


ADVENT 2018
**BE THE
HOPE**
THIS CHRISTMAS





Hi, All!


We have entered the season of Advent, a time of preparation when we await the celebration of Jesus' birth. Anyone who has experienced the waiting time for a child to be born (son, daughter, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, friends) knows that there are a lot of things to do in order to be ready. That is what the season of Advent is intended to be. How do we prepare ourselves year after year to receive the newborn king? What things do we need to do in order for our lives, our hearts, our minds, and our spirits to be ready once again to keep walking with him, learning from him, and following him?

When we skip right from Thanksgiving to Christmas, we miss an opportunity for spiritual growth through reflection and living in that ambivalence of waiting and wondering. We have an example in Mary who was "pondering" many things in her heart! She had so much to deal with as a teenager, much less becoming a mother, and facing the circumstances of being pregnant without being married to Joseph, something that would have brought shame and shunning to her.

Several years ago, I purchased the DVD "The Nativity." It is always interesting to see a film maker's presentation of the birth of Jesus, and I suspect this one had many well researched scenes. What struck me the most was Mary's transformation from a young teenager playing with other children to becoming a mother – the mother of Jesus, God's Son. In the movie she recognizes what a wonderful man Joseph is, and her character often says little or nothing, but her facial expressions let the audience know something was going on deep inside her. If you haven't seen it, I recommend it for your own "pondering."

As we move through Advent, we will address the theme "When Hope is Born" and are reminded to "BE the Hope!" May we all grow in grace and God's love this Advent and Christmas. Since Advent begins the new church year, may our journey with Jesus from his birth to his ascension and then the birth of the church at Pentecost be one of new insights and a closer relationship with God and each other. Blessed Advent.

Merry Christmas!
Grace and peace,
Rev. Deb



In this season of joy with the
promise of the coming King
please remember to pray for...

Barbara & Jim Slater Pauline Boynton
Clark Cole Sharon Garceau
Irene Derosier Seraphim Afflick
Trudy Parkhurst Joette MacKenzie
Malia Broe Rev. Sue Ellery
Rev. Bill Gardei Gerry Royer
Barbara Millar Cynthia Drake
Marion Collishaw Sue Goodhue
Kim Hishop Hunter Pinkley
Sylvia Bartlett BrianThompson
Our church family
Those in rehab and care facilities

Sending a card is a great way to let
someone know you are thinking of them.



**December
Celebrations**

3	- Al Cansdale
4	- Jaime Berry
10	- Jennifer Guilford
11	- Matthew Allen
12	- Lauren Littlefield
13	- Evelyn New
16	- Julia Burkes
23	- Priscilla Wilson
25	- Kimberly Philbrick

MARK YOUR CALENDARS


Wentworth Service:

On Wednesday, December 12, Rev. Deb will be leading a worship service at the Wentworth House. She would like to make it a Christmas celebration with singing carols and giving the residents a small gift from First UMC. We will sing carols from the United Methodist Hymnal. If anyone would be able to join her, please let her know. (A pianist would be really nice!)

Christmas Eve Service:

Our Christmas Eve Service will be at 7:00 pm on December 24th. We hope you will plan to attend this lovely service of lights and bring your families, neighbors, or friends with you!

Rev. Deb will be on vacation from December 25 through January 1st and will be back in the office Thursday, January 3rd. For any pastoral care, please contact David Richards.



Sunday School Christmas pageant December 23rd

**And the friendly beasts
around him stood**

This year's Pumpkin Patch sales results are astounding and continue to prove how much our customers love this church mission! We sold over \$35,000, being just \$800 shy of our highest year, and we had to be closed on one Saturday due to the weather. Over \$21,000 goes to the farmer for his expenses, including leasing Navajo land and paying Native American harvesters. Over \$14,000 will go to help keep our building open for worship services and events, and to help subsidize rental costs for the many groups that meet here (including Planet Rangers, AA Groups, NA Group, ProMusica and Doris Rice's art class). Local farm animals are and have enjoyed eating LOTS of rotten and leftover pumpkins. People care where their money goes. Our story and people keep them coming back. PHS Peer Leadership, Planet Rangers' (parents, campers and CITs), neighbors, and some congregants had fellowship during our Unloading Parties. A GREAT BIG THANK YOU goes to everyone who helped set up, baked, worked Booth shifts (some 3-4 shifts each week), maintained the Patch, help with take down, and anything else needed. Together we made it happen again. Love and Hugs, 😊 Sue



Hello from Ruth Tuttle!

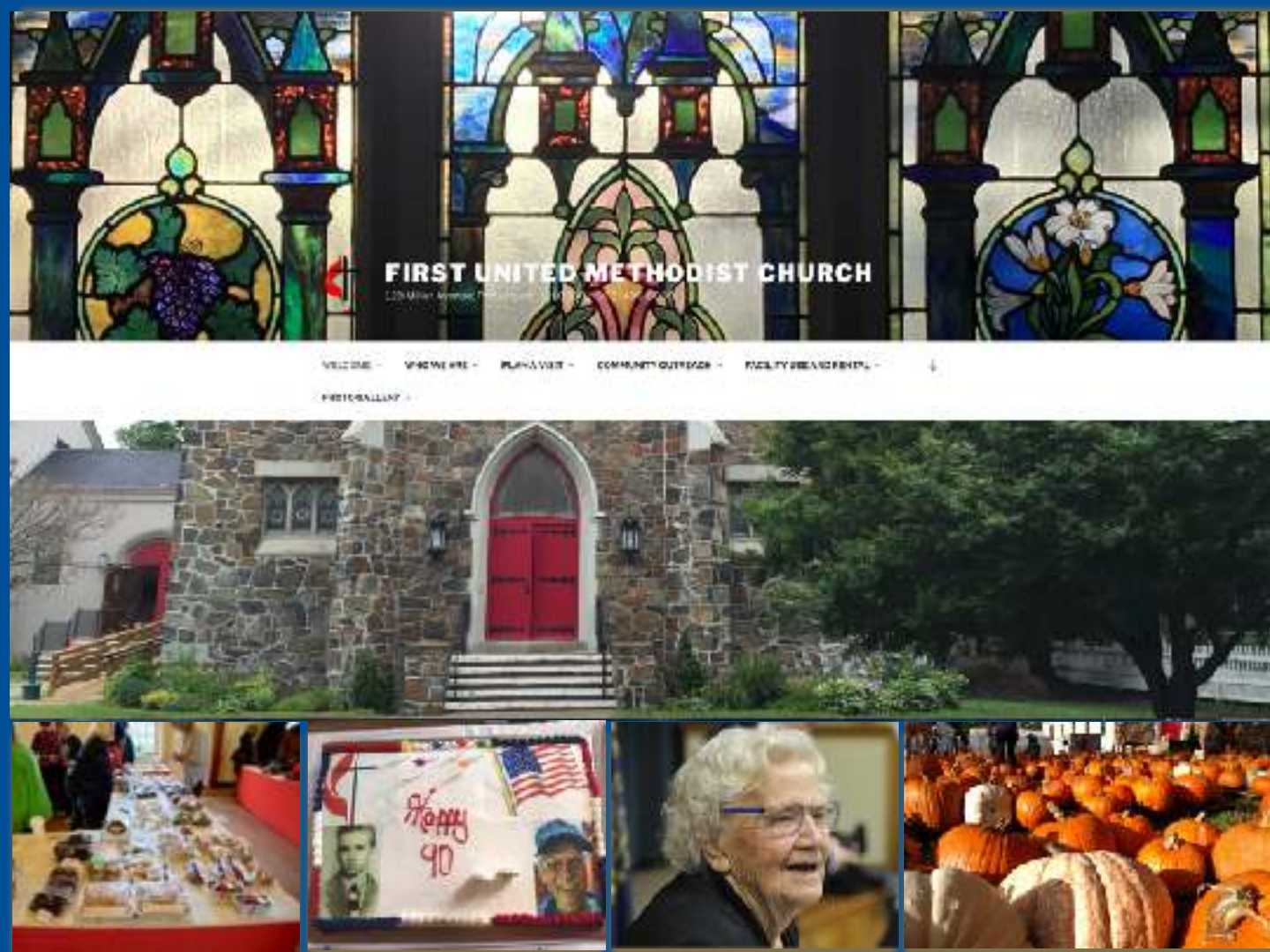


Coffee hour after church each week is a wonderful time to catch up with friends and meet new ones! Please talk to Ken Westbrook donate refreshments for a Sunday.



The dad to these two young men have come to our Patch all 15 years! In chatting, we discovered that he has 15 "My Little Pumpkin" photos of his sons, and he agreed to send us the first one. As with many others, it's tradition to come to the Patch and buy from only us!





Website UPDATES

We continue to update our church website on a weekly basis with:

- Weekly bulletin
- Special music on YouTube link
- Photo gallery updates
 - Bell Bazaar 2018
 - Interfaith Service
 - Ken Westbrook's 90th celebration
 - Ruth L. Griffin Memorial Bridge
 - Pumpkin Patch 2018
- Mark Your Calendar
- Weekly inspiration

Please be sure to check it out and use the site as an opportunity to share with those who can't make it to church so they feel part of the community. You can load the site to your phone or we have a church iPad that you can use for visitation. Here is the link information to our church website - <http://fumcportsmouth.com>



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It's becoming a tradition for us at FUMC in lieu of poinsettias this year we will again partner with Heifer International and the FUMC kids blessings project to honor our loved ones with a gift of kindness and BE THE HOPE this Christmas.

Please fill out the form in the bulletin and place it into the offering plate.

In a world filled with so much judgement, hatred, and violence, it's often difficult to look past that and view the world as a kind place. Even if the world around you seems like it will never be a peaceful, loving place, you can still make a small difference. Sure, a single person can't stop people from being mean or violent towards each other, and world peace is not within one person's reach. However, what we all can do to promote peace, love, and a general respect for others is practice random acts of kindness. An act of kindness, no matter how small, can have such a powerful ripple-effect on others. When people are treated with kindness, they will often convey that same kindness towards others and before you know it, you've impacted quite a few people. No act of kindness is menial or unimportant; anything done with kindness is significant and beneficial to our world today. Today we launch our BE THE HOPE campaign and we will decorate the Christmas tree with all of our offerings of hope and kindness accomplished each week.

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ACTS OF HOPE IDEA CALENDAR - Dec. 2018

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
					1 Give someone a compliment	2 Get in touch with an old friend or relative
3 Donate a Christmas present to a charity	4 Tell a joke to make someone smile	5 Do something kind for yourself	6 Hide a happy note for someone to find	7 Tape some money to a vending machine with a note saying enjoy	8 Smile and say hello to a stranger	9 Bring someone to church
10 Let a car in front of you in traffic	11 Write or send a thank you note to someone for no reason	12 Leave extra tip for someone who serves you	13 Tell someone you love them	14 Pay for someone's coffee	15 Offer to help someone who needs help	16 Feed the birds
17 Give a treat to your postal worker	18 Give or send flowers to someone	19 Pay for someone's lunch	20 Donate food for the food pantry	21 Practice patience	22 Visit someone who is unable to get out	23 Open the door for someone
24 Hug someone	25 Think only positive thoughts all day long	26 Donate unneeded clothes/jackets to someone	27 Encourage someone	28 Send a care package to one of our students	29 Let someone in front of you in the check out line	30 Forgive mistakes
31 Respect others... always						

December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						Greening of the church 9 AM 1:00 PM AA
2 10:00AM Worship 11:15 Coffee 1st Sunday of Advent	3 6:00 PM Finance 7:00 PM AA	4 7:00 PM NA	5	6 7:30 PM AA	7 8 PM AA	8 1:00 PM AA
9 10 AM Worship 11:15 Coffee 2nd Sunday of Advent	10 7:00 PM AA	11 Noon PEACE CIRCLE 6 PM Church Council 7:00 PM NA	12 Worship Service Wentworth Home 11 AM	13 7:30 PM AA	14 8 PM AA	15 Seacoast Santa 1:00 PM AA Rock MY Soul Concert 7PM
16 10 AM Worship 11:15 Coffee SPRC 3rd Sunday of Advent	17 7:00 PM AA	18 6 PM Trustees 7:00 PM NA	19	20 7:30 PM AA	21 8 PM AA	22 1:00 PM AA
23 10:00AM Worship Pageant 11:15 Coffee 4th Sunday of Advent	24 Christmas Eve service 7 PM 7:00 PM AA	 <i>Christmas</i>	26	27 7:30 PM AA	28 8 PM AA	29 1:00 PM AA
30 10:00AM Worship 11:15 Coffee	31  First Night					



COMMUNITY OUTreach GROUP UPDATES

FUMC A RECONCILING CONGEGATION

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

BACKPACK MINISTRY/END 68 HOURS OF HUNGER

This program continues to thrive and our 6th school year is now on the backstretch and we are already starting to think about next school year and what we can do to make the program even more successful and give it even more outreach into the community. My co-coordinator has been meeting with school officials to determine what could be improved or changed in order to get more children/parents to take advantage of the program and they came up with some good ideas we are going to implement for next school year.

We are currently serving 67 children total from all 6 Portsmouth schools. We continue to get amazing support from other churches and our community volunteers. I get emails from folks regularly asking how they can get involved and volunteer. God is good!

If you would like to get involved in this ministry or learn more about it, please contact me directly at jen_b76@yahoo.com or 603-801-3886.

SEACOAST FAMILY PROMISE

SFP is going stronger than ever. We currently have (4) families in the program – 3 of which are new from our last rotation, which means families once again have transitioned successfully from this program into stable housing. If you would like to volunteer, we have opportunities available to help with prepping the Sunday school rooms for family arrival, cleaning them up when it's over the next week, dinner crew for Friday night and we could always use new overnight volunteers. Many of the current volunteers in this program have been doing it all 12 years, so some fresh volunteers would be appreciated. This program definitely changes lives forever and I am proud that our church is a part of it, along with 20+ other congregations in the Seacoast NH area. If you think you might like to help and experience the joy of changing people's lives, please contact

Jen Berry,

Coordinator - jen_b76@yahoo.com or 603-801-3886.

UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief)

Is an agency that reaches out to communities and countries who have gone through natural disasters, fires, and many other traumatizing events that have caused destruction and loss. They provide clean-up support, medical supplies, school supplies, and a number of other ways of helping those who are in distress. Even though we may not always see them listed in the newspapers, they are among the first ones to respond since teams are made up of people who live in the area. We have had training in our annual conference for volunteers who are prepared to show up to help immediately. For example, with the fires in Lawrence, MA recently, a team was already there helping with food, spiritual and physical support, and a variety of other helping ways.

Here at First UMC, we support UMCOR through our financial giving, as well as occasionally putting together kits or flood buckets to send wherever they are needed. All money we give goes to help wherever it is needed. On the Sunday designated as "One Great Hour of Sharing," the money for that Sunday goes to help the administrative costs to run UMCOR. So, when we donate to a cause, we can be sure that 100% of the funds go to that cause. Each month we will collect mission money for UMCOR to go to a certain cause. Most recently, the collection has been for the continuing clean-up in Puerto Rico as well as the fires in Lawrence. For more information, go to GBGM.org. Thanks for all you do to help others!