



THE MESSENGER



DULUTH FIRST UMC'S NEWSLETTER

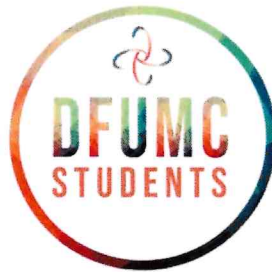
MAY 2026

The Youth Ministry at Duluth First UMC

Youth-Led Worship Sunday and Recognition of Graduates: May 17th

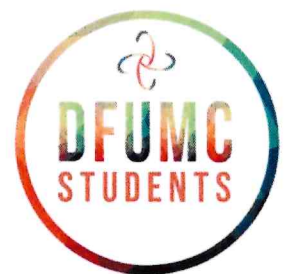
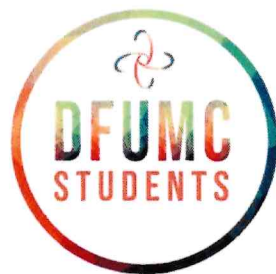
Please join us on Sunday, May 17th, for youth-led worship in all three worship services (8:30 a.m. Traditional, 11:00 a.m. Contemporary, and 11:00 a.m. Traditional). It will be a great morning as we get to hear messages from our students and as they lead us in various aspects of our worship services.

We will also be recognizing our graduates of 2026 at all three worship services on May 17th. Congratulations to all the graduates and their families!



Youth Summer Mission Trip: The Gainesville Aid Project

Students from our Youth Ministry are excited to partner with The Gainesville Aid Project (GAP) from Wednesday, June 10th, through Sunday, June 14th, to serve those in the Gainesville, Hall County area. Students and adult leaders will serve those needing home repairs, wheelchair ramps, lawn care help, etc., during the day and will participate in group activities, games, and worship in the evening. We ask for your prayers for this mission trip!



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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.



Youth Ministry's
Sunday Night Gatherings

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 May is:

- **Sunday, May 3rd: Senior Recognition Night** at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, May 10th: No Sunday Night Gathering** (Mother's Day);
- **Sunday, May 17th: Sunday Night Gathering** at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, May 24th: Sunday Night Gathering** at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, May 31st: Adult Volunteer Appreciation Night** at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank").

The Sunday Night Gathering schedule for June is:

- **Sunday, June 7th: Gwinnett Stripers Game** at 1:05 p.m. at Coolray Field. Please be on the lookout for more information and registration.
- **Sunday, June 14th: No Sunday Night Gathering** (returning from the Gainesville Aid Project);
- **Sunday, June 21st: No Sunday Night Gathering** (Father's Day);
- **Sunday, June 28th: Sunday Night Gathering** at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank").

The Sunday Night Gathering schedule for July is:

- **Sunday, July 5th: Sunday Night Gathering** at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, July 12th: Sunday Night Gathering** at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, July 19th: 2026 FIFA World Cup Final Watch Party.** Time TBA in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, July 26th: 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.



A Big "Thank You" for Encouraging and Supporting Our College Students

Thank you so much for your generosity in providing gift cards for our college student care packages! Because of your support, we were able to send out 37 care packages.

We are also grateful to Laura Cox for helping lead this ministry, and to the Tuesday evening Women's Bible Study Group for writing encouraging notes, helping assemble the packages, and praying together for the students.

Thank you for the many ways you love and care for our college students!



Women's Bible Study Group



Prayer Concerns

- Sara Adams • Kathy Anderson
- Jack Brannon • David Cook
- Lorraine Day • Ann Fleming
- Rosemary Hall • John Hammons
- Linda Kepler • Luke Livingston
- Pam Logan • Dottie Moor
- Scott Parrish’s mother, Kathleen • Ethel Sales
- Jeff Schulz • Bill Swisher • Sharon Swisher
- Dale VanPelt • ShiQuita Ward

- Betty Bluster & family in the death of her brother-in-law.
- Beth Hollstein & family in the death of her uncle.
- Deb Jackson & family in the death of her uncle.
 - The family of Lillian Jean Lowry in her death.
 - Jenny Masterson & family in the death of her step-father.
- Tim Near & family in the death of his mother.
- The family of Mary Jo Southerland in her death.
- Joyce Upchurch & family in the death of her brother.



General Church Fund

Received on April 5, 2026 (Easter Sunday)	\$42,148.30
Received on April 12, 2026	\$17,899.50
Received on April 19, 2026	\$19,806.50
Received on April 26, 2026	\$44,111.50

Year-to-Date, 2026

Received as of April 26, 2026	\$639,997.64
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“Crossing the Finish Line”

Capital Campaign: Year-to-Date, 2026

Received as of April 26, 2026	\$130,858.58
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Attendance

Worship Attendance

(includes in-person attendance and online views)

April 5, 2026 (Easter Sunday)	1118
April 12, 2026	613
April 19, 2026	534
April 26, 2026	578

**This Summer’s Vacation Bible School
at Duluth First UMC - “Rainforest Falls:
Exploring the Nature of God”**

Register now for “Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God” 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.



**Item Donations Needed for
Vacation Bible School**

Please consider making a donation of items on our Amazon wish list for this summer’s Vacation Bible School - “Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God.” The wish list includes items needed for crafts, as well as snacks.



If you would like to donate an item or items, please use your smartphone or tablet to scan the QR code located to the right. Thank you for your support of “Rainforest Falls, Exploring the Nature of God.”



**Entering the Church Buildings
on Weekdays**

To ensure a safe environment for our **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten** students and staff, everyone is asked to use either of the Atrium entrances or the back entrance of the Sheldon Family Life Center from the rear parking lot, when coming to the church during school hours. **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten** meets **Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** This will help maintain a safe and focused environment for our students.

We appreciate your cooperation in supporting our **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten** weekday ministry at Duluth First UMC.



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

Summer is almost here, and we couldn't be more excited! What an amazing year it has been! Our **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten** and **DuluthKidz** families have filled our hearts with joy, laughter, and so many beautiful memories. We can't wait to keep the fun going at "Rainforest Falls, Exploring the Nature of God" Vacation Bible School — make sure to register today!



A huge, heartfelt **THANK YOU** to our amazing **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten** teachers. You have planted seeds of faith and love in our children that will grow for a lifetime. We are beyond grateful for you!

Mark your calendars! The **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten's End-of-Year Program and Kindergarten Graduation** is **Thursday, May 14th, at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary**. Everyone is invited - you won't want to miss it!

Thank You to

Connie Goodman and Jodie Bowling

After decades of faithful service, the "Dynamic Duo," **Connie Goodman** and **Jodie Bowling**, teachers from **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten**, are stepping into a well-earned retirement! They both leave behind a legacy that has shaped generations of children and families in our Duluth community.

Together, these two women have given over three decades of service to our church preschool ministry. Ms. Connie has taught for 35+ years and Ms. Jodie has taught for 27 years! Their commitment reaches far beyond the classroom, having built relationships, supporting families, mentoring colleagues, and helping to shape the spirit of our preschool into what it is today! Many lives have been influenced by their dedication to teaching young minds.

While their daily presence will be missed, their influence will continue in the lives of the children they taught. We are tremendously grateful for their years of dedication and the love they have shared with the children and their families.

As they begin this new chapter, we would like to wish them happiness, rest, and the opportunity to enjoy life to the fullest! **Thank you, Ms. Connie and Ms. Jodie, for everything!**



THANK YOU!
SO MUCH
Connie Goodman
35+ years!



THANK YOU!
SO MUCH
Jodie Bowling
27 years!

Children's Ministry and Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten



Children's Ministry and Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten



Popsicles on the Playground:

Mondays, June 8th and July 13th

The summer is too long to go without seeing our friends! Preschool-aged children, their siblings, and their grown-ups are invited to come play at the church **on Mondays, June 8th and July 13th from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.** We will have popsicles for the kids and iced coffee for the grownups!

Join us on the playground if the weather is nice, and if it is raining or way too hot, we will be in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles, Associate Pastor, by e-mail at arawles@duluthumc.org.

Be on the look out for other meet up opportunities this summer by following us on:

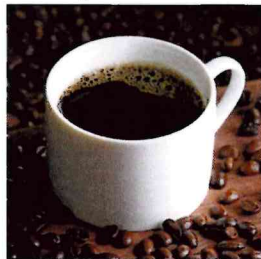
- Our church's website – www.duluthumc.org;
- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/DuluthFirstUMC>;
- Instagram – <https://www.instagram.com/duluthfirstumc>.



Christian Beginnings Parents

Coffee Get-Together: Tuesday, May 5th

Parents of **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten** kids are invited to a **Parents Coffee Get-Together**, with coffee provided by **Break Coffee Roasters**, on Tuesday, May 5th. Come hang out together beginning at 9:45 a.m. and enjoy a hot cup of coffee in the cul-da-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.



“Where are you serving?”

Snack Items Needed for Duluth High School and Coleman Middle School

Teacher and Staff Appreciation:

Through Sunday, May 3rd

If you would like to show your support and appreciation for the teachers and staff at Duluth High School and Coleman Middle School, we can use your help. We will be delivering large snack baskets for the staff lounges at both schools during Teacher Appreciation Week, beginning Monday, May 4th.

Your donations of snack items will help make this possible. **We need individually wrapped candies, breakfast bars, peanut butter crackers, etc.** Collection spots for your donations will be located in The Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall and on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center **until Sunday afternoon, May 3rd**. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. David Burchett, Assistant Pastor, by e-mail at dburchett@duluthumc.org.

Thank you for your help to ensure our local teachers and school staff feel seen and appreciated!



Duluth First UMC Serving at Hands of Christ Duluth Co-Op: April 18, 2026



Highlights from Volunteer Appreciation Sunday: April 19, 2026



3rd Grade Bible Sunday

On Sunday, April 19th, our 3rd grade students received their Bibles in the Contemporary Worship Service. It was such a time of joy for our 3rd graders - John Marvin Klayman, John Smith, and Gus Wolfe - and their families as the 3rd graders received a special Bible from the church.

Thank you to our congregation for your support of our young people. If you see our 3rd graders in the coming weeks please let them know what your favorite scriptures are, as they begin diving in and discovering the words for themselves!



Gus Wolfe, John Smith, and John Marvin Klayman receiving their Bibles.

Miracle Sunday: May 17th

In 2025 The United Methodist Church launched a new vision statement - **“To love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously.”** As a result we, as United Methodists, are recommitting ourselves to supporting clergy and United Methodists around the world. John Wesley made education a core commitment of his Methodist movement going back to its earliest days. In 1748, just a decade after his heart-warming spiritual awakening, Wesley established the still-thriving Kingswood School to provide high-quality education to the children of coal miners, as well as adults.



So it makes sense that as the people called Methodist “spread scriptural holiness over the land,” they planted not only churches but also schools for all ages. Those campuses eventually came to include United Methodist seminaries and theological schools to educate clergy around the globe. But ensuring would-be pastors can pay for their education has long been a challenge — especially in Africa, the Philippines and parts of Europe. While 71% of United Methodist clergy in the U.S. have a master’s degree or higher in theology, less than 5% of clergy in Africa, Europe and the Philippines can say the same.

That’s where **Miracle Sunday** comes in. The one-time offering is scheduled to take place in the denomination’s more than 30,000 congregations on Sunday, May 17th, the final Sunday of this year’s Easter season. The offering will raise funds for the **Endowment for Theological Education in Africa, Europe and the Philippines**. We will take this offering during worship on May 17th and invite you to participate in this important mission of The United Methodist Church. This offering is in addition to your giving to the general fund.



Donate Blood at Duluth First UMC:

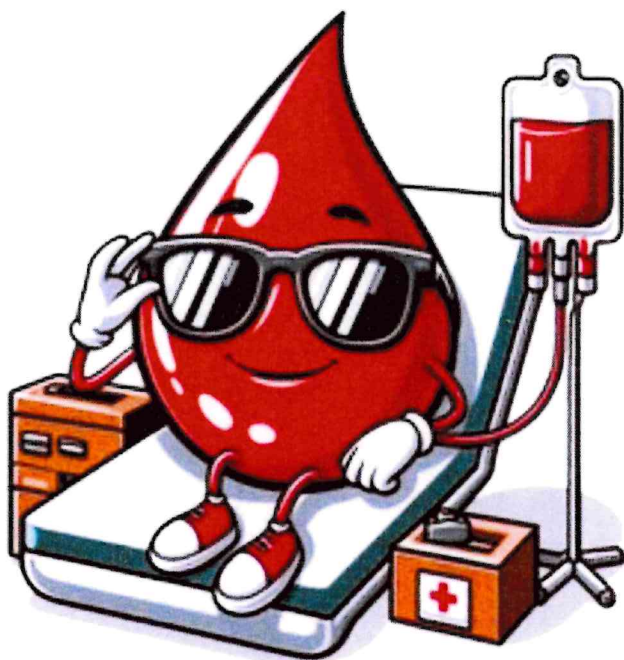
Wednesday, May 13th

Giving blood is one of the simplest yet most powerful ways to make a direct, life-saving impact in someone else's life. A single donation can help multiple patients—People undergoing surgery, trauma victims, cancer patients and those with chronic illness who depend on regular transfusions to survive. **Blood cannot be manufactured; it can only come from donors, which means every contribution matters.** It's a small act that takes little time but offers immeasurable value—turning an ordinary day into an opportunity to be someone's lifeline.

An American Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at Duluth First UMC from 3 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 13th, in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall. Please consider donating blood as the Red Cross is experiencing the worst blood shortage in over a decade. 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.

Please eat a good meal and drink plenty of fluids prior to your donation. All donors will receive a \$20 eGift Card, thanks to Amazon! Please go to rcblood.org/ Amazon for additional information.

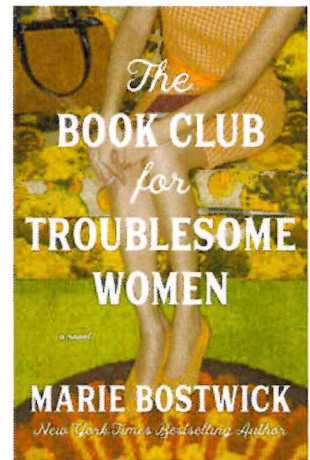


Library Book Club to Discuss

“The Book Club for Troublesome

Women”: Monday, May 11th

The Library Book Club will meet on Monday, May 11th, at 10:00 a.m. in room F 145, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center, to discuss The Book Club for Troublesome Women by Marie Bostwick. The Book Club for Troublesome Women is a historical fiction novel about four suburban housewives in 1960s Virginia who form a secret book club, inspired by Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique, to discuss their dissatisfaction with the “American dream” and find empowerment through friendship and shared experiences.



Nicknamed “The Bettys,” the women—Margaret, Charlotte, Viv, and Bitsy—navigate personal crises and societal expectations, discovering their own strength and the power of sisterhood during a pivotal year. (Source: www.google.com)

Senior Adult Coffee Hour:

Wednesdays, June 10th, July 15th,
and August 12th

Senior adults are invited to join us once a month this summer for a time of coffee, conversations, and fellowship. Bring a game, something you want to discuss, or just show up to enjoy time together!

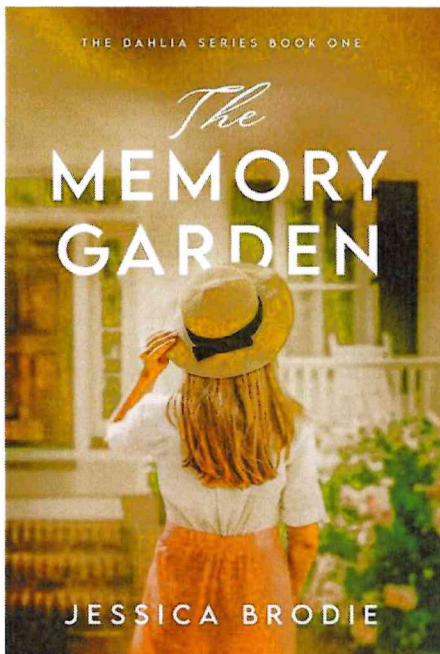
We will meet on Wednesdays, June 10th, July 15th, and August 12th, at 9:30 a.m. in the cul-da-sac area outside of the offices on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. AnnaKate Rawles, Associate Pastor, by e-mail at arawles@duluthumc.org. We look forward to seeing you there!



New Titles in Our Church Library:

Spring Is Here!

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



The Memory Garden by Jessica Brodie (*New Christian Inspirational Fiction; Dahlia Series, Volume 1*)

Rock-bottom has a name for Rebecca Chastain, and it's Dahlia, South Carolina.

Once a celebrated big-city journalist with a promising future, Rebecca now finds herself shattered—jobless, abandoned by her fiancé, and haunted by her own desperate attempt to escape it all. The small-town newspaper job in her granny's hometown isn't just a step down but a humiliating reminder of everything she's tried to outrun. If not for reconnecting with her childhood friend, Josh, she'd already be gone.

Then there's Devon—an eleven-year-old boy with eyes too old for his years, caring for his ailing Memaw while hiding stories he's terrified to share.

When Rebecca's reporting brings their lives together, something unexpected begins to take root in the barren soil of her heart. But Devon's dangerous uncle is closing in, and time is running out for Rebecca to open her eyes and see what's going on before it's too late. As shadows lengthen over Dahlia, Rebecca must decide if she'll retreat to safety or stand her ground for a boy who's fighting his own battles—and perhaps find healing for herself in what she once called the last place on earth she'd ever return to.

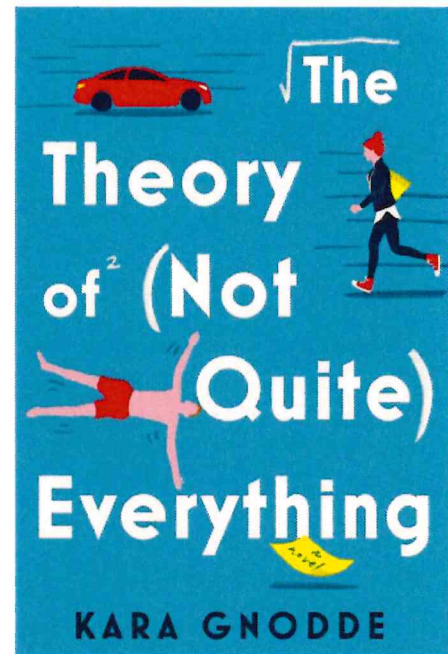
Some gardens only bloom after the harshest storms.

(Continued in the next column.)

New Titles in Our Church Library:

Spring Is on the Way!

(Continued from the previous column.)



The Theory of (Not Quite) Everything by Kara Gnodde (*New Regular Fiction*)

“Meet Art and Mimi Brotherton. Devoted siblings and housemates, they're bound together by the tragic death of their parents. Mathematical genius Art relies on logic, while Mimi prefers to follow her heart. When Mimi decides she needs more from life than dutifully tending to her brilliant brother, she asks for his help to find love. Art agrees, but on one condition: that she find her soulmate using a strict mathematical principle. Things seem promising, until Mimi meets Frank: a romantic, spontaneous stargazer who's also a mathematician.

