

Dear Friends,

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 (Common English Bible)
Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

As we leave 2020 behind (thank goodness!) and enter 2021 we wonder what lies ahead. We can only speculate, but we can also trust that God has already gone ahead of us to prepare the way. The verses from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians is a good reminder for us to begin our New Year with prayer, asking for God's guidance, and giving thanks.

The Advent/Christmas season was filled with so many things for which to be thankful. The list could go on and on, but here are a few things to lift up: the generosity and faithfulness of so many who continue to support our mission and ministry in the midst of COVID-19, the joint Advent Devotions shared with folks from the Eliot UMC, St. Mark's UMC, and our congregation, the jointly shared children's Christmas pageant, and our beautifully decorated church building.

May this list, along with your own, be a springboard into 2021 where we pray without ceasing and find reasons to be thankful in spite of a pandemic, in spite of a divided nation and world, and in spite of anything that may come into our lives to challenge us. Please know that you are in my prayers every day, and I give thanks for all of you.

Love and blessings, Rev. Deb

Liturgist Sign-up

Anyone who would like to be part of reading the liturgies for the Sunday videos, may sign up through this link: https://signup.com/go/RrbfxUv. There are many openings for this next year! We record the videos at the church on Saturday morning at 10 am, and Rev. Deb sends out the readings in the middle of the week. If anyone has questions, contact Rev. Deb.

Visioning ZOOM meeting

Our Visioning team will meet via ZOOM on Sunday, January 17 at 11 am, following the worship gathering. Kevin Fickenscher will send an invitation to the team prior to the meeting.

Please keep sending your pledges and donations.

As we begin our New Year, please continue to support our church's ministries, administrative needs, salaries, and building maintenance through your financial giving. Maybe this year will offer all of us the opportunity to give just a little more than we did during 2020. Your faithfulness in sending your financial support is very much appreciated. Thank you so much!

Statements Available by email

Our financial secretary, Nancy Chesser, would like to send end of year financial statements to those who have email. This will save postage and the cost of envelopes. However, anyone who would like to have a printed statement should let her know, and she will send them to you.



Mission Shares

We celebrate that we have been able to pay our Mission Shares in full. By paying these, we participate in many missions of the United Methodist Church. This is an important part of our commitment to the UMC, and we are grateful for so many who have helped to make this happen.

Sunday School

Even though we have not been able to meet in our church building, Rev. Deb is sending out activity sheets for the children (or anyone who would like to have fun with them). These are based on the scripture for each Sunday. We will continue to do this until we are able to meet again in person. Please share them with any children you know!

Safe Sanctuary Policy

The Church Council adopted a Safe Sanctuary Policy at their December 15th meeting. The policy is available to anyone who is interested and copies will be on file at the church office. This is an important policy for us to have in place to protect our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. For more information, please contact Rev. Deb.





From the James W. New II Family

Would like to thank the church family for your cards, phone calls and prayers.
Love and God's Blessings,
Evelyn, Anissa, and Tamara

From Rev. Deb Hanson

Thank you for the gifts you give me all year long, and thank you for the gifts given at Christmas this year. I appreciate your thoughtfulness very much. Rev. Deb

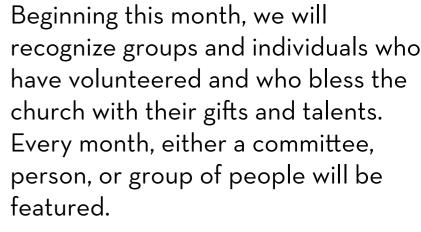
From Bevan Bloemendaal

What a crazy year we have had being disconnected and yet I still feel connected to each of you...while I don't get to see all your faces I know that we are all keeping each other in thoughts, prayers, some distanced visits, Facebook posts, phone calls and emails have all helped guide us through these times. Thank you for once again allowing me to be part of your loving FUMC family...as always your passion, compassion and generosity amaze me. Thank you. With gratitude and love, Bevan









Recognition of Volunteers







This month we recognize ALL who helped with our "Share The Joy" Campaign. The donations exceeded our initial goal of helping 4 local NH kids and family to helping 51 foster kids, families and at risk kids in the Seacoast area.

We recognize the passion of the







We recognize the passion of the leadership task force - Bevan, Sue S, Sue R, Airial and Rev Deb in making this community outreach a reality for Christmas 2020. There were many angels that helped us from decorating, photography, marketing, donating, shopping, wrapping to delivering JOY to those who needed it the most. Thank You!

The KIDS FIRST program will continue to be an important FUMC community outreach program 12 months out of the year.





UPDATE - IT IS WITH HUMBLE GRATITUDE
THAT WE THANK YOU FOR HELPING US
SHARE THE JOY FOR 51 LOCAL NH FOSTER
AND AT RISK KIDS' LIVES THIS CHRISTMAS.
YOUR GENEROSITY HAS MADE AN
INCREDIBLE DIFFERENCE AND A CHRISTMAS
FOR THEM TO REMEMBER WITH GREAT JOY...
THANK YOU!

This year has been challenging in countless ways and we are reminded of that family traveling to Bethlehem who had nothing, but through the kindness of an innkeeper they were given a place to stay.

Our fundraiser this year is "Share The Joy" a collaboration between the FUMC Kids First program and with Airial Sillanpaa who is the President of the NHFAPA [NH Foster and Adoptive Parent Association] and FUMC Kids First program in making a difference in some local kids lives this Christmas.

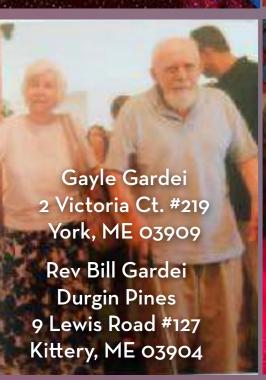
PRAYER LIST

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



Barbara Clement Riverside Rest Home 276 County Farm Rd #304 Dover, NH 03820







OUR FAMILY WHO CAN'T MAKE IT TO CHURCH A card can make a big difference in someone's day!







If you or someone you love is struggling with the holiday blues, you are not alone. Many people are finding the season difficult this year. While these tips may not make one jolly, they can help us celebrate more fully through this holy season.

10 WAYS TO DEAL WITH THE HOLIDAY BLUES

- 1. Feel your feelings. The only way out is through.
- 2. Open up to others. You don't have to face this alone.
 - 3. Meditate to quiet the thoughts that torment you.
 - Start a new holiday tradition instead of focusing on what once was.
 - 5. Try light therapy to counter grey weather.
 - 6. Make a gift. Creativity can be therapeutic.
 - 7. Get moving. Exercise boosts endorphins.
 - 8. Get outside, even if it's cold. Nature heals.
- 9. Treat yourself. A little self-care can go a long way.
- 10. Give to someone in need and get a helper's high.

LORI DESCHENE





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. FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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Website - fumcportsmouth.com

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson Like and Follow Us On: []



HAPPY NEW YEAR