



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.

February 2021



**The Church Is Not a Building—
We Are the Church!**



*First United Methodist Church
230 E. Skyline Parkway
Duluth, MN 55811
www.fumcduluth.com*



Our First Family

Thank you to Charley Korsch and Tom Brown for doing the boiler checks each day for the past several months. What a wonderful gift you have given your church!

Congratulations to Elissa Downs and Dustin Oehler on the birth of **Fleur Leigh Oehler**. She was born on Saturday, January 16, and is Sue and Roger Downs' first grandchild.

Congratulations to Mike Goodlet and Rob Meijer, who were engaged this past week.

A gift to light the church for the week of January 31 was given anonymously in memory of **Tiffany Langdon-Larson**, daughter of Jojo and Cynthia Coffin-Langdon. The gift will be shared with FUMC's Racial Justice Action Committee.

Thank you to everyone who supported our Youth Fund by ordering Terri Lynn Nuts. We made just over \$500 in profit!

Thank you to all those who have shared their talents and time to make our online worship services happen—musicians, pastors, engineers, editors, fine arts, readers, office staff, and contributors.

Our service is often held up as a shining example of a beautiful and meaningful worship experience.

On the Journey With You

Each week we record worship on Tuesday afternoon. That can be challenging when the week's important events happen after Tuesday. The week of the presidential inauguration, I recorded my sermon on Tuesday, before the Wednesday inauguration. If I had recorded it afterwards, some of these thoughts would have been included:

- “And so we lift our gaze, not to what stands between us, but what stands before us” ~*Amanda Gorman*
- When a friend commented to President Biden about the huge, challenging task in front of him, he asked him if he would be OK. President Biden put his rosary beads in his hand and said that he would be OK. It reminds me of our “LO Promise” where Jesus says “LO, I am with you always.” With God with us, we can accomplish and face very hard things and have the inner resources to do so.
- “EVERYBODY is entitled to be treated with dignity and decency.” ~*President Biden*
- “There is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it.” ~*Amanda Gorman*
- “We will lead not merely by the example of our power but by the power of our example.” ~*President Biden*
- One final quote that has been on my mind lately: “Fight for things you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.” ~*Ruth Bader Ginsburg*

May we seek to be the light, to share love, to be hope in our world!

On the journey with you!
~*Pastor Jeanine*

First Family

First United Methodist Church

230 E. Skyline Parkway, Duluth, MN 55811
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Pastor: [Jeanine Alexander](#)
Editor: [Bill Alexander](#)

Next First Family deadline: **February 17**
Submit to connect@fumcduluth.com



fumcduluth.com

All-Church Annual Meeting

The All-Church Annual Meeting will be held via Zoom on Sunday, February 14 at 11am (right after worship) for the following purposes:

- Membership report and approval
- Financial report
- COVID policy and update
- Reopening process and plan
- Action on pastoral candidates
- Update on the UMC
- Being together

The Zoom meeting link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5446347519>

Meeting ID: 544 634 7519

If you need help getting on Zoom, please contact Kelby Werner in the church office at 218-727-5021 or at info@fumcduluth.com, and he will help you. There are also dial-in numbers for those unable to do video.

Help Needed

New members are needed for the church finance team chaired by Teri Tangen. If you have a financial background and an interest, please inform Pastor Jeanine at pastor@fumcduluth.com. We need you. If you have questions about the role, feel free to email Teri at teri.tangen@gmail.com.

Ash Wednesday

Save the date and make plans to virtually attend our Ash Wednesday service. We will be live-streaming the service at 7pm Wednesday, February 17. You will be able to find it on our YouTube channel.

Look for links on the FUMC website and Facebook page as well as in Pastor Jeanine's weekly email.

Drive-by Church

We will be providing a drive-by church, at the main doors, immediately following worship on Sunday, February 7, from 11:15am-12:30pm. You will be able to connect with Pastor Jeanine, get a Lenten devotional book (with a devotion for each day during Lent), and receive a few other items to help you spiritually during the season of Lent. Please feel free to drop off your offerings, food for the Food Shelf, or anything else at the same time. Please wear a mask when Pastor Jeanine greets you at your car, as will she.

Advent and Christmas Giving

Our congregation did an amazing job giving and blessing people during the holidays. For our Advent and Christmas Giving, we gave:

- \$5,000 special giving to the ministry of the church
- \$1,000 special giving to CHUM
- 150+ toys
- 215 food items (mostly cereal)
- 375 pairs of socks
- 145 pairs of underwear
- 18 coats
- 220 hats/scarves/mittens
- 32 gift cards

Lenten Small Groups

We will be hosting several small groups via Zoom during Lent and studying the book *Love Is The Way—Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times* by Bishop Michael Curry. Be watching for an opportunity to sign up for a five-week class mid-February to March. Pastor Jeanine Alexander, Rev. MaryAnne Korsch, Pastor Cynthia Coffin-Langdon, and Kelby Werner will facilitate the groups.

Cara Overland

Cara Overland has resigned her position as finance/office/building manager effective the end of January, 2021. She has received two opportunities she feels she cannot pass up even though she has only been with us for three months. Here is an excerpt from her letter to us:

“It has been a pleasure working here at the church over the last three months. I deeply appreciate the generosity of Pastor Jeanine, the staff and the church members. I have received two separate offers/opportunities that I am not able to let pass. The first is for one of my businesses that will take my family out of town for much of the summer. The second is a consulting role with a local non-profit. The consulting role will provide a home office work environment,

—continued on page 4

From the Welcome Desk

by Mary Giese

What is time? And, what time is it?

During COVID I wonder how many of us have been using our time to do things that we never seem to find time for, like going through drawers, closets, boxes of treasures, and "stuff." In my sorting, I found a manila folder filled with Parson to Person articles my father, D. Price Lackey, had written for church newsletters. Part of an article from the 1975 Springfield, MN *UMC Saltshaker* really hit home with me since the words are just as timely today. I share it with you:

"Well, what is time? And, what time is it?"

Time is a very precious something that all too many of us misuse or waste. We have often heard someone say, 'Oh, I'm just wasting time while I wait for.....' Or, 'I'm just killing time.' How tragic. Time is far too valuable to just be tossed away in that fashion—and we are guilty, most of us, somewhere along the line. Time is that precious something given to us to use in preparation for ETERNITY. To do the best we can, with whatever abilities we may possess, in living for God; in helping those who are in less fortunate circumstances than we; in promoting peace and brotherhood among races and nations; in lifting humankind a little nearer to being Christ-like. The use, or misuse, we make of time determines our destiny. Time that has gone by can never be returned to us. We can't really save time, we can only use it to the best advantage.

"What time is it?' It is time for us to start making better use of all of the blessings God has bestowed upon us. No one else can do it for us. Each one of us is responsible for the time allotted to us by God.

"What time is it?' It is time for each of us to realize that the success of the Christian religion depends upon each individual claiming Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. When we have come to that realization, and act accordingly, God will provide us with strength and courage to tackle our tasks, and bring His Church to its highest moments."

While we wait and anticipate the time we can be back together in our building, there is time for us to reach out to people we have met or know who may need a helping hand, a friendly conversation or an encouraging word. A few minutes of our time each day may open doors in the future for people to be welcomed to church and to be a part of our caring and sharing congregation. Remember, We are the church with a *Welcome For Everybody, Always*.

—Cara, from page 3



Cara Overland

fewer hours, and increased flexibility. This will allow me to maximize the potential of my two businesses, as well as spend more time with my family. I care deeply about the

church, and I'm sad to leave so quickly."

Your church leaders and Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) have met, are moving forward on studying the position, and will do the work necessary for recruitment of the next person(s). Steve Mattson and SPRC are leading this endeavor with the support of the lay leaders, council chairs, finance and trustee chairs, Pastor Jeanine, and Rev. MaryAnne.



Nancy Eaton

Nancy Eaton has generously agreed to be interim once again. We are so lucky and blessed for her willingness and ability. She will begin on Tuesday, February 2 and

will work Tuesday–Friday from 9am–2pm. Kelby will work Monday–Thursday, 9am–3pm and is generously and enthusiastically willing to take on new roles. Kyle Harriss will assist with building needs and Teri Tangen with finance needs.

This is disappointing news, but we will be okay and God will make a new way. We can celebrate with Cara her new adventure.

Mission and Social Justice

From Our Sustainability Team

Are you interested in sustainability but afraid that thinking and talking about it is just TOO depressing? Do you feel the whole situation is TOO hopeless, so why bother? Well, we have an option for you!

Several on the Sustainability Committee will be reading a book called *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy*, by Chris Johnstone. It's a positive and hopeful book about sustainability and responding to the challenges the world is facing. Think about joining us as we read this compelling book. If there's interest, Geoff Bell has agreed to lead a Zoom discussion. Please let Geoff know if you are interested: ggbell@d.umn.edu. You can find [the book on Amazon](#) or order it from your local bookseller.

An important transportation statute called [Clean Cars MN](#) is now open for public comments, and Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light (MNIPL—an interfaith community co-creating a just and sustainable world) is hosting an informational webinar on February 3. Learn all about the draft ruling and how it will benefit our environment and consumers! Anjali Bains, the senior clean transportation manager with Fresh Energy, will be the presenter. At the end of the webinar, all attendees will have the opportunity to write their own comments of support that MNIPL will submit to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on your behalf.

What: Informational webinar and comment-writing party for Clean Cars MN

Why: This proposed policy would increase the number of electric vehicles offered by Minnesota auto dealers while raising vehicle emissions standards for new passenger vehicles.

When: Wednesday, February 3 at 7:00 pm

Who: People engaged in climate justice — and their congregations and communities!

Where: Zoom

Contact Sam Benson to register for the free event: 218-329-3833.

Gruskin Sisters Present Benefit Concert to Help Elvis

Dear Friends,

We hope this message finds you safe and healthy in the new year! At a time when the world needs more doctors and nurses, we're excited to present an online benefit concert in support of a young student's medical tuition. Elvis, who lives in Mbeya, Tanzania, just began coursework for his Diploma in Clinical Medicine (a post-secondary three-year degree roughly comparable to pre-med in the US). Due to the economic toll of the pandemic, Elvis' family won't be able to cover the cost of tuition and supplies.

On Sunday, February 28, from 2-3pm EST, Johanna Gruskin and her friends will be putting on a benefit concert to cover the \$6,000 cost of Elvis' medical studies (tuition, laptop, textbooks, medical equipment). You will hear an array of solo works that were formative during the early years of our musical education. We hope you'll be able to join us so that we can all give Elvis a start in his medical career!

Tickets are \$20. You can purchase your ticket by donating at least \$20 at [this link](#). Of course, if you are moved to do so, we appreciate donations over that amount. Those who donate \$20 or above will receive a link to the concert 48 hours before the event. In case you cannot make it to the live concert, all ticket holders will be emailed a recording after the event. [Editor's note: If you are reading this in the printed version, go to fumcduluth.com/newsletter to get to the link.]

For those who join us live, there will be the opportunity to donate and bid on prizes during the event as well!
Thank you! ~Johanna and Rebecca Gruskin

From Our Faith Community Nurse

Greetings to all,

I know many of us thought that we would be much further along in receiving doses of vaccine by now, but as we know, this rollout has not met everyone's expectations. Thank goodness many of our frontline health providers have received at least one dose of vaccine, and many others in long-term care facilities have also. Childcare staff and a few schoolteachers will also begin to get the limited supply of vaccine, as well as people 65 and older or those with underlying conditions. The new pilot programs in nine cities around Minnesota are now beginning, which will help distribution. To receive any vaccine, an appointment is necessary—no walk-ins. Please see the [MN Dept of Health website](#) for further information.

It is imperative that people remain vigilant in distancing and mask wearing, especially since new variants of the virus are beginning to circulate and are more easily spread.

If you are 65 and older or have an underlying condition such as diabetes, heart disease, or asthma, and you were exposed to someone who has tested positive, and/or you yourself have symptoms (which can include fever, runny nose, cough, fatigue, headache, sore throat, nausea, or diarrhea), get tested. If you are positive, call your health care provider and ask about receiving Monoclonal Antibodies.

According to a [January 10 article in the Duluth News Tribune](#), right now these antibodies are the only treatment that can help reduce the severity of symptoms and keep you from the possibility of being hospitalized. It's been shown that hospitalizations do decrease and people recovered more quickly after they received the antibodies.

These antibodies, which mimic natural antibodies, are made in the lab. It has been shown that they can reduce the amount of virus in a person's system and therefore can reduce hospitalizations, as symptoms of the disease are less profound. This is one of the treatments former president Trump received. (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)

These antibodies need to be given **early**. It's recommended to give them within three days of a positive COVID test or at least within ten days. The earlier the better. Even if you are feeling well after the positive test, symptoms can abruptly appear. So make the call to your provider.

The antibodies are given intravenously over about an hour but you remain up to a half hour post-infusion to be observed for any side

effects. (So plan on a couple of hours.) Both Essentia and St Luke's are sites for the infusions, and Essentia has areas set up to deliver these antibodies system wide.

Convalescent plasma is also a mode of treatment for those who are hospitalized. The plasma may lessen the severity or shorten the length of COVID-19. If you have recovered from COVID-19, please consider donating plasma to help others fight the disease. Call the Memorial Blood Center or the Red Cross to donate plasma.

We must fight this virus together. With the suffering of many people, let's find solidarity to follow guidelines, help one another, and help ourselves. Let the peace of Christ surround each and every one of us, and through Him embrace, strengthen, and heal us.

Blessings to all of you, and stay safe.
~Linda Wiig

Strikepoint to Purchase Very Large Bells

With the receipt of a few very generous donations, Strikepoint has started the



process to purchase a lower 7th octave of bass bells. The half-octave will eventually number seven aluminum bells, each in individual cases. These will be lower in pitch than our current lowest bells, weigh half as much as bronze, and can be (relatively) easily played by more people than just our strongest musicians.

If you are interested in helping to fund this project, please contact Bill Alexander at bill@strikepoint.com. It's going to be exciting!

Lennon-Berini Fund Awards \$1,500 Scholarships

At the worship service on January 3, the Scholarship's Selection Committee presented six \$1,500 scholarships to members of our congregation. The recipients are:

Elise Hintzman, a junior at the College of St. Scholastica majoring in secondary English education and minoring in music. She enjoys running, reading, and camping up the North Shore.



Nakiah Lanthier, a junior at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire majoring in communication sciences and disorders, and working towards being a speech language pathologist. She enjoys dancing and kayaking.



Kelby Werner, a senior at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities majoring in psychology and minoring in family therapy. He enjoys writing his novel, reading, and playing games with friends.



Parker Hinnenkamp, a junior at the University of North Texas majoring in music with a concentration in sacred music. He enjoys hiking, jazz, classical opera performances, and cooking with friends.



Gus Kjolhaug, a second-year graduate student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities majoring in educational psychology with emphasis in clinical mental health. He enjoys personal fitness, snowboarding, biking, and listening to music.



Lindsey Clark, a first-year student at Winona State University in the Addiction Counseling Certificate program. She has her bachelors in community psychology from St. Cloud State. She enjoys fishing and camping with her family.



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.



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