



THE MESSENGER



DULUTH FIRST UMC'S NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026



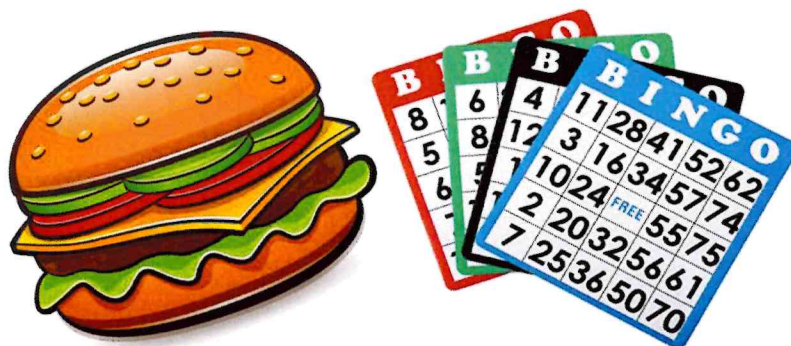
Join Us for "Burgers & Bingo"

Special Wednesday Night Dinner Event on August 12th

All are invited to join us on Wednesday, August 12th, for a special back-to-school "Burgers & Bingo" Wednesday Night Dinner event from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in Hinton Hall, located on the 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center. The menu includes hamburgers, French fries, cole slaw, baked beans, and dessert. For the kids – the same.

Bingo will begin at 5:45 p.m. and will be played during the dinner time with prizes for our winners!

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 and 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. Credit/debit card payments, as well as cash and checks, are accepted.



Burgers & Bingo

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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.

Promotion Sunday Celebration:

August 2nd

The new school year is beginning soon, and we are excited to celebrate Promotion Sunday on August 2nd! Children and youth are invited to the celebration on August 2nd, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall.

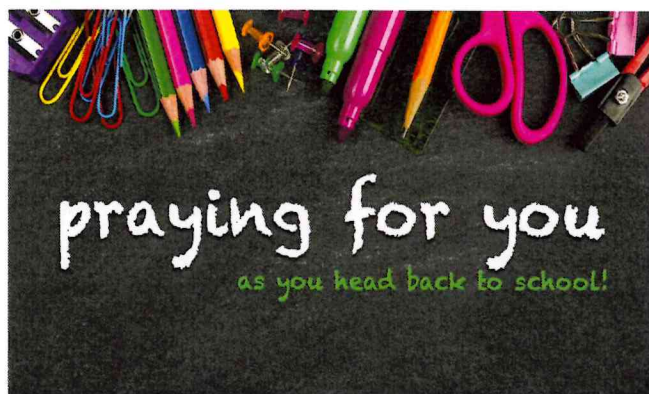
Children and youth will be together playing games, having a snack, enjoying fellowship with one another, and receiving a goodie bag. We can't wait to see everyone there!

PROMOTION SUNDAY

Back to School Blessing:

All Worship Services on Sunday, August 2nd

We invite everyone to join us for a Back to School Blessing on Sunday, August 2nd in all three worship services (8:30 a.m. Traditional Service, 11 a.m. Contemporary Service, and 11 a.m. Traditional Service). We will have a moment set aside during the worship services to pray for the new school year.

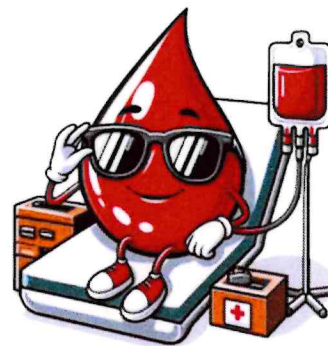


John & Kate Deighton
2715 Whippoorwill Cir NW
Duluth, GA 30097

Damien & Lorena Swirble
3668 Abbotts Bridge Road
Duluth, GA 30096
Damien & Lorena's sons are Isaac & Noah.

Blood Drive at Duluth First UMC **on Wednesday, August 12th**

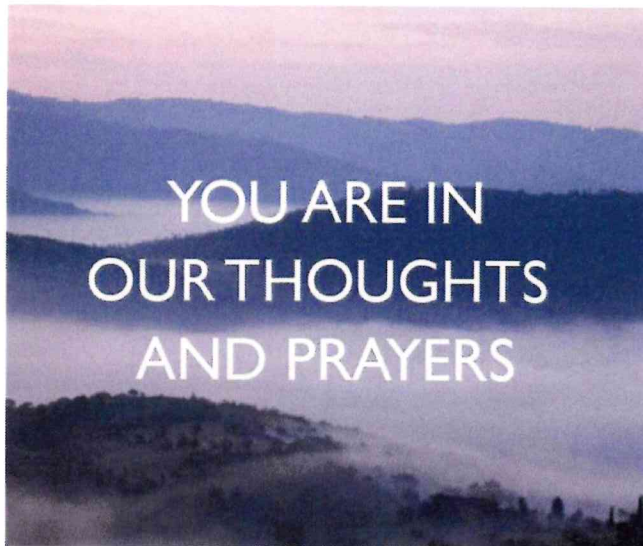
The need for blood doesn't take a summer break! **Every 2 seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood.** The American Red Cross is declaring an emergency blood shortage as blood donations have fallen to a four-year summer low, worsening this summer's emergency shortage. Donors are asked to take action immediately to help save lives.



An American Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at Duluth First UMC on **Wednesday, August 12th**, from 3 to 7 p.m. in the Dorothy L. Rainey Fellowship Hall. **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.

Did you know you get a free health screening when you give blood? They check your blood pressure, pulse, and hemoglobin (the iron-rich protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen from your lungs to your body and brings carbon dioxide back). **Don't wait - schedule your appointment today!** Don't be afraid to save someone's life! Donate your important blood type in August and get \$20 in Amazon Gift Cards by e-mail.



Prayer Concerns

- Lorraine Day • Ann Fleming
- Shamain Hallett • Tim Heard
- Tom Martin • Dottie Moor
- Bette Pickin • Marilyn Scheiwe
- Donald Southerland • Sharon Swisher

- Johnathan Ancell & family in the death of his grandmother.
- Pat Burden & family in the death of her brother.
 - The family of Marion Harley in his death.
 - Nancy Livingston & family in the death of her husband, Luke Livingston
- Bob & Jenny Masterson & family in the death of Bob's brother.
- John Otwell & family in the death of his wife, Kaye.
 - The family of Jeff Schulz in his death.



General Church Fund

Received on July 5, 2026	\$35,456.55
Received on July 12, 2026	\$7,075.50
Received on July 19, 2026	\$22,346.00
Received on July 26, 2026	\$15,778.00

Year-to-Date, 2026

Received as of July 26, 2026	\$965,973.52
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"Crossing the Finish Line"

Capital Campaign: Year-to-Date, 2026

Received as of July 26, 2026	\$161,998.53
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Worship Attendance

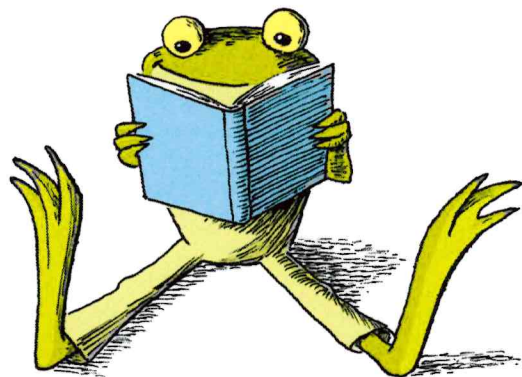
(includes in-person attendance and online views)

July 5, 2026	493
July 12, 2026	482
July 19, 2026	424
July 26, 2026	480

Book Bunch Story Time

Book Bunch, a story time for kids ages three and four-years old, will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:15 to 6:30 p.m., beginning on August 19th, in the Louise McDaniel Memorial Library, located on the 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center. Kids will hear a story being read from a guest reader and they will have an opportunity to check out a book from the library.

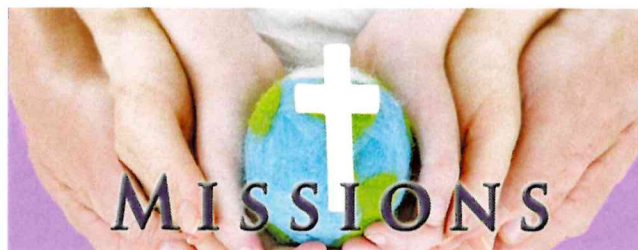
If you would like to be a volunteer **Book Bunch** reader, please contact Leslie Yokeley, Director of Children's Ministries, by e-mail at lyokeley@duluthmc.org or call 770-476-3776, ext. 138.



Join the Fun with DuluthKids

DuluthKids is a fun opportunity on Wednesday nights for kids, ages Kindergarten through 5th grade, to gather together for fellowship and Bible study. Programming is age-appropriate with curriculum designed for the kids. **DuluthKids** will meet on Wednesday evenings, beginning August 19th, from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. in rooms C-122 (Kindergarten - 2nd) and C-121 (3rd - 5th).

If you have any questions or would like to be involved in this ministry for children, please contact Leslie Yokeley, Director of Children's Ministries, by e-mail at lyokeley@duluthmc.org, or call 770-476-3776, ext. 138.



Missions Opportunities for Kids

A missions opportunity for kids ages Kindergarten through 5th grade will be available from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday evenings beginning August 19th. Kids will meet in the **Childcare Corner** area in room B111 to work on mission projects.

If you have any questions or would like to be involved in this ministry for children, please contact Leslie Yokeley, Director of Children's Ministries, by e-mail at lyokeley@duluthmc.org, or call 770-476-3776, ext. 138.



New Children's Music Program for Ages Kindergarten - 2nd Grade Begins Wednesday, August 19th

Our Music and Worship Arts Director, Verena Lucía Anders, will be leading a new Children's Music program for children, ages Kindergarten through 2nd grade, on Wednesday evenings from 6 to 6:30 p.m. During this time children will sing, play instruments and learn fun songs that can be sung in worship.

A minimum of 8 registered children is required as well as a commitment of regular attendance. Please e-mail Verena at vanders@duluthmc.org to register your child.



Sunday School for Children and Youth

On Sunday, August 9th, children and youth will report to their new Sunday School classes. Kindergarten through 5th grade kids will meet in their new classrooms in the C and D wing hallways of the Kids Village:

- Three & Four year old (as of September 1st): **Childcare Corner**;
- Kindergarten through 2nd grade: room C120;
- 3rd through 5th grade: room D126.



6th through 12th grade youth will meet in room F149 on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center.

Sunday School for both children and youth is from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. If you would like to be a Children's (Kindergarten through 5th grade) Sunday

school teacher, please contact Leslie Yokeley, Director of Children's Ministries, by e-mail at lyokeley@duluthumc.org or call 770-476-3776, ext. 138. If you would like to be a Youth (6th through 12th grades) Sunday school teacher, please contact Rev. Min Lee, Director of Youth Ministries, by e-mail at mlee@duluthumc.org or call 770-476-3776, ext. 119.

Duluth First UMC's Childcare Corner

Childcare Corner is a place where kids love to hang out and play with toys, make new friends, create crafts and have stories read to them. On Sunday mornings during the 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. worship services, children from birth to pre-K (4 years old) are invited to stay at **Childcare Corner** while their parents attend either the Traditional or Contemporary Worship services.

During the 9:30 a.m. Sunday School hour, the children are taught a Bible lesson, do a craft and have a snack as well, as good old fashion playtime. When the weather is good, we even will have some outside time. When there are other events going on around the church, such as Bible studies, choir rehearsals, etc., **Childcare Corner** is available for children as old as 5th grade. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Wettlaufer, Childcare Director, by e-mail at lwettlaufer@duluthumc.org.



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.

Substitute Teachers Needed for Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten

The upcoming 2026-2027 school year for **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten** will begin on September 8th. Substitute teachers are needed, and if you love spending time with children from 6 weeks old through Kindergarten, we have a spot for you.

Being a substitute teacher for Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten is a paid position. If you would like to be on our substitute list, please contact Pat Szathmary by e-mail at pszathmary@duluthumc.org or call 770-476-3776, ext. 131, for questions or more information.

Something Big is Coming... Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten Wishlist!

Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten, our church's preschool and Kindergarten program, is starting their new school year on Tuesday, September 8th. The teachers and staff have been working hard to prepare for the new school year and they are very excited to welcome the kids to the school.

The **Christian Beginnings** staff is so grateful for our church family, your incredible generosity and the support you provide for our ministry! In the next few weeks, you will have an opportunity to provide supplies for the preschool classrooms that will be used for our children to learn, grow and thrive! An Amazon wish list is being created and will be shared soon; please watch out for the announcement.

Thank you for supporting our **Christian Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten**. If you have any questions, please contact Leslie Yokeley by e-mail at lyokeley@duluthumc.org, or call 770-476-3776, ext. 138.

Join Us for Wednesday Night Dinners in Hinton Hall

August 12th - "Burgers & Bingo Night"

Hamburgers, French fries, baked beans, cole slaw, and dessert.

For the kids – the same.

August 19th

Herb roasted chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, buttered corn, rolls, and dessert.

For the kids – chicken tenders and French fries.

August 26th - Taco Night

Tacos with choice of chicken or beef, flour tortillas, choice of refried or black beans, yellow rice, lettuce, tomato, cheese, salsa, sour cream and guacamole, and dessert.

For the kids – the same.

**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 and 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.**



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 Tracy Brinker, Receptionist, by e-mail at tbrinker@duluthumc.org or call 770-476-3776, ext. 112. We hope you will consider volunteering.

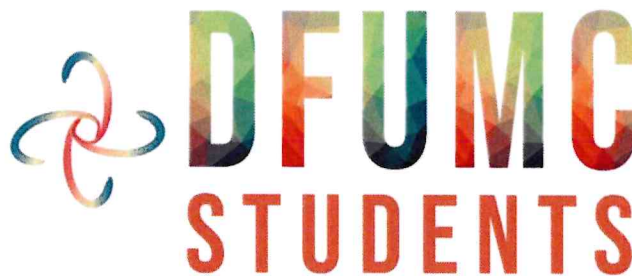
Youth Ministry Weekly Programs

• **Sunday School:** We have a year-round Sunday School for students in the 6th through 12th grades on Sunday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in room F149, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center.

• **Sunday Night Gathering:** Students in the 6th through 12th grades are invited to join us for **Sunday Night Gathering** from 5:30 p.m. 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 Gathering** includes delicious dinner, fun games, amazing worship, inspirational and relevant messages, and life-changing small groups.

• **Wednesday Night Bible Study:** We invite students in 6th through 12th grades to join us for Bible Study during the school year as we dive into the Word of God and grow together as a community! Bible Study is held on Wednesdays from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. in room F149, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center.

For additional information or questions, please contact Rev. Min Lee, Director of Youth Ministries, by e-mail at mlee@duluthumc.org.





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 August is:

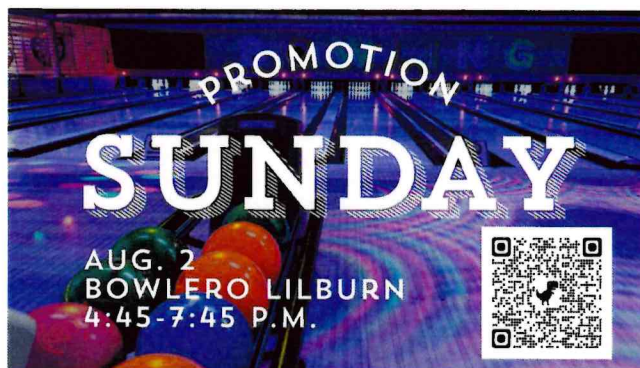
- **Sunday, August 2nd: Promotion Sunday Fun at Bowlero Lilburn.** As we welcome our rising 6th graders to our Youth Ministry and kick off the new school year together, we will have a fun night of fellowship at Bowlero Lilburn (3835 Lawrenceville Hwy, Lawrenceville) on Sunday, August 2nd. We will meet and depart from the church at 4:45 p.m. and the pick-up time from the church will be at 7:45 p.m. The cost is \$20 per person (includes bowling, shoe rental, a \$10 arcade card, food, and drinks) Please sign up using the following link: <https://forms.gle/o2RoEU5AamAciYzx9>.
- **Sunday, August 9th: Sunday Night Gathering** at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, August 16th: Sunday Night Gathering** at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, August 23rd: Sunday Night Gathering** at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Center ("The Fish Tank");
- **Sunday, August 30th: Joint Youth Group** with other churches at Johns Creek UMC from 5:15 to 7:15 p.m. Please drop off and pick up students at Johns Creek UMC (11180 Medlock Bridge Road, Johns Creek).

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.

Youth Ministry Promotion Sunday Fun at Bowlero Bowling: August 2nd

We are excited to celebrate Promotion Sunday! As we welcome our rising 6th graders to our Youth Ministry and kick off the new school year together, we will have a fun night of fellowship at Bowlero Lilburn (3835 Lawrenceville Hwy, Lawrenceville) on Sunday, August 2nd.

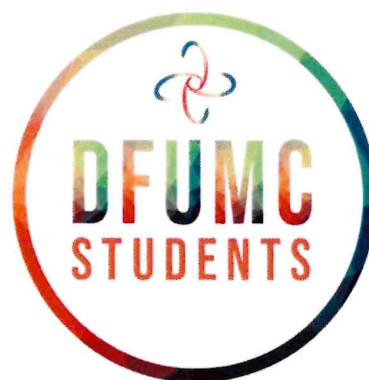
We will meet and depart from the church at 4:45 p.m. and the pick-up time from the church will be at 7:45 p.m. The cost is \$20 per person (includes bowling, shoe rental, a \$10 arcade card, food, and drinks) Please sign up using the following link: <https://forms.gle/o2RoEU5AamAciYzx9>.



Save the Date! Youth Fall Retreat is November 6th - 8th

We are excited to participate in **The Rooted Retreat** (North Georgia UMC Conference Retreat) hosted by the Glisson Camp and Retreat Center, from Friday, November 6th through Sunday, November 8th, for our youth fall retreat! It will be an incredible weekend with powerful worship experiences, dedicated youth group time, fun activities, and food and lodging at the Glisson Camp and Retreat Center!

We are looking forward to a meaningful and fun fall retreat together! Please be on the lookout for more information and registration. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Min Lee, Director of Youth Ministries, by e-mail at mlee@duluthumc.org.



Parent Connection Group Resumes Meeting on Wednesday, August 19th

Parent Connection, our small group for parents of children of all ages, will resume meeting on Wednesday evenings from 6 to 7 p.m. on August 19th in rooms F206/207, located on the 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center. Discussions will center around positive Christian parenting in a world that often seems to look to culture for a parenting model.

Please contact Rev. David Burchett by e-mail at dburchett@duluthumc.org for more information.



Join Our Church's Young Adult Ministry

The **Young Adult Ministry** is a group of young adults (18 to early 30's) who are building lasting friendships and exploring what it means to follow Jesus. Wherever you are in your faith journey, we'd love to have you join us! We are striving to build community, draw closer to God.

Join us on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in room F147, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center. For more information, please contact Rev. David Burchett by e-mail at dburchett@duluthumc.org.



Save the Date! Church-wide Cookout: Sunday, September 13th

Save the date as we hold a church-wide cookout on Sunday, September 13th, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in the church's front parking lot. Invite your friends and neighbors and bring the whole family for a cookout with fun activities for children and youth. Additional information will be available soon.



Men's Small Group Evening Bible Study Forming Soon

Have you wanted to be part of a men's small group Bible study but are not available to participate during the day? We are looking for several men willing to lead a men's evening Bible study group, as well as folks who are interested in attending. If you are interested in participating, please contact Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles by e-mail at arawles@duluthumc.org.



Senior Adult Coffee Hour: Wednesday, 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 Wednesday, 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!



"Simply Something" Classes

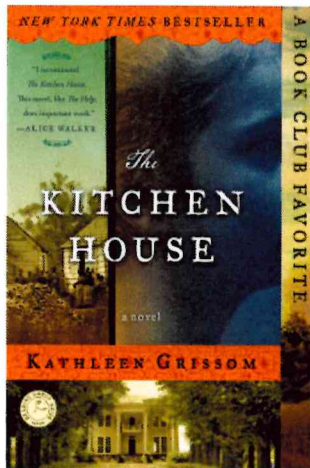
Resume on Tuesday, August 18th

Our *Simply Something* classes are simply moving on to new things this year. In August we will begin to study the book of Ruth. Ruth is one of only two books in the Bible named after a woman, a woman named in the lineage of Jesus Christ. This short but important book has some interesting themes of honor, love, and commitment. If you want to know more, then *Simply Something* is just the place to be. Join Rev. Dr. C. Kay Fuino for *Simply Something* on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m., **beginning on August 18th**, in room F147, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center.

Please bring your Bible and handouts will be provided. Come with your coffee, tea or water, and your open mind to learn from each other. For more information, please contact Rev. Dr. C. Kay Fuino, Associate Pastor, by e-mail at ckfuino@duluthumc.org or call 770-476-3776, ext. 117.

Library Book Club to Discuss "The Kitchen House": Monday, August 17th

The **Library Book Club** will meet on Monday, August 17th, at 10:00 a.m. in room F145, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center, to discuss **The Kitchen House** by Kathleen Grissom.



The Kitchen House is a historical fiction novel set on a Virginia plantation before the Civil War, following orphaned Irish girl Lavinia who becomes an indentured servant and is raised by the plantation's enslaved people, particularly Belle, the master's illegitimate daughter. The story explores themes of race, class, family, and loyalty as Lavinia straddles the

worlds of the kitchen and the big house, leading to tragic events that expose the harsh realities of slavery and the bonds between the characters.

DISCIPLE

FAST TRACK

BIBLE STUDY FOR BUSY LIVES

Disciple Fast Track Bible Study

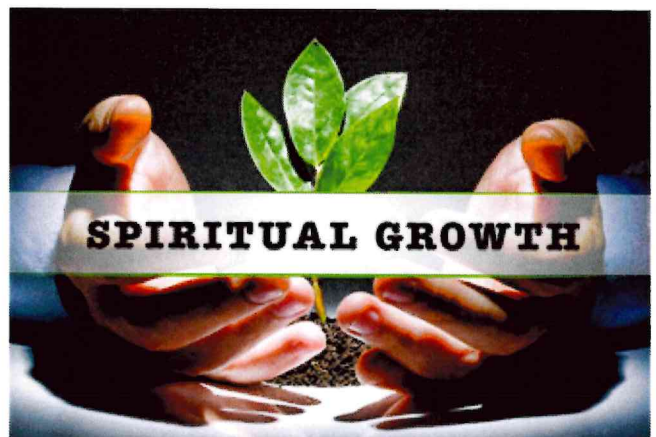
Begins Wednesday, August 19th:

Please Register by Monday, August 10th

Join us on Wednesday evenings, beginning August 19th, for 12 weeks of studying the Old Testament with ***Disciple Fast Track***, an overview of the books of the Bible in a shortened study. Have you wanted to learn more about the substance of the Bible but could not commit to a long-term study with lots of reading during the week? Does thirty-four weeks of study seem like an eternity? Your body just cannot sit through a 2 ½ hour class no matter how good it is? Then ***Disciple Fast Track*** is just what you are looking for to learn about what it means to be a disciple by learning the biblical narratives of our faith.

This new format for **Disciple Bible Study** is perfect for busy people. It uses much of the content of the original **Disciple Bible Study**, a small group study that has made a difference in thousands of lives since 1987. The class time and study time have been adjusted to fit our busy lives today. We are scheduling the sessions to fit a time when your youth are also involved in their activities and childcare is available for younger children.

The cost is \$20 per person for the study book. You will also need a study Bible. The class will meet from 6 to 7 p.m. (classroom to be determined). **A minimum number of people must be registered in order for the class to occur.** Please sign up by Monday, August 10th, by e-mailing Rev. Dr. AnnaKate Rawles, Associate Pastor, at arawles@duluthumc.org.





“Where are you serving?”

The Missions Ministry at Duluth First UMC

Our **Missions Ministry** at Duluth First UMC continues to find more ways to reach and connect with those in



need in our world and our community. Over the past year we have been involved with Hands of Christ Duluth Co-Op, Duluth High School Care Team, Rainbow Village, Family Promise of

Gwinnett, C Kay Fuino School in Liberia, Wellroot Family Services, Murphy-Harpst Children's Center and other ministries.

If you would like to become involved with our **Missions Ministry**, we invite you to join us on Sunday afternoons from 4 to 5 p.m. in room F205, located on the 2nd floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center, as we plan and share in devotions. For more information, please contact Rev. David Burchett by e-mail at dburchett@duluthumc.org.

Rainbow Village in Need of Donations for Families and Facilities

As school begins a new year, **Rainbow Village**, a local missions ministry supported by Duluth First United Methodist Church, is always in need of supplies for their families and facilities. **Rainbow Village** works to transform the lives of families experiencing homelessness by providing help, hope, housing and healing in order to instill initiative, self-development and accountability that will foster meaningful growth in the lives of all who encounter **Rainbow Village**.

You can find a QR code located to the right, as well as on the **Missions Ministry** bulletin boards in the Children's Wing, across from the library, and on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center that will link you to their Amazon wish list.



Happy Sacks:

Helping Children in Our Community

A growing number of school children in our community rely on free and reduced priced meals at school for their main daily meals. However, there may not be enough food to go around over the weekend. The goal of the **Happy Sacks** mission outreach program is to provide healthy snacks for school children over the weekend. **We pack approximately 150 Happy Sacks each week, which are then delivered to the schools on Friday, and given out by the school counselors to the appropriate children.**

For the 2025-26 school year, we packed and delivered 4,133 Happy Sacks. Since the program began in the fall of 2012, we have delivered **44,177 Happy Sacks** to children in our community. The need continues to grow as does the cost of filling the bags. The **Happy Sacks** program is not a part of the church's regular budget, so we depend on your donations. As we get ready to begin our 15th year of the **Happy Sacks** program, please consider picking up a few extra items the next time you're at the store or making a financial donation to support the **Happy Sacks** ministry. Thank you for your continued support of this mission!



Crafts, Pieces of Art, and Baked Goods Needed for “Bundle Up for Buffalo”

Annual Fundraiser: November 14th & 15th

Crafters, potters, artists, and bakers of all kinds – your talents will be needed in November! It may seem a long time from now, but it really isn't and it is not too soon to be thinking about our annual missions fundraiser, **Bundle Up for Buffalo**, on Saturday, November 14th, and Sunday, November 15th. All proceeds from the **Bundle Up for Buffalo** fundraiser help our sister church, Seneca Street United Methodist Church in Buffalo, NY, keep the heat on their facility during the winter months which fall from October 2026 through April 2027. This helps provide a safe, warm, after-school location for neighborhood children to go to.

You have been so faithful in prayer for this “pocket of poverty” in the North for many years. Please consider what you can make, and something that others would enjoy purchasing. Thank you for your support.

GriefShare Support Group Meetings

Begin Wednesday, August 26th

GriefShare Support Group, led by the church's **Stephen Ministers**, will walk alongside you through the loss of a loved one. **GriefShare** is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. Through this 13-week session, you'll discover what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" in grief. Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you'll learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way.



Our next session of **GriefShare Support Group** classes will start on Wednesday, August 26th and continue through December 2nd, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in room F153, located on the 1st floor of the Sheldon Family Life Center. Gain access to valuable resources to help you through your grief. **GriefShare** also offers **Bereavement Candlelight Services** the Monday (November 23rd) before Thanksgiving, and a **"Surviving the Holidays"** class on Wednesday, November 18th.

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.



The North Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church's 2026 Annual Conference Report

Our Lay Delegates from Duluth First United Methodist Church have submitted their report from the 2026 North Georgia United Methodist Church Annual Conference, held June 18th - 20th in Athens at the Classic Center. Duluth First United Methodist Church was represented by 5 clergy and 5 lay delegates. Bishop Robin Dease opened the conference by preaching on the scripture theme, Matthew 25:40 – **Unto the Least of These**.

The report includes information from various forums, business meetings, and services. A full report on all 3 days of the Conference – with pictures – can be found on the North GA UMC Conference's website - ngumc.org. A copy of the 2026 Annual Conference Report is included with this edition of *The Messenger* monthly newsletter.

Next year's 2027 Georgia Annual Conference will be held in Athens at the Classic center on June 16 – 18, 2027.



Giving to the Church and Best Practices for Giving

We are thankful for your gifts to the church and we welcome them in many ways. Below are some of the ways you can give:

Preferred (safe):

- **Recurring online gift.** Click on **ONLINE GIVING** on the church's website - **duluthmc.org** - and follow the prompts to set up recurring giving. This allows you to give automatically a specific amount at whatever interval you choose - once a week, once a month, once a year, whatever works best for you. If you are growing one step each year toward the tithe (10%), as many of us are, all you have to do is change the amount once each year to reflect that growth, and it's done!
- **Giving online, whether in-person or remote.** Click on the QR code printed in the order of worship if worshipping in-person, or click the link on the screen if you are worshipping online.
- **Through the church website anytime:** **duluthmc.org**, go to the **ONLINE GIVING** page (bank account or credit card).
- **Check in-person.**
- **Cash in-person.**

Not preferred (less safe):

- Check or cash sent through the mail.
- Using the bill pay service through your bank (this ends up being a paper check that is sent through the mail).

While the church welcomes any gift, we have found the most safe and efficient ways to give are in-person or online through the church website and we recommend recurring giving. **We would recommend NOT sending gifts through the mail at this time as we have had a few issues receiving gifts through the mail.** Additionally, if you are using your bank's bill pay service to send your gifts, they are likely sending your gift by check through the mail.



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.



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 Jack Brannon

*William & Meredith Camp
Jim & Julie Hall
Mr. & Mrs. McGlon
Margaret Odum
Sylvan High School*

In Memory of Dick Hartlett

Robert & Pam Gates

In Memory of Ernie Marlowe

*Joe & Meg Burkhart
Marilyn Coyle
Ferris A. Delionbach
Jim & Julie Hall
Elaine & Jay Jackson
Virginia Kirkpatrick
Connie & Ann Wright*

In Memory of Mary Jo Southerland

*Lori Duncan
Betty Jones*