

From the Pastor's Study...

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing...If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love." -John 15:5 & 10

Happy New Year!

We welcome a new year in ministry on the heels of an Advent that was incredibly beautiful, rich and meaningful. It was such a joy to celebrate my fourth Advent/Christmas season as your pastor. Throughout November and December I did something I do every year. I prayed and reflected deeply about how our church community should enter into the new year. 2025 is full of promise for us, and we are in such a wonderful place as a church community. As I contemplated how we should be postured as we move into 2025 the phrase that kept coming to mind was, "**cultivating a more personal relationship with Christ.**"

One of the easiest ways to do this is to know Jesus's story in the gospels, and to familiarize ourselves with the way that Christ is alluded to throughout all of the Bible. As I have mentioned in worship before (and in print) I believe one of the most tragic parts of modern Christian discipleship in the 21st century continues to be how rampant biblical illiteracy is becoming. This problem is intergenerational and it is caused by a myriad of cultural and social issues that I won't try to tackle in this note. Suffice it to say, I think we should respond both individually and collectively by engaging anew with God's word this year. I believe, just as our founder John Wesley did, that "searching the scriptures" can be a means of God's Grace, and that doing this as a practice can lead all people to deeper belief in God, informing them about salvation and how to live out Christ's teachings.

In this edition of the newsletter there are a couple of new ways that we will be engaging with God's word as a community; these include our worship together, a new weekly Bible study I will be hosting, and our read together initiative. You are also invited to take advantage of our great classes which happen both prior to and after worship each week. My hope and prayer for you this month is that you will take advantage of at least one new way to be engaged with the Bible and that you will be on the lookout for other ways in the coming months as we continue together in ministry in 2025.

It is a privilege to continue to serve as your Pastor in this new year, and I look forward to seeing you around the church or in worship.

Lots of Hope!
Chris

PLEASE JOIN US

Worship Service

Sundays
10:30am-11:30am
Sanctuary

Midweek Communion

Wednesdays
12:00pm-12:30pm
Sanctuary

Wednesday nights

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

Ignite Kid's Ministry

6:00pm-7:30pm
Classroom

United Methodist Youth

6:00pm-8:00pm
Youth Room

Fellowship Time

Sunday's
Gathering Area
10:00am

Church Council Board Members

Chair: Peter Alliman

Charge Conference Secretary: Phyllis Harrell

Finance Committee Chair: Jeff McMillan

Financial Secretary: Bruce Christopher

Lay Leader: Lee Anne Strickland

Lay Member to Annual Conference: Marlee Tierce

Lay Member to Annual Conference (Alt): Sue Hamilton

Nominations/Leadership Dev. Com.: Pastor Chris Black

Staff Parish Chair: Don Browder

Treasurer: Regina Warfel

Trustees Chair: To Be Decided in the January meeting



The Board of Trustees

Chad Chester
Wes Hibbert
Regina Warfel
Janet Tweed
Rick Rapping
Jill Alliman
Jerry Barr
Ray Nelson

Staff Parish Committee Members

Chair: Don Browder

Lay Leader: Lee Anne Strickland

Lindsay Lizeski

Bryan Beason

Kim Townson

Greyson Strickland

Mali Hubert

Steve Cornett

Dora Nelson

Ben Barger

Lay Member to Annual Conference: Marlee Tierce

Finance Committee Members

Chair: Jeff McMillan

Pastor: Rev. Chris Black

Lay Member to Annual Conf.: Marlee Tierce

Church Council Chair: Peter Alliman

Parrish Chair: Don Browder

Trustee Representative: Jerry Barr

Lay Leader: Lee Anne Strickland

Financial Secretary: Bruce Christopher

Treasurer: Regina Warfel

At-Large Members: Alfred Greenwood

Chal Thompson

Glenda Parker

Nominations and Leadership Development Committee Members

Chair: Rev. Chris Black

Don Browder

Bethany Williford

John Sherrer

Jan Johnson

Lay Leader/Vice Chair: Lee Anne Strickland

Veronica Venable

Patty Williford Jones

Peggy Wengert

Lindsay Lizeski

Rev. Chris Black, Pastor
cblack@firstumcmadisonville.org

Nikki Rutzen, Executive Assistant
nikki@firstumcmadisonville.org

Sue Hamilton, Director of Congregational Care & Choir
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Erin Strickland, First Steps Coordinator
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FIRST UNITED METHODIST

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Madisonville, TN 37354

Call: 423-442-2471

Fax: 423-442-2434



We Support Our Church By...

Our Gifts:

- Doing repairs/maintenance on the FUMC building
- Reaching out to members in times of grief

Our Presence:

- In church average for December-101
- Celebrating the lives of those who have passed on to be with Jesus



January 5
Communion Sunday

January 12
Gabi & Mike Tallent in honor of our kids

January 19
Gabi & Mike Tallent in honor of our parents

January 26
Gabi & Mike Tallent to celebrate when we first met in 1996

Mike & Gabi Tallent are providing the coffee and treats for every Sunday in January.



Ways To Give...

- ♦ Monetary giving in Worship
- ♦ Monetary giving online
- ♦ Being in Worship weekly

We Support Our Church By Our Prayers...

- Bob and Gail Fink with the death of their son
- Judy and John Maiuri
- Cole Strickland and family
- Family of Joseph Certo (Conley)
- Mary and Tony Nelson
- Heather Summey (Harrell family)
- Zander Liszeski and family
- Williford/Jones family
- Patty's brother Doug Riddle
- Dennis Dailey (Tweed family)
- Matthew Slouka
- Betty Byrum Hicks and family
- The Barger family
- Kefauver family

Update from the Community Café Ministry

The Community Cafe' wishes to thank all of our great congregation for their help in serving others in many ways through the Community Cafe this past year. We have averaged serving 45 persons from the community and about 15 from our own church who help us cook, serve, and clean up. Averaging about 60 people per week. Additionally, we were able to give out 30 gift bags to our guests on the Tuesday before Christmas. In each bag (*decorated by the Ignite children*) was an orange hard candy, nuts and a Christmas Card from Community Cafe *plus* a gift card to Walmart. This is just another unique way this ministry was able to bless folks during the Christmas season. If you wish to see what we do and how we do it, come by any Tuesday at 5:00pm and we are usually finished by 6:15pm. This past year one of our volunteer churches stepped away from helping us with providing sides, desserts, bread and beverages. If that is something you think you might be interested in helping with, please let me or Jan Johnson know. Each church is on a 7-week rotation. Thank you again for your outpouring of love and generosity. May God richly bless you in the coming year!!!

~Jan Johnson & Dora Nelson

RESURRECTION IS THIS MONTH!!

January 24th-26th, 2025
LeConte Center, Pigeon Forge, TN

Resurrection is an awesome annual event of worship and spiritual growth for youth and youth mentors. Each year over 12,000 youth and volunteers come together in Pigeon Forge, TN, to celebrate the God of The Resurrection. Through inspirational words and music led by nationally-known speakers and musicians, young people encounter the Lord in new and deeper ways. Resurrection is hosted by the youth ministry of the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church. For many, Resurrection is an opportunity for conversion, decision, and revival. For others, it becomes a moment of realization that their faith needs to grow deeper and more serious. Let us be in prayer for each of our youth who will be on this formative retreat. For more information, contact Vanessa Barr at vbriummer@gmail.com

SUE'S JANUARY NEWS

Wasn't December 2024 an exciting month at First UMC Madisonville?! I can't believe that it was my 50th Christmas season here at First UMC Madisonville. We had a beautifully decorated church. We had Hanging of the Greens and a social time on the first Sunday of Advent. Our choir performed the Christmas cantata on the 15th. Marlee Tierce led an Advent study group. We had an adult Sunday School class. We had Breakfast with Santa for our children and opened the big event up to all children in the community. We had wonderful sermons. We had a wonderful Christmas family night supper on the night that we did our annual children's/youth Christmas program. We had a beautiful Christmas Eve service with many church and community people (almost 170) in attendance. Our United Methodist Women in Faith had a wonderful Christmas luncheon at Western Sizzlin in Athens. We served several people through our Community Benevolence Fund and other resources. I am sure there are things that I have not put in this paragraph. December 2024 was a wonderful and special month at First UMC Madisonville.

January is always a time of new beginnings, and January 2025 is no exception. The 2025 calendar is wide open for exciting things that we want to do and plan to do at First UMC Madisonville. We already have many things penciled in. We have an up and running adult Sunday school class. We have 2 adult study classes that will begin in January. Our choir continues to grow as does our United Methodist Men and Women in Faith groups. The choir will begin to work on the Easter cantata soon. We have our First Steps program for our children on Sunday morning as well as a wonderful nursery for our little ones. Our Ignite program for our children is going strong on Wednesday evenings and will start meeting again on January 8th at 6pm. Our youth group is making preparations for Resurrection 2025. We have opportunities for all ages to get involved! 2025 is going to be another very exciting time for our church and we hope everyone feels this excitement. We are moving forward and the momentum continues to build. I think everyone feels the excitement and commitment that we have now. Continue to look at your emails, our website, newsletters and bulletins for what will be happening. WE ARE ALIVE!

-Sue

The Bible Fellowship invites you to join them for the next study

Light from Afar: An Advent Devotional from Around the World. Yes, we know that we've passed 2024 Advent, Christmas and New Year's Day, but this is a study of stories and reflections of authors from Brazil, Philippines, Ukraine and South Africa as they share cultural and religious traditions in their home country. This provides a daily devotional for four weeks that includes recordings of songs from each country. We will enjoy lunch and fellowship together on Sundays: January 12th & 26th and February 2nd & 9th. Please let Marlee know if you would like a book or just come when you can to the Youth Room after church services.

Mark your calendars for breakfast for dinner!

On Wednesday, January 22nd at 6:00pm we will be having our monthly family night supper in the fellowship hall, and we want to invite you to bring your favorite breakfast dish! This could be biscuits with gravy, fruit salad, bacon, egg & sausage casserole, etc. Pastor Chris will be making pancakes to share. This dinner should be a wonderful time to be together during one of the coldest months of the year.



Into the Bible with Rev. Chris Black starts this month!

Have you ever been intimidated by the Bible?
Or felt that you didn't know where to start with reading or studying scripture?
Have you ever wanted to go deeper and to learn more?

Beginning on Wednesday, January 8th at 7:00pm Rev. Chris Black is beginning a new Pastor's Bible Study Class that will help you approach the Bible with confidence. This class will meet in the fellowship hall and will be a home-style Bible Study for all ages! Pastor Chris will offer an in-depth exploration of the gospel of John, and then he will move into other areas of the scriptures. In the midst of our study the group will discuss some fundamental ways to engage with the Bible, so that you may apply it to your life today. It doesn't matter if you're new to the Christian faith or have studied the Bible for years, you are welcome to attend. If you have any questions about the upcoming class please email Pastor Chris at cblack@firstumcmadisonville.org