

## From the Pastor's Study...

As we enter May, I am reminded of all the transitions that often take place during this month, especially for many of our young people. We will have graduations, and the end of another school year for teachers and administrators. Some of our parents will be making the shift toward summer childcare, and many young people will be starting summer jobs. Also, many will be going on trips to rest or will look to spend time outside with family and friends. May can be a fun time as we shift from the unpredictable weather of spring to the promise of warmer days in the summer. Devotionally, I have found myself in a season of transition now that Lent/Holy Week are behind us. During this month I am planning on (once again) re-reading Paul's epistle to the Romans, which begins this way:

***"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."***  
Romans 1: 1-7

The English translation of these first verses of Paul's letter makes for a really long sentence! Did you notice that it takes a long time to get to that first period? In this text Paul opens one of his most theologically expansive letters with a powerful assertion. He proclaims that he is called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of Christ. He is explicitly clear about who he is in relation to Jesus Christ and the work that God is continuing to do through the good news of our Savior. Later he reminds the Romans, (and us many years later,) that we have a clear identity as well!

As disciples, we are called "to belong to Jesus Christ" alone. This means as Christians we are called to prioritize our own growth in God's "grace and apostleship" and to invite others into (or teach others about) this life of "obedience of faith". We can do this in many different ways. John Wesley encouraged his followers to intentionally utilize what he called "the Means of Grace". Things like prayer, searching the scriptures, worship, serving others, visiting the sick or imprisoned, and partaking of the sacraments. For Wesley, these were outward and inward practices that were meant to intentionally deepen one's love for God, and for others.

As we move into May and the summer months, I want to invite you to try to do one thing different to deepen your relationship with God, and to reach out to (or serve) others in faith. This could mean doing something like making time to pray at noon each day for the whole month, or even seeing how you could get involved with feeding the hungry here in Monroe County. Whatever it is, I hope you will be creative with how you express how you "belong to Jesus Christ".

See you around the Church!

*Chris*

*join us!*

### Fellowship Time

Sundays  
10:00 am  
Gathering Area

### Worship Service

Sundays  
10:30 am  
Sanctuary

### Midweek Communion

Wednesdays  
12:00 pm  
Sanctuary

### Wednesday nights

Choir Rehearsal  
6:00 pm  
Sanctuary

### Ignite Children Ministry

6:00 pm  
Classroom

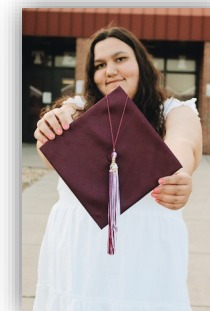
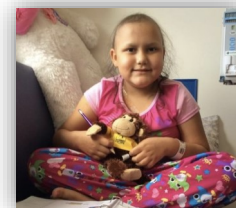
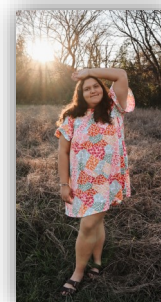
### United Methodist Youth

6:00 pm  
Youth Room

## CELEBRATING OUR 2025 GRADUATES!!

### Cheyenne Cruz

Cheyenne is graduating from Tellico Plains High School Cum Laude and with distinction. She plans to attend Tennessee Wesleyan University majoring in Nursing then to work on the pediatric oncology floor. She is currently her class treasurer and Beta Vice President.

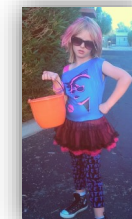
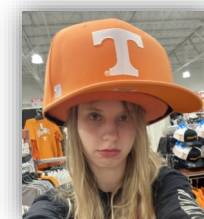


### Russ Grubb

Russ is graduating from the Maryville Christian School ISP program and will be attending TCAT Knoxville for HVAC Services.

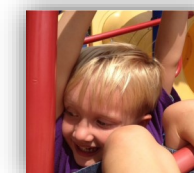


### Ruby Levinson



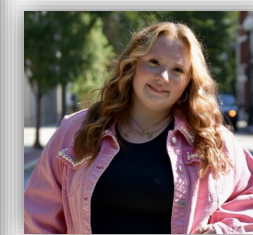
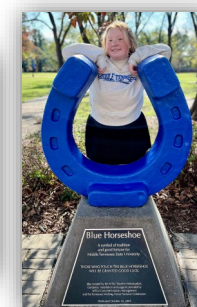
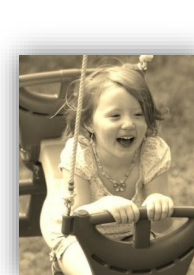
We are so blessed to see Ruby graduate from Tellico Plains High School. She has worked so hard to graduate with honors. She has been accepted into the University of Tennessee where she plans to study Chemistry. If needed, to support her recovery, she may opt to attend Roane or Pellissippi for a year, either way she is college bound! Way to go, Ruby!!

### Tate Sherrer



Tate is graduating from Tellico Plains High School. He plans to attend a community college to major in Business/Finance. We are very proud of the young man he is growing into, a man of great integrity and determination.

### Britney Williford



Britney is graduating with honors and distinction, Summa Cum Laude from Tellico Plains High School. She will be attending Middle Tennessee State University for Digital Marketing.

### Your giving allows us to have a Youth Ministry!

Your monthly giving allows our budget to support a youth ministry program that has a strong track record of making disciples of Christ. Jerry and Vanessa Barr along with several other adult volunteers offer a time of fellowship, a shared meal, prayer, games, and a lesson each Wednesday night in our church. The youth also take part in outreach through mission and spiritual growth through retreats like Resurrection. The devotion of our volunteer leaders, coupled with your financial support, makes it possible for us to continue to make disciples like the graduates listed above. Thank you!

Rev. Chris Black, Pastor

cblack@firstumcmadisonville.org

Nikki Rutzen, Executive Assistant

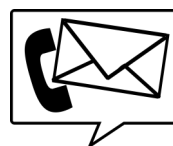
nikki@firstumcmadisonville.org

Sue Hamilton, Director of Congregational Care & Choir Ministries

sue@firstumcmadisonville.org

Erin Strickland, First Steps Coordinator

eroberts@firstumcmadisonville.org



### FIRST UNITED METHODIST

Church: 143 College Street

Mail: PO Box 157

Madisonville, TN 37354

Call: 423-442-2471

Fax: 423-442-2434





We Support Our Church By...

Our Gifts:

- Celebrating the many achievements by our members
- Honoring our 2025 Graduates
- Celebrating our Mothers on May 11th!

Our Presence:

- In church average for April-94
- Attending and rejoicing in Holy Week

Coffee Bar



May 4th  
Glenda Parker

May 11th  
Janet Tweed

May 18th  
Open

May 25th  
Jan Johnson

Flowers

May 4th  
Communion



May 11th  
Mother's Day

May 18th  
John and Susan Sherrer in honor of their son, Tate

May 25th  
Mike and Gabi Tallent

Ignite & Youth Suppers

May 7th  
Family Night Cookout

May 14th  
Carol McKenzie, Jennifer McKenzie and Peggy Wengert

May 21st  
Lee Anne Strickland, Whitney Grubb and Janet Ruppel

We Support Our Church By Our Prayers...

- ♦ Peery family
- ♦ Strickland family
- ♦ Ruppel family
- ♦ Venable/Gay family
- ♦ Kefauver family
- ♦ Barr family
- ♦ Kayla Couch and family
- ♦ Harrell family
- ♦ Penland/Giles family
- ♦ Stuckey/Huff family
- ♦ Betty Hicks family
- ♦ Green/Leamon family
- ♦ Harold & Carolyn Hunt and family
- ♦ Conley family
- ♦ Liszeski family
- ♦ Maiuri family
- ♦ Reedy family
- ♦ Larson family

Are you interested in participating in a hand bell choir?

All interested individuals are invited regardless of age or experience in ringing bells. First meeting of the hand bell enthusiasts will be held on Sunday, June 22nd at 3:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. If you are willing to give this a try, whether you can attend the first meeting or not, please contact Marlee Tierce:  
email: mtierce@aol.com or text 678-525-0348  
or call 423-884-2196.

Looking ahead to the next Holston Annual Conference



As we prepare for the 2025 Holston Annual Conference, we are excited to announce this year's theme: **Together in New Beginnings**. This theme reflects our shared commitment to moving forward as one body in Christ, embracing the opportunities and challenges that come with stepping into a new season of ministry and mission.

Rooted in Romans 12:5, which reminds us that *"so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another,"* our theme invites us to reflect on the power of unity as we embark on new beginnings together. Whether in our local churches, our communities, or across the conference, we are called to build connections, strengthen relationships, and trust God's leading into a renewed future.

The 2025 Annual Conference will take place June 1-4, 2025, at the beautiful Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center in North Carolina. Surrounded by the tranquility of the lake and the grandeur of the mountains, this beloved gathering space will once again host clergy and laity from across the Holston Conference.

During these four days, we will worship, celebrate the ways God is working through our churches, and discern how we can better serve Christ and one another. As we meet in fellowship, we will embrace the spirit of renewal that comes with new beginnings and deepen our connection as the body of Christ.

We look forward to seeing how God will move among us as we journey **Together in New Beginnings**.

SUE'S MAY NEWS

MAY is here! I am looking out my office window at all the greenery outside—beautiful grass, shrubs and trees. Right now I can hear the little kids at the daycare next door as they play outdoors. I am an outdoors person and I would love to be outside this morning. I mowed my lawn yesterday afternoon and I made a quick visit to Granny's on Hwy 411 to pick up some flowers and vegetables to plant. (She has a beautiful supply right now!) Springtime in East Tennessee is such a wonderful experience.

We are so lucky to live where we get to enjoy all the seasons! I love springtime! May is a time of completion and a time of new beginnings—especially for those graduating from high school and college/training programs. On Sunday, May 11th, we will honor our 5 high school graduates, Russ Grubb, Tate Sherrer, Britney Williford, Ruby Levinson and Cheyenne Cruz with a reception at 9:30am in the gathering area. We are asking you all to bring a favorite finger food to the reception to share with everyone. We will have a basket where you can put graduation cards. We are so proud of these 5 young people! If you have someone graduating from college/training program this spring, please send me their name, school and area of study and we will get this information in the June newsletter.

As many of you know, one of my favorite things to do is keep the blessing box supplied. Going out to the blessing box a couple of times a day gives me the opportunity to get up and move and feel like I am accomplishing something. Sometimes I even get to visit with folks who come by the blessing box—both those who are leaving items and those who are taking items that they need. Yesterday I was able to reconnect with one of the people who visited our box several times during the winter. In fact, he is the gentleman who passed out in our office and we had to call 911 to take care of him. We have worried for weeks about him. He said he spent 5 days in the hospital. He could have passed out somewhere else on that very cold day and been alone. We were so glad that he was here and we assisted him. It was such a blessing yesterday to see him sitting outside again. We have been so blessed over the last few months with the giving to the blessing box. The blessing box right now has made me think about *Matthew 14: 13-21—the feeding of the 5000!* Right now we have gotten down to just a few items in our storage room where it looks like we have just enough to feed a few people. Thanks to one of our church families who have made a monetary donation for the blessing box, I am going to shop for items to help restock our supply. I don't put too much in the box at one time so we can serve more people.

When you think about the blessing box and our Tuesday night Community Café, we are providing food to many people in need. Go back and read *Matthew 14: 13-21* and think about the "5000" that together we can feed. Thank you so much for your donations. As always, keep your May newsletter handy, take home your weekly bulletins and watch for emails and texts throughout the month.

Our church is alive!

~Sue

Our Church has stepped up in Missions!

This year our Hiwassee District Hands On Mission Project goal was 50 food buckets and at last count our community has collected 58! As a church body we have responded in an incredible way to support the Holston Conference's ongoing mission to Liberia. The new goal for our church is 70 buckets. We can do it! Our food buckets **have to be here by May 8th**. If you are interested in making a bucket please grab a pink instruction slip from the gathering area.



Graduation Celebration

On Sunday, May 11th beginning at 9:30am please join us as we honor our five graduating seniors: Cheyenne Cruz, Russ Grubb, Ruby Levinson, Tate Sherrer and Britney Williford with a reception in our gathering area. We are asking you all to bring your favorite finger food to share. Please have your food here by 9:20am so that everyone can enjoy it. Thank you!

Mark your calendars for a Family Night Cookout!

On Wednesday, May 7th at 6:00pm we will be having our monthly family night supper and we will be enjoying bar-b-que food! Pastor Chris will be grilling hot dogs and we will have BBQ pork. You are invited to bring your favorite BBQ side dish or dessert. (potato salad, coleslaw, hot dog chili, potato chips, etc.) This will also be the supper for the Youth and Ignite (so you might want to add a little extra). If you prefer eating veggie dogs, just bring them and Chris will grill them. We plan to eat in the fellowship hall. Every time we have a family night supper it is a wonderful time to fellowship and break bread together. Please join us!