

The Key Newsletter

March 2026

Volume 14 - Issue 03



Sunday Worship

Adrian UMC
9:00 a.m. Sunday Worship

First UMC
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

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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!



It feels like we've got a million things going on right now in the Family Life department! I hope that there is something for everyone to be involved with and enjoy.

Connect is well into Season 2 of *The Chosen*. We will begin Season 3 on March 18 and end on May 13, barring any more snow cancellations. Please join us for a meal at 5:15 and **activities for ALL AGES!** Please **note** that even if you did not join us for season one, you are more than welcome to begin with season two. You know the stories of Jesus, so you won't be confused!

Children's **Sunday School** continues to meet weekly.

The **Fireside Book Club** meets on Tuesday, April 21st at 7:00p.m. in the Fireside Room. We are reading *the Invention of Wings*, by Sue Monk Kidd. Set in the Civil War era, this book covers issues of race, slavery, friendship and kindness. Come with the book read and prepared for great discussion!

Our **children and youth** will have **Ice Skating** time on Sunday, March 22nd, from 2:00-4:00p.m. If any adults would like to come as helpers, we do need a few skaters to join us!

We will have another **BINGO** event on March 28th from 4-5:00p.m. Come and join the fun!

Don't miss being at church on **Mother's Day**, May 10th! There will be so much going on, you can hardly believe it! A chocolate fountain during coffee fellowship time, children singing for their moms, confirmation and the last day of Sunday School! **Mark your calendars now!**

Community Kids' Camp will be June 8-11! Please watch for opportunities to volunteer, for food needs and for the new adult engagement element that we are adding! This will be a terrific four days of fun, learning, playing and growing together!

Looking forward to seeing you at many of these activities!

Serving Him Together, Gretchen

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

Sermons for Lent: "Come worship the Lord!"

1. March 1st Lift High the Cross—The Crucifixion as God's Word and Redemption
2. March 8th O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done—Penal Substitution and Sacrificial Offering
3. March 15th Agnus Dei—Atonement as New Passover, New Covenant, and Redemption
4. March 22nd Were You There—Moral Influence and Moral Example Theories of Atonement
5. March 29th What Wondrous Love Is This—Moral Influence Theory, Part II – Palm Sunday
6. April 5th Christ the Lord Is Risen Today—*Christus Victor* Theory of Atonement Easter Sunday

March 29, Palm Sunday – Worship at Adrian at 9:00 am and First UMC Worthington at 10:30 am

April 2nd, Maundy Thursday – Joint Service at Adrian UMC at 6:30 pm

April 3rd, Good Friday—Joint Service at FUMC 12:00 pm

April 5th, Easter Sunday- Worship at Adrian at 9:00 am and First UMC Worthington at 10:30

Community Thursday Lenten Luncheon

Be sure to join us at our community Thursday Lent luncheon.

Thursday, March 5 – 12:00 pm-First Lutheran
(Pastor John Mitchem will be preaching)

Thursday, March 12—12:00 pm -Westminster

Thursday, March 19 – 12:00 pm—American Lutheran

Why Did Jesus Have to Die? The Meaning of the Crucifixion

Two thousand years after Jesus's crucifixion, the cross remains the most recognized symbol in the world. It crowns church steeples, hangs around necks, and fills our hymns and prayers. Christians speak of Jesus "dying for our sins," but what does that really mean? Why *did* Jesus have to die, and how does his death bring life? Ask a dozen Christians and you may hear a dozen different answers. Some emphasize forgiveness. Others talk about victory over evil. Still others see an example of self-giving love.

In *Why Did Jesus Have to Die?*, This sermon series invites us to slow down and explore the richness of the New Testament's witness. During this series we discover that no single image or theory can capture the mystery of the cross. Each theory of the atonement offers a piece of the puzzle, which, when seen together, gives us a picture of God's message to us, told by and through the cross. Together, they reveal not a formula, but the depth and breadth of God's love and mission for us.

Over the Lenten weeks, you will help you hear the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection in myriad ways. Whether your listeners are lifelong believers or new to faith, this journey will deepen their (and likely your) understanding of Christ's passion and enlarge their trust in the God who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son."

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!

At my last doctor appointment, I was told I'm cancer free!
Thank you for all the prayers!

Galen Benton

Thank you for all the cards, transportation, and meals.
Shellie Williams

The Ray Hinz family would like to thank everyone for the kind words, cards, and memorials. We appreciate the support we received at this time of sorrow. We want to thank everyone who came to be with us at the visitation and funeral and helped with the lunch.

Marlene Miller & Family
Roy & Judy Hinz Family

Thank you for all the beautiful cards, and greetings for my 90th birthday. That brought me joy. God bless you.

Marlene Miller

Thank you to all who participated in the Soup Cook-Off, either by providing a soup for us to enjoy or by attending and partaking of the soups! All of you made it a fun event for all ages! The winner of the Golden Ladle was Scott Belz with his Meatball Tortellini Soup, The Silver Ladle (half a bean difference in votes) went to Lucy Bjerke with Cheesy Wild Rice Soup, the Black Ladle went to Ginny Tate with Mexican Chicken Soup. Our two Honorable Mentions went to Steve Leach with his Chicken Soup and to Sally Hibma with her Santa Fe Soup. Each of the soups were truly delicious! We're already looking forward to the fun next year!

Easter Lilies

Don't forget to order your Easter Lilies for Easter Sunday to decorate the sanctuary this year in memory of a loved one or for a special occasion. The cost per lily will be \$11.00 and will be delivered to the church by Good Friday to either church. Please share them with the church until after the Easter service. **The deadline to order your Easter Lily is March 25.** The sign up sheet is in the Narthex and you may either put the \$11.00 in a separate envelope in the offering plate (please indicate what this is for) or deliver it to the church office.

Name: _____

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

Enclosed: _____ Phone number: _____



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

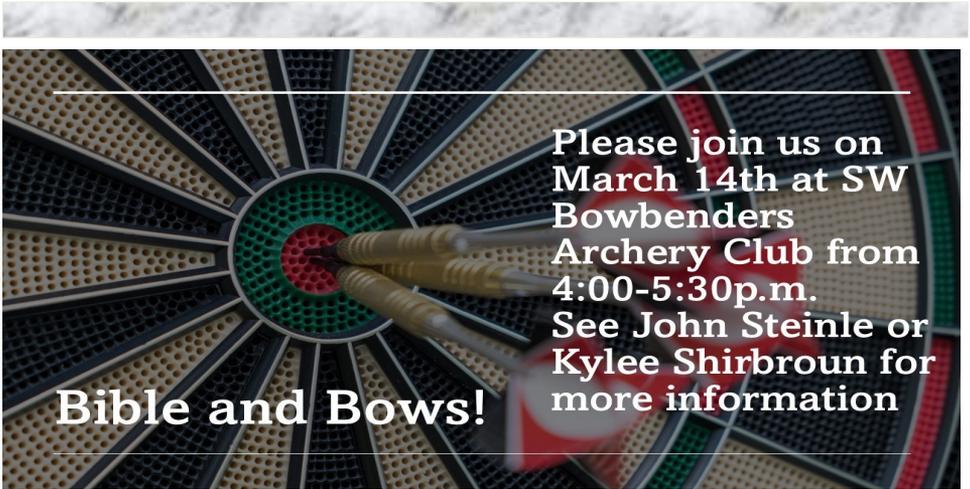
In 2026, we will once again be participating in Operation Christmas Child.

Please note that we will begin collecting donated items in August, continuing through October. The shoeboxes will then be packed in November.

If you would like a list of the items needed for the shoeboxes, copies are available in the Narthex.

If you have any questions, please contact Pam Soderholm.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of this meaningful project.



Please join us on
March 14th at SW
Bowbenders
Archery Club from
4:00-5:30p.m.
See John Steinle or
Kylee Shirbroun for
more information

Bible and Bows!

Ice Skating Fun for Youth & Kids

Sunday March 22nd from 2-4pm

FREE Bring a friend! **FREE**

JBS Ice Arena @ 1600 Stower Dr
Worthington, MN

Sponsored by First United Methodist Church
& First Lutheran Church



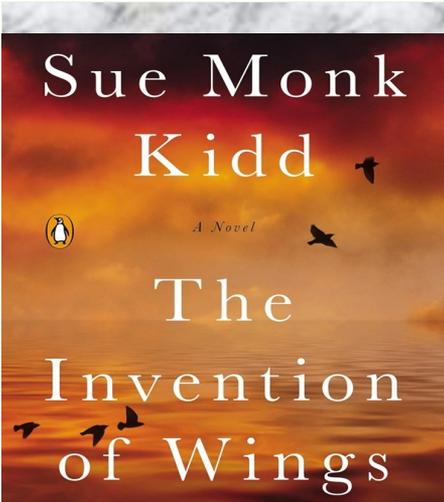
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | WORTHINGTON

FAMILY BINGO NIGHT

Saturday, March 28
4:00-5:00 p.m.

Everyone, all ages, are welcome
to this FREE event! Prizes of gift
cards and other surprises!

**WIN
PRIZES!**



Sue Monk Kidd
A Novel
The Invention of Wings

Fireside Book Club!
 April 21 / 7:00p.m.
 Fireside Room
 Please come with the book read and be ready to discuss this fantastic pre-Civil War era book.

COMMUNITY KIDS' CAMP

✦ **CREATE!** ✦
 June 8-11 ✦

(Location: American Lutheran Church)
 5-5:45pm Meal ✦ 5:45-8pm Activities

NEW!
Adult Engagement
 (6:15pm-7:45pm)
 REGISTER USING THE QR CODE.

  Community Kids Camp



TO REGISTER:
SCAN THE QR CODE (BY MAY 26)
OR CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE.



For children age 3 (& potty trained) through completed grade 5.
 Suggested donation: \$5/child

Soup Cook-Off



Bibles & Bows





*Here are the highlights from
the First UMC Council meeting held
on Thursday, February 19, 2026*

CELEBRATIONS:

- Excellent attendance at the Ash Wednesday service.
 - The youth participation was appreciated and enjoyed.
- Thirteen individuals will be playing bells Feb. 22, allowing all 5 octaves to be played.
- Quilts/blankets, sheets, paper supplies, laundry soap and welcome bags were blessed during service and then delivered to R.A.Y.S. Unlimited (Worthington's sober living facility for men). The items were very appreciated. A representative of R.A.Y.S. will be speaking with the Night Light group in April.

CHALLENGES:

- It has been decided not to move forward with the painting of the Fellowship Hall.
- Gretchen is seeking someone to fill in for her on March 4th to lead Connect discussions.
- A question was brought forward regarding the congregation being made aware of our monthly financial status and possible financial needs: Would individuals be more likely to give more monthly vs. at the end of the year? A reminder was given that full financial statements are made available to the congregation each month following the Council meeting in a folder outside of the church office. .
- Multiple hymnal racks were again broken and repaired by the Hibmas – thank you to Gary & Sally!

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CURRENT FOCUS:

- Missions: Hollie Hibma brought forth a need for blankets among Middle School families. A blanket drive will be started by the Missions team to assist our community families.
- Mobile Meals delivery will be April 16-30. Sally will be seeking volunteers in March and voiced her appreciation for how great our church is about fulfilling this community need.
- Family Life has many activities coming up:
 - Connect: The Chosen Season 2 will finish on March 11. Season 3 will run March 18-May13 (barring any weather cancellations).
 - Community Lenten Lunch
 - Ice skating on March 22
 - Bingo on March 28
 - Sunday School kids will be singing on Palm Sunday and Mothers Day
 - Community Kids Camp will be June 8-11

CUTTING EDGE ISSUES:

- Greeters and offering plates: It appeared a few individuals missed the email with a revised letter for Greeters. The resumed passing of offering plates seems to be going well.
- \$250 has been donated for Fellowship Hall projectors.
- \$250 has been donated toward our subscription to Right Now Media. Another \$300-350 is needed to cover the recently reduced cost. Personal donations are still being accepted following expressed interest in continuing the subscription.
- Fireside room update: The room has been evaluated and someone will be coming in the next week or two to repair the walls. The Trustees will be covering the cost of these repairs. Painting will be done after repairs are completed.

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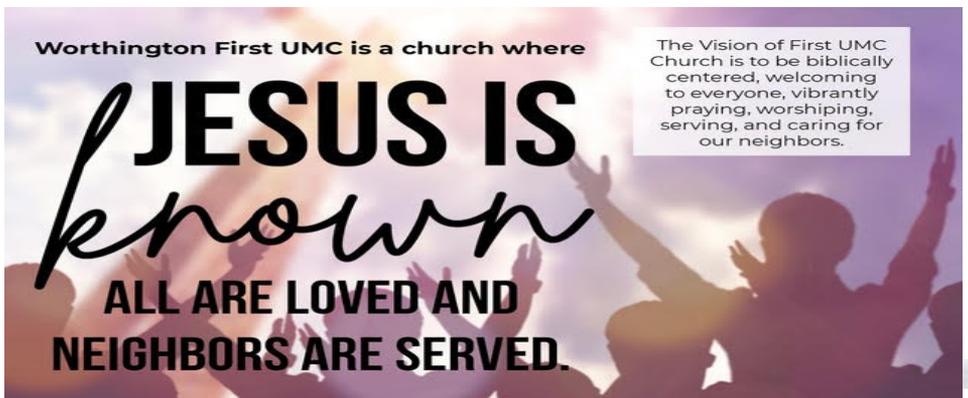
- Tap cards: Pastor John's preference is to have 2-3 cards in each pew for easy access during services. Currently have enough that we've received for free to cover the main floor. May need to purchase more for the upstairs but they are inexpensive.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- Expenses were up in January, primarily due to the annual insurance bill of \$18,645 and an exceptional January heating bill of \$5000. We receive a significant discount by paying the insurance bill at one time.
- February giving is up so far for the month, allowing us to meet payroll. Apportionments will be held until payroll is ensured.
- **The Council would like to remind the congregation that copies of the full financial statements are available in a folder outside the church office after the Council meeting each month.**

Next Meeting: March 19, 2026

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Shirbroun, FUMC Covenant Council Recording Secretary





*Here are the highlights from
the Adrian UMC Council meeting held on
Wednesday, February 11, 2026*

Adrian Adm. Meeting minutes

2-11-2026

We will be working with Pastor John in reviewing our membership list.

Adrian is hosting the Maundy Thursday service. There will be communion and the confirmation students will be serving.

Good Friday service will be at First at noon.

Do we want to do something before the church service on Easter Sunday, coffee and rolls possibly? Will talk to other members.

Confirmation Sunday will be May 10th. Adrian has one confirmand. All the students will be attending the Adrian service.

Do we want to do something before the service, we usually do cake, coffee and juice?

Finances were reviewed.

Parsonage:

The property taxes were reviewed.

Repairs were made in the main floor bathroom. The toilet needed repair, a large amount of water was used in January probably because the toilet stuck. The renters are asking for help to pay the water bill. It was agreed to help with the amount of 230.00.

Cindy Hokeness would like to organize a brunch for after the church service on March 8th.

The idea of a float for the Christmas in July celebration this year was mentioned as the city of Adrian is celebrating 150 years.

Happy Birthday!

1	Kyla Hietbrink Rose Homan	12	Kenny Hoefler Andrea Johnson	20	Debra Horne Kinley Kurtz
2	Chad Heidebrink Tina Nickel	13	Lori Nienkerk Virgle Buck	21	Kevin DeSmith Larry Doeden
3	Evelyn Green Jason Horne	14	Lourdes Franco Lennex Hietbrink	22	Jane Moore Connie Haberman
4	Tatlana Mikel Franco Chad Jaycox	15	Jeremy Johnson Dena Leach	24	Jayden Maras Christopher Nelson
5	Levi Leach Bonnie Frisbee	16	Sadie Nickel Makenna Nickel	25	Jada Nelson Aaron Bonsma
6	Diane Vagt Susan Belz	17	Tim Yager Donna Essman	26	David Reisdorfer Katherine Gallagher
7	Susan Belz Lisa Gerdes	18	Donna Essman Kip Jensen	28	Ashtyn Van Westen Elizabeth Bushard
11	Tori Johnson Megan Kluever Carson	19	Dave Johnson Walter Kellen	30	Jonah Oberloh
	Jaden Nickel Myra Palmer		Ayden Miller Dana Oberloh	31	

Happy Anniversary!

4	Gerald & Cindy Langendorfer	18	Steve & Anita Leach
5	Roger & Karen Rye	20	Rick & Diane Honermann

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:	Marie Lonneman
Custodians:	Sarah & Chad Nickel

Office: (507) 372-2939 Fax: (507) 372-2404

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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	March 1	Deb Steinle	John Steinle
Sunday	March 8	Kari Meyer	Claire Meyer
Sunday	March 15	Deb Steinle	John Steinle
Sunday	March 22	Deb Steinle	John Steinle
Sunday	March 29	Kari Meyer	Claire Meyer

First UMC		Greeting Team
Sunday	March 1	Marlene Miller & Pat Grimmus
Sunday	March 8	Micah & Alyssa Hietbrink
Sunday	March 15	Clyde Scheevel & Sandi Schulze
Sunday	March 22	Larry Hyink & Burdell Kuhl
Sunday	March 29	Steve & Janet Jeppesen

Prayers for health concerns:

Rod Behrends

Chris Nelson

Logan Waldner

Ron Husenga

Kristin (Dalrymple) Amundson

Lourdes Franco

Virgle Buck

Lowell Carlson

Dianne Dalrymple



Those dealing with cancer:

Christopher Brown Shellie Williams

Marion Reitsma (friend of Jolene Kuhl) Stacey White

Mike Miller Jeff Wachell (friend of Deb Steinle)

Those recovering/dealing with health issues:

Nancy Hyink

Bill Carlberg

Larry Doeden

Emma Schnyders

Pat Huisenga

Corky Tate

Ariana Lopez

Aiden Remme

For those dealing with grief and loss...

Mike Johnson & family with the loss of Janelle

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

Margaret Loger