



# FIRST UNITED

## METHODIST CHURCH

**JANUARY, 2025**  
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### PASTOR'S PAUSE JANUARY 2025



On the first day of a new year many of us wish each other a "Happy New Year!" But as we begin a new year, we need more than a hopeful greeting from the people around us. We need to listen to what God told Joshua about 3,400 years ago. As Joshua was about to lead God's people into the promised land, he had reason to be afraid. He had an enormous task ahead of him, and he was well aware of the dangers that he and the people would soon be facing. He needed God's encouragement.

As we move into 2025, we may be facing new challenges, things we didn't expect. But with that said, we need to be able to laugh in the moment. And who greater than the classic humorist, Erma Bombeck to give us some encouragement. Here are her New Year's resolutions:

1. I'm going to clean this dump just as soon as the kids grow up.
2. I will go to no doctor whose office plants have died.
3. I'm going to follow my husband's suggestion to put a little excitement into my life by living within our budget.
4. I'm going to apply for a hardship scholarship to Weight Watchers.
5. I will never loan my car to anyone I have given birth to.
6. And just like last year...I am going to remember that my children need love the most when they deserve it the least.

Church, what happens in this coming year is not left to chance. God is in charge, and God promises to stay close: "The LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Many years later, the Lord Jesus made the same promise when he said, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20). That's the reason we can wish each other a "Happy New Year with a smile!"

*PRAYER: God in heaven, thank you for the gift of a new year, for laughter and for your promise to stay with us. We ask for your guidance and wisdom each day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## RECONCILING TASK FORCE Cynthia Frederick, Chair

The educational sessions on Sunday mornings will continue in January. Matt Lewellyn-Otten, (he/him, they/ them) Associate Director of Religious Organizing at OutFront Minnesota, will lead the next class, Queer Theology 101. It takes a look at the clobber passages in the Bible. This will be on Sunday, Jan. 12, in the Fellowship Hall at 11:15, right after church. Matt will also lead a class on Sunday, February 9, at the same time.

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.



## THANK YOU...

I wanted to thank everyone for your thoughts, prayers, cards and gifts during the past year for the most challenging health diagnosis and treatment I've ever experienced. Life is not so easy at times, I feel so blessed for having the support of the church community, family and friends. Most importantly, I'm also blessed that God has been with me the entire time providing comfort and healing. I continue to heal and I'm doing good. My family looks forward to getting back to normal activities in 2025! Thanks again,

Diana and Mark Miller



## WOMEN OF FAITH

On Thursday, January 9th the Women United in Faith group will be meeting at the Lake Elmo Inn at 11:00 am for our annual luncheon. It will be a wonderful time of fellowship and food! If you are interested in joining us, please contact Vicki Anderson.



## THANKS FROM THE MARTHA GROUP

Many thanks to our congregation for helping out during the Advent and Christmas season. Those who helped with the decorating to help our church be seasonal and welcoming, thank you. For those who shared their nativity scenes, it is much appreciated. Thanks also to those who donated money for flowers and to the music program. We hope you felt the hope, peace, joy and love this season and that it will continue throughout the year.

## WEDNESDAY SUPPERS

The weekly dinners will resume on January 8. A potluck dinner will take place on the final Wednesday of the month - January 29. Meals begin at 5:30 each week and all are welcome.

# WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT SHOULD READ OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER?

If you have a friend, acquaintance, visitor, former member or have a family member who would benefit from receiving First United monthly newsletter and other church communications, please contact Denice to add them to our church email list. We want as many people as possible seeing the good work FIRST UNITED performs every day.

## SCRIP IS AVAILABLE!

The Scrip Program provided \$1,295 to the church General Fund during 2024. Thank You to all who participated. 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 February 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.



## 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.



## UNITED METHODIST MEN (UMM)

Join the United Methodist Men for a monthly devotion, breakfast, free range discussion, and fellowship. The January 11 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.



## CARING MINISTRIES TEAM

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. Our next meeting will be in Thursday, January 16 at 1pm. All are welcome to join us. The date will be available on the church calendar shortly.





## A LOOK BACK IN OUR HISTORY By Patsy Bellman

The Annual Report of 1975 tells that a youth retreat was held at Camp Kingswood in January. - One sentence... I was a college student in 1975 and had been invited to attend as one of the 'chaperones'.

The youth met at the church after school that Friday on a warm, rainy, winter day. A school bus driven by Rev. Art Hill was our mode of transportation. We loaded up the bus and headed south on Greeley Street only to find that Greeley Street was flooded in the low spot between the pond and Lily Lake. Several cars were turning around, but Art assured us that the bus was high and would make it through. About half way through our drive, the rain turned into snow, but we made our way on to camp. After supper the camp director stopped by to say that he was leaving some candles and matches for us because, "Sometimes a heavy snow like this will cause a power outage."

Sure enough, about a half hour later the power went out and didn't return for the rest of our stay. The first night it was a fun adventure. We were in a warm building, so no electricity was a minor inconvenience. When we woke up in the morning, we began to feel the chill of a furnace that didn't work. The temperature had dropped to below freezing, so that didn't help either. A fire was built in the meeting room fireplace and kept burning to give up some warmth. The range in the kitchen was gas, so the director and his wife were able to continue providing meals. They also kept the burners lit to give off some much needed heat. The water pump at camp was electric, so snow was collected in big pots, melted, and poured into the toilet tanks for an occasional flush. Rev Hill had planned to drive the one car that accompanied our group back to church on Sunday morning so he could preach in Stillwater. He spent time trying to shovel out on Saturday, and the director attempted to plow the camp road for him, but there was too much snow and the county or township hadn't plowed yet anyway Art made a phone call to his wife, Elaine and she assured Art that no one would be at church anyway because of 3+ feet of snow there.

By Saturday evening the only relatively warm spot was in the meeting room near the fireplace. Sleeping bags were moved from the bunk beds in the sleeping rooms to the floor of the meeting room and that's where we all slept. Sunday morning a phone call was made requesting that the road be plowed so our bus could get to the highway. With the temperatures continuing to drop, we wouldn't be safe for an extended stay. After lunch we loaded up the bus, drove down the camp road and found that the snowplow had just gone through. We made it back to Stillwater safe and sound. It wasn't an ordinary youth retreat, but it sure was an adventure!

## YOUTH MINISTRY/YOUTH COUNCIL

The Youth and the Youth Council recently came together to do some Christmas baking for our homebound folks. We all had fun and the result was 12 festive Christmas packages ready to be delivered.



