



WHO  
WE ARE

## 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](mailto:office@fumcportsmouth.net)

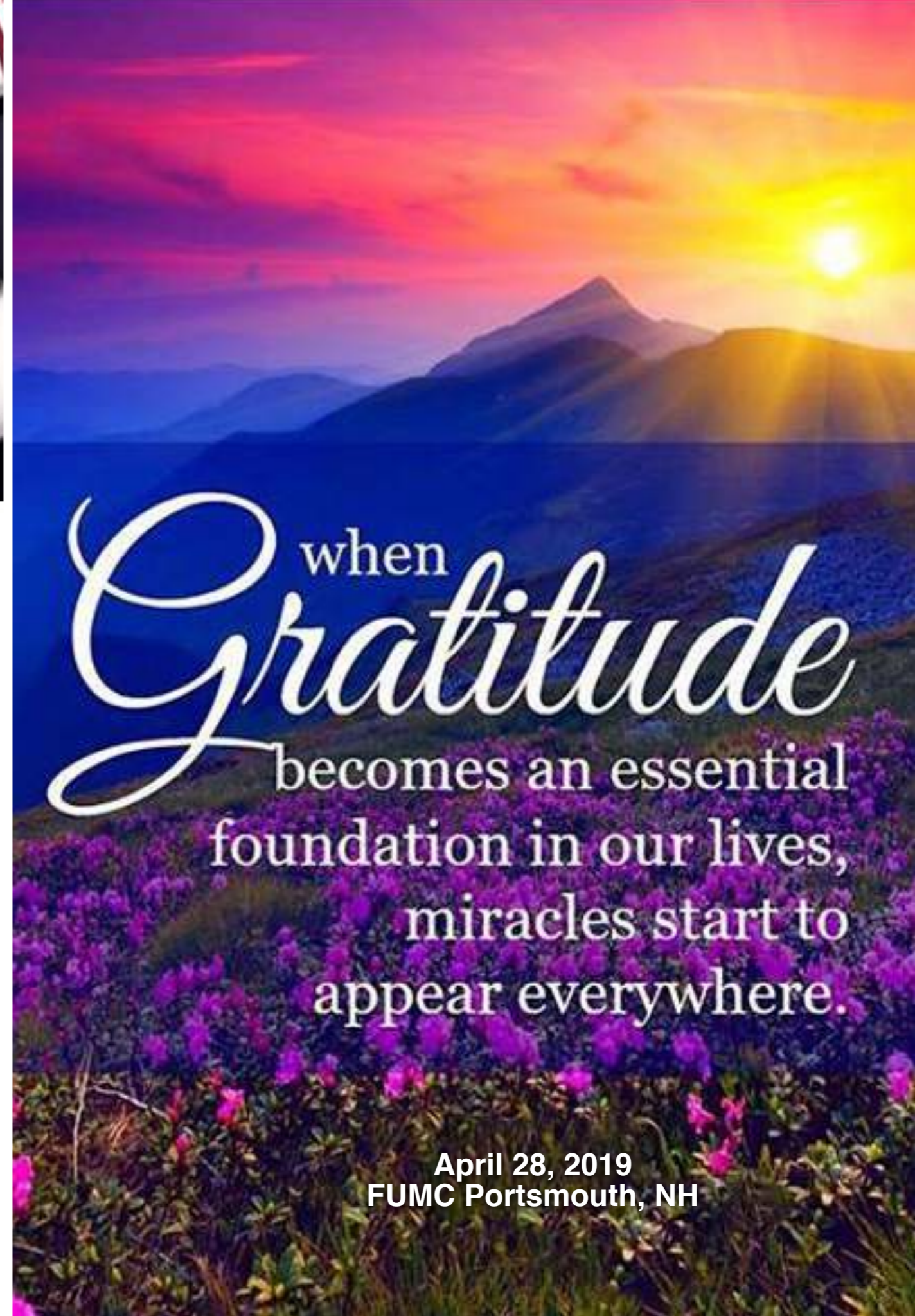
Pastor office hours - Tuesday and Thursday 9 am - 12 pm

[call to ensure availability]

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Check out our website at [www.fumcportsmouth.com](http://www.fumcportsmouth.com)

Like and Follow Us On:   



when  
*Gratitude*  
becomes an essential  
foundation in our lives,  
miracles start to  
appear everywhere.

April 28, 2019  
FUMC Portsmouth, NH



We Gather for Worship

**Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light**

**Celebrations**

**\*Call to Worship**

L: Come! Dance! Sing! Celebrate the goodness of the Lord!

**P: God continues to give us such great gifts of love.**

L: We are made strong in the Lord.

**P: We are made rich in the Lord.**

L: God's blessings are lavished on us every minute of every day!

**P: Come, let us give thanks to the Lord our God.**

**\*Hymn:** "Lord of the Dance" UMH #261

**A Time for the Child in all of Us**

**Prayer** (unison)

Gracious God, we know that we have neglected to thank you for so many blessings. You've blessed us and waited for us to run back to you with thanks, and we have gone our own way. We have taken you for granted. Please forgive us. Put thankfulness into our hearts and souls. Let us speak it, sing it, and live it. That we might be visible, not silent examples of those whom you have healed. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance

L: Turn again to the Lord, for you are beloved of God and have been given many blessings. Rejoice in God's love for you.

**ALL: Amen!**

**Sung Response:**

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

**Ministry of Music**

We Proclaim the Word

**Reading the Word:** Luke 17:11-19

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

**P: Thanks be to God.**

**Message:** "Thankful Hearts"

Rev. Deb Hanson

We Respond to God's Word

**\*Hymn:** "All I Need is You" TFWS #2080

**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.**

**Gratitude Moment**

John VanReenen

**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)

**Faithful God, accept the gifts we bring out of thankfulness for all you have done for us, and use them for your service. Amen.**

We Go Forth to Serve

**\*Hymn:** "Standing on the Promises" UMH #374

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

**May the Lord, gracious God bless and keep you forever. Grant your 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 worshiping 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 Atkinson  
Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek  
Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal  
Acolyte - Sue Richards  
Greeters - Marilyn Stebbins, Ken & Shannon Corpron  
Ushers - Anne & Mike Coffey, Ken and Jenya Westbrook  
Sunday School - Aerial Silanpaa & Kaya Sarosiek  
Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek  
Worship Service Tech - Steve Scott  
Photographer - Dave Atkinson



PRAY TO ME  
I WILL HEAR YOU

Jeremiah 29:12

## WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER DEAR LORD...

Gayle Gardei	Roseanne	Barbara & Jim Slater
Marion Collishaw	Rev. David Kerr	Barbara Sylvester
Sue Goodhue	Jim New	Pauline Boynton
Hunter Pinkley	Kim Hishop	Barbara Millar
Sylvia Bartlett	Bobbie Noble	Irene Derosier
Brian Thompson	Art Munson	Barbara Clement
Malia Broe	Pastor Sue Ellery	Joette MacKenzie
Gil Stebbins	Judy Doyon	Vicky Fernandez
Rev. Bill Gardei	Charles Gilman	Alissa Fernandez
Woodie Lange	Our Church Family	Gabor [Brianna's father in-law]

Come join us for coffee hour after the church service in Sanborn Hall...we'd love to catch up with you and see how your week has gone.

Today's altar flowers are Celebrating our 22nd Anniversary Tim & PennySue Orr





# UPCOMING EVENTS

There will be a **Pampered Chef Party** held in Sanborn Hall on May 4th at 1:00. Please contact Sue Sarosiek or Melanie Berry for more details.  
**ALL are welcome!**

## 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.

**Tri-State Lay Servant Ministry Classes** offered. See bulletin board in Sanborn Hall for more information.

## Funeral Pre-Planning Workshop

On Thursday, May 9 at 4:00 pm in Sanborn Hall, we will host a workshop by J. Verne Wood Funeral Home on pre-planning funerals.

## Thank You to Barbara Slater

As many of you know, Barbara Slater has given up being the chairperson of the Nurture Committee due to health reasons. We invite everyone to send Barbara a note of thanks - shower her with love and gratitude.

Thank you, Barbara, for your faithful leadership of our Nurture Committee for so many years. It is our turn to nurture you! You are such a blessing! Many blessings from your Church Family.



**SPRING CLEAN UP - 24 PEOPLE, 3 HOURS, ENTIRE CHURCH DUSTED, FLOORS WASHED, CURTAINS FIXED, WINDOWS WASHED, 1 AWESOME DAY!!...THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CAME TO HELP!**



**THANK YOU!**  
To everyone who participated in the 40 DAY 40 ITEM challenge. We collected 44 bags that will be donated to the Epilepsy New England Foundation helping our community here in NH. WELL DONE!







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

“Thankful Hearts” – 4/28/19  
First UMC – Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

SCRIPTURE: Luke 17:11-19

THEME: Our gratitude overflows because of God’s many blessings.

A colleague shared an experience he has regularly with a friend of his. Whenever he asks his friend, “How are you?” the friend answers, “I’m grateful.” Most of us would expect to hear, “fine” or “good” or even “great,” and there are also times when we hear, “I’ve been better,” “Not so good,” or “Okay.” But hearing “I’m grateful” seems to make us pay attention more.

In today’s lesson, we see an example of gratefulness that passes all expectations, even for Jesus. It’s helpful to understand the situation that would have surrounded the ten men who were leprosy. Today, we associate leprosy with Hansen’s Disease (no relation) which is an infectious disease that affects the skin, the nervous system, and mucous membranes. It inhibits a person’s ability to feel pain, and they often lose their eyesight, limbs, and have other debilitating conditions.

However, in Jesus’ day, leprosy could have been any unusual mark that appeared on the skin, such as psoriasis, eczema, or a rash of some kind. Those who developed skin issues were ostracized, and, by religious law, removed from contact with anyone else. Most often they were banished from the city to live in groups outside the city walls. These skin diseases didn’t discriminate between rich, poor, ethnicity, or social standing. As one pastor wrote, “Leprosy was a great social equalizer,” which may explain how a Samaritan ended up in a group of ten lepers, nine of who were Jewish. They accepted him and bonded together because of their situation.

But the Samaritan also had a second label that branded him as an outcast; he was a **Samaritan**. Those who lived in Samaria, which was located outside of Jerusalem, were considered to be half-breeds, not accepted by the Jerusalem Jews. During the exile, these were Jewish folks who remained in Samaria, and they intermarried with Assyrians as well as other non-Jewish people. So, even though they were Jewish, they – and their children – were considered “tainted” because of the intermarrying with another ethnic group. It’s very interesting that, particularly in Luke, Jesus often paid attention to and cared for the Samaritans. His parable of the Good Samaritan presented a kind hearted, compassionate man who was a Samaritan, and he had a long, caring interaction with a Samaritan woman at a well.

In our story, the leprosy Samaritan was a double outcast by virtue of being a leper as well as a Samaritan. For the most part, he was in a lose-lose situation, where, as long as he was a leper, he had a group who didn’t care what ethnicity he was. They **all** had been cut off from families, friends, homes, communities, jobs, temple, and society in general.

Before we condemn the Jewish leaders and laws for excluding and marginalizing those who had physical ailments, it’s helpful for us to look at our own prejudices. Who are the ones we reject and ostracize? How do we pass judgment on them? In what ways can we learn from Jesus’ acceptance of all people, and even particularly the poor, sick, afflicted, and marginalized? Imagine what it would have meant to the men to have Jesus even speak to them, and then discover after following his instructions that they had been healed of their

disease! Imagine how it feels for us to offer compassion, acceptance, and understanding to those who are different from us, to those who are ostracized by society. Maybe we have had that experience ourselves – how did we feel if and when we were finally accepted and affirmed?

I once had a young woman in a youth group who would go to the cafeteria at lunch time and look for the students who were sitting alone. She would walk up to the table where they were sitting and ask if they would like some company. Many of them became her friends, and she would often stand up and defend them to those who were bullying them. Sometimes, it brought criticism and abuse toward her, but she believed that she was supposed to help those who were ostracized by others, and it began to catch on with other students who started doing the same thing. Imagine how grateful those students felt to know they had someone who cared about them and was befriending them.

Jesus healed the ten lepers. He told them to go to show themselves to the priests, as was the custom in those days. We can be pretty sure that the nine who went on were ecstatic that they had been healed, even though they didn't return. And in actuality, they did exactly what Jesus had told them to do, following the procedure for being restored to their society, which was to show themselves to the priests in order to be declared "clean." But the one leper who returned to Jesus really took his healing a step farther. Maybe he went to the priests later – probably in Samaria – but he was so grateful that he couldn't help himself. He turned around and ran back to thank Jesus, praising God loudly. The disciples might have rolled their eyes to see a Samaritan throwing himself at Jesus' feet, but Jesus accepted the man's gratitude and affirmed his physical, as well as his spiritual healing. "Go on your way; your faith has made you well." (v. 19)

What in our lives makes us so grateful that we just have to "turn around, run back to Jesus and give thanks and praise"? How do we express our gratitude? In what ways are we able to then share that gratitude with others? I have lunch once a month with a retired colleague and dear friend of mine, and when we met last month, she shared with me that she had started a gratitude journal on January 1. Every day, she wrote down five things for which she was grateful, and she has noticed a gradual awareness of the many things that are blessings in her life. It has lifted her attitude to one of thankfulness, and she is grateful for that because, as she said, there just isn't a lot of good news around us these days. She is beginning to count her blessings every day, and she is beginning to see even more than she anticipated. It inspired me to do the same, so I have been keeping a gratitude journal, and I find that it helps me to be thankful for even the smallest things.

Have you ever encountered someone who was just not grateful for things in life? Does it seem that they find everything that is wrong for them and very little that is right? When you say that the sky is so beautiful, not even a cloud in it, do they stand looking until they find a cloud to point out to you? I wonder what would happen if we started answering the question, "How are you?" with "I'm grateful." Even in the difficult times, can we answer "I'm grateful"? It's a mindset, isn't it?

I once saw a cartoon (screen) that reflects human tendency to not say "thank you" or show gratitude for our blessings very often. (*point to screen*)



PLEASE

THANK-YOU

PRAYER SORTING DEPT.

FRANK



I know how I feel when I wonder if Dave's and my families have received our gifts for birthdays or holidays, and we don't hear anything. Mostly, I want to know if they have received it, but it would also be nice to have a quick "thank you" even if it's a text or email, and that means, of course, that we need to be doing the same in return! We somehow – sometimes – forget to say thanks and count our blessings.

How do we do that with the church? We have entered our gratitude campaign time, counting our blessings, sharing witnesses about what this church means to those who share their answers. And now it leads us to how we express our gratitude financially when we make our pledges for the coming year's budget next Sunday. Giving in all aspect of our stewardship life is part of what makes us a church, and gratitude for all God's blessings is what guides us in the ways we participate.

How do we show our gratitude for all God has given us as a church? How do we support the mission and ministry of the church? Our vows of membership are to support the church with our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. It's a commitment we make to be part of this congregation and part of the greater church. We have the freedom to choose what we will give from those promises. Praying is hopefully something we do daily, and my hope is that we not only keep those who are having challenges in life in our prayers, but offering prayers of thanks for the good things God is doing in our midst.

I'm so grateful for our Sunday school and the teachers, for the leadership of the laity, for the fellowship we share, for the ministry we have with this beautiful building, and for the ongoing visioning we have that challenges us to grow, to expand our ministries in different ways, and for the many, many gifts we have among us as a church family. We have many who serve to make our mission and ministry possible, including doing an amazing newsletter, creating bulletins that are beautiful and full of information that will help us to know what is going on, people who donate their time and money to help with Seacoast Family Promise and the End 68 Hours of Hunger program. I see so much of what is happening here as a response to God's love that we share together with each other and with others in the community and world.

Our attendance seems to be increasing as we gather for worship on Sundays, and other events that take place. Your generosity for the 40 days of Hope during Lent produce OVER 40 bags of donations that will go to the Epilepsy Foundation through their Savers store. This is part of witnessing to our faith, and we witness in many other ways. Most of the time, when I tell people I'm serving First UMC, they ask where it is located. When I tell them, they light up and say, "Oh! The pumpkin church!" Our outreach through the Pumpkin Patch reaches many people. Someone said something to me a few weeks ago that made me so grateful. When I

told her where I was serving, she said, “I hear there are some really good things happening there.”

So, when we talk about gratitude, it takes on more than just one dimension. Gratitude is our response to God’s work in our lives and in our church life, and we can ask ourselves how will we continue to express that through our prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness. As we approach the financial giving part of it, I hope you will think about how you are able to offer your financial gifts, not out of obligation, like the nine lepers who went to show themselves to the priests, but like the one leper who returned to give praise and thanks to show his gratitude to Jesus.

Money always seems to be a touchy subject, but we need the monetary gifts in order to carry on our ministry together. When I was serving in another church, I discovered that I was the highest giver in the congregation which shocked me, because I knew that there were at least three VERY wealthy families there. On the financial pledge Sunday, I challenged the whole congregation to increase their giving as they were able, and if they could to match or surpass my giving. Five families matched my pledge.

Of course, not everyone can give more, and that is understandable, and that’s why it’s so important to search our hearts and ask God to lead us to what we can be giving. Maybe we can find a way to give a dollar, two, three, four, or five dollars a week more. As I thought about it, I realize that Dave and I each buy an iced tea every day, and that would be about \$2.00 each, or maybe we could take an assessment of where we throw out food that has gone bad or revamp our budget. That is good stewardship of our resources, and I believe it would be an act of gratitude for the many blessings God has given the two of us. We both would like to share those blessings with others through being part of this church. As we have thought and prayed about our financial giving for this next year, we decided that we will increase our pledge by ten percent this next year.

Just think. We had thirty pledging units. I wonder what would happen if all them increased by ten percent or whatever they can afford. Even a dollar a week more would be an act of gratitude and sharing from our own blessings. No one’s gift is too small because they all add together to make the whole picture. We give what we can and what we feel God is leading us to give. We are blessed! We have so much to offer here! We have a wonderful congregation and people who are part of our mission and ministry – something for which we can be grateful! Good things are happening here! God is leading us, and we are a church who has something to offer.

So, the next time someone asks, “How are you?” Maybe we all can begin to answer, “I’m grateful!” It might start a wonderful conversation!

Let us pray:

**God of grace, we hear your call to generous and grateful giving in the way you meet our needs each day, and in the peace you give which passes understanding. Having received so much, we offer all we have, our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness for your kingdom. Bless us for the work of your church. Amen.** (*Carol Penner Liturgies, <https://carolpenner.typepad.com/leadinginworship/2015/06/generous-giving-offering-prayer.html>*)