



# First Family

*We welcome all people... are guided by the teachings and unconditional love of Jesus... are inspired to participate as faithful disciples of Christ.*

January 2020

## Not a Day Off!



## How Are You Spending Your "Day On"?

January 19  
Interfaith Worship Service

January 20  
Twin Ports MLK Breakfast Program  
Twin Ports MLK March  
MLK Rally

*See pages 7 and 9 for details*

**First United  
Methodist Church**

230 E. Skyline Parkway  
Duluth, MN 55811  
[www.fumcduluth.com](http://www.fumcduluth.com)



## Our First Family

### Congratulations to Rebecca Miles

The United States women's curling team, which includes FUMC's Rebecca Miles, advanced to the playoffs of the 2020 World Junior B Championships on Sunday in Lohja, Finland. Her team will not be going to the World Junior Women's Championship this year, but what an amazing season. We are so proud of Rebecca!

### A Gift to Light the Church

A gift was given to light the church for the week of Thanksgiving in memory of my father, Burton Halvorson, whose earthly life ended July 1, 2019. He was a shining example of hard work, honesty, and putting others before yourself. I am so thankful for the life he lived and wanted to honor him by lighting the outside of our beautiful building as it shines its beacon of hope and healing in this community.

~ Connie Adamec

### Loaves and Fishes

Dear friends at First United Methodist,

Thank you so much for your monthly contribution to the ministry of Loaves and Fishes and for your many years of support! It is because of the kindness of folks like you that we can keep our doors open to

—continued on page 4

## On the Journey With You

In November our congregation was pondering stewardship as we all prepared to make our financial commitment to the ministry and mission of our church for 2020. We talked about how we need to be generous givers for the sake of our souls. Not only are others and the world better and blessed when we give of our time, talents, gifts, and service, but we are better and blessed too.

During a children's message, I gave each of the children present a \$5 bill and asked them to use that money not for themselves, but to show kindness and love to others in any way that they could think of. The next Sunday there were a dozen or so additional kids at the children's message who hadn't been there the week before to get their \$5 blessing money. I didn't have any more \$5 bills with me so I asked the congregation if they had any. Rev. MaryAnne walked around the congregation and collected at least 30 additional \$5 bills from you—you are so incredibly and joyfully and quickly generous! Not only did those kids get their \$5, but all the other kids who come for Wednesday programming got them too.

Our kids were up to the challenge and got busy blessing people. They filled out a form telling what they did and how they felt. Here is a list of what some of them did:

- I donated my \$5 plus \$5 of my own to a group that was bagging groceries for their group at Super One.
- I donated my money to Animal Allies Society (three children did that).
- I used my \$5 to buy things for the basket for church for Christmas (our Advent CHUM baskets).
- I gave my \$5 to my school to pay lunch bills for kids who can't.
- I gave it to Bentleyville so everyone can enjoy it even if they are poor (three children did that).
- I donated my \$5 bill to the Great Lakes Aquarium because they need it (two children did that).
- I gave my money to Santa to give to the poor.

—continued on page 5

## First Family

### First United Methodist Church

230 E. Skyline Parkway, Duluth, MN 55811  
218-727-5021      Info@fumcduluth.com

Pastor: Jeanine Alexander

Editor: Bill Alexander

Next First Family Deadline: **January 15**

Submit to [connect@fumcduluth.com](mailto:connect@fumcduluth.com)



[fumcduluth.com](http://fumcduluth.com)

## Worship in January

**Sunday, January 5**—Lessons from Jonah #1: "When We Find Ourselves Running from God"

*Scripture: Jonah 1*

Have you ever felt God leading you to do something but you didn't want to do it? Do you ever wonder, "What is God's will for my life?"

Jonah ran away... what are we running away from?

**Sunday, January 12**—Lessons from Jonah #2: "Faith When God Seems Hidden"

*Scripture: Jonah 2:1-9*

How do we deal with things happening that we don't understand? When have you realized that you aren't in control? What do we do/lean on when we are in dire situations?

**Sunday, January 19**—Faith Mentors #1: "Noah—Making A Difference"

*Scripture: Genesis 6:5-22*

**Sunday, January 26**—Faith Mentors #2: "Ruth"

*Scripture: The Book of Ruth*

## Faithfully Fit

The Faithfully Fit exercise class will resume on Thursday, January 2 at 9am. All are welcome to join!

## Strikepoint's "Bell Noël" Concert a Huge Success!

Thank you to the many people who attended or donated to Strikepoint's first annual Christmas Gala Concert. People are still talking about the performances of Strikepoint's guest artists, MC, and Elvis. Mark your calendars for next year's event—Saturday, December 5, 2020, 7pm. What will they do next?

## CHUM Donations Wish List

Winter is here! Tents and sleeping bags are needed now. CHUM is also looking for adult-size white T-shirts and deodorant. In addition, when families arrive at the Steve O'Neil Apartments, they have been homeless for some time. They come with little, and setting up a household takes some help. CHUM has families who need pots, pans, bakeware, and cooking utensils. If you can help, please drop off your donations at the CHUM office at 102 W. 2nd St., Duluth.

## Lennon-Berini Fund Awards \$1,500 Scholarships

In the 1950s two young men, John Lennon and Joe Berini, served First Methodist as staff members working with Duluth youth, particularly in the Central Hillside area. To commemorate their work, a scholarship fund was developed in 1985. Subsequent contributions have helped to sustain the Fund and allow for the presentation of 91 scholarships totaling \$85,190 as of today.

At the worship service on December 29, the Scholarship's Selection Committee presented four \$1,500 scholarships to members of our congregation. The recipients are:

**Katie Harvey**, a second-year graduate student at the University of Illinois Chicago studying biomedical visualization. She is interested in dancing bhangra, rock climbing, playing cello, and reading.

**Parker Hinnenkamp**, a junior at the University of North Texas studying for a BA in organ performance. He is interested in hiking, biking, reading in the Texas sun, and spending time with friends.

**Gus Kjolhaug**, a first-year graduate student at the University of Minnesota studying clinical and mental health counseling. He is interested in personal fitness, snowboarding, reading, and spending time with loved ones.

**Kelby Werner**, a junior at the University of Minnesota studying psychology with a minor in family therapy. He is interested in becoming a pastor, as well as reading, playing board games, and working on his novel.

Terry Wallin, President/Trustee of the fund, encourages church members and others to consider contributions to the Lennon-Berini Scholarship Fund to ensure the continued annual presentations to future worthy candidates.

—Our First Family, continued from page 2

friends experiencing homelessness and crisis.

First United Methodist has always been a light of justice and compassion on the hill. We are grateful for you!

~Joel Kilgour

## Final Financials From Fall Roast Beef Dinner

The 2019 Fall Roast Beef Dinner financials are in, and we were able to contribute \$4,310.65 to church ministries. This is approximately our usual contribution



from each dinner. Well done on meeting our goal! You are the best volunteers ever! My heart is still thanking all of you for your time, energy, and financial resources for the church ministries.

***The Spring Roast Beef Dinner  
will be  
Thursday, April 23, 2020.***

Blessings,  
~Cindy Hedlund

## Thank You!

to everyone who bought Terri Lynn nuts and goodies. All proceeds will be used for our summer mission trip.

~Rev. Cynthia Coffin-Langdon

## Being a Welcoming Congregation

When people tell me that First UMC is a wonderful welcoming congregation that makes me feel good. I have been thinking about exactly what being a "welcoming" congregation means. Maybe it starts with visitors being welcomed on a Sunday morning and invited into a conversation with one or two of our members. Perhaps they will return again, and they may even look for those people who greeted them the first Sunday. As weeks and months go by, the visitors may decide that they have found their church home and attend a new member information class. Following the class, they join the church and are then part of the wonderful welcoming congregation meeting and greeting visitors. And on it goes...

There are a lot of opportunities that go beyond greeting visitors that makes FUMC welcoming, and I'm asking you to think about being involved in one or more in 2020.

**Greeters on Sunday morning**—welcoming visitors and members alike. A friendly face, a handshake, the door being opened as they approach, directions to the Sanctuary—all say "welcome."

**Sunday Drivers Team**—This is one of the nicest welcomes our church can offer. For those without transportation, being picked up and brought to church and home again is a welcome gift. Drivers, male or female, are needed on a rotating or occasional schedule. Could you consider being a special Sunday Driver?

**Indoor Plants Care Group**—Thank goodness we have indoor plants to remind us about gardening and taking care of God's creation. They are a welcome sight during the long winter. Volunteers are needed to water plants in the Atrium and the Sanctuary garden up front. A rotating or occasional schedule works for this group, too.

Stop at the Welcome Center in the Narthex, and we'll get you in touch with any or all of these groups. There are many other opportunities as well—just ask!

Thank you! And, you're "welcome!"

~Mary Giese, Director of Welcoming and Hospitality

## Singers Wanted for the Victory Chorus

The Victory Chorus, an inclusive choir for people living with memory loss and their care partners, is welcoming new participants for 2020. The Victory Chorus is a joy-filled, supportive, and inclusive community choir. No audition, no pressure—just a great time! We welcome anyone living with Alzheimer's or other dementias who can attend the weekly rehearsals and who wants to make great music, create positive memories with their care partners, and make new friends!

This session begins on Sunday, January 12 and concludes on March 15 with a performance. The Chorus rehearses weekly from 1:30-3:30pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Duluth, 835 W. College St.. For more information or to register, contact Beth Kaiser at [vcjoybethk@gmail.com](mailto:vcjoybethk@gmail.com) or 218-343-8145.

# Ruby's Pantry Help Needed

The parking lot crew for Ruby's Pantry is in real need of additional help. Having help to safely get the customers in and out with their groceries is even more important this time of year since we have lost part of the parking lot to piles of snow. Ruby's is the third Thursday every month and parking lot help is needed from 4 to about 6pm on that day. Anyone interested can contact Charley Korsch, Mike Donahue, or Doug Buell. You can also contact the church office at 218-727-5021.

# All-Church Conference

Sunday, February 23 Immediately following worship we will have our annual church conference meeting for the following purposes:

- Deal with membership rolls
- Receive a financial update
- Approve candidates for ordained ministry
- Elect leadership
- Update on the current situation in the UMC

This meeting will take about an hour. It is of interest to members and friends of the

congregation. Everyone has a voice—members have a voice and a vote. A nursery will be available for children.



—pastor's column from page 2

- I bought food and donated it to people who need food
- I got my friend a PEZ because I know she likes PEZ and Elsa and Anna.
- I bought my mom a huge candy bar because she loves chocolate and nobody gives her stuff and she gives everyone stuff.
- I bought a blanket, and we brought it to a place for people who don't live in a house.
- I lost my \$5, then I earned \$5 and I put it in a Red Kettle (Salvation Army) and the man with the bell thanked me.
- I gave my money to a man asking for help with a sign on the street.
- I gave \$5 to the donut basket because people like getting donuts at church.
- My family all gave money. and we bought a turkey for Thanksgiving for hungry people.
- I gave food to the food shelf and put it in the cart (4 children did that).
- I bought a water bottle for a girl who lost hers.
- I put my money in the offering plate at church because I like church.
- I bought cloth bags for my teacher to use instead of plastic ones.
- I bought a bag of three pairs of fuzzy socks and dropped them off at church hoping someone will be able to use them.
- I bought a stuffed wolf with kind blue eyes and gave it to Toys for Tots.

I asked the kids how they felt when they used their money to help others and share kindness. They said:

- I felt great.
- I felt like I can do big things.
- It felt amazing.
- I felt happy.
- I was excited for my friend.
- I felt happy that the animals are loved.
- I wanted the \$5 for myself but was happy that I gave it away even though I wanted it.
- "Yippee" is how I felt.
- I felt good.
- Giving is great.
- I felt warm and snuggly.
- I felt good because a kid will think, "Wow, a kid in this big wide world cares for me!"

Thank you to our children for leading the way in kindness, giving, and generosity. We are never more like Jesus than when we give! We are starting a brand new year—2020! This year may we consistently find big and small, unusual and ordinary ways to help others, to show kindness, and to be a blessing. It will change the world... it will change our church... it will change us.

On the journey with you,  
~Pastor Jeanine

# Wednesday Night Meal Volunteers Needed

There are a total of 13 Wednesday night meals for 2019-2020 that still need volunteer help. Our meal coordinator does the planning, food purchase, meal prep, and clean up. Four to six volunteers are needed to help with these tasks beginning at 4pm (one or two people needed), with the others needed as they are available. Clean up ends about 7pm. The meal is served from 5:15pm to about 6:30pm. Compostable plates and cups make clean up easier. Vegetarian, gluten-free, and dairy free options are available.

Committees and church groups are asked to volunteer for two Wednesdays. Available dates are:

**January 15, 22, 29**

**February 5, 26**

**March 4, 11, 18, 25**

**April 1, 15, 29**

**May 13**

If your group or committee has already done two Wednesdays, thank you! If your group or committee is able to help with one or more, please contact Mike Donahue, 218-879-3456 or [mpcmdonahue@msn.com](mailto:mpcmdonahue@msn.com), with your choice of date(s). Have a second or third option available in case your preferred date(s) have already been taken by another group or committee.

There are sign-up sheets in the church office and in the Narthex on Sundays.

## From Our Faith Community Nurse

### Osteoporosis

Greetings Everyone!

I would like to thank all of you who signed up to donate blood last month. Some of you were unable to give, but you attempted, and I appreciate your willingness. Some of you were able to donate at Memorial Blood Center itself.

'Tis the season that many of us fall on the ice and can sustain injuries to our bones. So this month I thought I would talk a bit about osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a silent disease, affecting both men and women.

Major risk factors of bone loss are: life-long low calcium and vitamin D, current tobacco use, alcohol, more than two drinks daily, and lack of exercise. Alleviating these risk factors is key to preventing osteoporosis.

It's never too early to invest in bone health. The prevention of osteoporosis begins with optimal bone growth and development in youth.

Bones are living tissue, and the skeleton grows continually from birth to the end of the teenage years, reaching a maximum strength and size (peak bone mass) around the mid-20s.

Children and adolescents should:

- Ensure a nutritious diet with adequate calcium intake
- Avoid protein malnutrition and under-nutrition
- Maintain an adequate supply of vitamin D
- Participate in regular physical activity
- Avoid the effects of second-hand smoking

Bone mass acquired during youth is an important determinant of the risk of osteoporotic fracture during later life. The higher the peak bone mass, the lower the risk of osteoporosis.

Did you know that new bone is created throughout life as old bone is removed?

During childhood and the beginning of adulthood, bone formation is more important than bone removal. Later in life, however, the rate of bone removal is greater than the rate of bone formation and results in net bone loss—a thinning of your bones.

The nutritional and lifestyle advice for building strong bones in youth is just as applicable to adults. Get adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D, stop smoking, and get 30 minutes of

—continued on next page



—continued from previous page

weight-bearing activity per day, and resistance exercise two times a week. It is also important to get a dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) scan to measure your bone density, especially women.

I will be conducting classes in fall prevention in March—please stay tuned for details!

Keep those walks cleared the best you are able.

~Blessings, Linda Wiig

## Estimate of Giving/Pledges Update

Thank you to everyone who has already turned in their estimate of giving for 2020 so we can plan financially for our ministry and mission! If you haven't done so yet, please put your card in the offering plate or bring/send it to the church office. Additional cards are available at church. We need the participation of everyone. As you know, each year our expenses increase and our building requires additional upkeep and care. The good news is that our estimated pledged giving is \$30,000 more than last year, which is crucial to having a balanced budget once again. Well done, everyone! Thank you for your generosity. For more information about our financial status, please plan to come to our annual church conference meeting on Sunday, February 23 following worship.



## Twin Ports MLK Events 2020 January 19-20

Join us as we celebrate our communities of faith supporting Dr. King's message. The 2020 MLK theme is centered on Dr. King's speech, "Give Us the Ballot and We Will Transform the South," in which King states, "Give us the ballot, and we will no longer have to worry the federal government about our basic rights."

**The Interfaith Worship Service** will be held at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church from 4–5:30pm on Sunday, January 19. There will be an inclusive worship service with various faiths within our community. There will also be light refreshments, spoken word, music, and more! The service will be interpreted into American Sign Language.

**Twin Ports MLK Breakfast Program** will be held at Holy Family Catholic Church from 7–9am on Monday, January 20. The Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Community Breakfast has been happening in Duluth since 2002. Please plan to come join the community conversation and share a wonderful meal with other members of the community. More information will be coming on the program, but make plans to be there. This year's community breakfast will feature a live-stream broadcast of Minneapolis's MLK Celebration with their keynote speaker, Eric Holder, former attorney general who is currently focused on issues of redistricting and gerrymandering and how they affect voting rights.

**Twin Ports MLK March**, Monday, January 20: March with us in unity against systemic racism and oppression. Gather at 10am at Washington Center (corner of 4th St. and Lake Ave.) Free snacks and hot beverages will be served. Get there in time for a free MLK button! Create your own poster for the March and Rally and also stop at the YWCA's Girl Power table for t-shirt decorating so that you have your MLK marching swag! At 10:30am, we will go over chants and songs for the march by "Girl Nation." At 10:45am, we will have a few words from our very own Sandra Oyinloye of DanSan Creatives. We will march off promptly at 11am. The route is from Washington Center through downtown to the DECC, where the MLK Rally will commence at 12pm.

**2020 MLK Rally** on Monday, January 20 at noon at the DECC: The keynote speaker is Autumn Brown, and the emcee will be Doreen Nyamwaya. Performers include the ARE Poets, Major Attraktion Dance Group, and more. The Drum Major for Peace Awards will be presented. There will be children's activities, a selfie photo booth, vendors, and free MLK buttons while supplies last outside the DECC hall. The Rally will be interpreted into American Sign Language and recorded for broadcast.

***Feeding others in body as we are fed in spirit...***

# What is Happening in the UMC? — Update

Many of you have questions about what will happen after our General Conference meets May 5-15, 2020. Will the exclusionary, discriminatory rules around LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or transsexual, queer or questioning, intersexual, asexual or ally) remain or will we get rid of the rules? Will the United Methodist church split? Will we continue to be a United Methodist church? How will it affect Minnesota and FUMC? These are all excellent questions for which we don't yet have answers. This we know: the Minnesota Annual Conference of the UMC voted at Annual Conference last June to reject the discriminatory policies and be an inclusive Annual Conference. The vote was 85%. Our church (FUMC) long ago decided to be fully inclusive in membership, leadership, and the gift of marriage. Whatever happens in May of 2020, Minnesota Methodists will move forward together, as will our congregation. We need to keep living out our commitments to inclusion, keep praying for hearts to change, keep encouraging (and demanding) inclusion, and move forward in ministry and mission with conviction!

In our baptismal vows, we ask the one being baptized (or the parents of the child being baptized), "Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?" Based on our baptismal vows, a new movement has cropped up in the United Methodist Church, the movement to "Resist Harm." When the special session of General Conference met in February of 2019, they passed the Traditional Plan, which made wide-sweeping changes in the ways in which we organize ourselves as a denomination and police ourselves, and took more severe measures towards excluding LGBTQ people. Most of that plan was ruled unconstitutional, but a few measures were kept, and they go into effect on January 1, 2020. The highlights of that are:

- Pastors who perform same-gender weddings are now subject to a minimum penalty if they are found guilty in a church trial of a one-year suspension for the first offense, and a termination of your credentials (you are no longer allowed to be a clergy person) for the second offense.
- Boards of Ordained Ministry are not allowed to approve candidates for ordination if they do not meet ordination standards on sexuality (i.e. are identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual). Those Boards of Ordained Ministry are required to ask candidates about their sexuality.
- Bishops are not allowed to ordain candidates that they know to be lesbian or gay, even if the Board of Ordained Ministry has approved them.

In order to resist the harm being done by these new rules, many things are happening. Already, a number of Boards of Ordained Ministry (including Minnesota) have refused to exclude candidates solely on sexuality. Several bishops have refused to allow charges against clergy to go forward, and others have said they will not have trials. They have also said they will ordain whomever their Boards of Ordained Ministry send to them. Clergy all over the country are poised to do same-gender weddings after January 1. Our system, while having a process for charges and trials for clergy, is designed for ministry, not for trials. Multiple charges and trials will snarl the system, and points out the futility of making that our focus.

We encourage you to continue to live out our baptismal vows to resist evil, injustice, and oppression. You can do it by noticing the people around you every day. Make sure that you are open, inviting, and affirming of different people around you. Smile at the person struggling with a crying child. Let someone who looks harried get in line in front of you. Assume the best, not the worst, about someone. Speak words that affirm and lift up rather than ones that tear down. Don't swear at the person who fishtails in the ice and snow in the next lane. Put yourself in the shoes of someone whose culture or skin color is different from yours. Learn new things about our history and about the people who live right around us as well as miles away. Take time to educate people, share your story, and listen to theirs. There is so much we can do, and so much that God



is calling us to do. Keep remembering the beginning words of our baptismal vow: "Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you?" We are called to live out our baptismal vows... and God gives us the power to do so.

On Sunday, February 23, we will have a church conference meeting immediately following worship. At that meeting we will outline the plans that will be presented at General Conference and their implications. We will also respond to your questions and make a list of questions for which we don't yet have answers so we can answer them as events unfold. Please plan to attend this meeting. Let Pastor Jeanine know if you cannot attend, and we will schedule another session so everyone who wants information and discussion has that opportunity. Feel free to talk with any of us about this as well.

If you would like to attend General Conference as a volunteer (it is being held in Minneapolis), please go to [gc2020welcome.org/volunteers/](http://gc2020welcome.org/volunteers/) for more information or talk with Rev. MaryAnne, who is on the planning committee.

On the journey with you,  
*Pastor Jeanine & Rev. MaryAnne;*  
*Lay Leaders Cindy Hedlund & Jim Wheeler*  
*Council Chair Scott Hedlund*



Anne Gustafson smiles as she shows off the newly installed boiler. The project, which also included repair of airflow gates and installation of improved air and temperature control, is finally finished. We share her relief and happiness. Thank you, Anne and Trustees!

## Family News

### Martin Luther King, Jr., Rally—January 20

All ages, especially our youth, are invited to attend the MLK Rally and March on Monday, January 20. Rev. Cynthia Coffin-Langdon will chaperone any tween or teens who can be dropped off. We will gather at 10:15am at the Washington Center (corner of 4th St. and Lake Ave). Free snacks and hot beverages will be served, and a few speeches and songs will take place. At 11am we will march to the DECC for the rally that begins at noon. Talk to Cynthia if you have any questions. 218-260-3114 or [pastorcynthiacf@gmail.com](mailto:pastorcynthiacf@gmail.com).  
~Cynthia Coffin-Langdon

### Feeding Others in Body as We Are Fed in Spirit

Starting January 5, every communion Sunday (typically the first Sunday of the month) we are asking you to bring a donation of food (or monetary donation) for the CHUM



Food Shelf. That way when we come to the communion table to be fed spiritually, we are also feeding others who are physically hungry. The food shelf cart will be available for donations. If you make a financial donation, please note "food shelf" in the check memo or envelope, and make checks out to FUMC. Thank you for loving our neighbors in need.



# MINNESOTA METHODISTS

Our beloved United Methodist Church has declared all are not welcome to serve God. In Minnesota, we have already decided we will not be that church: the church that discriminates against people because of who they love, the church that discriminates against people for who they are.

In October, elected leadership of the Minnesota Annual Conference came together to determine our path to be the church God has called us to be, "rooted in Jesus, grounded in Wesleyan theology, inclusive of all persons, and engaged in the work of justice and reconciliation." During the event, District Superintendent Dan Johnson shared a reflection titled "Same Water, New Wells." Today, with Dan's permission, we share this reflection with you.

In this time of Advent, when we are just a few short weeks away from January 1 when the Traditional Plan takes effect, remember to be hopeful. Remember the hope felt in June, when over 85% of our conference declared all are welcome to serve God. When we declared all are welcome in our churches, where we will celebrate everyone for who they love and who they are.

## "Same Water, New Wells"

Jeremiah 2: 1-5, 10-13 (13 key verse)

Leadership Summit Message, 10/11/19

Water wells, our morning worship theme, have been literally and figuratively in my heart and hands over the past year. Some of you know that there's a little cabin in our family 20 miles southwest of Brainerd. It's central to memories and memory-making for now five generations of family. First there was a little bunkhouse and outhouse built by my grandfather during the Second World War. Then in 1974, my dad and I built a slightly larger cabin with four rooms and indoor plumbing. I still remember digging a five-foot-deep crawl space, driving a sandpoint and well pipe about 30 feet into the ground until we hit water, and connecting the pump and pressure tank. Then we built a cabin right over the top of it, with a trap door into the crawl space. It was amazing! Wonderful cool, clear water. No hand pumping and daily priming. Running water in the kitchen and—best of all for some in the family—a flush toilet!

But over a couple decades, rust stains accumulated on the fixtures, and a strong mineral taste and smell permeated the water. We tried a couple of water treatment systems, and they certainly made a difference, but for some reason it seemed like our water was getting tainted. The well was literally imprisoned underneath the cabin with no other access for repair or maintenance. Then we began a remodel project late last summer. The cabin's cement block foundation no longer met code, so we hired a couple sub-contractors—one to carefully lift the cabin and move it and a second to excavate and lay a full basement of concrete blocks before setting the cabin back in place again. In the process, we had to remove the old sandpoint. I took a picture and if you see it attached, it's completely encased in rust. Over 44 years it had become so clogged and corroded that even the best of water was tainted by the very mechanism we relied on to draw water from the well!

While sandpoints are still used for inexpensive water access for irrigation, residential drinking water codes require an entirely different technology. It involves drilling a well, usually much deeper into the aquifer. A well casing like a 4" PVC pipe is inserted into the hole, and a pump and pipe are lowered through the casing. All of this is installed just outside the cabin about ten yards away, for easy access and modifications and replacement in the future without having to tear down the very foundations of the structure. Now we have



wonderfully renewing and refreshing water once again. The very same life-giving water reservoir was down there all the time! We've just re-tapped into it more deeply, in a new and relevant way!

In 1972, just two years prior to me driving this sandpoint as a teenager, the UMC declared that homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. A majority of people felt it was the necessary thing to do at the time for the purity of our Wesleyan movement, but over time that action has tainted not just ministries but our very ability to draw fresh water from the fountain of God. No amount of revision or retrofitting or repair is likely to make a difference in the deep divide over the continuum of human sexuality or the range of biblical interpretation. Curiously, the same year we're setting our cabin on a new foundation and drilling a new well, the foundations of our beloved UMC are shaken. In the midst of this turmoil, I find personal hope and purpose in knowing that the same reservoirs of living water are still ever present and available to all. But we do need to build new systems of access that allow all of us to flourish once again!

Before we jump immediately to the promise of renewal, I call us to a moment of confession for our own contributions to the current compromising state of our collective work and witness. The Prophet Jeremiah did just this in the years preceding the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile. He called out the faithful, the chosen people of Judah, for trading their relationships with God and one another for the idolatry of human-made institutions and laws. Metaphorically, Jeremiah cries out then and now in chapter 2 verse 13, channeling the voice of God, "My people have committed two crimes: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water. And they have dug wells, broken wells that can't hold water."

I know that not all of us are of one mind regarding our denominational divisions these days nor many of the other polarizing themes that divide our country politically, economically, and racially. But could today be a day for us to come together, to claim our past, to confess our present, to cast a vision for our future? We have to shed the rusty wells that taint and obstruct our ability to grow in love of God, reach new people, and heal a broken world. We must build one or more wells that genuinely attract others to the life-giving waters of Christ!

### **Around Our Connection**

Please save the date for "Holy Diversity: Celebrating Cultural Difference." Minnesota has seen a 29% growth in its population

of people of color since 2010, ranking us 9th highest in the country for increasing diversity. Yet achievement gaps and racial tension in Minnesota show how far we have to go to celebrate cultural difference as an expression of God in the world. Join us Saturday, January 25 at Hennepin Ave. UMC, as Dr. Grace Pak, pastor, teacher, and professional certified coach specializing in religion and race relations, facilitates a conversation to bring people together across cultural differences in order to live fully in God's Kingdom.

On Sunday, February 23 from 3 to 5pm, Minnesota Methodists invites you to save the afternoon for a conversation with Bishop Karen Oliveto at United Methodist Church of Anoka. Bishop Oliveto is in town for the Mahle Lecture at Hamline University, and will also be at the Twin Cities District Ash Wednesday service at Hamline Church on February 26.





## First United Methodist Church

First Family (USPS 349-210) is published monthly by First United Methodist Church, 230 E. Skyline Parkway, Duluth, MN 55811-2799. Periodicals postage is paid at Duluth, MN 55806.

### Volume 54, Number 1

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to First Family, 230 E. Skyline Parkway, Duluth, MN 55811-2799.

## Our Regular Weekly

*This calendar includes only those events open to church members or the general public. Other events are scheduled in the building, but not listed.*

### Sundays

9:00am Faith Forum - FSL  
9:00am Nursery - Rm 106  
10:00am Worship - S  
10:15am Sunday School - Rm 105 & 112  
11:30am Strikepoint - BR  
3:30pm T'ai Chi - Rm 104

### Mondays

Noon Gamblers Anonymous - Lib  
3:30pm Spirit Yoga - TBC  
5:30pm Whole Birth Yoga - TBC  
6:30pm Sinfonia - LSH  
8:00pm Eating Disorders Anonymous - Lib

### Tuesdays

5:00pm T'ai Chi - Rm 105  
6:00pm Gamblers Anonymous - Lib  
6:30pm Mama Yoga - TBC

### Wednesday Evening Activities

4:15pm Child Care - Rm 106  
5:00pm JAM - TBC  
5:15pm Dinner - LSH  
5:30pm JAM Jr. - TBC  
5:30pm Bible Explorers - Rm 105  
5:30pm Ringtones - BR  
5:45pm Sanctuary Choir - EL  
6:30pm Tweens - Rm 112  
6:30pm Confirmation - FSL  
6:30pm Tapestry - S  
6:45pm Cast in Bronze - BR  
7:45pm Class Ring - BR

**Calendar may change—check [www.fumcduluth.com](http://www.fumcduluth.com) for updates.**

### Thursdays

9:00am Faithfully Fit - EL  
6:00pm T'ai Chi - Rm 104

### Fridays

8:00am Men's Study Group - FSL  
9:00am Alcoholics Anonymous - TBC

### Saturdays

9:00am T'ai Chi - Rm 104

## One Time & Day-by-Day

### Wednesday, January 1

*New Year's Day - Church Closed*

### Thursday, January 2

4:00pm Foundation Meeting - FSL

### Tuesday, January 6

10:00am Writers Group - Lib  
5:30pm Hospitality - FSL

### Wednesday, January 8

9:30am Prayer Shawl Group - FSL

### Thursday, January 9

10:00am Christ in Crisis Book Study - FSL  
5:15pm Trustees - Lib  
6:00pm Christ in Crisis Book Study - FSL  
6:30pm Amateur Radio Operators - LSH

### Saturday, January 11

9:00am Reiki Community Healing Circle - TBC

### Sunday, January 12

11:30am Sustainability - Lib

### Monday, January 13

7:00pm Priscilla Circle - FSL

### Tuesday, January 14

10:00am Writers Group - Lib  
2:00pm Loud Laughing Ladies - FSL  
4:00pm Foundation Meeting - FSL

### Wednesday, January 15

9:00am Scrabble - Lib  
9:30am Naomi Circle - FSL

### Thursday, January 16

4:00pm Ruby's Pantry

### Monday, January 20

*Martin Luther King Jr. Day*  
10:00am Rachel Circle - FSL

### Tuesday, January 21

7:00pm Council - EL

### Thursday, January 23

5:30pm Finance Committee - Lib

### Saturday, January 25

9:00am Citizens in Action - LSH

### Monday, January 27

5:30pm Ruby's Pantry Steering Committee - FSL  
6:30pm Monarch Buddies - Lib  
8:00pm Eating Disorders Anonymous - FSL

### Tuesday, January 28

2:00pm Loud Laughing Ladies - FSL  
6:00pm Quilters Guild - LSH

S	Sanctuary
CW	Club Wesley
BR	Bell Room
Lib	Library
TBC	Three Brothers Chapel
EL	East Lounge
LSH	Lakeview Social Hall
FSL	Fireside Lounge