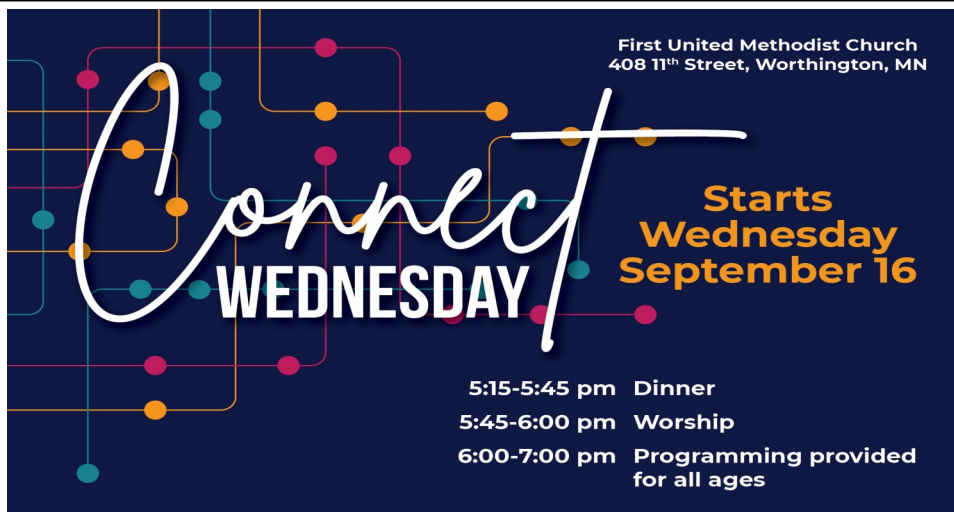


The Key Newsletter

September 2026

Volume 13 - Issue 09



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

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

Inside this issue

Family Light	2	Banquet Picture	10
Worship	3	Message/ Conference	11
Coffee Fellowship	4	Message from Pastor	12
Missions	5	Financial Report	13
Upcoming Events	6-7	September Birthdays/ Anniversaries/ Staff	14
September Calendar	8-9	Live Streaming Broadcast Schedule Sound/Media List Greeter List	15
		Prayer Corner Care Center Residents	16

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



There is so much to look forward to this fall and upcoming year!

Greg the Great will join 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!

Sunday School will begin on Sunday, September 20th. Elementary and Intermediate School students will meet at 9:00 downstairs. Adults will meet in the Fireside Room and study the book *Undistracted* by Bob Goff. This will include videos from Right Now Media.

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.

A dedicated **Prayer Team** for Resurface will meet on Thursdays at 9:00a.m. in Emmanuel Chapel. Please join us there in prayer - or commit to praying on your own - for our speakers, worship, preparations and attendees.

Serving Him Together,
Gretchen

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



A Campaign for Kindness Coming in September

The primary focus of the Love One Another Campaign is "Love In Action." Focus group conversations have made it clear that while polarization continues to increase and civility decreases, people are tired of just talking about it. It's time to do something. Jesus' commandment to love one another is clear, and he modeled for us what this love looks like. This year's campaign will focus on empowering and encouraging people to put love into action through both individual and corporate acts of compassion and kindness. Special resources, including a journal with ideas for daily acts of kindness and reflections, and small group and individual studies, will be available in September. We will also have Yard Signs and shirts available for purchase soon. Two years ago, by placing yard signs in our yards, we gained two new households that have joined our community of faith.

Week 1 – Love Another
Week 2 – Show Us
Week 3 – Abide in Us
Week 4 – You are MY FRIEND
Week 5 - TBA



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!

Thank you!

Serving at The Banquet was a success! Thank you to the 20 volunteers that helped serve 280 people.

Also, thank you for the monetary donations - \$888 will go to help pay for the meal that was prepared and \$116 which came from the noisy offering will go to the milk fund.

Thank you for your generosity and your care of those who need a meal.

Resurface

If registering for the conference on the church website is intimidating to you, please stop in the Narthex immediately after the Worship Service on August 30th or September 6th or 13th and sign up with Gretchen! Or call Lori at the church office any time! 507.372.2939

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.





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

Resurface

RENEWING YOUR MIND, BODY & SOUL

**Be a part of
our Resurface
Prayer Team!**

**Please join us in person or on your own to be
praying for our fall Resurface conference!**

Thursdays at 9:00a.m. in Emmanuel Chapel

August 27th through October 22nd

Church Work Day



**Help us
spruce up
the
building!**

**Thursday,
October 15.
9:00a.m.-
noon.**

RENEWING YOUR MIND, BODY & SOUL

Resurface



A Women's Conference

Saturday, October 24, 2026

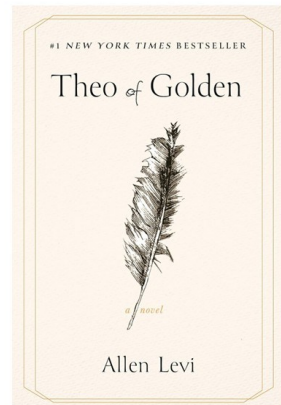
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

First Methodist Church, Worthington

**FIRESIDE BOOK
CLUB**

THEO OF GOLDEN

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5
7:00P.M. FIRESIDE ROOM.**



Banquet Pictures





August 19, 2026

Dear Worthington First UMC,

I am writing to you with a word of appreciation and an update on the ministry of Cristos En Tu Ayuda. First, thank you for the ways your congregation has continued to support the ministry of the Cristos En Tu Ayuda congregation with your prayers, hospitality, and financial support.

As you may know, Pastor Angel France who was serving Cristos En Tu Ayuda made the decision to leave the congregation to care for family matters in June. At this time, the congregation is not meeting as we begin the search for new leadership. I want to assure you that the conference continues to see the importance of a dedicated United Methodist Hispanic ministry in Worthington. With MissionInsite data indicating that almost 1/2 of the population identifies as Hispanic/Latino we know we are called to continue to develop a ministry here. Together with your superintendent and the office of strategy, innovation, and congregational development we are working to identify potential leaders and assess the needs.

In this time we ask that you partner with us in the following ways.

1. Pray for this community and for the elevation of the right leader for this time.
2. Welcome members of the Cristos En Tu Ayuda congregation that may join you for worship, prayer, or lift up other needs.
3. Help us to identify community leaders, partners, or resources that we may want to engage in conversation as we dream this next chapter.
4. Dream as a congregation about ways you might want to deepen your partnership with this planting congregation in a relaunch.

I welcome you as a congregation to join us in a time of breakthrough prayer over the next 60 days as we lean into what God is inviting us into!

Prayer

God of imagination and new beginnings, we lift the Cristos En Tu Ayuda congregation before you. Bring forward the right leader for this congregation to thrive and hold them close as they wait expectantly for what is next. Ignite in our congregation a curiosity and desire to deepen the ways we will partner with Cristos En Tu Ayuda in the future as we dream new dreams together. Amen.

In Christ,

Rev. Erica Koser
Director of Strategy, Innovation, and Congregational Development



A Note from Pastor John & Gretchen

I wanted to share some exciting news from Gretchen in her note below. We say at First UMC that our mission is to have Jesus known and to love our neighbors. This is always best done when we go outside of the church, as I say each Sunday, "As you go out into the world." I am super excited that Gretchen will be following this mission. I know she has been in deep prayer over this new adventure. Rest assured, she will continue her role here at FUMC.

July 28, 2026

Hello, friends!

Pastor John asked me to write a brief note to let you all know that I am running for the District 518 School Board. I do not see this as interfering with my job at all. My hours are flexible here (which I sure do appreciate), and so that helps greatly. Pastor John just wanted me to let you know that this is happening and that he is very supportive of my being out in the community in this way.

One other important note that Pastor John would like me to mention is that, should I be elected, when I am at work I'm here for the church, not the school district. So if you have school board questions or things to address with me, please do so when I am not at work. I will deal with board issues in the evenings, so that will be the best time to be in touch.

Thank you so much, and should you feel so led, I will appreciate your support!

Serving Him together,

Gretchen A. O'Donnell

Congregational Care Ministers

At First United Methodist and Adrian UMC, we strive to do ministry with excellence. One way we start providing excellent ministry is with our Congregational Care Ministers (CCMs) and our pastors. With a congregation of our size, we rely on trained CCMs to serve alongside our pastor and staff in Congregational Care by making hospital visits, following up on prayer requests, providing one-on-one support for those going through difficult issues, serving communion to those homebound and in nursing homes, and visiting our members who cannot get out and much more. The pastor will still make visits, but this will ensure more contact with our members.

If you feel called to care for others and wish to apply to become a CCM, please contact Pastor John, and he will get you the application. A training will be set up in September.

The deadline for our sign-up will be Sept 20th.





Financial Update for July 2026

Income

July 2026 Income \$38,451.28

2026 YTD \$195,887.84

2025 YTD \$212,055.86

Expense

July 2026 Expense \$ 19,490.57

2026 YTD 184,226.36

2025 YTD \$ 188,824.16

For the first time this year, we had a month in the "black". Thank you to all who gave in July and August.

We Made a Mistake

In the January minutes from the Covenant Council we said we needed to replace both projectors in the social hall at \$3000.00 each, for a total of \$6000.00.

In the letter you received with your giving statement, we did not do the math correctly when we said we needed \$3000.00. We needed to replace both projectors for a total of \$6000.00.

We have now received donations totaling \$3,250, which leaves us \$2,750 short, so we would welcome additional gifts.



Happy Birthday!

1 Leah Schuett	10 Karen Rye	22 Diane Honermann
2 Brenda DeSmith	Betty Taarud	23 Pat Grimmus
Dr. Mark Ludes	11 Angel Franco	Dylan Schuett
3 Pat Bretzman	Kenli Geertsema	Randy Taarud
4 Katlyn Hill	12 Matthew Yager	24 Diane Dybeveck
Etta Schroeder	13 Matthew Erlandson	25 Janet Jeppesen
5 Chris Dybeveck	Sharon Jones	Kory Nickel
Scott Heidebrink	14 James Jenson	26 Weston Erlandson
6 Carroll Miller	16 James Stefferud	27 Claire Ludes
9 Nathan Erlanson	17 Charger Erlandson	Roger Rye
Margaret Essman	Deron Soderholm	Conrad Schmidt
Sally Hibma	21 Wade Lawrence	28 Ian Ruppert
Shellie Williams		Jenna Winselman

Happy Anniversary!

2 Robert & Deb Horne	9 Dennis & Cheryl Bonsma
3 James & Laura Schuett	14 Conrad & Judy Schmidt
4 Jerald & Evelyn Green	18 Gary & Sally Higma
8 Bill & Deb Geertsema	25 James & Amy Stefferud

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

Office: (507) 372-2939 Fax: (507) 372-2404
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	September 6	Deb Steinle	John Steinle
Sunday	September 13	Kari Meyer	Claire Meyer
Sunday	September 20	Kari Meyer	Claire Meyer
Sunday	September 27	Deb Steinle	John Steinle

First UMC		Greeting Team
Sunday	September 6	Dick & Denise Schlichte
Sunday	September 13	LeAnn Donovan & Mary Monthei
Sunday	September 20	Rick & Dianne Dalrymple
Sunday	September 27	Chris & Diane Dybeck

Prayers for health concerns:

Rod Behrends	Ron Husenga	
Chris Nelson	Virgle Buck	
Logan Waldner		
Kristin (Dalrymple) Amundson		
Julie (Ginny Tate's sister)		
Carol Oberloh	Susan Bents	Galen Benton
Rylie Olson's grandpa	Kari Meyer's father	
Preston Smith (Pastor's friend)		



PRAYER CORNER

Those dealing with cancer:

Christopher Brown	Shellie Williams	Mike Miller
Marion Reitsma (friend of Jolene Kuhl)	Stacey White	
Nicole Bonsma	Diane (Sharon Algood's friend)	

Those recovering/dealing with health issues:

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

For those dealing with grief and loss...

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