

**With All Your Heart  
Lenten Series 2019**

***“ONE IN CHRIST”***

**March 31, 2019  
FUMC Portsmouth, NH**

*We Gather for Worship*

**Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light**

**Celebrations**

**\*Call to Worship**

L: Our Lenten journey continues. Often the road has been stony and hard. Sometimes we have stumbled and even fallen.

**P: But God has been our friend and our guide. We have no cause to be alarmed. God is faithful to us, even when we are faithless.**

L: Today we rejoice in God's faithful love, and together ask for strength and signs of hope and life.

**P: And again we are drawn together to celebrate the life that is ours in Christ Jesus. Thanks be to God!**

**\*Hymn:** "Lord, We Come to Ask Your Blessing"      TFWS #2230

**A Time for the Child in all of Us**

**Prayer** (unison)

**Creator of Beauty, help us to find the beauty in life, in your creation, in our very selves. Help us to lift up what is good and wonderful, kind and thoughtful and beautiful, in our lives and in the lives of others. Call us away from the negativity in the world that causes us to judge and look down on others, and instead to embrace your goodness that is in all that you have created. In the name of Jesus the Christ, who turned death into eternal life, and turns our sin into forgiveness and restoration, we pray. Amen.**

**Sung Response**

"Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"

TFWS #2193

**Ministry of Music**

*We Proclaim the Word*

**Reading the Word:** Joshua 5:9-12; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

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

**P: Thanks be to God.**

**Message:** "One in Christ"

Rev. Deb Hanson

*We Respond to God's Word*

**\*Hymn:** "And Are We Yet Alive," vv. 1,3,6

UMH #553

**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)

**Thank you, God, for the generosity that enables us to share. We are rich in many things. Help us to empty ourselves of pretense, even as we pour out gifts of gratitude. We dedicate our offerings and ourselves to shaping the community you intend, in the spirit of Christ.**

**Amen.**

*We Go Forth to Serve*

**\*Hymn:** "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling," vv. 1,2,4

UMH #384

**\*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*

*UMH = United Methodist Hymnal    TFWS = The Faith We Sing*

*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 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



Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Pastor's Assistant - David Richards

Liturgist - Sue Richards

Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek

Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal

Guest Pianist-Sal Hughes

Acolyte - Kaya Sarosiek

Greeters - Ken & Sharon Capron & Marilyn Stebbins

Ushers - Art Munson & Nancy Chesser

Sunday School - Dave Atkinson

Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek

Worship Service Tech - Steve Scott

Photographer - Dave Atkinson

**Today's altar flowers are given by Erin  
to say "Thank you" to each of you  
that has extended such a warm  
welcome for my time here!**



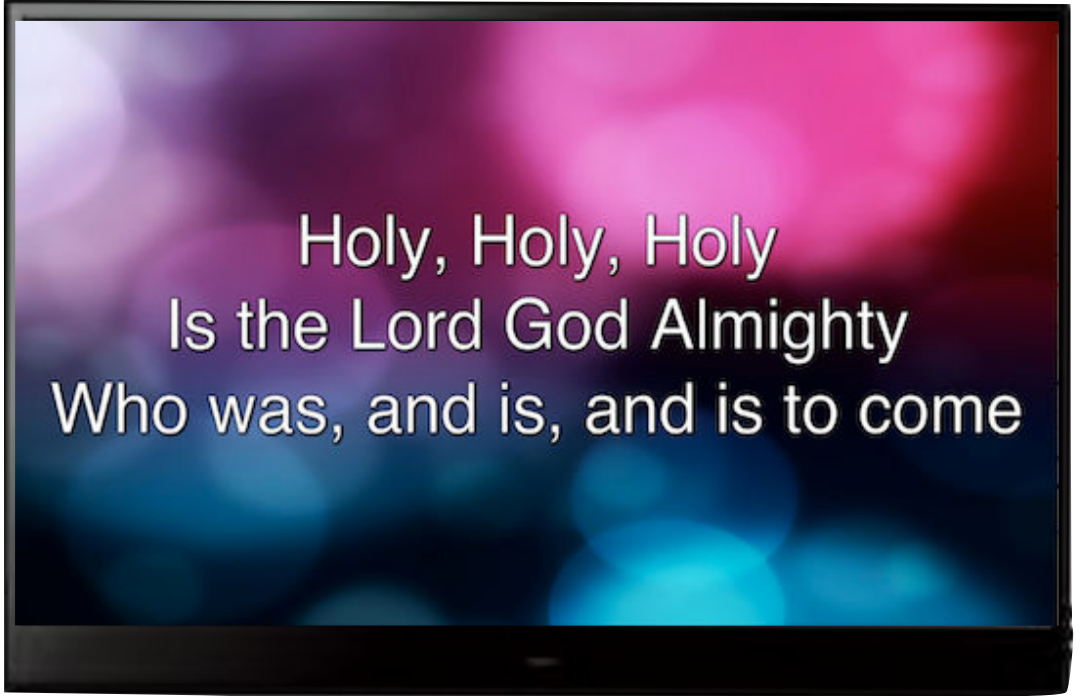
"If you seek Me early  
and diligently, you  
will find Me."

Proverbs 8:17

Gayle Gardei  
Marion Collishaw  
Sue Goodhue  
Hunter Pinkley  
Sylvia Bartlett  
Brian Thompson  
Our Church family  
Gil Stebbins  
Rev. Bill Gardei  
Woodie Lange  
Roseanne  
Rev. David Kerr  
Jim New  
Kim Hishop  
Charles Gilman

Barbara & Jim Slater  
Barbara Sylvester  
Pauline Boynton  
Barbara Millar  
Irene Derosier  
Barbara Clement  
Malia Broe  
Joette MacKenzie  
Vicky Fernandez  
Alissa Fernandez  
Art Munson  
Gabor [Brianna's father in-law]  
Family of Trudy Parkhurst  
Pastor Sue Ellery  
Judy Doyon

**We have reached our  
goal for the TV Monitor!!!  
Thank you to everyone  
who contributed their  
generous support!**

A television monitor with a black frame, displaying a religious hymn. The background of the screen is a soft-focus image of colorful bokeh lights in shades of purple, pink, and blue.

Holy, Holy, Holy  
Is the Lord God Almighty  
Who was, and is, and is to come

# UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**This is UMCOR Sunday** when we receive a special offering for the United Methodist Committee on Relief. An envelope is included for any gift that is offered, and there is a brief description of the work of UMCOR. Please support this important missional work.

**Offering envelopes** are available on the kitchen counter for those that would like them.

There will be no **Finance Trustees Meeting** on 4/2. That meeting will be combined with the **Church Council Meeting** scheduled for 4/16 at 6pm in the church.

**Spring Clean Up** April 6th 9-2pm lunch is provided. Sign up sheet in Sanborn Hall.

**Lent 40 Day 40 Item Challenge** Remember one item a day!

# **SFP CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**Monday, June 3rd at Pease Golf  
Course...Open to all!**

**Win a Subaru Assent courtesy of  
Exeter Subaru. Silent auction,  
games, history of golf hole special  
and more.**

**1 PM shotgun and includes dinner  
and silent auction. \$125 per golfer  
[includes cart]. Buffet dinner and  
your friends and family can join for  
\$25 each. Registration underway  
on [seacoastfamilypromise.org](http://seacoastfamilypromise.org)**

**NEW CHALLENGE - THE SWING  
FOR SEACOAST CHALLENGE open  
to all area faith communities.  
Teams of four golfers...the faith  
community team that comes in first  
place will receive the SWING FOR  
SEACOAST trophy and a \$100 gift  
certificate to Cafe Nostimo.**



**Today, Sunday, March 31st -marks the the  
fourth Sunday of Lent and our Lenten  
Series "Repenting ". It is through your  
heartfelt kindness that we continue our  
community outreach with the "Give  
Hope" campaign and a challenge...the  
40 day - 40 item challenge!**

**Each day of Lent, remove one item from your  
closet/home that you longer wear or need and put it  
into this bag. At the end of Lent we will gather all  
the bags on Easter Sunday service and donate the  
items to the community who can really use them. Thanks for being part the  
Lent Challenge of giving hope to others...With all our heart...Thank you! Bags  
may be returned to Sanburn Hall for collective donation.**

**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**

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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](http://www.fumcportsmouth.com)

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SERMON GIVEN 3/31/19 BY  
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

“One in Christ” – 3/31/19  
First UMC – Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

SCRIPTURES: Joshua 5:9-12; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

THEME: We are called to be the Body of Christ together.

I would like to introduce Joshua, son of Nun, successor to Moses, and the man who led the tribes of Israel into the Promised Land after forty years of wandering in the wilderness. God called and appointed him to help the tribes organize so they could enter the land of Canaan where they would settle and make their home, but it wouldn't be an easy task. First, they had to conquer the land. The people whom he was leading weren't even the original nation that had been led out of Egypt and away from slavery; an entire generation had passed away, including their leader Moses.

Moses had seen them through the wilderness, calling on God to provide for them, and God had given them manna, water and quail in order to survive. During their forty years in the wilderness, they had not celebrated Passover, so when they finally set foot in Canaan, they set up camp and began to re-established their traditions with God. That meant that the manna ceased and they had to find ways to feed themselves off the land – they no longer needed that provision from God.

Joshua's calling was to be the leader, to keep them focused on God's presence with them and to help them learn about what living life as free people really meant. Of course, the only life most of these folks knew was wandering in the wilderness, so Joshua's task included helping them to recover their identity as “God's chosen people” and learn how to live as God's children. For all of them, it was a new experience, and they needed each other to keep moving forward.

Some of you know what it is like to move to a new place. I can't even begin to list all the places I have lived, and I wasn't even the daughter of military. Dave's dad was in the air force, and he moved a number of times when he was a child. We have talked about how important the family support was during those moves because you uproot and go somewhere totally different and often challenging. Both of us had to make new friends and see how we fit into the school system or the new job or whatever the case may be. I know my parents were busy adjusting, too, but they were always there for us to listen to our worries or our concerns.

One of the times we moved, I was going into my junior year in high school. The school I left was where all my friends were, and it was one of the times when we had stayed in one place for quite a while, so I had grown up with quite a few people. My friends were also part of the youth group at church, and we spent time together in social situations. That summer in our new location was tough, and the school year was challenging. You see, my new class had a reputation for being a wild class – drinking, spending the night together, smoking, getting into trouble. I did not fit in.

Eventually, we began to attend a church about 16 miles away, and that is where I found my connection. It was the church and the Sunday school and the youth group that gave me grounding and brought back my anchor of music, worship and God. As a pastor, I have found

that to be true whenever I move to a new congregation. It is God as my anchor and finding Christ at work in the midst of a congregation that keeps me going until I start to know people better and feel that I might fit in. Joshua kept going because he had God with him, leading him, and his family traveled with him, too – and it was a BIG one!

Okay, so now let me introduce you to Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus. As Saul, he had been a Pharisee who had been in charge – maybe even self-appointed – to make sure that the “Jesus followers” (as they were known then) were punished for their blasphemy. The early Christians feared him, and he stood by and watched while many were put to death. On his way to Damascus one day, he had a vision in which he encountered the living Jesus who spoke to him and called him to change his ways.

He was so thoroughly converted that he was renamed as the apostle, Paul, but he didn’t particularly get along with the disciples who had followed Jesus, so they all agreed that he would minister to the Gentiles. Paul traveled many miles on foot and by boat, establishing church all around the Mediterranean Sea, including the churches in Ephesus, Philippi, Galatia, Colossae, Thessalonica, and Corinth. It was the church in Corinth that seemed to give him more trouble than the others because of their bickering, arguing, and contentious behaviors toward each other, and even toward Paul himself.

Paul’s letters would be read when the people assembled, and the content was instructional as well as calling them to accountability. After the first letter, Paul decided that a visit would be in order, but apparently, while he was there, he was either insulted or hurt by someone in the church, so he later followed up his visit with a “letter of tears” reprimanding them for not paying attention to their lack of care for him. To make it really messy, Paul was later told that his “letter of tears” had caused the church much grief and pain. Apparently, there were plenty of complaints and finger pointing going around.

So, Paul’s second letter to the church in Corinth was one that struck a tone of reconciliation. Reconciliation, Paul tells them, begins with God’s reconciliation with humanity through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is from that cornerstone in the life of the church where the congregation finds reconciliation with God and with each other. Paul appeals to them to offer grace and forgiveness and to be reconciled with each other. In fact, he tells them that they are ambassadors for Christ; thus, they are ambassadors of reconciliation – together, as one body in Christ.

I suspect that there aren’t many churches that haven’t experienced conflict and division. Sometimes the division is caused by lack of communication and being straightforward and honest. When churches talk among themselves in small groups, the cracks appear. Pretty soon, there is an email campaign that draws the line in the sand, and people stop talking with each other. I’m always amazed at how rumors run rampant, and people (I’ve done it myself) will believe something without hearing the other side. My worship professor in seminary used say, “Check it out!” In other words, hear both sides of a story and try to walk in the other person’s shoes. Seek to find out what the truth is.

The conflict between Paul and the church could have been resolved much faster if they had really talked with each other. And that’s another thing. Paul wrote letters, and the letters were

part of what caused the rift between Paul and the church. When we write emails, it's important to remember not to read emotion into them because we can't hear the other person's voice or see their face. In other words, we can't assume that sometimes what we are reading is a nasty comment or just an observation. Check it out! The need for reconciliation comes when we don't talk with each other about something that is bothering us, and we can do that in loving and caring ways.

One of my parishioners came up to me one Sunday after church and said, "Are we all right?" Surprised, I looked at her and asked, "What?" (Really subtle, huh!) She said again, "Are we all right? I was feeling like maybe you were upset with me or something." After a hug and reassurances, I told her that it was good to ask if she wasn't sure, and I promised to do the same with her. Check it out! Being one as the Body of Christ means learning to live together as the family of God, and that includes resolving disagreements, forgiving each other, caring about each other, communicating, and supporting each other. Joshua and Paul were blatantly honest with their communities, and each one led their communities knowing that God was with them.

Joshua and Paul both are leaders, called by God, to go where others have not yet gone. Joshua leads the tribes of Israel into their new land and Paul brings the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to Gentiles who had never heard about Jesus and his teachings. All of this is new to the people. Both groups are establishing or re-establishing their identities as God's children. In order to accomplish this, they must work together as one, in unity, and committed to the task of following in God's ways and sharing God with others. If there is division or a lack of understanding about who they are – WHOSE they are – they will not be able to effectively share that message.

Churches today can learn from the Biblical stories about how the family of God faltered, returned to God, reconciled with God and each other. It's something that has been happening for centuries, and because we are human, it continues to happen. But we return to God over and over again because of God's love for us, God calling us back, and our need to know God and love God more every day. As the Body of Christ, we lift each other up and send each other out into the world to live the Good News! We are friends and family in Christ.

*There is a story about a college student who spent a year with a group of Navajos on their reservation as part of a research project he was doing for a doctoral thesis. He lived with one family, sleeping in their hut, eating their food, working with them, and generally living the life of the Navajo Native American. The old grandmother of the family spoke no English at all, yet a very close friendship formed between the two. They shared the common language of love and understood each other. Over the months, he learned a few phrases of Navajo, and she picked up a little of the English language. When it was time for him to return to the campus, the tribe held a going-away celebration.*

*As he stood ready to get into his pick-up truck, the old grandmother came to tell him goo-bye. With tears streaming from her eyes, she placed her hands on either side of his face, looked directly into his eyes and said, "I like me best when I'm with you." Isn't that the way we feel in the presence of Jesus? He brings out the best in us. We learn to see ourselves as worthy and valuable when we are in his presence. And we learn about love and acceptance when we*

*work together as the Body of Christ. “I like me best when I’m with you,” can be a wonderful thing that the family of God can share with all who come to worship with them as well as take that sense of love and caring into the world to share with others. (Illustrations Unlimited, p. 228, #11, edited)*

Being one in Christ opens hearts and doors so that we work at being faithful to our calling as God’s children, whether it leads us into new places or helps us find reconciliation and direction. Yesterday at Trudy’s memorial service, Nancy Richards talked about how important Trudy’s family and her church family had been in her life. And she said, “We need each other.” We DO need each other.

We need each other to be reminded that we aren’t on this faith journey alone. We need each other for love and support when it’s sometimes just really hard to keep on keeping on. We need each other so we pray for others and ask for prayers when we need them – and even when we don’t need them. We need each other to remember the love of God in our lives and the immeasurable value we have as God’s children and as brothers and sisters in Christ. We need each other because, in spite of times when we might struggle to like someone in the church, we still can learn how to reconcile with that person or persons.

As our denomination considers what to do as we face possible – probable – division, we need each other to keep facing forward and seek where God wants us to go. We help each other discern God’s direction in our lives. Just like the church in Corinth, we draw together as one in Christ, a diverse, imperfect, and hopeful group of people who are brought together to show the world that, in spite of differences and struggles, Jesus Christ is in our midst and leading us to mission and ministry as one body – the Body of Christ – to the best of our ability. We are blessed. We are loved. We are called. We are God’s children. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!

Let us pray: Thank you God, for this congregation and the many gifts and talents they bring together to make disciples for Christ and to be part of transforming the world. Lead us, guide us, and keep us ever moving forward as your children because we truly are blessed by you so that we can be a blessing to each other and others. Amen.