



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.

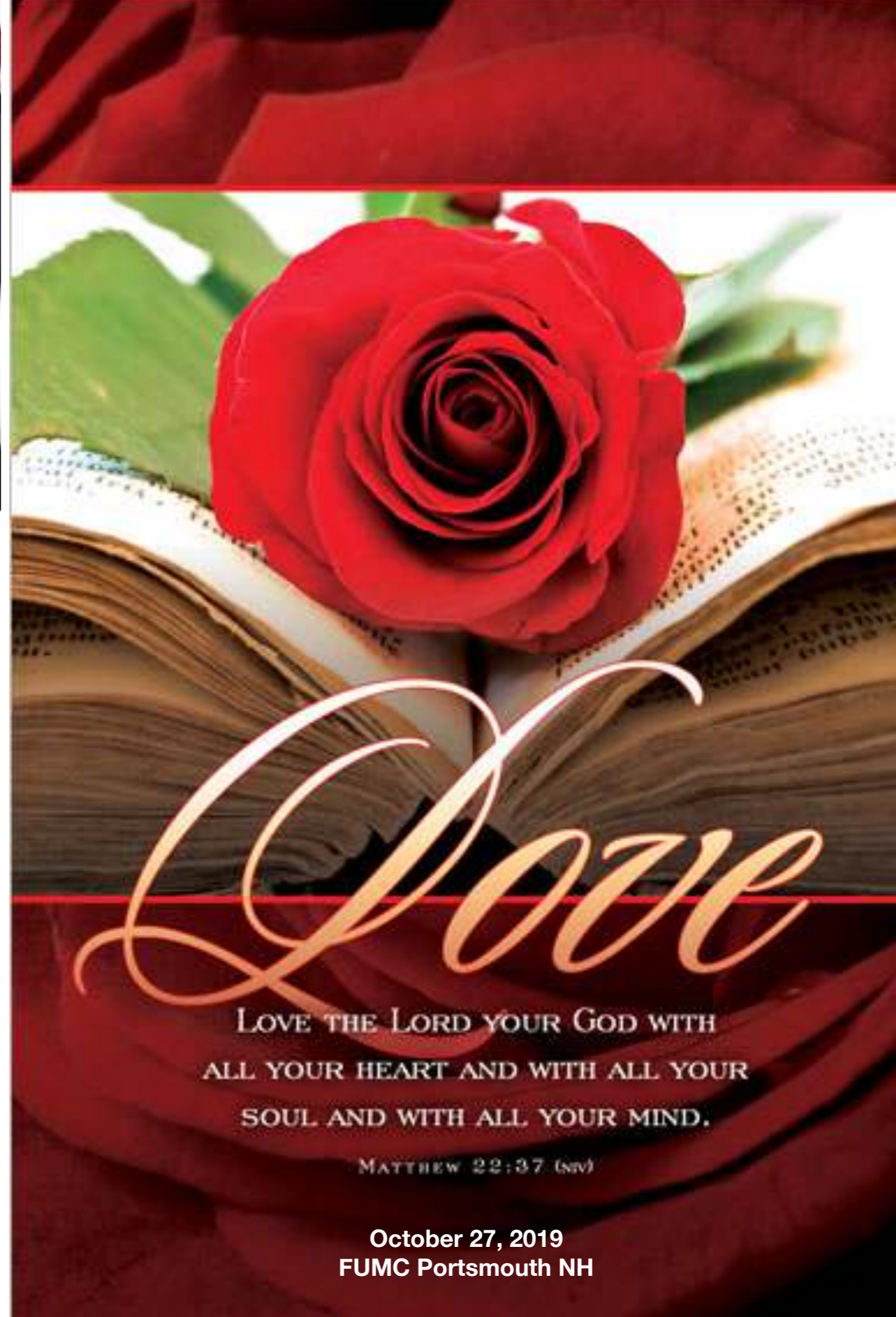


New England Annual Conference Tri-State District
The Rev. Sudarshana Devadhar, Bishop
The Rev. Taesung Kang, District Superintendent

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:   



LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH
ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR
SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.

MATTHEW 22:37 (NIV)

October 27, 2019
FUMC Portsmouth NH

We Gather for Worship

Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light

Gratitude Moments

***Call to Worship**

L: In God's time, we will become more fully who God intends for us to be.

P: In God's time, we will continue to take on the heart of Christ.

L: In God's time, our understanding of Jesus' teachings will increase.

P: Past, present, and future, we are in God's time.

L: Yes! In this time, in this place, let us celebrate and worship our God!

P: We celebrate our amazing God!

***Hymn** "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" UMH #110

A Time for the Child in all of Us

Ministry of Music

Prayer (unison)

Loving God, you hold us in the palm of your hand so we can grow in relationship with you and each other. Then you send us into the world to share that love with others. Help us to continue trusting you, to keep returning to you, to keep learning from you, and to love you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And help us love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Thank you, O God, thank you. Amen.

Sung Response "Spirit of the Living God" UMH #393

We Proclaim the Word

Reading the Word Matthew 22:34-40

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

P: Thanks be to God.

Message "In God's Time" Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson

We Respond to God's Word

The Covenant of Membership Insert

***Hymn** "I Was There to Hear Your Boring Cry" TFWS #2051

Prayers of the People

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 into 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)

It is with love and joy that we present ourselves and our offerings this morning, gracious God. Receive them, use them, grow them for the betterment of our world. Amen.

We Go Forth to Serve

***Hymn** "Marching to Zion," v. 1,3,4 UMH #733

***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 - Jane Richards
Ushers - Anne & Mike Coffey
Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek
Worship Service Tech - Steve Scott
Photographer - Dave Atkinson
Sunday School - Aerial Silanpaa & Kaya Sarosiek

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER...



Dan Strange
Anne Coffey
Ken Young
Rev. Bill & Gayle Gardei
Marion Collishaw
Sylvia Bartlett
Gil Stebbins
Woodie Lange
Jim New
Bobbie Noble
Barbara Glidden
Judy Doyon
Charles Gilman
Ruth Griffin
Jim Slater
Barbara Sylvester
Barbara Millar
Barbara Clement
Rev. Charles & Anona Hartman
Our Denomination
Our Church Family



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

UPCOMING EVENTS

FRIENDLY REMINDERS

9/1 - 10/31, FUMC is collecting your “stuff” for our Savers FUNdraiser. It’s a great time to clean out and have the church get paid. Bag or box up your good, clean, working, sellable condition items and put them on Sanborn Hall stage. We need to deliver everything all together to Savers on 11/6, for weighing. Here’s an example: 14 lbs. of “Soft Goods” = about a 13 gal. trash bag and a black garden leaf bag from 30 to 40 lbs. Our goal is 10,000 pounds which equals approximately \$2000.00.

11/2, Barbara Slater’s Memorial Service will be at 11:00 am with reception to follow in Sanborn Hall. If you can help with refreshments, see Sue Sarosiek.

11/3, Sunday, the clocks change, so remember to turn your clocks back!

11/3, There will be a pizza party for all who helped with the Pumpkin Patch in Sanborn Hall at 12 pm.

11/12, Peace Circle meets at 9:30 am at FUMC. All are welcome.

11/16, Our annual turkey supper will be held in Sanborn Hall at 5 pm.

There are still plenty of spots open for volunteers at the Pumpkin Patch. We still need baked goods for the Pumpkin Patch. Anyone who would like to donate a baked good, please feel free to drop them off! Remember the Pumpkin Patch ends on October 31 and even a couple of donated hours or baked goods is a big help. See Sue Richards if available.

Upper Room devotionals are available near the Narthex monitor.

Just a friendly reminder, please try to keep your pledge up to date so we can meet our financial obligations as a church. Thank you for your faithful giving!

We continue to celebrate those in Senior Living. Please send a card from the table in Sanborn Hall to brighten their day. Stamps are available in the office or leave on counter for mailing. Thanks!

**Altar flowers
are for the
caregivers that
work so hard at
Wentworth
Senior Living.
Thanks!**



RECEPTION INTO THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The pastor addresses all those transferring their membership into the United Methodist Church: As members of Christ's universal Church, will you be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church, and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries?

I will.

RECEPTION INTO THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

The pastor addresses all those transferring membership into the congregation:

As members of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service, and your witness?

I will.

COMMENDATION AND WELCOME

The pastor addresses the congregation:

Members of the household of God, I commend *these persons* to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase *their* faith, confirm *their* hope, and perfect *them* in love? *The congregation responds:*

We give thanks for all God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As members together with you in the body of Christ and in this congregation of the United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

The pastor addresses those baptized, confirmed, or received:

The God of all grace, who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, establish you and strengthen you by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you may live in grace and peace.

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RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Pastor: Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's Holy Church. We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price. Through confirmation, and through the reaffirmation of our faith, we renew the covenant declared at our baptism, acknowledge what God is doing for us, and affirm our commitment to Christ's Holy Church.

RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

The pastor addresses the candidates:

On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you: Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of your sin?

I do.

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

I do.

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations and races?

I do.

(Candidates kneel for laying on of hands) Remember your baptism and be thankful.

The Apostles' Creed (unison) UMH #881

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*** catholic meaning universal*

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SERMON TRANSCRIPT GIVEN BY
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

“In God’s Time” – 10/27/19
First UMC – Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 22:34-40

THEME: God’s love transforms us and helps us to grow in our relationship with God and others.

Our lesson today takes place in the middle of Jesus being tested by the temple leaders. They ask him questions with the intention of trapping him into saying something that they can criticize. As in so many cases, Jesus knows how to deal with their questions, and most often it is by asking questions in return, although in today’s lesson, he directly answers them. Here we have a clear entrapment attempt when one of the Pharisees asked Jesus which is the greatest commandment.

Well, as our Sunday school children might be able to tell us, there are Ten Commandments, so how could Jesus pick only one, when each commandment has a different focus and intent. His answer is interesting because he quotes the Hebrew scriptures – or as we know it – the Old Testament. He chooses the *Shema*, which is from Deuteronomy 6:5 – “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.*” This is what the Israelites were expected to recite upon arising every morning and before going to sleep every night. It was also placed in a *mezuzah* and hung on the door frame as one entered the house. Each person would touch the *mezuzah* as a reminder of this instruction.

But Jesus didn’t just stop at the passage from Deuteronomy. He also added Leviticus 19:18 “*you shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.*” These are instructions that every good Jewish person would have learned from childhood and would know them very well. When we look at the Ten Commandments, the first section has to do with our relationship with God and the last section has to do with our relationship with others. So, when Jesus combines Deuteronomy and Leviticus, he covers all of the Ten Commandments and brings the Greatest Commandment into a succinct and easy to remember commandment that encompasses all the commandments.

When one loves God with all they are, that love cannot be contained and naturally flows out to others. Jesus’ response to the Pharisees was to remind them of their own teachings about the *Shema*, something that they would relate to readily and totally understand. The Christian church has not adapted such a practice in the same way, but there are prayers, rituals and teachings that help us remember God’s love for us and our commitment to God. Someone once asked the theologian Karl Barth what he thought was the most profound theological truth, and his reply was “Jesus loves me, this I know.” (*ideas from this paragraph found at Text This Week, Scott Hoezee, under the commentaries for today’s scripture lesson.*)

Jesus loves me, this I know. Many of us have sung this and heard it time and time again. I once did nursing home services for residents who had memory loss issues, and for the most part, they were unresponsive, busy picking at their lap robes, sleeping, or staring straight ahead. I wondered how much they were really getting out of the service until at the very end, I started singing “Jesus Love Me.” Nearly every person lit up and sang with me. Deep inside,

they carried the song, the knowledge that Jesus loved them, and they might not have been able to tell us about it, but they could sing it.

What does it mean to really love God with all our being? How do we know God's love and share it with others? It's not always clear cut and certainly not easy. The most personal illustration I can share is a piece of my own journey. It is my journey and as unique to me as yours is to you. We all are on a different place in the path and have different ideas about what it means to be in relationship with God. In addition, the bishop has asked pastors to share their call stories with the congregation.

So my sharing is intended to be an example of a faith journey that ended up going a VERY different direction than I could ever have imagined. From my earliest years, I went to church. I grew up in a singing household – as you probably have figured out by now. We sang many songs and hymns, listened to a variety of records, and many of those were recordings of hymns. By the time I was in high school, I had a pretty good repertoire of hymns – mostly the traditional ones. Having grown up in the Lutheran church, I knew Martin Luther's hymn that we sang at the beginning of the service very well – "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Music was implanted in my soul, and it was/is one of my life lines to God, but I didn't really know it much.

I went through Sunday school, Vacation Bible school, sang in all the choirs at church, endured two (or was it three) years of confirmation classes, confessed my faith, joined the church, and was finally able to take communion. I have to admit that I couldn't wait to take communion, but not for the reason you might think. My parents were strict tea-totalers, but the church served wine at communion, so when I was confirmed I was able to taste wine for the first time. Since my parents were communion stewards, they actually bought the wine, and I later decided that they bought the worst wine anyone could find to keep us from wanting more. It worked until I reached college and we had Mogan David something-or-other that had a whole different taste.

But I obviously missed the point about communion! It isn't about taking the bread and wine, but about Jesus' forgiveness and salvation. It took many years for me to have my heart connect with the blessing and joy of receiving – and giving – communion. So, my childhood and youth journey was one of those take-for-granted faiths. I was like the disciple Peter, learning, but not really catching on to who Jesus really was and how God was with me in my life. My faith did not inform my life, but was an extra-curricular activity.

In fact, I pretty much grew up with horrible self-esteem and was often self-degrading. I didn't like anything about me, spent years comparing myself to others who I thought were who I wanted to be, and worst of all, I was painfully shy and unsure of myself. Oh, I know, I'm not so shy now! But it was so bad then that one person told a friend of mine that I was stuck up because I wouldn't speak to others – it was actually shyness.

In high school, I went with our youth group, the Luther League, to a youth convention in Dallas, Texas where I felt stirrings of a call to ministry. It was a bit confusing since the Lutheran church didn't ordain women, so I knew pastoral ministry was out. Instead I looked to other areas, and finally settled on teaching music. All through college I went to church, sang in the church choir, and even took religion classes since I was at a Lutheran based college and required for graduation. I learned a lot, but my heart hadn't moved yet.

After college I moved out here and lived with a friend in Old Town, Maine. I taught elementary music in Howland, Maine and attended a United Methodist Church up the road from where we lived. My mother always told me to become involved in a church because that is where I would find friends and support. She was right! Of course, I sang in the choir and did a lot of solos, and eventually, I became the chairperson of the Christians Education Committee. And it was at the Old Town United Methodist Church when I once again felt the call to ministry. I didn't act on it – thought it was a fluke because even the United Methodist Church wasn't ordaining women at that time – or so I thought.

But there was something more that happened at that United Methodist Church. God broke open my heart – just a crack – and I began to understand that I needed to be in a relationship with God, not just take things for granted. Do you know what it was that started the crack? (Pause) Music. In the Lutheran church, we didn't have gospel music or revival type music, but “Standing on the Promises,” “He Touched Me,” “Blessed Assurance,” “Victory in Jesus,” “It is Well with My Soul,” and a whole bunch of other hymns seeped into my heart and said to me, “There's more to this God relationship than you know.”

The journey brought me to a bunch of twists and turns. My shyness began to disappear – after all you can't teach music and not put yourself out there! As the journey began to move uphill and down and around bends, I began to discover the love of God that told me that I was worth something and could begin to love myself by getting to know myself as God's beloved child.

A huge turning point came when I attended a spiritual renewal week-end where I learned about God's love and how God loved me through others in powerful ways. In essence, through prayer, support, discussions, and Bible study, my heart was, as John Wesley put it, “strangely warmed.” Actually, it began a new leg of my journey that opened me to loving God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength which is a continuing part of the journey, and I have claimed that as my life-passage.

The year before I entered seminary, I was alone on my own private retreat and I sang, “Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.” It's a dangerous prayer to sing if you aren't willing to accept what God will do in your life. God pretty much opened my eyes to where I was supposed to be, and I have never looked back. I gained new eyes to see how God is at work in me and became willing to have God work through me.

Of course, I don't do this perfectly – flawlessly! Sometimes, loving my neighbor or loving myself is challenging, but I am reminded that the journey is a process, not an arrival gate. I don't think we ever stop learning, growing, or becoming more fully who God wants us to be. My call to ministry became stronger until I finally went to seminary and followed the ordination process. The thing I have learned is that we never have a straight path to what John Wesley calls, “Moving on to perfection” – perfection in God's love. The path is filled with set-backs, rocky ridges, mountain-top experiences, disappointments, frustrations, joys, confidence in God's love, and curiosity about where God will lead us next.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and your neighbor as yourself,” is the Greatest Commandment because it puts God at the center of our lives and informs

everything else we do. It opens our eyes to injustices, to people who need help, to being able to look in the mirror and see a Child of God there instead of someone we don't want to see or maybe don't even know very well because we have spent a life time putting that person down.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and your neighbor as yourself, is our own type of *shema* that we could benefit from repeating regularly. I often ask myself what it is about Jesus that grabs me and holds on. I learn from him about confidence. He didn't let other people's opinions of him bother him! He was God in the flesh, so he had the answers, and even though we obviously aren't God, we can study God's word, consider how Jesus lived and taught and why he died and rose again. We can be grounded in Christ, even when we don't always stay grounded, and we can seek to put on the mind of Christ.

I have a jigsaw puzzle game on my computer whose puzzle pieces are really hard to put together because the cut-out shapes are oddly cut with little uniformity. I find that taking it slow and paying attention to colors and how the edges might fit together help me to complete the puzzle. The journey of faith is like that, too. We take it one step at a time and keep moving forward as much as possible throughout our lives because eventually, the puzzle pieces will all find a place.

We belong to God. We are God's precious and beloved child. Each one of us is unique and cherished for who we are. As we grow in our relationship with God, we also grow in love and grace with others – and even ourselves. God's love transforms and shapes us and helps us. Thanks be to God!

Let us pray: Thank you, loving God, for claiming us as your own child, for cherishing us, for loving us beyond what we can even comprehend. And as we grow in that love, teach and guide us to become who you would have us be in this world, in our relationships with others and ourselves. Fill us with your love, and help us share it in the name of Christ. Amen.