



WHO
WE ARE

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. James McPhee, District Superintendent

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

129 Miller Avenue - Portsmouth, NH 03801

Office Phone 603-436-6038 office@fumcportsmouth.net

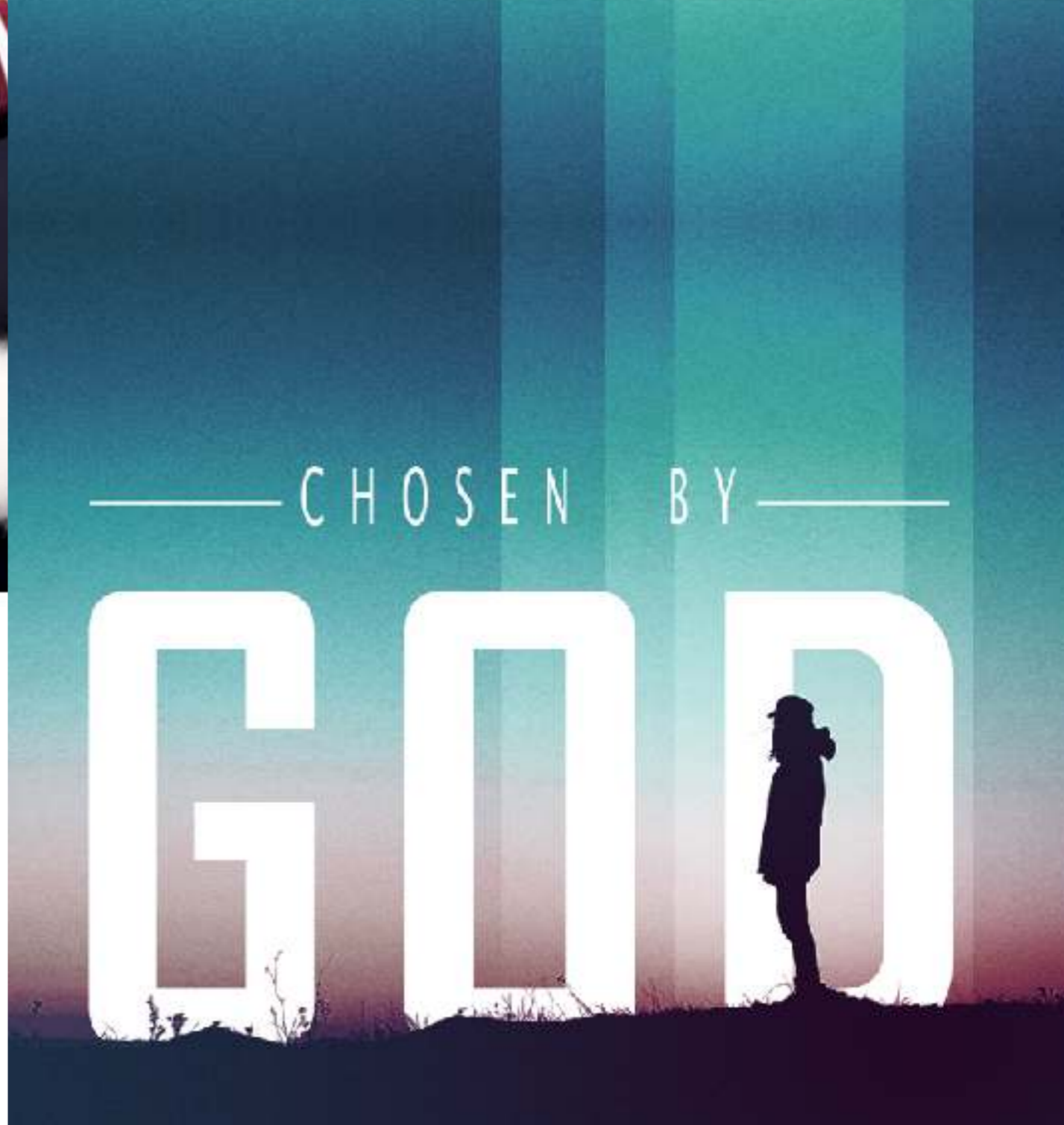
Pastor office hours - Tuesday and Thursday 9 am - 12 pm

[call to ensure availability]

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Check out our website at www.fumcportsmouth.com

Like and Follow Us On:   



**June 30, 2019
FUMC Portsmouth**

We Gather for Worship

Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light

Celebrations

***Call to Worship**

L: We have come to listen to the biblical stories.

All: We have come to consider our own stories.

Side 1: Have you seen blazing chariots?

Side 2: Have you felt the whirling wind?

Side 1: Have you known the sacred silence?

Side 2: Have you rejoiced in restored life?

L: Have you heard the voice of truth?

Side 1: In the stories of prophets and kings,

Side 2: In the stories of widows and orphans,

Side 1: In your story,

Side 2: and your story,

L: in all our stories:

All: God shows up.

L: May we have eyes to see and ears to hear.

***Hymn:** "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah" UMH #127

A Time for the Child in all of Us

Prayer (unison)

Come, Holy God, offer us your mantle of love and power in this place. In the shelter of its love let us lay before you our troubles, our longings, our hopes. Let its power open us to new ways through difficulty, struggle and loss into your Spirit's realm of joy and peace. Come, Holy God, in your presence there is fullness of glory. Amen.

Sung Response: "O Lord, Hear My Prayer" TFWS #2200

Ministry of Music

We Proclaim the Word

Reading the Word: 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14; 1 Peter 2:9-10

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

P: Thanks be to God.

Message: "Passing the Mantle"

We Respond to God's Word

***Hymn:** "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" UMH #703

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)

Help us, God, as followers of Christ to offer ourselves and our possessions to bring hope and help to those who need to know your presence through us. Amen.

We Go Forth to Serve

***Hymn:** "Spirit of God" TFWS #2117

***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*

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 worshipping our God so you leave this place feeling that you have been blessed to be a blessing. Please join us again!

Rev. Deb Hanson



Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson
Pastor's Assistant - David Richards
Liturgist - Dave Atkinson
Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek
Acolyte - Alexa Langs
Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal
Greeters - Steve and Kellie Langs
Ushers - Nancy Chesser & Art Munson
Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek
Worship Service Tech - Steve Scott
Photographer - Dave Atkinson

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER...

Gayle Gardei
Marion Collinshaw
Sue Goodhue
Hunter Pinkley
Sylvia Bartlett
Brian Thompson
Malia Broe
Gil Stebbins
Rev. Bill Gardei
Woodie Lange
Roseanne
Rev. David Kerr
Jim New
Dan Hislop and family
Bobbie Noble
Pastor Sue Ellery
Judy Doyon
Charles Gilman
Diederich Family
Aunt Karen (PennySue)
Our Church Family
Barbara & Jim Slater
Barbara Sylvester
Pauline Boynton
Barbara Millar
Irene Derosier
Barbara Clement
Joette MacKenzie
Vicky Fernandez
Alissa Fernandez
Jessie
John Richards



**Today's altar flowers are
given by Evelyn Laux in honor
of Chris's birthday**



Upcoming Events

FUMC office will be closed for Independence Day, July 4, 2019.

Summer Sunday School

Sunday school will continue for the summer. The children will be watching DVD's on the "Ten Commandments" as well as learning about some of the biblical stories we will be focusing on during our worship time. All are welcome, and if there are those who would be willing to give the regular teachers a break, even if it is for one Sunday, please let Rev. Deb know. Thanks!

Camperships are available for children and youth who would like to attend Wanakee! We pay part of the cost. Contact David Richards if you are interested.

Finance Trustees Meeting on July 9, 2019 at 6:00 pm at the Parsonage. All are welcome.

Memorial Service for Fred Pettigrew on July 20th at 11am.

Church Council meeting on July 23, at 6 pm in the church office.

The **Finance Trustees** and **Church Council** will have a combined meeting on August 13, at 6 pm in the church office.

UMC Market Place

<https://umcmarket.org/>

Do you shop online? Have you ever heard of UMC Market Place? This is a place where you can shop on line with places like Staples, Bed, Bath, and Beyond, Travelocity, and many other online stores, and when you go through the UMC Market.org, a percentage will be sent to the church. It's a great way to do fundraising with what you are already doing! To learn more, visit the website above and read about how it works, then sign up using First UMC, Portsmouth as the benefiting church. If you have any questions, please ask Rev. Deb.

Fundraising Ideas

Do you love **Texas Roadhouse Rolls**? Would you be interested in participating in a Fundraiser. This would consist of taking orders and distributing your orders upon delivery. Please let Rev Deb know you'd participate.

Congratulations!

Linda Reiber received the Lifetime of Discipleship Award at our District Conference. Read the full article on the bulletin board.

Congratulations!

Art Munson received the James S. Cogswell outstanding industrial Security Achievement award. He received 1 of 51 awards from 13,000 facilities read the full press release on the bulletin board.



Come join us for coffee hour after the church service in Sanborn Hall...we'd love to catch up with you and see how your week has gone.



A Prayer for Suffering Children

**God of All Children Everywhere,
Our hearts are bruised when we see children suffering alone.
Our hearts are torn when we are unable to help. Our hearts are
broken when we have some complicity in the matter. For all the
times we were too busy and shooed a curious child away,
forgive us, oh God. For all the times we failed to get down on
their level and look eye to eye with a child, forgive us, oh God.
For all the times we did not share when we saw a hungry child
somewhere in the world, forgive us, oh God. For all the times
we thought about calling elected officials to demand change,
but did not, forgive us, oh God. For all the times we thought
that caring for the children of this world was someone else's
responsibility, forgive us, oh God.**

**With Your grace, heal our hearts. With Your grace, unite us in
action. With Your grace, repair our government. With Your
grace, help us to find a way to welcome all children everywhere,
That they may know that Jesus loves them, Not just because
“the Bible tells them so,” But because they have known Your
love in real and tangible ways, And they know that nothing,
absolutely nothing, can separate them from Your love.
Amen.**



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SERMON GIVEN 6/30/19 BY
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

“Passing the Mantle” – June 30, 2019
First UMC – Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

SCRIPTURES: 2 Kings 2:1-12, 6-14; 1 Peter 2:9-10

THEME: When we pass the mantle, we continue the ministry of Christ in the world.

It was time for Elijah to go. His ministry as the chief prophet of Israel was coming to an end. Last week we heard about how God spoke to Elijah in the sheer silence following a strong wind, earthquake, and fire. When he went down the mountain, Elijah stopped at a field where a young man named Elisha was working. Instead of just passing by, he felt God’s nudge to call Elisha to become a prophet, too, so Elijah threw his cloak over Elisha and commissioned him.

From that point on, Elisha became Elijah’s protégé, and they traveled everywhere together. The other prophets of Israel noticed them wherever they went, especially when they followed the path that would lead Elijah to the place where he would be taken into heaven.

Today’s passage about transition of power is rather strange and full of symbolism. While Elisha stands at the banks of the Jordan River which they had just crossed after Elijah struck the water and parted it, a chariot of fire and horses of fire came between them. The chariot and horses are drawn from the ancient belief that God is the “commander and chief” of all of heaven, and the whirlwind often represents an action or a revelation from God.

As the other prophets watched from afar, Elisha saw the mantle or cloak from Elijah fall to the ground, and, as Elisha had asked, he not only received the mantle, but also a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. In ancient times, the inheritance of the oldest son in a family inherited double of everything while other sons had a single portion. Elijah and Elisha were like father and son in many ways. Elisha learned from his mentor, and as he stood watching Elijah drawn into heaven, the reality of his new role and as the chosen lead prophet must have overwhelmed him, for he cries out “Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” (v. 12) A new era had begun as Elisha picked up the mantle with anxiety, realizing that he was now on his own. Yet, he confidently began to serve God using what he had learned from his friend, companion, and teacher, Elijah.

I invite you to think of people who have been mentors to you. What did you learn from them? How did you learn – by observation, reflection, discussion, classroom studies, working side by side, or other means of learning? In the United Methodist Church, ordained Elders are expected to mentor those who have felt called to becoming a pastor or who are serving as pastors either as probationers or as local pastors. This week, I was thinking about all the people I have mentored – some at the point of exploring their call, some through candidacy, some local pastors, and a few who went on to be ordained. Over the course of 22 years, I worked with ten people (that I can remember – it may have been more), and of those ten seven quit the process or eventually gave up their role as a candidate or local pastor, one is currently a local pastor serving a church in Maine (and I still mentor her), and two went on to be ordained as Elders.

That’s a large percentage of people who gave up! When I mentioned this to a friend of mine and wondered if I had failed them, she said, “No. Just because they decided to quit that

process doesn't mean that you failed them, but that you helped them discern their calling so they knew that they were on the wrong path." When we mentor people, it's helpful to remember that they don't always have to say "This is for me!" or do it "our" way.

Passing the mantle happens when the other person has accepted the role to which he or she has been called and then carries on that work, hopefully with a double portion of wisdom and spirit. Interestingly, I have tea every so often with one of the pastors who has been ordained, and we now mentor and support each other. Her wisdom and insight are very helpful to me, as I hope mine is to her.

We can be chosen to serve God in so many ways. The scriptures are full of places where work needs to be done in the spirit of Christ's ministry. When we read Romans 12 or 1 Corinthians 12, we discover a long list of work to be done in the churches. Our call as a church is to be in ministry together and outside the walls of our building. We learn together in community and then disperse outwardly. The early church congregations needed instructions on how to "be" the church.

Those to whom this letter is addressed were gentiles who had been converted to faith in Jesus Christ. They were "newbies" in the faith, and the letter encouraged them to understand that they had been called to carry on Jesus' ministry. They may not particularly know everything, but they would learn. Perhaps most of all, they could find confidence in the fact that they had been called by God in their baptism to be part of that mission. We only heard two verses from the 1 letter of Peter, but they offer great encouragement and a reminder of their identity. Hear them as if they were written to all of us:

But you, congregation of First United Methodist Church, Portsmouth, NH, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people. In order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." (1 Peter 2:9-10 NRSV)

We are not a church without Jesus Christ. We are not a church when we try to do things on our own power and leave God out. We are a church when we work together to do the work of Christ to which we are called. We are a church not just here in this building but in the world. What we do as we minister to the world matters, and we CAN make a difference!

Our words, actions, and behaviors witness to others as we interact with family, friends, co-workers, and people we encounter whom we don't even know. When I moved to New England many years ago, several of my family members told me that New Englanders weren't friendly. They told me that they are very reserved and would give you a cold shoulder. I haven't found that to be true, even though many people stare at me as if to say that I have the nerve to say "hi" without permission.

We are all members of the family of God; everyone is a beloved child of God even though they may not always act that way. It's helpful to ask ourselves, "If Jesus was here, how would I act toward that person? What would I say? Would it be different in his presence?" As the church of Jesus Christ, we mentor each other in the faith. What does it mean to belong to this or any

family of God? What do we learn by watching and learning from our brothers and sisters who live out their faith? What do we learn from Elijah and Elisha about the companionship that helps us all grow in faith?

It seems to me that we might consider **trust**, **a willingness to learn**, **acceptance**, and **love**. Elisha didn't know Elijah when they met, yet he went with him to learn from him and take on his work eventually. He trusted him and grew as an apprentice of sorts, eventually receiving the double portion of his mentor's spirit. Elijah taught him insight, discernment, and how to be in communication with God in significant ways. Elisha loved Elijah like a father and recognized how important Elijah was in his life and in his new vocation. When Elijah is finally gone, Elisha has to gather his wits about him and carry on.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, his disciples gathered together, reminded each other of his teachings and example, worshiped, and received the power of the Holy Spirit which helped them carry on the ministry and mission of Jesus in spreading God's love. The apostle Paul took the good news beyond Israel to the gentiles, a once hated and reviled people, but the church of Jesus Christ has grown world-wide with thousands of followers because of their witness. We all may worship in different ways, but we all have the same calling – to be the priesthood of all believers, to BE the light of Christ in the world.

Sometime during the early 2000's, I was serving at the church in Hampden, ME. I had a habit of rising very early, around 5:00 am and working on my computer. One morning, the rain woke me along with some thunder, so I got up and went to my computer to do another review of my sermon for that Sunday.

Suddenly, there was a huge boom, and then silence. After looking out all the windows, and not seeing trees down or resting on the parsonage, I went back to my computer. But about ten minutes later, someone rang my doorbell, and I discovered a Hampden police officer standing there. He greeted me, then asked, "Did you know the church was hit by lightning?" I grabbed my church keys and went out with him where, by then, a crowd had gathered in front where, sure enough, the steeple had a large gaping hole whose edges had been blackened from the strike.

When we checked inside, we discovered that the damage seemed to have mostly been at the front of the church. The telephone in the nursery downstairs was out and the wire was blackened from where the force of the lightning traveled. The computers at the back seemed all right, but – interestingly – the lights in the sanctuary would not go out. Regardless of what we did, the lights remained on.

After a lot of conversations and calls, the trustees and I finally were able to find people help us fix those things that had been affected, and we were thankful that nothing else had been damaged. However, I went home and rewrote my sermon totally. When the lights in the sanctuary couldn't be turned off, I was reminded that Jesus had told us to be a light to the world – to carry his light to the world.

Our light – the light of Christ within us as a church, made up of the people of God – all of us – should never go out. We live our faith in the world for all to see. That's what the song we sang

with the children this morning was all about – “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.” The light of Christ shines in us and through us, reaching out to a world that seeks something positive, longs to find hope, cries for justice, and where people struggle to make ends meet, feed their families, put a roof over their head, find health care they can afford.

The voices we have are the ones that speak for those who have been silenced, forced into submission, pushed aside, and punished when they do speak out or ask for help. The light of Christ never goes out, and, as the church, remind each other of that Light when we worship together, and then we carry that Light into the world. We have a symbol of that in our service when the acolyte comes in carrying the candle lighter, lights the candles, and at the end of the service extinguishes the candles, but relights the wick of the candle lighter when carried out.

Every week, we hand out a figurative mantle to remind each other that we have been called to ministry for Christ in the world as the priesthood of all believers. *“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”*

WE are God’s people. Let’s keep our lights burning brightly. Let’s support each other and care for each other and encourage each other. “Let’s continue the wonderful ministries we are doing together, and let us BE the Church in the world as we strive to shine the light of Christ to others. Beloved children, YOU are chosen to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. What an opportunity! What a gift! What a challenge! What a blessing!

Let us pray:

Oh, God, sometimes we think we are doing enough for you. Yet there are times when we forget our call to be the priesthood of all believers. We hide our lights and go about our business trying to do things our own way. Remind us to stop, talk with you, talk with others, learn from each other, and help each other grow in ministry wherever we are in whatever we do. May all that we do be to glorify you and share your love. Amen.