



December 27, 2020



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
129 MILLER AVENUE
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REV. DR. DEBRA J. HANSON

Welcome and Introduction

Good Morning! Welcome to this morning's worship service from the First United Methodist Church in Portsmouth NH. I am David , my wife Sue, and Bevan our music director, hope that as we join in worship this morning you will feel the Joy and be renewed with the Hope that this Christmas time brings to each and every one of us.

Invitation

God of glory, your splendor shines from a manger in Bethlehem, where the Light of the world is humbly born into the darkness of human night. Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world, so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice, and defenders of all for whom there is no room. Amen.

Prelude

Call to Worship

Come they told me, a newborn King to see, our finest gifts we bring, to lay before the King, so to honor Him. Let us worship the Living Christ, Jesus the son of God, sent from heaven to be born in a stable because there was no room at the inn, so that we who are born on earth may one day dwell in a room in Heaven.

Hymn: I Love to Tell the Story

Reading of the Word: Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Ministry of Music: Bevan Bloemendaal

Joy and Hope

Tell me the stories of Jesus, you know, the ones I love to hear. Until 2 days ago, the stories we have been hearing and reading are mainly about Mary and Joseph and the fulfillment of the prophecies. The journey to Bethlehem, no room in the inn, the birth at the stable and then that singular event that **changes** everything. The Birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

When I was typing this, my thoughts told me to write 'that singular event that **changed** everything', but God guided my fingers to the letter 's' rather than the 'd' at the end of the word change that I had intended. I even backspaced to erase the 'd' and God said again to me, no David, Jesus birth **changes** everything. You see, it is not merely a historical event, Jesus and his birth is an ongoing event. We celebrate the Miracle of Christmas year after year because the birth of Jesus means so much, it means more than the world, it means an eternal home with God in Heaven. The birth of Jesus, that event that started it all continues to change everything!

How, you might ask? I think that most of you know how. The sheer JOY that overwhelms us at the birth of a child. I know that we aren't all parents, but we all have been children and witnessed other parents having children, the JOY is inescapable. The Joy of holding a newborn baby, having them fall asleep in your arms. The JOY that appears on children of all ages when they receive a gift, perhaps under the Christmas tree. The JOY of giving a gift. The JOY of smelling, let alone eating, a meal, fresh baked bread or my favorite freshly baked cookies. The JOY of donating to those in need. The Joy at seeing the overwhelming response to our 'Share the Joy' campaign, Wow! I could go on, but instead push the pause button for a few moments and reflect on those people and events and things in your life that bring you JOY! Go ahead.

Welcome back. You know that God provided you and I with all of that. That's right, everything we have is a gift from God. I believe that with the birth of Jesus, we received the greatest gift of all. HOPE! We have hope and assurance from and through Jesus that nothing can separate us from God if we just believe in him. What better news can there be? If God is with us, who can be against us? What power is out there that is greater than God the creator of the heavens and the earth?

H.O.P.E. **H**allelujah **O**ur **P**rince **E**xists

I want to finish this message with a reading by A Janeen Quillman. It may sound familiar, but it has a powerful message that I think will touch your heart.

The Day After Christmas

'Twas the day after Christmas and all through the house
The kids were all stirring both Mom and her spouse.
All the stockings were down and the chimney was bare.
It looked like a party had taken place there.

The tots were busy playing with toys on their beds
While visions of bills danced in Mom's and Dad's heads.
The children were happy as they thought there had been
A red-suited elf that brought presents to them.

They heard he was jolly and with toys in his sleigh,
He came down their chimney before Christmas Day.

It's sad that these little ones had never been told
The truth about Christmas, God's gift long ago.

That God sent a Savior to all men on earth
And this was the day we celebrate His birth,
That they could have Jesus in their hearts every day.
His love to be with them as they sleep and play.

But this day after Christmas as in years before
God's love, like a gift, lay unwrapped on the floor.
Among all the trappings of a long Christmas bash
Covered with wrappings it was thrown in the trash.
And there God was hoping to see each little face
Filled with the wonder of Jesus' saving grace.

But God is long suffering and willing to wait
Another whole year or as long as it takes
For the truth about Christmas to come shining through,
His gift of a Savior for me and for you.

Prayer

Light of life, you came in flesh, born into human pain and joy,
and gave us power to be your children. Grant us faith, O Christ, to see
your presence among us, so that all of creation may sing new songs of
gladness and walk in the way of peace. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Know that God loves you so much that he sent his son Jesus for you and for me. Now after the example that He taught us, let's join together in the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen

Hymn: Go Tell it on the Mountain

Blessing

Go now in Peace, and may the love of God surround you, everywhere you may go...tell it on the Mountain. Share the Joy, spread the Hope. Amen!





PRAYER LIST

Jeanne Westcott, Bill and Gayle Gardei, Erin, Evelyn New & Family,
Erika, Earl, Amy, Jim, Juliann, Dennis Hoskins, Jim Slater,
Robert (Babe) Williams and Family, Charles Gilman, Barbara Clement,
Christine, Barbara Glidden, Gil & Marilyn Stebbins, Danny Westbrook,
Dan Strange, Bobbie Noble, Durgin Pines Residents & Workers,
Riverside Rest Home Residents & Workers,
Those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19
Those in nursing and assisted living care,
Our Denomination – Our Church Family



WHO WE ARE

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.



One way to make a donation to FUMC is to point your phone camera on QR code and it will guide you through the process... thanks for making a difference.



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