griffin, Ken Young, Anne & Mike Coffey
- Sunday School - Children in Church
- Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek
- Worship Service Tech - Steve Scott
- Photographer - Dave Atkinson



Today's altar flowers are in thoughtful preparation and celebration of our Risen Savior.



"If you seek Me early and diligently, you will find Me."

Proverbs 8:17

Gayle Gardei
Marion Collishaw
Sue Goodhue
Hunter Pinkley
Sylvia Bartlett
Brian Thompson
Malia Broe
Gil Stebbins
Rev. Bill Gardei
Woodie Lange
Roseanne
Rev. David Kerr
Jim New
Kim Hishop

Barbara & Jim Slater
Barbara Sylvester
Pauline Boynton
Barbara Millar
Irene Derosier
Barbara Clement
Joette MacKenzie
Vicky Fernandez
Alissa Fernandez
Art Munson
Gabor [Brianna's father in-law]
Pastor Sue Ellery
Judy Doyon
Charles Gilman

Our Church Family

UPCOMING EVENTS

The combined **Finance Trustee/Church Council Meeting** meeting is on **4/16** at 6pm in the church.

April 18 Holy Thursday Pot Luck at 6 pm in Sanborn, followed by communion service. All are welcome.

April 19 Sanctuary open for Good Friday Prayers, 9:30 - 12:30. There is also an Ecumenical Service at 12 pm at St. John's Episcopal Church, 100 Chapel St., Portsmouth.

There will be a **Pampered Chef Party** held in Sanborn Hall on May 4th. Please contact Sue Sarosiek or Melanie Berry for more details.
ALL are welcome!

Thank You to all who contributed toward the Technology Vision. We have reached our goal for the TV Monitor!

GRATITUDE SUNDAY - MAY 5TH

Our [retiring] District Superintendent Jim McPhee will be joining us for Worship and Luncheon. Please mark your calendars to be part of the service.

Offering envelopes are available on the kitchen counter for those that would like them.



Our 40 DAY 40 ITEMS Lent Challenge is coming to a close on Easter Sunday. If you haven't already brought your bags in please do so next Sunday. You can bring the bags

into Sanborn Hall for collection. Your generous donations will be part of our "GIVE HOPE" community outreach to folks who can really use the help. Thank you!

SFP CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

**Monday, June 3rd at Pease
Golf Course...Open to all!**

Win a Subaru Assent courtesy of Exeter Subaru. Silent auction, games, history of golf hole special and more.

1 PM shotgun and includes dinner and silent auction. \$125 per golfer [includes cart]. Buffet dinner and your friends and family can join for \$25 each. Registration underway on seacoastfamilypromise.org



NEW CHALLENGE - THE SWING FOR SEACOAST CHALLENGE open to all area faith communities. Teams of four golfers...the faith community team that comes in first place will receive the SWING FOR SEACOAST trophy and a \$100 gift certificate to Cafe Nostimo.



SERMON GIVEN 4/14/19 BY
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

“Preparing” – 4/14/19 Palm Sunday
First UMC – Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 19:28-40

THEME: We walk with Jesus through Holy Week, beginning with the entrance into Jerusalem.

After World War II, New York City saw a number of ticker tape parades as they welcomed the troops home from the war. People lined the streets and cheered, and soldiers were reunited with their families. It was a huge celebration. This past February, people lined the streets of Boston to celebrate the Patriots winning the Super Bowl, and in October they lined the streets again to celebrate the Red Sox winning the World Series. In each instance, there was a sense of joy and triumph as the “heroes” moved through the streets.

Today’s lesson from Luke 19 tells of a parade where people lined the streets as Jesus rode a donkey into the Holy City of Jerusalem. His disciples placed their cloaks on the donkey and put Jesus there – something that kings would have been done for a king. Then they entered the city with shouts of joy and spread more cloaks on the ground as if to lay a red carpet for the incoming king. Excitement grew, and the crowds gathered, some came out of curiosity; some were there with hope that this was the start of a new king of Israel – the Messiah – who had finally arrived to take over and defeat the Roman occupiers; some had hope; some were suspicious and angry.

Even though this scene is in all four of the gospels, Luke’s version of Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem is a little different from the other gospels. There were no palm branches waving, only cloaks laid down, and apparently the disciples did all the announcing his arrival. There was symbolism of Jesus’ humility in the way he entered the city. It was a contrast to the usual entrance of someone in power.

Only a short time before, Pontius Pilate had arrived in Jerusalem, appointed by Caesar to keep the peace in Jerusalem and to squash the insurrectionists. Pilate would have arrived with a show of power and might, riding a mighty steed, and accompanied by an army of fully armored soldiers at his side. That parade would have been full of pomp and very showy so that the people would know that Pilate had arrived and was assuming his duties.

When Jesus arrived on a donkey, the people would also have recognized the meaning that a donkey was often used for a king who arrived in peace. The contrast between Pilate’s entrance and Jesus’ entrance is startling and, at least to us, obvious. Pilate arrived with a show of force; Jesus arrived in peace and with the knowledge that his entrance would certainly lead him to his death. In spite of the disciples and the crowd’s hopes for Jesus to be the warrior king who would come into Jerusalem to reclaim the city for Israel, Jesus would not be that kind of king. Jesus would disappoint them and shock them by being arrested and put to death in a vicious and heinous way. That week went downhill fast for those who saw Jesus as the answer to Israel being restored to full nation-hood.

We call this Holy Week, and we stand at the threshold of entering into the journey of Jesus’ last week of his life here on earth. In order to truly understand the depth of God’s love for us and the choice Jesus made to give his life for us, we must journey through this week. During this week before his death, Jesus spent as much time teaching the disciples as he could. They

probably were just waiting to see when he would make his move, but he never made the one that they expected. Instead, he angered (again) the temple leadership by cleansing the temple courtyard of the vendors who were selling animals for sacrifice. He celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples, but changed the words, confusing the disciples. At that last supper with them, he even encouraged Judas to hurry up and do what he was going to do in betraying Jesus.

After supper, they went to the Mount of Olives where Jesus could pray, and the disciples fell asleep. They just never really got who Jesus was or what he was doing. Even when he was arrested, Peter drew a sword, ready to fight, and Jesus told him to put it away because Jesus' way was one of peace, not violence. The nightmare for them continued when he was tried and crucified, and they were so terrified of being arrested, too, that they all ran and hid.

Some of us have been through nightmares in our lives, too. We have sat beside loved ones who were dying from some disease. The vigil is long, painful, and difficult. Or some have discovered that their child ran away from home, and the search became a desperate hope that the child would be found and returned eventually. Others have lost their jobs and spent months searching for something, anything. Any number of situations in our lives can put us on that journey to discouragement, loss, and despair.

Jesus' disciples really didn't know what they were headed for on that morning when they joyfully escorted him into the city of Jerusalem with shouts of "Blessed is the king who come in the name of the Lord!" (v. 58). Eventually they would realize that he had been raised from the dead, and they would be empowered to carry on his work in the world. It wasn't until the reality of the resurrection sank in that their discipleship came full circle, and they "got it!" They got the fact that Jesus' kingdom was not like the earthly ones that were always in danger of being overthrown – that is why Pilate was sent to Jerusalem, to ensure that Jerusalem would not be taken over by "those" Israelites. Rome's way of keeping peace was with imprisonment and death.

Jesus' way was one in which people experienced compassion, healing, and new life. Jesus overcame far more than the powerful human forces of this world; he overcame death itself. Jesus saw himself as the fulfillment of the prophets, and our Isaiah passage reminds us, that he, too, endured being struck and spit at, and disgraced. In the Philippians passage, Paul reminds us that Jesus humbled himself and God exalted him. Jesus persevered, and God prevailed, opening the door for the disciples to figure out and pick up the work that Jesus had begun, and they were supposed to carry on.

When we choose to follow Jesus, we may not always understand how God works through us to be his disciples in the world, but we, too, persevere in living for Jesus. Kate Matthews writes: *There is no "off-season" for being a follower of Jesus; it's an everyday thing, week in and week out, 24/7. Not just Sunday not just holy days and not just when we're in church or when we're praying. Being a Christian is an every-day, every-moment, all-of-our-live journey. Still, this week is Holy Week, which comes at the end of Lent, a season of conversion, of turning around, of re-orienting our lives toward God just in case we've slipped off course. (Kathryn Matthews in SAMUEL, found at Text This Week under commentaries for today's gospel lesson).* Holy Week is a type of preparation toward the resurrection.

The journey of living for Jesus means walking with him, not just during this week, but every day. It means regularly laying down the things that block our relationship with Christ and each other and pay attention to living for Christ. It's a journey with ups and downs, but it's one where we, the church, are called to faithfully carry on the work of Christ in the world. Our theme during this Lenten season has been "With all Your Heart," return to God with all our hearts, offer all our hearts to God, live with all our hearts in the ways that Jesus has taught us. There is a sort of symbolism in the disciples' laying down of the cloaks on Palm Sunday. Instead of lifting Palm branches, our Luke passage reminds us that we also need to lay down our cloaks. What are those cloaks? What do we need to lay down?

Maybe it is to “. . . lay down ways of living that do not honor God, our neighbor, and all life around us; to cry out for an end to injustice and suffering; to allow Christ to fill our lives with humility and new beginnings of hope. Maybe we also need to lay down the superficial cries of victory and triumph, or our expectations of how God will change us and our world; and look for the ways God will come into our lives to accomplish this. (Rev. Todd Pick commentary found in the UMC Board of Discipleship Worship series “With All Your Heart” for the 2019 Lenten Season, slightly edited.)

During this Holy Week, as we journey with Jesus, I encourage all of us to be part of the special events and services that are being offered. When Jesus carried his cross to Golgotha, he went down the “Via Dolorosa,” which means in Latin, “the Painful Way” or “the Way of Suffering.” The crowds again lined the streets, but this time, instead of a joyful parade, it was a way of derision and taunting. He took our place and carried our sins for us. His death meant that we can live as Easter people now, people who have hope, who offer hope, and who live with the joy of God's love in their hearts, a joy that is too good to keep to ourselves.

We, as the Church, live in a world that desperately wants and needs to hear that message of hope. Sometimes we speak it; other times we just live it. There is a poem called:

The Gospel According To You (taken from the poem by Leroy Brownlow)

There's a Gospel according to Matthew; To Mark;
To Luke; and John too.
There's another gospel that many are reading...
The Gospel according to You.

But the sermon most likely to influence others
Is the Gospel according to You.
They are reading the book you are writing...
You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day;

By things that you do; By things you say.
Others read that gospel, whether faithless or true!
Say! What is the Gospel According To You?

(Zoe <https://zoekdlee.wordpress.com/2013/10/17/the-gospel-according-to-you-taken-from-the-poem-by-leroy-brownlow/> -found at this web site)

This is a week of journeying, of preparing ourselves to welcome the joy of Easter, even though we must move through the valleys to get there. Together, as the family of God, we line the

parade route into Jerusalem as Jesus enters, throw down our cloaks, move through this week of challenges, and travel down the Via Dolorosa to the cross. Together, we support each other, care for each other, reach out to those around us to offer hope, and next Sunday, we will celebrate that Jesus is alive! Thank you for being on this journey!

I invite you to turn in your United Methodist Hymnals to the prayer at number 281 as we pray this together:

Almighty, God, you sent your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to suffer death on the cross.

Grant that we may share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

One God, now and ever. Amen.