



THE MESSENGER



DULUTH FIRST UMC'S NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

The Children's Ministry at Duluth First UMC

Register for the 2026-2027 School Year at Christian Beginnings!

Registration for the 2026-2027 school year is now open at **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten**, and spaces are limited! As an award-winning program, we are proud to nurture each child's growth in a loving, Christ-centered environment that supports academic readiness, social development, and spiritual growth.

Families interested in enrolling or scheduling a tour are encouraged to contact Pat Szathmary by e-mail at pszathmary@duluthumc.org or by phone at 770-497-1743 for more information.

Christian Beginnings

Preschool & Kindergarten



where smiles happen!

Save the Date for Vacation Bible School 2026

Get ready for a wild Amazon adventure in this summer's Vacation Bible School at Duluth First UMC, **Rainforest Falls - Exploring the Nature of God!** *Rainforest Falls - Exploring the Nature of God* is filled with amazing creatures and meaningful moments in the Psalms! This summer, kids will explore God's Word and grow closer to their loving Creator through fun, faith-filled experiences.

Mark your calendars for June 22nd through 26th, and keep an eye out for more details coming soon!



INSIDE THE MESSENGER

News & Announcements.....1-16 Prayer Requests.....16 Finances.....16 Attendance.....16

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.

WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH



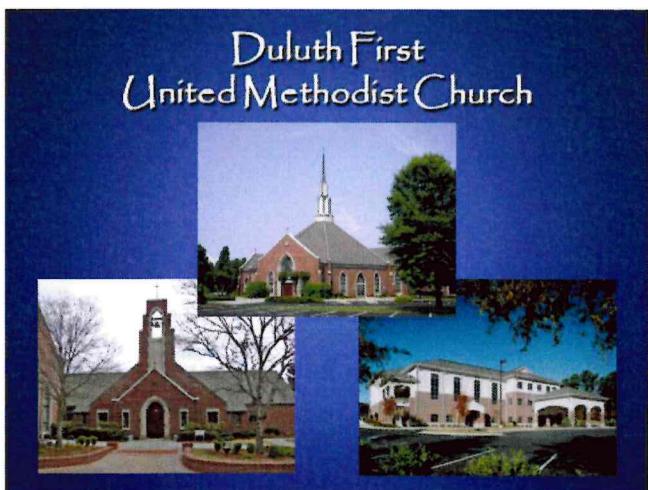
Andrew Rawles
665 Hickory Ridge Road
Lilburn, GA 30047

Scott & Genie Rawles
665 Hickory Ridge Road
Lilburn, GA 30047

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.



Pancake Supper: Tuesday, February 17th

Make plans to join with your family and friends and attend a **FREE** pancake supper on Tuesday, February 17th, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall. There will also be sausage, bacon, coffee, juice, milk, and water. Supper is **FREE**, but donations are appreciated! Proceeds will benefit Duluth First UMC's **Music & Worship Arts Ministry**.



Ash Wednesday Service: February 18th

Ash Wednesday will be observed on Wednesday, February 18th, with a short service beginning at 6 p.m. in Hinton Hall, located in the Sheldon Family Life Center. During the service, ashes will be placed on foreheads as we confront our own mortality and confess our sin before God within our community of faith.

PLEASE NOTE: The service will take place during our regular Wednesday night dinner format, so plan to arrive early and receive your food before the service begins. Dinner is served beginning at 5 p.m. Food service will be stopped while the Ash Wednesday service is taking place. It will resume at the conclusion of the service.



Duluth First UMC Welcomes Chef Kenny Lewis to Our Staff

Duluth First United Methodist Church is happy to welcome Kenneth "Chef Kenny" Lewis to our staff as Director of Food Services.

Chef Kenny is originally from Miami, Florida, and was raised in Lithonia Georgia. He found his love of culinary in his High School home economics class and at a part-time job at a local pizzeria. After High School he attended Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Alabama.

Chef Kenny can vividly remember calling his grandmother to ask for specific recipes to feed his dorm roommates because the school cafeteria was closed. To pay for school he worked in the cafeteria and the catering department, honing the skills that made him the chef he is today.

After college he continued working in the culinary field with employment at high-end restaurants and private schools cafeterias. While employed at Woodward Academy, a private school located in East Point, Georgia, he earned the title Chef by developing his own recipes and menus.

Chef Kenny's skills led to work in the non-profit sector in churches. With the help and guidance of Pastor Craig Oliver, Jr., of Elizabeth Baptist Church, he was able to operate and run a successful non-profit food truck. Currently he owns and operates his own food service and catering business, Your Daily Bread Co., a non-profit dedicated to providing food and beverage to men, women and children and disadvantaged communities in need of nourishment.



Chef Kenny Lewis

Join Us for Wednesday Night Dinners in Hinton Hall

February 4th

Chicken Alfredo, penne pasta, broccoli, zucchini, garlic breadsticks, and dessert.
For the kids – the same

February 11th

Pulled pork BBQ on a bun, sweet potato fries, baked beans, slaw, and dessert.
For the kids – hot dogs and sweet potato fries.

February 18th - Ash Wednesday

Fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, biscuits, and dessert.
For the kids – chicken tenders.

February 25th

Chicken pot pie, green beans, corn on the cob, biscuits, and dessert.
For the kids – chicken tenders and French fries.

NOTE: Menus are subject to change.

For the week's menu please visit the church's website at duluthumc.org.

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!



Wednesday Night Dinner Teams

Are Looking for Volunteers

The Wednesday Night Dinner teams are looking for volunteers - our **Dinner Belles** and **Beaus** - to help. No special experience or skill is necessary - just a willingness to serve, make some new friends, and have fun! **Each team volunteers only once a month and on the night that you volunteer you get a free meal!** We hope you will consider joining us for some good food and good fellowship.



If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Marilyn Scheiwe, Event Coordinator, by e-mail at mscheiwe@duluthumc.org or call 770-476-3776, ext. 111. We hope you will consider volunteering.

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.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Celebrating Black History Month

February is **Black History Month**, a time to celebrate the unique contributions of African Americans to the American history. Whatever your heritage or background, black history is part of everyone's history.

The General Commission on Religion and Race has compiled 29 suggestions to help United Methodists celebrate **Black History Month** during this year. Some ways to celebrate may include educating yourself on black history or the various African American Methodist movements. You might also support local African American businesses/charities or participate in local advocacy. You can also explore black literature, film and music that convey the unique voices and experiences of the culture.

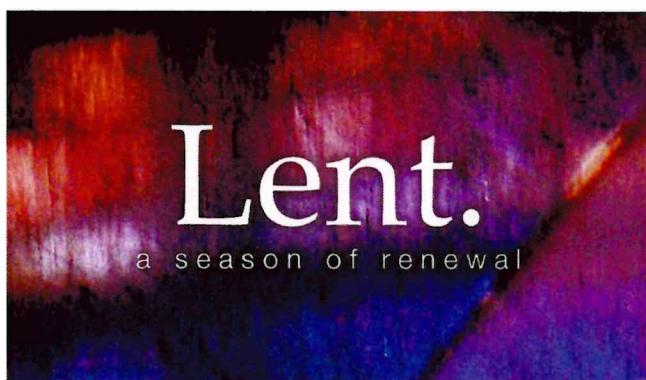


Please scan the QR code located above with your smart phone or tablet to learn more about how you can participate in **Black History Month**.

2026 Lenten Calendar Available

Beginning Sunday, February 15th

Please look for our 2026 Lenten calendar, **40 Days of Lent in the Name of Jesus**, in the worship handouts on Sunday, February 15th. The Lenten calendar is provided to you by the volunteer librarians of The Louise McDaniel Memorial Library.



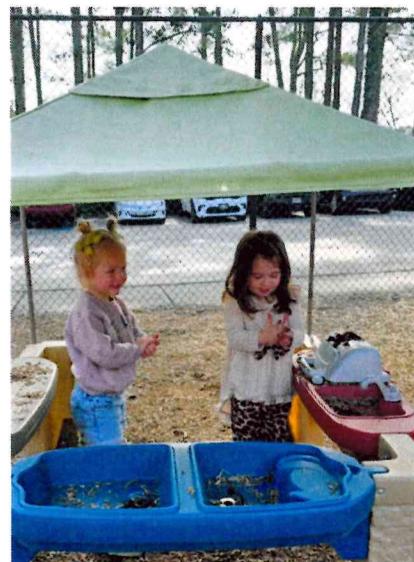
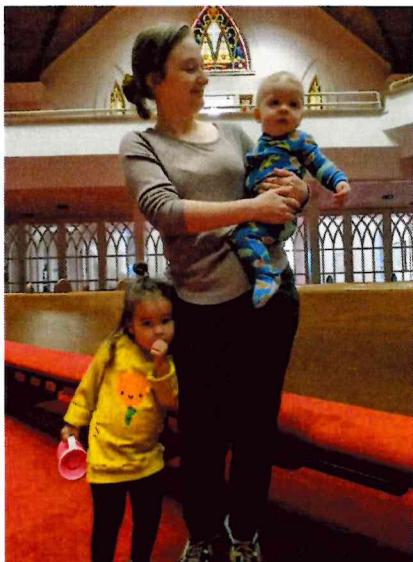
Children's Ministry and Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten



Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten



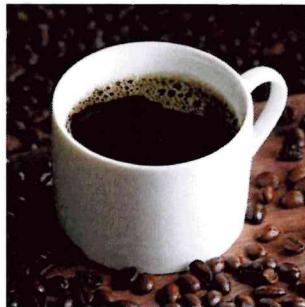
Children's Ministry and Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten



Christian Beginnings Parents Coffee

Get-Together: Tuesday, February 10th

Parents of Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten kids are invited to a Parents Coffee Get-Together, with coffee provided by **Break Coffee Roasters**, on Tuesday, February 10th. Come hang out together beginning at 9:45 a.m. and enjoy a hot cup of coffee in the cul-de-sac area outside of the church offices located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center.



We thank **Break Coffee Roasters**, with locations at 3122 Hill Street NW in Duluth and 235 N. Perry Street in Lawrenceville, for providing the coffee.



Youth Ministry Sunday Night Gatherings in February

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 February is:

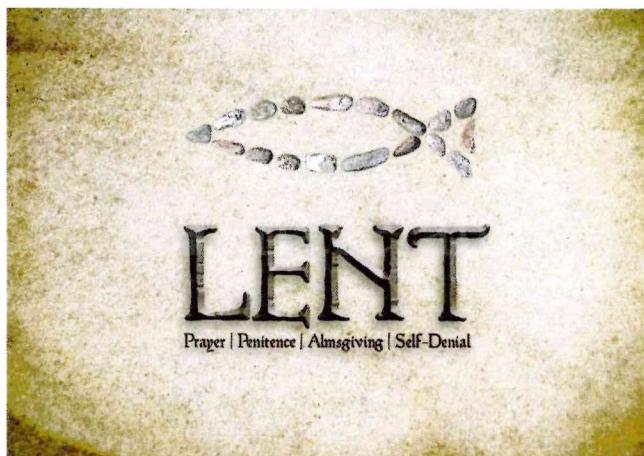
- **Sunday, February 1st:** Sunday Night Gathering at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, February 8th:** Super Bowl Party at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, February 15th:** Sunday Night Gathering at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, February 22nd:** 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.

Lenten Devotional Videos

The season of Lent will soon be underway, and students in our church's **Youth Ministry** are excited to share their Lenten devotional videos with you! Every Wednesday, from February 25th through April 1st, we will post a short devotional video created by one of our students on our **Youth Ministry** YouTube channel, **dfumcstudents**, as well as on the church's website, duluthumc.org.

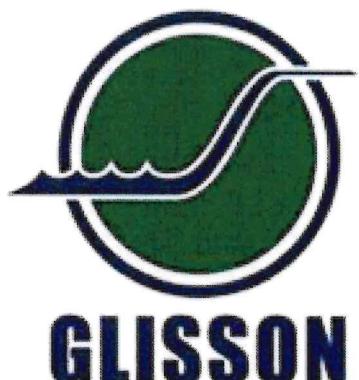
We would love for you to journey with us this Lenten season by watching and sharing these videos with others. Please also be sure to subscribe to the **Youth Ministry's** YouTube channel to receive notifications whenever new content is posted.



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>.



MISSIONS

“Where are you serving?”



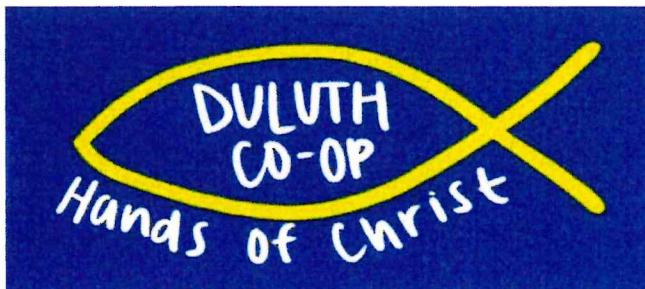
Wednesday Night Food Drives in February

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 February are:

- February 4th: macaroni and cheese;
- February 11th: cereal;
- February 18th: cans of soup;
- February 25th: cans of diced tomatoes.

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!



Volunteers Needed at Hands of Christ

Duluth Co-op During the Month of March

March is Duluth First UMC's month to volunteer at the **Hands of Christ Duluth Cooperative Ministry**. Duluth First UMC was one of the founding members of **Hands of Christ Duluth Co-op**, created more than 30 years ago to help with food insufficiency in the 30096 and 30097 zip codes. Volunteers stock pantry shelves, divide bulk food items into smaller packages, and fill orders. An experienced "captain" for the day guides you.

Choose to work a 2-hour shift from 10 a.m. to noon, or noon to 2 p.m. on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday during the month March. **Hands of Christ Duluth Co-op** is located at 3649 Rogers Bridge Road in Duluth. To volunteer please scan the QR code located to the right with your smart phone or tablet. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. David Burchett by e-mail at dburchett@duluthumc.org.





MISSIONS

"Where are you serving?"

Thank You from

"Bundle Up for Buffalo 2025"

To the good people of Duluth First United Methodist Church,

Each year as I attempt to write this letter to you, I am struck at how my words fail to convey my feeling of gratefulness. Nevertheless, I will try again.

I visited Buffalo early in December and experienced the bitter below-zero-windchill of this city. For those who can rent a portion of a house, the heat is often not adequate. For those living in cars, the heat depends on the ability to pay for gasoline. For those on the street, Seneca Street United Methodist Church provides a place where one can walk into a Christ-centered place, get warm, get fed, and even take a shower. YOU make that happen. Through your generous giving during and after the **Bundle Up for Buffalo** fundraiser this past November, some of the poorest in our country can stretch out on a pew and get warm for a while. YOU fulfill Christ's directive through your humility and generous spirit.

Almost seventy children are coming to Seneca Street UMC every day after school. Volunteers are at the church ready with snacks and ready to help with homework. Because moms may not get home until later, a warm meal is provided so children are not hungry at night. Even if the power goes out in the Seneca-Babcock neighborhood of South Buffalo, a generator will kick on now. What a blessing is this heat you provided!

I am already starting to plan for **Bundle Up for Buffalo 2026**. Thank you for your selfless generosity, your ongoing prayers, and your many gifts. God bless you and yours as you continue to serve Him throughout the upcoming year.

Many thanks for all of your support!
Beth Intondi



Operation Christmas Child Update

Our church congregation has completed the 2025 **Operation Christmas Child** campaign. Our contribution was 104 shoeboxes that includes 25 online shoeboxes and 79 individually prepared shoeboxes.

If you registered your shoebox, you should have received an e-mail indicating the country your shoebox was delivered to. If not, you can go to **Samaritan's Purse** website - www.samaritanspurse.org - to find the location of your shoebox by clicking on **Build a Shoebox Online**, going to **Pack a Shoebox** in the page header, and click on **Label Options** in the drop-down menu. In the **Track Labels** field you can enter your e-mail address or label code number.

The shoeboxes filled by the **Christian Beginnings Kindergarten** students were delivered to the Republic of the Congo and a hard to reach area.

Please let Charlie Doerlich know the location of your shoebox so that he can add it to the **Operation Christmas Child** map on the **Missions Ministry** bulletin board located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center. The map reflects our church's shoebox delivery locations for over the past ten years.

Thank you so much for your support of this important mission for children around the world. For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Charlie Doerlich by e-mail at chaz3d@gmail.com or call 678-662-2115.



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**



United Women in Faith

will be selling chocolate candies and goodies just in time for Valentine's Day. All the proceeds

will go to **Street Grace**, an organization that fights **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.



Human Trafficking Awareness Day Is Sunday, February 8th:
Please Wear Something Blue to Church

Human trafficking is a serious problem worldwide. Often, we think it is not here in the United States, but trafficking is in all 50 states and right here in our own community. Human trafficking comes in many forms. It can be coerced labor such as hotel workers, farm workers or restaurant workers, as well as sexual exploitation. It can affect persons at any age. Sometimes sexual exploitation occurs with a family member or a known trusted person.

If you suspect something, the best idea is to call the hotline to get advice about what to do. Do not confront the people directly as that could put the victim at risk. The hotline phone number is 888-373-7888.

The State of Georgia has passed many laws that make sexual trafficking more difficult for the traffickers, and releasing the victim from prostitution charges, plus helping the victims to rehabilitate.

Many organizations in our community are working to put an end to human trafficking, and to help rescue victims. For example, **Street Grace** works to protect children and youth from sexual exploitation and **Wellspring Living's** mission is transforming lives of those at risk or victimized by sexual exploitation.

Anytime there is a big event, whether it be sport related, concerts or conventions, human trafficking increases. It's time to put a **STOP** to human trafficking. So, on **Super Bowl Sunday, February 8th**, the **United Women in Faith** are asking you to please wear something **BLUE** which is the international color of Human Trafficking Awareness.



Human Trafficking Awareness Day: Sunday, February 8th

Human Trafficking “Did You Know?”

You are encouraged to wear blue on Sunday, February 8th, as it is the international color of Human Trafficking Awareness. Did you know that:

- The United States State Department says that there are 27.6 million victims of human trafficking worldwide at any given time.
- Human trafficking is the exploitation of a person's labor by coercion, power or control. Coercion can be done through drugs and/or a love belonging issue.
- If you suspect human trafficking, the best idea is to call the hotline at 888-373-7888 to get advice about what to do. Do not confront the people directly as that could put the victim in more risk.
- In 27 states children can be charged as prostitutes. **The State of Georgia is NOT one of them.** In 19 states sexual trafficking is not considered child abuse, So the victim is criminalized.
- 40% of human traffickers use black women and girls because they think they will get less jail time if the victim is black.
- Many victims of human trafficking deal with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), nightmares and the shame blanket that weighs them down. Most victims say the issue that causes them the most stress is sexual trauma before the age of 13. Victims need to be rewired as their body is the scene of the crime.

How can we help? We need to work inward first and deal with our biases. We need to be intentional and educate ourselves and others about human trafficking. We need to have redemptive vision. We need to share our stories. Secrecy is what enables trafficking.



Human Trafficking

Reporting and Resources

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE (24/7 Confidential)

- 1-888-373-7888
- Text: 233733

YOUR LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT (911)

GEORGIA CARES

- Georgia Cares is the single point of entry for anyone seeking help for actual or suspected victims under the age of 18 of child sexual exploitation and/or child sex trafficking.
- 24 Hour Hotline: 1-844-8GA-DMST

GA DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY & SERVICE (24-Hours, 7 Days a Week)

- Reports of child abuse and neglect can be made to 1-855-GA CHILD (1-855-422-4453)

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

- The Cyber Tipline: 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE GA (Parenting is hard.

Let someone help you.)

- Help Line: 1-800-CHILDREN

OUT OF DARKNESS (GEORGIA)

- Rescue Line: 404-941-6024 (24/7 hotline—age 18 and older)

TAPESTRI (Serving immigrant and refugee communities in Georgia)

- For immediate help, call 404-299-2185.

Information Resources

POLARIS PROJECT

- <https://polarisproject.org/human-trafficking-recognize-signs>

ECPAT-USA (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking)

- <https://www.ecpatusa.org>

U.S. OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES — OFFICE ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

- <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/training/nhttac>

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING INSTITUTE (Center for Civil and Human Rights Museum, Atlanta)

- <https://www.ihtinstitute.org>
- Leverages the collective efforts of private, public, educational, faith-based, and civic organizations to accelerate local, national and global movements to end the trafficking of persons.

"Taste and See" Lenten Study:

Begins Sunday, February 22nd

Everyone is invited to participate in a Lenten study, based on the book **Taste and See** by Margaret Feinberg, beginning Sunday, February 22nd. The study, led by Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles, will meet on Sundays, February 22nd through March 29th, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. in room F145, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center.

Taste and See will be a different type of Lenten study – it will be one about feasting and “discovering God among butchers, bakers, and fresh food makers.” We will discuss where we can find God and that we are all invited to **“Taste and See”** that God is good. We will also sample some of the dishes that the author discusses!

The cost of the class is \$20 is per person to cover the cost of the book and food samples. Childcare will be available by request. To register and for more information, please contact Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles by e-mail at arawles@duluthumc.org, or call 770-476-3776, ext. 128.

Greeters Needed for

8:30 and 11:00 Worship Services

We need **YOU** to be a greeter at our brand-new **Welcome Center** located in the Veterans Memorial Gathering Room on Sunday mornings. People attend churches where they feel like they are warmly received and welcomed, and we want to be sure every visitor at Duluth First United Methodist Church experiences that!

Greeters are needed for the 8:30 and 11:00 worship services. Please sign up to volunteer and be at the new **Welcome Center** one service and one Sunday each month to help us welcome those who have walked through our doors. It's simple and a wonderful way to serve our church!

To sign up and/or get more information, please contact Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles by e-mail at arawles@duluthumc.org or call 770-476-3776, ext. 128.



Ancient Christianities -

The First Five Hundred Years:

A New Study Group Begins on **February 24th and 25th**

Join us for a new small group class opportunity that will discuss the first five hundred years of Christianity. Beginning Tuesday, February 24th, and Wednesday, February 25th, this class will meet twice each week for 20 weeks and participants may attend either class. Classes will be held on:

- Tuesdays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
- Wednesdays from 5:45 to 7:15 p.m.

The subject matter will be based on **Ancient Christianities: The First Five Hundred Years**, a series of 20 lectures by Paula Fredriksen, Professor of Scripture Emerita at Boston University and Professor Emerita of Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Dr. Fredriksen, and author of numerous books and a widely sought-after speaker, is a worldwide recognized scholar of early Christianity. A former Catholic, Fredriksen converted to Judaism several years ago.

The class, led by Pete Fleming, will consist of 20 fifty-minute lectures by Dr. Fredriksen which will follow her latest book. Participants are not required to purchase the book, but they may wish to. Classes will be augmented with weekly summaries of the material plus optional additional readings and bibliographies.

If you would like to participate in this new study or have questions, please contact Pete Fleming by e-mail at lfleming3832@att.net or Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles by e-mail at arawles@duluthumc.org. Please let them know which day of the week you will most likely be attending the class so that classroom space can be planned for.

ANCIENT
CHRISTIANITIES
THE FIRST
FIVE HUNDRED YEARS
PAULA FREDRIKSEN

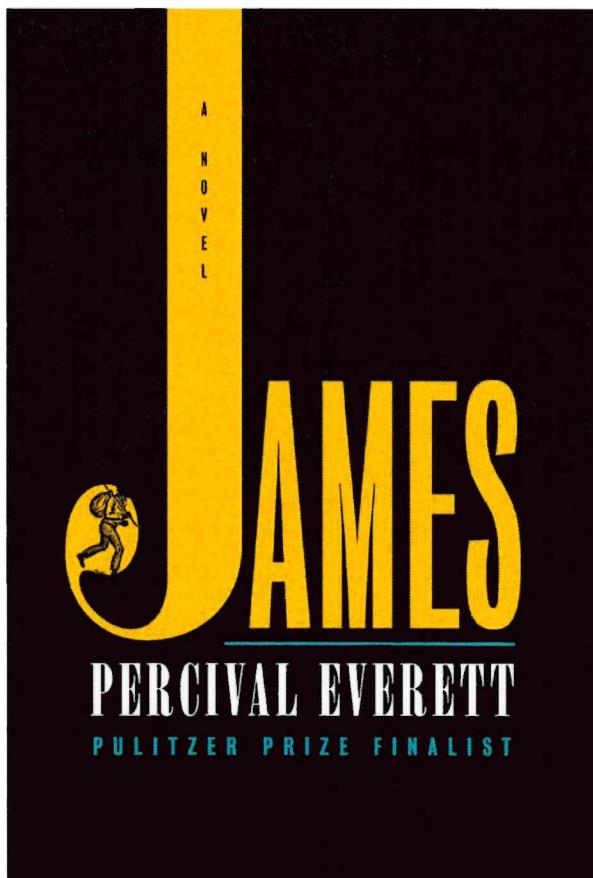


Library Book Club to Discuss “James” by Percival Everett: Monday, February 9th

The Library Book Club will meet on Monday, February 9th, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in room F145 (located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center) to discuss the book James by Percival Everett with a discussion led by Amy Burk. James, a brilliant, action-packed reimagining of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, both harrowing and darkly humorous, is told from the enslaved Jim’s point of view.

When Jim overhears that he is about to be sold to a man in New Orleans, separated from his wife and daughter forever, he runs away until he can formulate a plan. Meanwhile, Huck has faked his own death to escape his violent father. As all readers of American literature know, thus begins the dangerous and transcendent journey by raft down the Mississippi River toward the elusive and unreliable promise of the Free States and beyond.

Brimming with the electrifying humor and lacerating observations that have made author Percival Everett a literary icon, this brilliant and tender novel radically illuminates Jim’s agency, intelligence, and compassion as never before.



New Titles in Our Church Library for Winter Reading

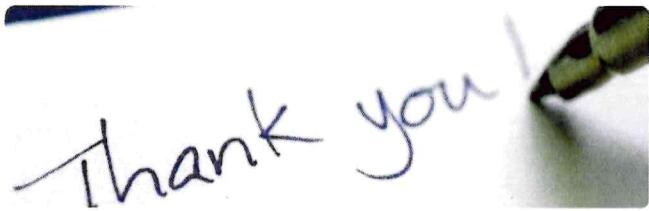
Cozy up with a good book this winter from **The Louise McDaniel Memorial Church Library**, located on the 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center, where you can find your next great read!

The Women of the Bible Speak: The Wisdom of 16 Women and Their Lessons for Today by Shannon Bream (Christian non-fiction, a United Women of Faith selection). Fox News Channel’s Shannon Bream opens up the lives of sixteen of Biblical women, including Deborah, Miriam, and Mary Magdalene, arranging them into pairs and contrasting their journeys. In pairing their stories, Shannon helps us reflect not only on the meaning of each individual’s life, but on how they relate to each other and to us.

Sacred Self-Care: Daily Practices for Nurturing our Whole Selves by Chanequa Walker-Barnes (Christian non-fiction). This 49-day interactive devotional from clinical psychologist and theologian Dr. Chanequa Walker-Barnes shows how to begin caring for your spiritual self in only forty-nine days. Each day includes short, accessible, and practical prompts, practices, scripture passages, hymns, and prayers that help you nurture your spirit and offer insight and guidance on: practicing self-compassion; setting boundaries; accessing priorities and establishing routines that reflect your values; understanding why self-care is subversive and reparative in social justice; and more.

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman (fiction). “Smart, warm, uplifting, the story of an out-of-the-ordinary heroine whose deadpan weirdness and unconscious wit make for an irresistible journey as she realizes the only way to survive is to open her heart. Meet Eleanor Oliphant: she struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what she’s thinking. Add in her unusual appearance and inability to have a fashionable wardrobe, and you have someone different until...Enter Raymond, the bumbling and deeply unhygienic IT guy from her office. Together, they make a great pair.





Thank You from the Worship Committee

A short note to say a grateful **Thank You** to all of you who assisted the **Worship Committee** to "ungreen" the Sanctuary and Hinton Hall on Sunday, January 4th. Your assistance made quick and orderly completion of the task. We look forward to including the congregation in these activities in the future.

Charlie Doerlich, Worship Committee Chairman



Thank You from the Students

at Ferguson Elementary School

Thank you for your generous support of Ferguson Elementary School's annual **Holiday Store**, held on December 18, 2025. Our students were thrilled to shop for their family and friends, selecting gifts that were then wrapped with care at our wrapping station.

This special event was made possible through the kindness of our community. Every item in the **Holiday Store** was donated, and we are especially grateful to Duluth First United Methodist Church for their tremendous support. Your generosity brought joy to our students and helped make the holiday season a little brighter for them. A heartfelt thank you to church members Teri Adkins, Sara Lee, Elaine Norton, Sally Southerland, and Betty Worthington for volunteering their time at the wrapping station.

We are now accepting donations items for the 2026 **Holiday Store**. They may be given to Sherry Ferguson or Sally Southerland. If you have any questions, please contact Sherry at 770-490-7168 or by e-mail at sf28@bellsouth.net. Thank you again for your continued support!

Boy Scout Trent Allen's Eagle Project

Dear members of Duluth First United Methodist Church,

My name is Trent Allen and I am a Boy Scout with Troop 419 in Duluth, GA. I am currently working towards my Eagle Scout rank.

For my Eagle Project, I will be refurbishing the outdoor chapel, located by the Scout Hut at Duluth First United Methodist Church. This will include dismantling the top wooden part of the podium and rebuilding the exterior of it with trex wood to make it strong and useful for many years to come. I will also be laying mulch down.

If you would like to help me raise funds for my Eagle Project, please scan the QR code located to the right with your smartphone or tablet and that will take you to my GoFundMe fundraising page. Thank you for your support.



Eagle Scout candidate Trent Allen of Troop 419.

"Christmas Gifts to the Church"

Special Offering

The following people and groups have given to the "Christmas Gifts to the Church" Offering to the glory of God in memory of others:

- Donald Burns, by Dale & Sara Burns.
- William & Helen David, by Richard & Gail Waigand.
- John Gilbreath, by Dianne Gilbreath.
- Marvel Guy, by Phil & Shirley Guy.
- Chatt Johnson, by Carol Johnson.
- Todd Karnitz, by Barbara & Al Karnitz.
- Billie Loose, by Frank & Linda Loose.
- Shigenobu Machida, by Miriam Machida.
- My Mom, Francisca Marcheco, by Sara Brewer.
- Rev. John E. Meeks, by Tom & Joyce Upchurch.
- My father, Jim Newsome, by Cynthia Peterson.
- Gregory Bruce Norton, by Matthew Norton.
- Ashley & Joan Page, by Donald & Carol Page.
- Scott Patterson, by Dennis & Debbie Patterson.
- Mike Ramstead, by Dave & Jenny Kuny.
- Mike Ramstead, by Dick & Pam Rodie.
- Juanita Shera, by Randy & Loretta Manning.
- Jan's Dad, John Shirley, by Linton & Jan Jones.
- Karl Stoneking, by Bettie Stoneking.

The following people and groups have given to the "Christmas Gifts to the Church" Offering to the glory of God in honor of others:

- Joe Brewer for our 40th wedding anniversary, by Sara Brewer.
- Bryan & Debbie Johnson, by Bob & Sherry Griffeth.
- My twin brother, Bill Masterson, and his wife, Jane, by Bob & Jenny Masterson.
- Carol Stalcup, by the S.O.S. Sunday School Class.
- Mark & Diann Tyrrell, by The Harley's.

The following people have given to the "Christmas Gifts to the Church" Offering to the glory of God:

- David & Susan Baker
- Don & Cindy Bennett
- David & Joanna Burchett
- Marty & Debbie Bush
- The Chancel Choir
- David & Karen Cook
- David & Karen Crawley
- Sean & Susan Delaney
- John & Betsy Fenton
- Hollene Ferguson
- William & Beverly Fields
- David Fraser
- Teguh & Lita Ghazalie
- Don & Cheryl Greene
- Willard Hurst
- Bill Knox
- Bud Knox

Continued in the next column.

"Christmas Gifts to the Church"

Special Offering

(Continued from the previous column.)

The following people have given to the "Christmas Gifts to the Church" Offering to the glory of God:

- Guy & Pam Logan
- John & Shirley Grace Madajewski
- Laura Madajewski
- Nancy Martin
- Bill & Jo Ellen McClees
- Jimmy & Beth Mozley
- Alan Neal
- Elaine Norton
- Dick & Pam Rodie
- Ethel Sales
- The Salt Sunday School Class
- Polly Sanders
- Glen & Karen Smith
- Carol Stalcup
- Chuvalo & Clara Truesdell
- Preston Younger



Set Up Recurring Online Giving to the Church

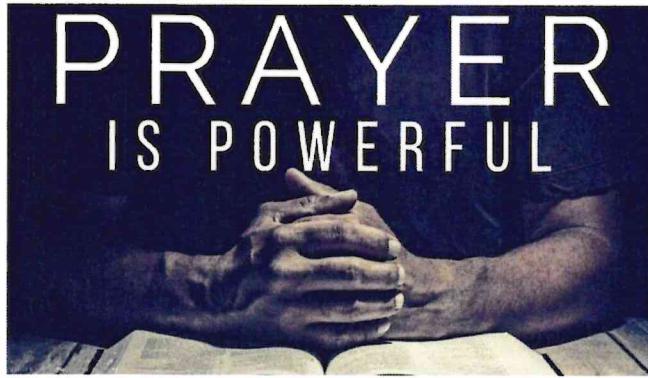
Recurring giving is easy to set up just by going to the **ONLINE GIVING** page on our website – duluthumc.org, or if you are watching church online, click on the link that will take you to that page.

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@duluthumc.org or call 770 476-3776, ext. 113.



**SET UP A
RECURRING GIFT >>**



Prayer Concerns

- Kathy Anderson • Jack Brannon
- Larry Bunten • Lorraine Day
- Ann Fleming • Sue French
- Jeff Greene • Jeanine Gullett
- Rosemary Hall • Shamain Hallett
- John Hammons • Dick Hartlett
- Carol Hitchcock • Carol Johnson
- Linton Jones • Stephanie Minschwaner
- Dottie Moor • Cheryl Otto
- Jewell Parsons • Charlie Pierce
- Ethel Sales • Charlotte Schlubach
- Dale VanPelt • Amy Worthington

- Shirley Guy & family in the death of her brother.
- Shirley Knox & family in the death of her cousin.
- Lucie Lee & family in the death of her aunts (her father's sisters).
- The family of Henry Pettus in his death.



Deadline for the March 2026

Edition of "The Messenger" Newsletter

The article deadline for the March 2026 edition of *The Messenger* newsletter is Thursday, February 20th, 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.



Finance Report

General Church Fund, 2025

Year to Date Budget, 12/31/25	\$1,865,552.00
Received Year to Date, 12/31/25	\$1,695,871.41

General Church Fund, 2026

Received on January 4, 2026	\$30,006.00
Received on January 11, 2026	\$24,126.00
Received on January 18, 2026	\$89,562.00
Received on January 25, 2026	\$24,004.00

Received Year-to-Date, 2026

Received as of January 25, 2026	\$167,698.00
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"Crossing the Finish Line"

Capital Campaign: Year-to-Date, 12/31/25

Received as of December 31, 2025	\$282,018.24
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"Crossing the Finish Line"

Capital Campaign: Year-to-Date, 2026

Received as of January 25, 2026	\$89,613.29
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Attendance

Worship Attendance

(includes in-person attendance and online views)

January 4, 2026	570
January 11, 2026	587
January 18, 2026	538

January 25, 2026: The church was closed on January 25th due to winter weather. A video featuring a message and worship music was posted online in place of the worship services. The video was viewed 412 times.