

LOOKING BACK... LOOKING AHEAD

- ♥ 2025 All Saints remembrance and Baptisms
- ♥ Consecration Celebration!
- ♥ Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond
- ♥ Safer People - Stronger Church webinar
- ♥ Community building opportunities
- ♥ AND returning groups and serving opportunities



November 2025 Newsletter

lovefirstumc.org



Would you like to help nourish those in need and spread some holiday cheer? The Justice & Mercy team is

collecting food and funds for holiday meal kits. These kits will be made available to our 3rd Saturday meal guests to take home in December. Suggested food items include canned green beans, cranberry sauce, instant potatoes, stuffing mix, boxed dessert, and reusable shopping bags. Funds collected will help us provide gift cards for perishables like ham, turkey, butter, and milk.

We will be collecting donations now through **Wednesday, November 12th.**

Look for the shopping cart in the welcome area to donate food items. Funds can be donated on the website through the QR code or through offering (please

designate for Justice & Mercy). On November 15th, representatives from the Conference are meeting in our space and they will begin sorting and assembling the kits. Then on November 16th, all are welcome to help finish sorting and assembling kits after the worship service.

If you have any questions, please contact Dory, Justice & Mercy Chair at justice.mercy@fumcsr.org. Thank you!



All Saints Sunday November 2nd 9:30am



What do you fear? INSISTING ON HOPE THIS ADVENT

Advent begins

Sunday, November 30th at 9:30am

Advent Grief Service

Sunday, December 14th at 4:00pm

Christmas Eve Services

3:30pm & 5:00pm

Looking Back...Looking Ahead

Pastor Leah Rosso, Lead Pastor

lrosso@fumcscr.org

This fall we have taken time to focus on our DNA, on who we are as the peculiar Christians called Methodists. Some might say, “well that’s just history,” and in some sense they would be right. But as our history has gotten us to where we are today, we can learn from it and still draws the wisdom that is there for us today. We’ve also been wrapping up our Visioning Process, with a new Vision Statement and continued conversation about what this means for us today (see the Vision page of this newsletter!) Some in our community might say, “well that’s a future I’ll never see,” and they might be right. But as a community that desires to make a difference in this world and help guide our community to be more loving, we need a vision to guide us to take risks and leaps of faith for the vision God has given us.

Lawrence Stookey, in an old book called *Calendar: Christ’s Time for the Church*, says, “Indeed, it can be said that Christians are called to assume a cruciform posture: Standing upright with feet firmly planted in the present, we stretch out one arm to grasp our heritage and the other arm to lay hold of our hope; standing thus, we assume the shape of our central symbol of faith: the cross.”

In other words, we are grounded in the present, while always looking back for the wisdom of the past, and forward towards where God is leading us now. There’s also a symbol and concept from Ghanaian heritage that represents a similar idea. The bird below is that symbol, called sankofa. You can see how the bird is looking over its shoulder while facing in the opposite direction. This is a symbol that we always learn and gain from our past that which we need as we move into the future; that we honor those who have come before us and the wisdom they bring as we continue to create what is yet to come. This month we will celebrate All Saints’ Day, naming the ways in which those who have come before us have blessed us and created the present where we now stand; and we will continue our Visioning Process, where we will claim a future we have yet to see. May this be a month of blessing, of peace, of challenge, and of living out our faith.



**May we be moved by love
to become love!**

Coming Up In Worship

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

November 2 - All Saints Sunday

Sacrament of Communion

Blessed and Beloved with Rev. Susie Putzke

Ephesians 1:11-23; Luke 6:20-31

A Deep Dive in the Book of Isaiah

November 9

The Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 6:1-8; Isaiah 9:2-7

November 16

The Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 40:1-8; Isaiah 55:1-13

November 23

The Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 61:1-11

What Do You Fear?

Insisting on Hope this Advent

November 30 - Advent 1

Luke 1:5-13; Lamentations 3:55-57

Sartell Community Thanksgiving Service

at

The Waters

1227 Pine Cone Rd

**Sunday, November 23
at 6:30pm**

*A collective service among Celebration
Lutheran, Riverside Evangelical, St. Francis
Catholic Church, The Waters, and First UMC*



Youth Ministry does not happen alone!

Amanda (the short one) and Susie (the tall one) could not have a better group of volunteers helping support the youth of this church!

Truly, it takes all of us to care for the diverse and wonderful group of Love First youth. Shout out to all the ways all of you are showing up, praying, and rejoicing in loving the Jr. and Sr. High youth.

Youth Companions:

Dave, Josh, Janet, AnnElise,
Rhoda, Jennifer, and Noah

THANK YOU!



Consecration Sunday - Lean into Love!



thank you

Thank you to everyone who participated in Consecration Sunday! It was a wonderful morning of celebration, connection, and dedication to our future.



If you were not there, look for the Visioning page of the newsletter to find out our new Vision Statement! Also, please make sure to turn in your Estimate of Giving Card.

An electronic one is available on the website (you can use the QR code here), or you can turn one into the church office, or just email us your giving estimate for 2026. The Finance Team thanks you for your dedication and care so that we can be good stewards of all that God has given us as we create the budget for 2026.



THANK YOU FROM UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

It is very apparent that Love First UMC cares about people. A call went out for Winter coats, hats, gloves, mittens and boots for the residents of Emma Norton in St. Paul and the results were AMAZING once again. Thank you so much for your gifts of 32 coats and the assortment of Winter gear. We truly do LOVE well. The holidays are upon us and the need now is for \$25 gift cards from Cub Foods, Walmart, Target, Kohls., and HyVee. Please give these to Kathy Hulsebus to get safely to St. Paul before November 20th.



Love First Q Source Announcement

Vas Wojtanowicz accepted a new role as the curator of the Royalton History Museum, as of October 16th, and has stopped down as the Q Source community coordinator. Kira Smith-Ahles will be taking his place. Please extend your well wishes and congratulations to Kira, as she guides Q Source on its next phase of joyful service to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and its supporters at FUMC and beyond. A BIG thank you to Vas for getting this group off to a good start!

NOVEMBER Communion Offering: Emma Norton Services

The programs at Emma Norton have consistently successful outcomes. Every individual journey of recovery is unique, and across our organization we can measure the direct impacts we've had on moving those journeys toward wholeness. We know every little victory is a part of a success story worth celebrating.

Our programs have shown again and again that they are effective models to move our most vulnerable community members toward safe, stable housing, which provides a foundation for greater individual stability and wellbeing. In 2024, we served 363 individuals, with 50 percent identifying as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and all very low income. In our Family Housing, over 80 percent of individuals and children identify as BIPOC. See below for additional outcome measurements for 2024.

**October's
Communion
Offering**

**World Communion
Sunday will receive
our gifts of \$1,300**

Overall 2024 outcomes :

- 87% of all clients maintained housing for one year or more.
- On average, 80% of all clients complete one or more goals on their stability plans annually.

Emma's Place:

- 100% of families maintained housing for 6 months or more or moved into permanent, affordable housing at exit.
- 100% of adult heads of household engaged in services offered at Emma's Place.
- Over 90 youth (98%) participated in youth activities and programming.

Scattered-Site program:

- 92% of tenants successfully completed their initial lease period upon moving into their own rental units.
- 100% of households experiencing a crisis that potentially affected their housing stability received support to resolve it.

Thank you October Community Fellowship Meal Team!

A hard working group prepared and served the October community meal. Many thanks to Sue Mischler, Dianna Fink, Corrine Soyering, Thandi Nyamande, Thabiso Nyamande, Chuck Kelly, Linda Caird, Mary Smith, Cathy Danzl, and Jackie Ankenman. They served 108 guests a filling meal of tuna casserole, corn, coleslaw, pickles, cookies and fruit.

The 3rd Saturday each month FUMC serves a free meal to anyone who stops by. **FUMC serves next on November 15th.**

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



Jr and Sr High Youth enjoyed a night of skating, music, and fun! We rented out Skatin' Place in St Cloud and took over one Wednesday night in October.



Youth and congregation members help sort costumes for the October free costume give away. Our mission was to get as many costumes as possible into the hands of children in the community.

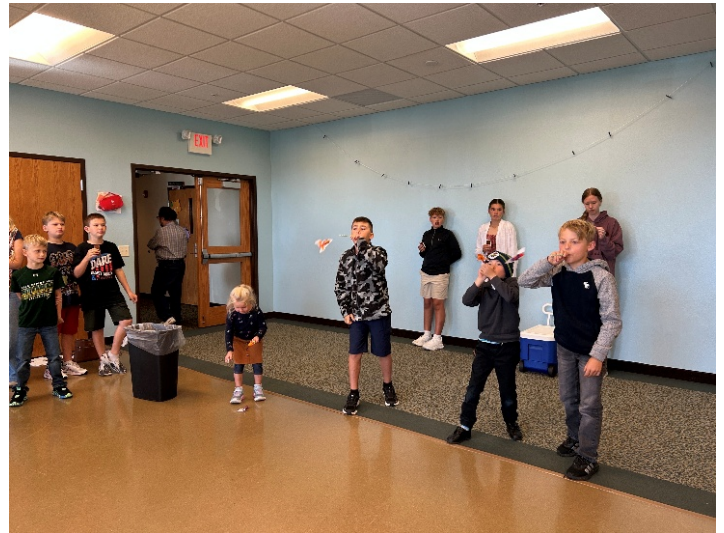
Thank you, congregation for your support!



Sunday School has been running for about two months now! The kids have been exploring Bible stories such as The Good Samaritan, Jesus Teaching the Lord's Prayer, and Zacchaeus the Tax Collector.



We're continuing to make small adjustments along the way to find the structure that best supports our families. We'd love to hear your feedback — please don't hesitate to share your experience with us!



What you need to know about Sunday School

- Sunday School is designed with kids in K-6th grade in mind.
- Sunday School happens **from approx. 10:15 am – 11:15am.**
- Kids who want to go to Sunday School **are excused from worship** after the sermon/communion (watch for the slide on the screen inviting the children to leave worship).
- Each week we start with a game centered on connecting with one another. Then the group reads a bible story together and moves into the classroom for an activity that connects to the story.
- **Please pick up your kid(s) from the Ed. Wing (north side of the building) at 11:15 am.**

All Saints Sunday, November 2 at 9:30am



Todd Diesen



Joan Ellens



Linda Meier



Kathy Bremer



Barbara Kjolhaug



Ed Lalor



Jana Kelly



Willowdean Stone



EllenDeane Schwieger



Kathy Calligure



Theodore James Tuyisenge Saturn



Ardis Hines



Ruth Sundby



Shirley Zager



Marlin Vos



Baptisms that took place so far in 2025...

Marusha

Rowan

Beau

Cooper

Winnie

Jahaan



Leaning Into Our Vision Together

When I think about this community, I think of home—a place of belonging, growth, and grace. Over the past year, our Vision Team has witnessed the Holy Spirit moving among us as we've listened, prayed, and discerned who God is calling us to be.

Through every conversation, a shared truth has emerged: our calling as a church is to love as God loves—actively, compassionately, and inclusively. We see that love already lived out in meaningful relationships, in service to others, and in the welcome offered to all who walk through our doors.

Now we are ready to affirm a Vision Statement shaped by the hearts and voices of this congregation—a vision that reflects our deepest hopes for how we will embody Christ's love in the world. Our Vision Statement:

A community moved by love through connection with God, creation, and one another.

As we move forward, may we continue to choose together—to show up for one another, to grow in faith, and to trust that the Spirit who has guided us this far will lead us into all that is ahead.

Our next steps involve refining the priorities that came forward in the vision:

- our identity as Love First,
- community relationship building and diversity, land ministry and stewardship,
- stability, safety and risk management, and • leadership development, staffing management, and communication.

We'll do this together through intentional conversations with leaders and through a Strategic Planning retreat this winter.

Janet Satern & Leslie Mulder, Visioning Team



**LOVE
FIRST**

United Methodist Church of the St Cloud Region

**A community moved by love
through connection with God,
creation, and one another.**

Thank
you

to everyone who helped during this season
of Plant & Prairie Care Days!



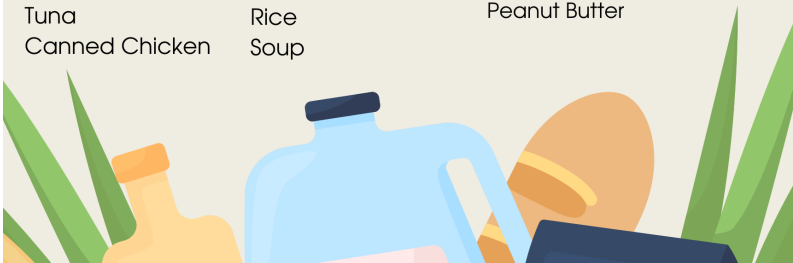
FOOD
INSECURITY IS ON
THE RISE

Many St. Cloud Area Families
are in need of your support!

**YOU CAN
HELP**

Favorite Items

Cereal	Hamburger Helper	Mac & Cheese
Ramen	Oatmeal	Apple Sauce
Spaghetti & Sauce	Pancake Mix	Canned Fruits & Vegetables
Tuna	Rice	Peanut Butter
Canned Chicken	Soup	



Building Community at FUMC

Weekly & Monthly Groups

More details at

lovefirstumc.org/groups

Caregivers Support Group

*1st & 3rd Wednesdays each month
at 7pm via Zoom*

New participants must pre-register at:
caregivers@fumcscr.org

Prayer Shawls

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

The Well

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

Conversations on Grief

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

Bible 365

Fridays at 10am via Zoom

UM Men's Group

*2nd Tuesdays at 6pm
in fellowship hall*

Big Questions, No Answers

*2nd Monday at 10am
in church library*

Do you find yourself grappling with deep questions about faith, theology, and the nature of God? You're not alone. Join a monthly gathering of seekers and thinkers as we explore where the Spirit is present, especially in the questioning. This month, we're asking: ***How is truth and belief part of faith?***

Come with your thoughts, questions, doubts, and insights. All are welcome in this environment of mutual trust and respect.

Young at Heart (YAH!)

*2nd Friday each month
at 10am in fellowship hall*

YOUNG AT HEART will meet Friday, November 14 at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall to coffee and program by Dr. Vital Vakil from CentraCare. He is a nephrologist in a practice for 10 years. Nephrology is treating kidney disease, hypertension and high blood pressure, diabetes, among other conditions. His talk will be concerning fats, salts and sugars. Following his program, Cathy Bagaglio will give us some resources and facts about vegans. We go to lunch following the program, if you care to join us. Please plan to attend to become more informed about nutrition.

WANTED



CARDBOARD EGG CARTONS

Bring to the church office by November 26th.

Movie Mavens will be attending the November Movie on Tuesday, November 11 at the Parkwood Theater. Sarah's Oil is a true story set in the 1910 oil boom of a young Oklahoma girl who inherits 160 acres of land thought to be worthless. Sarah becomes convinced there is oil beneath the surface of her land and enlists the help of a wildcatter to search it out. Corrupt oil magnates become aware of her search and try to make havoc for Sarah.

We will meet at the theater at 3:00 p.m. for the 3:30 p.m. showing and go to Zaffiros after for discussion and supper. Plan now to join us and let Kathy Hulsebus know if you are going rsvp@fumcscr.org ALL ARE WELCOME!

Coming up at FUMC & the community

**Amanda Hodge and Leslie Mulder will lead a
Trauma-Informed Ministry webinar for the conference:**



**Safer People,
Stronger Church:
Practicing
Trauma-Informed
Leadership
Webinar**

Nov. 18, 6:30-7:45 p.m., online

As faith communities, we are called to nurture healing and hope. Many of us are still learning how trauma affects people, congregational culture, and the systems that support ministry. This session offers descriptive language, ideas, and options so each congregation can discern its own path toward being more trauma-informed. To begin, moving from 'what's wrong?' to 'what happened?' quiets judgment and strengthens conflict skills. Over time, trauma-informed leadership can influence a whole-church operating system, evolving norms and practices so that safety, voice, and choice create a virtuous cycle of trust.

Together, we will:

- Clarify terms, boundaries & language: Define trauma and its impacts, the 4R's of trauma-informed care, and name what trauma-informed leadership *does* and *does not* do.
- Pinpoint where, in your context, trauma-informed practices may matter most.
- Discern your "why" for trauma-informed leadership, building on the strengths and challenges of your church today.
- For congregations that want to take the next step: Select an action, understand Conference resources, and identify whom to bring to the table.

Register at: lovefirstumc.org



Join us on November 23rd, 2025 at First United Methodist Church, after church service during fellowship hour (around 10:30am).

Grab a 2SLGBTQIA+ community events calendar, fresh stickers, and coloring page. We will also have a new craft to celebrate the awesome turkeys that visit the prairie, while you enjoy coffee, treats and a supportive faith community. Handouts available for allyship-building education.





MedCity Refuge Watch Party

Saturday, November 1 at 1pm

FUMC library

Minnesota Reconciling Congregations invites you to learn about the work of MedCity Refuge, Rev. Ana Wilson, will speak on how they support person seeking gender affirming care in Rochester and how you can support this work.

We will gather in the church library for a watch party or you can attend virtually on Christ UMC's YouTube channel:

[@christunitedmethodistchurc1891](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1891)



Movie Screening

A FREE EVENT FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY!

**Paramount Center
for the Arts**

913 W St Germain St, St Cloud, MN 56301

**Free
Event**

**November 8th
2025**

Starts at 6 PM

Brought to you by:



You are invited to the presentation:

Clean Energy and Climate Action

Saturday, November 15, 2025 at 1:30 pm

Great River Regional Library

in the Mississippi Room

1300 W. St. Germain, St Cloud, MN

Learn about how Minnesota will meet its energy goals in the face of current federal challenges, from J. Drake Hamilton, Fresh Energy Director of Science Policy, an expert in climate and energy at the state and national levels. J. was appointed to the MN Advisory Council on Climate Change. The Council is helping to update the climate plan for the state. J. has spoken at our church in the past. Come learn and ask your questions.

First Church recently completed converting all of the lighting in the church to LEDs with the exception of the Sanctuary. More fund raising is needed to accomplish completing this transformation which reduces our electric usage and bills.

Co-sponsored by Citizens' Climate Lobby and League of Women Voters of the St Cloud Area. All three organizations listed in this article are nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations.



United
Women
in Faith

United Women in Faith

Acting boldly, showing up and making a difference!

Our actions have always spoken as loud as our words. Acts of love. Acts of Faith. Acts of change. For more than 150 years, we have been showing up and getting things done. Together we're making the world a better place: locally, globally, fearlessly.

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. Email Kathy Hulsebus at rsvp@fumcscr.org for reservations.

UWF Calendar of Events

November 2 – Susanna Wesley Circle serves coffee hour

November 3 – Executive Team Meeting, 1:00pm in Library

November 11 – Sarah Circle, 12:00pm in Fellowship Hall, Potluck & World Thank Offering Program

November 18 – Susanna Wesley Circle, 7:00pm in Library

November 19 – Fellowship at Drakes, 11:30am at Drakes Café, Sartell

Officers Serving Beyond our Local Unit

Did you know that First United Women in Faith has five members serving beyond our local unit? Besides serving on our unit's Executive Team these women are also officers on the Area and the Conference Executive Teams. Thank you to these members for their ongoing dedication to United Women in Faith!

- **Diane Bublitz** – Headwaters Area Treasurer
- **Vicky Clausen** – Headwaters Area Spiritual Growth Coordinator
- **Kathy Hulsebus** – Headwaters Area Emma Norton Representative
- **Linda Kotschevar** - Headwaters Area President
- **Carol Miller** – Minnesota Conference Education & Interpretation Coordinator

Fall Bake Sale Thank You

We extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to the success of our Fall Bake Sale. Special thanks to our bakers, buyers and helpers who contributed to the fundraiser. Your contributions raised close to \$700 for missions with women, children and youth!

Find United Women in Faith Online

National UWFaith Website: <https://uwfaith.org/>

National UWFaith Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/uwomenfaith>

Minnesota UWFaith Website: <https://www.uwfaithmn.com/>

Minnesota UWFaith Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/127497622121/>

Our Local UWFaith Unit: <https://www.lovefirstumc.org/umw-main>



First United Methodist Church
of the St. Cloud Region
1107 Pine Cone Road South
Sartell, MN 56377
lovefirstumc.org

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID

PERMIT NO. 337
ST. CLOUD, MN 56301

Address Service Requested



First United Methodist Church
of St. Cloud Region



@lovefirstumc.sartell



lovefirstumc.org

The church office is open Monday thru Thursday: 8:30am - 2pm & Friday: 8:30am - noon

Linda Agre,
Office Administrator
320.251.0804 ex. 102
lagre@fumcscr.org

Aaron Carpenter,
Music Ministry
320.251.0804 ex. 111
acarpenter@fumcscr.org

Ken Fruth,
Grounds & Maintenance
320.251.0804 ex. 110
custodian@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

Rev. Leah Rosso,
Lead Pastor
320.251.0804 ex. 104
lrosso@fumcscr.org

Korynn Ruch,
Financial Administrator
320.251.0804 ex. 103
kruch@fumcscr.org

Alan Srock,
Handbell Director
asrock@fumcscr.org