



- LAUNCH of a new year of programming!
- Methodist Core Values sermon series
- Covenant groups using Wesleyan questions of self-examination
- PRIDE Week activities & Borealis concert at FUMC on Sept 21
- Men's Group World Famous Pancake Supper on October 14

## LOVE First Newsletter for September 2025

September 2025 Newsletter

lovefirstumc.org

### Eco Camp Special Thanks

Year three of Eco Camp was one for the books! We are deeply grateful for the many hands and hearts who made our prairie adventures possible this season. From those who planned and prepared, to the teams who welcomed guests with warm hospitality, to the cooks and servers who provided meals for as many as 80 people at a time. Your care created a place of joy and connection. And to all who came to participate and share in the beauty of our prairie land, thank you for bringing your presence and spirit. **Together, we created something truly memorable.**



## LAUNCH into Fall!

### Wednesday, September 3

Prayer Shawls from 5-6:30pm  
Sanctuary Choir at 7:30pm

### Sunday, September 7

Sunday School for Grades K-6

### Tuesday, September 9

UWF - Sarah Circle at 1:30pm at church  
Men's Group at 6pm at Sy's home

### Wednesday, September 10

Launch Night & parent meeting with dinner for grades 6-12 from 6-8pm

### Sunday, September 14

Covenant Groups begin



New & Returning Groups - How is it with Your Soul?

# How is it with your soul?

- Pastor Susie Putzke, Connectional Pastor

[sputzke@fumcscr.org](mailto:sputzke@fumcscr.org)

When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, he replied: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”* And he added, *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself”* (Mark 12:30-31). These two commandments remain at the core of our faith, reminding us that love for God and love for one another cannot be separated.

In the Wesleyan tradition, Christians have long practiced this love through covenant group/small gatherings where individuals come together to pray, reflect, and **“watch over one another in love.”** These groups offer a safe space for honest conversation, encouragement, accountability, and spiritual growth.

This fall, our church invites you to join—or even form—a covenant group of your own. We’ve provided a step-by-step guide to shape your time together, with the goal of 10 one-hour conversations. You might already meet regularly with friends and want to bring these questions and practices into that space. You might be hoping to form relationships with others in our church family. Or perhaps you’d like to try something entirely new, leaning into community as we reflect on Wesley’s questions for self-examination (even if they feel a bit clunky at times). Whatever your starting point, let us remain open to how this season of change might also bring transformation within us.

Our fall can fill up so fast with things that matter far less. Should you wish to join/form a group. Sign up at the table in the church entryway. Look for the display labeled “How is it with your soul?” Please indicate your time and day preference for meeting on the lists provided. Feel free to grab or peruse the group packet as well. May we each find deeper connection this season in our faith and in one another.



## **10-Week Wesleyan Covenant Group** *How is it with your soul?*

### **Weekly Structure (60 minutes)**

1. Welcome & Check-In – 10 min
2. Centering Prayer – 5 min
3. Scripture or Devotional Reading – 5 min
4. Spiritual Reflection & Self-Examination  
– 25 min
5. Community & Support – 10 min
6. Closing Prayer – 5 min

# Coming Up In Worship

Sunday Worship at 9:30am and livestream at [www.lovefirstumc.org](http://www.lovefirstumc.org)

## How is it with your soul?

### *Methodist Core Values*

#### **September 7 - LAUNCH DAY!** **with Holy Communion**

*Psalm 91: 1-6, 14-16; Luke 17: 5-6*

#### **September 14**

*Psalm 119: 97-104; Luke 18: 9-14*

#### **September 21 - Reconciling Sunday** *with special speaker Gerald Gurss, director of the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus* *Jeremiah 31: 31-34*

#### **September 28**

*Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18; Romans 8: 9-30*



### **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.



# The YOUTH Annual Boat Party was a SPLASH!



*Thank you,  
Mulder Family,  
for hosting  
this wild bunch!*



## SEPTEMBER Communion Offering: Anna Marie's Alliance

Anna Marie's Alliance reaches thousands of people in the five counties surrounding St. Cloud, Minnesota. Each year, our 36-bed emergency shelter houses nearly 500 individuals and their children as they flee relationship abuse. Prevention and Education initiatives reach approximately 4,000 school-age youth, teaching them valuable relationship skills and ways to create healthy boundaries. Community Advocacy programs provide 24-hour crisis support, on-scene advocacy for individuals immediately after an incident takes place, criminal justice system advocacy, and victim support services that continue throughout the court process and until families are settled safely in their new, violence-free homes.

The impact of Anna Marie's Alliance can be seen in the faces of individuals who have finally broken free from abuse; in the children whose lives are filled with a new sense of peace; and in the next generation, who have the opportunity to learn early in life which behaviors are healthy and which cannot be tolerated.

**August's  
Communion  
Offering**

**FACT will  
receive our  
gifts of  
\$1,650**



### **DID YOU KNOW that FUMC is now on Instagram?**

At the beginning of the year we started posting on Instagram @lovefirstumc.sartell  
You can find us there if that is your preferred social media platform.

We are still on Facebook as **First United Methodist of St. Cloud Region**

# Youth Ministry

- Amanda Hodge, Director of Family & Youth Ministry

[ahodge@fumcscr.org](mailto:ahodge@fumcscr.org)

## High School Youth - 2025 Summer Service Trip



In July, our high school students partnered with Minnehaha UMC for a service trip across the Twin Cities. Over four days, they served meals, packed food, and supported organizations like Open Arms, Second Harvest Heartland, Bridging MN, and MN Tech for Success. Each day focused on building bridges of faith, empathy, and dignity, reminding us that service is not charity—it's community.

Through reflection and teamwork, students discovered that service transforms the server as much as the served. They return home as bridge-builders, committed to sharing God's love in our schools, families, and neighborhoods.



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

# Coming up at FUMC & the community



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 Kathy at [kbiesjaede@hotmail.com](mailto:kbiesjaede@hotmail.com) for an October start.



## PLANT & PRAIRIE CARE DAY: SEPT 20TH

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!

## 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 . . .

### \*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.



## WORLD FAMOUS PANCAKE SUPPER!

ALL-YOU-CAN EAT MEAL SPONSORED BY FIRST UMC'S UNITED METHODIST MEN

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2025 - 4:30-7:00 PM**

TICKETS: ADULTS \$10 CHILDREN 6-12 \$5 CHILDREN 0-5 FREE  
BAKE SALE AND HAND-MADE CARDS FOR SALE



## Pride Week is coming! Save these dates....

**Tuesday September 16** – Pride and Peace Walk. Meet at the St. Cloud Public Library at 5:30 p.m.

**Saturday September 20** – Pride in the Park at Lake George, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Sunday September 21** – Worship at 9:30 with special speaker Gerald Gurss, director of the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus. Then Borealis, an ensemble of the TCGMC will present a concert at 3 p.m. (Free will offering)

## We will need folks to staff the booth and welcome our guests to the concert.

For staffing the booth, the following shifts are available -- 10:30 – 12:30, 12:30 – 2:30, 2:30 – 4:30

For the concert, we will need a couple people to greet the guests, point out restrooms and collect the free will offering. Please arrive at 2:30.

If you can help with either of these activities, please contact Jennifer at [help@fumcsr.org](mailto:help@fumcsr.org)

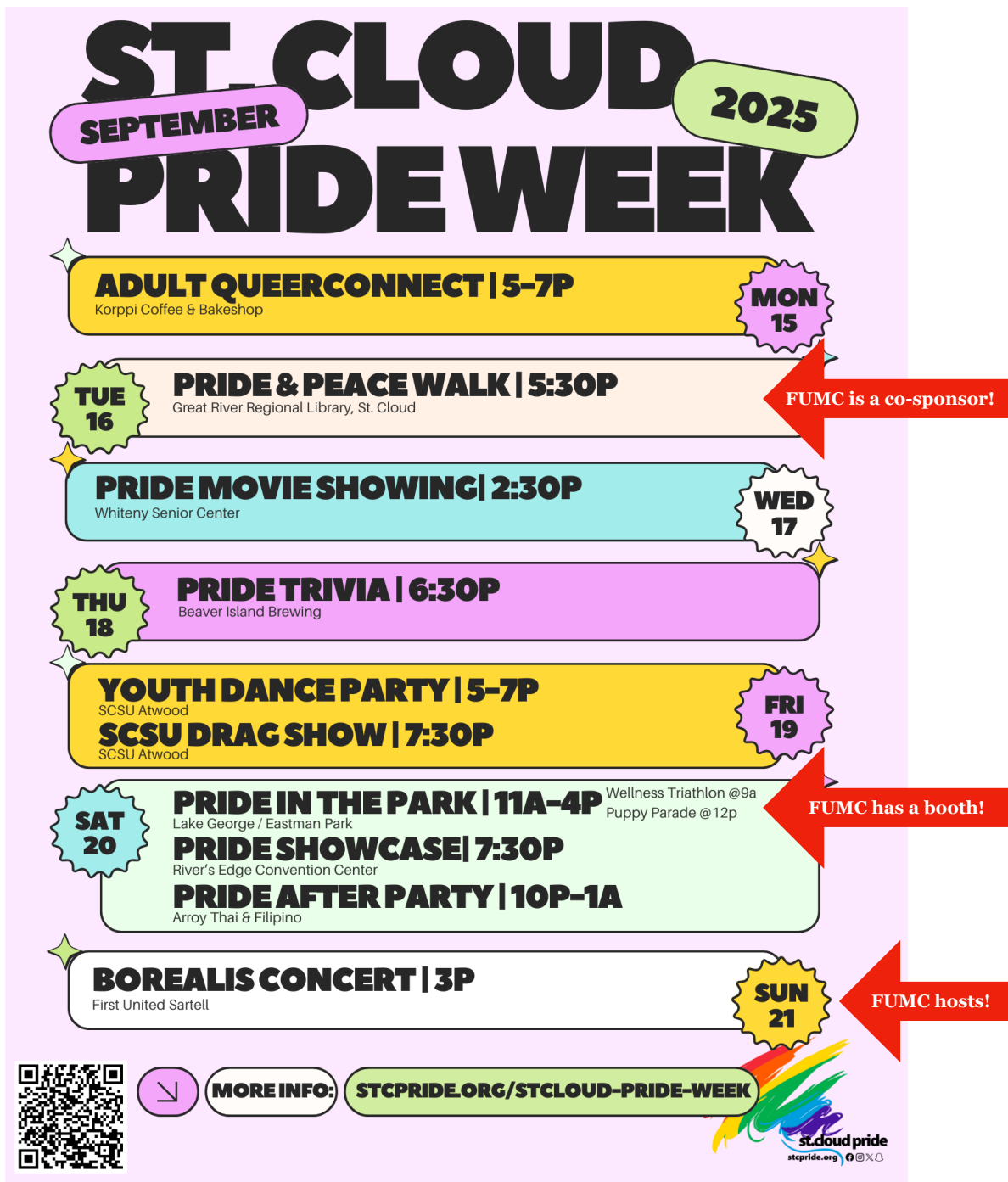
## Clothing Donations Needed for Pride in the Park

## Clothing Exchange

Clothing, shoes and accessories in good condition and in sizes for teens and up.

Donations can be brought to church and placed in the collection bins at the Food Shelf cart OR taken to the SCSU Women's Center, Atwood Center #218 (M-F 9-4:30).

*All donations at church will be taken to SCSU on September 5.*



**ST. CLOUD PRIDE WEEK 2025**

| Day    | Event  | Time                      | Location  | Notes                 |
|--------|--|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| MON 15 | ADULT QUEERCONNECT                                       | 5-7P                      | Korppi Coffee & Bakeshop  |                       |
| TUE 16 | PRIDE & PEACE WALK                                       | 5:30P                     | Great River Regional Library, St. Cloud   | FUMC is a co-sponsor! |
| WED 17 | PRIDE MOVIE SHOWING                                      | 2:30P                     | Whitney Senior Center   |                       |
| THU 18 | PRIDE TRIVIA   | 6:30P                     | Beaver Island Brewing   |                       |
| FRI 19 | YOUTH DANCE PARTY<br>SCSU DRAG SHOW                      | 5-7P<br>7:30P             | SCSU Atwood   |                       |
| SAT 20 | PRIDE IN THE PARK<br>PRIDE SHOWCASE<br>PRIDE AFTER PARTY | 11A-4P<br>7:30P<br>10P-1A | Lake George / Eastman Park<br>River's Edge Convention Center<br>Arroy Thai & Filipino | FUMC has a booth!     |
| SUN 21 | BOREALIS CONCERT   | 3P                        | First United Sartell  | FUMC hosts!           |

**QR CODE** | **MORE INFO:** [STCPRIDE.ORG/STCLOUD-PRIDE-WEEK](https://stcpride.org/stcloud-pride-week)

**stcloud pride**  
stcpride.org @stcloudpride

# Sunday School & Youth Group LAUNCH!

- Amanda Hodge, Director of Family & Youth Ministry

ahodge@fumcscr.org

## SUNDAY SCHOOL LAUNCH!

Sunday School for ages K-6<sup>th</sup> grade **will begin Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>.**



### What you need to know about Sunday School

- Sunday School will be from approx. 10:15 am – 11:15am.
- Sunday School students will be excused from worship on Sundays after the sermon (watch for the slide on the screen inviting the children to leave worship).
- All students will go to the Multipurpose space for a game centered on Connecting with one another.
- Then the group will read a bible story together and move into the classroom for an activity that connects to the story.

**What we need most is Sunday School teachers!** If you are open to teaching once or twice a month, please email Amanda and let's have a conversation about setting you up for success!

## YOUTH GROUP LAUNCH!

Jr & Sr High Youth Groups will **launch Wednesday evening groups on Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>.**

### What you need to know about Launch Night

- The **launch night** will be from **6:00-8:00pm**.
- **Parents/guardians of grades 6-12 are asked to attend this once-a-year meeting** to go over the plan for the year, fill out annual permission forms, and ask questions.
- We **will provide dinner** for the parents and youth.
- Youth will play outside with the Youth Companions during the meeting and then transition to the Youth Room.
- If you need childcare for kids younger than 6<sup>th</sup> grade in order to attend, please [email Amanda](#) ASAP.



### What you need to know about Wednesdays

- Jr High Youth will meet in the Jr High room (old Youth room) from 5:45 – 6:45 pm.
- **GAP/dinner Time** – Jr & Sr High meet in the Fellowship Hall – a space for announcements, homework, dinner, and fellowship from 6:45 – 7:15 pm.
- Sr High Youth will meet in the new Sr High room from 7:15 – 8:30 pm.
- When we have combo night (such as a guest speaker or service project), the timing will shift and Jr and Sr High groups will be together. **Please pay attention to Amanda's weekly email** to know what that week's plan is. **If you do not receive her weekly emails and would like to, please [email Amanda](#) to sign up.**



United  
Women  
in Faith

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

**Our Mission:** We seek to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.

**Our Vision:** Turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youth around the world. Learn more at <https://uwfaith.org/>.

### 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 for reservations at (918) 407-0253

### UWF Calendar of Events

September 6 – Area Fall Gathering, Minnetonka UMC, 9am-2:30pm

September 7 - Susanna Wesley Circle Serves Fellowship

September 9 - Sarah Circle meets at 1:30pm in the Library

September 17 - Fellowship at Drakes meets at 11:30am at Drakes Café, 520 1st St. NE, Sartell.

Call Kathy Hulsebus for reservations at (918) 407-0253

September 23 - Susanna Wesley Circle meets at 7:00pm in the Library

### Headwaters Area Fall Gathering Saturday, September 6, Minnetonka UMC “Does Anxiety Have an Emoji?”



Minnetonka United Methodist Church will be hosting our Area Fall Gathering on Saturday, September 6, from 9am-2:30pm. Marion Hansen, retired Registered Nurse, Study Leader for our previous UWFaith study “Finding Peace in an Anxious World” by Erin James-Brown and our current UWFaith Conference President will be the keynote presenter for the day.

Registration is online only at <https://forms.gle/w4zTJQCoQcyprrhr6>. Rides will be provided from the church. Contact Linda Kotschevar at [jklotsch2@gmail.com](mailto:jklotsch2@gmail.com) if you plan to attend. Be sure to join us for a day of learning, fun and fellowship!

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### Thank you August Community Fellowship Meal Team!

A hard working group prepared and served the August community meal. Many thanks to Dianna Fink, Sue Mischler, Thandi and Thabiso Nyamande, Emily and Abby Swenson, Lynn, Dave and AvaMarie Tatro. They served 83 guests a fun meal of tacos, Spanish rice with refried beans.

The 3rd Saturday each month FUMC serves a free meal to anyone who stops by. **FUMC serves next on September 20th.**

### 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

# 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@fumcscr.org](mailto:caregivers@fumcscr.org)

## Prayer Shawls

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

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

## Young at Heart (YAH)

**2nd Fridays at 10am - September 12th  
in fellowship hall**

This is a meeting for anyone who is young at heart, usually 55 plus. We meet at 10 for morning beverages and treats provided by members, a time of humor with jokes or readings, participate in a program with questions for the presenter and then go to lunch at the restaurant of choice, if you so desire.

The opening program is a presentation from Habitat for Humanity. We hope you will join us this month and each month on the second Tuesday.

Your heart stays young through food, fellowship and fun!

**Love First Q Source** will not have an activity for September. However, we encourage you to participate in St Cloud Pride week, September 15th – 21st with the Love First Community. The October 2SLGBTQIA+ community calendar, fresh stickers and coloring pages will still be available for pickup on the 21st at the Q Source table in the Fellowship area.

## 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.

**September's topic:** If God created us as good...where did all the evil come from?

## The Well

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

This group meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. They will begin reading *Everybody Always* by Bob Goff.

## 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.

## UM Men's Group

**SEPTEMBER 9th at Sy's home  
Usually meet 2nd TUESDAYS at 6pm  
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.

**On October 14th the men will once again sponsor the World Famous Pancake Supper! Tickets will go on sale September 14th. \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 6-12, children under 6 eat free.**

## THANK YOU

It's difficult to put into words how much all of your prayers and support has meant to Todd and I and our girls. Time and again the girls have commented how grateful they are to have grown up in such a supportive community, and we couldn't agree more! Your constant prayers, cards, and gifts have made a tremendous difference in not only helping us feel your love tangibly, but also in meeting our needs before we even knew how to ask. It is extremely humbling to be on the receiving end of such care and comfort. Thank you. Each day is a bit better, and we look forward to a time soon when we will be at full strength and energy to participate and lead in the ways we used to be able to. Thank you so much Church. What amazing ways you have shown up for us in a truly difficult time.

In kindness and gratitude,  
Todd, Leah & Family

**THANK YOU** for the generous school supply donations! They have been shared with Community Angels, a partner of Anna Marie's Alliance. ~ Justice & Mercy Team



## COAT DRIVE FOR EMMA'S PLACE

United Women in Faith are now collecting new and gently used coats for Emma's Place in St Paul.

These coats are for men, women, and children of any size. Make sure the coat is warm enough for Minnesota winter and in good condition. Mittens, hats and gloves are also needed.

The collection time will end on September 1, so the UWF can deliver them to our District Area meeting on September 5 and 6 in Minnetonka. **BRING ITEMS TO FELLOWSHIP HALL AND PLACE UNDER THE UWF TABLE.**





First United Methodist Church  
of St. Cloud Region



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@lovefirstumc.sartell



First UMC

11:07 Prayer

@d9de36

**The church office is open Monday thru Thursday: 8am - 2pm & Friday: 8am - noon  
Office CLOSED Monday, September 1st**

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**First United Methodist Church of the St Cloud Region      September 2025 Newsletter**