

The Key Newsletter

February 2026

Volume 14 - Issue 02



Soup Cook-Off!

**Sunday, February
22 following
worship service.**

**Sign up in the
narthex by
February 15th**

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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www.firstumcworthington.com

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



After all of the activities and fun of December, January arrives at a much slower pace! We do have a few things coming up, however, that I hope will give opportunity for some fun and involvement here at FUMC.

Connect has reconvened for the winter! We have begun watching Season 2 of *The Chosen*. 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 adults will have the winter off.

Our next book club will meet on April 21. We will be reading ***The Invention of Wings*** by Sue Monk Kidd. Inspired by the historical figure of Sarah Grimke, the novel is set in the pre-Civil War south. The book covers the journey of a slave and her mistress over thirty five years, "as both strive for a life of their own, dramatically shaping each other's destinies and forming a complex relationship marked by guilt, defiance, estrangement and the uneasy ways of love."

Looking forward to seeing you at many of these activities!

Serving Him Together,

Gretchen

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

February Worship: "Come worship the Lord!"

The CHOSEN

Join us Wednesdays
at First United Methodist
Church, 408 11th Street,
Worthington, for a free
meal at 5:15. Afterwards, we
will watch The Chosen and
have a short discussion.
Childcare is provided.



Connect WEDNESDAY



5:15-5:45 pm **FREE Dinner for all ages**

5:45-6:00 pm **Worship**

6:00-7:00 pm **Exciting Kids, Youth and Adult
Programming**

*Adults will watch The Chosen series and have
a short discussion*

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

Ash Wednesday Service

**Wednesday, February 18th
6:30 p.m.**

First UMC Worthington





"Yes, It's all Worth it"

Creativity pays off

Back when I was a kid, this is how things went: church leaders met to plan programs. They implemented those programs, and virtually always, people attended said programs. Children, youth and adults were served. There wasn't much else to do, after all. Why not go to the neighborhood church and enjoy free food and entertainment. Sometimes the people came back and kept coming back and settled down and helped to plan future programming for children, youth and adults themselves. That was normal. That was good.

These days, churches offer programs for children, youth and adults. And sometimes, if you've promoted it well enough and checked every other possible school, community and family calendar, a few people attend. And so we try to get creative. Maybe this event? Maybe that one? How about this idea? A few of the ideas would have shocked my grandparents. But this isn't my grandparents' world. It isn't my grandparents' church.

But it is still God's.

And so we keep trying new ideas to compete with the busyness and opportunities of the world today. We try things like Bingo and seasonal parties. We check calendars and dates and have engaging graphics and entertainment. And then we leave the results up to God. And when we do that - when we trust Him to be working in our efforts and despite our inadequacies - we see Him do exciting stuff! Like when several ladies who attended Bingo came for the Ladies' Christmas party, and who knows what else will bring them our way in the future? And when the youth bring their friends on Wednesday nights. And when we open our doors and hearts to new projects and ideas.

We just wanted to say thank you for your support of our new ideas! And we are excited about some of the ideas we are planning for the future. Thank you in advance for your continued support, prayer, and help. To God be the glory! And please send us any creative ideas you have - who knows how God might lead us to serve him here at First Methodist Church!

Gretchen and the Family Life Team



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!

**Worthington**

A NIGHT OF COMEDY & ENTERTAINMENT



Marty Simpson
COMEDIAN



Tommy Binford
MUSICIAN

FEBRUARY 20TH, 2025 @ 6-9 PM
Lerma's Event Center
703 Oxford St. Worthington, MN

\$50 PER TICKET
Includes Meal
All proceeds go to Love INC

RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY! TICKETS ARE LIMITED!
GO TO WWW.LOVEINCW.ORG/COMEDIAN
OR EMAIL INFO@LOVEINCW.ORG



Missions Year End Thank You

2025 was another great year for missions. We were able to support many mission areas due to the generosity of our congregation through monetary donations and volunteering to help with projects. We are especially thankful for the generous monetary donation from the Foundation. We are so very grateful for all of the support that we receive throughout the year.

March FoodShare - A donation of \$200.00 was given to both pantries, Manna Food Pantry and Worthington Christian Church from the missions general fund and matched by the Worthington Healthcare Foundation.

Love Offering - \$225.00 which came from personal donations was given at the Minnesota Annual Conference.

Nobles County Backpack Program - A donation of \$500.00 was given to help purchase items that are needed for the backpacks which are given out to Nobles county children.

A few people from our congregation were there to help with setup and distribution.

New International Life Missions - A donation of \$1,000.00 was given to help support the non-profit organization run by Delbert & Sandy Groves in Zambia, Africa.

The Banquet - In August a group of 20 volunteers from First served an evening meal to 254 people. \$1,245.00 in donations was given to help pay for the meal.

The Coat Closet Gap Ministry of Love INC - Donations from the congregation of warm clothing items (coats, snow pants, hats, gloves, mittens, scarves & boots) were given to help keep the Coat Closet stocked.

Food Shelves - Donations of non-perishable items were given throughout the year by the congregation and given alternately to Manna Food Pantry and Worthington Christian Church Food Shelf. A donation of \$400.00 from the missions general fund was given to each of the pantries at the end of the year.

Every Meal - Pastor Angel along with help from his church distribute food to children at the Worthington Middle School throughout the school year.

Operation Christmas Child - Donations of items were given by the congregation to be packed into the boxes along with monetary donations of \$900.00 which helped to purchase additional items and help with shipping of the boxes. 180 boxes were packed between First & Adrian. CETA collected money to help with the postage for the boxes. Kits to make skirts and bags were put together and were sewn by volunteers. A group of people helped to make jump ropes from t-shirts which were included in the boxes.

Myra Palmer and Dianne Dalrymple were instrumental in helping to get these projects set up. Also, there were many helpers from the Night Light Circle, Sunday School kids and others who helped with getting the items for the packing party ready and also packing the boxes.

Time to Revive - Caleb Tiede - \$1,000.00 through personal donations and from the Mission general fund was given along with a year end donation of \$300.00 from the missions general fund.

ELIC – Linda Doeden – \$380.00 from personal donations along with a year end donation of \$300.00 from the missions general fund was given to Linda for her work in Laos.

Project Morning Star – A donation of \$300.00 from the missions general fund was given to them at the end of the year to help with their operating budget.

Teen Challenge of the Dakotas – \$300.00 from the missions general fund was given to them at the end of year.

Mission Haiti – Our biggest project of the year was a to raise \$10,000.00 for the SAM Elderly Home in Haiti. We were treated to a wonderful Haitian meal and heard about the needs at the home by the leadership team from Mission Haiti. We raised enough funds to surpass our goal - \$11,422.04!! We had a baked potato lunch where we took in \$952.00, a jewelry making fundraiser which netted \$400.00 and a pie fundraiser which earned us \$262.50. Three noisy offerings were taken and we collected \$1,518.46. Along with personal donations of \$7,002.15 from First and \$1,286.93 from Adrian we are able to help give some support for the people.

Zoom Lent 2026 Bible Study

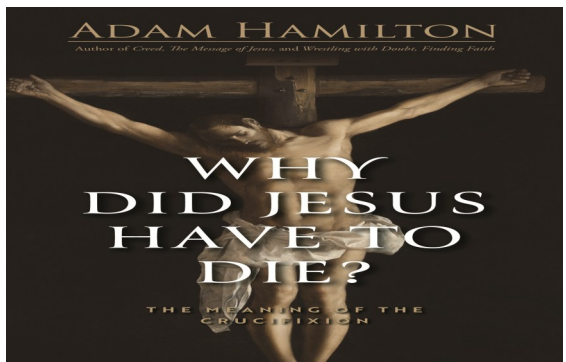
WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE?

When words fall short, the cross still speaks. Our small group will study a new book by Adam Hamilton — Why Did Jesus have to Do It? — The Meaning of the Crucifixion. Despite the crucifixion's central role in Christian faith, the New Testament offers few clear answers about how Jesus' death saves us or why exactly he had to die. The writers use many metaphors—ransom, sacrifice, reconciliation, victory—but never fully explain how it works or why it had to happen this way.

What if that's because we've been asking the wrong question?

What if the cross isn't just a transaction to be explained, but a living Word from God meant to transform us and how we live?

Join us on Monday nights starting February 23rd, 2026, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm on Zoom. To sign up for the Bible study use the QRC code below or contact Pastor John.



Bibles and Bows



**BIBLES
AND
BOWS**

Join us for a FREE, fun,
nondenominational archery
activity & fellowship!

All ages are welcome, but must
must be at least 8 years old to
shoot. All instruction and
equipment is provided!

FEB 14
4:00-5:30

**SOUTHWEST
BOWBENDERS**
27150 PLOTTS AVE

**QUESTIONS? CONTACT JOHN AT 507-370-0597
OR KYLEE AT 507-360-0761**

The poster features a central purple and yellow cloud-like shape containing the event details. To the left is a target with three arrows hitting the bullseye. To the right is an illustration of a person in archery gear aiming a bow. The background is a light beige color.

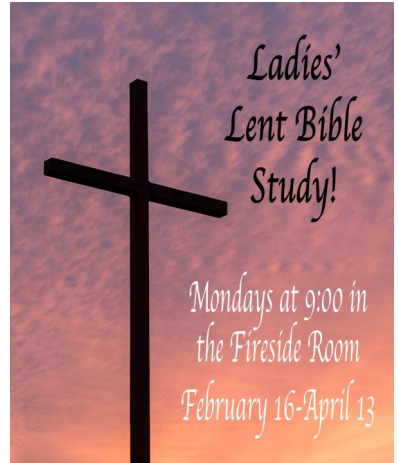
Decorating Valentine Cookies

**Join us during
fellowship
time on
Sunday,
February 15th
for some
yummy fun!**



Ladies Lent Bible Study

Ladies, please join us—or pick up a book to go through on your own—for our Lent Bible study, *Clinging to the Cross; How Lent points Us to Lasting Hope in Christ*. We will meet on Mondays at 9:00 am in the Fireside Room February 16-April 13 (excluding Easter Monday). Cost of the books is \$18. Let Gretchen know if you'd like a book!



Soup Cook-Off



Soup Cook-Off!

**Sunday, February
22 following
worship service.**

**Sign up in the
narthex by
February 15th**



Thursday, February 26
@ First United Methodist
*12:00 noon worship ** 12:30 pm fellowship dinner*
Pastor Jeanette McCormick

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



*Here are the highlights from
the First UMC Council meeting held
on Thursday, January 15, 2026*

CELEBRATIONS:

- \$11,422.04 was raised for Mission Haiti by First and Adrian churches, exceeding the \$10,000 goal.
 - It is hoped that members of the congregation might "adopt" the 12-13 Haitian residents and write letters to them in the coming year.
- Apportionments are paid in-full for the year.
- Gretchen reported that our fall events, such as Bingo, brought more individuals to the church than the previous event, including some who are former church attendees. Three ladies heard about and participated in the Ladies Christmas party after attending the Bingo event. These events provide outreach opportunities in keeping with our church mission of being a church where Jesus is known, all are loved, and neighbors are served, and the service of our volunteers is truly appreciated in making these events happen.
- Missions team:
 - A big thank you was sent out to Terry Perkins for her many years of service on the Missions team, as she is stepping down from her role.
 - Missions was able to disperse \$2000 in donations in 2025:
 - \$300 – Linda Doeden's mission work
 - \$300 - Project Morning Star
 - \$300 – Caleb Tiede/Time to Revive
 - \$300 - Teen Challenge of the Dakotas
 - \$400 to each of the local food shelves
 - Foundation reported donations:
 - \$3500/year to Missions
 - \$2400/year to Love Inc.
 - \$20,000/year to Family Life Coordinator
 - \$20,000/year to Cristo En Tu Ayuda
 - \$6000 to Caleb Tiede/Time to Revive

(continued from page 14)

CHALLENGES:

- One meal still needs to be covered for Wednesday night Connect.
- Painting the Fellowship Hall: Volunteers have backed out due to physical demands and a professional painter must be hired. An anonymous donor volunteered to pay for the painter. Jim shared that some a couple of members have now voiced unspecified concerns over painting the Fellowship Hall paneling. However, paint has already been purchased following Council discussions in September, October and November, and eventual approval from the Covenant Council and payment approved by the Trustees/Jim.
 - Pastor John clarified that the Trustees have not yet discussed this topic at a committee meeting, and one needs to be held soon. Pat G. volunteered to attend this Trustees meeting to provide information and answer any questions she can.

CURRENT FOCUS:

- Upcoming Lent activities:
 - Women's bible study
 - Zoom bible study
 - Confirmands will be assisting with Ash Wednesday service
 - Maundy Thursday service will be at Adrian and Good Friday at FUMC

CUTTING EDGE ISSUES:

- Family Life activities:
 - Feb. 15 – decorating cookies
 - Ladies' Lenten bible study begins Feb. 16
 - 3rd grade bibles
 - Women's Retreat will be held Oct. 24
- Bibles & Bows will resume once a month, beginning Jan. 17 at 4:00 PM at Southwest Bowbenders. All are welcome for fun and fellowship, even if they are not shooting. All equipment is provided.

CHALLENGES:

(continued from page 15)

- RightNow Media subscription has been canceled due to cost and reported inactivity by the company. Individuals have voiced interest in making personal donations to renew/restart the subscription. A motion was made and seconded to renew, and donations will be collected from those interested in contributing.
 - Any donations over the necessary funds will be saved and earmarked for a 2027 RightNow account.
- Fellowship Hall projectors were originally purchased in 2017 and one is no longer functioning.
 - A discussion was held regarding whether one or both projectors should be replaced. Consensus was to replace both but save the one that is functional as a backup.
 - Costs: \$3528/projector if purchased from the vendor, \$2700 if purchased from Amazon (plus a \$125 rebate gift card); may need to pay a professional to install if volunteers are unable to. Will attempt to install new projectors ourselves first.
Funds will come from the General Fund, not the Trustees.
- Decorative/Facility Update: Kyle Johnson will be coming in to assess the needs and costs of repairing the window frames/surrounding walls in the Fireside Room.
- The Council agreed to resume passing the offering plate in February, with the Greeters collecting the offerings during the Generosity Moment. Offering plates will be brought forward during the Doxology and placed on the altar by Pastor John.
 - Small cards will be available for those who donate online to place in the offering plate, if desired.
 - Anyone may volunteer to collect the offering if any Greeters are not comfortable or physically able to do so.
 - Those seated in the balcony can take care of that area, as it has historically been done (unless there are more than two greeters/ushers).

(continued from page 16)

- Jolene is unlocking doors on Sunday morning, and Pastor John will open up if she is not attending church on a given Sunday to ensure those in charge of coffee fellowship have access to the church in a timely manner.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- December was a very good month for giving and reduced expenses, allowing all apportionments to be paid up for 2025. There is a \$23,896.06 carry-over going into 2026, but most of this will go toward an annual \$18,800 insurance policy that must be paid in January. Cash flow at the beginning of the year is always hard, and we will also need to purchase the projectors for the social hall.

Next meeting date: Feb. 19, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Shirbourn, Council Recording Secretary



Happy Birthday!

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Heidi Klingenberg | 11 Donald Dirks | 18 Jonathon Heidebrink |
| 3 Allan Miller | 12 Marlene Miller | Stacie Miller |
| 4 Curt Hendel | Trevor Nickel | Kaylee Steinle |
| 5 Marlene Iblings | Dorothy Sietsema | 19 Dave Bushard |
| 6 Connor Tripp | 13 Ivy Jenson | 20 Julie Shore |
| 8 Owen Heidebrink | Ceta Zeba | 22 Braxton Vortherms |
| Josh Taarud | 14 Judy Schmidt | 23 Kylee Shirbroun |
| 10 Alice Kellen | Mary Van Horsen | 25 Abby Hibma |
| Brady Palaschak-Smeins | 16 Autumn Grussing | Elly Hibma |
| | 17 Jim Nickel | 26 Kyle Johnson |
| | | 28 Dustin Oberloh |

Happy Anniversary!

- 14 Angel & Lourdes Franco 21 David & Elizabeth Bushard

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
408 11th Street P.O. Box 668
Worthington, MN 56187
methodistoffice@gmail.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	February 1	Kari Meyer	Claire Meyer
Sunday	February 8	Deb Steinle	John Steinle
Sunday	February 15	Kari Meyer	Claire Meyer
Wednesday	February 18	Deb Steinle	John Steinle
Sunday	February 22	Rick Dalrymple	Deb Steinle

First UMC		Greeting Team
Sunday	February 1	Kathy Gallagher & Beth Habicht
Sunday	February 8	Kurt & Melissa Geertsema
Sunday	February 15	Bill & Deb Geertsema
Wednesday	February 18	Gary & Sally Hibma
Sunday	February 22	David & Hollie Hibma

Prayers for health concerns:

Rod Behrends	Corky Tate	
Chris Nelson	Shellie Williams	
Beth Habicht	Logan Waldner	
Virgle Buck	Clyde Scheevel	
Ron Husenga	Lowell Carlson	Etta Schroeder
Kathy Tetrick-Hoffbeck (Pastor @Jeffers)	Lourdes Franco	
Kristin (Dalrymple) Amundson	Dianne Dalrymple	
Anne Christine Lindell (Pastor John's friend)	Phil Bjerke	



PRAYER CORNER

Those dealing with cancer:

Janelle Johnson	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	
Ariana Lopez	Aiden Remme	

For those dealing with grief and loss...

Marlene Miller family with the passing of her brother, Ray Hinz

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