First Family

Volume 59, Number 7



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

230 E. SKYLINE PARKWAY DULUTH, MN 55811 WWW.FUMCDULUTH.COM

On The Journey With You

We are living in a very divided society right now, where there is deep political polarization. Our congregation, although it leans quite liberal, contains people of a variety of political and theological places. And yet we find that we care about each other, grow in faith together, and join hands in loving each other and doing great ministry together. In our church, we focus on values, living out the ideals and ways of Jesus, and having that inform everything. We challenge each other to make sure our beliefs, words, and actions are reflections of our faith over and above any political ideology. When our common focus is on "What would Jesus do, say, or think?" that grounds and centers us. Our biggest calling is to offer care and support for the most vulnerable and marginalized, both in mission (providing necessities) and social justice (standing for policies that protect people and against those that don't).

In a July 7, 2025 court filing, The U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) declared that churches and other houses of worship can endorse political candidates in certain circumstances without risking the loss of their tax-exempt status, despite a decades-old Congressional statute that bans political candidate endorsements.

The General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church has put out a statement strongly opposing the use of churches and houses of worship for partisan political affiliations and endorsements. The recent IRS political candidate endorsement filing is at odds with a law Congress passed more than 70 years ago—the Johnson Amendment—and applies to all charitable nonprofits, whether they are secular or religious.

The rule was introduced by former President Lyndon B. Johnson (hence the name Johnson Amendment) in 1954, when he was serving as the U.S. Senate majority leader. It banned all tax-exempt organizations, like churches and charities, from directly or indirectly participating in politics, specifically in endorsement or opposition of candidates.

Critics of the IRS' court filing say it is not about religion or free speech, but about radically altering campaign finance laws. The IRS decree could open the floodgates for political operatives to funnel money to churches in exchange for support of their preferred candidates, while receiving generous tax breaks at the expense of taxpayers who may not share those views.

Even though the formal relationships between religious communities and governments vary from country to country, as United Methodists, we generally affirm the independence and integrity of both institutions, and



we advocate for a relationship of mutual respect in which neither institution seeks to dominate or unduly influence the other.

"While we do not believe churches should affiliate with particular political parties, we do encourage churches to speak out boldly on social issues from a gospel perspective. We further believe churches have a right and responsibility to educate and equip their members to be effective advocates for justice in the wider world." (United Methodist 2025 -2028 Social Principles, The Political Community, Government Responsibilities, A., Church and Governments)

I think this Facebook post by Father Joseph Kemp gives us great guidance: We always must take the side of the vulnerable just as Jesus did.

"Father, if there is schism in the church, how will we know who is right?" Follow the poor. Which ever side chooses the poor and most vulnerable, follow that one because that is where Christ is.

Another Facebook post I came across gives encouragement, I will leave you with:

DONT GIVE UP ON THIS YEAR
KEEP FIGHTING FOR THE GOOD
KEEP SHOWING UP
KEEP LOVING.
KEEP GIVING BACK.
KEEP BEING KIND.
KEEP BEING BRAVE.
KEEP CARING.
KEEP TRYING NEW THINGS.
KEEP SHOWING GRACE.
KEEP ON
THIS WORLD NEEDS YOU
TO BELIEVE IN THE GOOD.

Children & Youth



The Church Summer Carnival on July 14 was a huge success. There were around 50 dedicated and spirited volunteers and over 500 participants! Amazing energy, relationships and partnership between the church and the University Nursery School. So many people worked so hard to make this happen. Larry, Abbi and their team knocked this out of the ballpark! Thank you to everyone who volunteered and all who came. People of so many ages came and spent their afternoon and evening serving and playing with such positive spirits.



Outdoor Worship and Picnic (weather permitting; otherwise in Sanctuary) Sunday, August 3 * 10am

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- * Pastor Jeanine and Larry will preach a "COOKIE GOSPEL" sermon
- Music by Tapestry
- * Bouncy house and fun activities for kids
- * Coffee and doughnuts before worship
- 🕷 Lunch and ice cream floats after worship

Come and bring your friends!

SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST FOR TEACHERS



This year we are blessing students by helping teachers.

Please bring school supplies of all kinds to church by Sunday, August 24 and put them at the communion table at the front of the Sanctuary.

Teachers/Paras/Educators will be able to pick up supplies beginning Sunday, August 24. SUGGESTIONS:

NEEDS

SUPPLIES		FOOD
	CLASS	

Crayola crayons (24-count boxes)
Pencils – types requested:
pre-sharpened; Ticonderoga
Notebooks – mostly wide ruled
Folders
Expo markers
Sharpie Markers
Pens – all colors
Glue sticks
Crayola colored pencils
Loose-leaf paper
Markers – Crayola type

Good Quality paper towels 3-oz Dixie Cups Sandwich baggies with zippers Gallon baggies with zippers Anti-bacterial wipes Hand sanitizer Goldfish crackers
Graham crackers
Granola bar
Fruit snacks
Honey Graham
crackers
Smarties candies
Juice Boxes
Individually
wrapped snacks
(many requests
for this item)

CONFIRMATION - A new class is beginning

Every other year, we begin a new two-year confirmation program. We will start a group this fall; they will be in a class together, and will be confirmed in April of 2027. Students must be at least a mature 12 years old to participate. It will involve classes one Wednesday per month, and a variety of hands-on faith, service, learning, and growing experiences. We want the kids to experience following Jesus and faith. The Wednesday evenings when they don't have confirmation class, they are invited to be a part of the youth group. Information will be coming out soon. If you have a child/grandchild/friend who is 12 years or older who is interested, please let Pastor Jeanine know.

Fifteenth Anniversary of Ruby's Pantry - Coppertop



Play Dough Modeling Clay Highlighters

This August we will celebrate the 15th anniversary of Ruby's Pantry — Coppertop. Our church hosts Ruby's Pantry the 3rd Thursday of every month. I know many of you have volunteered to make this happen. So many people in our church and community are blessed by this service. August and December are months where our congregation is asked to provide additional volunteers. If you can help sign up on the sign up table at church or contact the church office and we will get additional information to you.



A Support Circle for Families and Friends of Loved Ones Living with Dementia

You are warmly invited to pull up a chair or pull up the link on Zoom.

At the heart of the Table of Eight experience is the encouragement we find in each other's dementia caregiving stories. By sharing our personal journeys, we create a deep well of insight and self-healing — for ourselves and for one another. Every dementia journey is as unique as a fingerprint. We are all amateur caregivers, constantly learning, unlearning, and adapting as we care. We are fellow travelers navigating two unknown worlds. Each person brings a story filled with hard-earned lessons, door-opening tips, and golden nuggets of wisdom; all forged through trial and error. In the end, sharing our stories is the most meaningful gift we can offer — to ourselves and to each other.

The first in-person, Table of Eight, dementia caregiver support group, will be held on Thursday, September 11th from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM at Coppertop. This gathering will NOT be online. The first zoom session will be held the following day, Friday, September 12th at 10:00 AM. The link is below. Please write or call me with any questions: Gary@Virtical.Live or (612) 810-1683.

Topic: Table of Eight 10:00 AM CST for

dementia caregivers

Time: Sep 12, 2025, 10:00 AM Central Time

(US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82137642460?

pwd=1ly405p0zaZKwRbfS0KS9omCI2NRRn.1

Meeting ID: 821 3764 2460

Passcode: 885142



The Guiding Principles By >Virtical Learning Systems™ Gary Solomonson, Founder & Nancy Goldman, Chair

- 1. Come as You Are. We honor each person's story whether your journey is just beginning, you've walked it for years, or maybe feel hopeless, alone, weary, angry, overwhelmed, or simply curious this group offers a welcoming space to share stories, explore caregiving approaches, and support one another. There's no pressure to speak only a warm invitation to take your place at the table to listen, to learn, and to feel heard.
- 2. Confidentiality Builds Trust. What's shared at the table should stay at the table. We ask that stories and personal reflections not be shared outside the group, other than with involved family. This assurance helps create a safe space where openness and trust can grow.
- 3. Listen to Understand, Not to Fix. We practice active, compassionate listening offering presence, not prescriptions. We're not here to solve everything, but to truly listen and care for the caregiver.
- 4. Small Sparks, Shared Light. Each gathering begins with a 10-minute guest story or insight to spark conversation and thoughts to gently light the way forward and lift each person's spirit.
- 5. Every Path is Personal. There is no "right" way to walk alongside someone with dementia. We learn from sharing each other's diverse experiences and care journeys. Entering our loved one's world, trial and error becomes the path.
- 6. Compassion over Comparison. We resist the urge to measure or judge. Every care situation is unique every act of love, however small, has value.
- 7. **Support Flows Both Ways.** This is not only a place to receive it is also a place to give, to witness, and to grow together. We come to the table for mutual support and shared strength.
- 8. Leave Lighter. Our hope is that each person leaves the table with a lighter heart, a helpful idea, and a sense of not being alone, knowing that we're glad you joined us and look forward to your return and stories.

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Steve O'Neil Apartments creates space for creativity

Residents of Steve O'Neil apartments, a safe haven for families experiencing housing instability, have access to a weekly art group called Colorful Connections. Here they can learn a new skill, practice mindfulness through creating, and engage with fellow artists. Children and adults held their first Art Show on June 27, with four winning pieces chosen to hang in the building.



Rhubarb Festival is more than a fundraiser

It's a celebration of Chum's mission, where music, food, community, and compassion come together in one beautiful, delicious day. More than 4,000 people came together on June 28 to celebrate community, music, and all things rhubarb — and thanks to you, the 2025 Rhubarb Festival was a huge success!

Safe Bay averaging 10 people per night

In less than two months of operation at three separate locations, Safe Bay has provided 556 nights of rest for 55 unique individuals. Having a safe place to park overnight has already helped individuals and families get back on their feet and head towards housing.

One person's stride can lead to meaningful change for many

Longtime runner Holly Grace completed this year's Grandma's Half Marathon for a cause close to her heart: raising money to revamp the backyard play space at the Steve O'Neil Apartments.

Holly recognized how vital it is for kids to have a safe, fun place to play — a space that supports their physical and emotional well-being while building friendships and community. With every mile she ran, Holly brought awareness to this need — and thanks to the generosity of friends, family and supporters, she met her \$1,000 fundraising goal!



FUMC Rhubarb Festival Stats

- We collected over 450 pounds of rhubarb
- We had rhubarb from Roseau to Rochester.
- We had 35 kitchen volunteers plus
 15 youth volunteers
- Over 450 hours of volunteer time
- 200 pies 119 coffee cakes over 70 jars of jam 35 large pans of crisps 24 small pans
- Bathed in prayer and great attitudes
- Led by Anita Zager, Debra King, Pamela Brown, Linda Harper and Larry Ehresman



Thank you everyone!
You have made a difference. This isn't about statistics, or even about rhubarb, it's about loving people. People will have food and housing because of you!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Connie Adamec Jill Anderson Jon Anderson Lee Ball George Bateman Celeste Dallman Carla Egge Renz Fairchild Hilary Fezzey Alex Flinner Mary Giese Cynthia Giuliani Dick Griffith Ray Gurske Richard Gurske Mary Hansen

Scott Hedlund

Courtney Houser Darren Houser Joe Jeannette Elizabeth Lambert Jolene Larson Sarah Lemae Karl Lindgren Tyler Mattila Michael Moe **Matthew Moses Delaney Nielsen** Jim Riehl Robyn Schlangen Ella Walker Felicia Walker Brennen Werner Jean Williams

Save the Date for Roast Beef Dinner!



Thursday, October 2, 2025 4:30-6:30 pm

Church Office Summer Hours Monday - Thursday 9-3 Friday 9-12

Some days the office may close early, please call ahead

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



From Our Faith Community Nurse

Importance of Immunizations

September will be coming soon, and I hope that your childrens, as well as your, immunizations are up to date. There's a lot of misinformation floating around, partially due to our HHS Director, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. He has been an anti-vaxer for a long time, and has at least seven appointees not qualified for their positions.

Usually, Minnesota is known for good health care and generally healthy people. However, in 2023 only 63% of children had completed their recommended immunizations by their 35 month. This is down from almost 68% in 2018. I was shocked by these numbers. Dr. Ries, a physician at M. Health Fairview, gives one reason for the low compliance: "Minnesota has a particularly weak vaccine law that allows persons to decline vaccines for school just based on any conscientiously held belief." She notes that rates have been declining since 2012, long before Robert F. Kennedy's appointment. Dr. Ries also states that part of this decline is due to misinformation and a lack of trust. Also, some people are still catching up on vaccinations after falling behind due to the pandemic. Other barriers to receiving immunizations are unavailable transportation and parents working more than one job.

Vaccinations have saved millions of lives around the world. A Minnesota law passed in 2024 allows childcare facilities and licensed family providers to require children over two months in their care to meet certain vaccination requirements. Please check with your health care provider if you have hesitancy in receiving any vaccine.

Some Common Myths:

1) The MMR vaccine causes autism.

No link has been found in many scientific studies.

2) Harmful ingredients are in vaccines.

The ingredients found help the vaccine stay safe and effective. Metals and formaldehyde in vaccines are lower than what is found in your blood.

3) Natural infection is better than immunization.

This is true – it can result in better immunity, but the risk is permanent brain damage, liver failure or liver cancer, deafness, pneumonia, and even blindness, which are all higher with the natural infection

So, vaccinations outweigh natural infection and are saving lives. And remember, you are not only protecting yourself or your child – you are protecting people who are immunocompromised. You are reducing the chances of spreading an active infection to someone who has a lower ability to survive it.

In 2024, The University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) founded the Vaccine Integrity Project. Its steering committee will engage professionals across the U.S. immunization landscape to gather feedback on how non-governmental entities may be able to help protect vaccine policy, information, and utilization across the U.S. "This project acknowledges the unfortunate reality that the system that we've relied on to make vaccine recommendations and to review safety and effectiveness data faces threats," Dr. Michael Osterholm, Regents Professor and Director of CIDRAP said. Recommendations by this body will be of immense help to health care providers and their clients.

MUSIC NOTES



from Velda Graham Bell, Director of Music Ministries/Organist

Strikepoint Concerts - 2025 Summer Tour

Friday, August 1, 7:00pm –

Join Strikepoint at the Cathedral of Christ the King (1111 Belknap St.) in Superior for the opening concert of their 2025 summer tour. Admission is free, but an \$18 donation is suggested; 20% of the donation will be returned to the Cathedral's organ fund.



Sunday, August 10, 7:00pm -

Welcome Strikepoint home from tour at a concert in our own Sanctuary. Admission is free, but an \$18 donation is suggested. Under Derek Bromme's direction, this year's tour takes them to Mt. Rushmore and the Black Hills.

Strikepoint's concerts are always filled with exceptional music and lots of fun.



Concert by

Echoes of the Lake &
Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social
Tuesday, August 19, 7:00 pm
First United Methodist Church
Held in Lakeview Social Hall



Join us for a concert by Echoes of the Lake, the Arrowhead Chorale's treble voice ensemble, and an Ice Cream Social sponsored by First UMC's Sanctuary Choir. The Sanctuary Choir will also be selling baked goods to raise money for their Choral Scholar program. There will be a freewill Donation for the concert.

For the past five years or so, our Sanctuary Choir has sponsored a Choral Scholar Program. This program gives an opportunity for a local college student to pursue choral singing in a community that is committed to excellence in sacred music. In turn, we benefit from their participation in our choir. In this five-year period, we have had two wonderful Choral Scholars: Riley Hinnenkamp, a UWS student and member of First UMC, and Henry Mattson, a student at St. Scholastica. We have been blessed by these young adults and their willingness to share their musical gifts with us!

Our Choral Scholars have received a monthly honorarium which has been paid with funds received from memorials, donations, and the Carol Donahue Scholarship Fund. We have been especially grateful for memorial gifts from the families of Dick Peterson and Al Merry, two dedicated members of our Sanctuary Choir.

Music Programs For Children & Youth at First United Methodist Church

Class Ring



Wednesdays at 7:30-8:30 p.m.

JAM Junior

JAM Junior is designed for our youngest musicians in first grade and under. Beth Brophy leads this "fun with music" program. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend with their children

Wednesdays at 5:00-5:30 p.m.

Class Ring is our youth handbell program for grades 7th-12th. Led by Derek Bromme, youth learn musical styles and handbell techniques for worship and outreach.



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Joyful Noise

Joyful Noise is our new program, co-lead by Beth Brophy and Christine Winkler Johnson, for grades 2nd-6th. Children will explore a variety of musical activities – bells, singing and drumming on our world drums. This program includes a weekly

Wednesdays at 5:15-6:15 p.m.

spiritual lesson or activity.

For more information contact the church office: 218-727-5021 info@fumcduluth.com

EARTHKEEPER



Several years ago, while having coffee in a Canal Park café, a friend visiting from the East looked up at a poster that read, "Save the Boundary Waters." She turned to me and asked, "Save them from what?"

That question has stuck with me. In July, my daughter Rebecca and I drove to Ely for a garden party at the banks of the South Kawishiwi River. We enjoyed food from Boundary Waters Kitchen, connected with others who love this place, and I even took a swim.

Rebecca dipped her toes in the river—a reminder of why this landscape matters. She canoed the BWCA in 2022 and 2024 with her college roommate and their partners.

We gathered with the Save the Boundary Waters campaign to learn more about threats from sulfide-ore copper mining. After our meal, we heard from three speakers: Ingrid Lyons, the campaign's executive director; Lacy Squier, Ely Connect manager and What's Up Ely podcast host; and Becky Rom, a retired attorney and founder of the campaign.

The riverbanks we stood on are Ground Zero for the proposed Twin Metals mine, owned by a Chilean conglomerate. The mine site drains into the BWCA and threatens a 4.3 million-acre freshwater ecosystem that stretches into Quetico and Voyageurs National Parks. "It's a sellout—giving 6,000 acres of public land in perpetuity to a Chilean company," Lyons said.

Copper mining is common in the dry Southwest. In water-rich places like northeastern Minnesota, the damage could be far worse. The campaign won a 20-year federal mining ban in 2023—but that protection is now at risk. With the recent 2025 election, the pressure is on.

This isn't just a Minnesota issue—it's national. And we only get one chance to save it.

Bible Verse

"The Lord God took the human and placed them in the garden of Eden to tend it and care for it."

-Adapted from Genesis 2:15

Naomi Yaeger is passionate about environmental sustainability and writes to educate. She is a commissioned Earthkeeper in the United Methodist Church.

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.



FIRST FAMILY

First United Methodist Church 230 E. Skyline Parkway, Duluth, MN 55811 218-727-5021, info@fumcduluth.com

Pastor: Jeanine Alexander Editor: Michelle Rowley

Next First Family deadline: August 18
Submit to connect@fumcduluth.com
www.fumcduluth.com

Building for the Future





If you've been a member of the church for any length of time, you know Richard Gurske. In addition to attending Sunday service and "pushing donuts" (his description) afterwards, he volunteers in the church office every Tuesday.

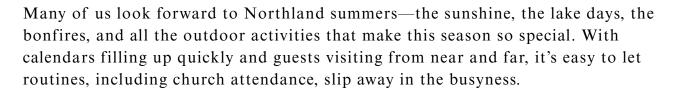
Another prominent position he holds is chairman of the Edgewood Assisted Living Hawks Club – a vibrant, handson group of older adults who've come together to build something extraordinary: a massive, handmade model ship, over four feet long and three-and-a-half feet tall. Richard, under the guidance of Tom Parker from Edgewood Dining Services, helped transform what was once the Men's Club into the now thriving co-ed Hawks Club. It began as a few residents building birdhouses, and now the club is a dedicated shipbuilding crew of men and women. Tom, who builds wood ship replicas from scratch at home, was recruited to captain the project. Together, they are building a large-scale replica of the HMS Victory, which the Hawks will rename "USS Edgewood."

"It was a big deal if we got four people to show up to make bird houses and to paint them - it wasn't as challenging," Richard explained." But this ... this is different. We average around 20 now. Men and women, everyone is welcome."

Richard hopes this labor of love inspires other seniors to stay active, engaged, creative, and looking forward to the days ahead.

"Because in our group, the older you get, yesterday is something we don't look back at, we want to look towards the future, all of us," Richard states. "We want to look to tomorrow, not yesterday, and we want to build something. And what a thing to leave for the next group of seniors. Do something as difficult as this - Go for it." As Richard continues as chairman of the Hawks Club, building the ship with passion and purpose, he also looks ahead to a personal milestone. On Sunday, Aug. 10, Richard will be lighting the church in celebration of his 93rd birthday, and in honor of his brother Ray's 99th birthday on Aug. 11. His gift will go to support the church's donut fund.

Staying Spiritually Connected During Northland Summers





That's why I'm so grateful for the gift of online worship at The Coppertop. Whether you're at the cabin, on the road, or just soaking in a slow Sunday morning, online services make it easy to stay grounded in faith and connected to our church family.

Personally, I find my weekends often filled with hosting friends and family at the cabin. Getting to church in person every Sunday doesn't always happen—but being able to tune in online, either live or later in the week, keeps me spiritually anchored. It's a simple yet meaningful way to stay in touch with both God and our community.

If you're joining us online, I encourage you to fill out a Connect Card and hop into the chat. Let us know how you're doing, share any prayer requests, or just say hello. We love hearing from you and want to celebrate your special moments and walk with you through any challenges.

Wherever you are this summer, I hope you find ways to enjoy God's creation and also nurture your spirit. Whether in the sanctuary or at the screen, you are always a part of our Coppertop family.

Grace and peace, Greg Leiviska, Director of Welcome

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

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.

Summer Cleaning and Electronics

Alex Flinner

As the middle of summer passes, many of us are cleaning out garages, sheds, closets, or drawers and discovering lots of items we want to dispose, but don't know how. These items include all single use and rechargeable batteries, tired or dead electronic devices, and a large assortment of phone, computer and computer-based hardware. Provided below is a list of some of these electronics, as well as WLSSD's disposal guide. These items all require special considerations for safe and responsible disposal.

Why is this important? Batteries and electronics are often made from or include heavy metals that become poisonous or toxic if they get into ground water or the air. They are also made from resources we can recover to use again and again.

Luckily in Duluth we have WLSSD's Materials and Household Hazardous Waste Recovery Centers. They are able to take and recycle many of these items and take additional devices and materials, including electrical cords, extension cords, phone cords, appliance cords, and indoor electrical wiring. So if you have a bunch of old speaker wiring, telephone cable, etc., bring them with you for recycling when you bring in your batteries and devices.WLSSD takes some things for free and charges a nominal fee for others. There are other companies in town that can also take used electronics and various materials. Some take scrap metal for recycling and can pay you by the pound if you have a large amount. Depending on what you are disposing, you may need to visit both facilities, please check with their guide at the website listed below.

Did you know that most modern copper ore is less than 1% copper by weight? The Duluth Complex ore body averages 0.66%. This translates to about 200 tons of ore for every ton of copper produced (1 ton = 2000 lbs). This figure does not include any of the waste rock, overburden, or tailings that also need to be moved. By recycling these cables, we can reuse this important resource and save some of the extensive efforts expended to produce these metals.



Types of recyclable batteries:

include Lithium, Nickel Metal Hydride (NMH), Nickel Cadmium (NiCad), Lead Acid, Alkaline, portable tool batteries,



WLSSD guide for product Disposal: https://wlssd.com/disposal-guide/

Household Hazardous Waste Facility: 2626 Courtland Street Duluth, MN 55806

Electronic Devices:

Old phones and chargers, old computer and computer based hardware (monitors, tablets, printers, scanners, laptops), old wired or wireless power tools, wireless vacuums, dead solar lights and old R/C toys.

Materials Recovery Center: 4587 Ridgeview Rd. Duluth, MN 55803

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. Periodic postage is paid at Duluth, MN 55806.

Volume 59, Number 7

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