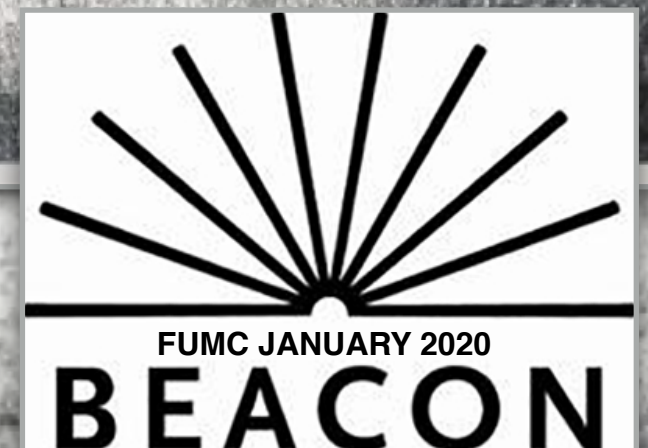


WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?

ON YOUR JOURNEY OF FAITH





Dear Friends,

“ . . . When [the wise men] saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Matthew 2:10-11 (NRSV)

So, have you recovered from the holidays? How was 2019 for you? Have you made your list of resolutions for 2020? What goals are you setting for this coming year?

The Wise Men/Magi, generally considered scholars or astronomers from the east (such as Persia) had a goal. They had studied the skies and stars, discovering an unusual star so they decided to follow it. This would have been along and sometimes perilous journey for them. More than likely, they were traveling for a long, long time. Scholars estimate that Jesus would have been a toddler when the Wise Men arrived in Jerusalem, and note that, in the passage above, they entered the “house,” which would indicate that Mary and Joseph were no longer in a stable, but in a home.

Theirs was a long journey into the unknown: not knowing where they would eventually end up, maybe not even knowing IF they would find where this star would lead them, or what they would find. But they arrived and were overwhelmed with joy to find Jesus and his mother Mary, believing he was the king of the Jews. That is quite a statement coming from three Gentiles who worship other gods. Yet, they reached their goal with great joy and offered their gifts.

Isn't all of life a journey into the unknown? I mean, if we really think about it, we never really know what is around the corner. What can we learn from the Wise Men? I think several things. First, they studied and carefully learned about the star. In their research and studying, they discovered the possibility of the birth of a new king, one that was so important it prompted them to make the trip to find him. Whenever we make decisions, we can spend time pondering them and researching as needed or at least weighing the pros and cons before we set out in a different direction.

And, we can learn about perseverance and gratitude from these men who appeared seemingly out of nowhere to worship the king. Their appearance in the story of Jesus' birth is a message that Jesus came for all people, including Gentiles, including those who are poor, those who are wealthy, as well as people from all over. Jesus is the Savior of the *world*, and the Wise Men represent those who saw him in his real identity and celebrated his arrival.

Maybe this year, our goals can include finding ways to grow even more on our faith journeys. We can have resolutions that not only improve ourselves, but improve the world as we follow Christ and live for him throughout the year. Maybe those resolutions are some we can keep with joy! Happy New Year!

Grace and peace, Rev. Deb



Upcoming EVENTS

1/1 - Happy New Years...today is the day to start that next step in your FAITH journey 2020

1/2 - Rev. Deb resumes regular office hours

Starting 1/2 - Rev. Deb will begin having lunch at Heberts every Thursday, at about 12:15 pm and is inviting anyone who would like to join her for fellowship and conversation to come and bring a friend. This is a way of being out in the Portsmouth community and being more visible, as well as connecting with a long-established business in the area. If the weather is bad, it will be cancelled.

1/7 - Finance Trustee meeting at 6 pm, at the parsonage

1/10 - Superintendency Dinner

1/14 - The Church Council meeting will be held at at 6:00 pm

1/18 - Visioning committee meeting at 11:30 am to be held at Kevin Fickenscher's home

Sundays - Church Service starts at 10 a.m. Sunday School is right after the children's sermon and we look forward to catching up with you during coffee hour after the worship service...see you there

Everyday - Be a Prayer Warrior and lift up the world and it's people in prayer

Sometime this week - write a note, card or visit one of our family members who are either living in assisted living, nursing care or homebound

2020 Flower chart - is posted in the Narthex. You can bring your own arrangement or have the church order them at a cost of \$25 to you. This is a great way to honor, remember, thank or let someone know they are appreciated

From Rev. Deb -

Thank you for your generous gifts at Christmas. Your encouragement, trust, and support are also gifts that I cherish. It is my privilege to be your Pastor. May God continue to bless our work together.

From Bevan -

Making a joyful noise at FUMC gives me such joy. The opportunity to be a storyteller through music is a gift that I am grateful you allow me to share each Sunday. Your generosity through spoken words, thumbs up, hugs and winks are all incredibly appreciated. Thank you once again for your generous Christmas gift.
Love, Bevan

To our Sunday School Teachers -

Thank you to the following people who served as Sunday school teachers this year: Dave Atkinson, Rosie Buswell, Dave Richards, Sue Richards, Kaya Sarosiek, Aerial Sillanpaa, and all those who pitched in to help on short term projects. We appreciate your gifts and faith you have shared to teach our children the wonderful stories of the Bible.

To our Committees - As we begin a new year, we are grateful for all who have served and continue to serve on all our committees. Their work helps us to keep the mission and ministry of the church on track as well as keeping us faithful in our stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. Welcome to those who are coming onto committees and assuming new roles. For a complete list, please see your Church Conference annual report.

thankful
grateful
blessed

Photo GALLERY



What an awesome group we have here...some of the kids who came out and helped to "GREEN" the sanctuary and made the beautiful gingerbread houses that are on display in Sanborn Hall.

Check out all the creativity and let them know how much you love seeing them each Sunday...they are our future!

Photo GALLERY



The “GIVING TREE” program was blessed once again this year by your generosity. We were able to provide 5 families in need a very special Christmas. Not only were there toys, clothes, boots, dressers and a desk for the kids, there were necessities for the adults like grocery gift cards, cleaning supplies and bed linens.

Thank you congregation and Planet Ranger families for making this Advent outreach program such a success for FUMC. We also thank Sue Sarosiek, Sue Richards and Airial Sillanpaa for organizing and delivering all the gifts.



Prayer

LIST

Rev. Charles & Anona Hartman
Dan Strange
Ken Young
Rev. Bill & Gayle Gardei
Marion Collishaw
Sylvia Bartlett
Gil Stebbins
Woodie Lange
Jim New
Bobbie Noble
Barbara Glidden
Judy Doyon
Charles Gilman
Ruth Griffin
Barbara Sylvester
Barbara Millar
Barbara Clement
Yvonne Griffin
Our Denomination
Our Church Family

COMMUNION SUNDAY PRAYER MINISTRY

The Prayer Team is made up of individuals who know the power of prayer and will be stationed near the communion rail to offer prayers of healing for yourself or someone you know needing to be lifted up in prayer after you have received the elements. January's Prayer Team is David and Sue Richards.

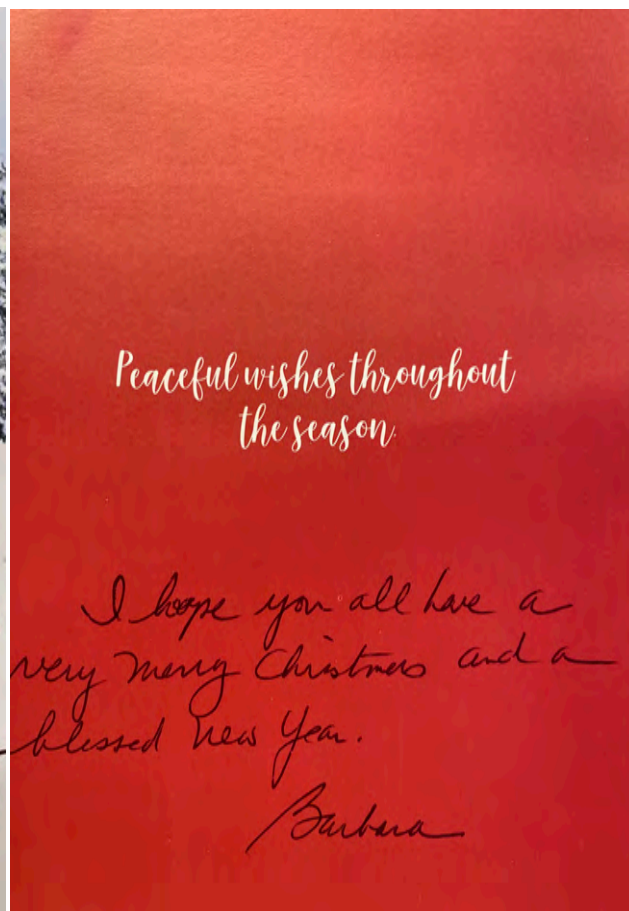
New Address -

Congratulations to Rev. Deb and Dave who moved into their new home at Wesley by the Sea after Christmas. Their new address is: Deb Hanson & Dave Atkinson, 47 Dorfield Lane, P.O. Box 1363, Wells, ME 04090. Their home phone is available in the church office. Please use that if you have a need to reach Rev. Deb when she isn't in the office.

Blessings Bank -

The donations collected from the Blessings Bank at the beginning of each church service is going toward helping a school in Cameroon. Our Sunday school kids have a connection with the school and our donations provide them with supplies and the ability to keep educating the children. Thank you for sharing your blessings!

From Barbara Clement - To my FUMC family I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and I appreciate all the visits and cards. Here is my Christmas card to all of you.



Things TO KNOW



Our family

Who can't make it to church

Sometime this week -

write a note, card or visit one of our family members who are either living in assisted living, nursing care or homebound.

Barbara Clement
Riverside Rest Home
276 County Farm Rd
Room 304
Dover, NH 03830

Gayle Gardei
2 Victoria Ct. #219
York, ME 03909

Rev Bill Gardei
Durgin Pines
9 Lewis Road #127
Kittery, ME 03904

James New
9 Lewis Road
Rm#104
Kittery, ME 03904

Sylvia Bartlett
231 Washington St
Rye, NH 03870

Gil Stebbins
143 Rogers Rd
#105
Kittery, ME
03904

Woodie Lange
346 Pleasant
St.#101
Portsmouth, NH
03801

JoEtte MacKenzie
18 Woodman St
Rochester, NH 03867

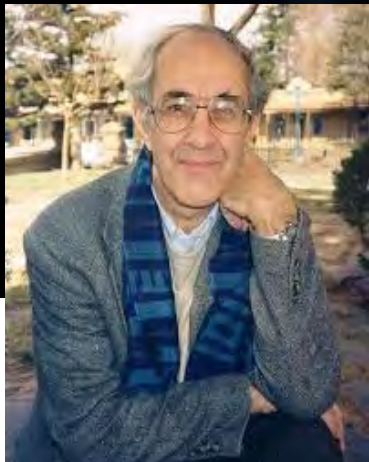
Marion Collishaw
111 Westwood Drive
Nashua, NH 03062

Barbara Glidden
188 Jones Ave #101
Portsmouth, NH
03801

Barbara Millar
220 State Road, #110
Kittery, ME 03904

Barbara Sylvester
346 Pleasant St. #254
Portsmouth, NH 03801

THE SPIRITUALITY OF GIVING



The international renowned priest and author, respected professor and beloved pastor, Henri Nouwen wrote 39 books on the spiritual life.

He corresponds regularly in English, Dutch, German, French and Spanish with hundreds of friends and reached out to thousands through his Eucharistic celebrations, lectures and retreats. Since his death in 1996, ever-increasing numbers of readers, writers, teachers and seekers have been guided by his literary legacy. Nouwen's books have sold over eight million copies and been published in over 28 languages.

The Finance/Trustees are studying a book by Henri Nouwen, **Spirituality of Giving**, each month, we will be sharing little “snippets” from what we are learning.

From *Bread for the Journey* by Nouwen:

“Community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another.”

We are a community of faith, and we need each other in order to be in fruitful ministry for Christ in our community and world. Sometimes we might think that giving of our time, talent and treasure is an obligation, but it's important to think about how we support this community of faith in our stewardship of giving not only financially, but also with our time, our prayers, and our service.

Nouwen says in our study book (p. 50), “We have something to offer—friendship, prayer, peace, love, fidelity, affection, ministry with those in need—and these things are so valuable that people are willing to make their resources available to sustain them.”

What we have is actually a call to community, to being who God has called us to be, to be steeped in our faith journey and commitment to the mission and ministry of our church. Stewardship is a spiritual journey, as Nouwen writes in *Here and Now*: “A truly spiritual life is life in which we won't rest until we have found rest in the embrace of the One who is the Father and Mother of all desires.”

May we strive for spiritual growth, working together in unity as we seek to be faithful followers of Jesus in building the Kingdom of God here on earth.



January Birthdays

**1 Bill Crisp
3 Tenley Westbrook
4 Bert Eckert
5 Joseph Philbrick, Jr.
6 David Richards
11 Cathy Martin
16 William Dewhurst
23 David Bovee
25 John VanReenen
27 Tammy Bunting
29 Thomas Reed
31 Yvonne Griffin
31 Tim Orr
31 Karin Scott
31 Vicki David
31 Yvonne Griffin**



Community

OUTREACH

Backpack Ministry/End 68 Hours of Hunger Update - This program continues to thrive and, though it's hard for me to believe, we have now started our 10th school year. We are currently serving 96 children total from all 6 Portsmouth schools and Birch Tree Center (school for Autistic children in Newington). We have been very fortunate with fund-raising this summer – Pease Tenant Assoc., Liberty Mutual/Protective Insurance and Proulx Real Estate all did big fundraisers for us and we added over \$16,000 to our funds. Amazing how God makes things happen! As always, I want to thank the faithful volunteers who work all school year to make this happen. 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. Jen Berry, Backpack Ministry/End 68 Hours of Hunger - Portsmouth Coordinator

Seacoast Family Promise – SFP is going strong. Our next rotation is March 1 - March 8 and we currently have (4) families in the program – a total of 14 people. All of the families we worked with in 2018 and 2019 to date have moved to stable housing and have remained there. We have had 9 cars donated this year for our current and former families. This is such a blessing, since without reliable transportation, these families cannot succeed. If you know of anyone who might have a vehicle available to donate (it is a tax deductible donation), please let them know we always have a need for them and they will change a family's life forever by doing so.

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 15 years, so some fresh volunteers would be appreciated. There is a training session for new volunteers at Bethany Church in Greenland on Sunday Nov 3rd if you think you might be interested. I will be attending. We also need cash donations to purchase breakfast and lunch food items when the families are here.

This program definitely changes lives 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 firsthand, please contact Jen Berry at jen_b76@yahoo.com or 603-801-3886.

JANUARY 2020 - SUNDAY WORSHIP TEAM SCHEDULE

DATE	LITURGIST	GREETERS	USHERS	ACOLYTE	WORSHIP TECH	SOUND TECH	SUNDAY SCHOOL	PRAYER TEAM
1/5/20	Sue Richards	Jane Richards	Art & Nancy Munson	Kaya Sarosiek	Steve Scott	Dave Richards	Rosie Buswell Aerial Sillanpaa	Sue Richards Dave Richards
1/12/20	Graham Baker	Jeanne Westcott & Steve Wescott	Ken & Jenya Westbrook	Marilyn Stebbins	Steve Scott	Sue Sarosiek	Dave Atkinson	
1/19/20	Dave Atkinson	Al & Jan Cansdale	Anne & Mike Coffey	Alexa Langs	Steve Scott	Sue Sarosiek	Sue & Dave Richards	
1/26/20	John VanReenen	Langs Family	Jan & Al Cansdale	Alexa Langs	Steve Scott	TBD	Aerial Sillanpaa & Rosie Buswell	

**NOTE - IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO MEET THE PROPOSED SCHEDULE PLEASE LET US KNOW
IMMEDIATELY SO WE CAN SCHEDULE SOMEONE ELSE.**



JANUARY 2020



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 ♦ New Year's Day Office closed	2 ♦7pm AA	3 ♦7pm AA	4 ♦1 pm AA
5 ♦10 am Worship ♦11 am Coffee Hour	6 ♦7 pm AA	7 ♦5:30 pm Promusica ♦6 pm Finance Trustee ♦7 pm NA	8	9 ♦7pm AA	10 ♦Tri-State Superintendency Dinner	11 ♦1 pm AA
12 ♦10 am Worship ♦11 am Coffee Hour	13 ♦7 pm AA	14 ♦5:30 pm Promusica ♦6 pm Church Council ♦7:00 NA	15	16 ♦7pm AA`	17 ♦7pm AA	18 ♦11:30 Visioning Committee ♦1 pm AA
19 ♦10 am Worship ♦11 am Coffee Hour	20 ♦Martin Luther King Jr. Day ♦7pm AA	21 ♦ 5:30 pm Promusica ♦7 pm NA	22	23 ♦7pm AA	24 ♦7pm AA	25 ♦1pm AA
26 ♦10 am Worship ♦11 am Coffee Hour	27 ♦7pm AA	28 ♦5:30 pm Promusica ♦7 pm NA	29	30 ♦7pm AA	31 ♦7pm AA	



FUMC PORTSMOUTH

A RECONCILING CONGREGATION

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.



New England Annual Conference Tri-State District

The Rev. Sudarshana Devadhar, Bishop
The Rev. Taesung Kang, 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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