

THE body *of* CHRIST



January 27, 2019
FUMC Portsmouth, NH

We Gather for Worship

Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light

Celebrations

***Call to Worship:**

L: The Spirit of God is upon us.

P: We are called to be God's people.

L: The Spirit of God is upon us.

P: We are called to be the body of Christ.

L: Come let us worship God, who binds us together in love and service.

***Hymn:** "They'll Know We are Christians"

TFWS #2223

A Time for the Child in all of Us

Prayer (unison):

For our slowness to recognize your gifts in other people and their calling to be children of God: Lord, have mercy.

For our reluctance to accept your free gifts and your gracious call to play our part in your ministry: Christ, have mercy. For any cause of division in your body for which we are responsible: Lord, have mercy.

Assurance of Forgiveness

L: God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. (*Romans 5:8*) Hear then Christ's word of grace to us: Your sins are forgiven.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Sung Response: "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"

UMH #349

Ministry of Music

We Proclaim the Word

Reading the Word: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

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

P: Thanks be to God.

Message: "The Body of Christ"

Rev. Deb Hanson

We Respond to God's Word

***Hymn:** "Help Us Accept Each Other"

UMH #560

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.

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):

Though many different amounts and ways, when gathered up by you, our gifts become a food pantry, a rebuilt life, medicine for children, a caregiver to the lonely - your grace in action. In love we offer these gifts in the name of Jesus. Amen.

We Go Forth to Serve

***Hymn:** "Blest Be the Tie that Binds"

UMH #557

***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*

Large print bulletins are available from the greeters

Please join us in Sanborn Hall after the worship service for coffee hour



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



This past week We welcomed Erin to our FUMC family as our new Administrative Assistant. When you get a chance please stop by and say hello.

The church office hours will be:

Tuesday 9:30 - 4

Wednesday 9:30 - 1

Thursday 9:30 - 4

Friday 9:30 - 1

Today please join us after the worship service for coffee hour...it's a great time to meet everyone and to catch up with each other.

February 5th Finance Trustee meeting @ 6pm at the parsonage.

February 19th Church Council meeting @ 6pm at the church

March 10th TO NOTE: SPRC meeting scheduled for 1/27 has been moved to 3/10 after worship.



**WE WILL
GAIN COURAGE FROM EACH OTHER
AND FROM OUR SHARED STORIES OF
GOD'S MIGHTY POWER**

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER:

Barbara & Jim Slater

Barbara Sylvester

Pauline Boynton

Barbara Millar

Clark Cole

Irene Derosier

Barbara Clement

Malia Broe

Trudy Parkhurst

Joette MacKenzie

Kim Hishop

Pastor Sue Ellery

Nancy Chesser's family

Gabor [Brianna's father in-law]

Our Church family

Rev. Bill Gardei

Gayle Gardei

Marion Collishaw

Sue Goodhue

Hunter Pinkley

Sylvia Bartlett

Brian Thompson

Pat McLaughlin

VanReenen Family

Gil Stebbins

Roseanne

Rev. David Kerr

Jim New

**Today's altar flowers are given
by Yvonne Griffin celebrating
her birthday this month.
Happy Birthday Yvonne!**





Sunday Worship Team

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Pastor's Assistant - David Richards

Liturgist - John VanReenen

Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek

Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal

Acolyte - Kaya Sarosiek

Greeters - Mike & Anne Coffey & Marilyn Stebbins

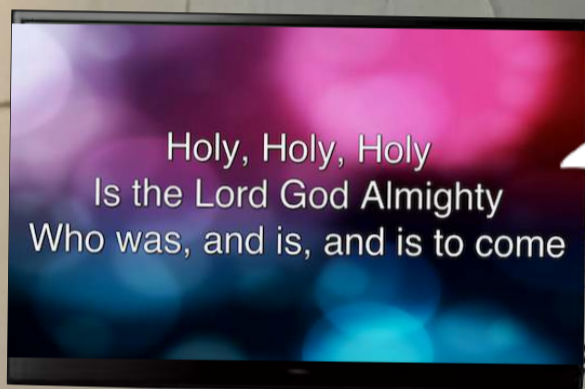
Ushers - Dave & Sue Richards & Jan & Al Cansdale

Sunday School - Kaya Sarosiek & Aerial Silanpaa

Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek

Worship Service Tech - Nancy Chesser

Photographer - Dave Atkinson



The Finance Trustees are looking for donations to replace the outdated screen and projector being used each Sunday with a large LED monitor. This monitor will provide higher screen quality

for content/visuals and words improving readability/clarity and overall better placement for enhanced visibility from all areas in the sanctuary and less disruption on the pulpit area.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration in our continued goal of enhancing our worship experience here at FUMC. Please see John VanReenen for details.

BE THE HOPE



In keeping with our continued "BE THE HOPE" Advent campaign and practicing it each and every day we have an opportunity to help our furloughed Coast Guard members during this challenging time.

If you want to help they can use \$20 Gift Cards [there is a limit to what they can accept under regulations]. See the church office for more information on how you can help.

**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. James McPhee, 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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SERMON GIVEN 1/27/19 BY
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

“The Body of Christ” – 1/27/19

First UMC – Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a (and references to last week's 1 Corinthians 12:1-11)

THEME: We are one in Christ and called to be the church in the world as we share our gifts.

Last week's scripture passage from the first half of 1 Corinthians 12, contained the apostle Paul's teachings about the gift of the Spirit that we are all given in order to build up the church. The point in those passages was Paul's reminder that the Spirit gives the gifts, and we are asked to share them with each other and the world. Not everyone is given the same gift, but all are given from God in order to carry on the work of Christ in the world: “. . . There are varieties of gifts, *but the same Spirit*; and there are varieties of services, *but the same Lord*; and there are varieties of activities, *but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.*”

We are one in Christ – one in the Trinity – and brought together by God who offers us many spiritual gifts: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, the ability to speak, the ability to understand what is said. These and many more gifts are offered in order to be in mission and ministry together, and some people are given one gift while others are given another. It is up to us to discover and accept those gifts and use them to glorify God.

When we bring our spiritual gifts together, we find that we also are more cohesive as a community of faith. Everyone is involved, and everyone works for the good of the church of Jesus Christ. It's always interesting to me that many churches struggle to focus on the work of Christ and become involved in actions that can become distracting and sometimes divisive. There is a story about *two men who were riding a bicycle built for two when they came to a big steep hill. It took a great deal of struggle for the men to complete what proved to be a very stiff climb. When they got to the top the man in front turned to the other and said, “Boy, that sure was a hard climb.” The fellow in back replied, “Yes, and if I hadn't kept the brakes on all the way we would certainly have rolled down backwards.”* (Illustrations Unlimited, p. 125, #5)

Putting the brakes on may seem like a helpful thing to do, but it also makes the work harder. Sometimes, when division happens in a church, wisdom and discernment are most needed. Along with that is the need to listen to others, to learn as much about a situation as possible, and to realize that there are always many interpretations of what is going on. The Spirit offers us gifts to make forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing happen, and yet, in so many churches, there are people who don't let go of those things that block them from accepting the gifts the Spirit gives. The gifts of the Spirit open us to new ways of solving issues and helps us set an example of living in and offering God's grace.

A small boy at a summer camp received a large package of cookies in the mail from his mother. He ate a few, then placed the remainder under his bed. The next day, after lunch, he went to his tent to get a cookie. The box was gone. That afternoon a camp counselor, who had been told of the theft, saw another boy sitting behind a tree eating the stolen cookies. He said to himself, “That young man must be taught not to steal.” He returned to the group and sought out the boy whose cookies had been stolen. He said, “Billy, I know who stole your cookies. Will you help me teach him a lesson?” The puzzled boy replied, “Well, yes—but aren't you going to punish him?” The counselor explained, “No, that would only make him

resent and hate you. No, I want you to call your mother and ask her to send you another box of cookies." The boy did as the counselor asked and a few days later received another box of cookies in the mail. The counselor said, "Now the boy who stole your cookies is down by the lake. Go down there and share your cookies with him. The boy protested, "But he's the thief." "I know. But try it—see what happens." Half an hour later the camp counselor saw the two come up the hill, arm in arm. The boy who had stolen the cookies was earnestly trying to get the other to accept his jackknife in payment for the stolen cookies, and the victim was just as earnestly refusing the gift from his new friend, saying that a few old cookies weren't that important anyway. (*Illustrations Unlimited*, pp. 217-218, #14)

Wisdom and discernment from the counselor helped the boys find forgiveness and healing. Relationships can be healed through the power of the Spirit and through human beings who are willing to open their minds and hearts to the work of the Spirit in their lives. Paul knew that the congregations in Corinth were often divided, arguing over who had better gifts than someone else, or what was the proper way to share communion, or whether they could continue to use rituals from their previous pagan worship. In today's passage, he builds on the idea of spiritual gifts and how they all fit together in one body. He reminds them that the body of Christ must work together, and everyone has a place in the body – no one is more important than anyone else; we just have different abilities – gifts – that make up the whole.

Paul appeals to them to have unity of purpose and offers them instruction on what it means to be "a church," the church where Jesus and his teachings are the focus. (*Information from the preface to 1 Corinthians found in The Access Bible*, p. 244). In Corinth, the small congregations were house churches that Paul had founded and had only been in existence for a short time. The letters to the Corinthian church are rich with teachings that help our churches today to remember that even in our generation, the gifts of the Spirit are intended for helping churches find unity in their mission and ministry as the Body of Christ. This includes resolving conflicts and helping others to find and share their gifts.

Last Sunday was Human Relations Day, set aside to offer us the opportunity to share our financial gifts with those who are on the margins of society, to support programs that help to improve literacy for the poor, seek justice for those who have experienced inequality, help released prisoners integrate back into society, sets up partnerships for after-school programs, home repairs, and other services, enables community development programs in poverty areas, provides support for troubled youth, helps fund recovery programs and school readiness programs, and a lot more. It is the church being the Church. Our contributions, combined with many other congregations, provide for places where we are not able to be or to go. These funds are shared in the United States as well as other places in the world.

We have been given the gift of being the Church, and we are a church that cares deeply about many things. Our outreach programs cover a lot of ground, but, let's face it, we are not able to be everywhere or offer everything. That's why the world-wide church can work together to make a difference in our local areas, national, and international locations. Jesus reached out to the poor and marginalized in his society, and we do the same.

Along with that outreach comes awareness that we have gifts to offer. Martin Luther King, Jr. never intended to become the spokesperson for the injustice of racism, but he reached a point

where he could no longer be silent – the gift of a prophetic voice. Many people joined him, and a movement was started that changed our country – or at least it started to. Racism still exists, and sometimes the Spirit leads us to speak out in order to stand up for equality for all people. Our God is a God of relationship.

And we are a people who are in relationship with God and each other. We have been given gifts from God by the power of the Spirit to be in ministry together as the Body of Christ so we can use those gifts to help relationships heal, grow, develop or whatever needs to happen in order to manifest Christ to the world. We are brought together from all aspects of life, in many places in our world, and the gifts we receive help to make a difference to others. As Christ's Body, we welcome everyone regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, physical challenges, age, or life challenges, just as Jesus did when he was on this earth.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism knew rejection from his own denomination – the Church of England. He was banned from preaching in the churches there, so he went to the masses, and he stated, "The world is my parish." His preaching brought hope to poor miners who struggled to make a living, and his acceptance of the outcasts in society modeled for the Methodist movement how they (and we) were (and are) called to speak out for social justice. He preached personal and social holiness. Personal holiness is growing in God's grace, being accountable for our faith journeys, and living so that the gifts of the Spirit were evident in our lives. Social holiness is reaching outward to the marginalized, rejected, and outcasts of our world. It is a call for justice, standing with those who have been treated unfairly. Wesley called for a balance of personal and social holiness.

Our spiritual gifts are part of who we are as United Methodists, as Christians, as the Church of Jesus Christ in the world. There is no perfect church, and far too often the Body of Christ is fractured and marred by division and behaviors that cause hurt and pain. There is truth to the saying that "A church isn't a haven for saints but a hospital for sinners." We all sin and fall short, but by the grace of God, we continue to be blessed with the gifts of the Spirit given to us as the Spirit chooses. And God works through these gifts – through us – to offer Christ to the world.

We are the Body of Christ. Sometimes we may not think we have anything to offer, but Paul teaches us that everyone matters, and everyone as something to offer. For example: *Sir Michael Costa was a great orchestral Conductor of the 19th Century. It is said that one day he was conducting a rehearsal in which the orchestra was joined by a great choir. Midway through the session the piccolo player stopped playing. It seemed innocent enough – after all who would miss the tiny piccolo amidst the great mass of instruments blazing away? All of a sudden Sir Michael stopped the entire orchestra and choir. "Stop! Stop! Where's the piccolo? What's happened to the piccolo?" We may sometimes feel like that piccolo player – that we don't have much to offer, that if we stopped our ministry no one would notice anyway. Yet the Great Conductor notices, and needs us to complete his orchestral masterpiece!* (<https://storiesforpreaching.com/category/sermonillustrations/church-body-of-christ/>)

I remember one woman in a church I served who was elderly and told me that she could come to church but was no longer able to do anything to participate in the life of the church. I asked

her if she could pray, and with a delighted look on her face, she answered, "I can do that!" I always considered her one of my "prayer warriors," because she would take the prayer list and pray over each name, and I could call her to ask her to pray when we were facing a tough issue at a church meeting or when someone was having a hard time. Often, no one knew that she was praying for them, but I believe it made a difference, and she felt that she was doing something significant.

We have examples of working together in community all around us. We can even learn from geese. *When you see geese flying along in "V" formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.*

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are travelling on the thrust of one another. When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone – and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front. If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those people who are headed the same way we are.

When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs, whether with people or with geese flying south. Geese honk from behind to encourage those who are up front to keep up their speed. What messages do we give when we honk from behind?

Finally, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshot, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies, and only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group. If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that. (Source: Unknown)

As the Body of Christ, we are called to work together to find ways to resolve our differences, nurture each other, and reach out to others. We are the church, not just a building; we are the church in the world. Rev. Stan Mast wrote about today's passage: "At a church conference a while back I saw a T-shirt that captured the good news of our text. The front of the T-shirt, the side people read as they approach, said, 'I don't go to church.' On the back, the side you read when you turn around after passing that provocative message, it said, 'I am the church.' Church is not a place to go. It is people on the go. Church is what I am. I am part of the Body of Christ." (Text This Week under commentaries for today's passage)

May we strive to BE the Body of Christ, to work TOGETHER to heal, grow, and keep our focus on being part of the mission and ministry of bringing Christ to the world, sharing our gifts, and growing in personal and social holiness.

Let us pray: **Spirit of the living God, we praise and adore you for empowering us to claim membership of the body of Christ, a gift received through the fullness of your grace. Empower us anew, we pray, with the power of your Spirit and hearts of love to proclaim**

the reconciling word among people. Remind us that we are all members of the one body and if one member suffers, we all suffer. We give thanks that all of us are Christ's body, and rejoice in each one being a part of it. Accept our adoration and praise for these great gifts, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen. *written by Moira Laidlaw (edited slightly by me), and posted on **Liturgies Online. <http://www.liturgiesonline.com.au/>***