

FOR GOD
SO LOVED
THE WORLD
THAT HE GAVE

**HIS ONE AND
ONLY SON,**

THAT WHOEVER
BELIEVES
IN HIM
SHALL NOT
PERISH BUT HAVE
ETERNAL
LIFE

JOHN 3:16



2021

LENT

JOURNEY

Sunday March 14th

Prelude

Introduction

Invitation

Call to Worship:

John Wesley reminds us that the world is our parish, and especially today we remember how we are connected to our brothers and sisters everywhere. God's family reaches out to those near and far: beyond borders, oceans, mountains to bring us together in Christ. God so loved the world, and that is all of us, everywhere. Let us worship together!

Hymn: "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light," vv. 1,2 (UMH #206)

Reading the Word: John 3:14-21

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

Ministry of Music

Message: "God So Loved The World"

"God so loved the world." How familiar the John 3:16 verse is to so many of us! Among the scripture passages in the Bible that share the Good News of God's love with us, and this is certainly one of the most familiar. In all the verses found in today's reading, we are reminded that following Jesus is a challenge. It's not a simple matter of knowing God loves us; rather, it is making a commitment to live lives that reflect the Light of Christ in the world and that seek to serve God.

Verse 21 reads, "But anyone who follows the true way comes to the light. Then the light will show that whatever they have done was done through God." This calls for giving ones self to God and living a life that serves God. None of us is able to do this perfectly. We all fall short and put our own needs ahead of others. However, that is what grace is all about. God's love is big and wide and deep enough to forgive us, pick us up, dust us off, and point us in the right direction again.

But there is another assumption that often happens when we read John 3:16. Most of us tend to ignore two words: “the world.” We take the message of “God so loved the world,” for ourselves, apply it to ourselves, and make it our own, but “the world” means far more than just our own small corner of the globe.

There is an organization in the United Methodist Church called UMCOR, which stands for the United Methodist Committee on Relief. This organization is world-wide, and we are often invited to send financial and material donations to help when there has been a natural disaster or some kind of event that has brought destruction to people’s lives.

UMCOR is made up of volunteers from all over the world who respond to situations that have happened to disrupt and often destroy people’s homes and livelihoods. While I was serving in a previous church, we had a group of people who went through the training so they would be part of helping if needed in our area. Whenever disaster strikes, UMCOR is there immediately, because those who have been trained live in that area.

Shortly after the training had taken place, there was flooding in Vermont, and some of the newly trained and well as seasoned volunteers responded to help churches, families, and businesses clean up, rebuild, and begin to recover. No matter where this type of disaster happens in THE WORLD, UMCOR is there because of the volunteers who live in that place. Here is a video that talks about UMCOR.

As you may have learned, we take a special offering every second Sunday of March to support the administrative work of UMCOR so that 100% of any donation sent for a particular project may go directly to the situation. It’s so important for us to help UMCOR continue to do this work in the world, whether is it next door or oceans away.

We don’t always see the effects that hurricanes, tsunamis, tornadoes, earthquakes or other disasters have in other countries. I had the privilege of visiting Nicaragua a number of years ago on a mission trip, so whenever a disaster strikes there, it catches my attention. A good example is the after effects of two category 4 storms, Hurricane Eta and Hurricane Iota made landfall from the Atlantic within weeks of each other.

UMCOR partnered with Accion Medica Cristiana (AMC) in Nicaragua to provide immediate food relief for residents of 11 communities. Dr. Belinda Forbes, a missionary who works with AMC, confirmed that the families receiving aid were among the most vulnerable sectors of the population: pregnant women, new mothers, families with children under five years of age, elderly residents and subsistence farmers who lost their crops. Subsistence farmers and women with young children were two of the vulnerable groups targeted in Nicaragua to receive AMC emergency relief in partnership with UMCOR.

Forbes shared the story of Bessie Rios, a woman who lost her fruit trees: “Bessie says her children ask, ‘when will we eat that fruit again?’ as they talked about living through the hurricanes.” Rios is part of an organized group of indigenous women that benefited in the past from UMCOR water and nutrition grants and work to support women in their community. Her family received a food aid packet from AMC.

Dr. Forbes said that the UMCOR grant, along with some additional funding, contributed to relief for 896 families in another region. AMC’s work in disaster preparedness equipped local community leaders with the capacity to help during the emergency caused by the hurricanes.

These are only a few instances of how we, as followers of Jesus, offer support and care in whatever way we are called, so that we can be part of sharing the love of God with others near and far. “God so loved the world.” It is a statement that has huge implications for all of us when we choose to live as those who bring the love of God to others.

We may be called to share God’s love wherever we live and work right now, or maybe we are called to financially support missionaries and mission programs throughout the United States and the world. Or, perhaps someone might feel a call to step out of their comfort zone to take a mission trip or learn more about what it means to be a missionary. Wherever - however - we are called, let us remember that God’s love is for ALL of the world. “God so loved the WORLD.” May our journeys continue to be marked by God’s love that is proclaimed through the way we live our lives, how we share the Light of Christ with others, seeking to share God’s truth, and in the ways we serve God, near and far. “God so loved the world!” Amen.

Prayer:

God of all, you claim us as your children, regardless, of race, ethnic origins, location, and economic circumstances. You sent Jesus to give us life, not only life eternal, but the fullness of life in the here and now. As we remember that you love the world, may we share from our abundance to help connect with our brothers and sisters wherever there is need in this world, whether it is next door or in another country. May we see the face of Christ on our neighbors near and far. Open our eyes and hearts to make a difference in this world by sharing our resources, prayers, and love with others. Amen

The Lord’s Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.

Hymn: “O How He Loves You and Me” (FWS #2108)

Blessing

PRAYER WARRIORS NEEDED

Jen Patria
Bill Stover
Naomi
Erin Frane
Jim Slater
Charles Gilman
Barbara Clement

Harry Junkins
Fred Walton
Sophia
Barbara Glidden
Bobbie Noble
Dan Strange
Danny Westbrook

Juliann

The family of Jeanne Westcott
The family of Bill and Gayle Gardei
Jen - Stebbins daughter-in-law
Those in nursing and assisted living care
Front line workers
Our Denomination
Our Country
Our Church family
Those who have lost loved ones to COVID



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.



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
129 Miller Avenue - Portsmouth, NH 03801
Office Phone 603-436-6038
Email - office@fumcportsmouth.net
Website - fumcportsmouth.com

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