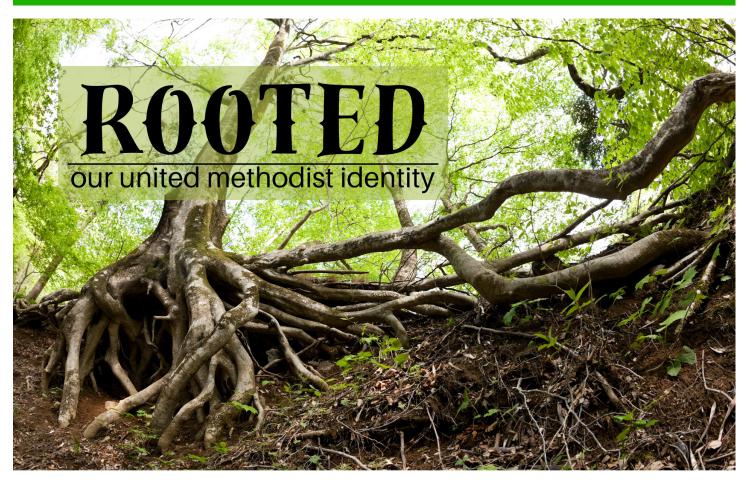
First United Methodist Church of the St Cloud Region

April 2024 Newsletter





First Plant & Prairie Care Day of 2024 Saturday, April 20th from 9am until noon

Plant and Prairie Care Day Spring tasks:

Take off protective tree wraps Clean up winter garden debris Weed gardens Trim bushes Replant perennials if needed Spread fertilizer

Come when you can and stay as long as it works for your schedule.

No experience required. Just bring work gloves.



ROOTED: OUR UNITED METHODIST IDENTITY - PASTOR LEAH ROSSO Irosso@fumcscr.org



I am always amazed by the depth of roots, whether it be in the weeds that I'm trying to pull out of my yard, or the exposed roots when a tree topples over. Root systems are deep and wide and usually underestimated for their strength and resilience. It seems to me that the same is true of our United Methodist roots! There are so many gifts to being United Methodist, from the foundation of grace that the Wesleys provided, to the branches of inclusivity and a focus on the fruit of the Holy Spirit. During the month of April, as the worldwide United Methodist Church meets at General Conference in North Carolina (see the second to last page of this newsletter for details), we will be talking about our identity as United Methodists here at Love First UMC – what it means to us, what is

unique about being Methodist, and how this identity helps us to grow in faith and share God's love with the world. Rather than becoming irrelevant, each day that I witness the division in our world; the disparity between rich and poor; and bear witness to the harm that is being done, I am more and

more grateful for our United Methodist heritage and how it is that we are called to work in the world. I hope you'll join me as we celebrate this month with Confirmation; hear from people in our church about how God is at work in their lives; and come together in our care for the Earth. As John Wesley said before he died, "The best of all is, God is with us." God is still with us! Come celebrate and explore with us how our Methodist roots are shaping our faith today.

> Guests at the FUMC Art Crawl and Fiber art by Nicole Zitzow





COMING UP IN WORSHIP - ROOTED: OUR UNITED METHODIST IDENTITY

April 7: Holy Communion Wandering Heart series concludes with "Here's My Heart" John 21: 1-19

April 14: Baptism at the United Methodist Church Confirmation Sunday "By Water & The Spirit" Mark 1: 4-12

April 21: "Hearts Strangely Warmed" A Sharing of Transformative Stories

April 28: "Quadrilateral or Pentagon?" Celebration of Earth Day Kick-Off of the Capital Campaign

May 5: "Holy Conferencing: Now What?" What happened at General Conference and where do we go from here?



CONVERSATIONS ON GRIEF

Grief is a part of our daily lives. Grief manifests itself in a variety of ways including loss of loved ones through death or divorce, loss of pets, friendships, health challenges, job transitions, finances and various other changes. Knowing that grief and life transitions are so interconnected, we at First United Methodist Church want to provide a safe place where one can share their stories of grief and seek the supportive presence of faith and community. Join us for Conversations on Grief that will meet in the church library on the 2nd Sunday of each month following worship.

"This group is a place where one could listen to someone else's story and realize that they don't feel so alone." ~ Kathy

Leadership provided by Monica Peterson. If you would like more information about this group please contact the church office.

Prayer Station Available

In order to deepen our prayer lives and invite more people into the physical act of prayer, we have a votive table on the northeast side of the Sanctuary for people to light a candle of prayer. It can be to honor someone, a prayer for healing, forgiveness, or a prayer for our world & our church.



NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY AT FUMC

April 28th Celebration of Earth Day

in Worship Stay afterwards and walk the prairie! The Land Stewardship Team will be happy to guide walks and show people around if you haven't been out there yet or want to see what's new!

THINK CARDS! Make your lists! The next sale will occur **May 5**. That will be before Mother's Day, Father's Day, and many graduations. It will be our final sale of the season. Be sure to check us out at 9:00 AM before the service and then until 11:00 after the service.





Sunset Labyrinth Worship Tuesday, April 9 at 7:30pm



The worldwide UMC is meeting for the first time since 2019!

Come hear about the upcoming General Conference of the United Methodist Church. An information session and discussion will be held **after worship on April 7th** by Jennifer Galovich.

Come to the Library and hear about what legislation we're hoping to see passed, what it will mean for the worldwide church, and what effects it may have on us locally.

Cultivating Companions SMALL GROUPS FORMING NOW

Are you undergoing a big change or time of transition? Would you like to connect with a small group of individuals who are also leaning in to their faith in the face of change. Reach out to Pastor Susie with your interest in joining a small group.







Many ages and mediums were represented in Love First UMC's Art Crawl on March 20th!







- IT TAKES A COMMUNITY!

Art Crawl Congratulations!

Our first art crawl was a great success and we really must thank Jessica Storkamp for the inspiration for the event, her work on the planning team and for being an artist in the display. Thank you to Pastor Susie Putzke, Mary Smith, Diana Klisch, Linda Agre, Pastor Leah for planning and execution and the many, MANY artists who provided their works for display! *Please enjoy the many photographs* throughout the newsletter of the event provided by Stef Young, Kathy Hulsebus, and Pastor Susie Putzke.



Salvation Army Food Shelf

40 pounds of groceries was donated to the Salvation Army Food Shelf in March. That included the liquid laundry soap and some of the personal items. They were happy to receive the personal items, as they are just getting back residents after they had the fire and the long cleanup.

Thank you March Community Fellowship Meal Team!

Thanks to the volunteers who prepared and served the March Third Saturday Community Meal. They include Caitlin & Brady Hickcox, Barb Rosene, Linda Caird, Briana Santillana, Emily Schlangen, Jackson and Liam Putzke, Lily Rosso, and Audrey Hodge. They served sloppy joes, chips, coleslaw, brownies, cupcakes, milk and lemonade to 83 guests.

Gratitude for our Usher/Greeter Team!

Every Sunday our members and guests alike are welcomed to worship by our greeters and our worship team is supported by our ushers - we couldn't do it without them! This group is lead by Jan Fruth and she has done an amazing job keeping us organized.

- April 7 Ushers: Micki Blenkush & Dan Michaels Greeters: Jan & Ken Fruth
- April 14 Ushers: Judie & Ken Dunlop Greeters: Betty & Sy Schlangen
- April 21 Ushers: Kathy Hulsebus & Jerusha Morris Greeters: Kathy Calligare & Marcia Summers
- April 28 Ushers: Gail & Larry Kuzel Greeters: Judie & Ken Dunlop
- May 5 Ushers: Gail & Larry Kuzel Greeters: Roger & Judy Diesen
- May 12 Ushers: Mike & Karel Helgesen Greeters: Jerusha Morris & Kathy Hulsebus
- May 19 Ushers: Cathy Danzl, Gail & Larry Kuzel Greeter: Marcia Summers
- May 26 Ushers: Liz & OJ Inveiss Greeters: Jill & Bob Haak

thanksyou

We wish to thank all those who have given us your gifts, cards, visits, rides, thoughts and prayers as we have dealt with our health challenges the last couple of months. We are so blessed to have such a loving and caring church. We love you all. *Chuck & Jana Kelly*

PLEASE REGISTER FOR THESE UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

WALKING IN GRIEF TOGETHER

Grief is often a lonely journey through many passages, but it doesn't have to be. Together we have the opportunity to share our stories that are both unique and yet communal. Judie Dunlop and Monica Peterson will lead the group as we will discuss self care, difficult emotions, remembering, life adjustments, finding meaning, as well as other shared concerns.

Please join us for 6 weeks starting Thursday, April 4th 5:30-6:30pm in the church library. **Please RSVP to the church office by Tuesday, April 2nd.**



Spiritual Direction offered by Rev. Alison Hendley and Rev. Steve Peterson

People come to spiritual direction when they want to discern, be heard, heal, and grow. Spiritual Directors are trained professionals who listen intently with compassion and love.

More information can be found at our website: **lovefirstumc.org/spiritual-direction** you can book a session with Alison at: **calendly.com/spiritualdirectionalison/spiritual-direction** or with Steve at: **lovefirstumc.org/spiritual-direction-with-steve**

Earth Day Nature Retreat Saturday, April 20th, 2-5pm

Join us to be in nature and listen to how God is speaking to you through the prairie beauty. There will be time for community and solo time on the land.

Registration fee S25 scholarships available **lovefirstumc.org/nature-retreat**

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY - PASTOR SUSIE PUTZKE sputzke@fumcscr.org

SUNDAY MAY 12: Children and Youth Sunday

Join us as we celebrate the many ways in which our children and youth add to the life and vitality of the church. This will be a service in which we both celebrate and hold a spotlight to the young leaders within our congregation.

Special performance by our Quest Chime Choir Still accepting new players. Come practice with us during Quest.

Contact Susie if your child is interested in a leadership role in worship this Sunday!





Quest Chime Choir during rehearsal!



COMING SOON: ECO KIDS CAMP

Be on the lookout for an email assessing your family's date preferences for this summer's ECO Kids camp.

Not on our Children's Ministry e-mail list??? email <u>sputzke@fumcscr.org</u> to be added today.

Sunday School Grades K-2 and Quest Grades 3-6 meet Sunday Mornings after Worship

YOUTH MINISTRY - AMANDA HODGE

Confirmation Sunday is April 14th !

We are thrilled to announce that three of our wonderful students, Lily, Emily, and Briana, have embarked on their journey of confirmation! Following an enlightening overnight retreat, our youth have been diligently meeting with mentors, attending confirmation classes, and deepening their faith.

In the spirit of service, they recently dedicated their time serving at the 3rd Saturday community meal. Their dedication to both spiritual growth and community outreach is truly inspiring.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 14th, as we come together to celebrate their confirmation service. Let's show our support and encouragement as they take this important step in their faith journey! Please plan to join us in congratulating our confirmation candidates on their commitment and dedication.



April Schedule

- Wednesday, April 3 Youth Group (Middle 6pm & High School 7pm)
- Wednesday, April 10 Youth Group (Middle 6pm & High School 7pm)
- Wednesday, April 17 Youth Group (Middle 6pm & High School 7pm)
- Wednesday, April 24 Youth Group (Middle 6pm & High School 7pm)

For an updated summary and other details about Youth Group please visit <u>https://lovefirstumc.org/</u> <u>youth</u> I Questions, email Amanda Hodge <u>ahodge@fumcscr.org</u>



OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE AT FUMC & IN THE COMMUNITY

Community Fellowship Meal

The 3rd Saturday each month FUMC serves a free meal to anyone who stops by. Contact the church office if you are interested in helping. FUMC serves next on April 20th.

Other Community Meal locations and times:

- Place of Hope (511 9th Ave N) serves 12:30pm and 5:30pm each day
- Salvation Army (400 Hwy 10 S) serves Monday-Friday from 11:30am—12:45pm
- Newman Center (396 1st Ave S) serves the 2nd Saturday each month from 11:30am— 12:45pm
- Bethlehem Lutheran (4310 CR 137) serves the 4th Saturday each month from 11:30am-12:45pm
- St. Augustine's (443 2nd St SE) serves the 3rd Sunday each month from noon—1pm.
- St. Mary's Cathedral (823 1st S S) serves the 4th Sunday each month 4:30-5:30pm

Upcoming Service Project

Dear congregation- Thanks to your generosity at Christmas time, we have enough gifts to go back to Promise Neighborhood this spring and let the youth pick out something special for their Mom for Mother's Day!

Please join us in the fellowship hall on **Sunday**, **April 14** following the morning service to decorate gift bags and cards for this project.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO USHER OR GREET ON SUNDAYS?

CONNECT WITH JAN FRUTH fruity191@q.com or 320 - 380-3372





UMCOR Menstrual Hygiene Kits Collection

During the month of April United Women in Faith will be collecting items for UMCOR

Menstrual Hygiene Kits. These kits provide basic necessities to support vulnerable menstruating populations and are distributed by UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) during disasters, whether socioeconomic or as the result of a natural occurrence.

Below is a list of items that are needed for each kit. You can bring the items for an entire kit or just bring one or two items (i.e. box of tampons or one pack of flushable wipes). We will assemble as many complete kits as we can and then the kits and any remaining items will be sent to one of UMCOR's supply depots for future distribution.

Please place the following items by the UWF table in the fellowship hall:

•One one-gallon size re-sealable bag

- •Two 2 oz. bottles hand sanitizer
- •Three 4-gallon bathroom trash bags
- •One travel pack of wet ones
- •10 Tampons (5 regular and 5 super absorbency)--Unscented
- •10 Sanitary Napkins—Unscented, long super ultra-thin
- •Bath-size soap (3 oz. bar or larger)--No lvory or Jergen's soap, do not remove from packaging
- •One pack of flushable wipes (42 count)-unscented
- •Six laundry detergent sheets--Laundry detergent sheets should be placed inside of a small plastic storage bag prior to being added to the kit.

- BUILDING COMMUNITY AT FUMC



United Women

United Women in Faith Acting boldly, showing up and making a difference!

Our Purpose: To be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

Connect with a Circle - become part of a sisterhood in faith!

- Sarah Circle Meets the second Tuesday of the month at 1:30pm in the Library.
- Susanna Wesley Circle Meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm in the Library.
- Fellowship at Drake's Meets the third Wednesday of the month at 11:30am at Drake's Café, 520 1st St NE, Sartell. Call Kathy Hulsebus at 918-407-0253 for reservations.

UWF Calendar of Events

- April 7 Sarah Circle serves Fellowship
- April 1 Executive Team Meeting at 1:00pm in the Library
- April 9 Sarah Circle meets at 1:30pm in the Library
- April 13 Big Waters District Spring Gathering from 9am-2:30pm at our church
- April 17 Fellowship at Drakes meets at 11:30am at Drakes Café, 520 1st St. NE, Sartell.
 - Call Kathy Hulsebus at 918-407-0253 for reservations by April 10.
- April 23 Susanna Wesley Circle meets at 7:00pm in the Library

United Women in Faith District Spring Gathering At First UMC of the St. Cloud Region



Our UWFaith will be hosting the Big Waters District Spring Gathering on Saturday, April 13, from 9:00am-2:30pm. The event will welcome UWFaith members from across the Big Waters District. Our theme is *"Hope and Healing for Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Women"* and Aliyah Ewing from Terebinth Refuge in Waite Park will be the guest speaker. Terebinth Refuge is a Christ-centered shelter and safe hone that brings hope, healing services and freedom to sexually exploited and trafficked

women. The cost of the event is \$20 which includes lunch. Registration is required with the deadline of April 6. Registration forms can be found in the April First UWF Updates or on the UWF table in the fellowship hall. The congregation is invited to come to listen to the speaker from 10:30-11:30 at no charge!

Check out a book from the UMFaith Lending Library!



You are encouraged to check out the books in our lending library located on the UWFaith table in the fellowship hall. These books are a part of the UWFaith Reading Program and new titles are added yearly and kept for five years. As a result, these are current and timely books dealing with social action, spiritual growth, nurturing for community, education for mission and leadership development. Each book has a check out slip in it that can be filled out and left on the table.

Please try to return the books within two months. Be sure to take advantage of all these great books that are available to the entire congregation!

RETURNING FAVORITES FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY AT FUMC

Prayer Shawls

1st & 3rd Wednesdays each month at 5pm in church library & Zoom

This group works on prayer, baptismal, and confirmation shawls as well as hats, scarves and mittens for local schools and charities.

Caregivers Support Group 1st & 3rd Wednesdays each month at 7pm via Zoom

Join us for a twice-monthly virtual support group to reduce isolation, normalize hardships & affirm those of us who care for elderly, ill, or loved ones with extra needs. Our group is facilitated by experienced caregivers. New participants must pre-register at: fumccaregiversgroup@gmail.com

Young at Heart (YAH)

Will not meet in April. Watch for a May Event! 2nd Friday of the month at 10am in fellowship hall

The group is created for people age 55+, but anyone is welcome. They share jokes and are focused on education and often have community organizations come share what they are doing so we can partner.



Conversations on Grief

2nd Sunday each month after worship in church library

This informal discussion group meets to share stories of grief in all its many forms.

Big Questions, No Answers 2nd Monday at 10am in church library

This group is coming together to wonder out loud about questions of life and faith with each other.



UM Men's Group 2nd Monday at 6:00pm in fellowship hall.

They meet each month around a meal to discuss local project and fund projects where we see need in the community, most recently we supported Pathways 4 Youth and Habitat for Humanity.

The Well 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 5:30pm church library

This group is discussing the book "May I Have this Dance" by Joyce Rupp. Join them for a time of community sharing and devotion

Bible 365 Fridays at 10am

Meets via Zoom to discuss the week's readings "The Book of God" by Walter Wangerin Jr. Contact the church office for the Zoom link.

LOVE FIRST VMC IN THE COMMUNITY & REGION

April 28th at 4pm: Community Gathering for Peace

We are partnering with St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church and Celebration Lutheran Church to have a Pray for Peace Walk at the lake near Sartell Community Center on Sunday afternoon. Look for more details in the weekly church emails as it gets closer.

April Communion Offerings Promise Neighborhood

After school in math and reading programs for children who live in the Talahi School area designed to assist students achieve in school, that's Promise Neighborhood! Working to create a sense of community among children and families, that's Promise Neighborhood! Encouraging parents to assist in their children's education, that's Promise Neighborhood! Helping families in a lowincome area with may racial minorities to locate community resources for family success, that's Promise Neighborhood!

These are the reasons why FUMC has supported Promise Neighborhood from its beginning. Our offerings help make this possible.

Heart Forward Yoga with Lauren Murphy at FUMC

in person at FUMC or online

Saturdays April 6 & April 13 at 10am All classes are open-level, which means you can be a beginner or a more advanced yoga practitioner. These classes are all 60 minutes long and include gentle yoga poses, meditation, and breathwork. Each class is formulated around a theme related to grieving and/or anxiety.

Register at:

www.heartforwardyoga.com/classes

YOU'RE INVITED!!!

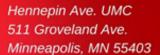
Please mark your calendars and plan to join other Reconciling Congregations for this important discussion of the future of the United Methodist Church. Note that you can join virtually if you cannot be there in person.

Questions? Contact Jennifer Galovich

MINNESOTA RECONCILING CONGREGATIONS SPRING SOCIAL GATHERING

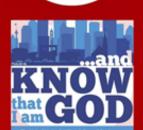
APRIL 13, 2024

FELLOWSHIP 11:30AM - 12PM POTLUCK MEAL 12PM - 1PM PROGRAM 1PM - 2:30PM



You are also welcome to attend virtually at facebook.com/MNReconcilingCongregations

Join us for a conversation about General Conference 2024 with members of the Minnesota delegation and for a time to connect with United Methodists in Minnesota



Minnesota Reconciling Congregations https://www.mnrcumc.org Reconciling Ministries Network https://rmnetwork.org

General Conference is coming!! What you need to know...

From April 23 to May 3, United Methodists from around the world will gather in Charlotte, North Carolina for General Conference. The delegates who will represent the Minnesota Conference are Rev. Carol Zaagsma (Good Samaritan UMC in Edina) and lay delegate Dave Nuckols, Minnetonka UMC). Of the 5000 – 7000 expected to attend, 862 are official delegates representing the U.S., Africa, the Philippines, Europe and some churches that have UMC ties.

At this point, nearly 1100 petitions have been received for consideration by legislative committees who will review these and forward those which are approved on to the full body for their consideration.

The Reconciling Ministries Network, of which we are a part, has three legislative priorities:

• Worldwide Regionalization:

This proposal restructures the UMC based on equity and respect for missional context. It would create regional conferences in Africa, Europe, the Philippines and the U.S. Each conference would have autonomy in regional decision making. *This amends the constitution, so will require a two-thirds vote of the General Conference followed by a two-thirds aggregate vote of the lay and clergy members present and voting in the annual conferences. If passed, this will only take effect after the Council of Bishops certifies their ratification (Spring 2026).*

Revised Social Principles:

This revision would remove the phrase "The practice of homosexuality is compatible with Christian teaching" and change the definition of marriage from "one man and one woman" to "two people". *Passage of this proposal would require approval of 50% + 1 of the GC delegates.* It does not require approval of the annual conferences.

• Removal of harmful anti LGBTQ+ language:

There are various places in the Book of Discipline where anti-LGBTQ+ language appears. The proposal would removal **all** language that targets LGBTQ+ persons, including, for example, the incompatibility statement, the policy that prohibits ordination equality, the policy that prohibits marriage equality, and all parts of the traditional plan approved at GC 2019. Like the previous proposal, *passage of this proposal would require approval of 50% + 1 of the GC delegates.*

Please know that the Minnesota Conference remains committed to the vision it adopted at its 2019 AC:

"[We are} a Methodist movement rooted in Jesus, grounded in Wesleyan theology, inclusive of all persons, and engaged in the work of justice and

reconciliation. These are and will continue to be our guiding values as a leadership team; we believe they align with our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and our vision for every congregation to be a vital expression of the gospel imperatives to grow in love of God and neighbor, reach new people, and heal a broken world."

Please pray for all the delegates to the General Conference, that they may act with grace and wisdom.

(Additional information can be found at <u>Minnesota</u> <u>Conference of The UMC (minnesotaumc.org)</u>)





College students who are or have been actively involved in First United Methodist Church are encouraged to apply for a scholarship to aid with college costs. Qualified students can apply for either or both the Stevenson or Cater scholarships online using the same application form. Previous recipients are eligible to reapply.

The Stevenson Scholarship will be awarded to an undergraduate college student who is a member of First United Methodist Church of the St. Cloud Region. Students entering college in Fall 2024 are eligible for this scholarship. Expected award: 1 scholarship of \$600.

Application deadline is May 15.

Cater Scholarships will be awarded to college students **(sophomore in Fall 2024 through graduate study)** who are members of a United Methodist congregation in Minnesota. Expected awards: up to 3 scholarships of \$1,500 each.

Application deadline is May 15.

Application forms may be obtained from the FUMC website at https://lovefirstumc.org/scholarships

The Grannis Memorial Scholarships will be awarded to students who are entering or currently attending a seminary with plans to work in a United Methodist ministry. Applicants must have a Minnesota connection through church, family, or a Minnesota institution or organization in which the applicants are or have been involved. Expected award: scholarships range from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

Application deadline is May 15.

Application forms may be obtained from the Minnesota Annual Conference website at <u>https://mnumc-reg.brtapp.com/GMScholarshipApplication</u>

Your application will include writing about how you expect to serve God and your neighbor through the career path for which your college education will prepare you. The committee also requires a transcript of your latest year's work in high school or college plus two letters of recommendation. Details are on the application form.

If you have questions, please contact Sandra Q. Williams, Scholarship Chair, at

sandraqwilliams@gmail.com

THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN WILL KICK OFF IN APRIL. COME HEAR WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!

The church office is open 9:00am until 2:00pm, Monday - Thursday and 9:00am until noon on Friday - CLOSED April 1st & 5th

Linda Agre, Office Administrator 320.251.0804 ex. 102 lagre@fumcscr.org Aaron Carpenter, Music Ministry 320.251.0804 ex. 111 acarpenter@fumcscr.org

Amanda Hodge, TRC & Youth Ministry 320.251.0804 ex. 107 ahodge@fumcscr.org Rev. Susie Putzke, Connectional Pastor 320.251.0804 ex. 105 sputzke@fumcscr.org Julie Daniels, Financial Administrator 320.251.0804 ex. 103 jdaniels@fumcscr.org

Rev. Leah Rosso, Lead Pastor 320.251.0804 ex. 104 Irosso@fumcscr.org Ken Fruth, Grounds & Maintenance 320.251.0804 ex. 110 custodian@fumcscr.org

> Alan Stock, Handbell Director asrock@fumcscr.org

First United Methodist Church of the St Cloud Region

April 2024 Newsletter