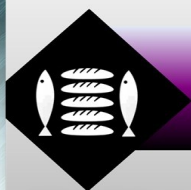


The Key Newsletter

August 2026

Volume 13 - Issue 08



THE BANQUET

Where Volunteers are the eyes, ears, hands, and feet of our Lord...



Monday, August 17th

Sunday Worship

Adrian UMC
9:00 a.m. Sunday Worship

First UMC
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

408 11th Street, Worthington,
Minnesota 56187
Phone: (507) 372-2939
methodistoffice@gmail.com

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Hello! Welcome to the Family Light Update - where we shed some light on the Family Life Ministry of First United Methodist Church!



I'm still feeling the good vibes from our lovely Ladies by the Lake evening yesterday! We had great conversation and received insights into each other and into the strangest foods we've ever eaten. What a fun conversation! Our last **Ladies by the Lake** of the summer will meet on August 18th at Judy Schmidt's home, 312 Lake Avenue. Please join us for what is always an enjoyable evening of conversation and laughter! We will meet at 6:30p.m..

We have a new fun event for the Seniors in our congregation (and I don't mean 18-year-olds)! Please join us on Tuesday, September 1st for **Senior Saddles!** We'll meet at 11:45a.m. at the church to coordinate rides (we can pick you up at your home if you'd like) and carpool over to Hills, MN, to Rock Ranch. There we'll interact with the horses (including riding one in the arena, if you'd like), hear about their stories and the story of the ranch, and enjoy coffee and cookies with our friends. We are limited to 15 people, so sign up early! Cost is \$5 per person. Please sign up by Sunday, August 30th. This event is geared for those age 55 and over.

Please put Sunday, September 13th on your calendar when **Greg the Great** joins us again to help kick off our Sunday School year! This is for EVERYONE of ALL AGES - not just our Sunday School kids. Greg's show is fun, Christ-centered and magical! Bring your friends!

Wednesday's **CONNECT** will start up on September 16th! Please join us for a meal, worship, fellowship and Bible study. There will be programming for all ages! Meal at 5:15; worship at 5:45; age-appropriate classes at 6:00.

We will have our **Backpack Blessing** during Sunday worship on Sunday, August 30th. Kids, bring your bags and we'll have a special moment together as you enter into the new school year!

The **Fireside Book Club** meets next on Tuesday, November 3rd at 7:00p.m. in the Fireside Room. We are reading *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi. This book has taken the world by storm with its story of a gentle man who does what he can in his little corner of the world to bring joy and kindness to his community. Please come with the book read and be ready to discuss this inspiring novel!

And ladies, be sure to sign up for **RESURFACE**, coming on Saturday, October 24th. We are praying that this day-long conference will renew your mind, body and soul. Tell your friends and plan on attending this meaningful day. See registration details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Serving Him Together, Gretchen

"Worship the Lord with gladness..." - Psalm 100:2a



August 2—Communion Sunday

Noisy Offering towards the milk fund at "The Banquet"
at FUMC 10:30 service

August 23 - Adrian Congregational Meeting—8:15 am

August 30—Gretchen O'Donnell preaching
Backpack Blessing

Sound/Media Help is Needed

We are in need of more people to help with the Sound/Media system on Sunday mornings. If you would be interested in helping please contact the church office or Pastor John.

Sunday Morning Coffee Fellowship

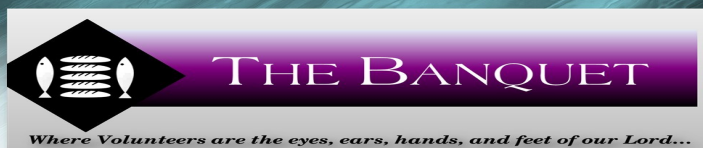
Come to the Fellowship Hall on Sunday morning before church to enjoy a cup of coffee or juice and a roll, and visiting with other members and friends of the church. It all begins at 9:45 a.m.!

Women's Coffee

The women's weekly coffee group meets every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. at HyVee in the Starbucks serving area. All women are invited to come and join this fabulous group!

Men's Breakfast Group

The Men's Breakfast group meets every Wednesday at 8:00 a.m. at the Blue Line Cafe. The men discuss shared concerns, solve the problems of the world, and make sure the rain gauges are up to speed. All guys are welcome to join us each week!



Monday, August 17th

We will be serving at The Banquet in downtown Sioux Falls on Monday, August 17th. We will need 6 people to help prepare the food from 2:00-5:00 pm and 30 people to help serve and cleanup 5:15-8:00 pm. There is a sign up sheet in the narthex.

We will be accepting monetary donations to help pay for the meal. Please make your check out to First UMC and put "The Banquet" on the memo line.

We will also be taking a noisy offering on Sunday, August 2nd that will go towards the milk fund at The Banquet. Thank you for your consideration of helping with this mission project.

Food Shelf Donations

Your donations for the local food shelves of non-perishable food items are accepted throughout the year, please place your items in the wagon located in the narthex. Please be aware of the "best by" or "use by" dates on the items that you are donating. Items are taken alternately to the two food shelves.

Blankets Needed

During the long cold snap in January, we discovered students who struggled with warmth. In our community, there are homes with multiple families living in them. The kids often share a bed and blankets. When one person turns, someone is without a blanket. To save expenses, many of these homes have the heat set relatively low and the house is drafty. Older kids often prioritize the health of their younger siblings and will give them the blankets. The blanket supply at the Middle School has dwindled down to nothing. If you would like to donate warm, used blankets of any size, please put them in the box in the hallway by the kitchen. Thank you!

Missions Committee

Operation Christmas Child-2026

We are collecting items to put in the Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes which will be packed on Sunday, November 8th. Items that are needed are school supplies, personal care items (not bars of soap or toothpaste) clothing & accessories for boys and girls, toys for boys and girls, games, activities, and craft kits for boys and girls. You can pick up a sheet in the narthex with a more specific list of items. Please place your items in the box in the narthex. Monetary donations are also accepted to help with the purchasing of additional items. If you have any questions, please contact Pam Soderholm.

We can no longer accept pill bottles to use for our sewing and bead kits. Some countries receiving the boxes are not accepting the pill bottles due to potential drug residue in the bottles.



Thank you

Thank you so very much for all the care you gave me on Sunday, July 19 and all the prayers. Special thank you to all the people who picked me up and took care of me, Pat and Pastor John for coming to the hospital and for the many calls I got this week. God's love and thank you very much.

Etta Schroder

Ladies by the Lake!

Join us at the Lake on August 18th at
6:30p.m.! (Please note this earlier time.)

We will meet at Judy Schmidt's home
312 Lake Ave.



BACKPACK BLESSING

**STUDENTS,
BRING YOUR
BACKPACKS TO
CHURCH ON
SUNDAY,
AUGUST 30TH!**

A poster for a 'Senior Saddles' event. It features two brown horses in stable windows. The text 'Senior Saddles' is at the top in large white letters. Below it, 'Come visit the horses!' is written in a curved font. At the bottom, event details are listed in white text on a dark background.

SENIOR SADDLES

Come visit the horses!

Tuesday, September 1st at 1:00 pm
Seniors over 55 only • Carpool available
Limit of 15 people • Cost \$5 per person
Please sign up by Sunday, August 30

Rock Ranch, located in Hills, MN, offers the chance to experience the joys of horsemanship in a natural, Christ-filled setting. The Senior Saddles program provides opportunities for seniors to participate in a tour of the facility, spend time with the horses, enjoy coffee and cookies and socialize. You will be able to interact with the animals but riding is not required. We will meet at 11:45a.m. at the front of the church to carpool over to Rock Ranch.
(If you'd like to be picked up at your home, let us know.)

A poster for a magician named Greg the Great. It features a man in a tuxedo holding a top hat, surrounded by magical effects like doves, rabbits, and floating cards. The background is dark with red curtains.

Minnesota's top family magician!

GREG THE GREAT!

Sunday, September 13
9:00 am
This event is for all ages and everyone is welcome!
Worship to follow at 10:30 am
First United Methodist Church
408 11th St., Worthington, MN



First United Methodist Church
408 11th Street, Worthington, MN

Connect WEDNESDAY

**Starts
Wednesday
September 16**

5:15-5:45 pm Dinner
5:45-6:00 pm Worship
6:00-7:00 pm Programming provided
for all ages

RENEWING YOUR MIND, BODY & SOUL

Resurface

A Women's Conference

**Saturday, October 24, 2026
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
First Methodist Church, Worthington**





Lay Speaker Certification Training (Virtual)-Fall 2026

The Certified Lay Speaker program prepares laity to serve as worship leaders within their local church and/or other churches as requested. Completion of the [ConneXion](#) program is desired prior to completion of this program (available online at [MNsource](#)).

Program includes sermon preparation, United Methodist Beliefs and history, organizing and leading a worship service.

Instructors include

- Dr. Bruce Forbes, Morningside University retired: Methodist History and Belief systems
- Marion Hansen, CLS, Chair LSMT: Development of the worship service and Nuts and Bolts of providing pulpit supply
- Whitney Sheridan, Pastor Centennial UMC: Message preparation and use of scripture for worship

Dates: Saturdays November 7, 14, and 21, 2026, 9 a.m -2:30 p.m.

Registration is \$75 and includes materials. *Do not let the cost keep you away. Contact Marion Hansen for alternate arrangements.*

For additional information or questions contact Marion Hansen, chair Lay Servant Ministry Team at marionha@wcta.net

Photo Directory

If you remember, about 18 months ago, the church upgraded our database to a system called Relam. This was done to eliminate differences across our several databases and bring all of our information into one place.

One of the benefits of the new system is access to an online photo directory that will ensure accurate information updates and provide cost savings by eliminating the need for the current online directory app, Instant Directory.

We are putting the final touches on the new photo directory app and configuring it so our members can access the information in the new app. We are hoping to have this done in the next week or so.

Below are some steps you can take to be ready for the new online photo directory.

- 1) Download the Realm Connect app from your Apple or Google App Store.
- 2) Sign in to the app using the email address you currently use for church emails.
- 3) If you have an updated photo you would like included in the directory, please send the photo to Pastor John at jdmitchem@me.com or drop a copy off at the office.

If you have any trouble signing in to the app, please let Pastor John know, and he will be more than willing to help you with the new app. If you need or like a printed out copy of the current directory, please see Pastor John on Sunday for a copy, drop a note to jdmitchem@me.com, and he can send you an electronic version at any time.



Financial Update First UMC Worthington

2026 has been a very busy time of ministry. As we end summer and move into fall, we continue to love our neighbors, heal a broken world, and welcome visitors to our building.

During the first half of the year, we have had many activities here at FUMC. Some of these projects required significant financial inputs.

- Community Bingo – a great outreach opportunity
- Hosted many funerals this year and helped with providing food and manpower for the funeral meals
- Wednesday night "Connect" program
- Serving at "The Banquet" for those in need
- Lenten luncheon
- Helped with Community Kids Camp (VBS)
- Lenten bags and devotionals given to our members

We are looking forward to several important projects this fall, including the following.

- "Greg The Great" will help us kick off fall programming with a new show
- Revised Wednesday Night "Connect" sessions
- The Women's "Resurface" Conference in October
- Friendship Supper
- Community Bingo

All of this happens because of your faithful giving to the church. Please know that as you give to the church, we always work hard to do the most good with your gifts.

We wanted to give you an update on the church's finances as of the end of June 2026.





For the year of 2026, our income has fallen behind our expenses.

Our total income for the first 6 months of 2026 is \$157,336, compared to \$168,189.71 in 2025. This is a decrease in revenue of \$10,853.15. The total expenses paid in the first 6 months of 2026 was \$164,731.85, compared to \$170,219.34 for 2025. This is a decrease of \$7,365.

However, we have not paid our apportionments for several months due to tight cash flow, and currently owe \$14,500 to the Conference. The total amount is not due until the end of the year, so we can still make it up. We are paying staff and our normal bills before paying apportionments. So, in reality, our expenses are well above those of 2025.

Increased expenses and decreased income obviously create a problem. So, we do have to ask for your help.

The best way you can help is to continue your regular giving. For those who give at regular intervals, we encourage you, if possible, to give online so that when you are absent from church, your tithe for the ministry will still be given on time. You may go to our website at www.firstumcworthington.com/give or contact the church office to help you set it up.

We understand that some of you feel the apportionments are very important and should be paid. If you would like to give a gift on top of your normal giving and would like the funds to go to the apportionments, please make a note on the check for the "ABC" fund, or you can give at our website www.firstumcworthington.com

The second major expense we will have in August is replacing the video projectors in the Fellowship Hall. The projectors are used on Wednesday night "Connect" events and will be essential for the Woman's Conference in October. One of them has failed completely, so we should replace both

good ministry," and affirmed that "you and your congregation are doing great ministry". Just as you rely on a regular income, First United Methodist Church of Worthington



with the identical model at the same time, which will cost a total of \$3600.00. If you would like to make a special gift for this, please mark your check for Projector, or you may give your gift online at www.firstumcworthington.com/give

I know this letter may cause some concern, but I want to assure you that God is working in powerful ways to help people know Jesus as we love our neighbors. The Rev. Maxie Duham, who served as the editor of Upper Room and as Senior Pastor at Christ United Methodist Church in Memphis, told Pastor John, "Money follows good ministry," and affirmed that "you and your congregation are doing great ministry". Just as you rely on a regular income, First United Methodist Church of Worthington depends on your regular donations. FUMC values the dedication of congregation members who consistently contribute throughout the year.

The Finance Team on behalf of Church Council

Ellen Hoefker and Mike Brignac



*Here are the highlights from
the First UMC Council meeting held
on Thursday, July 23, 2026*

OLD BUSINESS ITEMS:

Worship Design Team – Initial email Pastor John sent out received minimal response, but two Council members stated they did not receive the email. Pastor John will resend and gauge interest. If there is no or minimal interest, this will be dropped.

Prayer List – After revisiting this topic, it was agreed that beginning in August, only short-term prayer concerns will be listed in the bulletin to allow for a more concise and accurate list. Those with short-term prayer requests that are no longer needed (for example, health has improved after an illness) are asked to contact the office or a council member to request removal from the list. This will help prevent an unnecessarily large prayer list and allow us to focus on those who currently need our prayers and support.

Long-term or on-going prayer concerns will still be listed in the monthly newsletter, Friday email, and on a printed list in the Narthex.

Giving cards - In January, it was discussed that small cards would be made available for those who give online and would like to place something in the offering plate during service stating this. Pastor John and Lori will address this at the next staff meeting so they are available moving forward.

Tap Cards – There were not enough cards to place any in the first few pews or upstairs. This item will be revisited in August to determine if there are finances available to add more in these areas.

Some council members voiced an inability to scan the tap cards with their phones. Anyone experiencing this issue is invited to individually “problem solve” with Pastor John

CELEBRATIONS:

Finance: Giving has been higher in July versus previous months.

Foundation:

- Recent donations given by the Foundation include (2) college scholarships, support of the Family Life Coordinator position, the Resurface women’s conference this fall, financial assistance for Pastor John’s trip to Haiti in support of the Mission Haiti project, and the continuation of monthly donations of Love Inc. was approved.
- The Foundation also approved a donation to Linda Doeden’s project, ELIC - an English language teacher training program in Laos.

Missions:

- \$750 was recently donated to the Nobles County backpack program
- 46 pounds of donated food was taken to the Manna Food Pantry by Rick Dalrymple

Family Life:

- Family Life voiced appreciation for the Foundation’s support of the Resurface conference.
- The recent Ladies by the Lake event was very enjoyable. It was a great opportunity for casual interactions and brought together a diverse group of ladies who may not otherwise participate in other activities.

CHALLENGES:

Trustees:

- Train feels the recent problems with the air conditioner chillers are taken care of. These chillers were air-controlled but are now electrical.
- Loose/crooked light covers in main hallway were noted. According to Jim, these covers continually come loose due to wind, but Chad will continue to repair as needed. However, it was also noted that when the bulbs in these lights go out, they will need to be replaced with LEDs. John Nordell has been contacted for input on the best and most fiscally responsible way to approach this.
- Missing ceiling tiles in main hallway: Kyle Johnson will look into getting a supply of tiles on-hand as our supply has run out. The tiles will be replaced once they are received.
- The tree near the 11th Street church sign has been trimmed back so it’s no

(continued from p. 15)

longer covering the sign. However bush trimming still needs to be taken care of. Jim will look into getting a quote to trim bushes and this topic will be revisited.

- Rugs in hallway & kitchen are stained and showing wear. Chad will get quotes for replacing.

- Parsonage maintenance issues:

- Shingle replacement has been done, using the supply of shingles on-hand. There will be no supply cost, just labor.
- Garage doors: The left garage door opens/closes on its own and is scheduled to be replaced. Right door had some wiring get tangled but is still functioning ok.
- Dishwasher: per Pastor John, the conference states there should be a dishwasher in each parsonage. Jim Nickel approved this purchase and got an \$800 floor model from Karl's that retailed for \$1300.

CURRENT FOCUS

Family Life:

- The Book Club will be meeting July 28.
- Family Life is also focused/working on the next Ladies by the Lake event, Senior Saddles, & Greg the Great kicking off Sunday School in the fall.
- Gretchen will be preaching for Pastor John August 30 and September 6. Communion will be moved to September 13.
- Resurface Conference: Gretchen and committees are plugging away on preparations for this event. External advertising will be a focus starting 6 weeks prior to the event, but internal registration is already open. Maximum registration count is 140 (limited by seating at tables in Fellowship Hall), but we're hoping for at least 100.

Missions:

- First and Adrian churches will be serving at the Banquet on Monday, Aug. 17. A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex or interested persons may contact Pam. The Missions team is seeking donations of \$500-700 to cover the cost of the meal. A Noisy Offering will also be collected Aug. 2 for the Banquet milk fund.
- Aug. 19-21 will be sewing kit days. Mayra Palmer is working on preparing items for this and information will be shared once plans are finalized.
- Blankets for the Middle School and Operation Christmas Child donations continue to be collected.

Wednesday Connect - will have the same schedule as last year with Pastor John leading services/activities. The plan or focus of services will change up periodically to keep it "fresh".

(continued from p,16)

CUTTING EDGE ISSUES

- Pastor John is seeking several volunteers – *men AND women* – to assist with conducting a walk-thru of the interior and exterior of our facility. Different perspectives can help identify possible areas that need structural or aesthetic attention.
- Photo Directory App – Family photos are not all showing up and some individuals are having issues logging in. Pastor John is happy to assist anyone as needed and technological “kinks” will continue to be looked at.
- Fireside Room – The room was looked at on July 23 and information will be shared with and discussed by the Trustees prior to the next Council meeting.

Financial Report and Discussion

- June ended up with a Net Total of +\$562.50.
- Apportionments continue to be tracked but will be addressed at the end of year as we continue to prioritize payroll and bill paying. Expenditures continue to be kept well in-check.
- Ellen will be addressing the congregation during the service this Sunday, July 26. She will provide information regarding the church’s current financial status, how consistent giving by members is critical, as well as how congregation members may give separately/additionally to specific needs such as projectors for the Fellowship Hall and Apportionments. She will also state that if the expenses for projectors and Apportionments are met through designated donations, any giving above those amounts will automatically go into the General Fund.

It was shared with the Council that Pat Grimmus has volunteered as the Memorial Chair. Her committee currently consists of Betty Taarud, Judy Schmidt, & Pastor John. Additional committee members are always welcome!

Next Covenant Council meeting: August 20

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Shirbroun, FUMC Covenant Council Recording Secretary

Adrian Congregational Meeting

There will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, August 23 at 8:15 am to share info on church parsonage

Happy Birthday!

1 Coleen Bui	8 Kim Grussing	19 Taylor Nickel
2 Melissa Geertsema	Treyson Polk Brignac	20 Brielle Bullerman
Thelma Yager	9 Karen Cook	David Reese
Ray Hokeness	10 Sharon Algood	Nicole Reyne
4 Ohlanna Franco	13 Merle Belz	22 Dave Carstensen
Julie Lopez	Tim Meyer	23 Phoenix Erlandson
Deb Nelson	14 Joyce Gravon	26 Rick Dalrymple
6 Sandra Schulze	17 Derek Lee	28 Terry Mille
	18 Tim Blume	31 Shawn Kluever

Happy Anniversary!

1 Dave & Hollie Hibma	20 Tim & Kris Tripp
5 Dana & Amy Oberloh	22 Steve & Terry Johnson
8 Larry & Jan Heidebrink	23 Randy & Marjo Taarud
16 Colin & Gretchen O'Donnell	25 Dan & Amber Nielsen
	30 Allan & Carroll Miller

First United Methodist Church Staff

Pastor:	Rev. John Mitchem
Administrative Assistant:	Lori Nienkerk
Family Life:	Gretchen O'Donnell
Youth Leader:	Lisa Gerdes
Bell Choir Director:	Brenda DeSmith
Finance Manager:	Jenna Ahlers
Custodians:	Sarah & Chad Nickel

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408 11th Street P.O. Box 668
Worthington, MN 56187
methodistoffice@gmail.com
www.firstumcworthington.com

Live Streaming!

Each Sunday we live streaming our worship services from First UMC. If you are going to be out of town, you can catch the live broadcast on our church app (download to your device) or any one of four different online locations:

The Boxcast TV Channel

<https://boxcast.tv/channel/qikol6fqes2qwhperl2l>

First UMC YouTube Channel

Go to YouTube: First United Methodist Church Worthington

First UMC FaceBook

Go to FaceBook: Worthington: First United Methodist Church

First UMC Website

<http://firstumcworthington.com/>

Worship services for First UMC are scheduled to be broadcast on the public access Channel 3 in Worthington. The broadcast times are Sunday at 6:30 am, Monday at 3:00 p.m. and Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. for the current week. Worship services for Adrian UMC can be found on the church's YouTube Channel.

Greeters, Live Stream and Media Tech

We can use one or two more pairs of persons to help with our live stream media on Sundays. Please contact Pastor John if you are interested. Here are the persons who are scheduled to help with the greeting, sound, media, and live stream services:

First UMC		Sound/Video	Media Shout
Sunday	August 2	Kari Meyer	Claire Meyer
Sunday	August 9	Rick Dalrymple	Deb Steinle
Sunday	August 16	Deb Steinle	John Steinle
Sunday	August 23	Deb Steinle	John Steinle
Sunday	August 30	Kari Meyer	Claire Meyer

First UMC		Greeting Team
Sunday	August 2	Eldon & Sue Bents
Sunday	August 9	Galen & Sherry Benton
Sunday	August 16	Dennis & Cheryl Bonsma
Sunday	August 23	Phil & Lucy Bjerke
Sunday	August 30	Mike & Rebecca Brignac

Prayers for health concerns:

Rod Behrends	Ron Husenga
Chris Nelson	Lourdes Franco
Logan Waldner	Virgle Buck
Kristin (Dalrymple) Amundson	
Julie (Ginny Tate's sister)	
Carol Oberloh	Dorothy Sietsema
Rylie Olson's grandpa	



Those dealing with cancer:

Christopher Brown	Shellie Williams	Mike Miller
Marion Reitsma (friend of Jolene Kuhl)		Stacey White
Jeff Wachell (friend of Deb Steinle)		Nicole Bonsma

Those recovering/dealing with health issues:

Nancy Hyink	Bill Carlberg	Larry Doeden
Emma Schnyders	Pat Huisenga	Corky Tate
Ariana Lopez	Aiden Remme	Dianne Dalrymple
Steve Johnson		

For those dealing with grief and loss...

The family of LeAnn Donavon with the passing of Kevin

Giving thanks & praying for:

Our Bishop and District Superintendent...

Our teachers, administrators, students...

Front line health care workers...

Law enforcement & emergency workers...

Service women & men and their families...

If you have a loved one you would like to have added to the Prayer Corner list, or if any name needs to be removed from this list, please contact the church office: 507.372.2939 methodistoffice@gmail.com

Prayer Chain

Please send requests to our email Church Office
methodistoffice@gmail.com
or (507) 372-2939

Care Centers

First UMC:

The Shores

LaDee Grant

Sibley Specialty Care Center

Norma Swenson

Adrian UMC:

Mary Jane Brown Ctr (Luverne)

Mary Prins

Adrian Country Living Cottage