

First Family

MAY 2025

Volume 59, Number 4



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

230 E. SKYLINE PARKWAY

DULUTH, MN 55811

WWW.FUMCDULUTH.COM

On The Journey With You

One of my favorite poems is “The Summer Day” by Mary Oliver. She writes:

“Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean---
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and
down---
who is gazing around with her enormous and
complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes
her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don’t know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the
fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn’t everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?”

This poem has us thinking about nature, beauty, prayer and the purpose of life. It’s a reminder to relish every moment and to take time to see the beauty all around us. It’s a call to pay attention to the natural world, and in so doing we see the beauty and complexity of the world, and begin to even understand ourselves better. The poem also reminds us of the temporal nature of this life. With the death of my dad, I have come face to face with that. In missing my dad, I am ever thankful for all the simple and beautiful moments of love and life we shared together. In all our relationships let’s pay attention, ponder, see, and cherish. The words, “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” is a question that grips my heart every time I read this poem. I often think of some profound thing I might do. But perhaps the most profound thing we can do is pausing, seeing the beauty around us, paying attention, praying, and then follow the Spirit’s leading wherever that might take us.

Friends, let’s do that together.

Many blessings and much love. On the journey with you! Pastor Jeanine



End of Year Picnic

Wednesday, May 14

6:00-7:00pm – Picnic food (brats, hot dogs, chips) for everyone. please feel free to come even if you aren’t a regular Wednesday dinner participant.

6:30-7:30pm – Outdoor games for children and youth and anyone else who wishes to participate

GRADUATE RECOGNITION SUNDAY:

Sunday, May 18, 2025 at the 10am worship service we will be honoring all high school and post-secondary school graduates. Please let Pastor Jeanine or the church office know if you, or a family member is graduating from high school, college or beyond so we can celebrate you. Let us know where you are graduating from and future plans.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE LOVE OFFERING

Each year, churches in the Minnesota Annual Conference take a LOVE OFFERING for missions in conjunction with our Annual Conference Session, which will take place June 11-13, 2025. Bishop Lanette Plambeck invites congregations to pray about and participate in the 2025 Love Offering as we put love into action. Our congregation will participate.

If you make a financial gift please mark “Love Offering” on your check or envelope. Checks can be made payable to FUMC, and we will bring one check representing all of us.

This year’s Love Offering will go to:

- Africa University for student scholarships (30%) – A United Methodist-related school in Zimbabwe, currently educates about 2,500 students from 24 African countries. Africa University is committed to increasing the number of students who enroll from all the countries of sub-saharan Africa where the UMC is growing and in need of ethical and well-formed leaders. With your support, students are equipped to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, reduce hunger, improve public health, instill hope, and build prosperous and peaceful communities.
- Immigration Law and Justice Network (30%) - an organization first established by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), supports 19 sites across the country, each providing low-income immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers with urgently needed immigration legal services, advocacy, and education. Immigration Law and Justice Network envisions a nation where every immigrant has access to justice in an anti-racist immigration system that honors the dignity of all people. Financial support from the Love Offering is critical at this moment, and every dollar will make a difference to immigrants seeking access to justice.
- OC Ministries (20%) - a Minnesota Conference Advance Special that’s celebrating its 35th anniversary, supports schools, medical clinics, churches, agriculture projects, vision clinics, curriculum writing, and student scholarships in Chile, Haiti, Jamaica, Liberia, Puerto Rico, Sierra Leone, and Uganda. Formerly known as Operation Classroom, its goal is to inclusively minister to the bodies, minds, and souls of children and their families. OC Ministries partners with United Methodists around the world, including the Richard Ormsby Secondary School in Baiwalla, Sierra Leone; the Egypt Project avocado farm that supports ministries in Jamaica; a guesthouse for visitors in Liberia; and the La Saline Clinic in Port au Prince, Haiti. Your support fulfills children’s practical needs, ensuring they have access to food, education, and a nurturing environment to thrive.
- Midwest Mission (20%) - a depot in the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) relief supply network, brings people together to transform resources into humanitarian relief so that people’s lives are changed for the better, alleviating them from poverty and crisis. Disaster relief, health, education, and micro business supplies are given freely through trusted partner nonprofits internationally and in the United States. This is thanks to countless volunteers and donors—the backbone of Midwest Mission—who work hard to show God’s love in a practical way. This includes more than 133 donors and 50 volunteers who came to Midwest Mission from Minnesota in 2024 alone! This year, Midwest Mission is celebrating 25 years of making a difference.

When making a gift please note “Love Offering” on your donation.

CHILDREN IN MAY 2025 **(NURSERY – 5TH GRADE)**

SUNDAY SCHOOL @ 10am: Sundays,
May 4, 11, & 18

- Children K-5th grade leave for Sunday school after the children's message in worship.
- NURSERY CARE on Sundays (5 years and under) 8:30am-end of worship
- Sunday, May 4 – Movie and Pajama Day in Sunday School

Wednesday, May 7

- 5-5:30pm – Jam Jr. Music: nursery - 2nd grade in the chapel, including Bible learning
- 5-5:40pm - Ringtones Bells - 3rd -5th grade
- 5:40-6:05pm - JAM Music: 3rd-5th graders singing/drumming ...
- 5:30-6:00pm – Supervised play time for 2nd grade and under
- Dinner at 6:00-6:30pm
- Nursery care available 5:00-7:00pm

Wednesday, May 14 – End of year picnic

- 5-5:30pm – Jam Jr. Music: nursery - 2nd grade in the chapel, including Bible learning
- 5-5:40pm - Ringtones Bells - 3rd -5th grade
- 5:40-6:05pm - JAM Music: 3rd-5th graders singing/drumming ...
- 5:30-6:00pm – Supervised play time for 2nd grade and under
- 6:00-7:30pm - Picnic Dinner (served 6-7pm) & Outdoor Games (inflatable ... gaga pit ...)
- Nursery care available 5:00-8:00pm

Text with any questions:

Larry Ehresman 218-260-9577;

Abbi Adamec 218-721-7626

YOUTH MAY 2025 **(GRADES 6-12)**

Wednesday, May 7

- Come anytime 6:00-6:30pm for supper
- 6:45pm -- YOUTH GROUP
- 7:45-8:45pm -- Youth Bells/Class Ring

Wednesday, May 14 -- End of year picnic & games

- Come anytime 6:00-7:00pm for supper
- 6:30-7:30pm - Outdoor Games (inflatable ... gaga pit ...)
- 7:45-8:45pm -- Youth Bells/Class Ring

Sunday, May 18 -- GRADUATE SUNDAY

- Graduates will be recognized in church at 10am and will receive a gift

Text with any questions:

Pastor Jeanine 763-443-0570

Larry Ehresman 218-260-9577

Friends always welcome!!!

A look ahead at summer - Save the dates

- **Sunday June 15** 10am MN Teen Challenge (adult/teen recovery) IN Worship Outdoor Worship & Picnic (dates TBD)
- **Friday June 20** 5-8pm - VBS experience for children (with dinner) & Parent's Night Out
- **Friday, June 27** 10am-5pm: Rhubarb Mission Work & Fun At Canal Park
- **Monday July 14** 5:30-7:30pm - Family Carnival Night (with Pizza)
- **Monday, July 21:** 10am-5pm: Union Gospel Mission & Water Activities
- **Sunday August 10** 10am – Special Sunday School Preview followed by ice cream social.

Text with any questions:

Pastor Jeanine 763-443-0570

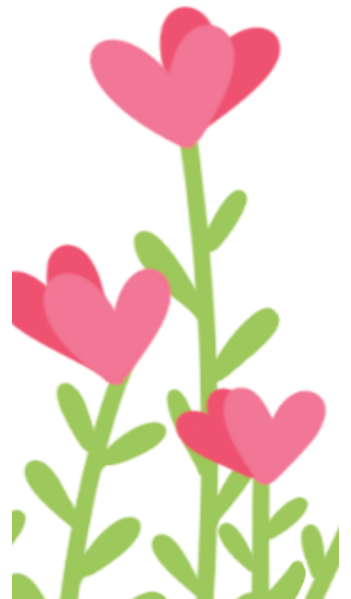
Larry Ehresman 218-260-9577



WORSHIP IN MAY 2025

There are three ways to participate in worship. 10am live in our sanctuary on Sundays, 10am livestream on Sundays as worship is taking place or anytime afterwards on YouTube.

- **May 4:** We will celebrate Holy Communion. The theme is: “Be Not Afraid” and will include 3 “mini” sermons with hymn “Be Not Afraid” in between.
- **May 11:** Mother’s Day/ Garden Sunday. The sermon is called, “Is it Well?” We will ponder the questions - is it well with you, with your partner/relationships, with the children
- **May 18:** Graduate Recognition The sermon is called, “It All Depends on Our Point of View.” Real change, lasting growth requires a change in vision, a change in perspective. Does our perspective begin with ourselves ... or with others, with God?
- **May 25:** Memorial Weekend. The sermon is called, “How Awesome Is This Place?” We will explore places and situations in which we find God in awesome ways.



Sudoku

			7		4	6	2	
					5	7	8	
6		7	2					
				6		3		9
	6	8	4	5		2		1
				2		8		6
1		2	5					
					2	4	6	
			9		8	5	1	





Garden News

Our season of gardening begins in May. Mark your calendars and meet in the east parking lot.

Bring basic garden tools and plan on a couple hours of activity. We look forward to seeing you.

May 11 Garden Sunday

May 15 @ 9:00am Garden Clean Up

Rain Date May 16 @ 9:00am

May 29 @ 9:00am Geranium Planting

Rain Date May 30 @ 9:00am

June 4 @ 9:00am Annual Planting/Mulch

Day Rain Date June 5 @ 9:00am

(Men come later @ 10:30am to give us time to get things planted.)

Questions?

Call Marlene Bowen 218-343-1314

From The Welcome Desk

This post-Easter reflection invites you to pause and embrace the quiet transformation that the season brings. After the culmination of Holy Week, it's natural to feel both the weight of exhaustion and the buoyancy of newfound hope. It's a time to rest and reflect, to recognize that the seeds of resurrection that have been planted may flourish in unseen ways. This is an opportunity to acknowledge the personal whispers of change that touched your heart during this sacred time. Perhaps this year felt different, marked by a unique moment or realization that illuminated your spiritual path. Embrace your story as it unfolds, knowing that your journey with the risen Christ is significant and cherished. Celebrate the joy and hope you've shared, allowing yourself the grace to simply be in this moment of renewal.

Faith Forum May 2025 9:00 –9:45am in the Fireside Lounge

May 4: Pat Miller - Gifts Our Parents Gave Us

In this session we will explore traits and habits we as individuals have absorbed from our parents.

May 11: Vets for Peace

May 18: Sami Cultural Center

Who are the Sami? learn about the Sami, Sami culture and crafts, and the Sami American diaspora with a presentation by Marlene Wisuri, a founder and chair of the Sami Cultural Center of North America, which has been located in Duluth for over ten years.

FIRST FAMILY

First United Methodist Church

230 E. Skyline Parkway, Duluth, MN 55811

218-727-5021, info@fumcduluth.com

Pastor: Jeanine Alexander

Interim Editor: Greg Leiviska

Next First Family deadline: May 16

Submit to welcome@fumcduluth.com

www.fumcduluth.com

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Abbi Adamec	Jeremy Jeanette
Parker Ahlers	MaryAnn Korsch
Mary Bergan	Laura Krumwiede
Randy Bowen	Jan Laine
Lauren Carolan	Travis Lanthier
Jean Conner	Ethel Lewis
Rick Egge	Sue Marquardt
Izy Fairchid	Carleen Maynard
Diane Fortney	Rachel Miles
Don Gibson	Carrie Moe
Alice Gurske	Linda Rau
Colleen Hasforth	Ceci Riehl
Linda Hauschildt	Marilyn Skansgaard
Joan Hendershot	Robert Toftey
Elise Hintzman	Kiah Walker
Michael Hintzman	Emily Wallin

If your birthday isn't listed, please contact the church office so we can update our database

Building Security

Please check in with the church office when entering the building during the week

Volunteers Needed:

We are seeking dedicated individuals to assist with locking up the church following our Sunday services. This is a vital role that ensures the security and safety of our cherished place of worship. If you are available and willing to help, please contact the church office at your earliest convenience. Your support and commitment to our community are greatly appreciated, and we look forward to working together to maintain the sanctuary for everyone. Thank you for considering this opportunity to serve.

From Our Faith Community Nurse

Greetings to everyone! I'm writing this as we are experiencing a nice Spring rain which was very much needed. As we have just experienced Maundy Thursday as of this writing we are reminded of humility and love. Jesus' commandment is to "love one another as I have loved you". Unfortunately, many in our Congress and the leaders under President Trump have not shown humility or love for their fellow citizens. In case you don't get the Duluth News Tribune and missed the article by Dr. Paul Terrill, a family physician in Grand Marais, the budget being put forth to Congress includes "massive cuts to Medicaid." At a meeting I attended at UMD this week, it was outlined that the cuts to this program would include \$800 million in cuts to Medicaid. It is the largest health insurance program in the country. As doctor Terrill points out "critical care many of our Northlanders receive now would be gone". Medicaid has been keeping many people healthy, it boosts state economies and saves lives. According to the NY Times 72 million people across the U.S. receive Medicaid support and 1.2 million are here in Minnesota." Who does Medicaid serve? Eligible families which include low-income adults, children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with disabilities. It includes hospital care Dr. visits, lab tests, and some drugs. It includes long-term care and at home care costs. Each state can also choose optional services to provide. What would these massive cuts do? Well, I think you can imagine. In our Northeastern region, care providers would not be able to deliver services, rural hospitals and clinics would more than likely close. Many nursing homes would close as elderly loved ones staying there because of Medicaid benefits would need to be moved out. Where would some of these people go that have no families to help care for them? Families would experience personal finances being stretched. How would disabled adults and children get the care that's needed? The health and well-being of all our families would be affected.

If you are able, I point you to an article in the New York Times, "What Can House Republicans Cut Instead of Medicaid? Not Much". Feb. 25, 2025. This article lays out options for cutting the \$880 billion mandated for the House Energy and Commerce committee that has jurisdiction over the program. These cuts would be for over the next 10 years. And what do the tax cuts mean for your income group? And would these tax cuts offset cuts to Medicaid? I point you to an article, "Who Benefits from Tax Cut Extension?" found on [factcheck.org](https://www.factcheck.org). It is true that the wealthiest would receive the most benefit, but other tax brackets would also, except those lower income households who would be worse off.



Carol M. Donahue Student Music Scholarship

Good News. We have four new music scholarship students that have received the Carol M. Donahue Music Scholarship of FUMC. The scholarship provides funds for students that are 12-18 years and are interested in improving their skills on the instrument of their choice. The students are from various churches, as well as schools from the Arrowhead Region. We celebrate their desire to improve their skills and willingness to share their music with their congregations or perform in a concert setting. Each student can receive the scholarship for up to three years with the approval of their instructor.

The music scholarship students for the 2025-2026 year:

Nathaniel Bateman---Flute and Piano---FUMC

Delaney Nielsen---Piano---FUMC

Regine Fredrick---Organ---Denfeld High School

Sawyer Baldes---Voice and Piano---Kenwood

Lutheran Church, Duluth

Thank you for your continued support for the youth and their families with the Carol M. Donahue Music Scholarship

Carol Donahue

Barb Lindgren

Alix Craft



Noah Bovy

I am happy to announce that Noah Bovy will be our new Sound Technician. Noah is a student at UMD and is looking forward to learning our system and gaining more experience running live audio as he continues his studies. Feel free to swing by the Tech booth and say hi after a service!

Alex Flinner

Tech Coordinator

Spring Assembly & Business Meeting

6 PM Tuesday, May 20

Hosted by First United Methodist Church

230 East Skyline Pkwy



Join us for a cookout at the Coppertop, with the greatest view in town! We will gather in the parking lot for a Chum Family Reunion with hotdogs fresh from the grill. Travel through the Ministry Fair where you can meet staff and volunteers and learn about the many Chum programs we offer and how you can connect. Pick up your Rhubarb Festival signs and banners. Get the latest updates on the Shelter expansion. Your presence is crucial for the quorum needed to help us adopt changes to our constitution that will support us as we move forward with our shared mission.



CHUM Rhubarb Festival Volunteer Schedule at the Coppertop

Make Pie Dough May 7 - 10-3 we will be making and rolling pie dough to freeze. We have pledged to make 200 strawberry rhubarb pies. That means we need 400 crusts. Please feel to sign up for an hour at a time, ½ day or all day. Invite a friend to join you. No experience required but if you have a rolling pin please bring it with you. We always have a good time. Please email anitazager@gmail.com. Your Rhubarb Team, Anita Zager, Pamela Brown, Linda Harper, Debbi King and Larry Ehresman. There's also a signup sheet in the narthex.

Kitchen Schedule in June

Rhubarb Drop off Sunday, Monday, Tuesdays

Every Tuesday, chopping rhubarb and prepping strawberries, 1:00-4:00, we can schedule an evening prep session if you have 4 people who would like to volunteer

Every Wednesday - Assembling pies 9:30-3:00, wrapping and freezing

Festival Week June 23-27, Kitchen schedule will be in June FF, making, baking and boxing pies, coffee cakes and crisp.

Saturday, June 28 CHUM Rhubarb Festival all day at Asbury UMC

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help us with a painting initiative that aims to refresh and beautify our spaces. No prior experience is necessary, just a positive attitude and a readiness to lend a hand. It's a wonderful opportunity to meet fellow church members, learn new skills, and make a tangible difference. If you are interested in volunteering your time and energy, please contact the church office at your earliest convenience. Your contribution will be greatly appreciated, and together, we can achieve something truly special.

Connect Cards

Please remember to complete the connect cards. These cards are essential not only for tracking attendance but also for keeping you informed about upcoming activities, events, and opportunities within the community. By filling them out, you ensure you won't miss out on any important updates or events. Additionally, it's crucial to update your contact information if there have been any changes. This helps us maintain accurate records and ensures you receive all necessary communications. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and helps us to serve you better.

Ways to give to

support your church: give online at fumcduluth.com or use the QR code. or text **COPPERTOP** to **73256** or mail to FUMC, 230 E. Skyline Parkway, Duluth, MN 55811.



PONDERINGS

Being gracious and supportive to others is an invaluable trait that fosters strong relationships and creates a positive atmosphere wherever it is practiced. At its core, graciousness involves showing kindness, empathy, and respect to those around us, even in challenging situations. It means being considerate in our words and actions, acknowledging others' efforts, and valuing their perspectives. When we offer support, we actively encourage and uplift others, providing help and understanding as they navigate their personal and professional journeys.

Practicing these virtues can transform our interactions, making them more meaningful and fulfilling. In a world where stress and competition often dominate, taking the time to be gracious can have a profound impact. Offering a sincere compliment, lending an ear to someone in need, or simply being present can make others feel valued and understood. Supportive environments also foster collaboration and innovation, as individuals feel safe to express their ideas without fear of judgment.

Moreover, being considerate and encouraging benefits not only those on the receiving end but also the giver. It cultivates a sense of community and belonging and can lead to personal growth as we learn from the diverse experiences and perspectives of others. Therefore, embracing these qualities is a choice that enriches our lives and the lives of those around us, creating a ripple effect of positivity and kindness in our communities.

“The deeds you do may be the only sermon some persons will hear today.”

St. Francis of Assisi

MUSIC NOTES

from Velda Graham Bell, Director of Music Ministries/Organist

FUMC Handbell Program Announcement

I am happy to announce that Derek Bromme will be adding to his music duties at First UMC. Starting this fall, Derek will also direct Cast in Bronze, our adult handbell ensemble, and Class Ring, our youth handbell ensemble. Derek has been our Sanctuary Choir Director for the past three years and Strikepoint's director since last fall. We are fortunate to have him on our music staff and I very much look forward to his leadership of Cast in Bronze and Class Ring.

Our children's handbell group, Ringtones, will continue its rehearsals through the middle of May, but it may be restructured in some way for the future. The music staff and children's ministries staff are currently discussing ways to best provide musical experiences (handbells, singing, drumming, etc.) for our children. If you have ideas or thoughts about children's music, please feel free to chat with me. We are open to discussing any ideas you may have. Stay tuned for more information about this!

I am very grateful to Christine Winkler Johnson who has led our handbell groups on an interim basis since Bill Alexander's death. Thank you, Christine, for your willingness to help us during this difficult time. We have appreciated your musical skills, as well as your positive and fun spirit.

Finally, thanks to all the ringers who are and have been a part of the handbell program at FUMC. Bill created a remarkable program and I know he would be very happy to know that his legacy is continuing and flourishing.

THANK YOU



Thank you to all who planned and participated in the early Earth Day events on Sunday April 6, led by Doug Wood of Old Turtle fame. The morning children and family reading of Old Turtle, Doug's sermon and song during worship, and his later afternoon concert were not only enjoyable but inspirational. One child went home singing a Doug Wood song and then wrote a book which was later shared in a family book reading! An adult was reminded how sometimes we need to give ourselves a break from what is heavy on our heart. Another child was encouraged by learning that Doug also grew up with learning challenges and was able to overcome them and become a successful singer-songwriter and author. And at least two visitors commented on how they enjoyed our church and its hospitality and would like to participate more.

A successful day.

The Sustainability Committee

LOST AND FOUND

If you're searching for a cherished item that seems to have vanished, don't lose hope just yet. It's possible it has found its way into the lost and found section of the church office. This often-overlooked treasure trove is a safe haven for misplaced belongings, waiting to be reunited with their rightful owners. Take a moment to visit the church office, where the kind staff can assist you in your search. Whether it's a beloved book, a piece of jewelry with sentimental value, or any other precious item, the lost and found might just hold the key to restoring what you thought was forever lost. Remember, sometimes the things we hold dear have a way of finding their way back to us.

Velda Bell Accepts Preservation Award

On April 3, our own Velda Bell accepted an historic preservation award on behalf of the Friends of the Felgemaker for all of their work in restoring and maintaining the historic Felgemaker organ at Sacred Heart Music Center. The Depot Foundation's Circle of Friends Arts and Culture Awards are given annually to people and organizations who have enriched our community through arts, culture and history. Congratulations, Velda! We are so glad to see all your hard work recognized!





For the first time, Strikepoint will be a part of Duluth's popular Homegrown Music Festival. Their performance will be Saturday, May 3, at 7:30pm at Zeitgeist Theater (222 E. Superior St., Duluth). According to the Homegrown website, "During Homegrown, admission wristbands can be purchased at any venue that requires them. Advance tickets are available at Globe News (1430 Tower Ave., Superior), Zenith Bookstore (318 N. Central Ave., Duluth) and River City Records & Books (1814 W. Superior St., Duluth), and remain on sale throughout the week of Homegrown. Wristbands do not guarantee entry to venues at capacity - if you want to see a specific band, get there early!" A single-day wristband for admission on Friday or Saturday is \$25. Strikepoint is looking forward to seeing lots of familiar, friendly faces!



Roadside Cleanup

The Bill Alexander Family established the spring and fall Roadside Cleanup as part of our caring for the Earth. Bill's recruitment for volunteers comes from the May 2023 First Family:

FUMC sponsors one of the St. Louis Co. Roadside Cleanup locations, and twice a year schedules a time to make our community a little nicer.

Our cleanup area is a two-mile stretch of Maple Grove Road, from Lindahl Road to Solway Road. The spring cleanup time will be on Saturday, May 10, from 12–2pm. We always need more help to make the workload a little lighter. Please call the church office at 218-727-5021 or contact Pamela Brown (pamela.brown@reliabilitysolutions.us) if you are interested. You should dress for the weather, bring gloves, wear footwear suitable for walking in ditches, and meet us at the Faith Baptist Church parking lot at Midway and Maple Grove. Bags for collecting trash and stylish yellow visibility vests will be provided!

This would be a great family activity and a way to put our caring for creation into action.

The Coffee Hour after worship on Sundays is a perfect way to connect with the people of our church and is viewed as a ministry. Currently, we have a 4-week rotation, working in teams of 2. Would you consider volunteering for this important mission? Training is provided. You may contact with either Linda Wiig (linda.wiig@hotmail.com) or Pamela Brown (pr.brown1906@gmail.com) should you like to find out more.

Conversation with Church Friends: A group is meeting over Zoom every second and fourth Tuesday at 10am to catch up with each other and talk about what comes up that day. If you're interested in joining the group, contact Pamela Brown at pamela.brown@reliabilitysolutions.us



EARTHKEEPER

I Thought I Was Saving Trees—Then I Learned About AI's Thirst

Reflecting on the hidden environmental cost of our digital lives

I used to think that by going paperless — writing, emailing, and working online I was saving trees. No paper, no problem—right? Last week, I attended the Zenith Marketing Conference. One of the main speakers urged people to jump right into using AI because it's here to stay and it's not going away. I find learning how to use AI fascinating. Are you afraid of AI, (Artificial Intelligence)? Many say it will take away jobs. One session I attended showed how videos and images could be generated in minutes, right before our eyes, saving a company thousands of dollars and time if the same images and campaigns had been developed by human graphic artists. But the elephant in the room, something that no one brought up, was the amount of electricity and water AI uses. However, in a small group break-out session, a retailer known for a commitment to sustainability wondered if its customers would think they weren't true to their brand if they used AI to develop slogans and images for its marketing. Last month was the first time I was aware of an environmental issue with the use of AI. A friend of mine who is environmentally aware told me how much water AI used I was flabbergasted. "Why on Earth would AI need to use all that water!?" I wondered. According to the Washington Post article:

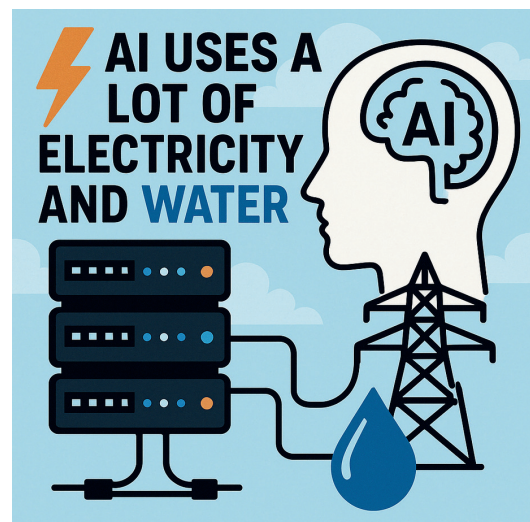
- A 100-word email generated by an AI chatbot using GPT-4 requires water, a little more than 1 bottle of water
- Using the Chatbot once weekly for a year requires 27 liters, about 1.43 water cooler jugs.

Once weekly for a year by 1 out of 10 working Americans (roughly 16 million people) requires 435,235,476 liters, equal to the water consumed by all Rhode Island households for 1.5 days. The article goes on to say, "Each prompt on ChatGPT flows through a server that runs thousands of calculations to determine the best words to use in a response. In completing those calculations, these servers, typically housed in data centers, generate heat. Often, water systems are used to cool the equipment and keep it functioning. And data centers use a lot of electricity. If a data center is located in a hot region, and relies on air conditioning for cooling, it takes a lot of electricity to keep the servers at a low temperature. If data centers relying on water cooling are located in drought prone areas, they risk depleting the area of a precious natural resource.


How You Can Help Reduce Digital Energy Use

- Unplug devices, especially game consoles, computers, and streaming boxes when not in use.
- Use cloud storage mindfully. Constant syncing across devices adds to server demand.
- Reduce video streaming resolution when high definition isn't necessary.
- Clean out your inbox. Emails and attachments are stored on servers and add up over time
- Support companies that commit to using renewable energy and efficient data centers.
- If a data center comes to your town encourage them to use renewable energy.

"He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the Earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills."
Psalm 147:8 (NIV)



(This image was generated by AI and used roughly 1 bottle of water to create. Image prompted by Naomi Yaeger)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
MAY				1 Trustees 4:45pm	2 Men's group 8am	3
4 Faith Forum 9am Worship 10am	5 Yoga Devotion 5pm	6 SPRC 5:30pm Conversation with Church friends via zoom 10am	7 Prayer Shawl 9am Music/Youth Groups 5pm	8	9 Men's group 8am	10
11 Garden Sunday Faith Forum 9am Worship 10am Sustainability 11:30	12 Yoga Devotion 5pm	13 SPRC 5:30pm	14 Music groups 5pm End of year Picnic 6pm	15 Garden cleanup 9am Ruby' Pantry 4:30-6pm	16 Men's group 8am Garden cleanup (rain date) 9am	17
18 Graduate Sunday Faith Forum 9am Worship 10am	19 Rachel Circle 10am Yoga Devotion 5pm	20 Conversation with Church friends via zoom 10am Finance 5:30pm CHUM Spring Assembly 6pm	21 Naomi Circle 9:30am	22 Red Cross Blood Drive	23 Men's group 8am	24
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First United Methodist Church

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