



The Flame Newsletter

2026 July Issue

First United Methodist Church

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



Please Join Us!

From the Pastor's Study...

"Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed." -1st Peter 1:13

I can't believe that I am officially beginning my 6th year as your appointed pastor here at 1st UMC of Madisonville! It has been such a blessing to serve among you and alongside you as we strive to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. I am welcoming yet another year of ministry with you all, and I am looking forward to seeing how the Holy Spirit will inspire our faith community to be the hands and feet of Christ in new and powerful ways.

As I prepare for a new year in ministry with you all I am reminded that for many of us July is a month filled with summer fun, outdoor activities, cookouts, and fellowship time with friends and family. However, as the summer heat continues many of us will naturally begin looking ahead toward what is next...or to the fall. I know this will be especially true for our educators and students who will be returning to school very soon. This could also be true for farmers getting ready for a harvest, or even grandparents preparing their schedules for grandkid pickups/drop offs. In the coming weeks I'm sure all of us will begin making preparations in our own way for all that awaits us in August and September.

Those of us in the church are currently making preparations for Vacation Bible School this month, but we are also looking ahead toward many fall activities, studies, times of fellowship, and worship. As you personally prepare for what is to come this fall I hope you will make intentional plans to be a part of some of our programming ministries in the church. All of us on staff will be looking to cultivate opportunities for you to be engaged here at the church so that you can grow as disciples in your love for God and your love for those around you. My prayer is that all of us would prepare our hearts, minds, and bodies to be engaged in the work of sharing God's unconditional grace but also growing in that same grace day by day.

See you around the church! -**Chris**

Rev. Chris Black
Pastor
cblack@firstumcmadisonville.org

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

Nikki Rutzen
Office Coordinator
nikki@firstumcmadisonville.org

Erin Strickland
First Steps Coordinator
eroberts@firstumcmadisonville.org

Mary Humphries
Nursery Coordinator
maryfgahan@gmail.com



Altar Flowers

July 5
Communion Sunday

July 12
Open

July 19
Open

July 26
Given by Carolynn and
Alfred Greenwood

Coffee Bar

July 5
Glenda Parker

July 12
Janet Tweed

July 19
Open

July 26
Open



FUMCs VBS

Gear up for an unforgettable winter sports extravaganza with Snowball Mountain Challenge VBS 2026. We hope to see you all the week of **July 12th!** Register your child/children now! Call the office or see Sue after church to grab your registration forms.



Exciting New Sign Updates!

Some of you may have noticed that our two sided electronic sign near our office has been out of commission for a little while now. This sign has exceeded its operational life expectancy by many years, and is now ready to be replaced.

Over the last several months our trustees in consultation with our finance committee have developed a plan for a new sign. The design is very reminiscent of our current sign, however the electronic portion will be much larger.

We are very excited about this upgrade for our church, because it will allow us to communicate and even bless our community in powerful new ways. It will also allow us to let folks know more about all the great things happening in our church family from week to week. In order for us to move forward with this, we have kicked off a financial campaign called:

A Sign of Faith

Building a Welcome for Generations

We will need to collect approximately \$21k to make this project possible. If you are interested in contributing to this new campaign, please designate your giving to "A Sign of Faith."



Scissor Collection for the Monroe County Back to School Bash!

Our church will be supporting the Monroe County School's Annual Back to School Bash on July 23rd with a kids scissor collection this month. Each year the **Back to School Bash** provides free essential school supply items to the first 500 kids who drop by, as well as a food bag. It is a wonderful event that provides many essentials for children in need in our area. If you are out shopping during the few weeks, please feel free to pick up a pair (or two or three :-)) of scissors for a child to begin school with this year. Our church goal will be to offer 500 pairs of scissors! We hope you will participate in this fun July mission initiative.

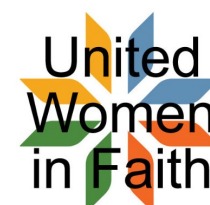
Bible Fellowship

On Sunday, July 12th, please plan to come and get some goodies at the Bible Fellowship's bake sale in the Gathering area before and after church service. Donations (checks made out to First UMC or cash) will go to **A Sign of Faith** project for our new outdoor church sign.



Senior Fellowship Group

Join us on **Wednesday, July 22nd at Angela's Miami Grill in Athens at 11:30 AM for our next luncheon.** If you need to carpool please be in FUMC's upper parking lot by 10:45 AM.



In July, our group will collect school supplies. We ask the congregation to participate if you would like. Buying school supplies is a big challenge for at least 1 in 5 of our families. These supplies may be brought to Mission Alley at any time during the month. Students and teachers are welcome to take the supplies they need. The most requested supplies are facial tissues (Kleenex), loose-leaf paper, and number two pencils. Cleaning wipes to sanitize tables and classroom surfaces are also a much needed request. For smaller children, boxes of large crayons or large "jumbo" pencils are also requested. Once our teachers and students take the items they need, the collected supplies will go to the local school resource center. Thank you for supporting our community of teachers and students!

Volunteer Spotlight



Marlee Tierce

For many years our own Marlee Tierce has been a faithful volunteer leader within our congregation in the areas of discipleship, ambassadorship, administration, and music. Marlee currently teaches our Bible Fellowship Class which meets each week following worship on Sundays. She also coordinates our “Joyful Ringers” bell ministry which has grown since its inception last year. She hosts the small group called the “Susanna Study” which is specifically for widows both within and outside our congregation. Marlee currently serves on the Care Team and has coordinated our “Welcome Bag” ministry for our visitors, and she helps out on our nominations and leadership development team. Lastly, she is a faithful choir member too! In the past, Marlee has served as a lay representative to the Annual Conference from our congregation. This role came with many committee assignments including: Church Council, SPRC and Finance. I hope all of you will take some time this month to thank Marlee for all her hard work to help make our church a better place for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Why I Give to First United Methodist Church

I give to our church because I love God, and I love our church. I believe God wants us to serve others and to help them grow closer to Him. When I give my offerings along with other congregational offerings, we are able to serve in so many ways. Think of the many services our church already provides-youth and Ignite ministries, Bible studies, music ministries, community café, our benevolence fund, mission trips which provide care to others, ramp building projects, providing food through our Blessing Box ministry, our annual Breakfast with Santa, Easter Egg Hunt, Vacation Bible School plus other services. We are blessed to have Pastor Chris to lead, teach, and inspire our congregation, with Sue providing her music ministry and congregational care services and with Nikki providing her skills as our Church Office Coordinator. All of these services and programs are here today because of our gifts to First UMC Madisonville and because of so many people in our congregation who volunteer to help our ministries succeed! Our congregation is a very loving and generous group of people. I feel confident that we will continue to serve God in even more ways in the future. This is why I give to our wonderful church! ~Carol McKenzie

Stewardship Report

as of the printing of the newsletter 7/6/26

June Total Giving: \$15,821.70

June Budget: \$22,892.00

Year-to-date giving: \$135,236.44

Year-to-date budget: \$148,798.00

Total Annual budget: \$297,596.00

Because of your generosity we were able to:

- Open our doors for worship, prayer, learning, and outreach throughout the week and Sundays.
- Send representatives from our congregation to the Holston Annual Conference at Lake Junaluska.
- Feed members of our community through the blessing box and our community Café ministry.
- Collect TONS of diapers to bless families at the Monroe County Community Wide Baby Shower.
- Live Stream our worship services for those who can't be with us in person.
- Provide comfort, congregational care, and opportunities for pastoral counseling for members of our church and our community.

Thank you for your faithful generosity. Your gifts are more than numbers on a report-they are acts of worship that make ministry possible in our church and community. Because of you, lives are being touched, needs are being met, and the Gospel continues to be shared. We are deeply grateful for your stewardship and for being part of God's work here at First UMC of Madisonville.

Our Church Prayers

- ♦ Barbara Penland and family
- ♦ David Fancher
- ♦ Margie Perkins (Greenwood)
- ♦ Sue and Dennis Cardarella and family
- ♦ Rustie Stukey and Jim Richardson (Dopkins)
- ♦ Kay Ashley (Barger)
- ♦ Slouka family
- ♦ Taylor family
- ♦ Humphries family
- ♦ Jill Reeves and family
- ♦ Brenda (Kathy Isbill's sister)
- ♦ Kayana Jones (Gary Jones' sister)
- ♦ Connie Caroine and Ken Hibbert and family
- ♦ Conley family
- ♦ Kat Ahart and Barbara Baiz
- ♦ Maiuri family
- ♦ Ronnie Gay and family
- ♦ Houvenagle family
- ♦ Joshua Stuckey and family
- ♦ Tate Sherrer and family
- ♦ Kendall Wimmer and family
- ♦ Mike and Sandy O'Neill and family
- ♦ Larson family
- ♦ Nelson & Stratton family
- ♦ Unspoken Prayers

SUE'S JULY NEWS



JULY! Summer has officially just begun but it seems like we are almost halfway through it. Most of the kids in Monroe County schools will start back to school on July 31. I have lived here all my life, and this is the earliest first day that I can ever remember! Many of you have already had your summer vacation, and some of you are trying to cram one in over the next few weeks. I am writing this on June 30, and it is 93 degrees in Madisonville at this moment. It is definitely summer. Everyone needs to stay cool and hydrated.

I am looking at our July calendar, and out of the 31 days in the month of July we already have activities scheduled in the church building on 21 of these days. Several of these days have multiple events and services scheduled. Nikki already has the July calendar printed so make sure you pick up one. We are going to be very busy. Our big special event will be our Bible School **Snowball Mountain Challenge** scheduled for July 12-16. Things are falling into place, and this is going to be a great Bible School. We are again joining with Madisonville Presbyterian Church for 5 days of fun, fellowship and learning. We will have classes for all ages, children through adults, and we hope that we again have participation from folks out in the community. Please let Kathleen Cornett know if you can provide food for any of the supper meals.

I hope to see you all at our July services and special events. It is going to be a busy July!

~Sue

Madisonville First United Methodist Church 200 years of fellowship 1826-2026
Part 5: A tradition of giving



For two years in 1916 and 1917, services were held at Madisonville Presbyterian church where a Methodist circuit preacher came twice a month to preach. Despite the delays caused by WWI, the 5th building to house the First Methodist congregation was made of bricks. The entrance faced North and was erected under the guidance of Charles Wesley Hicks (father of Judge Sue K. Hicks), Attorney General Nobe Peace, Jess Millsaps, Mrs. S.N. Penland, Mrs. Mimi Richards and Mrs. P.G. Kelso, and R.B. Witt. First Methodist Church was on a circuit with Key's/Buckner Chapel (on the former Hiwassee College Campus), Oakland Methodist in Vonore and Chestua Campground in Englewood. A 1931 quilt that contains the names of many of these people and churches is hanging in our gathering area.

For much of the 20th century the Methodist church joined with other churches of the town for 5th Sunday services which rotated between congregations and denominations. The United Women of Faith at First Methodist Madisonville originally formed as The Ladies Aid. UWF's early mission work was funded by selling lunch on “Court Days” and “Mule Days” when bustling crowds filled the county seat. Normally, Madisonville, was a quiet horse town with a couple of boarding houses and hotels, yet they had no restaurants until after WW2. This tradition of serving food to the community became a hallmark of Madisonville Methodist generosity and civic engagement. The quilt at a cost of \$1.00 per name (during the height of the Great Depression in 1931) serves as a reminder of both personal sacrifice and a testament to the generosity of the people of this church, even during hard times. Today's Methodist women, youth and men volunteer in mission near and far providing health kits for Liberia & Zimbabwe and handicap ramp building for our next door neighbors in Sequoyah Village.



Our Presence:

- ♦ June worship average: 101
- ♦ Supporting our church in the various Missions we participate in.

Our Gifts:

- ♦ Sharing our harvests of vegetables with our church family.
- ♦ Having a part in growing our many ministries and church membership for the future.