

Staffing update from SPRC:

We are very excited to welcome our new staff at Love First and look forward to introducing and welcoming them in worship on **Sunday, September 13th.**

- Neddy Yong, Family Ministries Coordinator
- Greta Neigum - Nursery Attendant (*see a photo on page 4*)
- Olive - Nursery Attendant
- Marusha - Nursery Attendant

Come check out our bulletin board in the nursery to learn more fun facts about our team!

Welcome
to new
FUMC staff!

Join us in celebrating another successful Eco Camp Experience! We had both a record number of participants and volunteers this year which added to the excitement of the event. Many thanks to the many hands who made Eco Camp all that it was from grant writers, to idea generators, to our many implementers. Special Thanks to Mary the Kitchen Fairy who fed on average over 115 people a night. We had two nights of attendance with 140 participants. We hope you experienced both Joy and Connection out on our prairie.

Enjoy the camp photos throughout the newsletter!



Hello Church Family,

I am thrilled to begin this journey at Love First! My family moved to St. Cloud a little over a year ago, and we were very happy to find a loving and inclusive faith community in our area. Thank you for welcoming us with open arms and for your collective commitment to fostering healing, inclusion and justice in our community and beyond. I'm thankful for the legacy of those who have come before us and trust in the new thing God is birthing. I look forward to supporting our kids, youth and families as we deepen our faith and spirituality together. Please feel free to say hello. We look forward to meeting you!

Neddy Yong

nyong@fumcscr.org



Meet the Yong Family:

*Aizaiah, Neddy, Serenity (11),
Valor (8), Rio (6) and Kairo (3)*



Our Worship Theme and really our theme going into fall is, “I See You.” We want to make sure that we welcome each other well; that we recognize the ways we may have grown and changed over the summer; and that we also welcome guests and new visitors among us with encouragement and great listening ears! This, of course, is often hard to do. We all have our busy lives. I can be so focused on my own changes and stress about the busyness, that I forget to slow down and remember all the ways everyone is going through your own stuff!



As you come back to regular worship this fall; as you join in leadership or small groups or the intergenerational workshops or the youth programming, I invite you to really look around you. Who is in the room that looks like they need someone to see and hear them? Who is not in the room that you may need to reach out to because something big happened to them this summer and they're not sure about coming back? Who is brand new and possibly terrified (do you remember when you came for the first time?!?) and needs a smiling face and someone to ask how they are; what they're looking for; how you can be a partner for them in experiencing God.

All of the things are starting again! You'll see new staff, music groups gathering, people laughing. Take a moment and, like Jesus, see the ones on the edges, the ones who are hesitant, the ones who need a bit of extra comfort, and then pray as you respond. God will help us to know how to welcome one another when we take the time to pause. The Holy Spirit will nudge us when we take time to listen. May our eyes be opened to see one another and to experience God's love!

Pastor Leah
lrosso@fumcscr.org

Launch into Fall!

Wednesday, September 2
BELLissimo Handbell Choir at 6:00pm

Tuesday, September 8
Men's Group at 6pm at Sy's home

Wednesday, September 9
Prayer Shawls from 5-6:30pm
Sanctuary Choir at 7:30pm

Sunday, September 13
"I See You" worship series begins
Family & All Ages Workshop during coffee hour

Sunday, September 20
Delicious Debate & Discussion returns after worship
Book Study led by Rev. Bill Meier at 6:30pm

Wednesday, September 23
Parent Meeting for Youth Launch at 6:00pm
Watch your email for further details.

Wednesday, September 30
Labyrinth Worship
at 6:30pm in the backyard



LOVEFIRSTUMC.ORG/EVENTS

COMING UP IN WORSHIP

SUNDAYS AT 9:30AM AT FUMC

LIVESTREAM: LOVEFIRSTUMC.ORG



**6
SEPTEMBER**

HOLY COMMUNION
SOMETHING FOR EVERY BODY CONCLUDES
Matthew 15:21-28

**13
SEPTEMBER**

LAUNCH SUNDAY/WELCOMING STAFF
I SEE YOU SERIES BEGINS
Romans 14:7-12; Mark 10:46-52

**20
SEPTEMBER**

PRIDE CELEBRATION SUNDAY
GUEST SPEAKER: JEAN CARLOS DIAZ
Acts 10:11-16 NIV

**27
SEPTEMBER**

HOLY BAPTISM
I SEE YOU CONTINUES
Numbers 27:1-11; Matthew 15:21-28

***30*
SEPTEMBER**

LABYRINTH WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY AT 6:30PM
FUMC'S BACKYARD LABYRINTH



DID YOU MISS A SUNDAY OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR FAVORITE SERMON AGAIN?
WE HAVE AN ARCHIVE OF VIDEOS AVAILABLE: [LOVEFIRSTUMC.ORG/ARCHIVE](https://lovefirstumc.org/archive)

Children's Ministry: Join us as we LAUNCH into the school year together!

Get ready to kick off the new ministry year with an interactive, multigenerational gathering designed for all ages.



- **What:** A hands-on **Family and All Ages Workshop** featuring interactive storytelling, creative crafts, games, meaningful table discussions, and music.
- **When:** **Sunday, September 13**, after worship
- **Where:** **Fellowship Hall**
- **Who:** **Children, youth, and adults of all ages**—everyone is invited to take part, whether acting in a skit, making art, or sharing in fellowship.

Inspired by Mark 10:46-52, this event celebrates community, belonging, and seeing one another authentically.

What to Expect

The morning will feature a skit bringing the story of Mark 10:46-52 to life, alongside instant portrait photos to build a community wall display celebrating our families.

Participants can explore several interactive stations such as guided table discussions, an obstacle course and games, and community songs.

Families can also pick up a **take-home monthly activity calendar** to keep the connection going at home throughout the season.

Lend a Helping Hand

We are looking for friendly volunteers to help bring the day together, including station leaders, photography helpers, supply setup, and cleanup. If you would like to help support this launch event, please reach out to the Children's Ministry team at fumc@fumcscr.org.

Join our Play Date Meet Ups!

(Monthly meet ups for families, variety of locations and activities)

September 12th at 10:00am

Playtime and a craft for kids at

FUMC fellowship hall



*All ages welcome,
current ages 0-6 years.*

**Contact Caitlin
for more info:**

playdate@fumcscr.org



There's a new face in the Nursery! Meet Greta:

Greta (also known as Mari's mom!) is currently studying elementary education, and is looking forward to growing her experience here at Love First as part of our Nursery Staff! When Greta and Mari aren't at church you can find Greta and her family doing all things outdoors.

We are very excited to Welcome Greta to the Nursery where she will most certainly be right alongside the littles building legos, painting and creating. **Welcome Greta!**

YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth of all ages and their families are invited to join us in this year's Pride and Peace Walk on Wednesday, September 16th. Join members of Love First and other area Faith Leaders and youth groups for a great start to our programming year. We will be led by the local Mettekor Choir Director walking around Lake George and celebrating Peace together for the healing of all people. Wednesday, September 16th, come to the main parking lot at Lake George at 5:30pm. We'll walk at 6pm and conclude around 6:45pm. This is a family friendly and pet friendly event! Make a sign and feel free to rock the rainbow.

Wednesday, September 23 at 6:00pm:
Parent Meeting Youth Group Launch
We're easing into fall so that our new Family Ministries Coordinator, Neddy Yong, can give input and direction to what is happening this year. Stay tuned as further details will be communicated through e-mail.

Photos from summer Mission trips.





presents
TaikoArts
Enso Diako Performance
Sunday, August 30th
11:00am in the sanctuary



In sponsorship with the Initiative Foundation's 2026 Joy & Connection Grant



A Co-Working Group is Forming!

Finding time for desk work can be challenging, but teaming up for a regularly scheduled co-working date makes it much easier and more enjoyable!

We are forming a co-working group at the church that will meet twice a month. Dates and times will be determined based on interest. We will gather 15 minutes early to set up and chat, work quietly on personal projects for an hour, and then resume conversation as we pack up.

You can use this time for anything you want to catch up on—writing, journaling, paperwork, emails, etc. (There is no pressure to share what you are working on.) Or get creative - work on crafts, read, knit, or enjoy a coffee and a word puzzle.

Contact Jess Storkamp with days and times you're available if you are interested: cowork@fumcscr.org

NAMI MENTAL HEALTH WALK
September 12th - Wilson Park, St. Cloud

Check in beginning at 9 a.m.

Walk begins at 10:00 a.m.

Walk with us to support those whose lives have been impacted by mental illness. Bring your stories of loved ones to share. Walk with us to bring awareness to the need for mental health funding and legislation and to support NAMI in providing invaluable services and life-changing programs and comprehensive education.



8 Weeks beginning September 24th

6:00-8:30pm

Love First UMC library

This is a free 8-session evidence-based educational program for family, loved ones and friends of a teen or adult living with a mental illness. Led by trained family members who have been there, this program provides information and strategies for taking care of the person you love, includes presentation, discussions and interactive exercises, as well as support and connection among peers.

Please **REGISTER** with Chuck, class leader, at
fumc@fumcscr.org or **(320) 251-0804**
to ensure the class is a good fit.

YOUNG AT HEART

**Understanding Trauma
Responsive Church**
with Mark Bordewick

**Friday, September 11th
at 10:00 am**

The meeting begins with coffee and treats, readings, jokes and announcements & then the program until 11am. Following the meeting those who want, go to lunch at a nearby restaurant.

If you haven't joined us before,
please come
and get acquainted.
The more the merrier.

Questions? Contact
Kathy Hulsebus
rsvp@fumcscr.org



Big Questions, No Answers

**What is the value of traditional
group responses and prayers?**

**Monday, September 14
10am church library**





Thank YOU for Serving Third Saturday Community Meal!

The August Community Meal served 137 guests. We had roughly 40 take-out meals. People enjoyed the summer picnic of hot dogs, baked beans, pasta salad, watermelon, cookies, and brownies. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers: Jesse, Logan, Ezra, and Connor Newman, Amanda & Jahar Schultz, Caitlin & Brady Hickcox (coordinators), Jon Hodge, Josie Laskowski, Mary Smith, and Dianna Fink. Our next 3rd Saturday Meal is September 19th. Please consider volunteering for our 3rd Saturday Meal. Use the QR or email below

Questions? kitchen@fumcscr.org

Signup QR



Donation QR



Fall Sunday Morning Adult Class Discussion Opportunities

Join us for another round of “Delicious Debate and Discussion” with Kathy and Mark Jaede **beginning on September 20th following worship.**

This year we will be discussing a variety of articles mostly from the Progressive Christianity website, plus several **books**, and some **short films** from The Work of the People: Spiritual Awakening & Faith Films website. Some of the articles include: Towards a new conception of God, When faith and science work together, Animals and Jesus, The promise of the "Interspiritual" movement, and An open-minded way to read the Bible. We will email articles to people after the first class.

The first book we will study together beginning in October will be **“Separation of Church and Hate,”** by John Fugelsang. A New York Times bestseller, it is described as “A Sane Persons guide to taking back the Bible from Fundamentalists, Fascists, and Flock-Fleecing Frauds.” It is humorous and a very fun read, exploring much of the Bible plus many contemporary issues such as white supremacy, feminism, abortion, LGBTQ+, poverty, immigration, gun control and more. You can purchase the book through Amazon and other websites either for a digital or hard copy, and probably the library. We plan to read excerpts in class so don’t worry if you haven’t read everything.

PLANT & PRAIRIE WORKDAY: SEPTEMBER 19TH
 weed control, watering, and prairie maintenance



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!





Community Angels Presentation - September 20

Join United Women in Faith on Sunday, September 20, for a special presentation by Community Angels, a St. Cloud non-profit supporting underserved families and individuals in Central Minnesota. Erica Cole, the organization's founder and community coordinator, will share its mission and ways our church can help. Erica will speak following the service in the Youth Room. All are welcome!

What does Community Angels do?

- Once a week, they host a community retail day at their boutique, where families can shop for free "Angel Treasures" for children ages 0-18, including new clothing, shoes, undergarments, and health and hygiene items.
- They offer literacy and art programs for kids, with a focus on BIPOC children. To support academic success, they host a children's book and art club during out-of-school time.
- They offer safe, confidential transitional housing for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, along with comprehensive case management to help individuals heal, rebuild their lives, and connect with community resources.

Currently, the boutique especially needs new preemie and newborn clothing items. United Women in Faith will collect these much-needed items from September 13 through October 4. Please place donations on the special table in the gathering space. Thank you!



BOOK STUDY

Rending the Veil:
The Mysticism of the Gospel of Philip
BY WARD J. BAUMAN

Books available online.

SUNDAYS.

SEPTEMBER 20

THRU NOVEMBER 1

6:30-8:00PM

*We hope to conclude this study
with a visit with the author.*





September 16th: PRIDE & Peace Walk!

Have you been frustrated before of the ways the faith community is often creating trauma for the Queer Community instead of helping to heal it? Are you in the LGBTQIA+ Community and want a way to be with people of faith that is not harmful? Our PRIDE & Peace Walk, started in 2019, brings faith communities together from all over St. Cloud to walk in Peace and celebrate PRIDE! Come get to know people in our faith community as well as people in other faith communities and get to know Queer people who want to be part of an event like this! Hosted by our church, there are people from Salem Lutheran, Bethlehem Lutheran, Unity Spiritual Center, and many more. We will be led by the local Mettekor Choir Director, Stephanie Hart, walking around Lake George and celebrating Peace together for the healing of all people. Wednesday, September 16th, come to the main parking lot at Lake George at 5:30pm. We'll walk at 6pm and conclude around 6:45pm. This is a family friendly and pet friendly event!

September 19th: PRIDE Booth at PRIDE in the Park

Please contact Pastor Leah, Stephen Wilke, or Josie Laskowski if you'd like to volunteer - or sign up on your connect card! We need set-up (9:30am-10:30am); three shifts (10-Noon, Noon -2, 2-4) and clean up (3:30-4:30pm). Come show your PRIDE and make new friends!

CLOTHING DONATIONS NEEDED

FOR ST. CLOUD PRIDE IN THE PARK CLOTHING EXCHANGE

DROP OFF YOUR DONATIONS
NOW-SEPT. 11
M-F 8:00-4:30

SCSU
WOMEN'S CENTER
ATWOOD CENTER #218
720 4TH AVE S

FOR QUESTIONS, HELP WITH DONATIONS, OR OTHER DONATION ARRANGEMENTS EMAIL
CHAIR@STCPRIDE.ORG

CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES IN GOOD CONDITION



September 20th: PRIDE Celebration Sunday

In 2019 we became a Reconciling Congregation, meaning that in the United Methodist Church we declared that we are fully inclusive as a congregation and willing to marry people as well as welcome Queer Clergy in our future. This year, Jean Carlos Diaz will be coming from the United Methodist NEON Ministry at the University of Minnesota. Jean Carlos is doing amazing things, and the student ministry there is led by Queer BIPOC folx. Come hear what is happening! There will be a chance for you to support NEON both with your prayers and with your money if you so choose.

Discover First: Two Fall Sessions

Part 1: September 27 & Part 2: October 4 OR

Part 1: November 8 & Part 2: November 22nd

Membership can mean something different in each church. At First United Methodist Church of the St. Cloud Region (FUMC), we believe that there comes a time when a person's faith journey is strengthened by taking a public vow of commitment to a community where you want to grow in your faith. This does not mean that you have to believe a specific set of beliefs or that you have it all figured out. What it does mean is that you are willing to share your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness with the community and on behalf of the community in the world. In return, we share those same things with you! We believe that we are stronger together than we are alone.

Getting to Know the Community:

No one makes a covenant with a community they don't even know! By coming to worship, joining a small group, and figuring out places you can serve, you will get to know the community and decide whether this is the best place for you to flourish in your faith. When you join First UMC, because we are a "Connectional Church" with the wider United Methodist Church, you are also joining the international United Methodist Church.

Once you have completed **Discover First** and talked with Pastor Leah, you are welcome to join First UMC. Becoming a member means reaffirming the vows made at your baptism and making a covenant with the church community. This is a public affirmation of faith within the worship service itself and will be coordinated with others who want to join.

Prayer Shawls Return

*Wednesdays,
September 9 &
September 23
at 5:00-6:30pm*

*1st & 3rd Wednesdays at 5pm
schedule resumes in October.*



The Well

2nd and 4th Mondays from 6:00 - 7:30 pm

*This group meets for a time of community sharing
and discussion of the reading.*





Why I Give - Rick & Lynda Ellis

At our house we are in the middle of a big transition. We're leaving the lake property we have owned and loved for 36 years. We're at a time in our life when we need to move to a home that is more age appropriate, somewhere where we can hopefully live out the last portion of our lives. There is, of course, sadness and loss associated with the transition. But we know it is time. And we're going to do it. And with the sadness and loss comes something else very precious. Gratitude. Life hasn't always gone the way we hoped. But life has also given us so many reasons to be grateful. And grateful we are.

One of the things we are most grateful for is our church community. We feel loved by our church community. We learn from each other. We care for each other. And the things we do together bring us closer to God. It is a very important part of our lives. And these are the reasons we support our church community financially.



JULY FINANCIALS

	Actual as of 7/31/26	2026 Budget	% of Budget
Revenue	\$361,765.80	\$718,859.00	50.33%
Expense	\$389,247.94	\$726,531.55	53.58%
Difference	(\$27,482.14)	(\$7,678.81)	

AUGUST COMMUNION OFFERING

Feeding Area Children Together (FACT)
will receive our gifts of \$1,140

*The QR code is available if you
would like to donate to the on-going
budget or communion offering.*



Our September Communion Offering will be received by Anna Marie's Alliance

Since 1979, Anna Marie's Alliance has served more than 22,000 victim-survivors of relationship abuse. Their team provides intervention in crisis situations and education that prevents relationship violence. Their mission is to provide education, intervention, and advocacy to those affected by relationship abuse with a holistic approach and anti-oppression focus. Anna Marie's Alliance provides individuals who are experiencing relationship abuse and their children with a safe place to stay and the resources they need. Through systemic change, their aim is to create a community where violence is not tolerated, and where every home is a safe one.

Communion Offering QR: Use the drop-down menu to select "Communion"



MUSIC MINISTRY AT LOVE FUMC

Choirs Handbells Instruments

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

LOVE
FIRST

CONTACT AARON AT
ACARPENTER@FUMCSCR.ORG

ALL AGES.
ALL LEVELS.
ALL FOR PRAISE.

*BELLissimo Handbell Choir rehearsals start September 2nd at 6pm
Sanctuary Choir rehearsals start September 9th at 7:30pm*





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

UWF Calendar of Events

September 6 - Susanna Wesley Circle Serves Fellowship

September 16 - Fellowship at Drakes meets at 11:30am at Drakes Café, 520 1st St. NE, Sartell.

September 8 - No Sarah Circle. Please attend Community Angels event on the 20th.

September 20 - Community Angels Presentation at 10:45 in Youth Room

September 26 - Area Fall Gathering, First UMC of the St. Cloud Region, 10am-2:30pm

September 28 - Susanna Wesley Circle meets at 7:00pm in the Library

Headwaters Area Fall Gathering

Saturday, September 26, 10-2:30

Love First UMC of the St. Cloud Region

"The Church's Role in Trauma Informed Care"



Our UWFaith will be hosting the Headwaters Area Fall Gathering on Saturday, September 26, from 10:00am-2:30pm. The event will welcome UWFaith members from across the Headwaters Area. Our theme is "The Church's Role in Trauma Informed Care" and Amanda Hodge, co-chair of the Trauma Responsive Church initiative at First UMC of the St. Cloud Region, will be our guest speaker. The cost of the event is \$25 which includes lunch. Register and pay online by the September 19 deadline at the following link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfmTWBxaI_fzMlIom9q0uGFru4Nhyat-AIqqy7aecJmRQdPg/viewform

[1FAIpQLSfmTWBxaI_fzMlIom9q0uGFru4Nhyat-AIqqy7aecJmRQdPg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfmTWBxaI_fzMlIom9q0uGFru4Nhyat-AIqqy7aecJmRQdPg/viewform)

The congregation is invited to come listen to Amanda speak from 10:30-11:30 free of charge!

Don't forget:

- Bring your new and gently used coats, hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves for Emma Norton to the church now through September 13.
- Bring your new preemie and newborn clothing items for Community Angels to the church September 13 through October 4.



Other Community Meal locations & times:

- 📍 Place of Hope (511 9th Ave N) serves 7:30am, 12:30pm and 5:30pm each day.
Salvation Army (400 Hwy 10 S) serves Monday-Friday from 11:30am–12:45pm
- 📍 Salem Lutheran (90 Riverside Dr SE) serves the 1st Saturday each month from 11:30am–1pm
- 📍 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 & 5th 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

On the 3rd Saturday each month FUMC serves a free meal to anyone who stops by. **Come eat the next meal on September 19th.**



Please note that there will be no card sale in September. To make up for this, our card makers are busy preparing a wonderful variety of holiday, sympathy, birthday, anniversary, silly, and thoughtful greeting cards for two sales in October.

CARD SALES
 Sunday, October 11th
Before and after worship service.
 Tuesday, October 13th
At the Pancake Supper from 4:30-7:00pm



WORLD FAMOUS PANCAKE SUPPER!

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

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2026 - 4:30-7:00 PM

BAKE SALE AND HAND-MADE CARDS FOR SALE

**TICKETS
ON SALE
SOON!**



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

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Address Service Requested



First United Methodist Church
of St. Cloud Region



@lovefirstumc.sartell



lovefirstumc.org

The church office is open Monday thru Thursday: 9am - 4pm
Beginning September 8th

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lagre@fumcscr.org

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

September 2026 Newsletter