



# FIRST UNITED

METHODIST CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2023

phone: 651.439.1880

Hours: M-TH, 9AM-3PM

FRIDAY, 9AM-1PM

fumcstillwater@gmail.com

813 W. Myrtle Steet

Stillwater, MN 55082



*Pastor's Pause September, 2023*

*The most wasted of all days is one without laughter.”*

*— Nicolas Chamfort*

There is nothing like a good laugh. For me, laughing is my reset button. Whether it's reading a funny story, watching a comedic movie, or enjoying homemade blooper videos, laughter truly is a great healer.

Studies have shown that

laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins. These are the body's natural feel-good chemicals, which promote an overall sense of well-being and temporary pain relief.

Further research has also discovered that babies and children laugh hundreds of times a day. Adults, on the other hand, often barely make it to double digits. Even joyful people can feel weighed down by the pressures and heartaches of life. Especially now. Yet, we are reminded that even God has a sense of humor. Remember in Genesis, when Abraham and Sarah were told they would be having a baby at 100? Or when Jesus spoke in Matthew 19:24, "I'll say it again -it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" In God's Word we can trust that even though there are times of weeping there shall always be a time to laugh.

Jesus said whoever humbles himself like a little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:4). Maybe it's time to turn your troubles over to God and become more like a child—full of joy and laughter. True joy begins with knowing the God who created you. Find peace with God today.

*PRAYER: Creator God, there are so many sad and troublesome things to face in the world today, which too often cause our hearts to become weighed down with difficulties and doubts — but I pray that Your joy would fill my heart and strengthen my soul. And that times of joyful laughter would replace those seasons of weeping and hardship.*

*Amen.*



**Back to Regular Office Hours  
Starting September 5,  
M–Th 9:00 am–3:00 pm  
Friday 9:00 am –1 pm**

**August Finance Summary – IMPORTANT, PLEASE READ:**

**FIRST UNITED 2023 Annual Budget: \$271,850 (\$22,654/month)**

After 3 and a half years of Pandemic related uncertainty plus other challenges, FIRST UNITED's General Fund is just now showing a significant projected deficit at the end of 2023. The \$56,000 of PPP Federal assistance during 2020 and 2021 was a huge help at the time, but it did mask our true financial position. At the start of 2023 we could see our Pledged and Unpledged receipts were barely going to cover projected Budget Expenses, but we had faith that with good financial management and a little luck we would be okay. Unfortunately, at the end of July the General Fund shows a deficit of \$19,241. At our Aug 17 meeting, the Finance Committee compared the 2023 Budget against the actual receipts and expenses in the first half of 2023, and then projected how much they will be at year-end. We project our General Fund deficit could be over \$40,000 at the end of 2023 without further action.

The Finance Committee and Ad Council created a list of ideas to address this deficit and has already put several ideas into action. Of course, we welcome ideas from the congregation too, so feel free to contact any Finance committee member or me with your thoughts and ideas.

Please note that despite the possible deficit, we still do have ample money in the bank to operate the church for the time being. We have the financial reports and tables if you would like to see them – just contact any Finance member or me.

Thanks, Jim Nelson, Finance Chair

**New Treasurer needed: After 2 years of doing an excellent job of being FIRST UNITED Treasurer, Mark Ridgway decided to step down at the end of 2023. We will need a new Treasurer starting 1-1-24. If you are interested, please contact Jim Nelson.**



## SEPTEMBER HAPPENINGS OF YEARS GONE BY by Patsy Bellman

1983 - 40 years ago, Kathy Hauser (Hartman) was hired to direct the young children's choir, Joyful Noise.

1993 - 30 years ago, The United Methodist Men's group prepared and served the Rally Day Brunch. A new class, Sunday Morning Papers, was an Adult Education offering that discussed current events. At the September United Methodist Women's meeting, the women met with the Mission's Commission for a joint event to hear a speaker from the Southside Coalition. This was an initial step to adopt a long term local mission project. The Wesley Meals were then served for several years.

1998 - 25 years ago, the Open Circle group participated in Hudson's "Spirit in the Park."

2008 - 15 years ago, the men had their retreat at Kingswood Camp with the theme, "Who Was Your Inspiration?" It also included the annual bocce ball tournament.

## WINNER CIRCLE

We will resume our meetings on the second Thursday in September at 10:00 am. We look forward to hearing about your summer activities on September 14th! Ann & Vicki



## UMM

Join the United Methodist Men for a monthly devotion, breakfast, discussion, and fellowship. The meeting on September 9 will be at the Lowell Inn at 8 a.m. Contact the church office at [fumcstillwater@gmail.com](mailto:fumcstillwater@gmail.com) to join the UMM mailing list. Also mark your calendar for the Highway 12 Cleanup September 23. Meet at the church at 9am.

## RECONCILING COMMITTEE

The Reconciling Committee would like to invite everyone to join in on a book study. The book is Rainbow in the Word: LGBTQ Christians' Biblical Memoirs. The study is being led by Rev. Dick Fisher and it starts Sunday, Sept 17th after church (11:15 - 12 noon) for 6 weeks, ending Oct. 22. Books are available in the office for a free will offering. Feel free to pick up and read the book, even if you can not make class. Cynthia Frederick, [cynthfred@gmail.com](mailto:cynthfred@gmail.com)



# CARING MINISTRIES TEAM

The Caring Ministries Team is focused on the care and support of members of our congregation . This is done in the form of:

- \* Grief Ministry for those that have lost loved-ones
- \* Card Ministry for those that are ill, grieving, or are alone
- \* Soup Ministry for those that are ill, homebound or otherwise in need of food
- \* Meal Train for those that are ill, homebound, or unable to purchase or cook their own food
- \* Home Communion for those that are homebound and desire to share in monthly Communion
- \* Conversation Partners for those that are homebound, ill, depressed, or otherwise in need of a friend.



**New team members are welcome!**

We would love you to join our team if you would like to participate either:

- \* As a member of the team who meet every 4-6 weeks to plan, review, and determine steps necessary to fulfill our multiple ministries OR
- \* Participate in one or more of the above ministries and have NO MEETINGS

Please contact the church office.

**Next meeting is on September 14th at 10:30am in the Wesley Room. All are welcome.**

## ACT OF KINDNESS AND THOUGHTFULNESS AWARD Announcing September Winners!

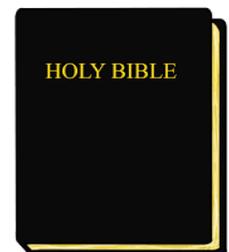


The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPR) would like to recognize Mary and Dennis Harcey as the September recipients of our Acts of Kindness Award. This exceptional couple have been selflessly giving of their time and talents to FIRST UNITED and our community for over 50 years! Mary has served on virtually every committee in the church with Dennis providing support as needed. Their accomplishments are too numerous to list in this short space. Be sure to tell them how much we appreciate them. They will each be receiving a Snicker Bar.

## FALL BIBLE STUDY

All are welcome to attend our Fall bible study as we continue our study of 1st Corinthians. We will begin on **Tuesday, September 19th at 9:30 a.m.** in the Wesley Room. Please contact our office if you wish to order a study guide. This will be a virtual event as well so please join us online as we look deeply into Paul's amazing letter.

'Questions? See or contact Jeff Levy at: [jlevy@susumc.org](mailto:jlevy@susumc.org).



## MARTHA GROUP

The Martha Group continues to meet on Tuesdays at the usual 10:30am time. We continue to work on the altar and sanctuary to have it ready for Sunday services each week. In addition we keep the inside and outside plants watered and try to work at keeping the church a welcoming place to all people..



## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

### URGENT Need for Tech Help with Sunday Services

The Tech Team has lost several members in the last couple of months and is now running with a minimum crew of 2 people. We typically have 3 people running the equipment each worship service. If one person is not able to assist with a worship service, we may not be able to send our worship service out to Facebook Live. The 35 to 40 people who tune into Facebook Live every week would not be able to view our worship service. Ideally, the Tech Team should be made up of 8 to 10 people. These 8 to 10 people will be trained on each of the 3 pieces of equipment used during a worship service. Once trained, they will be added to the rotation to cover 1 of the pieces of equipment on Sunday morning or during one of our special services. Our goal is to have enough Tech Team people to cover every piece of equipment once or twice a month. We are looking for men, women, and teenagers to help fill out our tech team. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to assist with our worship service, please contact Bruce Clark, or Bonnie Haines. Thank you for considering being a member of the Tech Team.



## SCRIP IS STILL AVAILABLE!

Scrip is available! Orders can be placed at Sunday worship services, Wednesday dinners, or anytime by email to [benj.w.jackson@comcast.net](mailto:benj.w.jackson@comcast.net). Payment for email orders can be dropped off at the church during office hours. Scrip doesn't cost, it pays!



## THE BELL CHOIR

The Rivertown Ringers Bell Choir will be starting rehearsals on Wednesday August 30 at 6:00! Have you played in the past and would like to join our fun group? We'd love to have you! Contact Kathy Hartman 651-430-2096.

## BRIDGE GROUP

The Bridge Group will meet September 1 at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Beginners are welcome! Contact the church office at [fumcstillwater@gmail.com](mailto:fumcstillwater@gmail.com) to join the Bridge Group mailing list.



## FAITH FORMATION

A plan is in place to offer Faith Formation on any given Sunday that children are present in worship. Following Christ's Kids time, the children and teachers will be invited to leave for their own class time downstairs for the remainder of the worship service. It is important that people who volunteer at the Welcoming Table are aware of this, as they may well be the first to welcome a visiting family. Those of you who bring your grandchildren to church will also want to know of this option for children.

As of now, three teachers are willing to leave worship to minister to the children. If you would be willing to be included in this list please talk to Patsy Bellman. We may not have any young families in our congregation at the present time, but if we have something to offer for the children, it may encourage a visiting family to return.

# WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPERS BEGIN SEPTEMBER 13

The Wednesday cooks met for a wrap-up meeting late last spring. Three of our head cooks will be continuing on. Since we will have one fewer head cook, and the potluck nights were well received, it was decided that the final Wednesday of each month would be a potluck dinner. The suggested donation is also increasing to \$7.00. (It has been \$5.00 for many years and during that time food costs have increased considerably.) Also, there is no collection can set out on the potluck nights. The increase will cover the cost of paper plates, cups and drinks on the potluck nights. There are opportunities to try out being head cook for a one time experience, or to be a helper in the kitchen. Volunteers are always welcome, talk to Adam Frederick, Mary Harcey, or Patsy Bellman. On the Potluck Nights bring a dish to share - main dish, salad, fruit, veggies, or dessert.

## MISSIONS

At our missions meeting, we decided to promote monetary donations for UMCOR in Maui through the month of **September**. Donna Fisher will enclose a poster with the newsletter for September. September 10 is the day when the church service starts at 10:00. It will be a special Rally Day. Donna Fisher will bring leis and Linnea Shinn will bring doughnuts. Other committees will be bringing treats also. There will be a brief meeting at 9:00am to make sure all our bases are covered.

**October** we will promote the Heifer Project. After church on October 8, we will have a Blessing of the Animals. We will promote monetary donations for Heifer Project through the month of October. Linda will provide brochures for the Heifer Project.

**November** we will be collecting gift cards for Community Thread for families in need. Donate gift cards in \$25 increments to grocery stores, gas stations and retail stores. The donation deadline is the end of November.

**December** we will be joining forces with th Martha Group to collect items of food and monetary donations. These gifts will be delivered to Valley Outreach in January.

**January** we are hoping to have a donation drive for Hope for the Journey Home.

Also next year, we are hoping to form a team for Habitat for Humanity, set up a mission trip and form a partnership with Lake Elmo School and Cimarron Community.

Thank you!

Linnea Shinn



## SEPTEMBER

Sept. 1 Laurie Bauer; Sept. 2 Barb Cobb; Sept. 3 Mason Schwerzler; Sept. 4 Mike Trimbo; Sept. 5 Debbie Krinke; Sept. 9 Lillian Wright, Sept. 11 Chris Nelson; Sept. 12 Sarah Anderson; Sept. 13 Diana Miller; Sept. 15 Shawn Helwig; Sept. 16 Reece Bastyr; Sept. 18 John Auer; Sept. 21 Bridget Haugen; Sept. 23 Everett Bye; Sharon Dockstader Sept. 24 Bonnie Haines, Megan Keller; Sept. 25 Kathy Jones; Sept. 26 Nathan Agard.



# YOUTH COUNCIL

## FALL ACTIVITIES

The Youth Council has developed activities geared towards a service project each month and a fun activity every month for our youth and their friends and families. A list of the of these are below:

### September

\* **Service**- September 10th - help with games after church on Rally Day- Youth Council will shortly be contacting our youth to recruit for this event.

\* **Fun**- September 23rd - Clued Up event in St Paul - Clued Up creates unique escape room style experiences. We will leave the church at 9:00 am and drive to the starting point in St Paul, using our phones we will receive clues to follow as we walk around downtown St Paul to try to solve the mystery. The theme for Sept is Beauty and the Beast related. Let Cynthia Frederick know if you have questions or are able to come, 651-214-9323. Bring money for lunch.

### October

\* **Service** - Date: TBD. Support a youth TRUNK or TREAT event. This project involves decorating a car trunk and providing candy to kids and families who come to visit at our church.

\* **Fun** - Date: TBD. Haunted Hayride

### November

\* **Service** - Date: TBD. Rake A Difference- youth and adults going to home of people needing assistance. Future activities for the rest of the school year were discussed and will be communicated asap.

## SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In June of this year FIRST UNITED awarded scholarships to our 3 students that are beginning college in the fall. We find there is a shortfall in this line item in the budget and would appreciate a donation to cover this. If you are willing to donate, please send your donation with "Scholarship Fund" written on the subject line of the check.

## NEXT MEETING

Date and time for our next meeting TBD but will be before Rally Day.

## TRUSTEES

We will not have a scheduled meeting in September. In August the retaining wall was redone to meet the standards required by the city.

Tom Ash.

