



THE MESSENGER



DULUTH FIRST UMC'S NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2026

Register Now for This Summer's Vacation Bible School: "Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God"

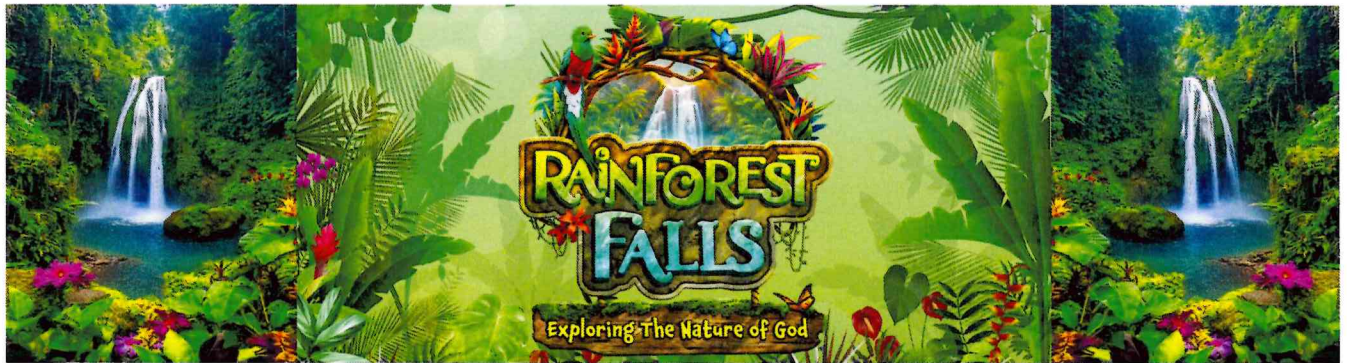
Mark your calendars and save the date for "Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God" Vacation Bible School. Registration is underway for the 2026 Vacation Bible School, being held **Monday, June 22nd through Friday, June 26th**, at Duluth First United Methodist Church. Vacation Bible School, held from 9 a.m. to noon each day, is for kids going into pre-Kindergarten (age 4 as of September 1st) through rising 6th graders. The cost is \$30 per child with a maximum of \$70 per family. Each day participants will participate in Bible story time, sing songs, play games, make crafts, and eat snacks.

In addition to registering participants, we are also registering adult and youth volunteers. We especially need shepherds, who are adult volunteers in charge of a group of 6-10 kids. Shepherds do not need to prepare anything in advance. They lead their group to the various activities where other volunteers are in charge. If you would like to help but are only available one or two days that week, you can put your available dates on your registration. We often need substitute shepherds. Also, the Childcare Corner is available for the children of volunteers if you have a child who is not old enough to be a participant.

Everyone who registers by May 24th is guaranteed a VBS t-shirt and copy of the music. All Vacation Bible School participant registration forms, as well as volunteer forms, are available online at the church's website – duluthumc.org, by scanning the QR code located to the right with your smartphone or tablet, or by going to vbspro.events/p/42cb8a.



For more information, please contact Leslie Yokeley, Director of Children's Ministries, by e-mail at lyokeley@duluthumc.org, or call 770-476-3776, ext. 138.



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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.*

Observing Holy Week

Holy Week is the last week of Lent, the week of Christian observances leading to Easter Sunday. It begins with Palm Sunday (March 29th) and progresses through Holy or Maundy Thursday (April 2nd) and Good Friday (April 3rd). From the waving of palm branches while shouting "Hosanna!" to the confusion of one ritual and creation of another, to the sham trial and gathering of the mob shouting "Crucify Him!" to the slow painful journey to the cross ending with a triumphant shout and darkening skies, **Holy Week** captures the most important week in the history of the faith.

We remember as we worship the One who gave His life for us. **Holy Week**, observed in many Christian churches as a time to commemorate and enact the suffering (Passion) and death of Jesus through various observances and services of worship, culminates with the Easter Sunday celebrations.

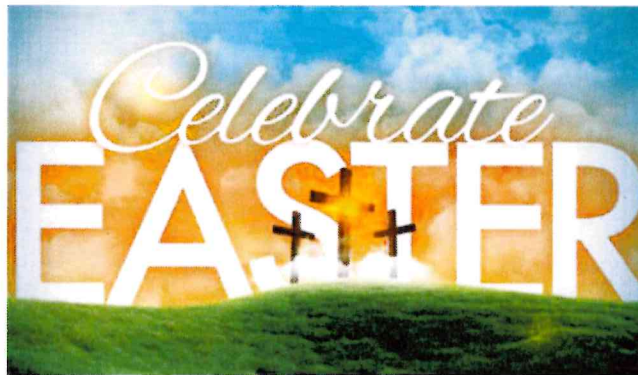
Source: *UMC Communications*



Good Friday Service: April 3rd

Make plans to join us for a **Good Friday service** on Friday, April 3rd, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Our **Good Friday service** will include a Passion narrative with musical reflections. It will be a contemplative service offering an opportunity for deep and personal prayer.

It is a wonderful service to bring your family, a neighbor or a friend. Childcare, for ages newborn through pre-Kindergarten, will be available in **Childcare Corner** during the worship service. The service will be live-streamed on the **Duluth First UMC Worship** channel on **YouTube**.



Celebrating Easter: Sunday, April 5th

Sunrise Service with Communion: 7:00 a.m. in front of the Sanctuary (in the Sanctuary in case of rain)

Join us Easter morning at 7:00 a.m. in front of the main entrance to the Sanctuary for our Easter Sunrise Service with Communion. This service includes singing, prayers, devotion, and Holy Communion. The 7:00 a.m. Sunrise service will be live-streamed on the **Duluth First UMC Worship** channel on **YouTube**.

PLEASE NOTE: We will not be holding our 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship service on Easter morning. Please make plans to join us at the 7:00 Sunrise Service and/or at either of the 11:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship or Traditional Worship services.

Easter Morning Fellowship: 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall

Join us on Easter morning for a time of fellowship from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall. All ages are welcome! Sweet treats and coffee will be available.

Contemporary Worship Service with Communion: 11:00 a.m. in Hinton Hall

The worship band, technical team, prayer team and pastor will be energized and ready to join with you in the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The 11:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship service in Hinton Hall, located in the Sheldon Family Life Center, will be live-streamed on the **Duluth First UMC Contemporary Worship** page on **Facebook**.

Traditional Worship Service with Communion: 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctaury

At the Traditional Worship service in the Sanctuary, the music will be as glorious as the day deserves with the choir lifting praises to God, ending with our annual Easter acclamation, Handel's *Hallelujah!* The 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship service will be live-streamed on the **Duluth First UMC Worship** channel on **YouTube**.

PLEASE NOTE: Childcare, for ages newborn through Pre-Kindergarten, will be available in **Childcare Corner** for all worship services, and during the 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Sunday School hour. Sunday School classes for children and youth will not be held on Easter.



Prayer Concerns

- Kathy Anderson • Jack Brannon
 - Amy Burk • David Cook
 - Karen Cook • Lorraine Day
 - Ann Fleming • Rosemary Hall
 - John Hammons • Pam Logan
 - Dottie Moor • Barbara Martin
 - Scott Parrish's mother, Kathleen
 - Ethel Sales • Jeff Schulz • Bill Swisher
 - Dale VanPelt • Shaquita Ward
- Linton Jones & family in the death of his uncle.
 - Jessica Parrish & family in the death of her mother.
 - Ginger Summerville & family in the death of her brother, John "Buzzy" Griffith Jr.



General Church Fund

Received on March 1, 2026	\$37,536.01
Received on March 8, 2026	\$14,255.75
Received on March, 2026	\$24,883.15
Received on March, 2026	\$26,202.00

Year-to-Date, 2026

Received as of March 22, 2026	\$473,924.75
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"Crossing the Finish Line"

Capital Campaign: Year-to-Date, 2026

Received as of March 22, 2026	\$121,771.79
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Worship Attendance

(includes in-person attendance and online views)

March 1, 2026	568
March 8, 2026	577
March 15, 2026	556
March 22, 2026	561

Bring Flowers for Easter Morning:

April 5th

The **Worship Committee** invites you to bring fresh flowers from your home to adorn the resurrection crosses that will be located outside of the Sanctuary and inside Hinton Hall on Easter morning, April 5th.



Share Your Easter Morning Family and Friends Photos with Us!

One of the Easter morning traditions at Duluth First UMC is when family and friends have their pictures taken in front of the resurrection crosses outside of the Sanctuary and in Hinton Hall to remember the joy of the day. We would like you to share your best picture with us, and they will be posted at a later date as a photo album on the church's Facebook and Instagram social media pages.

Please select your best/favorite family and friends picture from the morning and please email it (**just one picture please**) to Ken Willi, Director of Communications, by e-mail at kwilli@duluthumc.org. Please put **EASTER PICTURE** in the subject line of your e-mail and include your family's name of the names of the friends in your group. **Please submit your Easter picture no later than Friday, April 17th.**



Join Us for Wednesday Night Dinners in Hinton Hall

April 1st

Lemon pepper chicken, rice pilaf, asparagus, broccoli slaw, rolls, 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.

PLEASE NOTE: Our dinner on April 1st will be the final Wednesday Night Dinner in Hinton Hall for the 2026 Winter/Spring. We thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you back in Hinton Hall on Wednesday nights in August as we kick off our 2026 Fall/Winter dinner season.

Volunteer Appreciation Sunday:

April 19th

Volunteer Appreciation Sunday will be on April 19th. We will celebrate our volunteers, and all our wonderful congregation members, with sweet treats in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall from 10:30 to 11:00 a.m. We hope to see you there!





Youth Ministry’s Sunday Night Gatherings in April

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.

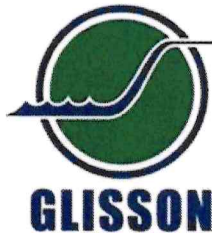
The Sunday Night Gathering schedule for April is:

- **Sunday, April 5th:** No Sunday Night Gathering;
- **Sunday, April 12th:** Sunday Night Gathering at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center (“The Fish Tank”);
- **Sunday, April 19th:** Sunday Night Gathering at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center (“The Fish Tank”);
- **Sunday, April 26th:** Kickball Night with Level Creek UMC Youth Group. Location/time is TBD.

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.

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>.



Recognizing Our Graduates of 2026: Photos and Information Needed by Sunday, April 26th

If you have a student (or if you are the student) who is a member of Duluth First UMC and is graduating from high school, trade school, college, or graduate school, please send a picture of your student by e-mail to Ken Willi, Director of Communications, at kwilli@duluthumc.org AND Rev. Min Lee, Director of Youth Ministries, at mlee@duluthumc.org. Please put **Graduate Recognition 2026** in the subject field of your e-mail.

Please be sure to include:

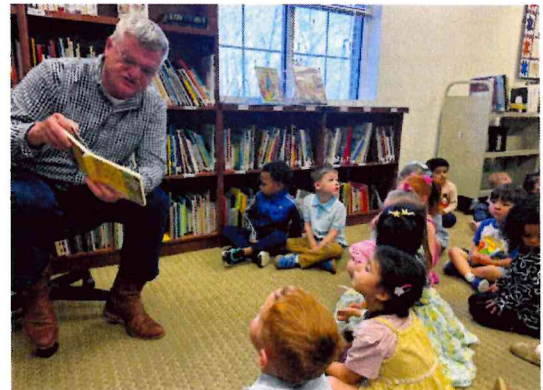
- the graduate’s name;
- the name of the school they are graduating from;
- their next step plans (i.e. college, military, trade school, graduate school, job).

All pictures and information need to be received by the end of the day, Sunday, April 26th.

PLEASE NOTE: Youth-led Worship and Graduate Recognition Sunday in all three services is scheduled for Sunday, May 17th.



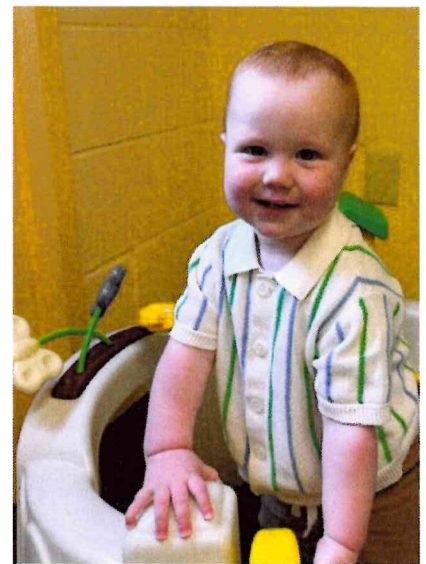
Children's Ministry and Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten



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Christian Beginnings
Preschool & Kindergarten



Christian Beginnings
Preschool & Kindergarten



Christian Beginnings

Preschool & Kindergarten



where smiles happen!

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.

Children's Ministry and Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten News

Easter season is here, and our kids couldn't be more excited! From **DuluthKidz** and **Sunday School** to the students at **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten**, this is a joyful time to be part of the Duluth First UMC family. We are so grateful for the incredible community that rallies around our children and their families each and every week!



"Where are you serving?"

An Opportunity for You to Serve at the Hands of Christ Duluth Co-Op: Saturday, April 18th

If you work during the day and would like to find an opportunity to serve in your community, the **Missions Ministry** has the day for you. If you would like a chance to serve in your community with your children, we've got just the day for you too! Join us on Saturday, April 18th, as we will be serving at the **Hands of Christ Duluth Co-Op** from 9 a.m. to noon. The **Duluth Co-Op** is located at 3649 Rogers Bridge Road in Duluth.

If you would like to be a part of this day, please scan the QR code located to the right and sign up. We can't wait to see you there!



Thank You for Serving

The **Missions Ministry** would like to extend a huge **THANK YOU** to all of you that served at **Hands of Christ Duluth Co-Op** during the month of March. You made a huge difference in your community. **THANK YOU!**



Wednesday Night Food Drives

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.

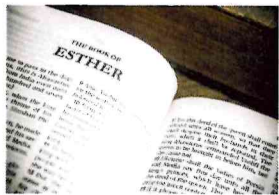
On April 1st we ask you to bring boxes of pasta or spaghetti. A table for donated items will be located outside of the main entrance to Hinton Hall.

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!

Simply Something Is Up to Something

Beginning Tuesday, April 7th

Beginning on April 7th, our Tuesday morning *Simply Something* study group will begin a five to six—session study of the book of Esther. The Book of Esther,



notable for being one of the two books in the Bible named after a woman (the other being Ruth), emphasizes the importance of standing up for one's community and faith. It is celebrated in Jewish

tradition during Purim, which involves feasting and reading the book aloud.

No extra book is required, just your Bible. We will also be using the additional books of Esther found in the Apocrypha. *Simply Something* meets in room F147 (located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center), at 10:00 a.m. on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Please let Rev. Dr. C. Kay Fuino know if you will attend so you can receive the class schedule of readings. For questions or to register please contact C. Kay by e-mail at ckfuino@duluthumc.org.

Atlanta Botanical Garden Trip:

Wednesday May 6th

Join **The RoadRunners** on Wednesday, May 6th, for a flower-filled day with a guided tour at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens with lunch to follow. The group will leave the church's back parking lot at 9:00 a.m.

The cost is \$40 per person and includes entry into the gardens, tour, and transportation via a 15-person van (please see notes below). The cost of lunch will be on your own.

PLEASE NOTE:

- In order to attend you must be able to get in and out of a 15-passenger van and be healthy enough to travel several hours by car.
- We must have a minimum of 12 people to sign up in order to rent a van, otherwise travel will be via caravan.



To register please scan the QR code located to the right with your smart phone or tablet, or contact Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles by e-mail at arawles@duluthumc.org. All registrations must be received by **Tuesday, April 21st**.

Interactive Seminar on Brain Health

and the Power of Gratitude:

Saturday, April 18th

All are invited to attend an interactive seminar on brain health and the power of gratitude, being held at Duluth First UMC on Saturday, April 18th, from 9:00 a.m. to noon in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall. Join us and our friends at **Senior Provisions** as we explore how to keep our minds sharp.

The main topics of discussion will include:

- **Brain Health: Warning Signs of Cognitive Decline and Prevention.** We will discuss the top 10 warning signs of memory loss or cognitive decline, and learn to recognize when it might be time to get a baseline. There are real things you can do daily to help reduce brain aging and maximize your thinking capacity.
- **Power of Gratitude: The Impact of Gratitude on Aging.** God created us with an internal system that works in beautiful balance. When we endure increases in stress due to change and circumstances, our bodies get out of balance. We will look at depression in aging and the physical impact on body and mind. We will explore how God defines gratitude and how putting it into practice not only is a biblical precedent, but serves to improve our overall health and well-being. You will learn practical ways to implement thankfulness in your community.

Snacks will be provided, and we invite you to make a donation to offset supply costs. **To register and request childcare if needed, please contact Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles by e-mail at arawles@duluthumc.org, or call 770-476-3776, ext. 128, by Friday, April 10th.**



Library Book Club to Discuss

“Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet”

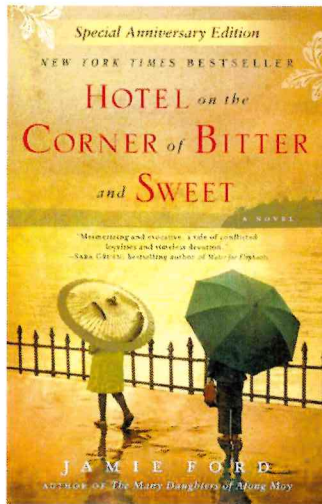
by Jamie Ford: Monday, April 13th

The **Library Book Club** will meet on Monday, April 13th, at 10:00 a.m. in room F145, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center, to discuss the book **Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet** by Jamie Ford.

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet is set in 1986. Henry Lee joins a crowd outside the Panama Hotel, once the gateway to Seattle’s Japantown. It has been boarded up for decades, but now the new owner has discovered the belongings of Japanese families who were sent to internment camps during World War II.

As the owner displays and unfurls a Japanese parasol, Henry, a Chinese American, remembers a young Japanese American girl from his childhood in the 1940s—Keiko Okabe, with whom he forged a bond of friendship and innocent love that transcended the prejudices of their Old World ancestors. After Keiko and her family were evacuated to the internment camps, she and Henry could only hope that their promise to each other would be kept.

Now, forty years later, Henry explores the hotel’s basement for the Okabe family’s belongings and for a long-lost object whose value he cannot even begin to measure. His search will take him on a journey to revisit the sacrifices he has made for family, for love, for country.



Deadline for the May 2026

Edition of “The Messenger” Newsletter

The article deadline for the May 2026 edition of *The Messenger* newsletter is **Thursday, April 23rd, at 9:00 a.m.** Please send all articles/information to Ken Willi, Director of Communications, by e-mail at kwilli@duluthmc.org.

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

New Titles in Our Church Library:

Spring Is on the Way!

Spring is on the way! Step into Spring with your next great read from The Louise McDaniel Memorial Church Library across from Hinton Hall!

The Gift of Forgiveness by Katherine Schwarzenegger Pratt is a perfect blend of personal insights, powerful quotations, and hard-won wisdom for those seeking a way to live with greater acceptance, grace, and peace. The book features experiences from those well-known and unknown, including Elizabeth Smart, who learned to forgive her captors; Sue Klebold, whose son, Dylan, was one of the Columbine shooters, learning empathy and how to forgive herself; Chris Williams, who forgave the drunken teenager who killed his wife and child; and of course Schwarzenegger Pratt’s own challenges and path to forgiveness in her own life.



All provide different journeys to forgiveness and the process--sometimes slow and thorny, sometimes almost instantaneous--by which they learned to forgive and let go. (Source: amazon.com)

The Other Emma by Sharon Gloger Friedman (Winner 2025 Fall PenCraft Award, Fiction - Historical Genre). In 1880, Rose Litkin, a nine-year-old orphan from the tenements of the Lower East Side, is adopted by Lucien Boyesten, a widowed banker seeking a companion for his spoiled ten-year-old daughter, Emma. Rose is whisked away to Boston—to a sister who resents and torments her—and struggles to find her place in a family where secrets abound.

Eight years later, impoverished and fleeing the disgrace of Lucien’s fraudulent business practices and tragic death, Rose and Emma board a train bound for New York to live with Lucien’s estranged sister, Frances. But a raging blizzard strands their train in the path of a runaway railway coach, and Emma perishes in the collision. Alone and frightened, Rose makes a desperate decision... Rose is warmly welcomed into Frances’s home as “Emma” and quickly becomes a part of her aunt’s extended family.

But the happiness that has always eluded her is still out of reach—clouded by the unbearable weight of her deception and the fear of losing everyone she holds dear. Set against the glitter and greed of the Gilded Age and rich in historic detail, *The Other Emma* chronicles Rose’s journey from the despair of the tenements to the mansions of Fifth Avenue. (Source: amazon.com)