



THE FLAME



2025 March Issue

From the Pastor's Study...

March has arrived, and as winter gives way to spring, we continue our Lenten journey together. As you know, Lent is a unique time in the life of the church, where we set aside 40 days to intentionally deepen our relationship with God. This could occur through adding spiritual practices or even doing acts of mission/service in Christ's name. You could also deepen your relationship with God by "fasting" from things that might get in the way of that connection. This could mean taking a long break from social media in order to pray or turning off the TV at night to search the scriptures before you sleep. Overall, Lent provides us (as Christ's disciples) with the opportunity to grow in the faith. As I said last month, Lent is a time for evangelism but also true conversion—a time for growing through repentance, fellowship, prayer, fasting and being signs of God's kingdom in our community and world.

My prayer for you this month is that you will lean into the scheduled moments presented in this newsletter, to be present and engaged in the life of our church. There are opportunities to be in service, but also fellowship, study and prayer together. Even if you've never done a Lenten practice before, you can jump in and participate this month. As you consider this, I want to invite you to ask yourselves: "What is one thing that I could give up that distracts me from God and what is one thing that I could add that draws me closer to God?"

As you consider this, I invite you to join me in keeping these verses of scripture from Hebrews 10: 19-25 before you this month: *"Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching."*

I look forward to seeing you around the church this month!

Lots of hope!

~Chris



Worship Service

Sundays
10:30am
Sanctuary

Fellowship Time

Sundays
10:00am
Gathering Area

Midweek Communion

Wednesdays
12:00pm
Sanctuary

Wednesday nights

Choir Rehearsal
6:00pm-7:00pm
Sanctuary

Ignite Children Ministry
6:00pm-7:30pm
Classroom

United Methodist Youth
6:00pm-8:00pm
Youth Room

New Sermon Series coming during Lent

Pastor Chris will introduce a new 5 week sermon series beginning on March 9th called, "I AM". In this series he will be exploring the famous "I AM" statements by Jesus in the gospel of John. The season of Lent is a time to remember one very important thing about what it means to be a Christian: "that when Jesus goes to the cross, there goes God." In the midst of this we are naturally reminded that to believe in Jesus is to hold the fullness of Jesus' humanity and Jesus' divinity together. Each time Jesus says, "I AM," the entirety of the "I AM" statements stands behind this revelation. When he says, "I AM" it gives us a glimpse of who he was and is now as God's incarnate. Consider the following quotation circulating on social media: *"I AM. Two of the most powerful words; for what you put after them shapes your reality."*

Save the date for Holy Week Worship Services and events in April



- ♦ **Sunday, April 13th:** Palm Sunday Worship at 10:30am in the Sanctuary
- ♦ **Wednesday, April 16th:** Midweek Communion at Noon in the Sanctuary
- ♦ **Wednesday, April 16th** at 7:00pm *Extended Brutality: A Study of Crucifixion* in the Fellowship Hall
- ♦ **Thursday, April 17th** at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary we will have our annual *Maundy Thursday Communion Service with Tenebrae*
- ♦ **Friday, April 18th:** Good Friday *Way of the Cross Prayer Walk* with Pastor Chris at 11:00am. We will meet and depart from our Sanctuary.
- ♦ **Saturday, April 19th:** Community-Wide Easter Egg Hunt at 11:00am at Houston Park in Downtown Madisonville
- ♦ **Sunday, April 20th:**
 - ~Easter Sunday Worship Sunrise Service at 7:00am at the home of Don and Kris Browder 645 W. Crestview Drive Madisonville, TN 34354
 - ~Fellowship time begins at 10:00am in the Gathering Area
 - ~Easter Worship Service at 10:30am in our Sanctuary (*Don't forget to bring flowers!*)



Our annual Holston Conference *Hand's On Mission* Project begins!

The Hiwassee District Outreach Team is encouraging churches to take part in the Annual Conference Mission Buckets initiative, helping to make a meaningful impact through this mission effort. The Hiwassee District has set a goal of assembling 500 food buckets for Liberia, each filled with essential supplies to support those in need. Churches and individuals can contribute by assembling and donating these buckets, with an estimated cost of \$32 per bucket. Every contribution brings the district closer to its goal and extends vital assistance to those who rely on these mission efforts. Thank you to all who have supported our *Hand's On Mission Project* over the years. Your generosity has made a difference in thousands of lives.

Here are the instructions for assembling a 2025 relief bucket:

*Pack in a NEW 5-Gallon Bucket
with a Lid:*

- 1 Bag of Sugar (4-5 lb.)
- 1 Bag of Rice (2 lb.)
- 1 Bag of Dried Beans (2 lb.)
- 1 Powdered/Dried Milk (NO larger than 64 oz.)
- 1 Oatmeal (18 oz. or less)
- 1 Cooking Oil (48 oz. or less)
- 2 Cans of Meat: ham (1 lb can), spam or tuna (12 oz can)
- \$8.00 Check/Cash for shipping

**Please bring your completed bucket
to the gathering area. They will be
taken to the Hiwassee District
collection site at a later date.**

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, 1st 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



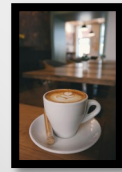
We Support Our Church By...

Our Gifts:

- Which goes toward making disciples of all ages.
- Helping to make our facility a vibrant home for worship, prayer and mission.
- Participating in local, regional and international missions.

Our Presence:

- In church average for February-86
- Attending one of the many classes/bible studies FUMC offers



Coffee Bar

March 2
Glenda Parker

March 9
Janet Tweed

March 16
OPEN

March 30
OPEN

Ignite & Youth Suppers

March 12
Jan Johnson, Kim Townson
& Veronica Venable

March 19
Carol McKenzie, Jennifer
McKenzie & Peggy Wengert

March 26
NO Supper

Ways To Give...

- ♦ Monetary giving during Worship & online
- ♦ Filling a Holston *Hand's On Mission Project* Bucket

SUE'S MARCH NEWS

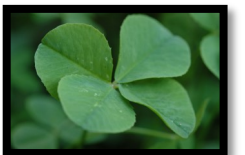
I can't believe that it is time to put out the March newsletter! Where has February gone? It seems like the world never really got in sync in February. Here at First UMC Madisonville since Christmas we have had to cancel two Wednesday night IGNITE meetings because schools were closed, and I have had to cancel 2 choir practices because of weather and other things. I want to get back on a regular schedule. We have a lot of things coming up over the next two months and we need to get ready!!

We plan to do our Easter cantata on the Sunday after Easter. If you are not a part of the choir right now, you still have time to join us as we practice for the cantata. We practice on Wednesday evenings at 6 PM in the sanctuary. (We will not practice on March 5th since we will be having our Ash Wednesday service and fellowship meal of soup and bread on that evening.)

Before we know it, it will be Easter! We have already reserved Houston Park for our big community Easter egg hunt on April 19th and we will have more information soon on how you can help in this event. It is always fun to get out in the community and let people know about our church.

There is a lot of exciting information in the March newsletter and we will be adding other events as we go through the month. We hope that you will participate throughout March and April. Before you know it, it will be Easter Sunday!

~Sue



We Support Our Church By Our Prayers...

- ♦ Kefauver Family
- ♦ Nelson Family
- ♦ Benton Family
- ♦ Byrum/Hicks/O'Neill Family
- ♦ Maiuri Family
- ♦ Chester Family
- ♦ Harrell Family
- ♦ Stucky/Huff Family
- ♦ Barger Family
- ♦ Carolyn (health) and Harold Hunt
- ♦ Bob and Gail Fink
- ♦ Conley Family
- ♦ Green/Leamon Family
- ♦ Nikki Rutzen's uncle and family in Illinois
- ♦ Unspoken Prayers



Ash Wednesday Worship & Family Night Supper on March 5th

Ash Wednesday is a unique day in the church year where we gather to mark the beginning of the 40 day season of Lent. Our worship together will be a time to put aside past sins and failures through repentance and to kick off a period of time to foster new beginnings in our relationship with Jesus Christ. In worship we will focus on the dual themes of sin and death in the light of God's redeeming love in Christ.

While the use of ashes as a sign of mortality and penance may be new to some, it has a significant history in both Jewish and Christian worship.

The imposition of ashes can be a powerful way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation. We hope you will join us for a special service of worship on **Wednesday, March 5th at 7:00pm** in our Main Sanctuary.

Before the service, at 6:00pm, plan to join us in the Fellowship Hall for a light soup & bread dinner. This will also be the dinner for the Ignite and Youth groups.

"Read Together" in March

This year Rev. Chris Black invites you to participate in the Holston Conference's "Read Together" initiative. This opportunity challenges us to read through the whole Bible in one year. In 2025, we will be reading the Bible chronologically using a path laid out in J. Ellsworth Kalas' "*The Grand Sweep: 365 Days from Genesis through Revelation*". This reading plan asks us to read only 2-3 chapters a day which will be much less burdensome than previous years' studies.

Participating in this initiative as a whole congregation can uniquely bind us together as Christ's disciples all while rooting us more deeply in God's word. Even if you didn't read every assigned reading in January/February you are welcome to jump back in! There are schedules available in the welcome center with each month's readings. As always if you have a question about a passage or verse you are reading, then please call (or text) Pastor Chris or stop by the church office.