



THE MESSENGER



DULUTH FIRST UMC'S NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025



Wednesday Evening Activities at Duluth First UMC: We Have Something for Everyone!

Join us on Wednesday evenings for the following activities at Duluth First UMC. We have something for everyone!

- **Wednesday Night Dinner:** 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. in Hinton Hall, 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center;
- **Book Bunch for kids (ages 3 – 4):** 6:15 to 6:30 p.m. in The Louise McDaniel Memorial Library, 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center;
- **DuluthKids (ages Kindergarten through 5th grade):** 5:45 to 7 p.m. in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall;
- **Youth Bible Study (grades 6 – 12):** 6 to 7 p.m. in room F149, 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center;
- **Parent Connection Group:** 6 to 7 p.m., room F207, 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center;
- **"The History and Archaeology of the Bible" Class for Adults:** 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in room F145, 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center;
- **Yarn Art Ministry:** 6 to 7 p.m. in room F205, 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center;
- **Happy Sacks:** 6 to 6:15 p.m. in room F152, 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center;
- **Wednesday Night Food Drive:** 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. outside of the main entrance to Hinton Hall, 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center;
- **Handbell Ensemble Rehearsal:** 6 to 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary;
- **GriefShare Support Group:** 6:30 to 8 p.m. in room F153, 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center;
- **Chancel Choir Rehearsal:** 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Don Lee Music Suite.

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Duluth First United Methodist Church

3208 Duluth Highway 120

Duluth, GA 30096

Phone: 770-476-3776

website: www.duluthumc.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DuluthFirstUMC

Instagram: www.instagram.com/duluthfirstumc

Sunday Mornings

8:30 a.m.—Traditional Worship service

11:00 a.m.—Contemporary Worship service

11:00 a.m.—Traditional Worship service

*All services can be viewed online at www.duluthumc.org
or on the Duluth First UMC Worship channel on YouTube –
search for Duluth First UMC Worship.*



United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith's 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 **all women** 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.

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 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.

Women Studying Together

Thursday Morning Bible Study

Women Studying Together, our Thursday morning Bible study open to all women, meets from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in room F145, located on the 1st floor Sheldon Family Life Center. This is a discussion group which includes women at different stages of life. Various themes of the Bible are addressed, sometimes going straight through a particular book, and other times a selection of Biblical references. A variety of resource materials are used for different perspectives and to encourage growth.

We are currently studying selections from the book of Job. This 4–5-week study will include the following topics for discussion:

- Assumptions about Prosperity and Success;
- Being a Friend to the Hurting;
- Talking to God — Challenging or Asking?
- "Too Wonderful for Me".

The objective of **Women Studying Together** is that our time together is encouraging and supportive of growth as individual disciples and as a community of believers. As we study, we ask questions, search for answers, share our stories, laugh and pray together. Discussions are led by Jenny Masterson. Bring your Bible (any translation) and join us. If you would like additional information, please contact Jenny Masterson by e-mail at jennybobm@comcast.net or call 678-591-0800.



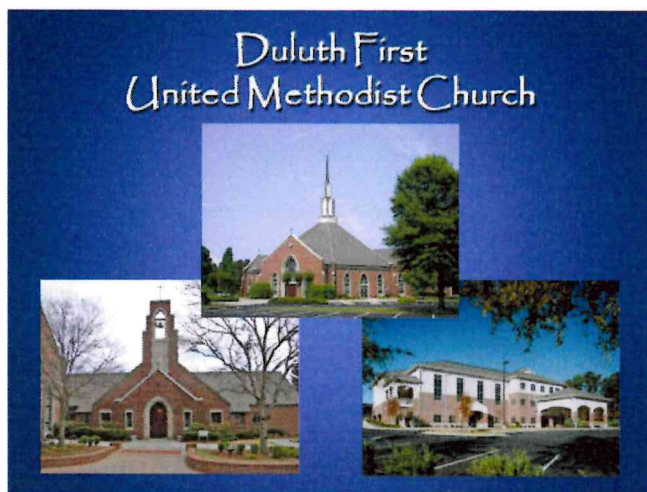
Learn More about Duluth First UMC

at Information Station:

Sundays February 1st and 8th

Are you new to Duluth First UMC as a guest or new member? Have you wondered about the United Methodist Church and our church's history? Are you looking for groups to get involved in? Join us for **Information Station** on Sundays, February 1st and 8th, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the Conference Room, located on the 3rd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center. We will drink coffee, talk about the church, and discuss ways you can get involved!

For additional information or to RSVP, please contact Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles, Associate Pastor, by e-mail at arawles@duluthumc.org.

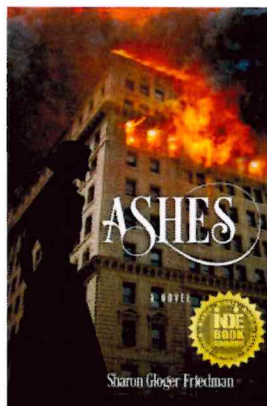


Library Book Club to Discuss

"Ashes" by Sharon Gloger Friedman:

Monday, January 12th

The **Library Book Club** will meet on Monday, January 12th, at 10:00 a.m. in room F145, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center, to discuss the book **Ashes** by Sharon Gloger Friedman. Sharon will be here in person to discuss her book **Ashes**, the story of a Jewish family flees persecution in Russia to New York, where their daughter works at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory and becomes involved in the workers' rights movement.



Join Us for Wednesday Night Dinners in Hinton Hall

January 14th

Pot roast, roasted potatoes, carrot medley, sautéed spinach, roll, dessert.
For the kids – hamburgers and French fries

January 21st

Smothered pork chops, rice, collards, candied carrots, cornbread, and dessert.
For the kids – hot dogs and French fries.

January 28th

Lemon herb catfish, dirty rice, corn-on-the-cob, stewed tomatoes, rolls, and dessert.
For the kids – fish sticks and French fries.

**Dinners are served from 5 to 6:30 p.m.,
with to-go boxes available from 6 to 6:30 p.m.**

Dinner is served in the Hinton Hall of the Sheldon Family Life Center. Enjoy fellowship around the table with family and friends.

The Dinner Belles and Beaus prepare excellent meals at very reasonable prices.

The prices for Wednesday Night Dinners are:

- \$10.00 for adults (including seniors and from 11 years up);
- \$7.00 for children 10 years and younger;
- \$30.00 for family meals (nuclear family members only – husband, wife, their children under 18 years);
- \$7.00 for salad bar only, which includes the salad bar, a choice of baked potato or sweet potato, dessert and a drink.

You can pay using a credit/debit card!

**NOTE: Menus are subject to change.
For the week's menu please visit the church's website at duluthumc.org.**



Children's Ministry and Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten



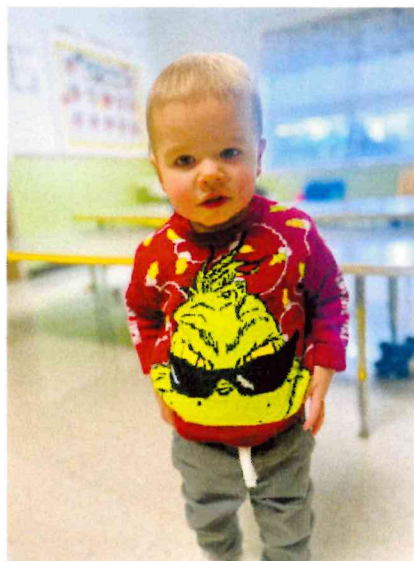
Christian Beginnings
Preschool & Kindergarten



where smiles happen!



Children's Ministry and Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten



Children's Ministry News

We are excited to share some highlights from a wonderful December in our **Children's Ministry** and look forward to a fun start to the new year together!

Congratulations to the winner of our **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten Christmas Tree Fundraiser**! The "Bluey" themed tree won our silent auction and we are so grateful to have raised over \$1,500 to improve **Christian Beginning's** general budget. Our congregation is truly generous in its support, donations and volunteers. Your support means so much to us!

As we head into the new year, we're also excited to kick off **Book Bunch** and **DuluthKids** once again on Wednesday evenings. We look forward to learning, growing, and having fun together in 2026!



Christian Beginnings

Preschool & Kindergarten



where smiles happen!

GriefShare Support Group

The **GriefShare Support Group**, led by the church's **Stephen Ministers**, will walk alongside you through the loss of a loved one. Our current session of weekly classes began on Wednesday, January 7th, and will continue through April 2nd. Meeting from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in room F153, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center, you will gain access to valuable **GriefShare** resources to help you through your grief. **GriefShare** also offers **Bereavement Candlelight Services** and a "Surviving the Holidays" class every year before the Thanksgiving holiday.

For more information, please visit the **GriefShare** website at griefshare.org, or contact Tracy Brinker, Bereavement Coordinator, by e-mail at tbrinker@duluthumc.org, or call 770-476-3776.



Registration is Now Open for Camp Glisson Summer 2026

It is time for summer camp registration at **Glisson Camp and Retreat Center**! Registration for Summer 2026 is open for members of North Georgia United Methodist churches and returning families of Summer 2025 campers.

Glisson Camp and Retreat Center offers Summer Camp in the forests surrounding Cane Creek Falls near Dahlonega, GA. Since 1925, this place has become holy ground as thousands have had their faith strengthened through God's presence there

in creation and Christian community. **Glisson Camp and Retreat Center** is part of the **North Georgia Camp & Retreat Ministries** of the **United Methodist Church's North Georgia Conference**. To see the schedule and/or register, please go to <https://glisson.org/register>.





Youth Ministry Sunday Night Gatherings in January

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. **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 January is:

- **Sunday, January 11th:** Sunday Night Gathering at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, January 18th:** Sunday Night Gathering at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, January 25th:** Sunday Night Gathering at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank").

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.

Happy New Year from the Youth Ministry

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of our **Youth Ministry**! We are so grateful for an incredible year together and excited to share our 2025 recap video with you. Please scan the QR code located below with your smart phone or tablet to view the video. We can't wait to see all that God has in store for us in 2026!



Youth Ministry's 2025 Recap Video

Youth Spring Retreat - Spiritual Life

Retreat: March 13th - 15th

We are excited to participate in the **Spiritual Life Retreat (SLR)**, a **North Georgia UMC Conference Retreat**, hosted by the **Glisson Camp and Retreat Center**, for our Youth Spring Retreat! It will be an incredible weekend with a guest speaker, a band leading worship, and small groups to dig deeper into the message and understand how God is providing support and direction on the spiritual journey. Each year, there is a different "theme" that guides these worship and small-group times.

Another unique design of the **Spiritual Life Retreat** is that students from different churches are placed in small groups and journey together all weekend long. It provides a great opportunity for students to get to know and build relationships with students from other churches.

The dates for the **Spiritual Life Retreat** are Friday, March 13th, through Sunday, March 15th, at the **Glisson Camp and Retreat Center** in Dahlonega. The cost is \$195 per student (You can pay in cash, check, or online). We want every student to be able to attend—scholarships are available if needed.

Please register for the **Spiritual Life Retreat** by scanning the QR code located to the right with your smart phone or tablet **by Sunday, January 25th**. If you have questions, please contact Rev. Min Lee, Director of Youth Ministries, by e-mail at mlee@duluthumc.org.



For additional information about the **Glisson Camp and**



MISSIONS

“Where are you serving?”



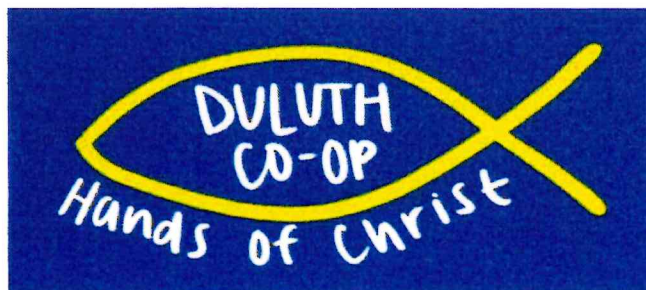
Wednesday Night Food Drives in January

The **Wednesday Night Food Drive** at Duluth First UMC for the **Hands of Christ Duluth Co-op** is our weekly mission project, combined with the many Wednesday evening activities offered at the church.

Items needed during the month of January are:

- January 14th: canned fruit;
- January 21st: tuna fish;
- January 28th: spaghetti or pasta.

Join us for a delicious dinner and fellowship in Hinton Hall, pick up a to-go dinner for your family, join us for any of our Wednesday evening activities, and drop off food items to help other families in need. We thank you for your support!



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. One of the primary sources of funding for **Seeds of Hope** is the purchase of poinsettias through the season of Advent, and lilies for Easter. A big **“Thank You”** to all who purchased poinsettias in memory or in honor of loved ones, as the proceeds from these sales went to benefit the **Seeds of Hope** fund.

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**.



Donate Blood at Duluth First UMC on Wednesday, February 4th

Every 2 seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. All blood types are needed now to help save lives. Spring into action and give patients a fighting chance by donating blood.

An American Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at Duluth First UMC from 3 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 4th, in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall. Please consider donating blood as winter weather across the country is causing a decline in donations. With more severe weather predicted, blood donors (especially type O) are needed to give to prevent a shortage. Patients need your help now!

To schedule an appointment:

- Visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter the sponsor code **dufumc**;
- Call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767);
- Contact Tracy Brinker by e-mail at tbrinker@duluthumc.org, or call 770-476-3776, ext. 112.
- Last, but not least, be a "walk-in" on Blood Drive Day.



Gifts in Memory and In Honor of Others

The following people and groups have given gifts to the glory of God in memory or in honor of others:

In Memory of Robert Bruce Houston

*Kristie Burrows
Margaret Bruce Hall*

In Memory of Nicole Stutts Minard

Alice George

In Memory of Berbard Robertson

Sharon Robertson

In Memory of Jack Sanders

Don & Robin Sanders

United Women in Faith Are Raising Funds to Help Put an End to Human Trafficking: Sunday, February 8th

On Sunday, February 8th, the **United Women in Faith** will be selling chocolate candies and goodies just in time for



United
Women
in Faith

Valentine's Day. All the proceeds will go to **Street Grace**, an organization that **fight**s human trafficking.

Founded in 2008, **Street Grace** been chasing one ambitious vision - **ending the sexual exploitation of children**. Thanks to the help of their generous partners and supporters, they are making serious progress.

Street Grace works on four areas to make changes:

- **PREVENTION** to help all of us recognize and stop exploitation before it starts;
- **PROTECTION** to make survival sustainable;
- **PURSUIT** to help law enforcement identify predators, protect victims and prevent future crimes;
- **POLICY** which makes safety the standard, shapes laws, training and systems that protect children long before a crisis begins.

So won't you say **YES** because change begins with you! Come to the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall on Sunday, February 8th, buy chocolates, and help put an end to human trafficking! For additional information about **Street Grace**, please visit their website at www.streetgrace.org.



New Titles in Our Church Library for Winter Reading

Cozy up with a good book this winter from **The Louise McDaniel Memorial Church Library**, located on the 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center, where you can find your next great read!

The Life We Bury by Allen Eskens (adult fiction). A college student interviews a dying Vietnam veteran and convicted murderer for a writing assignment, leading him on a quest to uncover the truth about the crime and confront his own personal demons.

Mixed Blessings by Barbara Brown Taylor (inspirational). In this new edition of her earliest collection of sermons, Barbara Brown Taylor brings her down-to-earth wisdom and keen perspective to the Bible readings of the lectionary cycle. Originally preached for the congregation of All Saints' Episcopal Church in downtown Atlanta, the topics of these sermons range from conversations with Abraham and Moses in the texts of the Hebrew scriptures to our awareness of the communion of saints and how to recognize a miracle when one comes our way.

For Those Who Are Lost by Julia Bryan Thomas (adult historical fiction). Inspired by true events, **For Those Who Are Lost** begins on the eve of the Nazi invasion of the island of Guernsey, when terrified parents have a choice to make: send their children alone to England, or keep the family together and risk whatever may come to their villages.



Small Group Survey Results

Toward the end of 2025, we asked our church family to take part in a Small Group survey. If you would like to read a summary of the survey results, please scan the QR code located below with your smart phone or tablet. Physical copies of the survey results can also be found on the side table in the cul-de-sac area outside of the staff offices on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center.



Small Group Survey Results

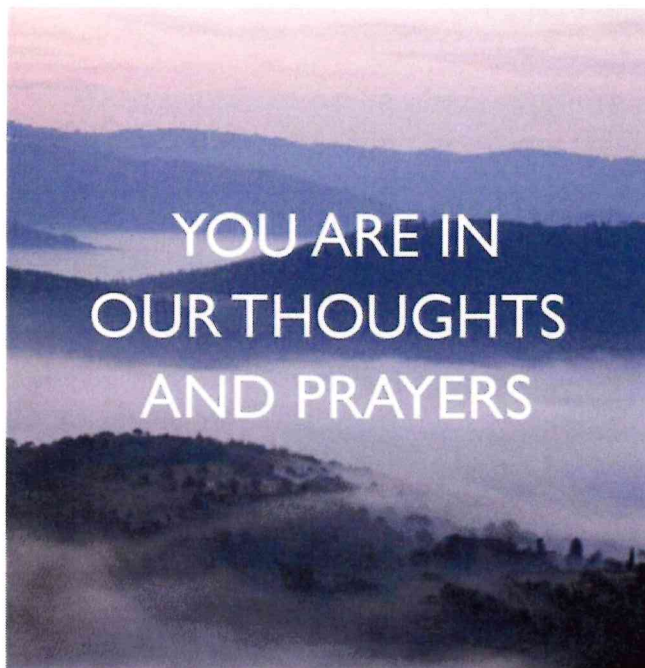
Set Up Recurring Online Giving to the Church

Recurring giving is easy to set up just by going to the **ONLINE GIVING** page on our website – duluthmc.org, or if you are watching church online, click on the link that will take you to that page.

Recurring gifts are helpful to both you and the church. You won't have to remember to write your check, and it works great with your budget as it is a consistent amount each time. The church benefits especially during slower months when giving is down and we can count on your gifts to continue our ministries and missions without interruption.

Please consider setting up recurring giving. If you need assistance, please contact Jan Jones, Financial Assistant, by e-mail at jjones@duluthmc.org or call 770 476-3776, ext. 113.





Prayer Concerns

- Kathy Anderson • Tracy Balkcom
 - Jack Brannon • Larry Bunten
 - Lorraine Day • Dianne Gilbreath
 - Don Greene • Rosemary Hall
 - Shamain Hallett • Carol Hitchcock
 - Carol Johnson • Linton Jones
 - Dottie Moor • Cheryl Otto
 - Charlie Pierce • Lin Ramstead
 - Ethel Sales • Charlotte Schlubach
 - Clara Truesdell • Dale VanPelt
 - Amy Worthington
- Tracy Brinker & family in the death of her father.
 - The family of Bruce Houston in his death.
 - Tammy Sherrill & family in the death of her father.
 - Christy Wolfe & family in the death of her brother.



Deadline for the February 2026

Edition of "The Messenger" Newsletter

The article deadline for the February 2026 edition of *The Messenger* newsletter is Thursday, January 22nd, at 9 a.m.

To keep up-to-date with all of the happenings at Duluth First UMC, please visit the church's website at duluthumc.org and/or pick up a copy of our weekly newsletter, *The Sunday Supplement*, available on Sunday mornings at all of our worship services.



General Church Fund

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Received on December 7 th | \$25,853.43 |
| Received on December 14 th | \$50,176.05 |
| Received on December 21 st | \$44,816.06 |
| Received on December 24 th | \$9,581.65 |
| Received on December 28 th | \$74,497.77 |

Year-to-Date, 2025

| | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Received as of December 28 th | \$1,525,345.06 |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|



"Crossing the Finish Line"

Capital Campaign: Year-to-Date, 2025

| | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Received as of December 28 th | \$273,348.24 |
|------------------------------------------|--------------|



Worship Attendance

(includes in-person attendance and online views)

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| December 7 th | 656 |
| December 14 th | 734 |
| December 21 st | 584 |
| December 24 th | 1245 |
| December 28 th | 421 |