



SUMMER DAYS



LOVE First Newsletter for August 2025

August 2025 Newsletter

lovefirstumc.org



Join us for the final Summer Listening Session

**Sunday, August 24th,
30 minutes after worship
in the Multipurpose Room**

Let's discuss how God is inspiring our community's future together. Please review the Vision Priorities + packet in advance, if possible: lovefirstumc.org/visioning

What We're Hearing So Far

Over the summer, more than 100 ideas and hopes have already been shared across two vibrant listening sessions on June 29th and July 13th. Here's a glimpse of what's rising to the surface:

- Community matters. You've named a desire for deeper relationships, partnerships, and connection across generations.
- Music and worship inspire. Many see creative expression as a core identity, calling for more diversity in music, youth involvement, and outdoor concerts.
- Support and healing are sacred. From mental health to trauma responsiveness, you want Love First to be a place of care and belonging.
- Environmental stewardship resonates. Our land is seen as a spiritual gift, ripe for gardens, trails, prayer, and connection.
- You're ready for growth. Whether through learning, advocacy, or interfaith collaboration, many are ready to go deeper and bolder.



We're listening and your voice matters. During Fall Stewardship season, we'll share what we've learned and Ad Council will begin a Strategic Planning process this winter.

Questions?

Email Leslie Mulder (leslie@lesliemulder.com) or Lance Thielen (lsternberg88@gmail.com).

Summer Days - Every Season Has Something to Teach Us

- Pastor Susie Putzke, Connectional Pastor

sputzke@fumcscr.org

Summer is one of my favorite seasons. At its best, it's a time of deep joy, rest, and play—think summer camp, S'mores, and long, golden evenings by the lake. But summer can also bring its share of challenges: bug bites, sunburns, broken air conditioners, and endless road construction.

No matter how we experience it, summer has something to teach us. It can be a wise and patient teacher—inviting us to slow down, notice, and reflect.

Look out the window.
Look at the ground.
Look at the sky.
Notice what the season
wants to teach you
in this exact moment.
- Kendra Adachi



STEP ONE:
REST

THE SUMMER DAY



+Mary Oliver

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

This month, we'll draw from the ancient, sacred rhythms of our faith to explore what summer—and the broader seasons of life—have to offer us. We'll look at the times that sustain us and those that stretch us. The seasons we carefully planned for, and the ones that surprised us entirely.

Together, we will Rest, Trust, Play, Pay Attention, and Sing as we discover how God shows up in all of it.

Let's set aside the pursuit of a perfect summer or the pressure to check every item off the to-do list. Instead, let's choose a focus that grounds us.

The seasons of nature—and of life—don't always hand us the circumstances we would choose. But even in the unexpected, there is wisdom to be found.

Let's listen. Let's learn. Let's be present to the sacred in this season.

Coming Up In Worship

Sunday Worship at 9:30am and livestream at www.lovefirstumc.org

Summer Days

with poetry by Mary Oliver

July 27 - Rest

Genesis 2:1-4; Exodus 20:8-11

August 3 - Trust with Blessing of Animals

Psalms 145; Matthew 6:25-34

August 10 - Play

with Holy Baptism and Holy Communion

Luke 18:15-17; Luke 15:5-15

August 17 - Pay Attention

Luke 10:38-42

August 24 - SING!

Psalms 150



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.

Devotionals for our SUMMER DAYS sermon series are available!



Stewardship at FUMC

- Korynn Ruch, Financial Administrator

kruch@fumcscr.org

4 Easy Ways to Give



mail

Mail it directly to the church:

First UMC
1107 Pine Cone Rd S
Sartell, MN 56377



mobile

Download **REALM-CONNECT** from your app store and sign in.

Tap the **Giving** icon at the bottom, tap **Make a Gift** and follow the prompts to give.

Need an account?
Contact the office. Talk to Linda or Korynn.



text

Text **LOVEFIRST** and amount to **73256**.

Click the link you receive in the text message response.

Follow the prompts to give.

Text giving saves your payment information so you can quickly give again.



online

lovefirstumc.org/give

Enter the amount, fund, frequency and email.

Click **Continue** and enter your payment information to complete the transaction.

If you have a **Realm** login, you can login when prompted to use your saved payment method.

AUGUST Communion Offering: Feeding Area Children Together

Here in Central Minnesota, 1 in every 5 students do not know where their next meal will come from. Going hungry as a child causes an increased risk of learning and behavioral challenges. At **Feeding Area Children Together (FACT)**, we bridge the gap for students when school is not in session through our three services:

FACT PACKS: Distributed before weekends and breaks, these packs provide full meals and high quality snacks.

FACT Pantries: Housed within our schools, these provide shelf-stable food for both our students and families.

Break Boxes: Filled with fresh food and pantry staples, these boxes feed our families over longer school breaks, lasting one week or longer.

July's Communion Offering

Habitat for Humanity will receive our gifts of \$1,355

Youth Ministry

- Amanda Hodge, Director of Family & Youth Ministry

ahodge@fumcscr.org

Middle School Youth Return from Minne Mission

Minne Mission 2025 – St Paul, MN

Our middle school students experienced an incredible week of service that transformed both their understanding of giving and their hearts. From the initial collecting of donations to the meaningful work of sorting items at the Department of Indian Works, our students witnessed firsthand the complete cycle of compassionate giving. Middle schoolers also helped prepare spaces for incoming families to shelter at Interfaith Action.

Between their service work, the students found great joy in playing games at Hamline United Methodist Church, our gracious host church.



Most importantly, our students explored what it means to give well and with dignity—learning that true service honors both the giver and the recipient. We're incredibly proud of how our middle schoolers embraced this opportunity to serve with such enthusiasm and grace.



If you do not already receive **Realm** emails from Amanda, please email her to get on our Youth mailing list at: ahodge@fumcscr.org

YOUTH GROUP TRIP TO

VALLEY FAIR

MON, AUG 25

SPECIAL RATE!
\$30 PER PERSON

INVITED: Youth entering 6th grade through graduating seniors

RSVP & Pay
Amanda
by August 11th!

Coming up at FUMC & the community



SAVE THE DATE!

FOR LOVE FIRST'S

ECO CAMP

FOR EXPLORERS OF ALL AGES!

EVENINGS of Aug 11, 12 & 13



REGISTER TODAY!



**PRAYER VIGIL FOR
OUR ST. CLOUD IMMIGRANT
COMMUNITY AUG. 15TH**



August 15th at 7 PM, Grace United Methodist Church
2615 Clearwater Road, St Cloud, MN

mygracechurch@gmail.com

CON COMM*

COMING . . . with CHOICES

October-December OR
January-March
Daytime OR Evening

Every Other Week for
Six 2-Hour Sessions
including
Two 1:1 Spiritual Direction Sessions

Stay tuned . . .

Love First

Source
Qoffee Break

Join us on August 24th, 2025 at First United Methodist Church, after church service during fellowship hour (around 10:30am). 2SLGBTQIA+ community, events calendar, social time, coloring pages and family-friendly relaxation. We will have sign-up sheets for opportunities to volunteer during St Cloud Pride.

Handouts available for allyship-building education.



*A Contemplative Community for Spiritual Transformation

This unique experience is designed to guide individuals on a path of self-discovery and spiritual deepening through a variety of contemplative practices. Participants will have the opportunity to explore various prayers and other meditative practices that foster a deeper connection with self, body, and the divine.



Are you interested in helping me to plan a series of social and theological discussion topics for Sunday mornings for the coming year? Are you intellectually curious and or worried about the world we live in? Are there certain issues you wish to learn more about? If so, please contact me at kbiesjaede@hotmail.com

I have lots of ideas, but I want yours too! My goal is to offer something starting in October. Thanks, Kathy Bies-Jaede

SAVE THE DATE!
BOREALIS
 CHAMBER CHOIR OF THE
 TWIN CITIES GAY MEN'S CHORUS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST
AT 3:00PM
Free-will offering

LOVE FIRST UMC
 1107 Pine Cone Road South
 Sartell, Minnesota

Celebrating St. Cloud Pride Week!

Love First
Q
 Source

SPLASHY ALL-AGES FUN WITH GRILLING AND BRICK OVEN PIZZA! BRING A SWIMSUIT AND TOWEL TO PLAY WITH WATER OR JUST CHILL WITH AWESOME QUEER FOLKS AND THEIR FRIENDS. VEGAN/GLUTEN-FREE FOOD WILL BE AVAILABLE.

BIG SPLASH BBQ POTLUCK!

AUGUST 26TH, 5:30PM
1107 PINE CONE RD S,
SARTELL, MN 56377

RSVP TO VAS WITH YOUR POTLUCK ITEM AND DIETARY RESTRICTIONS. PLEASE INCLUDE INGREDIENTS LIST. (320) 492 0475 - TEXT PREFERRED QSOURCE@FUMCSOR.ORG



Launch Sunday, September 7

We are excited about Fall with the **Blessing of Backpacks**. We will launch covenant groups that discuss, "How is it with your soul?" Together we will explore some of the questions that Wesley used for self-examination and will be centering ourselves in faith, hope and prayer. Express your interest on a Connect Card today!

ECO CAMP ITINERARY



Monday, August 11th
"TRUST"

- Kayak Demo
- Watercolor Workshop

Breakfast for Dinner



Tuesday, August 12th
"REST"

- Prayers of the Earth
- Sand Garden Exploration
- Labyrinth/Outdoor Grounding

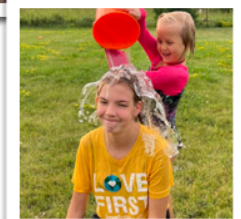
Pasta Bar



Wednesday, August 13th
"PLAY"

- Weed Scavenge
- Bracelet Making
- Water Play

Grill'n & Chill'n



REGISTER TODAY! *August 11-13*

FUN FOR ALL AGES!

lovefirstumc.org/camp

DID YOU KNOW about 11:07 Prayer texts or emails?

Beginning in 2016 LOVE First has been stopping each day at 11:07 am to pray together through the REMIND app that sends a text or email directly to you with the prayer (or part of a prayer) for the day.

If you are interested in joining this group, find REMIND in your app store. Create your account and select phone or email for notifications.

Select + Add Class

→ Join existing class

@ d9de36



We asked, and you delivered! Thank you for your donations of cereal and spaghetti O's. We collected and then make a joy-filled delivery of 145 boxes of cereal and 128 cans of spaghetti O's. We are living Love First by feeding kids this summer. CEREALously awesome!!

Andy Ruth and family serve the July 3rd Saturday Community Fellowship Meal.

**August 24th
our worship focus
will be SING!**

**Turn in your hymn or song
requests by August 10th on a
Connect Card or online at
lovefirstumc.org/hymn**



Building Community at FUMC

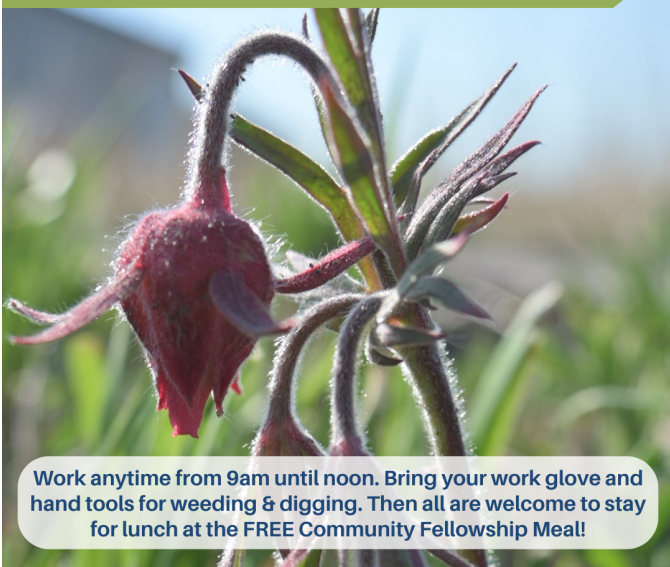
Caregivers Support Group

**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: caregivers@fumcsr.org

PLANT & PRAIRIE CARE DAY: AUG. 16TH

Weed control, Watering, Prairie maintenance, and more!



Work anytime from 9am until noon. Bring your work glove and hand tools for weeding & digging. Then all are welcome to stay for lunch at the FREE Community Fellowship Meal!

Conversations on Grief

**2nd Sunday each month
after worship in Ed Wing**

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**

Big Questions consists of a group of adults who share and discuss hard things in a spirit of trust and mutual respect.

August's topic: Why did God grant us free will?

The Well

**2nd and 4th MONDAYS
at 5:30pm church library**

This group meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. They are reading *The Upside Down Kingdom* by Chris Castaldo.

Bible 365

Fridays at 10am via Zoom

Meets via Zoom to discuss the week's readings. We have decided to participate in the [Dakotas-Minnesota Area study](#) of Luke-Acts for 2025. Contact the [church office](#) for the Zoom link.

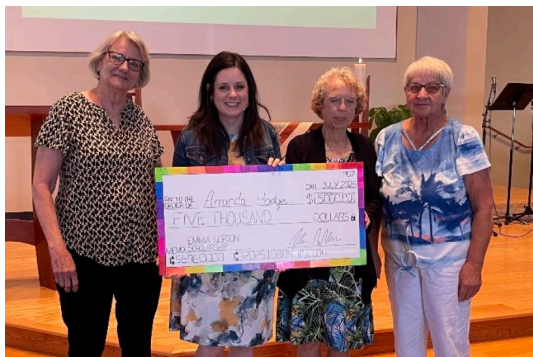
Thank you July Community Fellowship Meal Team!

A marvelous group prepared and served the July community meal. Many thanks to Andy & Janet Ruth & family and Bob Haak. They served 100 guests a picnic meal of smoked pork sandwiches, coleslaw, potato salad, chips, baked beans, watermelon, dessert and beverages.

The 3rd Saturday each month FUMC serves a free meal to anyone who stops by. **FUMC serves next on August 16th.**

Other Community Meal locations and times:

- ☪ Place of Hope (511 9th Ave N) serves 12:30pm and 5:30pm each day. Breakfast 7 days a week from 7:30am - 8:15am.
- ☪ 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 last Sunday each month 4:30-5:30pm



Amanda Hodge Receives Emma Norton Scholarship

Minnesota Conference
United Women in
Faith is proud to
announce that
Amanda Hodge is one
of three recipients of

this year's Emma Norton Scholarship. Amanda will be receiving \$5000 to begin her first year of study at Garret-Theological Seminary this fall. A "stand-in" check was presented to Amanda on Sunday, July 13, by local members of United Women in Faith!

The history of this scholarship dates to 1921, when a Minnesota woman named Emma Hayes Norton donated \$25,000 in stocks and bonds to the Women's Home Missionary Society, a forerunner of United Women in Faith. It was stipulated that the investment stay intact, and the interest be used for two purposes – half for the education of women going into full time Christian vocations and the other half used to build and maintain what we know today as Emma Norton Services in St. Paul.

By 1967 the fund had grown to \$156,000 and the Emma Norton Designated Fund was taken over by the MN Conference United Women in Faith. Each year women going into Christian ministries are invited to apply for the Emma Norton Scholarship. Congratulations Amanda on this outstanding honor!

HOST NEEDED FOR AN EXCHANGE STUDENT

International Cultural Exchange Services is looking for a host of faith for a young woman from Spain. Sofia is 15 who dreams of becoming an actress and would love to experience an America church community during her exchange year - her faith is a big part of her life and she hopes to attend services with her host family. She loves to cook (especially while jamming to Taylor Swift, her favorite artist!) and can't wait to try new recipes and share her signature brownie.

If you are interested in learning more about the program and Sofia there is information in the church office or you can contact Esraa Kadhem at ekadhem@icesusa.org.



**LOVE
FIRST**
United Methodist Church of the St Cloud Region
VISIONING TEAM

Share your own
ideas and hopes.

Offer feedback
and help discern
next priorities.

Hear about what
visions and themes
have emerged so far.

LISTENING SESSION
AUGUST 24TH AFTER WORSHIP



First United Methodist Church
of St. Cloud Region



vimeo.com/LoveFirstUMC



lovefirstumc.org



@lovefirstumc.sartell



First UMC

11:07 Prayer

@d9de36

The church office is open Monday - Thursday from 8am until 2pm.

Linda Agre,
Office Administrator

320.251.0804 ex. 102
lagre@fumcscr.org

Aaron Carpenter,
Music Ministry
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First United Methodist Church of the St Cloud Region

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