

Bangor First United Methodist Church
703 Essex Street , Bangor Maine



Cross Talk

JANUARY 2024

For Information...

Phone: 207-945-9567

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First

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The United Methodist
Church



OPEN MINDS

OPEN HEARTS

OPEN DOORS

A Note from our pastor Dr. Steve Smith....

Question #1: What is your very first memory of church? Question #2: What is your first memory of being confused in church? My answer to questions #1 and #2 are actually the same. My first memory of church is of my mother playing the organ. My first memory of being confused at church relates to my Mom's organ playing. My mother typically took two pairs of shoes to church, one pair to wear when she wasn't playing the organ, and one pair to wear when she was playing the organ. You see, playing a church organ typically means you are playing pedals with your feet, while also playing keys with your fingers (an amazing feat, if you ask me.) In order to play organ pedals with your feet, you have to wear somewhat narrow shoes, which explains why my mother typically took two pairs of shoes to church on Sundays. My earliest memory of being confused at church is: *"Hey, why is Mom taking two pairs of shoes to church? Should I be taking two pairs of shoes too? Is taking two pairs of shoes a "church-thing?"*

Of course, over the ensuing years, and even to this present day, there are still "church-things" that are confusing. Over the years I've heard questions such as: *"How can God be 3-in-one?"* (Trinity) *"Why do we do a Call to Worship?"* *"What is the meaning of communion?"* *"Why do the colors change (vestments) in the sanctuary?"* More significantly, *"Why do bad things happen to good people?"* *"Where was God when I was suffering?"*

As human beings, there are likely questions that won't be fully answered in this lifetime. After all, if we understood all matters related to God and church, we would be on the same level as God. And yet, we *can* find answers together. In fact, I find fellowship, strength, inspiration, and yes....fun in finding answers together when I'm part of an inquisitive church family.

What are your questions? What confuses you about your faith experience, God and church? Being part of a church means companionship. Being part of a church family means asking questions and working to discover answers together.

Let's learn together! Let's gather in-person and online in the New Year to learn, laugh, and discover together. And of course, I am very happy to speak with you privately if you'd like to toss around questions and answers together. Just let me know. *Pastor Steve*

This 'N That...



JANUARY 7

Meet right after church for lunch, a devotional and then adventure at the Escape Room! Hope you can join us!

CHURCH SCHOOL



Sunday school is going strong. There is a nursery available each Sunday.



FOOD CUPBOARD NEEDS



Any non-perishable items are gratefully accepted! But peanut butter & soup are always in high demand!

You are welcome to drop off donated food items at the back door of the church on **Thursdays from 10-1:00 or on Sunday mornings.**

Also checks are gladly accepted and can be sent to:
**Ecumenical Food Cupboard
PO Box 1106
28 High Street, Bangor, ME 04401**



BEAN SUPPER Next Bean Supper is March 23, 2024

Community Meal continues to serve drive up meals each Thursday from 4-6 pm



United Women in Faith

Our next meeting is January 13 at 10 am. If you are currently not on our email list and would like to be added to the Zoom list please give the office a call at 945-9567 or send an email to: bangorfirstumc@gmail.com



COMMUNITY MEAL

The Community Meal Take Out
Thursdays from 4-6

Drive up and pick up a delicious and nutritious meal!

GRATITUDE ATTITUDE... A New Year

Most of us will be pleased to bid 2023 farewell. While for many folks it has been a quiet year, for others it has been a year wrought with worry, uncertainty and illness. For me personally it has been a time of adventure, clutter clearing and reflection. As I cleared some of the clutter that had accumulated since my move into my new home, I took some trips down memory lane as I looked through and sorted lots of photos. I found items that I hadn't displayed or used for many years and my goal now will be to organize and store away the things I most want to keep and toss the rest hopefully making for a new and organized look and easy accessibility of the things I need to find quickly. I have also spent quite a bit of time reflecting and reminiscing about my trip out west. I had the time of my life!

My reality is very different from that of many others like those who must work remotely or those on the front lines of the pandemic battle. There are those who were and continue to be without work due to layoffs or shut-downs, those who visit or care for a parent with dementia, or those who care for a loved one who is receiving hospice. There are those who have to try to stay dry or warm while living outside, or worry about how they will feed, house and care for themselves and their families. It is so easy to be complacent when you are comfortable, safe and warm!

2024 is upon us. It will be a year that sees new leadership in our nation's capital. In the new year the pandemic will not yet be behind us and more difficult days will be coming. It will see despair, defeat, hate-mongering, gun violence, wars around the world, and even more hunger and homelessness. It may also be a year of renewed caring-concern, peace and love. It can easily become more of the same or can become a year full of hope, promise and gratitude. The new year is a new opportunity and ***it will be what we make it!*** Having faith and walking with God can get us through anything!

It will oft seem impossible to convince people to have hope. Many of their situations preclude an attitude of just the opposite. It will be up to us to work together to make a difference for those who are feeling lost, uncared for and hopeless. We can make a difference working through our church family and through local organizations such as *Faith Linking in Action* and other groups whose sole purpose is to improve the situations of those who have little voice. We can continue to provide meals for the *Greater Bangor Area Homeless Shelter* six times a year, or donate food on a regular basis to the *Ecumenical Food Cupboard*. It will be up to those of us who feel hopeful to reach out and care for those who feel only hopelessness and to pray for insight so that we not miss the need around us.

A new year can bring joy and hope. 2024 doesn't have to bring hopeless. Our days can be full of promise, hope and gratitude. We can keep busy. We can make sure we take care of ourselves and others. As Pastor Steve so often says... "Our best days are ahead of us!" There are many scriptures that let you know that God is always with us and that bring words of hope such as these from Philippians 4: 6-7... "*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*" **Let's fill 2024 with hope & gratitude!**



And **MEMORY JOGGERS**

Greetings,

My Friend's Place is a small, non-profit dementia day-care program. We are blessed to serve those who have Alzheimer's or other memory loss issues. We provide a specialized day program where laughter and friendship truly are the "best medicine." It is a safe, interactive experience where participants can enjoy a non-judgmental environment. Our program provides much needed respite for family members and other care partners. *My friend's Place* is a much needed, one-of-a kind program in our region.

Each day starts with tea, coffee and snacks, as we sit around a table together for socializing, much like our participants enjoyed before their diagnosis. It is a sad reality: when a person with dementia loses the ability to carry-on routine conversations, they often become socially isolated. We have wonderful volunteers that work to provide a wonderful experience for those who join us each week. We always welcome new volunteers. If you would like to find out more about our programs please contact me at 945-0122.

Blessings,

Lisa Jordan, Director MFP



FELLOWSHIP LIBRARY NEWS

Start the New Year with a book.

We are always shelving new books. A moving story involving a boy's abuse, ability to overcome the adversity and subsequent gain of strength leading to his marriage and a son of his own. David Pelzer has written, "A Boy Called It", "The Lost Boy" and "A Man Called Dave." The Fellowship Library has all three books. The subject matter is moving and the books are eye opening and inspirational. One of First Church's congregants highly recommends these reads.

Another new book is, "Finding Phoebe." Written by Susan Hylen, a professor of New Testament Studies at Emory University who has written several books on women in the Bible. It is described as "Instructive, insightful, innovative, and interactive...informing and transforming the way you perceive women in the New Testament ...in general and in Paul and his letters in particular."

Come in and browse. There are also cozy stories, history books and lots of Timothy Keller and NT Wright to help you with your spiritual journey. Lots of good reading for the snowy days ahead!

CHECK IT OUT!

Prayer Requests and Joys at FUMC

Sue W.
 Charles W.
 David H.
 Family of Juanita R.
 Rob. E. & Dottie
 Bellavance family
 Lynn D.
 Family of Mary Jane T.
 Suzanne W.
 Wayne G-H.
 David J.
 Amanda Q.
 Andy & Diane M.
 Sue H.
 Tuhan K.
 Carly
 Neighbor of Roz
 John brother of Jill
 Gary C
 David P's son
 Marie's son
 Evelyn M.
 Amanda H.



Prayer Requests

Family of Charlotte W.
 Donna & Beckett
 Linda friend of Phyllis
 Nicole
 Lynn D.
 Bill P.
 Carolyn Mc
 The homeless & hungry
 All those who have lost loved ones due to gun violence
 The people of Ukraine
 Pray for peace in our nation
 The people of Palestine and Israel

JOYS

We are grateful for...

- A new year
- God given courage & strength to face whatever life sends our way
- For new beginnings
- Health and recovery from illness
- Family & friends
- God's unconditional love
- For all those who help, even when not being asked
- Our pastors, musicians & Sunday school leaders
- Opportunities to learn and grow our faith
- The support of our congregation
- Our pets who give unconditional love
- Food, clothing and a home... the necessities of life!

Into your hands Heavenly Father we entrust these people who are in need of your healing touch, knowledge of your presence, and your comfort.

Sustain them in good days and bad. Help them to feel your loving presence with them during every difficulty, for you are always there ahead of any circumstance.

Watch over all those who are in need. Help them to feel that you are always near them and know that all they need do is look to YOU for comfort and for strength.

In Your loving name we pray. Amen

Don't you know? Haven't you heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He doesn't grow tired or weary. His understanding is beyond human reach, giving power to the tired and reviving the exhausted. Youths will become tired and weary, young men will certainly stumble; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will fly up on wings like eagles; they will run and not be tired; they will walk and not be weary.

Isaiah 40: 28-30 (Common English Bible)



JANUARY 2024

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1	2	3	4 John Kolenik	5 Pat Woodbury	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 Linda Folsom Priscilla Soucie
14 Nancy Soucy	15	16 Judy Hastings	17	18 Jackson Roberts	19 Scott Smith	20 Helen Willey Anne Porter Aiden Clarke
21	22 Tom Christensen	23 Lorena Fenlason	24	25 Heather Roberts Cooper Nye	26 Rolfe Flood	27 Jessie Stanhope
28	29 Elizabeth Downs	30	31		<i>Happy Birthday to you! God Bless you and keep you the whole year through</i>	

If you don't find your name on the birthday calendar it is because the office doesn't have the information. If you would like to be included on the Birthday Calendar just let the office know the month and day. (We don't need the year unless you want to share it!)



Grow Your Faith at FUMC:

***Tuesday Bible Study meets at the church at 1:00 & Thursday at 7 via Zoom**

***8:30 Sunday Spirituals (discussion group)**

***On-In person and online Sunday morning worship at 10:30 with Sunday school**

***On line devotionals Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays via email**

***Join one of our women's faith and fellowships groups: United Women of Faith, Piburn Circle**

***Join the Fellowship Choir or come and play a handbell**

***Get involved in mission by helping with our Community Meal on Thursdays... with our Bean Suppers throughout the year...or volunteer at My Friend's Place**

***Visit our library and check out a book for enjoyment, information or to grow your faith.**

***Volunteer to serve on a church committee**

We are a busy church and there are lots of ways to grow! For information about any of our programs contact the office at 945-9567




The books are here! Looking forward to our next study group-based on **"Wrestling With Doubt, Finding Faith."** Doubt is honest, wrestling with our faith typically helps us build our "faith muscles" which is much better than the alternative--turning our back on faith. Chapters include questions often asked by most of us: "Do my prayers go unanswered?" "Why do the innocent suffer?" "Is heaven real?"

Books are in Mary's office-a \$10 donation is suggested but certainly not required. We're wrapping-up our Advent study groups this week; we will dive into this new study the first week of February. Questions? Call me (Steve.)

We will meet **Tuesdays at 1pm** at church, and **Thursday evenings at 7:00 online.**

Happy to send you a book if you are joining us "from away."

	Newsletter Deadline	Worship Schedule
	<p>Deadline for information for the February newsletter is January 22.</p> <p>Information may be submitted in written form, via email, or by phone.</p>	<p><i>Pathways to God 8:30 via Zoom</i></p> <p><i>Traditional Worship Service: 10:30 On-line and in person</i></p>



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office closed	2 Office open 7:39-12 Fiber Arts Fellowship 9:30	3 Office open 7:30-12 Bells at 6 pm	4 Office open 7:30-10:30 Community meal 4-6	5	6 AA at 11:00
7 8:30 Pathways 10:30 Worship	8 Office open 7:30- 10:30	9 Office open 7:39-12 Fiber Arts Fellowship 9:30	10 Office open 7:30-12 Bells at 6 pm	11 Office open 7:30-10:30 Community meal 4-6	12 Office closed	13 AA at 11:00 UWF at 10
14 8:30 Pathways 10:30 Worship	15 Office closed Martin Luther King Day	16 Office open 7:30-12 Fiber Arts Fellowship 9:30	17 Office open 7:30-12 Bells at 6 pm	18 Office open 7:30- 10:30 Community meal 4-6 Piburn 1 PM EAAA food distribution, 3pm	19 Office closed	20 AA at 11:00
21 8:30 Pathways 10:30 Worship	22 Office open 7:30-10:30	23 Office open 7:30-12 Fiber Arts Fellowship 9:30	24 Office open 7:30-12 Bells at 6 pm	25 Office open 7:30-10:30	26 Office closed	27 AA at 11:00
28 8:30 Pathways 10:30 Worship	29 Office open 7:30- 10:30	30 Office open 7:30-12 Ad Council at 7 via Zoom	31 Office open 7:30-12 Bells at 6 pm			

Bangor First United Methodist Church

703 Essex Street

Bangor ME 04401

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Bangor First Methodist Church

Office Hours: Monday / Thursday: 7:30-10:30, Tuesday / Wednesday: 7:30-12

Mission Statement

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Senior Pastor:	Dr. Steve Smith
Assoc. Pastor:	Rev. Jeffrey S. Fister, DMD, Ordained Deacon
Church Administrator:	Mary Cissell Smith
Organist/Fellowship Choir Director:	John Mallery Haskell
Lay Leader:	James Burkhart
Director of Christian Education:	Hazel Chick
My Friend's Place & Memory Joggers:	

Lisa Jordan, Director Skippy Valentine, Program Coordinator

~ Worship Schedule ~

8:30-9:00: Sunday study series

10:30am – 11:30: Traditional Worship Service

September –May: Sunday school for children/youth to grade 8

Sermon podcasts & church blog are available on our website

~ Find us at... ~

Email: bangorfirstumc@gmail.com

Website: www.fumcbangor.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BangorFirst