

A close-up photograph of a person's face and hands in a prayerful pose. The person's eyes are closed, and their hands are clasped together in front of their face. The image has a teal and red color overlay. The text "NEVER STOP PRAYING" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

**NEVER  
STOP  
PRAYING**

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.



GOOD  
TO  
KNOW

### **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.



GOOD  
TO  
KNOW



**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

Beginning this month, we will recognize groups and individuals who have volunteered and who bless the church with their gifts and talents. Every month, either a committee, person, or group of people will be featured.



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 leadership task force - Bevan, Sue S, Sue R, Aerial 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.





— WE CAN USE YOUR HELP —  
IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE —  
**THIS CHRISTMAS**



**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 Aerial 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



Marion Collishaw  
50 Old Colony Way  
Scituate MA 02066



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

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



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



Barbara Glidden  
188 Jones Ave #101  
Portsmouth, NH 03801



Gil Stebbins  
143 Rogers Rd #105  
Kittery, ME 03904  
207.807.6675

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# OUR FAMILY

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

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## January

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

31 Yvonne Griffin

31 Tim Orr

31 Karin Scott

31 Vicki David

31 Yvonne Griffin



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.
4. 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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Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson  
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2021

HAPPY NEW YEAR