



# FIRST UNITED

## METHODIST CHURCH

**FEBRUARY, 2025**  
**Office Hrs.: M-Th, 9AM-4PM**  
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### PASTOR'S PAUSE FEBRUARY 2025

More than eight hundred years ago, Francis of Assisi prayed, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy."



Sometimes when we hear the latest tragic story of violence or hardship in the world, the idea of being an instrument of peace can seem overwhelming. But small acts of kindness remind us that in the face of fear, injury, and hatred, good does exist.

Similarly, we are bombarded with a 24-hour news cycle that does not seem to promote it, but church, believe me when I say, good does still exist in the world. It exists in my friends, children and my dear grandbaby, my neighbors, the hands of volunteers who help build houses after natural disasters, especially in places like California, in the sacrifices of military personnel fighting for someone else's safety, and in the simple ways we choose to serve others at work, at home, and in the community.

As Francis concluded, "It is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life." Acting kindly means dying to self, so that the needs of others might be met. And when we live out God's kindness in ordinary ways, even moments of despair can become opportunities for hope. May you live that out in the days and months ahead.

*PRAYER: Creator God, in a broken, troubled world, remind me of the peace I can offer others through practicing simple acts of kindness. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen.*



## RECONCILING TASK FORCE Cynthia Frederick, Chair

Matt Lewellyn-Otten, (he/him, they/them) Associate Director of Religious Organizing at OutFront Minnesota, will continue to lead Educational Sessions. These classes are open to everyone and we encourage all to attend. Matt was sick in January, so he will be joining us on Sunday, Feb. 9th, to lead the class on Queer Theology 101. We will be looking at the Bible passages that some see as condemning homosexuality. Matt will help us build “a new theological framework that allows us to see a theology that welcomes and affirms all people. You will receive notes on best practices for weaving this theology into your congregational life.” The class will be held in the Fellowship Hall at 11:15, right after church.

Please feel free to bring your thoughts and questions to the Reconciling Committee, made up of: Cynthia Frederick, Patsy Bellman, Sharry Swann, Lizzie Bellman, Mike Ptacek, and Pastor Jenny Lind Larsen.



## WOMEN OF FAITH

Our Women of Faith, United will hold their meeting on February 13th at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. Nancy Clark and Arlene Higgs are hosting. Our mission will be to tie 4 large and 1 small fleece blanket(s) at our meeting. These will then be donated to the Bridging Organization. All are welcome and we hope to see you there. Invite a friend to join this wonderful fellowship of women.



## THANK YOU TO DOROTHY REEVES!



Dorothy Reeves loved her FIRST UNITED Methodist Church! She and her family had a decades-long, loving relationship with the church that started in the 1950's, and continued to the day she passed away on December 20, 2024. Her faith in Jesus never wavered through good times and bad. Dorothy was a consistent attendee, sitting in the same pew every week and wearing a warm smile while offering a pleasant greeting to all. She will be missed.

Dorothy was incredibly generous too. In addition to her weekly financial contributions over the years, as her legacy to the church, she also took out 2 life insurance policies listing FIRST UNITED as beneficiary. Those policies have now been submitted, and the proceeds will be distributed to FIRST UNITED in the next few weeks. These financial gifts from Dorothy will help FIRST UNITED stay financially stable going forward.

**Again, thank you to Dorothy Reeves!**

## WEDNESDAY SUPPERS

Dinner is served each Wednesday at 5:30, no reservation is needed, just show up. A donation of \$7.00 is requested from everyone able to pay. That way our expenses will be covered and we are able to welcome first time visitors and those in need of a free meal. The final week of each month is a potluck meal, so bring a dish to share on February 26.

## SCRIP IS AVAILABLE!

The Scrip Order Schedule is posted on the church website homepage <https://fumcstillwater.com/> under Announcements and on the church Information Center. The next order will be placed on March 2. Orders can be placed after Sunday worship services or anytime by email to the church office at [fumcstillwater@gmail.com](mailto:fumcstillwater@gmail.com). Order blanks are available at the church Information Center or in the office. Payment for email orders can be dropped off at the church during office hours.



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## UNITED METHODIST MEN (UMM)

Join the United Methodist Men for a monthly devotion, breakfast, free range discussion, and fellowship. The February 8 meeting 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.



## ACT OF KINDNESS AND THOUGHTFULNESS AWARD

### Announcing our **FEBRUARY** Winner...**DON FOWLER**



Generous, kind, funny, and tough as nails. That's Don Fowler. I got to know Don one Sunday a little over a year ago. He had come through the doors of our church shortly after his beloved Bev, wife of 50 years, had passed. Beside himself with grief, he turned to our church, the one he and Bev had attended years before. Members whole-heartedly wrapped him in their love, and somehow he has been able to endure his grief. He is intensely grateful to the church. And he shows his gratitude by insisting on helping wherever he can, whether it's busting suds after Wednesday Night Supper or helping with the offering plates. He has also spent much of his adult life in the service of his country as a Marine and recruiter. His loyalty to his family and friends, country, and

God are very obvious. Don LOVES to be around people, and he especially likes to laugh; he is as friendly and kind-hearted as they come. The church has benefitted from his wonderful personality and his wonderful baking, since he always brings something that tastes good to our church suppers. The church is truly blessed to have had Don Fowler walk through its doors! *Article contributed by Jason Haugen*

## CARING MINISTRIES TEAM

The Caring Ministries Team met on January 16 to evaluate the recent needs of our congregation, so that we could provide care through our meal and soup ministries, card ministry, Communion outreach, or grief support. If anyone knows of a member or friend who would benefit from any of these support systems, please contact the church office.

The Caring Ministries Team supports friends and members of our church family who are in need during times of loss, sadness, illness, or loneliness in the form of food, visits, cards, Communion, or calls. We appreciate all of our volunteers who either do a one-time outreach or are part of the ongoing planning team. If you would like to be an occasional supporter or a monthly team member, please call the church office.



## MUSIC

The music team has begun practicing for the Tenebrae service and Easter Sunday. We are always looking for more musicians to volunteer in the Rivertown Ringers as well as the Chancel Choir.

There will be another signup for nominating your favorite hymn to be sung at a Sunday service. The form will be on the information center desk.



## FEBRUARY IS “ADOPT A CHILD” MONTH

Check out the back wall in the sanctuary for the names of all the children and youth who are a part of our church family. Choose one to seek out and recognize by:

1. Praying for them.
2. Send them a valentine.
3. Greeting them whenever you see them.



To "adopt" a child, remove the heart from the wall and take it with you. You will find their address on the back side of the heart.

## ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL JANUARY 16 BRIEF

**Holy Week Schedule** April 16 to April 20 - 4/16 Wednesday Night Meal; 4/17 Maundy Thursday Communion 6:30 p.m.; 4/18 Tenebrae Service 7 p.m.; 4/20 Easter Sunrise Service and 10 a.m. Service.

**Musical Ministry Job Search** - Staff Parish Committee is seeking a candidate(s) that can serve as Director of Musical Ministry, organist or organist/accompanist.

**Finance** - The General Fund shortfall was balanced in 2024 with a transfer of \$26,842 from the Legacy Fund. “Extra Mile” donations during 2024 from pledging families and adherence to budgeted amounts for committees helped to minimize the use of Legacy Fund cash reserves. Both AA and Sunny Hill are going to increase their contribution for 2025. Sunny Hill is considering expansion of their programming to before and after school elementary students.

**Trustees** - The Trustees completed a repair in the main level Men’s restroom and are proceeding with fan vendor quotation for repair of the northeast Sanctuary ceiling fan. Trustees are finalizing plans for conversion of the main level Men’s restroom to a Unisex Restroom, and conversion of the north and south entrance doors to a keypad/keyless entry system.

**Nominating** - Pam Hartley was elected to serve on the Staff Parish Committee.

**2025 Outreach Planning** - The Healthy Church Initiative recommendations were reviewed, with emphasis on ways for FIRST UNITED to increase our service and witness in the community.



## BRIDGE GROUP

The Bridge Group will meet February 7 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.

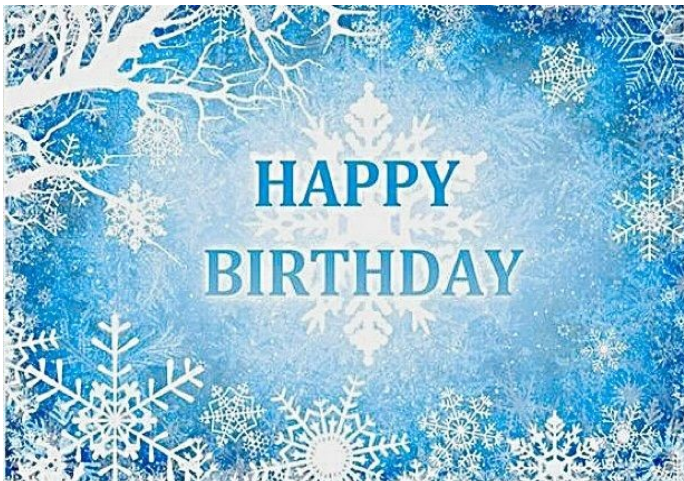
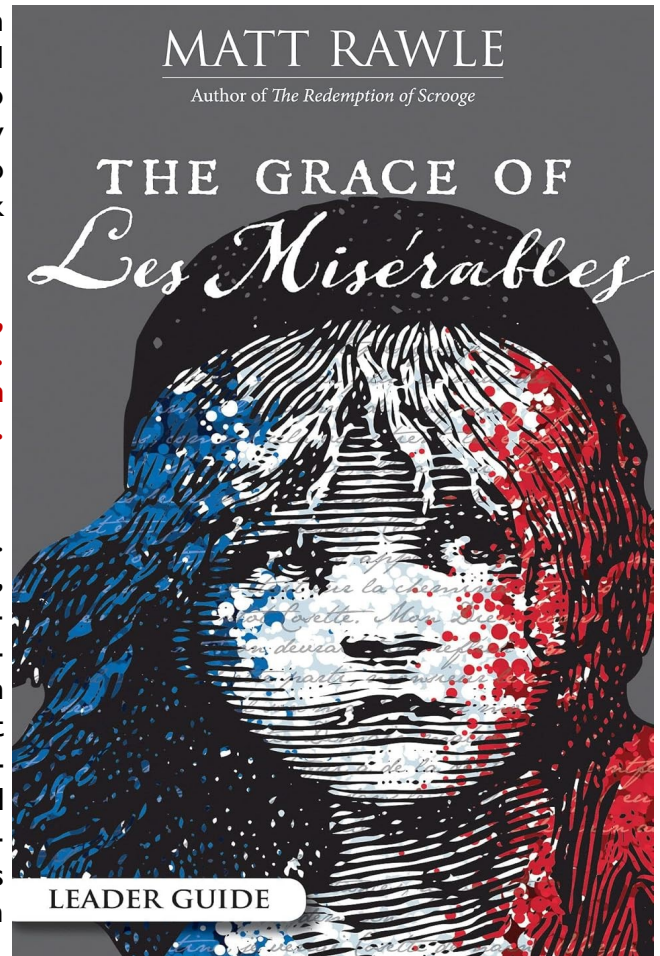


## 2025 LENTEN DISCOURSE (If you're tired of the word "study")

It's hard to believe that Lent is so close at hand, but March 5 is Ash Wednesday this year with Easter landing on April 20. Sharry Swann and Pastor Jenny will be teaming up to walk us through the book, *The Grace of Les Miserable* by UMC Rev. Matt Rawle. Based on the novel by Victor Hugo and of musical and movie fame, we will begin this six-week rendering during Lent starting,

**SATURDAY(S) - NOT Sundays - March 8, 16, 22, 29, April 5, April 12 at 10am in the Wesley room. Coffee and treats provided.  Sign-up sheet is in the office. Suggested donation for the book is \$15. (\*\*Detailed description below)**

\*\*Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* is a truly epic story. Whether you've tackled the 1,400-page 19th-century novel, witnessed the Broadway musical (and memorized its soundtrack), or seen the several screen adaptations of it, you already know the power of its story. In the six-week Lenten study *The Grace of Les Misérables*, author and pastor Matt Rawle dives into six ideals found in the story—grace, justice, poverty, revolution, love, and hope—each represented by a character in Hugo's story. As these imperfect and relatable characters interact, we can see how these ideals work together (perhaps even in spite of each other) out in the world.



### FEBRUARY

**Feb. 3 Samantha Hauser, Feb. 4 Frankie Reyna; Feb. 6 Erik Eitzman; Feb. 8 Janet Morgen; Feb. 11 Jasmine Zenner; Feb. 15 Virginia Miller, Feb. 17 Christina Leines; Feb. 18 Renita Deaton, Dorene Hauser, Rachel Reyna, Linden Terwilliger; Feb. 20 Sylvia Dalzell.**

## A LOOK BACK IN OUR HISTORY By Patsy Bellman

1995 -30 Years Ago Debi Orff (who is currently filling in as pianist) was the director of the Joyful Noise children's choir, Youth Chimes, and the Teen Choir. The youth had a busy February with both a Spaghetti Dinner Fund Raiser and a Ski Weekend.

2005 - 20 Years Ago There were two active adult social groups in the church. The 50+ Group enjoyed outings to theaters, game nights, and even a hayride. The Adults R Us group enjoyed bonfires, games, stereos, and the St. Croix River Islands.



## YOUTH COUNCIL

The Youth Council met on Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> to make plans for youth and children's programs through May.

- February or early March youth will have a make your own pizza and movie night – date tbd.
- Early April, probably Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>- program with families of Sunny Hill for craft fair and Easter egg hunt.
- Easter egg hunt on Easter Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup> for children in the congregation.
- Early May youth and Youth Council to create Mother's Day flower gifts for congregation and distribute on Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Late spring or summer youth will volunteer for a shift at Feed My Starving Children- date tbd.

Next Youth Council meeting is on Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.