Fourth Teller Newsletter

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

July 2026

FROM THE PASTOR

Fourth Avenue UMC members and friends,

Shawn Stoll - "We are a community moving forward together in Jesus."

This month marks the beginning of our second year together, and I am looking forward to this coming year. My family was able to find, purchase, and move in to our home in Faribault, and we are excited for the opportunity this presents to become more involved in the greater Faribault community!

This past month we dove deeper into the father of our faith, Abram and Sarai, and their children, Ishmael and Isaac. We discovered the depths of our faith are not anchored in the efforts of perfect humans, but rest in the power of what a redeeming God can do with imperfect people who simply choose to act in faith, trusting in God to provide.

Those who have been attending the Holy Moments book study have been leaning into the idea of partnering with God to bring heaven near, and have started finding lots of opportunities to experience the sacred in the midst of our ordinary lives. These moments are generating some great discussion!

July will begin with a recounting of the love and forgiveness embodied by the descendants of Abraham and Sarah in the fourth generation, and celebrating communion together. July 12 we will worship in the band shelter in the park, starting with a walking taco meal, and then sharing worship in song with a sing-a-long.

July 19 we will introduce an in depth series on Galatians, looking at the the Apostle Paul. (When I return from a two week vacation we will spend the next few months leading up to Advent with an in-depth study of Galatians.) Following this service, we will have a potluck, and then an all-church round table discussion to begin our visioning process. (More to come!)

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FROM THE PASTOR *con't*

Here is your invitation: please consider praying with us as we listen together to discern the Spirit's direction for our ministry in this next season. Pray first. Then listen to what each other is sharing. Somewhere in this conversation the Spirit is at work, and it is important that all our voices are heard because each perspective adds an element of clarity to the Call of God on Fourth Avenue UMC.

Consider the things that are on your heart. Why do they move you so deeply? What is it about this ministry that keeps you coming back? What skills and passions do you possess? How might God be moving you to act in faith? We're in this together.

I am excited to see what Holy Moments God has in store for us!

Your friend, Pastor Shawn

P.S. Please keep the Holling family in prayer. We have laid to rest both Lloyd and Alta in the last two months. June 25 would have been their 76th wedding anniversary.

WELCOME BACK, AGAIN

From the Editor

As Fourth Avenue keeps trying to find smart, eco-friendly ways to save on costs and time, I am proud to bring you another edition of this high-quality digital newsletter to keep everyone in the loop. I've been thrilled to hear that you're loving the new, easy-to-read layout. Thank you for the wonderful feedback!
Prefer the feel of real paper? No problem at all. Just stop by the church office and I'll gladly print a hardcopy for you.

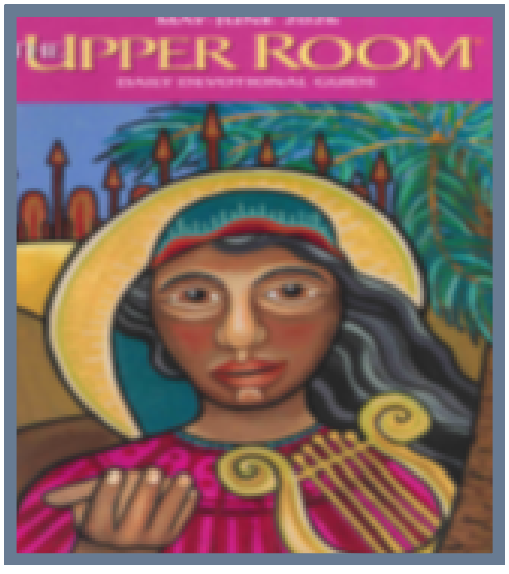
Calling all leadership team members: I want your voices! If you have an article for the FourthTeller, let's feature it!

To make sure I hit your inboxes right by the first of the month, we're setting the submission deadline just a wee bit earlier this time around. Please send your pieces my way by July 24th. Anything received after that will get a starring role in the following month's edition!
~ Sarah Clark

THE UPPER ROOM

The mission of The Upper Room daily devotional guide is to provide a practical way to listen to scripture, connect with believers around the world, and spend time with God each day.

The July/August issue is now available. Stop by the information center to pick one up, or call the church office and we will mail you one.
(Suggested donation $2.00)



FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

Invitation to Collaborate on Church's Future

A Shared Commitment

On June 7, the Finance & Investment Team shared a financial update following the church service. We extend our sincere gratitude for your time, thoughtful questions, and valuable input. Together, we share a commitment to fostering a sustainable and thriving congregation, both now and in the years ahead.

Love, Serve and Lead

As part of our ongoing work, the administrative body has begun important discussions about our church's long-term vision. Grounded in our mission to Love, Serve, and Lead as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, we are reflecting on important questions about our future. What will our congregation look like in one, three, or five years?

How will we be known in our community? From these initial conversations, two key focus areas have emerged:

Community Engagement and Building Relationships.

These priorities reflect our desire to strengthen connections both within our church family and with our neighbors.

The Next Step

As a next step, we invite you to join us for a special meeting after church on Sunday, July 19. This gathering will provide an opportunity for collaboration and the sharing of ideas that will help shape our financial priorities. We will also enjoy a potluck meal - if you are able, please consider bringing a dish to share.

At the July 19 meeting, we encourage all members and friends of the congregation to participate in brainstorming ways to advance these focus areas. Your insights and creativity are essential as we work toward developing a strategic vision. Our goal is to leave this gathering with a draft plan that supports our commitment to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously.

We look forward to seeing you after church on July 19. Bring your ideas and enthusiasm as we work together to build a church that is spiritually strong and sustainably resourced.

With gratitude and hope, Members of the Finance & Investment Team: Sara Steele (chair), Kathy DuChene (treasurer), Julie Schiffer (financial secretary), Wayne Rossow (financial secretary), Deb Jindra-Pope, Jim Heyer, Jim Miller, David Hanson, and Elizabeth Prange.

SHAPING OUR FUTURE

Faith, Finance and Fourth Avenue UMC

Before we gather together on July 19th for our special, all church collaboration, I thought it important to read how the Methodist Church feels about investments. What stood out in the Book of Resolutions was the deep connection between a church's financial investments and our faith.

As United Methodists, we believe that every financial decision carries both fiscal and social consequences. The denomination strongly urges churches to practice sustainable and socially responsible investing - balancing financial security with an active commitment to social justice, environmental stewardship, and human rights.

How this shapes our upcoming meeting

In the weeks before the meeting, the finance team is encouraging you to think about how we can focus on community engagement and building relationships. How can we can align our resources with UMC's values as well?

Using UMC guidelines, explore how Fourth Avenue UMC can actively support the following:

- **Positive Impact** - Investing in community development and affordable actions
- **Ethical Choices** - Ensuring finances avoid conflict with our social prinicples
- **Stewardship** - supporting initiatives that protect the community and improve the health and well-being of its members

As the finance committe said, we look forward to seeing you at the meeting. Join the conversations!!! This meeting is an opportunity for *everyone* to collaborate, voice ideas, and help decide how Fourth Avenue UMC will use its resources to promote God's reign both financially and faithfully. Your perspective is vital to shaping our shared vision.

~ Sarah Clark

GENTLE REMINDERS

Thermostats

Please do not change the thermostats. Some are run by an app on phones, and some are controlled by the thermostats on the wall. The boilers are off. The air conditioners in the sanctuary are being worked on by Luiken's because one doesn't work at all and another has a slow leak. Please dress accordingly. If you feel the temps need to be changed, please contact a Trustee.

Our current Trustees:
Dale Hauptli, Marcia Speiker as Co- chairs, members are Robert Nelson, John Streiff and Tom Bossmann.

Custodial Attention

To ensure our church building remains a welcoming, clean, and safe environment for worship and fellowship, we kindly ask for your help in caring for our shared space. If you notice any maintenance issues, spills, or areas requiring custodial attention, please submit a request to Sarah Clark in the church office. Alternatively, you can directly reach out to any of the trustees listed in the column to the left. Thank you for your watchful eyes and partnership in keeping our church beautiful!

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Greetings!

Lots going on with our mission adventures. Save your blood for the blood drive on July 10th in the Fellowship Hall from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The service in the park was a wonderful time! Good music and good food. And may I say, a wonderful message of hope. We are planning the next park concert/worship for July 12th. Bring friends, family and anyone on the street. A free will offering basket will be on hand for anyone that wants to "throw in".

Summer is flying, before we know it, we will be planning and hosting N.N.O. (National Night Out). The night will be complete with food, games, maybe music? You never know what's up our sleeves.

Believe it or not, I am missing the friends and fellowship of our Wednesday Warm-Up breakfasts, but we did need time off to collect our thoughts, recuit more help, and see about improving and getting the word out better, so stay tuned for that!

Oh you! We resurected the Garden Club again. I know its under trustees, but most of the help came from mission people. The shrubs and greenery look much better after Sharon gave them a trim. Fresh mulch was laid all around. It was a fun morning. Next month we will do another Saturday morning to paint the front railings. Maybe we'll have a snack or lunch to follow. That will be announced in the bulletin.

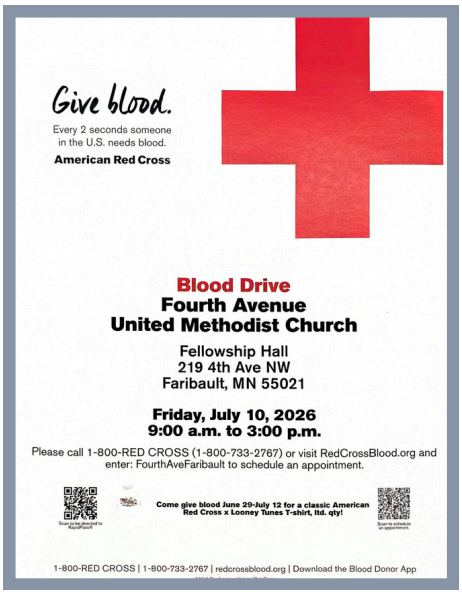
We continue working on the 3rd space program for youth and safe space. I am hoping to create an inviting atmosphere and maybe, just maybe, people will want what we have; meaning faith, peace, and the inner joy that only Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior can give!

I can't think of anything specific right now so I'll close with my motto; God loves you and so do I.

~ John Streiff, Mission Chair

P.S. If anyone has any ideas, needs, comments, or wants to join in on the fun, let us know or come to a mission meeting the second Monday of each month at 6:00 pm in the Parlor.

As a congregation, we have a unique opportunity to provide an immediate safety net for our neighbors in need. By taking just an hour out of your day to donate, you are quite literally offering the gift of life. Let's work together to fill every slot at our upcoming drive!



💖 The Incredible Impact

- 1 donation = up to 3 lives saved
- There is no substitute!

🚨 The Critical Need

- Every 2 seconds someone in the US needs blood
- 40,000 units of red blood cells, platelets and plasma are required daily across the country
- 3% = the number of eligible people who actually donate each year

TRUSTEE UPDATE

Thank You!

A couple of big thank-yous to Ed Kvestad for fixing the dripping faucet AND to John Streiff for unplugging the janitor's floor drain in the basement. Ed had to make multiple trips to Fourth before he could even get the water turned off due to a rusty shut off valve.
The plugged drain required the removal of the tiles, cement and dirt to get at the plugged pipe!!! Kudos!

Dome Improvements

The dome sides will have a high-grade vinyl siding installed that matches the education wing windows and brown trim on the soffit and new medium brown shingles. Valentyn Builders are planning on doing the work in the next few weeks.

At the July 2nd Trustee meeting there will be a vote to accept bids for the following:

- **Air Conditioners**: Two new air conditioners for the sanctuary that would be installed as soon as possible.
- **Tree Removal:** Remove both trees on the west side that are causing issues with our sidewalk.
- **Sidewalk replacement**: Replacement of some or all of the sidewalk on the 4th Ave side of the church.

Watch our church change with these necessary updates.

~ Marcia Speiker, Trustee Co-Chair

COMMUNITY ACTION CENTER

Open Your Heart Challenge

Here at the CAC, tackling food insecurity is our mission!

Have you heard of Open Your Heart Summer Challenge? It's a fantastic way for you to boost your support of CAC Food Shelves. Summer is historically the hardest time of year for local food shelves - and that's true for CAC as well. While school is out, local kids lose access to free and reduced-price meals and donations tend to dip.

With three food shelves located across Rice County, we provide 1.5 million meals and 500,000 diapers annually. We prioritize fresh, healthy, and culturally specific foods, delivering equitable access to food for everyone in our community. You can help us make a real difference this summer.

Join us in fighting hunger together this summer. Ensure our neighbors have an abundant, safe, and dignified food access experience - no matter the season. Simply visit our website and hit 'donate'.
Or, if you prefer, mail a check to our Administrative Office at 1651 Jefferson Parkway, Northfield, MN 55057.
(Information received from CAC in email.)

CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

A recap from John Streiff

What a blessing it was to be sent to represent Fourth Avenue UMC at the conference. I am forever in your debt. This is my second year at conference, so I knew some people. Knowing more people from around the state, pastors from our past and seeing young pastors grow is incredible.

The conference is filled with inspiring music and many thought-provoking, inspiring speakers on many subjects. One vote this year was to approve the study on the Israeli and Palestine conflicts. So many victims and so many opinions. It's hard to determine who is right.

Another topic was about change. That speaker brought a bit of humor into the issues of declining membership. The question they posed was, "Why do we have to change?". The ??? reply was, "Because we're broken".
That may sound funny. It got some laughs but, that's the reality ahead that challenges all of us. Thankfully the conference has resources and people to help with some of the issues that we will be actively discussing in the future.

There was so much more I learned at the conference. If you want to hear more about my time at conference, talk to me, Rev. Sharon Nelson or Pastor Shawn. We would be happy to share with you.

Side note: Did you know anyone is welcome to attend? If you are interested in coming with we would be happy to have more attend. Some congregations had a table full! All are welcome. A small fee is asked and only delegates vote however, everyone else can enjoy the awesome speakers and inspiring music. By attending you will also get an awareness of all the other programs, groups and functions that go on in the church. It's an eye opening experience.

God speed! ~ John Streiff, Mission Chair
P.S. You know who I am!

A recap from Rev. Sharon Nelson

What a joyful, educational, and thoughtful time we had in St. Cloud at the 2026 Minnesota Annual Conference! Attendees were motivated to stand up and be heard as we serve joyfully in our communities, and through the United Methodist Connection, across the United States and the world!

The theme of this year's conference was "Created to Serve Joyfully", with the scripture focus being Philippians 4.

In her Episcopal Address, Bishop Lanette Plambeck looked back to last year's theme of "Created to Love Boldly" while looking forward to this year's theme of "Created to Serve Joyfully."

Bishop Lanette spoke of the Greek word ek-kaleo, meaning called out, which is how we are being summoned by God into community, witness, and transformation. When God calls people together, "… there is a realignment…a reorientation of our hearts to God's service," said Bishop Lanette. God summons us to do big things, and to serve those around us. (con't on page 8)

CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

A recap from Rev. Sharon Nelson con't

Also speaking was Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth, Resident Bishop of the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area, this year's connectional guest. He preached a meaningful sermon about how happiness comes from what is going on in our world, but joy comes only from Jesus!

"What if the church became intentional about putting joy at the center? What if the church became known for joy, what if every minister of the church preached joy, what if every person who names the name of Jesus decided to become a joy ambassador?"

Bishop Bridgeforth also led a special teaching session, where he talked about "stuff of life" that weighs us down, and how we need to lean into Jesus' promise through Scripture to give us peace and rest.

Although it's been a few years since I attended conference, I thoroughly enjoyed my time there.

Thank you Fourth Ave UMC for the opportunity.

~ Rev. Sharon Nelson

CELEBRATIONS ALL AROUND

Happy, Happy, Happy

Happy Birthday and Happy Anniversary to everyone celebrating this month! We praise God for the beautiful gift of your lives and your marriages. As you mark another year, may you feel His deep love surrounding you, and may His grace guide you into a blessed year ahead. We are so grateful to celebrate with you!

July Birthdays

1 Tena Harren
1 Lauri Lammin
1 Ian Pope
2 Jo Ann Schulz
2 Dan VanDerVeen
3 Ella Prange
4 Pat Pecore
11 Sarah Clark
15 Rodney Mahler
17 Tony Gehrke
18 Karen Doehling
20 Sharon Nelson
21 Audrey Eiler
22 Russ Schulz
25 Jack Luedke
28 Pat Morris
31 Robert Nelson

July Anniversaries

18 Grant & Lauri Lammin
20 Dan & Shari VanDerVeen

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you..." — Numbers 6:24-25

JULY CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Trauma Group 1:00 -3:00 pm	2 Trustees 6:30pm Parlor Operation 23-0 7:00pm Library	3	4 Independence Day Jesus Food 10:00 - 12:00pm Faribault Mall
5 Worship w/ Communion 9:00am	6 Lakelanders 7:00pm	7 Mission Sewing 1:00 - 3:00pm	8	9 UWIF 12:00pm Parlor Bring a bag lunch Dessert provided	10 Blood Drive 9:00 - 3:00pm Fellowship Hall	11
12 Service in the Park Noon	13 Mission & Outreach 6:00pm Parlor Lakelanders 7:00pm	14	15	16 Finance & B&G 5:30pm Parlor Piecemakers 7:00pm	17	18
19 Worship Potluck 9:00am Church meeting to follow	20 Lakelanders 7:00pm	21 Mission Sewing 1:00 - 3:00pm Ad Council 6:00pm Parlor	22	23 FourthTeller Deadline	24	25 Garden Club 9:00am
26 Worship 9:00am Guest Pastor	27 Lakelanders 7:00pm	28	29	30	31	

STAY CONNECTED

Fourth Avenue United Methodist Church

Reach Out	The Details
Visit the Office	219 4th Ave NW, Faribault, MN 55021
Give Us a Ring	507-334-4308
In Your Inbox	fourthaveumcoffice@gmail.com
Doors Open	Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Our Team	
Pastor	Pastor Shawn Stoll
Administrative Assistant	Sarah Clark
Office Volunteer	Kathy DuChene
Choir Director	Kelly Landsverk
Pianist/Organ Accompanist	Doug Madow
Audio/Visual	Jim Heyer & Dale Hauptli
Nursery Attendant	Kim Luedke
Custodian	Sarah Clark

JOIN US!!!