



November 22, 2020

Introduction

Invitation

Prelude

Call to Worship:

Our lives are filled with the love of family and friends, and we rejoice in the gifts God has given us as we give thanks today and every day. Let us enter this time of worship with thanksgiving and praise.

Hymn: "Come, Ye Thankful People Come"

Reading the Word: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Ministry of Music

Message: "God's Indescribable Gift"

Prayer: (written by C. Longhurst)

What mighty praise belongs to you, O God, for your acts of love and faithfulness toward us! In your mercy you hear our prayers, you forgive our sins, you provide for our needs. From one end of the earth to the other, you inspire worship and praise! Even nature celebrates your goodness. We, too, would offer our praise and thanksgiving for your mercy and your faithful love toward us. Receive our adoration, our confession, our thanksgiving. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, make your presence known among us that we may hear your Word and know your will. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. 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: "Now Thank We All Our God"

Blessing

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written,

“He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.”

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!



**SERMON TRANSCRIPT
GIVEN BY
Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson**

Message “God’s Indescribable Gift”

Rev. Dr. Debra Hanson

Dave: What’s in the box, Deb?

Deb: I don’t know.

Dave: Aren’t you going to open it?

Deb: I don’t know. Maybe.

Dave: What’s that all about? You love to open presents.

Deb: I know, but this one makes me nervous.

Dave: Why is that?

Deb: It doesn’t make any sound.

Dave: So?

Deb: It’s also really lightweight.

Dave: Okay, and . . .

Deb: And I’m not sure I want to open something that doesn’t make any noise when you shake it, and is so lightweight that it feels empty.

Dave: Who gave it to you?

Deb: That’s another thing – there wasn’t a card with it.

Dave: Maybe the card is in the box.

Deb: Maybe.

Dave: Why don’t you open it to find out?

Deb: I’m not comfortable with it.

Dave: Why not?

Deb: What if it’s booby trap or something?

Dave: I doubt that – it looks like a birthday present.

Deb: Yes, it does, but since I don’t know who gave it to me, I’m not sure I want to open it.

Dave: Do you want me to open it?

Deb: No – it’s my present.

Dave: (shaking his head and getting a little frustrated) Let me get this straight. You don’t know who sent the box; you are afraid to open it . . .

Deb: (interrupting) Well cautious.

Dave: Okay . . . cautious! You think it’s a joke or a booby trap because it’s light and doesn’t make any sound when you shake it. Is that all?

Deb: Isn’t that enough? What if one of those springy snake things pops out when I open it?

Dave: The lid isn’t very tight, so I suspect it’s not that.

(Deb looks at the box, moves to open it, puts her hands down, starts to open it again, and then pushes it away.)

Dave: Still not sure?

Deb: No. Nervous.

Dave: Well, I know you didn’t ask for my opinion, but I think you should open it.

Deb: Why?

Dave: So, you can find out what is inside – it was after all a gift given to you!

Deb: (sighing) Oh all right. (cautiously, slowly lifting the lid and peeking inside, then showing surprise and quickly taking the lid off totally and looking inside)

Dave: (waiting until he can't take it anymore) So what is it?

Deb: It's an envelope.

Dave: What?

Deb: An envelope (holds it up for him to see)

Dave: Are you going to open it?

Deb: Okay. (opening the envelope and taking the paper out, reading)

Dave: What does it say?

Deb: It's a letter.

Dave: A letter? From whom?

Deb: I'll read it to you.

Dear Deb,

I have heard your prayers all week for people who are struggling with the pandemic, others who are sick, grieving, worried, homeless, hungry, and poor. I'm thankful that you have lifted these concerns to me. You have asked what I will do about what is going on, and I assure you I am with everyone. But I also need people like you whom I have called to be my hands and feet in the world. You have much to share, not only from your material goods, but also from your heart. Share them. Share my love for my children. Remember, you don't do this alone. I am with you, and I have called many others to minister to the world, as well. Think about how thankful you are for everything in your life, and, from that thankfulness, give of who you are and out of the abundance you have. I want you to remember that this is not only your gift to me. It is also my gift to you. Love, God

Dave: This is God's gift to you? What does that mean?

Deb: Well, I guess it's because I have the opportunity to show how thankful I am to God for all I've been given, not just in material possessions, but with people like you, my family, my friends, and all the people in the congregations I serve as blessings.

Dave: I get it. We give thanks because God promises to provide for us, and then we share with others.

Deb: The passage from 2 Corinthians says, "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous in every way. Such generosity produces thanksgiving to God through us. Your ministry of this service to God's people isn't only fully meeting their needs but it is also multiplying in many expressions of thanksgiving to God." (CEB vv. 11-12)

Dave: I guess we have a lot to be thankful for, don't we!

Deb: Yes, we do. This week we will celebrate Thanksgiving. Maybe this year, especially, we all need to name what we are thankful for.

What is your list? How has this time of social distancing changed the way you give thanks? In what ways have you offered the love of God to others? May your Thanksgiving be one of gratitude to our God who loves us and walks with us on our life's journeys, and may we be part of making a difference by offering the love and grace of God to them with grateful hearts.

Happy Thanksgiving! Amen.



PRAYER LIST

Steve & Colleen Nelson
Scarlett

Bill and Gayle Gardei
Geisinger Family

Dennis Hoskin

Evelyn and Jim New

Maria

Erika

Earl

Jim

Delores

Juliann

Jayne Griffin & Family

Robert (Babe) Williams and Family

Jim Slater

Charles Gilman

Fickenscher Family

Amelia and Michelle

Barbara Glidden

John

Gil & Marilyn Stebbins

Danny Westbrook

Dan Strange

Bobbie Noble

Pixie & Wayne Balt

Fred

Durgin Pines Residents & Workers

Riverside Rest Home Residents & Workers

Those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19

Those in nursing and assisted living care

Our Denomination

Our Church Family



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:   