



The Flame

2025 September Issue

From the Pastor's Study...

"In that day you will say: 'Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world.'" -Isaiah 12:4

What a great time to be the church in the world! I am constantly amazed and surprised by this church and the people that make it the warm and unique community that it is. As I have served among you for the last five years I have grown to appreciate how many of the seemingly normal interactions & conversations can have profound spiritual significance. I truly believe that this is the Holy Spirit moving among us, and connecting us as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is always a pleasant surprise when an everyday conversation with an adult, a youth, or a child can have deeper implications for my own relationship with God. I'm sure that each of you have experienced this at one time or another.

Several years ago when I was new on staff at another church, one of the children was playing in the nursery on a Sunday morning, and I asked her if she would like to share a toy with me. She looked at me inquisitively and a bit puzzled and then promptly did an about-face at my request and walked away from me. I thought, "Well, she is just being shy because she doesn't know me well yet." Then to my surprise a minute later, she brought me a toy, then another, and then another! By the end I was loaded down with toys. I was reminded of this interaction as I have reflected on our own unique church and how we are sharing who we are with our community. This is truly a great place, and we have so much to offer our community and world. William Sloane Coffin, the late Presbyterian minister and much-quoted author, wrote, *"A church is a place where we try to think, speak, and act in God's way, not in the way of a fear-filled world. A church is a home for love, a home for brothers and sisters to dwell in unity, to rest and be healed, to let go of their defenses and be free—free from worries, free from tensions, free to laugh, free to cry."*

Over the last 5 years many of you have shared that our church has been this in the past, and my prayer is that it continues to strive to be this more and more each day. There is no greater need in our world or in our area than for people to know and be welcomed into a community where Coffin's words are being made into reality. I hope we can all share something about our church with someone this month and be powerfully reminded of what a truly great place this is.

Lots of Hope!
Chris

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Church: 143 College Street
Mail: PO Box 157
Madisonville, TN 37354
Call: 423-442-2471
www.1umc.com



Fellowship Time
Sundays
10:00AM
Gathering Area

Worship Service
Sundays
10:30AM
Sanctuary

Midweek Communion
Wednesdays
12:00PM
Sanctuary

Wednesday nights
Choir Rehearsal
6:00PM
Sanctuary

United Methodist Youth
6:00PM
Youth Room

Ignite Children's Ministry
6:00PM
Ignite Classrooms



Rev. Chris Black to lead a retreat at First UMC of Gatlinburg.

On September 22nd-24th Rev. Chris Black has been invited to be the guest speaker at a spiritual formation retreat for the folks of 1st United Methodist Church in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Chris will join them for their annual retreat at a center in Bryson City North Carolina, and will teach 4 sessions over the course of two days. This is a wonderful opportunity for our church to be in connection to another church in the Smoky Mountain District.

FUMC is hosting a community-wide baby shower! Diapers needed!

On Saturday, Sept. 27th from 10AM to 2PM our church will be hosting a community-wide baby shower! This event is led by the Monroe County Health Council and the Monroe County Health Department along with many other community partners. Our church has been asked to take the lead on a diaper drive for those parents who will be present at the event. We want to invite you to purchase some diapers (Newborn/Size 1) and drop them off in Mission Alley. This will be a great way for our church to show the love of God to some new young families!

Mark your calendars for Family Night Supper!

On Wednesday, September 24th at 6:00PM we will be having our September family night supper in the Fellowship Hall, and we want to invite you to bring your favorite dish! This could be casseroles, deviled eggs, vegetables, fruit, bread, meat loaf, chicken, etc. Every time we have a family night supper it is a wonderful time to fellowship and break bread together and our dinner on September 24th will be no different! Please join us!



Pastor's Bible Study Continues in September!

Throughout the month of September, Pastor Chris will continue to host a home style Bible Study on Wednesdays at 7:00PM in the Fellowship Hall. Chris will do a deep dive into Paul's two letters to the Corinthian Church. It doesn't matter if you're new to the Christian faith, or have studied the Bible for years you are welcome to be part of this unique study of 1st and 2nd Corinthians. If you have questions about attending this class please email Pastor Chris at cblack@firstumcmadisonville.org.

Check Out Mission Alley!

The hallway between the sanctuary and the office area has been transformed! This area is now called **Mission Alley** and is meant to be a vibrant destination for missions collections, and an area where our church can celebrate our missional identity. In the coming weeks you will see some fun pictures from projects/trips that we have done in the past, as well as information about new opportunities for us to be in outreach. We will be doing different collections as we enter fall and winter, and we would encourage you to check out the ministry partners that are currently profiled in Missions Alley and make plans to contribute!

Smoky Mountain District Conference has been scheduled

Please make plans to join members and leaders of the Smoky Mountain District for our annual District Conference on September 21st at First UMC of Sevierville (214 Cedar Street, Sevierville, TN 37862) at 3:00PM. District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Angela Hardy Cross will be presiding. We will be discussing the business of the Smoky Mountain District, electing At-Large members to Annual Conference 2026, electing District officers/leaders and approving the 2026 district budget. If you have any questions about this event, or would like to attend please reach out to Rev. Chris Black.

Did you know that we have Midweek Communion at First UMC?

All are welcome to participate in a casual weekly communion service led by Pastor Chris Black on Wednesdays at Noon in the Sanctuary. This 15 minute worship opportunity consists of prayer, scripture readings, confession and a time of communion. Our time together promises to be a wonderful mid-week reconnection time of renewal, contemplation and fellowship. Join us, even if you're on your lunch break!

CONTACT US...

Sue Hamilton
Director of Congregational Care
& Choir Ministries
sue@firstumcmadisonville.org

Rev. Chris Black
Pastor
cblack@firstumcmadisonville.org

Nikki Rutzen
Executive Assistant
nikki@firstumcmadisonville.org

Erin Strickland
First Steps Coordinator
eroberts@firstumcmadisonville.org

We support our Church by...

Our Gifts:

- Cooking/baking your amazing sides for Family Night Suppers!
- Supporting our Missions in many different ways.

Our Presence:

- In church average for August: 98
- Joining in Fellowship at Family Night Suppers.

Coffee Bar

September 7
Janet Tweed

September 14
Open

September 21
Glenda Parker

September 28
Open

Flowers

September 7
Communion

September 14
In memory of Carol
McKenzie's mother,
Pearl Kelpser

September 21
Open

September 28
In memory of Joan Holland
and John Summitt

Our Church Prayers...

- Mary Alice Huff and Family
- Brenda (surgery) and Gary Alford
- Susie and Larry (car accident) (Tierce extended Family)
- Fran (Trotter) Goddard (health) and family
- Beason/Lowry Families in praise for the birth of Tyllie Sage Beason
- Tate Sherrer and Family
- Carolyn Peters and Family
- Tara Stewart and Family
- Maiuri Family



- Dora Nelson and Family
- Joshua Stuckey (health) and Family (Huff)
- Rustie Stuke and her caregiver Jim Richardson (Reba's sister & nephew)
- Anna Paquette (health) and Family (Dopkins')
- Mark Fagg (surgery) and Family (Osborne)
- The Family of Monty Barger
- Janet Tweed and her mother Carrie Robbins
- Chuck (heart surgery) and Kathy Isbill and Family
- Connie Caroine (Sandy Hibbert's sister)
- Jimmy Liszeski
- Unspoken Prayers

Some thoughts on giving from one of our leaders

"Generosity is super important to me. I believe it goes hand in hand with contentment and helps us avoid an instant gratification lifestyle that's just so easy to fall into these days." -Dave Ramsey

When Pastor Chris says, "It's time for our tithes and our offerings"-do you know that he's talking about 2 different kinds of donations? Do you know what they are? Your tithe is 10% of your income that goes to funding the budget of our church. Your offerings are what you may occasionally donate that go toward specific non-budgeted needs of our Church or perhaps a donation in honor or in memory of someone. Anything other than those is a donation. And I guarantee our church appreciates ALL of these.

My name is Bruce Christopher. I am a tither. I haven't always been a tither. About 30 years ago, when I was 53, I was laid off from my job-a well paying job. I had been working for a big company for 28 years and expected I would retire with them. Boy was I wrong. At that time my wife was a teacher's aide making about \$24,000/year. We had always been "givers"-but I looked at her then and said, "Judy, we need to start tithing right now-it'll be really cheap-only about \$45/week." And we did.

I got another job and we continued tithing, our income rose and we continued tithing. And to this day I am still a tither. I could use that money for other things (how about a nice 10-day European cruise). But I choose not to...and I am content with that.

I tithe because I want to support everything this church does. But maybe YOU don't care about everything this church does. For instance, what we are doing today, Worship & Music, takes up about 30% of our budget. So, if all you want to do is come to this beautiful sanctuary, worship with us for an hour on Sunday morning, and then just go home-then just give 3%. But if you also want to support our many Mission and Outreach ministries (30% of our budget) add another 3% to your donation. And if you want to support our Christian Formation ministries (25% of our budget) add another 2.5% to your donation. If you also want to support our Congregational Care Ministries (15% of our budget) add another 1.5% to your donation.

Now, I don't personally participate in all of these ministries, but I do fully support all of these ministries and that's why I am a tither.

Thank you,
Bruce

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:
JANET TWEED

This month, for our volunteer spotlight, we want to highlight Janet Tweed! She and her husband Steve have been long-time members of our church and have served in a variety of ways. For the last several years, Janet has coordinated our Sunday morning Coffee Bar Ministry in the gathering area. She has been faithful in getting volunteers, providing refreshments & coffee and setting up beautiful themes that go with the season or the day. This essential ministry of hospitality is a beautiful way that our church welcomes all who enter through our doors and provides an opportunity for fellowship each week. Janet's ministry has been incredibly creative and makes a wonderful first impression for our church community each week. Janet does all this great work in addition to being very active in United Women in Faith and as a Trustee of the church. Please feel free to let Janet know how much you appreciate her and our Coffee Bar Ministry!



Sue's September News

September! Can you believe it? We are already into our fall activities here at First UMC Madisonville. IGNITE, our Wednesday evening children's ministry, is in full swing. We had a big kick off on August 13th and have had 2 more sessions. Veronica Venable & Carolynn Greenwood are leading the K-2nd grade class and John Sherrer & Kim Townson are leading the 3rd-5th grade class. Carol McKenzie, Jennifer McKenzie and Charlie Wimmer lead the kids in singing and games. We have several supper teams that are fixing the meals for IGNITE and our youth throughout the school year. If you would like to help in any way, just let us know.

There are many opportunities going on right now for adult small group sessions. Check with Pastor Chris, Marlee Tierce or Reba Dopkins to find out more about the groups they are leading.

I know that it is just September, but our Chancel Choir has already begun to practice our Christmas cantata that we will present in December. It is a beautiful new cantata. We would love for you to join us on Wednesday evenings at 6PM in the sanctuary and be a part of our choir.

We are already putting the schedule together from now until the end of the year. Did you realize that it is only 2 months until we have our Trunk or Treat for Halloween? It is just a little over 3 months until we get into our Advent season and then Christmas season. Time is just flying by!

Check out our September calendar and see how you can become more involved in the events happening in September. There is something for everyone from children through adults.

~Sue

