

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.*

March 2024

**First United
Methodist Church**

230 E. Skyline Parkway
Duluth, MN 55811
www.fumcduluth.com

Photo by Roman Odintsov



Our First Family



A gift to light the church for the week of March 10 was made by the 2x2s in memory of Carol Norling. Carol's birthday would have been March 14. The gift will also support the Memorial Gardens.

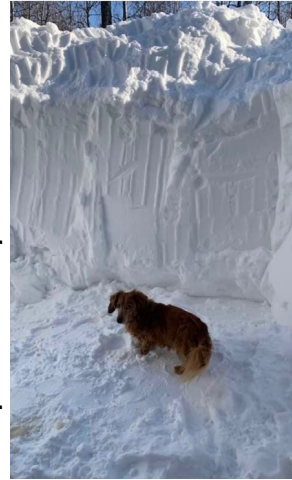
I want to thank Pastor Jeanine and the members of FUMC for all of your prayers, cards, and support given to Laura and my daughters after my recent fall and traumatic brain injury. Your support was extremely helpful to all of us during a time of great uncertainty about my survival and long-term effects of the fall. Thankfully the prognosis after the fall is positive, and I should be able to fully recover.

I also want to thank everyone for your support during my treatment, for MDS. During my treatment, I have become acutely aware of the importance of blood donations for people in my situation as well as for people who have suffered blood loss or need blood components for one reason or another. I would like to encourage everyone who is able to donate blood whenever possible. It doesn't cost anything but time and effort, and the donation will be priceless for the people who need it. It's another way for us to be of

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On the Journey With You

This is a picture of my back yard in February last year versus the same day in February this year. A lot has changed, hasn't it? We have gone from the snowiest winter on record to one of the least snowy. Also last February my little dog, Dooley, was still with me. He died on March 21 so is not in the picture this February, but he is still very much in my heart.



Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us that "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." I love living in a four-season climate and the regular changes that brings. I think having the variety gives me a deeper appreciation for summer, my favorite season. I also love the beauty of fall, the promise of spring, and the quiet of winter, watching snow fall. Interestingly, this winter is reminding us that even the same season of the year can be vastly different from another year. It works the same way in the seasons of our lives.

There's a poem that talks about this called "The Many Different Seasons" by M.S. Lowndes:

There are many different seasons in life that we go through,
times of God's blessing and peace, and times of hardship too.

No matter what the season we find that we are in,
God is there to lead us on and give us hope within.

And when the seasons of hardships have come into our lives,

First Family

First United Methodist Church

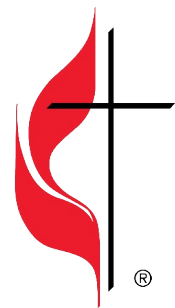
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Editor: [Bill Alexander](#)

Next First Family deadline: March 20

Submit to connect@fumcduluth.com



fumcduluth.com

we can be encouraged by God for our hope is placed in Christ.

For we know it's only temporary and will change as seasons do, though it feels like an eternity and we wonder if we'll get through.

But God's rivers of mercy flow down from heaven above, to bring to us refreshment and to touch us with love.

So thank the Lord for the seasons, as different as they are, and for the growth that comes from it, bringing change within our hearts.

I am praying for you, and am here for you, in whatever season you are in. One of the great blessings of being part of a community of faith is that we have each other for help, encouragement, and strength as we journey through the seasons.

On the journey with you!
~Pastor Jeanine

March is Food Share Month

Food Shelf donations are currently behind the need. The CHUM Food Shelf is gearing up for the Annual MN Food Share March Campaign, and CHUM is really trying to make a big push this year so they can create a large back-stock of food to help them get the summer months started on the right foot. This year their goal is \$100,000 and 50,000 pounds of food. CHUM needs all the support you can give. The first \$50,000 goes directly back to local farms to help support their fresh-food movement and to create a sustainable system for local food production and consumption.

Please bring food donations to church and put them in the cart, and we can make sure it all gets to the Food Shelf. You can make monetary donations through FUMC (put "Food Shelf" on the envelope or in the memo line). For every \$1 donated, CHUM can purchase \$3 worth of food! Traditionally, we bring food items to church on Communion Sundays but this month let's keep the donations coming all month long.

A Preview of Worship In March

March 3: We will celebrate Holy Communion. The sermon series continues our study of the book of James with "Putting Feet to Our Faith... The Power of Words."

March 10: The sermon series continues our study of the book of James with "Putting Feet to Our Faith... Smart Living."

March 17: "Putting Feet to Our Faith... Patient, Prayerful Planning" is the conclusion of our sermon series from the study of the book of James.

March 24: Palm Passion Sunday—The children will lead us in a palm parade as we begin the Holy Week journey. The sermon is called "From Cheers to Jeers... Is Feeling Good Enough?"

Thursday, March 28 at 7pm – Last Supper and Service of Shadows will be held in the Sanctuary and will also be streamed for those at home. There will be childcare and an activity for children following communion and the children's message.

Friday, March 29 at noon – Good Friday Service will be held in the Chapel and will not be livestreamed

March 31: Easter Sunday

- **Sunrise Service** will be in the Sanctuary with Tapestry at 7am. Spend some time viewing the sun rising over the lake before and afterwards.
- **Traditional Easter Worship** will be both in person in the Sanctuary and online on our YouTube channel at 10am. The Easter sermon is titled "Resurrection Rocks." There will be coffee, doughnuts, and fruit available in Lakeview Social Hall from 9–9:45am.

Please note that on Easter Sunday, fellowship time is before worship rather than after.

There are three ways to participate in worship:

- 10am, live in our Sanctuary on Sundays. (We hope you choose this one when you can—there is something wonderful about being in person with others, and you get a doughnut and coffee.)
 - 10am livestreamed service on Sundays as worship is taking place
 - Anytime afterwards on our [YouTube channel](#).
-

From Our Faith Community Nurse



Did you know that March is National Nutrition month? I will share with you a little information on what's good healthy eating.

Are you one of those adults or kids who eat cereals or bagels or oatmeal for breakfast? Have you ever noticed the amount of sugar contained in an average bowl of cereal or in a bagel?

Where's your protein in such a meal? You could add milk with some protein powder to your oatmeal. The better choice is to switch to a protein smoothie, eggs, or a breakfast burrito made with scrambled eggs. With this added protein, your attention and focus will improve.

Protein is necessary for a healthy functioning body. Our brains are built from nine essential amino acids, which we need to provide by eating protein-rich food. Our cells "talk" to one another, and if we don't get enough protein, this process is affected. If a person doesn't eat adequate protein in a day, they can end up feeling tired, depressed, anxious, and hungry.

The best sources of protein are lean meat, turkey, chicken, fish, and seafoods, but the healthiest are nuts, seeds, beans, and lentils. Adults need 20 to 30 grams per meal (based on a 170-pound adult). Once an adult gets to age 45 or more, muscle mass decreases and your protein needs increase to 75 to 90 grams per day. For example, if one eats a 3 oz. chicken breast with ½ cup of rice and ½ cup of veggies, that equals to 25 grams of protein. An egg with a bean burrito and glass of milk equals 28 grams. Those who follow a vegan diet can become deficient in iron, zinc, vitamins B12, A, and D, along with other nutrients. Vegans need to educate themselves on how they can acquire enough vital nutrients through what they eat. Plants high in B12 are usually not adequate sources of this vitamin and you will need to take a supplement with B12.

We should eat fish and other seafood twice a week. Salmon, trout, oysters, and sardines are sources of protein and also high in omega-3s. Try making your plate half fruits and vegetables, and watch your portion sizes. The Japanese have a saying (which I don't know how to write) but it means that when you are 80% full, quit eating. At this point you are comfortably full, your hunger is gone, you are satisfied, and you could participate in light activity.

Watch for more on foods to come. Researchers are finding that Hippocrates was correct—"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." There is so much more to learn about foods and health.

Now that we're in Lent, let's take time with God to meditate on His word and do good works.

Blessings, ~Linda Wiig

Lent/Easter Mission Project

One half of our financial offering is designated toward our operating budget, making possible everything we do. The other half goes outside our doors. This year your mission team has decided financial gifts will go to:

- The hands-on, life-changing ministry of **Harbor House Crisis Shelters**, in Superior, WI.
- **The Duluth NAACP Ignite Empower Transform Foundation** – working to cultivate economic safe spaces and provide services, leading to the empowerment and transformation of the African American and African Heritage community.
- Additionally we will be giving food for the **Food Shelf** as we participate in Food Share Month.

You will receive a letter with more information along with a giving envelope.

A Snapshot of Holy Week

- **Palm/Passion Sunday** – March 24 at 10am
- **Last Supper and Service of the Shadows** – Thursday, March 28 at 7pm. The service will include Holy Communion (the Last Supper) and journeying all the way to Jesus' death.
- **Good Friday Service** – Friday, March 29 at noon in the Chapel. This service will walk us through Jesus' death and the events of the last hours of his life.
- **Easter Sunrise Service** with Tapestry – Sunday, March 31 at 7am: A short service in our Sanctuary.
- **Easter Worship** – Sunday, March 31 at 10am

See page 3 for more details

Our First Family, continued from page 2
service to others.

Again, thank you for all of your prayers and support.
~Bob Krumwiede

Dear First United Methodist Church: Thank you so much to my church family for helping me pray for my brother, Ron, and his wife, Karen, for two years after he became ill. And a special thank you for the cards, emails, calls, and conversations after my brother died January 20. Thank you also to Pastor Jeanine for the telephone prayer when I really needed it. This is a great church family, and I am very glad to be a part of it for 44 years.
~June Kreutzkamp

Dear Friends in mission; Thank you! The dear people you helped with your gifts to UMCOR in disaster response and recovery and missionaries around the world, may never have the opportunity to meet you, but if they did, I am certain their response would be "Thank you!" Through your financial support, you are serving within a vital network of interactive relationships around the world. Together may we continue to reveal the love of God and demonstrate genuine love for our neighbors. Grace and peace,
~Roland Fernandes, General Secretary of UMCOR/Global Ministries of the UMC

Pastor Jeanine and FUMC: Thank you so much for all the support—the prayers and kind messages, the gifts, gift cards, and donations. Please share our immense gratitude with the congregation. We feel very loved. Blessings,
~Sarah and Billy Davis and family

Thank you, First United Methodist Church, for your monthly donation to CHUM's Chaplaincy Program and for the general fund. CHUM started in 1973 with the purpose of overcoming the increase of hunger, poverty, homelessness, and isolation in Duluth's Central Hillside neighborhood. Fifty years later, we are still here, providing life-saving services to our most vulnerable neighbors. The needs are great and growing, and our services are expanding to meet those needs. Thank you for being part of our community.
~Grace Swensen, CHUM Development Director

Dear Pastor Jeanine, thank you for the First United Methodist Church financial donation to the Food Shelf and car loads of groceries. Your gifts will allow us to continue feeding our neighbors. Pastor Alexander and Congregation, when you gave to Second Harvest Northland, you did much more than provide fresh and healthy food to neighbors facing hunger. You gave a mother the chance to take a breath and cook her children a good meal. You gave a grandmother a chance to share an old family recipe. And you gave a family a much-needed moment of peace around the dinner table. At the heart of all these moments was love—love that you passed on through your generosity. Thank you for all you do.
Sincerely, ~Shaye Moris, president/CEO

Dear First UMC, Thank you for your recent donation to the Union Gospel Mission. Here at UGM we are driven by a belief that everyone deserves food, shelter, and hope. And because of the generosity of our donors, the Mission has been on that mission for over 100 years. Your thoughtful gift ensures we can continue serving our guests in a way that preserves pride and inspires belief in a better tomorrow. Because shelter fills a need and food fills stomachs—but hope fills the soul. Thank you for making a difference in the Northland!
~Katie Hagglund, Executive Director

OPEN STAFF POSITION:

**Office Assistant/New Member/Welcome Person
10-12 hours a week**

This person will be responsible for welcoming new people and all people. This includes staffing (and/or finding others to staff) the Welcome Table on Sunday mornings, participating with Pastor Jeanine in new member classes, and providing a welcoming environment for the congregation.

This person will work in the church office two days (4-6 hours a day: pick from Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays) staffing the main desk and helping with office tasks. Computer skills are necessary.

Please talk with Pastor Jeanine or Sandy Smith if you or someone you know is interested, and/or submit a resume.

Children and Youth News for March

Nursery–5th grade

Sunday School – held at 10am on Sundays, March, 3, 10, 17

Children (K-5th grade) leave for Sunday School after the children's message in worship.

- **Nursery Care** for five-year-olds and younger from 8:30am to the end of worship
- **Palm Sunday, March 24** – Children will participate in the Palm Processional and sing in worship
- **Easter Sunday, March 31** – During Sunday School there will be an egg hunt and fun Easter activities

Wednesday Schedule

March 6

- Nursery care available 5-8pm
- 5-5:30pm – Jam Jr. Music (nursery–2nd grade) in the Chapel, includes Bible learning
- 5-5:40pm – Ringtones – 3rd–5th grade – Bell Room
- 5:40-6:05pm – Jam Music (3rd-5th graders) singing/drumming in the Chapel
- 5:30-6pm – Supervised play time for 2nd grade and younger
- 6-6:30pm – Picnic dinner

March 13

- Nursery care available 5-8pm
- 5-5:30pm – Jam Jr. Music (nursery–2nd grade) in the Chapel, includes Bible learning
- 5-5:40pm – Ringtones – 3rd -5th grade – Bell Room
- 5:40-6:05pm – Jam Music (3rd-5th graders) singing/drumming in the Chapel
- 5:30-6pm – Supervised play time for 2nd grade and younger
- 6-6:30pm – Dinner

March 20

- Nursery care available 5-8pm
- 5-5:30pm – Jam Jr. Music (nursery–2nd grade) in the Chapel, includes Bible learning

- 5-5:40pm – Ringtones – 3rd -5th grade – Bell Room
- 5:40-6:05pm – Jam Music (3rd-5th graders) singing/drumming in the Chapel
- 5:30-6pm – Supervised play time for 2nd grade and younger
- 6-6:30pm – Dinner (Hulst Family will provide)
- 6:30 – Tweens – 3rd–5th Grade

March 27

Holy Week – No Wednesday Activities

Thursday, March 28 – Last Supper and Good Friday Service, 7pm

- At the start of the worship service, children will join us for communion. Following communion the nursery is available for children 2nd grade and under. 3rd-5th grade students are encouraged to stay in worship.

Sunday, March 31 – 7am Easter Sunrise Service and 10am Easter Worship Service

- During Easter Sunday School there will be an egg hunt and Easter activities for all children, nursery–5th grade (following the children's message in the 10am Easter worship)

A Look Ahead at Summer

- Day Camp dates for students finishing K–5th grade: July 1–3 from 9am–4pm. (Let us know if you need before or after care)

Youth – Grades 6–12

Wednesday Schedule

March 6

- 6-6:30pm – Picnic dinner
- 6:30pm – Confirmation Class. Youth who are not in Confirmation may hang out in the Youth Room.
- 7:45-8:45 – Class Ring – Bell Room

Friday, March 8, 5:30-9:30pm – Swimming at The Edge

- This is part of the Confirmation Retreat. All youth, grades 6–12, are invited.
- Sign up at church or with Pastor Jeanine by Sunday, March 3.

Saturday, March 9 – Confirmation retreat continues

- 10am–1pm at church. Lunch is provided.

March 13

- 6-6:30pm – Dinner
- 6:30–7:30pm – Youth Group
- 7:45-8:45 – Class Ring – Bell Room

March 20

- 6-6:30pm – Dinner (The Hulst family is providing dinner)
- 6:30–7:30pm – Youth Group
- 7:45-8:45 – Class Ring – Bell Room

March 27

Holy Week – No Wednesday Activities

Thursday, March 28 – Last Supper and Good Friday Service, 7pm

Sunday, March 31 – 7am Easter Sunrise Service and 10am Easter Worship Service

A Look Ahead at Summer

- Mission Trip – June 17–19 (for students completing grades 6–12).
- Helping with Day Camp – July 1–3, 9am–4pm
Text Pastor Jeanine with any questions.

Ways to Financially Give to Your Church

You may mail your gifts to the church

Please mark “Easter Offering” on the memo line on your check or on the envelope. The church address is FUMC, 230 East Skyline Parkway, Duluth, MN 55811.

Giving Online

Click on the link below or copy and paste the URL into your browser: onrealm.org/FirstUMCMN/give/now

Via text message

Message to 73256 typing COPPERTOP in the message area. You then will be texted instructions.

If you have any questions about electronic giving, please email Sandy Smith at admin@fumcduluth.com

In whatever way you give and express love during this season, know that the need is great, and together we can make a great difference!

Spring Faith Forum

Our Faith Forum series continues on Sundays in March from 9–9:45am in the Fireside Lounge.

March 3: Nate Stewart from the Human Development Center talking about the Crisis Response Team's work

March 10: Charlie Orsak on green energy at FUMC.

March 17: Special guest Shawna Weaver discusses her book, *Climate Grief: From Coping to Resilience and Action*

March 24: Our own Alex Flinner – his year with an electric car

March 31: Easter. No Faith Forum.

April 7: Tom and Linda Wiig – installing solar panels in their home

EarthKeeper

by Naomi Yeager

Eco-Friendly Tips for a Birthday Bash

I'm excited about planning my 70th birthday party and ensuring it's eco-friendly. The plastic decorations at party stores just don't match the vibe I want, so I'm searching for better options. I thought about using paper decorations and colorful napkins, but here's the thing: while paper can be recycled five to seven times, tissue paper and napkins can't be recycled because their fibers are too short.

Even though I'm aiming to use recyclable materials, I'm giving myself a break and going with decorated paper napkins. Paper fibers get even shorter with each recycling cycle, making it harder to recycle them again. That's why tissue paper and napkins, with their short fibers, can't be recycled. However, they are likely made from recycled paper, so they still contribute to the recycling loop.

—continued on page 10

From the Welcome Desk

by Mary Giese



Dear Church Family,
Two questions. Q1: What brings new people to church for the first time? So many answers to that question—you could make a list. **Q2:** What brings them back a second, third, or fourth time, as they begin to call it their church home? Again, you could make a list of all the great reasons why people want to be a part of our open, caring, and sharing church family. There is something for all ages, and everyone is invited to participate at their comfort level. Our worship service is fully complete with a welcome for all, scriptures, prayers, a message for children (we all are God's children), an important, timely, and thought-provoking sermon... and then the music.

We are so blessed to have Velda Graham Bell as our Director of Music Ministries and Organist. Coordinating all the music with the worship plans and working with handbells, the Sanctuary Choir and Tapestry directors, plus others is only part of what she does. Sometimes you can hear a bit of what is to come if you happen to stop at church when she is practicing. I remember when a group would sit and listen to Velda play the Postlude following worship and give her a well-deserved round of applause. Then, one Sunday after the benediction, the congregation was invited to be seated for the Postlude. That was the beginning of a wonderful part of worship. A few minutes to sit and reflect on the service that just ended with a special concert piece just for us! Thank you, Velda, for sharing your music ministry with all of us. You are loved and appreciated.



Velda, following her Lenten Recital on February 21

Going to church twice on Sunday is becoming a new normal for me. I attend the Methodist church here in Grand Rapids in person and then come home and watch our FUMC service. The only thing missing is Richard G. and the donuts! I admit that I am comparing, and that is not always fair. One thing that I do hope will happen is to have others sit with me to enjoy the postlude and show our appreciation for the accompanist. We'll see.

For now please think about helping at the Welcome Desk or being a greeter—the first happy face someone sees when they come to church. Coffee Hosts are a great way to continue the welcome at church. Remember, "We are the church with a welcome for everybody, always!"

Women's Retreat March 9

We have a wonderful group of women ready to participate in the Women's Retreat titled "The Sacred Feminine" on Saturday March 9 at beautiful Camp Amnicon.

To get to Camp Amnicon: take the Bong Bridge to Superior • stay on Hwy 2 (Belknap Ave) • go through Superior until you come to Hwy 53 • turn right and go all the way through Superior on Hwy 53 until you come to the exit for Hwy 13 • at the top of the ramp turn left • go three miles and turn left at the Camp Amnicon sign. It comes up pretty fast, so pay close attention.

OR: meet us at the east parking lot at church at 8am and we can carpool to camp.

Breakfast will be served at 9am, lunch will be served at 1pm, and dinner will be served at around 6pm. Meals are \$12 each plus a \$4 camp-use fee. Total for all three meals is \$40. Please bring your checks, made out to FUMC, on the day of the retreat.

If you have any questions please call Anne Miller at 218-525-1555. It has been many years since our last retreat, and we're hoping you come prepared for a relaxing, informative, and fun time.



Let's Light Up the Church!

A joint project of FUMC Trustees and the Sustainability Team brings you "Let's Light up the Church!"

What do we want to do?

- Replace all (620) old fluorescent bulbs with brand new LED bulbs

Why should we do it?

- The old bulbs are inefficient and many are burned out.
- The new LEDs are highly efficient, saving the church money while reducing our carbon footprint.
- We will recover the cost in 3-5 years after the installation is complete. In 21 years we'll save the church almost \$100,000!
- We'll reduce our general lighting electric carbon footprint by about half.

How much will it cost?

- Supplies cost about \$6,000.
- Hiring an electrician will cost about \$10,000 more. Volunteer grunt work will reduce this cost.

How can you help?

- Donate money. For about \$50 you can buy a light fixture update.
- Volunteer! We're hoping to gather a small work party to help the electrician by moving ladders, setting stuff up, removing old bulbs, and cleaning the covers.

When does it start?

- The fundraising kickoff is Easter Sunday!



Organizing the Church Pantry

Many church members recently combined their skills and strength (the rusty old metal cupboard was heavy!) and cleaned out the kitchen pantry. We now know what we have and where to find it. We know what we lack and what we need to purchase to make our kitchen more efficient. Outside groups who rent our kitchen will now be able to navigate more easily.

Other advantages were more surprising:

- We don't need to buy lemonade mix for every event, because we already have seven large containers.
- We have enough napkins and sugar packets to last for years.
- Compostable dinnerware supplies can be inventoried in a glance.
- There is also an ample supply of Ziploc™ bags and some bags with brands that even women in their 70s do not recognize.

Many items were removed from the pantry (done as sustainably as possible). Some things were in poor condition, but stained tablecloths make great paint rags. We need coffee carafes, just not 47—some were given to a church in Superior to replace their old stained ones. Mismatched silverware and colored napkins (which are not compostable) were donated to the Damiano Center. Even the fancy silver-plated tea servers found a new home! Watch for them in upcoming Duluth Playhouse productions.

Thanks to everyone who moved shelves, sorted aprons, made new labels, reorganized the inventory, or participated in the make-an-offer sale. Community in action!



A COVID Retrospective

by Bill Alexander

Four years ago on Sunday, March 29, 2020, sometime (long) after midnight, the first official FUMC video was uploaded to our newly created (and approved) YouTube channel for that morning's worship service. A very terrified and sleep-deprived Bill Alexander was coaxing the internet to run a little faster and praying that no additional issues would suddenly smirk at him from the ether. It had been a long week, making sure all the video and audio for the service was either recorded or collected from our partnering UM churches, Hope and Hillside, and that his quickly-acquired professional video editing skills were sufficient.

I was indeed terrified, but Pastor Jeanine, who received countless messages and phone calls from me, was always reassuring me that if it all didn't work, we would still be here tomorrow. I truly appreciated that, and it finally all came together.

Our short term "project" turned into 14 months and 66 videos.

My partner in all of this was Alex Flinner, who had come in just a few weeks into the whole mess. What a team we were, and continue to be. I am staggered by the knowledge and the skills we gained in that ~~short~~ long period of time. We both seemed to live for the chance to finally see people, our church friends, on Tuesday recording days as, one by one, they came back into the building to create the worship service, one section at a time.

Sometimes out of horrible tragedy comes something special and unexpected. I hope it never happens again, but we'll be ready.



Photo by Nancy Eaton

—EarthKeeper, continued from page 7

Finding the right balance between practicality and eco-friendliness is key.

For my husband's 60th birthday, I got a nice Mylar balloon filled with helium. Mylar is plastic and can't be recycled in our household recycling. So I posted on Facebook, offering it to anyone celebrating a 60th birthday so they could reuse it. Did you know that helium is a finite resource? It was tough to find helium for his balloon ten years ago. Helium, a noble gas on the chemical periodic table, is not just for parties but also has important uses in welding and medical imaging.

Although our party won't be outdoors, if you're planning an outdoor event, please skip the balloons. "When balloons fly, seabirds die" is a motto from Victoria, Australia. They recommend blowing bubbles instead of balloons because rubber balloons, despite being natural, are extremely difficult to recycle or compost and often end up ingested by animals.

In conclusion, when recycling it's important to know the life cycle of the material. For example, aluminum can be recycled indefinitely, paper can be recycled 5-7 times, and sometimes it's okay to cut yourself some slack and make a bit more eco-friendly choices.



Staffing Updates From Your Staff Parish Relations Committee

Submitted by Aaron Boyson, chair of SPRC

As many of you know, the COVID pandemic was not only a public health crisis, it also has changed some fundamental things in the labor market, including wages and both the size and the nature of the labor pool. The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) has felt these changes acutely as we try to navigate staffing needs in the church, which has been an unfolding challenge. Of course, turnover in any workplace is avoided because it costs time and money. Worse, the lack of continuity often has negative impacts on the quality of services and programs as well as other staff who must mind the gaps when they occur.

We also know that key sociological and cultural changes (some exacerbated by the pandemic) are changing how people want to engage with a church, which adds more uncertainty about staffing. In fact, these larger changes are a focus of an ongoing strategic planning workgroup in the church. This group has the challenge of trying to imagine or reimagine how church best fits into the lives of people across generations as we look to the future.

In short, there is almost a tyranny of change to which many organizations, especially churches, must respond somehow. In a recent SPRC meeting talking about these things, Pastor Jeanine was reflecting on these changes over all her years in ministry, saying, “I don’t have the same job I did when I first entered the clergy.”

SPRC, as a body, has engaged in multiple conversations about whether or how to rethink some or all our staffing needs. Rather than just reflexively refill existing positions when they open, we have tried to also rethink how staffing meets the needs of our church, and how we can rethink positions and people to increase both effectiveness and stability. As you may recall, this led us to conduct surveys of our children and youth ministries when openings in those programs happened. As we did we decided to enter a time of experimentation and exploration to see how those programming needs are met. Perhaps nowhere are the sociological

and cultural changes felt more sharply than in how families want or need to engage with church. And yet the strength and vitality of the youth ministries of a church is of course not only theologically critical but also key to the longevity of a church. I remember coming to FUMC for the first time maybe 11 or 12 years ago from another church in town. We were “seeking” because we felt the separation was too strong between children and adults at our other church, even though by any measure the children’s programming was otherwise very strong where we were attending. My wife, Jennifer, and I entered the front doors of the “Coppertop”—it was Palm Sunday, and our two young children were handed a palm branch and swept right into the church service before we even sat down. Jen and I smiled as we shrugged our shoulders and said, “Well, I guess this is the place.”

This experimental phase began with the children and youth ministry programs. Since fall, these programs have flourished as Larry Ehresman, Pastor Jeanine, and the growing team of volunteers they have enlisted have covered programming on Sundays and during the week. We notice these programs are flourishing with this new direction. We hear strong reports about the continuity of having the Pastor involved in the programming. Larry also offers us professional experience working with children. So SPRC met with Larry to ask if he would stay on in a larger capacity, handling some of our other open staffing needs in a combined position until the end of next year. In addition to children’s ministry and assisting with youth ministry, this includes kitchen management and some hospitality functions. We asked if he would document his time and experience to help us learn more about these roles, and if a new position might be crafted. We learned that Larry was already volunteering to cover some of our open needs. He welcomed the extended position and his role in this exploratory period. So we have offered Larry a paid staff position, to be supervised by Maryjane Burdge, a member of SPRC. He has agreed to document his time and observations to best explore whether or how to redesign our staffing needs for the future, and in the

—continued on next page

—SPRC, continued from page 11

meantime realize some cost savings. By late fall of next year, SPRC intends to come to a decision about how to move forward with the staffing he covers and, at that time, open that (or those) position(s) for hire.

Meanwhile, we are also hiring a Welcome/Office position which will include welcoming functions with visitors, new members, and current members (what Mary Geise has done), and two days (4-6 hours a day) staffing the office. You will find more information about this position on page 5.

Though these are challenging times, SPRC will continue to try to adapt as necessary to be sensitive to changes in our culture and climate so that we may be in the best position possible to meet the needs of our current and future congregants. Meanwhile, we are excited about the growth in the children/youth ministries, and to share with you that Larry Ehresman has agreed to stay on for an extended time in this exploratory position.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

CHUM Winter Assembly



Every year, CHUM has three assemblies. Their Winter Assembly is the biggest and most important! A quorum of congregational members is required, as they will elect new members and officers of their Board of Directors, welcome any new congregations, and conduct any other CHUM business that requires a vote.

This year's Winter Assembly will be on Tuesday, March 12 from 6pm–8pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 5454 Miller Trunk Hwy in Hermantown. Join CHUM on this big night and learn all about what they have been up to! Everyone is welcome to the event. Please sign up by clicking the button below.

[Sign Up For Winter Assembly](#)

Harry Potter Party at Steve O'Neil Apartments

The Steve O'Neil Apartments community center was transformed into a wizarding wonderland just a few weeks ago, with decorations transporting attendees straight to the halls of Hogwarts. The attention to detail was awe-inspiring, as guests were greeted by floating candles, house banners, and even life-sized cutouts of their favorite magical characters.



The youth group from Pilgrim Congregational Church worked tirelessly to ensure that every aspect of the Harry Potter Party was authentic and enjoyable for all ages. From potion-making stations to wizarding duels, the event was filled with activities that captured the essence of J.K. Rowling's beloved wizarding world. Attendees were even treated to a Sorting Hat ceremony, where they discovered which Hogwarts house they belonged to.



The magical evening didn't stop there—costumes were encouraged, and attendees fully embraced the spirit of the wizarding world. From witches and wizards to magical creatures and house elves, the diversity of costumes added an extra layer of charm to the festivities.

As the night came to a close, the organizers expressed their gratitude to the Steve O'Neil Apartments community for their enthusiastic participation. The event not only brought neighbors together but also showcased the creativity and generosity of a local youth group.

A huge thank you to the organizers, volunteers, and all who attended the Harry Potter Party at Steve O'Neil Apartments. It was an enchanting experience that will surely be remembered for years to come. Keep an eye out for future community events, and until then, may your days be filled with as much magic as this unforgettable evening!

The background of the poster is a photograph of the St. Olaf Handbell Choir. There are about 15 members, mostly young adults, dressed in black shirts and pants. They are holding handbells and posing in front of a large, colorful sculpture called 'Coppertop'. The sculpture is made of large, curved metal plates in shades of blue, green, and silver, with a rainbow-colored pole in the center. The sky is blue with white clouds.

St. Olaf Handbell Choir In Concert

First United Methodist Church (the Coppertop)

**7:00pm Saturday,
March 2nd**

**Admission is free but a freewill
offering will be taken.**

FUMC's February Photo Album



Derek and Amos introduce Sonja



*Youth Group
On the Town*



Velda's Recital



The Annual Meeting



Livestream Team



Sanctuary Choir



Class Ring



New Yogadevotion Session

*A new Yogadevotion session led
by Carla Egge will begin on*

Monday, March 4

Running for eight weeks.

Meet in the Chapel at 5:30pm

Sign up at:

yogadevotion.com

Click "Classes" then "All in-person classes"



First United Methodist Church

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