

## JEREMIAH 29:11

"For I know the plans  
I have for you," declares  
the LORD, "plans to  
prosper you and  
not to harm  
you, plans  
to give you hope  
and a future."

## We Gather for Worship

### Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light

#### Gratitude Moments

##### \*Call to Worship

L: The buzz of the world interrupts our lives and fills our ears.

**P: Call us into your way of life, O God.**

L: The complaints of other settle in our mind and cloud our vision.

**P: Lead us into your vision of life, O God.**

L: The cries of the poor, the oppressed and the outcast pierce our hearts.

**P: Guide us in your example of living for others, O God.**

L: Fill our hearts, fill our eyes, fill our ears with your love, O God.

**P: Let us be your hands and feet in the world, O God.**

**ALL: Let us worship you together.**

\*Hymn "Two Fishermen"

TFWS #2101

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

#### Ministry of Music

Prayer (unison)

**You call us, Wanderer of seashores and sidewalks, inviting us to sail out of our smug harbors into the uncharted waters of faith, to wander off from our predictable paths to follow you into the unpredictable footsteps of the kingdom; to leave the comfort of our homes and accompany you into the uncomfortable neighborhoods we usually avoid. As we wait, in our simple, sometimes crazy, constantly uncertain lives, speak to us, Spirit of Grace: of that hope which is our anchor; of that peace which is our rock; of that grace which is our refuge. Amen.**

Sung Response "Come and Fill Our Hearts"

TFWS #2157

## We Proclaim the Word

Reading the Word Matthew 4:12-23

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

P: Thanks be to God.

Message "Call to Discipleship"

Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson

\*Hymn "Jesus Calls Us"

UMH #398

## We Respond to God's Word

### Prayer of the People

#### Silent Prayer and Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

**Our Father, who are 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 into 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)

**Great God of Heaven and Earth, you call us to leave behind our preoccupations and to follow you into the future. Sometimes we find your call challenging. We are comfortable, maybe even complacent, just the way things are in the present. May this act of giving be a gesture of our willingness to follow where you lead. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## We Go Forth to Serve

\*Hymn "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

TFWS #2129

\*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*

*TFWS = The Faith We Sing UMH = United Methodist Hymnal  
Large print bulletins are available from the greeters*



# UPCOMING EVENTS

2/4 - Finance Trustee meeting will be held at 6:00 pm.

2/11 - The Peace Circle will meet at Yvonne Griffin's home @ 9:30 am. The lesson is Martha, chapter 3 in our study book. All are welcome to attend.

2/15 - Celebration of the life of Steve Westcott @ 11:00 am. The congregation is invited.

2/18 - Church Council meeting will be held at 6:00 pm.

2/26 - Ash Wednesday service will begin our Lenten season with a service held in the sanctuary at 12:00 noon.

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.

Today's Altar flowers - Are in celebration of all the riches that God has given us.



# PRAYER LIST

Dave Richards	Julia West
Dan Strange	Judy Doyon
Bobbie Noble	Mohr Family
The Westcott Family	Rev. Charles Hartman
Sylvia Bartlett's Family	Our Denomination
David Richards	Our Church Family

All those living in assisted living, nursing care or homebound



# WORSHIP TEAM

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson	Greeters - Langs Family
Pastor's Assistant - David Richards	Ushers - Jan & Al Cansdale
Liturgist - John VanReenen	Sound Tech - Dave Atkinson
Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek	Worship Service Tech - Steve Scott
Acolyte - Alexa Langs	Photographer - Dave Atkinson
Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal	Sunday School - Aerial Sillanpaa & Rosie Buswell



## THINGS TO KNOW

### Welcome from Rev. Deb -

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!

### New Address information from Rev. Deb -

Thanks to those of you who sent cards to welcome us into our new home! It was so thoughtful! We temporarily have a post office box since we are in a new construction area, and the carrier wants to wait until the work is completed before trying to negotiate the trucks and workers. So, if anyone wishes to send something, the way to address the envelope, according to the USPS is to put the PO Box on the third line so it would read: Deb Hanson/Dave Atkinson, 47 Dorfield Lane, PO Box 1363, Wells, ME 04090. For now, please call the church office if you have a need to reach Rev. Deb when she isn't in the office. Maureen or Sue Sarosiek can reach her, and she will get back to you as soon as possible. Thanks!

### 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!

### Coffee Hour -

Come join us for coffee, snacks and fellowship directly after the church service in Sanborn Hall. We'd love to catch up.



## WITH THANKS

### Introducing "Kids First

The Giving Tree program was a wonderful success this past Christmas 2019 and we thank you for your generosity. With the support of our Congregation, Planet Rangers, and the Portsmouth community we provided Christmas gifts and essentials to 5 families.

Our five families this past year were comprised of children who needed to be removed from volatile family situations and placed into an alternate safe place with extended family.

Sadly, there is an alarming rise in the Seacoast area of children in these types of circumstances. When this happens the caregivers oftentimes are not prepared to take on this emergency and there is an urgent need for essentials for both the children and caregivers.

That said, with our Giving Tree experience and the increased need in our community the Church Council has agreed that this should be a year-long mission program and would like to introduce the KIDS FIRST program. This new program represents another important outreach for FUMC as we continue increasing our presence and support in making a difference for our community in need.

On a situation by situation basis we will put out a call to action for us to respond to with either monetary donations or needed essentials i.e. diapers, clothing, car seats, grocery gift cards. If you would like to learn more about Kids First and the ways you can help, please contact a Church Council member.



## **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.



**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](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:





SERMON TRANSCRIPT GIVEN BY  
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

“Call to Discipleship” - 1/26/2020  
Subtitle: “Leeches, Shrimp, Minnows, Insects, Grubs, & Worms”  
First UMC - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:12-23

THEME: What is God’s call in our lives?

Friends of mine have a son who is tall, thin, and at one point had long hair, a beard and mustache. One time when they were on the beach where they lived on Cape Cod, they were just relaxing and soaking up the sun’s rays, reading a book and watching others play in the ocean’s waves. All of a sudden, the wife reached over and grabbed her husband’s arm, saying, “I think Jesus is coming!” They stared at the young man walking down the beach toward them who, for all intents and purposes, really looked like the pictures of Jesus that they had seen, and as he drew closer, they realized that it was their son who had arrived in a surprise visit!

I wonder what the disciples who were fishing thought when Jesus approached them and invited them to follow him. You know, I wish I could have been there. I wish I could have experienced the human side of Jesus and been able to talk with him and hear his voice and answer his call without all the questioning I did when I answered my call to ministry. It would have saved me twenty-two years of wrestling before I finally said “yes.” And yet, as Jesus’ followers, we all hear his call in our lives every day. It may not be as clear as we would like, and certainly not as clear as those who were fishing that day who spoke directly with Jesus.

These men heard Jesus call them to follow him along the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Matthew’s gospel places Jesus in Capernaum, in the territory of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, not just to show that it was a fulfillment of a prophecy, but also because the Galilee area is diverse. Galilee was full of gentiles AND Jews, and the writer of Matthew’s gospel was sending a message to a largely Jewish audience, telling them that Jesus was for ALL people. The towns around the Galilee held a variety of folks with different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

When I was in Israel, I was surprised to see that the Sea of Galilee itself isn’t really very big; it’s a freshwater lake that measures around seven miles in width and thirteen miles long - actually about the size of Sebago Lake in Maine. In Jesus’ day, those who fished the waters did not own their fishing businesses, but actually worked for wealthy land owners or royalty, and their catch was not put out on the market for open sale but given to their bosses. Many did not even own their own boat - I noticed for the first time that Simon Peter and Andrew were throwing their nets, but no boat was mentioned. James and John were working with their father, and they had a boat, which may or may not have been their own. Taxes imposed on owning a boat were high, so many of those who fished for a living did so by standing in the water with only their nets.

They were not highly paid, but it was what they knew and it was a living. These were just plain ordinary men who worked hard, like so many of us, and did the best they could to provide for themselves and their families. That’s what struck me about Jesus’ choice of disciples.

If you think about it, he sought out every day people who were not particularly well educated, many couldn't read or write; they certainly didn't have seminary degrees, and some were of questionable reputation, like Matthew the tax collector. And Jesus saw something special, some great potential in each one. He knew that they had something to offer. I also think that they represent all of us. We all are ordinary people. We all, by the grace and gifts of God, have potential to work for Christ in the world. We all have something to offer through the diversity of our gifts and the many people we encounter throughout a day. We all are called to share those gifts.

So we are ALL called to fish for people - yup - every one of us! What do we use for bait: Leeches, Shrimp, Minnows, Insects, Grubs, or Worms? I don't think that would catch many people! It certainly wouldn't have interested me! So what is our bait? What is it that interests someone enough to want to know more about Jesus? How did we come to be called, anyway? Bishop William Willimon wrote: "You are here (in church) not because you are searching but because you have been sought, called, summoned. You are here because God has reached in, grabbed you, put you here, enticed, wooed, [lured] you here. So Christianity is not so much a religion of discovery. It is a religion of revelation. The long search is over. You have been found. This is the good news!" (found at Lindy Black's sermon notes at Text This Week on line for this Sunday's lectionary gospel commentaries.)

We need to ask what it was that caught our attention - what "bait" did God use to reel us in or "haul" us in? And then, when did God touch our hearts so that we were really hooked? It varies from person to person, but for many of us, it is NOT necessarily a defining moment in our lives. For many of us it was a gradual learning or awareness or acceptance, more like Peter who was intrigued and followed because he thought that there might be something better with this man Jesus. There must have been many times when he said, "This isn't what I signed up for, Jesus!"

Evangelism - bringing others to Christ - terrifies most of us. We feel that we just don't know what to say, so we say nothing because we are afraid that we will say the wrong thing. What we forget is that we are only the fishing pole or the net that God uses to get other people's attention. AND, it isn't up to just pastors to do that work! EVERY ONE of us is called to make disciples for Christ! (I think I hear knees knocking in fear out there!) Don't worry - we aren't alone in this work. We throw the nets and God touches the heart. More than that, God is already knocking on the door of their hearts, calling them to a greater relationship with God and others. "But," we might argue, "I don't have the gifts to do that! I just wouldn't know what to say." Well, as I've said before, we don't always have to SAY something. We can start by being an example, by helping others, by caring about others, by doing the unexpected, surprising thing rather than what is expected.

For example, one of the teenagers in a youth group from a church I used to serve was a very caring, compassionate person. She had a strong conviction that she could make a difference at her high school, so she watched for students who were picked on or bullied, sat alone in the lunch room, or seemed to be shy and lonely. Often, she would go over to sit with them and make efforts to become their friend or at least be friendly.



She was a cheerleader and a fairly popular young lady, so even though she sometimes was teased, the majority of her friends and fellow students saw her living out her faith in the way she treated and interacted with others. Her actions spoke loudly.

Here is another example: I have a friend who was working in her state's government as an administrator for one of the social service programs, and when the state downsized - like so many of them have - she had the choice of resigning or taking a position as the coordinator for women's prison rehabilitation. Her job would be to interview and work with the women who would be transitioning back into society. She wasn't sure she could do the work, but in the process of working with the inmates, she discovered that she had a gift for reconnecting them with their families, helping them find jobs, and providing resources for them as they learned how to live as significant members of society. Although I'm sure she encouraged them to attend church when they were out of prison and become involved in the life of the church, she did not preach to them - at least not with words.

Jesus invited the men who were fishing to follow him, telling them they would now fish for people. That is a great example for us, too. Part of hospitality is to invite. What if we made it a point to invite someone to church or a church activity at least once a month? Maybe there is a family member who has thought about going to church, but just hasn't been invited. Maybe there is a neighbor or co-worker who is longing to find a church family. Maybe there is a friend who sees us going to church and wonders what the big deal is. Maybe there is someone who simply needs a phone call once in a while because they are alone and lonely. Maybe there is a person who has lost a loved one and needs a card or an offer to go to lunch together. Maybe it's the family who hasn't been in church for a while and is afraid to return because of embarrassment that they haven't attended. Maybe it's someone who has gone through a divorce and just needs to feel encouraged and supported by others.

There are many ways we reach out to others to bring God's grace and caring to someone else. We make disciples for Christ when we share Christ with them and invite them to come to know him better. We need to get past our fear of being inadequate or saying the wrong thing because God will work through our ineptitudes and fumbblings anyway! It all starts with recognizing that God has given us something we can share; no gift is too small or unimportant. And we simply don't know what kind of seeds we have planted in someone else's heart when we witness to our faith through kindness, acceptance, and caring.

Years ago I read a devotional about a woman who invited her best friend to church every week. The friend always put her off, so she would say, "Okay. I'll pray for you every day." Her friend put it off and put it off, and finally, one day she actually went with the woman just to get her off her back. However, it was that morning in church that something happened in her heart, and she gave her life to Christ during that service. The two friends became volunteers in a in their town, and even though they didn't force their views on others, many people could see Christ in their lives and experienced their commitment to bringing Christ to others.

Our passion for Christ is what leads us to witness to our faith. That passion turns into a passion of caring for others. My life verse in the Bible is Matthew 22:37-39 - "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength . . . and your neighbor as yourself." (my paraphrase) Loving God with all our might and our neighbor as ourselves is a response to God's love. It becomes the joy of our lives. It becomes the driving force for us to treat others as we would want to be treated, and it opens our minds and hearts to care about others because that is what Jesus does. In caring and showing that we care, we are witnessing to our faith.

So this today, this week, this month, this year, and all our years, may we bait our hooks or pick up our nets, may we wade into the waters of humanity, may we cast our nets for Jesus and invite, invite, invite. We CAN make a difference for Christ in this world with the gifts God has given us. I remind us all again of the words of St. Francis of Assisi: "Go preach the gospel to all the world; use words if necessary."

Let us pray:

Remind us, O God of your presence with us as we seek to be faithful disciples of your Son, Jesus. Give us direction, words, actions, insights, and discernment as we reach out to others to bring a sense of your presence with them. Thank you for sending Jesus to teach us and lead us. We pray in his name. Amen.