

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025
8:30 AM



✠ Rise in body or in spirit.
The congregation speaks
/ sings the text in **bold**
type



For information about the
ministries, mission, and
activities of Duluth First
United Methodist Church,
please visit duluthumc.org.



Children are welcome in
worship!

Children's activity sheets
& crayons are available at
the main entrance to help
guide them in active
participation of worship.

Children newborn through
Pre-K are invited to go to
Childcare Corner, near the
Gathering Room.



Listening devices are
available during all worship
services. See an usher or
greeter for assistance.

ENTRANCE

Prelude | *Carol of the Bells* – Emily Anne Klayman, *Arranger & Pianist*

Welcome & Announcements

Vicki McLemore
Liturgist

✠ Hymn 219 | *What Child Is This* – GREENSLEEVES

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle

Kay Apley & Connie Barrett

Today, we come face to face with the scandal of Advent: Mary, the unmarried mother; God Incarnate growing in Mary's womb as a vulnerable baby; Joseph contemplating leaving Mary because of her pregnancy; God's love at work in ways that society and propriety could not understand; God calling Mary and Joseph to faithfulness despite the fear of disgrace.

With Mary and Joseph, we choose to wait, watch, and listen for the way of Love instead of responding in fear to the world's judgment.

We light this candle of love as a sign of our faithfulness as we seek, find, and follow Emmanuel, God with us.

✠ Sung Response

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

WORD & RESPONSE

✠ Scripture | Matthew 1:18-25

Karen Valduga

Common
English Bible

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn't want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. ²⁰ As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ²² Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

²³ *Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,
And they will call him, Emmanuel.*

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵ But he didn't have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

The Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon | *Signs from God: Signs and Faithfulness*

Rev. Dr. C. Kay Fuino
Associate Pastor

Prayer of Confession & Assurance of Pardon

Holy One, You call us to wake from sleep, to become aware to our surroundings.

The dawn of a new time of preparation is upon us. Forgive us when sleepiness takes its toll, when our discussions become battles, when our judgment and self-judgement outweigh our faith. Let us put on the light of Christ and live as You have called us in respect, in mutual dialogue, and in healthy living.

Help us so that everything we do reflects Christ's light. Amen.

✠ Sharing the Peace of Christ

Ministry Moment | *Long Term Facilities Maintenance Fund*

Robert Gates
Chair of Trustees

Receiving God's Tithe & Our Offering

Offertory | *Gesu, Bambino* – Pietro Yon

Emily Anne Klayman & Eva Mayfield, *Vocalists*
Sylvia Brock, *Pianist*

✠ Doxology | *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* – OLD 100TH

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

THANKSGIVING

✠ The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

...

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

...

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer our ourselves in praise and thanksgiving,
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

...

All honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against
us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is
the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Breaking the Bread, Receiving the Bread & Cup



Your giving is the
sole support of the
ministries of
Duluth First UMC.
For online giving,
go to
[duluthumc.org/
online-giving](http://duluthumc.org/online-giving), or
scan the QR code
with your
mobile device.



Prayer after Communion

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For questions regarding membership, contact Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles – arawles@duluthumc.org or 770.476.3776, x. 128.

Invitation to Christian Discipleship & Church Membership

SENDING

Those who wish to join the church today are invited to come forward as we sing the final hymn.

✠ Hymn 251 | *Go Tell It on the Mountain* – GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Reception of New Members (as applicable)

Hymnal, pgs. 34, 38

ALSO SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Audio/Visual Team:

Tabitha Lee
Joel McLemore
Ian Toole

Usher Captains:

David Burleson
Charlie Doerlich

We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As members together with you in the body of Christ and in this congregation of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

✠ Benediction

✠ Postlude

...

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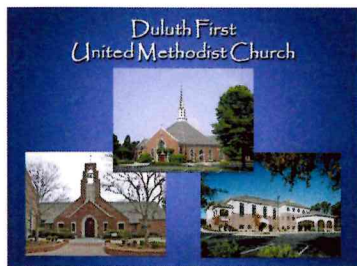
The Sunday Supplement



DECEMBER 21, 2025

Welcome to Duluth First United Methodist Church!

We are glad that you came to worship with us today. The mission of Duluth First United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. If you are looking for more information about Duluth First United Methodist Church and its ministries, Bible studies, and other programs and events, please be sure to visit our church's website at www.duluthumc.org.



To join Duluth First United Methodist Church, please come forward as we sing the song that follows the Invitation to Church Membership.

If you have any questions regarding membership or you are visiting and would like additional information, please contact Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles, Associate Pastor, by e-mail at arawles@duluthumc.org, or call 770-476-3776, ext. 128.

Prayer Concerns



- Kathy Anderson • Tracy Balkcom • Rosemary Hall • Shamain Hallett
- Carol Hitchcock • Carol Johnson • Linton Jones • Cheryl Otto
- Charlie Pierce • Lin Ramstead • Ann Reifert • Ethel Sales
- Abbie Stein • Clara Truesdell • Dale VanPelt
- Christy Wolfe & family in the death of her brother.



Want someone to talk to?

Stephen Ministers are there for you.

For more information or to request the support and care of a Stephen Minister, contact Rev. Dr. C. Kay Fuino by e-mail at ckfuino@duluthumc.org or call Stephen Leader Ann Fleming at 678-644-9108.



Christmas Eve Services: Wednesday, December 24th

Noon - Family Christmas Eve Service

- The Family Christmas Eve Service, with candlelight to close the service, will be held in Hinton Hall.
- Music, featuring Christmas carols, will be led by the Contemporary Worship Praise Team.
- The service will be live streamed on the **Duluth First UMC Contemporary Worship** page on Facebook.

4:00 and 6:00 p.m. - Candlelight Services

- The Christmas Eve Candlelight Services will be held in the Sanctuary.
- Music, featuring Christmas carols, will be led by members of the Ministry of Music and Worship Arts.
- The services will be live streamed on the **Duluth First UMC Worship** page on YouTube.

Children, newborn through pre-Kindergarten, are eligible for childcare at *Childcare Corner* at all three services.



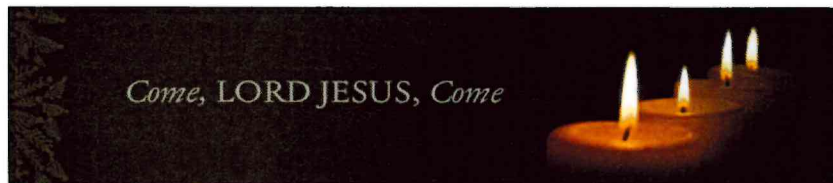
Youth Ministry Sunday Night Gatherings in December

Students in the 6th through 12th grades are invited to join us on Sunday nights for **Sunday Night Gatherings** from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank"), located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center (unless otherwise noted). **Sunday Night Gatherings** include great dinners, fun games, amazing worship, inspirational and relevant messages and life-changing small groups.

Our schedule for the month of December is:

- **Sunday, December 21st:** Ice Skating from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Atlanta IceForum (2300 Satellite Blvd, Duluth).
- **Sunday, December 28th:** No Sunday Night Gathering.

Please visit the **Youth Ministry's** website at <https://dfumcstudents.org> for more information. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Min Lee, Director of Youth Ministries, by e-mail at mlee@duluthumc.org, or call 770-476-3776, ext. 119.



Advent Devotional Videos

The season of Advent is underway and students in our church's **Youth Ministry** are excited to share their Advent devotional videos with you! Every Wednesday during Advent, we will post a short devotional video by one of our students on our **Youth Ministry's** YouTube channel - **dfumcstudents**. They would love for you to journey with them by watching and sharing these videos with others! Also, please click on the **SUBSCRIBE** button to get notifications whenever they post new content on their YouTube channel.

Advent Prayer Stations

Our **Youth Ministry** students have created **Advent Prayer Stations** to help you engage more deeply with God this season. **Advent Prayer Stations** are located:

- In the cul-de-sac area near the offices on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center;
- Outside of the main entrance to Hinton Hall;
- In the Veterans Memorial Gathering Room.

Each week of Advent you will find a new **Advent Prayer Station** designed to inspire and help you draw closer to God. We invite you to come experience it with us. May this Advent season overflow with hope, peace, joy, and love!

The End of the Year is Upon Us. Your Year-End Giving Makes a Difference!

As we move into the Christmas season, we are reminded that another year is coming to a close. The Finance Office of the church is ready to assist you with your year-end giving! There's still time to make a gift of stock—you may contact Benjamin Rah via e-mail at brah@duluthumc.org or call the church at 770-476-3776, ext. 120. All stock transactions must be completed no later than Wednesday, December 31, 2025, in order to receive tax credit.

If you're over 72 years old, year-end giving is a great opportunity to have your Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA contributed directly to the church also. It's a win-win. When you contribute your RMD that way, you save money by paying no taxes on it, and the church gets the full use of your gift because the church pays no tax on it, either.

As stipulated by IRS regulations, the church will be able to give year 2025 contribution credit (for tax purposes) for all donations received or post marked by December 31, 2025. The church office will be closed from Wednesday, December 24th, through Friday, January 2nd.

We will also receive donations on Sundays, December 21st and 28th, at all of our morning worship services (8:30 Traditional, 11:00 Contemporary, 11:00 Traditional), as well on Wednesday, December 24th, at our Christmas Eve services (noon, 4:00 and 6:00 p.m.) You may also mail your donations. In addition, we accept credit/debit card contributions online! Just go to the church's website at duluthumc.org and click on the **ONLINE GIVING** tab.

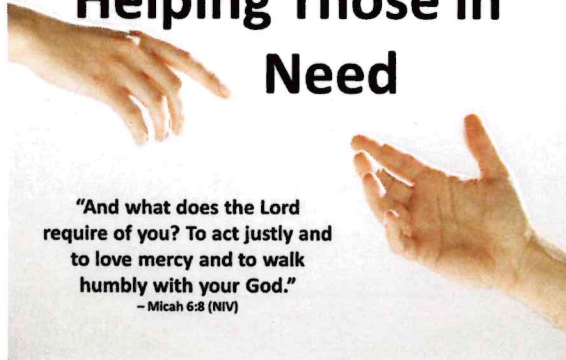
If you have a special need regarding your year-end contributions, please contact Benjamin Rah as soon as possible. Thank you so much for making a difference in this church and this community through your generous giving.



Seeds of Hope: Helping Those in Need

Seeds of Hope is a fund that is not a part of our general budget that we use to assist those in our community in need of help.

Helping Those in Need



One of the primary sources of funding for **Seeds of Hope** is the purchase of the poinsettias that are displayed this morning and on Christmas Eve in the Sanctuary and in Hinton Hall. We thank those who purchased poinsettias in memory or in honor of loved ones this season.

Your generosity and faithfulness in giving above and beyond to **Seeds of Hope** makes it possible for Duluth First United Methodist Church to provide necessities such as groceries, a meal, gas, clothing, and other needs to come about. More importantly, you help provide the resources that allow Duluth First UMC to provide hope for those in our community who are homeless, who are struggling, and who are lost. **Seeds of Hope** is a way to shine the light of Christ in our community and we show love, grace, and compassion to all those who are in search of help and hope. We thank you for your generosity in helping to fund **Seeds of Hope**.

Church Offices Holiday Closings

The church offices will be closed from Wednesday, December 24th, through Friday, January 2nd. They will re-open on Monday, January 5th. Have a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

United Women in Faith One-Day Retreat - "How the Stars Get in Your Bones":

Saturday, January 10th

What is it that allowed Mary to say, "Let it be?" Do you remember a time when you received a blessing that helped you be present to a change that arrived? The **United Women in Faith** invite you to join them on Saturday, January 10th, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to take time for one day, after Christmas and during Epiphany, to find a place where other women see you, welcome you and help you to be there for what comes next.



**United
Women
in Faith**

This casual retreat is an opportunity to relax after all the Christmas activities. Lunch, drinks, and snacks will be provided. We will meet from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall. Please sign-up during December at the **United Women in Faith** information tables located around the church to help us prepare for handouts and lunch. Please bring a pint size clear glass jar/Ball jar to use for one of the art projects.

The retreat will include readings and art from Jan Richardson's book **How the Stars Get in Your Bones**. You may bring a donation of \$7 to be sent to Jan Richardson for "Sanctuary of Women" to be shared with the A21 Campaign, an organization devoted to ending human trafficking and providing sanctuary and healing for those rescued from slavery.

Look at the stars of your world, your life, your family and see how they get into your bones. Look around to see another who might need a blessing from you. We will come together with art, readings, comfort, and a challenge to find something of sabbath rest to find the stars of your life. Perhaps there will be something that stretches you to a new place or invites you to think in a direction of an uncharted sky for your spirit. We will delight in blessings and prayers, share in a meal and in conversations of laughter, concern, sighs, and joys.

Blessings and joy for advent as you prepare the way for the Christ child to shine in your heart, to see the stars and count your blessings. Celebrate all you have done with a retreat together on January 10th to find your blessing. For additional information contact Terrie Adkins by e-mail at ttadkins@sprynet.com.

Christian Beginnings Preschool and Kindergarten - Vote Us Best of Gwinnett

Christian Beginnings Preschool and Kindergarten has been nominated for the "Best of Gwinnett" award again and we'd love to have your vote! Please take a moment to scan the QR code located to the right and vote for **Christian Beginnings** as "Best Education & Childcare."

We have been honored to receive this award in years past and we would love your continued support of our school. Thank you for your vote!



Scout Troop 419 Christmas Tree Recycling Fundraiser:
Saturdays, December 27th and January 3rd

Scout Troop 419 is holding their annual **Christmas Tree Pickup and Recycling event** on Saturday, December 27th, and Saturday, January 3rd, from 10 a.m. to noon. The trees are picked up at your curbside and your tax-deductible donation of \$10 minimum per tree is greatly appreciated. Please have your tree curbside by 10 a.m. Please remove all tinsel, decorations, flocking and wire that could clog up the chipper and do not wrap trees in plastic. You can sign up to arrange Christmas tree pick up by:

- Scanning the QR code located to the right with your smart phone or tablet;
- Sending an e-mail to christmastree@bsatroop419.org.

You can pay:

- At your door. Please leave cash or a check payable to **Troop 419** inside a Ziploc-style bag and place it under your doormat;
- Pay online at <https://paypal.me/bsatroop419>;
- By mail by sending a check made payable to **Troop 419** to Duluth First UMC, Attn. BSATroop 419, 3208 Duluth Hwy. 120, Duluth, GA 30096.



Thank you for your support!



Duluth First United Methodist Church



3208 Duluth Hwy. 120, Duluth, GA 30096

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Website: www.duluthumc.org

Facebook: DuluthFirstUMC • Instagram: duluthfirstumc

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**Louise McDaniel Memorial
Church Library**
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Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten
Office Phone: 770-497-1743

POINSETTIAS ARE GIVEN IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Doug & Ann Baker, and Vernie & Sarah Davidson, by David & Susan Baker.

Dot & Edgar Batson, by Brian & Jan Batson.

Susan Batson, by Brian & Jan Batson.

Bruce Bell, by Chris, Beth, Rachel, & Rebekah Patterson.

Scott Belleperche, by Lacy & Bill Evans.

Scott Belleperch, by Eleanor McCormack.

Don & Mildred Bennett, by Don & Cindy Bennett.

Bentley, our 10-year old yellow lab who passed away with cancer on August 27, 2025, by the Doerlich Family.

Ed & Bev Bessler, by the Bessler Girls.

Ed & Bev Bessler, and Fred & Marcie Hodoval, by Scott & Suzi Hodoval.

Jack Bluster, by his family.

Cleo Bowden, by Pam & Guy Logan.

Bill, Tim & Cheryl Brackett, and Ruth & Bob Looney, by Doris & Hayden Brackett.

Patricia L. Hansen Braynard, by Dale Braynard.

Ben Bridges, by Doug & Brenda Bridges.

Mae Knox Burge, by Daniel Clayton Knox, Jr. and family.

James & Lucy Camp, by Pete & Ann Fleming.

Gene Cooksey, by Amy Gill.

Archie Davis, by Jeanine Gullett.

Charles & Marion Doerlich, by the Doerlich Family.

Howard R. Dorris, by Pete & Ann Fleming.

Dirk Dutoit, by Sharon Robertson, and Natalie & Jacques Dutoit.

Clinton, Ada & Buddy Dyer, by Merri Loy.

Mr. & Mrs. Henry Edwards, by Daniel Clayton Knox, Jr. and family.

Bill Flynt, by Tina Flynt.

Gary French, by the French Family.

Peter Gill, by Amy Gill.

Steve Goolsby, by the French & Goolsby families.

Parents Bill & Jackie Green, by the Doerlich Family.

Jim Gullett, by Jeanine Gullett.

Mike Gullett, by Jeanine Gullett.

Bebe Heard, by Tim & Bobbie Heard, David & Sabrina & Brianna Heard, and Cole & Julia & Lylagrace Heard.

Shelby Hickam, by Harold & Wynn Hickam.

Darrell & Sally Hipes, by Don & Cindy Bennett.

Cheryl Hoffman, by Lorraine Day.

Eric & Marian Holmes, by Andy, Rhonda, Drew, & Will Holmes.

Robert Issell, by Pam & Guy Logan.

Mary Evelyn & Tuck Jackson, and Eleanor Summerour, by Ann Tiberghien.

Chatt Johnson, by Ashley, McCay, and Riley.

Robert Jones, Sr., by Pete & Ann Fleming.

Daniel Clayton Knox, Sr., by Daniel Clayton Knox, Jr. and family.

Katherine Edwards Knox, by Daniel Clayton Knox, Jr. and family.

Mr. Henry T. Knox, by Daniel Clayton Knox, Jr. and family.

Don Lee, by Sara Lee.

Robert Leftwich, by Kevin Leftwich.

Mary Looney, by Bryan, Debbie, Katherine, and Sarah Johnson.

Loved ones lost, by Chris, Beth, Rachel, & Rebekah Patterson.

Bill, Cora Lee & Steve Loy, by Merri Loy.

Chase Martin, by Nancy Martin.

Robert Martin, by Nancy Martin.

Wayne McCormack, by Lorraine Day.

Wayne McCormack, by Eleanor McCormack.

James E. McLean, Sr., by Andy, Rhonda, Drew, & Will Holmes.

Goff McMahon, by Keenan, Sarah, Emily Anne, Caleb, and John Marvin Klayman.

My parents, Titus & Kay Muzi, by Dianne Ogden.

Our parents, Margaret Newsome, and Pete & Wanda Peterson, by Bob & Cynthia Peterson.

My granddaughter, Nicole, by Donna Bowman.

Greg Norton, by Elaine Norton.

My parents and brother, by Lynne Ometer.



POINSETTIAS ARE GIVEN IN LOVING MEMORY OF

John & Lucille Pennington, Tim & Bobbie Heard, David & Sabrina & Brianna Heard,
and Cole & Julia & Lylagrace Heard.
Our daughter, Elizabeth Ann, by Bob & Cynthia Peterson.
Emily Grace Powell, Grace Noelle Church, Harrison Adams Dent, & Morgan Elyse Clement,
by Chris, Beth, Rachel, & Rebekah Patterson.
Bernard Robertson, by Sharon Robertson, and Natalie & Jacques Dutoit.
Joyce & Richard Rotach, by Beth Intondi.
Jack Sanders, by Polly Sanders.
Charene Smith, by Gary Smith.
Wade & Mary Nell Sprouse, by Nancy Howard, Zack & Tawny, Lee McCanless, and Tom Sprouse.
Gail Taylor, by Tim & Bobbie Heard, David & Sabrina & Brianna Heard, and Cole & Julia & Lylagrace Heard.
Evelyn Triana, by Toni Livingston.
My Dad, Kenneth S. Willi, by Ken Willi.
Scott Wills, by the Wills Family.
Harry & Jeannine Wootan, by Brian & Jan Batson.
Juanita Yearwood, by Pam & Guy Logan.
Helen Zelinka, by the Wills Family.



POINSETTIAS ARE GIVEN IN HONOR OF

The Abundant Life Sunday School Class, by Jim Woods.
TJ, Alison, & Arthur Ackerman, by Doug & Brenda Bridges.
Acolytes and Cross Bearers... past, present, and future, by Charlie Doerlich.
Kelly, Ben, Sam, & Will Adkins, by Arwyn Raina.
Verena Lucía Anders - "Welcome", by Jim & Terrie Adkins.
Verena Lucía Anders, by Robert & Pam Gates.
Palmer Baker, Winston Baker, & Edie Baker, by David & Susan Baker.
Gloria Bell, Tom & Linda Patterson, and Herb & Ramona Ricks, by Chris, Beth, Rachel, & Rebekah Patterson.
Jack & Pat Brannon, by Lorraine Day.
My children and grandchildren, by Merri Loy.
Donna Clark, by Polly Sanders.
Lorraine Day, by Eleanor McCormack.
The Duluth First UMC staff, by Pete & Ann Fleming.
The Duluth First UMC staff, by Jim Woods.
Vicki Frost, by Ann Tiberghien.
Bryan Johnson, by Robert & Pam Gates.
Carol Johnson, for her faith and courage fighting her cancers, by Ashley, McCay, and Riley.
Doug & Todd Judy, and Michael Griffeth, by Sherry & Bob Griffeth.
Nancy Livingston, by Toni Livingston.
Carol & Don Page, by Polly Sanders.
Charlie & Annette Pierce, by Lorraine Day.
Charlie & Annette Pierce, by Polly Sanders.
Asha, Azariah, & Anora Raina, by Arwyn Raina.
Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles - "Welcome", by Jim & Terrie Adkins.
Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles, by Robert & Pam Gates.
Anne Therese Saxelby, by Bill & Megan Saxelby.
The S.O.S. Sunday School Class, by Carol Stalcup.
Sally Southerland, by Carol & Don Page.
The Stephen Ministers, by Pete & Ann Fleming.
Bettie Stoneking, by Polly Sanders.
Grant, Kate, Jackson, Tommy, and Doug Tiberghien, by Ann Tiberghien.
Kathryn Willis, by Kay & Mike Montgomery.
Betty Worthington, by Sara Lee.



Seeds of Hope funds are used to help meet the needs of God's people living in Duluth and Suwanee--often strangers, widows, orphans, homeless, those who are lost, and those who are without hope--who come to Duluth First United Methodist Church seeking assistance.