

December 2025

# First Family

Volume 59, Number 11



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**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**230 E. SKYLINE PARKWAY**

**DULUTH, MN 55811**

**[WWW.FUMCDULUTH.COM](http://WWW.FUMCDULUTH.COM)**

## JOY TO THE WORLD

Not long ago, “Joy to the World,” a beloved Christmas classic, turned 300 years old. It has been blessing generations of people. Composer Isaac Watts’ interpretation of Psalm 98 invites us to sing a “new song” and it is a powerful cosmic performance of all creation being renewed and freed. This year, in worship during Advent/Christmas we will be reflecting on this powerful and precious Christmas carol.

Rather than “joy” being simply another word for “happiness,” we will discover that the depths of joy can be found especially in the midst of suffering, the work of justice, and the presence of compassion—all part of the coming of Jesus to this world and a message the world still so desperately needs.

Isaac Watts was born in 1674, in South Hampton, England. He was raised in a deeply religious family. Watts’ earliest memories were of his father’s convictions about religious liberty. His father was jailed twice rather than conform to the Church of England (he wanted to worship in a church unaffiliated with the government).

Isaac Watts became a pastor and eventually served a large, independent church in London. He developed a wide reputation for his preaching. He was consumed with communicating his Christian convictions in heartfelt worship and song.

The opening line of Watts’ “Joy to the World” is often sung incorrectly as “Joy to the World, the Lord has come.” That is not what Watts wrote. He wrote, “Joy to the World, the Lord is come.” Watts was not specifically writing about the past—the birth of Jesus. Instead he was writing about the future return of Jesus. The Scripture passage he based the song on speaks of the second coming of Christ. This is not simply about the newborn King—it is about the coming King.

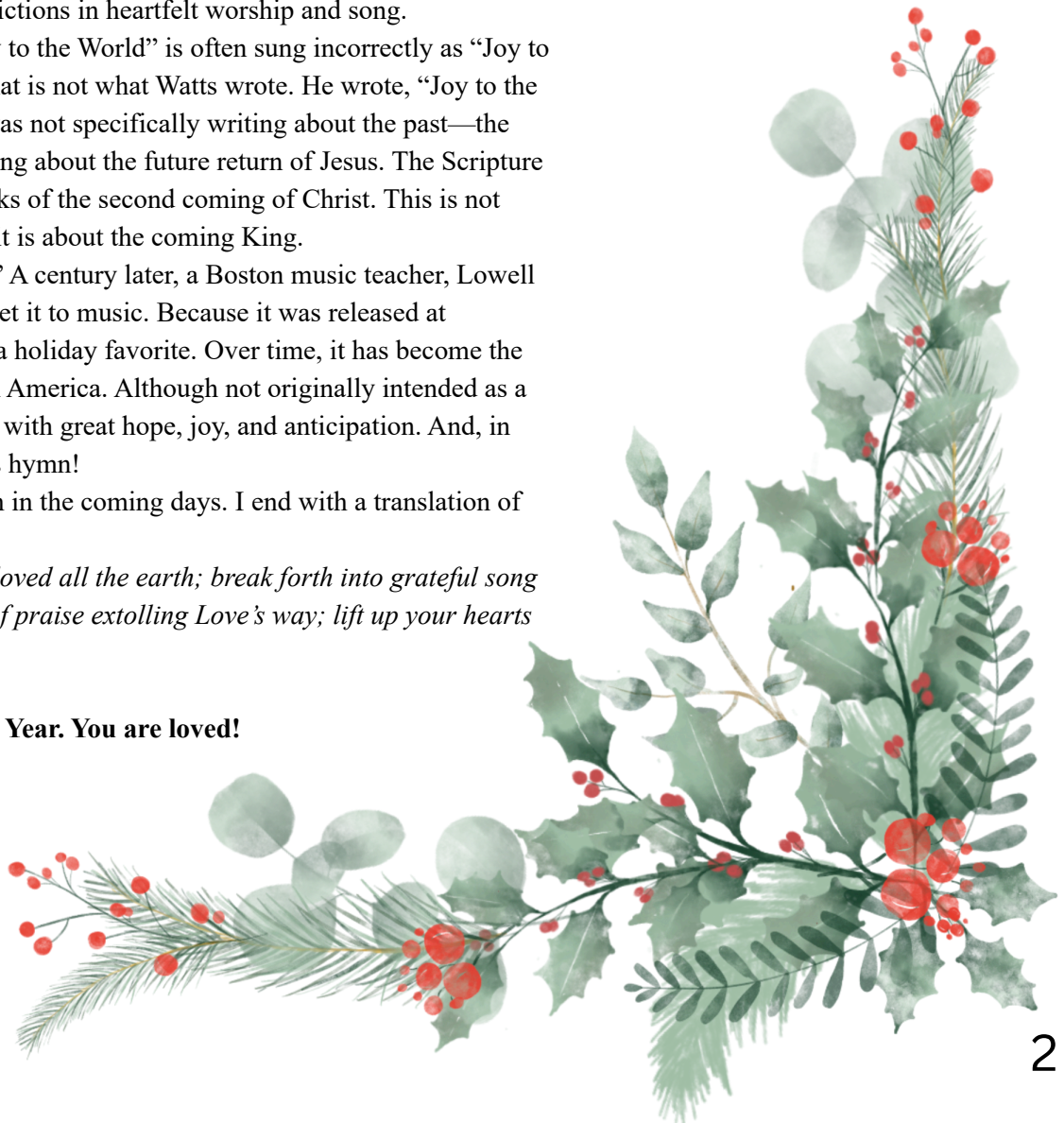
Watts wrote “Joy to the World.” A century later, a Boston music teacher, Lowell Mason, discovered the poem and set it to music. Because it was released at Christmastime, it quickly became a holiday favorite. Over time, it has become the most published Christmas Carol in America. Although not originally intended as a Christmas song, it is a hymn filled with great hope, joy, and anticipation. And, in that sense, it is a perfect Christmas hymn!

Join us as we explore this hymn in the coming days. I end with a translation of Psalm 98 by Nan C. Merrill:

*"Make a joyful noise to the Beloved all the earth; break forth into grateful song and sing praises! Yes, sing songs of praise extolling Love's way; lift up your hearts with gratitude and joy!"*

**Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. You are loved!**

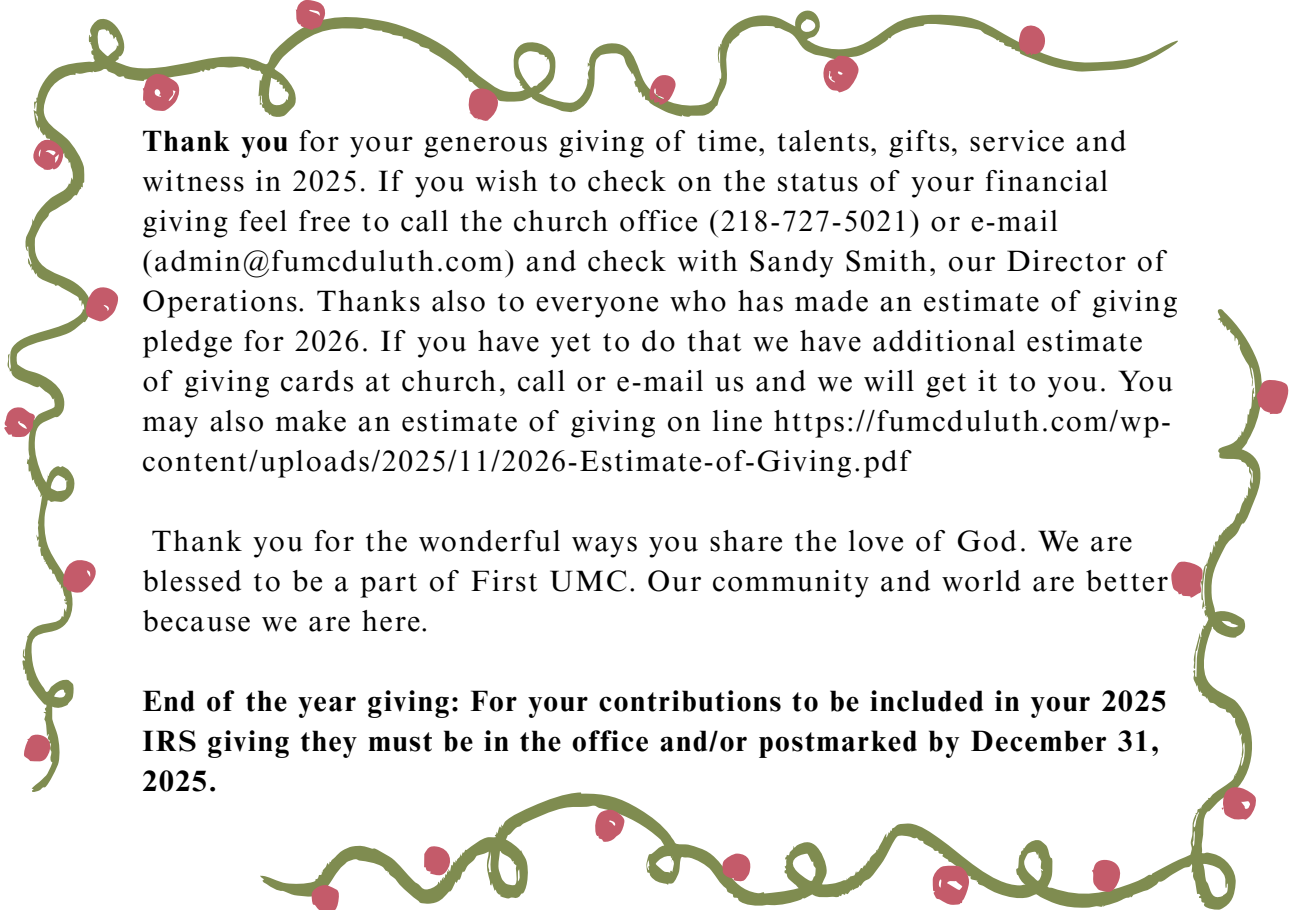
Pastor Jeanine





## WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

- **December 7** – The 2nd Sunday of Advent – Our annual children’s Christmas Pageant and Holy Communion
- **December 14** – The 3rd Sunday in Advent – Joy to the World: Repeat the Sounding Joy
- **December 21** – The 4th Sunday in Advent - Lessons And Carols with the choir, bells, and more.
- **December 24** – Christmas Eve Worship
  - 4:00pm in person and livestreamed (can be watched live at 4pm or anytime after) Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship which will include a children’s message, Velda Graham Bell and Tapestry Band.
  - 10:00 pm in person and livestreamed (can be watched live at 10pm or anytime after) Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship which will include the extoller’s bell choir (a reunion of bell ringers who have been part of our bell ministry), choir, organ ...
- **December 28** – Joy to the World Continues



**Thank you** for your generous giving of time, talents, gifts, service and witness in 2025. If you wish to check on the status of your financial giving feel free to call the church office (218-727-5021) or e-mail (admin@fumcduluth.com) and check with Sandy Smith, our Director of Operations. Thanks also to everyone who has made an estimate of giving pledge for 2026. If you have yet to do that we have additional estimate of giving cards at church, call or e-mail us and we will get it to you. You may also make an estimate of giving on line <https://fumcduluth.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2026-Estimate-of-Giving.pdf>

Thank you for the wonderful ways you share the love of God. We are blessed to be a part of First UMC. Our community and world are better because we are here.

**End of the year giving: For your contributions to be included in your 2025 IRS giving they must be in the office and/or postmarked by December 31, 2025.**

### **CALLING ALL CHILDREN & YOUTH: Our Children’s Christmas Pageant is Sunday, December 7 at 10am**

(“A Rehearsed/Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant”) called “Christmas Rock” with reception following. Rehearsals are Sunday mornings, during Sunday school, AND every Wednesday evening 5pm (for kids 1st grade and younger) & 5:15pm (grade 2 and older). There will also be a dress rehearsal on Saturday, December 6th 10am–noon with donuts and costumes (kids at that rehearsal will get their costumes). Children can participate even if the Sunday of the program is the only time they are there. There will be costumes for them. Invite grandkids, and children you know. We need youth to help with the children and the singing. Please contact director Beth Brophy with any questions: [musickids@fumcduluth.com](mailto:musickids@fumcduluth.com)

## YOUTH (Grades 7-12)

### Wednesday, December 3rd

- Come anytime 6:00-6:30pm for supper
- CONFIRMATION CLASS – 6:30pm
- Youth Group with Jason (older youth) – 6:45p.m.
- Youth Bells/Class Ring – 7:30-8:30pm

### Saturday, December 6th – Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 10:00am-12:00pm

- Come to help with the younger kids and participate in the Christmas program
- You can even get a costume!

### Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> - Youth Christmas Party

- We will go to Skyline Bowling for lunch...bowling...games...prizes
- \$10 to go toward the cost of food, etc. The church will pay the rest!
- Friends welcome, but you must sign up by Wednesday, December 3rd.

### Wednesday, December 10th

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

### Wednesday, December 17th

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

### Wednesday, December 26<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> & January 7th - No Youth Programs or dinner (Holiday break)



## CHILDREN (Nursery - 6th grade)

### Sundays, December. 14th & 21st – Sunday School @ 10am

Nursery/Sunday School (5 years and under) is open 8:30am through worship (kids can start in the nursery and then come up for the children's message ... or start in worship and then go to the nursery) Elementary Sunday School – takes place after the children's message in worship

**Sunday December 28th & January 4th: NO SUNDAY SCHOOL**  
Activity bags in worship. The nursery will be open for younger children.

### Sunday, December 7th at 10am - Children's Christmas Pageant ("A Rehearsed/Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant")

with reception following. Rehearsals are Sunday mornings, during Sunday school AND every Wednesday evenings 5pm (for kids 1st grade and younger) @ 5:15pm (grade 2 and older). Children can participate even if that Sunday is the only time they are there. Please contact director Beth Brophy with any questions:

[musickids@fumcduluth.com](mailto:musickids@fumcduluth.com)

### Wednesday, December 3rd

*Final rehearsal for the Christmas Pageant - children can pick out costumes*

- 5-5:30pm – Jam Jr. Music: nursery – 1st grade in the chapel, including Bible learning
- 5:30-6:00pm – Supervised play time for 1st grade and under
- 5:15-6:15pm – JOYFUL NOISE: 2nd-6th graders (Tween group ... bells ... drums ... singing)
- 6:00-6:30pm – Dinner
- 5:00-8:00pm – Nursery care available

### Wednesday, December 10th

- 5-5:30pm – Jam Jr. Music: nursery – 1st grade in the chapel, including Bible learning
- 5:30-6:00pm – Supervised play time for 1st grade and under
- 5:15-6:15pm – JOYFUL NOISE: 2nd-6th graders (Tween group ... bells ... drums ... singing)
- 6:00-6:30pm – Dinner
- 5:00-8:00pm – Nursery care available

### Wednesday, December 18th

- 5-5:30pm – Jam Jr. Music: nursery – 1st grade in the chapel, including Bible learning
- 5:30-6:00pm – Supervised play time for 1st grade and under
- 5:15-6:15pm – JOYFUL NOISE: 2nd-6th graders (Tween group ... bells ... drums ... singing)
- 6:00-6:30pm – Dinner
- 5:00-8:00pm – Nursery care available

### Wednesday, December 26<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> & January 7th - No Youth Programs or dinner (Holiday break)



Friends always welcome  
Please bring \$ contribution toward  
Wednesday suppers.

Text Pastor Jeanine 763-443-0570 or Larry  
Ehresman 218-260-9577 with  
questions/needs



# Advent/Christmas Mission Project

**This year you will have several ways to participate in  
our mission project**

## **Financial Donations**

Shared between the mission and ministry of our congregation,  
food ministry for Union Gospel Mission and CHUM

## **Give your time**

- Hope for the Holidays - Join us on November 23<sup>rd</sup> to write holiday cards for refugees and other immigrants immediately following the service
- Volunteer to help with serving lunch at Union Gospel Mission on December 8<sup>th</sup> from 11:30am - 1:30pm
- Volunteer to help with Ruby's Pantry on December 18<sup>th</sup> from 4pm-6:30pm

## **Donate items**

- Toy Give away for Union Gospel Mission (see giving tree at church and/or pick up a toy for any age child or youth - bring unwrapped toy to church and place it in the front of the sanctuary by Dec. 8.)
- Food and items for the Food Shelf. Specifically, Chum often need items like: Canned soup (non cream), Canned fruit, Canned vegetables, Canned stew and Canned pasta, Canned fish, Canned beans, Pasta, Rice, Cereal, Peanut Butter, Mac-n-Cheese, Toilet Paper (cited as a chronic need, rarely available in quantities needed), Cat food (apparently, dog food is more available), stuffing, gravy mix, juices, coffee ... And... of course... CASH.

**First United Methodist Church**  
**230 E Skyline Parkway**  
**Duluth, MN 55811**  
**[www.fumcduluth.com](http://www.fumcduluth.com)**



# We Give Thanks

Sunday, November 16th was Consecration Sunday. Following worship, we gathered for a simple meal of soup and bread. What a great way to come together and celebrate our commitment to God, church, community, and our earth.

Special thanks go to Scott Hedlund for making delectable bread. The soups would not have gotten to the table without the help of: Anita and Tim Zager, Linda Wiig, Marla Preston Yoho, Pastor Jeanine, Karen Alseth, and Tom Brown. You all know just how much Cindy Hedlund likes to decorate. She brightened the Social Hall by dressing the tables to welcome all.

Larry Ehresman and Pamela Brown extend our warmest thanks to all who made it possible to come to the table.

Thank you to all the volunteers who donated their time and talents to the Coppertop Bazaar bakery. And thank you to all our wonderful customers who purchased the yummy treats. The bakery was completely sold out before the end of the afternoon. It was a great success!

Thanks, Linda Harper and Barb Kim

Our church is a happening place. Saturday, November 15th, we hosted the Fiber Art Fair, the church library had its annual book sale, and we sold soup (using the delectable leftovers from the annual Roast Beef Dinner), and Larry's famous cinnamon rolls.

These missions could not happen without you. Special thanks to Rhonda Montavon and Marla Preston Yoho. With their help and your prayers, we raised over \$800.00 that will be used for updates to the Atrium and Narthex.

As Helen Keller said: "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

· Dear First United Methodist Church, thank you for your recent donation to the union Gospel Mission (UGM). 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!

Thank you for First UMC's regular donation to the CHUM general fund and CHUM's emergency shelter and the Chaplaincy program. Your monthly gifts allow us to continue to provide food, shelter, advocacy, and a caring community for some of Duluth's most vulnerable residents.

· Thank you for the generous gift to the Damiano Center! Your support is crucial to serving the most vulnerable in our community. Each day, hundreds of people visit Damiano seeking to have their most basic needs met. Thank you for partnering with us to strengthen our community by providing for the most vulnerable among us.

## Lighting the Church

2X2 group is lighting the church the week of December 7 in memory of Patrick Alexander who's birthday is December 10. The remainder will go to the Children's Ministry

FUMC Board of Trustees is lighting the church in memory of Bob Krumwiede the weeks of December 14, 21, 28, January 4 & 11. The remainder of the gift will go to the Choir.

## Communion Sundays = Bring Food for the Food Shelf

Every communion Sunday (typically the first Sunday of the month) we are asking you to bring a donation of food (or monetary donation) for the CHUM food shelf. That way when we come to the communion table to be fed spiritually we are also feeding others who are physically hungry. The foodshelf cart will be available for donations. If you make a financial donation please note "foodshelf: in the check memo or envelope and make checks out to FUMC. Thank you for loving our neighbors in need.

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





# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Tiffany Ahlers	Dan Maddy
Debbie Alander	Carrie Maki
Sharon Alexander	Pamela Montz
Colten Ball	Pamela Nelson
Dahlia Boberg	Gaige Omdahl
Robert Boyson	Carolyn Schroeder
Phyllis Durand	Jessie Skumatz
Larry Ehresman	Kirsten Stellmaker
Gretchen Flaherty	Annika Swanson
David Grant	Chuck Vidovic
Jon Hansen	Terrance Wallin
Art Headley	Erin Wiig
Jacob Jeannette	Thomas Wiig
Niklas Jeannette	Bob Williams
April Kruse	Theresa Williams
Barbara Lindgren	

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

## Monthly Volunteer Opportunity

Our church serves at Union Gospel Mission every second Monday of the month from 11:30 AM–1:30 PM. This is a hands-on, meaningful way to offer food, shelter, and hope to our neighbors. If you'd like to join the team or learn more, we'd love to have you jump in! Email [jana@duluth-ugm.org](mailto:jana@duluth-ugm.org) to learn more about volunteering.

## Faith Forum Fall 2025

Sunday mornings in Fireside Lounge before the Service 9:00-9:45

Please join us as we share our stories, become more informed about our community, and challenge each other to grow in faith and mutual understanding.

**Dec 7th:** Jeanette Pucheu shares her experiences volunteering at a Christian migrant shelter in Tijuana, Mexico with founder Esther Morales Guzman, and how this experience helped her heal from recent cancer treatment

***Faith Forum will start up again Jan 11th.***

Questions, concerns, ideas for future topics? Please contact:

Shelley Gruskin [sgruskin@css.edu](mailto:sgruskin@css.edu) or Jean Walsh  
[jmbwalsh@gmail.com](mailto:jmbwalsh@gmail.com)

## Save the Date:

All Church Birthday Party & Potluck  
Sunday, January 25, 2026

11:15 am - 1:00 pm

Bring your favorite dish to share OR  
pick your favorite birthday month,  
decorate an 8 foot long table, & bring  
a cake/dessert to share.

Sign up begins on Sunday, January  
4th in the narthex.

## Youth Toy Drive

Our youth are collecting new toys for the Mission's annual Christmas Toy Giveaway! If you'd like to participate, pick up a tag with gift ideas from the tree in the sanctuary and return your unwrapped gift to the church by Sunday, December 14th. Your generosity helps ensure every child experiences joy this Christmas season.

## Christmas Toy Giveaway Information

Parents and guardians who need assistance with Holiday gifts this season are invited to the Union Gospel Mission Toy Giveaway on Friday, December 19th, from 2–4 PM. Proof of ID is required for each child receiving gifts. Acceptable forms include: a birth certificate, recent school report card, school ID, current medical insurance card, or social security card.



Join Yogadevotion at First United Methodist this fall for a Somatic  
Yoga practice, sure to be the unwind you need to begin your week!

Mondays from 5:30pm - 6:30pm

This 8-week session runs from: 11/3 - 12/15 and the cost is \$88.

Register at: [bit.ly/FUMC-Fall](http://bit.ly/FUMC-Fall)

Celebrate the holidays with

# STRIKEPOINT

## Hallelujah! Holiday Jubilations & Traditions

with the Arrowhead Chorale Friday, December 12 • 7:00pm and

Saturday, December 13 • 3pm First Lutheran Church, 1100 E.

Superior St., Duluth, MN

## A Bell Noël: Ringing in the Holidays!

Friday, December 19 • 7pm

First United Methodist Church, 230 E. Skyline Pkwy, Duluth, MN

Tickets: \$25 for adults; \$10 for students and children

Artistic Director Derek Bromme•

dbromme@css.edu • Duluth, Minnesota

## Library News

### Recent Additions to the FUMC Library:

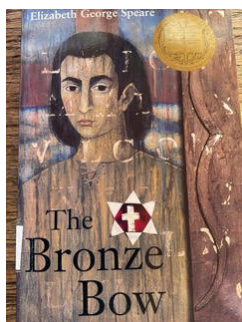


#### The Book of Forgiving By Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu

Archbishop Tutu & his daughter Mpho talk about the importance and power of forgiveness in our world.

#### Where Rivers Part By Kao Kalia Yang

Yang writes about the experiences of her mother & grandmother as they try to survive after the Viet Nam war. Yang was born in a refugee camp in Thailand and came to the U.S. when she was 6 years old.



#### The Bronze Bow Elizabeth George Speare

Daniel bar Jamin is an 18 year old Jewish boy who has been hiding in the hills of Galilee for 5 years --ever since the Romans entered the town & killed his father. Daniel makes friends with a sister & brother who find him in the hills and the 3 vow to win back Israel from the Romans. This book is recommended for ages 10 & above.





## Advent: Welcoming Christ, Welcoming One Another

As we enter the holy season of Advent, we are invited once again to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. These weeks leading up to Christmas are not just about counting down days, but about making room—for Christ, for one another, and for God’s transforming grace.

In the United Methodist tradition, we speak often of open hearts, open minds, and open doors. Advent is the perfect time to live out that calling. As we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, we are reminded that Christ’s light shines brightest when we share it together as a community of faith.

This season, may we be intentional about gathering as families and as a church family:

- **In our homes**, around dinner tables, and Christmas trees, sharing prayers and stories of God’s faithfulness.
- **In our church**, through worship, song, and service, renewing our commitment to grow in grace and love.
- **In our community**, reaching out with warmth to neighbors, newcomers, and those who might need a reminder that they are not alone.

Advent invites us to pause amid the busyness and remember that Christ comes to meet us—in worship, in fellowship, and in every act of kindness. When we welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us, we bear witness to God’s love made flesh among us.

Lets make this Advent a season of *presence*, not just *presents*—a time to strengthen our connections with family, friends, and our church family. Together, let’s fill our sanctuary and our homes with joy, prayer, and welcome, trusting that Emmanuel—God with us—will meet us here.

*“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” – Romans 15:7*



### FIRST FAMILY

First United Methodist Church  
230 E. Skyline Parkway, Duluth, MN 55811  
218-727-5021, [info@fumcduluth.com](mailto:info@fumcduluth.com)

Pastor: Jeanine Alexander  
Editor: Greg Leiviska

Next First Family deadline: **December 15**

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

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

# NEW & NOTEWORTHY

## Baptism



Baptized November 9th: Dominiko Orion Karoff, born June 7, 2024. His parents are Myra and Jason Karoff and his brother is Giovanni Kenneth Karoff. Grandparents are Bernice and Chester Pepper, Susan and Dale Karoff, and Marisa and Pat Green. Krista Paulzine is the godmother. Aunts and uncles are: Christina Trok, Simone Pepper, Chester Pepper Jr., Benjamin Trok, Mario Thornton, and Angela Lane.

## New Members



**Anna Rademacher**



**Wanda Marquardt & Paula Swenson**



**Tim & Brenda Singer**

## Staff



Andrew is a UMD student majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He loves camping, yoga, used items, sound and bread. We are happy to have him as a part of our team.

**Andrew Pickering, Sound Technician**

## Updates



**New Chapel lights**



## From Our Faith Community Nurse

Greetings! As we continue through this Holiday Season, I thought that it would be a good idea to do a little Food Talk. Eating links us to all beings who now live and all beings who have ever lived. Eating reveals our dependence on other living things and on the divine goodness that gives life to all things. The Lakota Sioux and other tribes give thanks to the animals that they hunt and kill believing that the animal surrendered its life for human survival. John Lane Deer remembers his uncle saying, "There's more to food than just passing through your body. There are spirits in the food, watching over it." Food is spiritual nourishment, be it supernatural—Jewish manna, Christian eucharist, Greek ambrosia, Hindu soma—or merely the daily portion of meat and potatoes. From *Gifts of the Spirit* by Paul Kofman and Philip Zaleski. When we sit down to a meal do we give thanks? Do we really relish what we eat or do we rush through it mindlessly distracted by what may be going on around us. Through table blessings we can remember and give gratitude to the source of our food and gratitude to those who produce it and give thanks to creation.

When preparing foods, the goals are:

- Prevent contaminating food with pathogens spreading from people, pets, and pests.
- Separate raw and cooked foods to prevent contaminating the cooked foods.
- Cook foods for the appropriate length of time and at the appropriate temperature to kill pathogens.
- Store food at the proper temperature.
- Always wash your hands after handling raw meat to prevent cross contamination that can spread easily

If you are having chicken or turkey, remember to cook to 185 degrees. Food contamination happens when foods are corrupted with another substance. It can happen in the process of production, transportation, packaging, storage, sales, and cooking. Contamination can be physical, chemical, or biological. Unfortunately, the funding bill that reopened the government — introduced by Senate Republicans and signed into law by Trump on Nov. 12 — included provisions that delayed, weakened or prohibited FDA enforcement of ongoing and pending food safety regulations. The regulations affected included safety and hygiene standards for handling produce and enhanced recordkeeping for certain parts of the food chain supply. This new bill along with the cuts to inspection personnel will not help to maintain food safety. Thus, we must remain diligent in our food preparation.

So let us give thanks for our food, provide as we can for those who have little, and eat with gratitude.

Peace and Blessings this season of Advent. Linda

## Sign Up for This Year's Extollers



Extollers 2024

It's time to recruit for Extollers, our Christmas Eve reunion bell choir! If you are currently involved in our handbell program, or have EVER been a member of one of our handbell ensembles, you are invited to be part of Extollers. This group usually draws around 30 ringers and uses at least three of our sets of bells. The Extoller rehearsal was always one of Bill Alexander's favorite parts of Christmas - a chance to see former ringers home for the holidays and have many "generations" of our bell program mingle. Our new bell director, Derek Bromme, is pleased to continue this very special tradition.

There will be a single rehearsal on Christmas Eve morning, from 9:30-11am, in the Sanctuary. The rehearsal ends with a group photo (see last year's group pictured here). The Extollers will then play for the 10pm candlelight service that evening. If you're interested in playing in this year's Extollers massed choir, contact Derek Bromme, 218-590-0087 or [dbromme@css.edu](mailto:dbromme@css.edu). If there are specific bells or a spot you'd like to play, be sure to let him know and we'll do our best to accommodate that.

# Music Notes

## Christmas at the Coppertop

**Don't  
miss out on  
these Christmas concerts  
held in our sanctuary.**

**Sunday, December 7, 7:00 pm**

**"Festival of Lights: Happy Holidays"**

**Twin Ports Wind Orchestra – Classical Brass  
Concert**

**Friday, December 19, 7:00pm**

**"A Bell Noël: Ringing in the Holidays"**

**Strikepoint and Friends Holiday Concert**

**Sunday, December 21, 10:00am worship service**

**"Christmas at the Coppertop: A Festival of Lessons  
and Carols" Music of the season offered by First  
United Methodist's Sanctuary Choir and handbell  
ensemble, Cast in Bronze, as well as a variety of  
vocal and instrumental solos and ensembles.**

**And, then mark your calendar for...**

**Friday, February 27, 7:00pm**

**"The Freshman"**

*a 1925 silent comedy film starring Harold Lloyd  
with live accompaniment by theatre organist Jelani Eddington*

## Ringling in the Holidays!

Our own Strikepoint, Duluth's premier handbell ensemble, will be playing lots of Christmas music this season. They are again honored to be featured guest performers with the Arrowhead Chorale on Friday, December 12 at 7:30pm and again on Saturday, December 13 at 3pm. Both concerts will be held at First Lutheran Church (1100 E. Superior St. in Duluth); come a little early, as Strikepoint will be playing a prelude beginning about 15 minutes before the concert. Tickets are available at <https://arrowheadchorale.com> or at the door, and are rumored to be selling fast. This year's concert is called Holiday Traditions and Jubilations: Hallelujah! According to Chorale conductor Matt Faerber, "I can't imagine a Christmas concert without Strikepoint!"

Strikepoint's own holiday concert, A Bell Noël: Ringing in the holidays!, is in our Sanctuary on Friday, December 19 at 7pm. Tickets are available only at the door and are \$25 for adults, \$10 for students and children. If ticket prices are prohibitive, please talk to Pastor Jeanine.

The **First UMC Carol Donahue Music Scholarship** is offered to students, 12 to 18 years old, for up to three years. After the first year they may continue with a recommendation from their instructor for a second or third year. Scholarship students need to have studied their instrument for three years before applying. This year, 2025-2026, we have three first year Music Scholarship Students. Each student receives a \$300 scholarship for each year of lessons, music or other materials related to their studies.

Victor Ramos is a violinist from East High School. He plays violin in the DSSO Youth Symphony Orchestra where he serves as Concertmaster, participates in the Summer Quartet Project, as well as playing in his school orchestra. The Quartet Project allows students to practice and perform in small groups as well as a full orchestra for one intense week of study. The students are guided in their studies by "seasoned" string instructors. The week ends as they perform in concert for the public, and with the Lake Superior Chamber Orchestra for its final concert with its Director, Byron Klimek.

Anja Harju played the violin for six years on the violin her grandfather crafted. The viola has been her main instrument for the past four years, as her school orchestra needed another violist to balance out the orchestra. She has had many opportunities to play for the public in various settings including school auditoriums, Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, Mitchell Auditorium, and for her family during holiday gatherings.

Yupeng Chen is currently the Associate Concertmaster of the DSSO Youth Symphony Orchestra and Co Concertmaster at East High School. Yupeng Chen radiates his enthusiasm for music. He has studied and played his violin since he was four years old. He says, "Music has become a definite part of his life with hopes to be a part of the DSSO no matter what profession he chooses."

We have two second-year students from FUMC; they are Delaney Neilsen, piano, and Nathaniel Bateman, piano and flute. We also have one second year student from Kenwood Lutheran Church, Sawyer Baldes, who is both a piano and a vocal student.

The music students mentioned above will have opportunities to perform for the congregation at various times of the year. This gives our congregation the opportunity to hear and see the youth supported by the Carol M. Donahue Music Student Scholarship Fund of FUMC. In the coming months the scholarship committee will be sponsoring a musical fundraising event that will be announced at a later date. If you know of a young student that has the ability to apply for this music scholarship of FUMC, contact Carol or one of the committee members listed below.

With Appreciation and for your continued support!

Carol Donahue, Chair  
Committee Members,  
Barb Lindgren and Alix Craft



First United Methodist Church  
230 E Skyline Parkway Duluth, MN

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# CHRISTMAS AT THE COPPERTOP

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## FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday, December 21, 2025  
10:00 am worship service

Discover the beauty of this traditional service of nine lessons and carols during the morning worship service at First United Methodist Church. The story of Christ's birth will be told through scripture readings and music offered by First United Methodist's Sanctuary Choir and handbell ensemble, Cast in Bronze, as well as a variety of vocal and instrumental solos and ensembles.









**A Support Circle for Families and Friends of Loved Ones Living with Dementia**  
**A Ministry of Coppertop Church – First United Methodist Church, Duluth, MN**  
**You are warmly invited to pull up a chair — or pull up the link on Zoom.**

## **December Gatherings**

**Thursday, December 11 at 10:00 AM – Coppertop Church**

**Friday, December 12 at 10:00 AM – Online from Gary's Office Zoom Link**

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87984010825?pwd=1K4ECb2TqdNVwucMJ3MPrMgcuPLnmz.1>

Meeting ID: 879 8401 0825

Passcode: 026414

### **December Stories – “Surviving the Holidays”**

Our first gatherings — both at Coppertop and online — have been filled with warmth, honesty, and wonderful stories. We learn from one another as we navigate the trial-and-error world of dementia care. The purpose of Table of Eight is simple: to offer family dementia caregivers a safe space to share stories and gain strength, ideas, and hope from the lived experiences of others.

Family members of all ages are welcome — whether caring for someone living at home or in assisted living or memory care. We especially welcome those who support a loved one from a distance. Please feel free to invite family and friends who live elsewhere to join our Second Friday Zoom Gathering each month at 10:00 AM CT.

At the heart of Table of Eight is encouragement, compassion, and the freedom to express our real feelings. Sharing our thoughts, experiences, frustrations, and fears can open the door to insight and self-healing — for ourselves and for one another.

For those who have walked through the passing of a loved one who lived with dementia, your presence and your stories remain deeply valued. Together we reflect on the meaningful question: “Who Am I Now, That I’m No Longer a Dementia Caregiver?” We are fellow travelers navigating two unknown worlds — ours and theirs. In the end, sharing our stories is the most meaningful gift we offer in this ministry: to ourselves, to one another, and to the memory of those we love.

For more information, please contact Gary at [Gary@Virtical.Live](mailto:Gary@Virtical.Live).

### **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](mailto:pamela.brown@reliabilitysolutions.us)



# EARTHKEEPER

Naomi Yaeger

## When the Stars Fade, So Does Our Witness to God's Handiwork

Lately I've been waking up at 4 a.m. and taking the dog outside to do her duty. While I'm outside I am amazed, at all the stars in the dark sky. But in many places the world is glowing 24/7, and we risk losing more than the stars — we risk losing a little of our soul. As believers called to respect God's creation, we ought to pause and ponder how our lights — once symbols of safety and progress — are now drowning the night, silencing the heavens and unsettling the order of life.

When artificial lighting blankets the night sky, the beautiful tapestry of stars that once whispered "Creator of the heavens" fades from view. The International Dark-Sky Association estimates that much of humanity now lives beneath skies so bright that the Milky Way is invisible. For birds that migrate by starlight, for insects that forage by moonlight and for humans whose bodies rely on cycles of dark and light, this constant glare is a distortion of the rhythm God built. Wild creatures suffer. Nocturnal animals dependent on natural darkness find their cues confused. According to the National Wildlife Federation, from bats and cougars to butterflies and sea turtles, artificial light disrupts feeding, breeding, and migration. Even human health is touched: studies show that exposure to light at night interferes with circadian rhythms and may lead to sleep problems and broader health concerns. As Methodists, we recall John Wesley's exhortation to live simply so others may simply live. In the same spirit, we might dim our lights, shield our floods and preserve the dusk. We can delight in creation's nighttime beauty and honor our role as stewards of land, sea and sky. The night sky belongs not only to astronomers or poets, but to every part of creation — including us. In reclaiming just a little darkness, we honor the Maker and the creatures He entrusted to our care.

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

## AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE



When reorganizing the Fireside Room cabinets, we discovered over 20 Imperial Glass luncheon plates, known as the crotchet pattern. This pattern was first introduced in the 1943 – 1944 Sears Roebuck Co. catalogue. These plates are in pristine condition, valued at anywhere between \$10.00 and \$25.00 each.

If you would like to own a piece of American history (and church history, too), the suggested donation is \$10.00. The proceeds will go to improvements of the Atrium and the Narthex.

Please contact Pamela Brown  
([pamela.brown@reliabilitysolutions.us](mailto:pamela.brown@reliabilitysolutions.us)), if you are interested.

**40s/50s GATHERING:** Saturday, January 24,  
2026 @ 6pm at Margarita's in the Denfeld Center  
on Grand Avenue.

**For:** Everyone in their 40's & 50s (those in their 30's who are old souls ... and those in their 60's who are young souls are welcome too ). Friends welcome .

**Your hosts:** Steve & Jenna Mattson, Aaron & Jennifer Boyson, Jeremy & Karen Jeannette, Larry Ehresman & Jeanine Alexander.

**What:** Good food and time together. Your entrée will be covered for you by a special gift (people love us) ... you will only need to pay for drinks and appetizers.

Watch for a sign up sheet in early January. Mark your calendars now so you can attend.

# In Remembrance



*John Kearney*



*Bill Alexander*



*Carol Healy*



*Margie Ehresman*



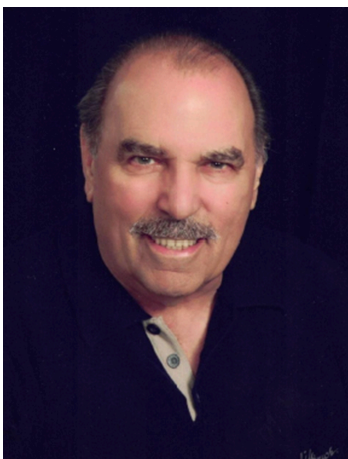
*Ethel Lewis*



*Walter Peterson*



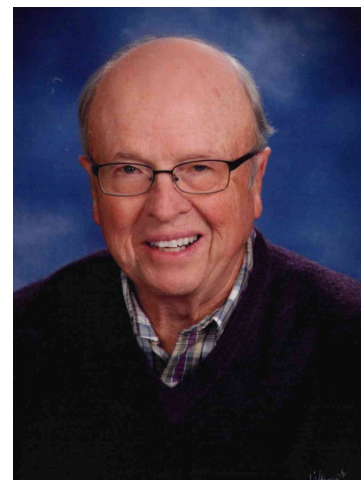
*Robert Krumwiede*



*Patrick Alexander*



*Dorothy Gum*



*Jerry Norling*





# CHRISTMAS

## Word Search



CANDY CANE  
CAROLS  
DECORATIONS  
ELVES  
FAMILY  
FRIENDS

GATHERING  
GIFTS  
GINGERBREAD  
MISTLETOE  
NORTH POLE  
ORNAMENTS

PRESENTS  
REINDEER  
RUDOLPH  
SANTA CLAUS  
SLEIGH  
SNOWFLAKES

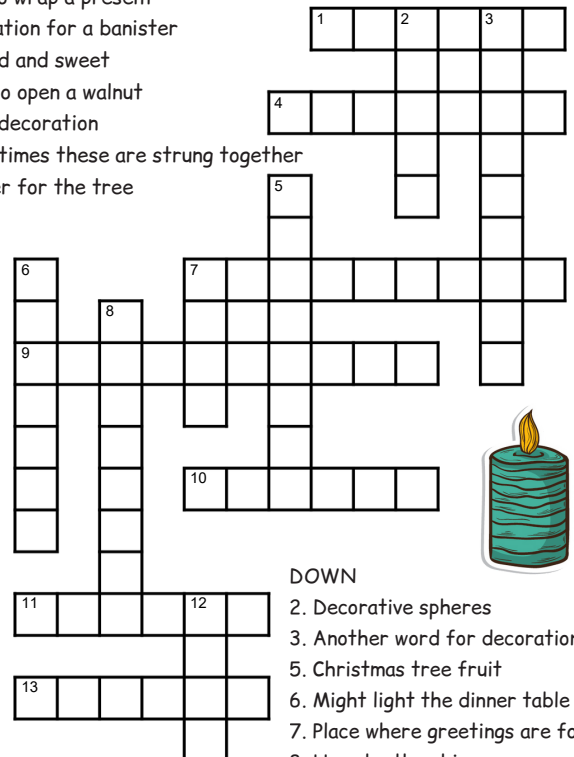
STOCKINGS  
TREE  
TURKEY  
WINTER  
WREATH  
YULETIDE



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

### ACROSS

- Used to wrap a present
- Decoration for a banister
- Striped and sweet
- Used to open a walnut
- Door decoration
- Many times these are strung together
- Glitter for the tree



### DOWN

- Decorative spheres
- Another word for decorations
- Christmas tree fruit
- Might light the dinner table
- Place where greetings are found
- Hung by the chimney
- Might be cedar, fir or pine



## WordScramble

As the first snowflakes fell, Twinkle the elf accidentally spilled her bag of holiday cheer. In the flurry of excitement, words about the season got jumbled everywhere! Can you help her sort them out before Christmas arrives?

EEIRRNDE

OSGCREO

HTAEWR

TLENSI

CARIEKFUT

NITVYITA

ADEVTN

GSHELI

YNICMHE

SMLTEOTEI

GONGEG

SFTOYR

UETSNHTC

ONWMASN

LOEN

LLHYO

DZLAIRZB

GNAERM

ASRT

CIICLE

AZAKNAW

SOSITLCE

RDAGNAL

ELEVS

# December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 5:30pm Trustees	5 8am Men's Group	6 Hmong New Year Celebration
7 9am Faith Forum 10am Worship Children's Program 3pm TPWO concert	8 5:30pm Yoga Devotions 4:00pm Foundation	9 10am Connect with friends via Zoom 5:30pm Finance 5pm KIT Women's connect	10 9:30am Prayer Shawl 5pm Evening Programs	11 10am Table of Eight In person	12 8am Men's Group	13
14 10am Worship 11:15am Sustainability	15 9:30am Rachel's Circle 5:30pm Yoga Devotions	16 6:30pm Council	17 5pm Evening Programs	18 4:30pm Ruby's Pantry	19 8am Men's Group 10am Table of Eight Zoom 7pm Strikepoint concert	20
21 10am Worship Lessons & Carols	22	23 10am Connect with friends via Zoom	24 Christmas Eve Services 4pm & 10pm	25 	26 8am Men's Group	27
28 10AM Worship Scholarship Sunday	29	30 10am Connect with friends via Zoom	31			



# First United Methodist Church

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## MINISTRY TEAM

**Pastor** - Jeanine Alexander  
pastor@fumcduluth.com

**Deacon** - Rev. MaryAnne Korsch  
maryanne.korsch@gmail.com

**Director of Operations** - Sandy Smith  
admin@fumcduluth.com

**Faith Community Nurse** - Linda Wiig  
linda.wiig@hotmail.com

**Director of Music Ministries/Organist**  
Velda Graham Bell  
music@fumcduluth.com

**Sanctuary Choir Director/Handbell Ministries**  
Derek Bromme  
dbromme@css.edu

**Tapestry Directors** - Leah and Corey Hulst  
ljghulst@gmail.com  
chulst70@gmail.com

**Administrative Assistant** - Nancy Eaton  
info@fumcduluth.com

**Directors of Children's Music** -  
Beth Brophy  
Christine Winkler Johnson  
musickids@fumcduluth.com

**Wednesday Youth Leader** - Jason Abbott

**Director of Welcome/Communications Coordinator** -  
Greg Leiviska  
welcome@fumcduluth.com  
connect@fumcduluth.com

**Technical Coordinator** - Alex Flinger  
tech@fumcduluth.com

**Technical Assistant** - Jacob Ginocchio

**Congregational Ministries Coordinator**  
Larry Ehresman  
larry@fumcduluth.com

**Bookkeeper** - Shevan Weerasinghe

**Sound Technician** - Andrew Pickering

**Nursery Coordinator** - Abbi Adamec  
abbi@fumcduluth.com

**Custodians** - Chris Robinson and Kevin Simich