The Flame Newsletter

October 2026 Issue

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Madisonville, TN 37354
423-442-2471
www.1umcm.com

Sundays

United Methodist Men
*2nd Sundays
8:30 AM
Fellowship Hall

Adult Bible Study
9:30 AM
Library

Fellowship Time
10:00 AM
Gathering Area

Worship Service
10:30 AM
Sanctuary

Bible Fellowship
11:45 AM
Youth Room

United Women in Faith
*3rd Sundays
11:45 AM
Fellowship Hall

Joyful Ringers
*2nd & 4th Sundays
2:00 PM
Classroom #1

Wednesday Nights

Choir Rehearsal
6:00 PM
Sanctuary

United Methodist Youth
6:00 PM
Youth Room

Pastor's Bible Study
7:00 PM
Classroom #5

From the Pastor's Study…

October is here and it (finally) officially (sort of) feels like fall outside. The weather is cooler, leaves are beginning to change, and all the "flavors" of the season are becoming more prominent (and I don't just mean Pumpkin Spice). Whenever October rolls around, I am always reminded of bonfires, s'mores, harvesting, time with friends, camping out, pumpkins, watching sports and of course, chili and cornbread. I love about everything about this season, but honestly, my favorite part is how God's creation changes so dramatically and vibrantly around us in the span of a month's time. This season always causes me to pause a little more than usual to remember God's presence in creation and God's love for us as his beloved creation. I was reminded of a prayer I came across a couple days ago in devotion I was doing. It is a prayer that naturally calls us to slow down, enjoy and even savor all the transformations of this season, and to look for God amid them. I hope you will join me in making this prayer a part of your devotional time this month.

See you around the church,

Chris

"A Fall Prayer"

O God of Creation, you have blessed us with the changing of the seasons. As we welcome the autumn months, may the earlier setting of the sun remind us to take time to rest.

May the brilliant colors of the leaves remind us of the wonder of your creation.

May the steam of our breath in the cool air remind us that it is you who give us the breath of life.

May the harvest from the fields remind us of the abundance we have been given and bounty we are to share with others.

May the dying of summer's spirit remind us of your great promise that death is temporary and life is eternal.

We praise you for your goodness forever and ever, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

We Support our Church by…

Stewardship Report

as of the printing of the newsletter on 10/1/26

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***September* Total Giving:**
$37,238.81
***September* Budget:**
$22,892.00
Year-to-Date giving:
$233,955.17
Year-to-Date budget:
$228,920.00
Total Annual budget:
$297,596.00

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Because of your generosity we were able to:

- Offer First Steps as a disciple ministry to our children.
- Upgrade our tables in the Community room.
- Support the United Women in Faith's partnership with Fresh Start, helping our struggling members of our community.
- Have our church open for worship each Sunday morning.
- Host Trunk or Treat for the church family and our community.
- Work together to improve the grounds of our church.

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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 touched, needs are being met and the Gospel continues to be shared. We are deeply grateful for your stewardship and for being a part of God's work here at FUMC.

Our Prayers

- Mary Kefauver and family
- Ann Barker and family
- John Maiuri and family
- Richard Conley and family
- Gini Tallent and family
- Gary Hamilton and family
- Tara Stewart and family
- Peters/Reeves family
- Quinn Strickland and family
- Barbara Penland and family
- Cardarella family
- Lisa Wills (Sherrer)
- Ruppel family
- Della Rector and family
- Kay Ashley (Barger)
- Slouka family
- Taylor family
- Becky Chester (Chad's sister)
- Brenda (Kathy Isbill's sister)
- Kayana Jones (Gary's sister) and Patty's mother
- Connie Caroine and Ken Hibbert
- Kat Ahart and Barbara Baiz
- Houvenagle family
- Tate, Merritt Sherrer, and family
- Kendall Wimmer and family
- Humphries family
- Rustie Stukey and Jim & Bob Richardson (Dopkins)
- O'Neill family
- Nelson/Stratton family
- Green/Leamon family
- Unspoken Prayers

Our Praises

- New baby Kohen Scott (Venable grandson)

Altar Flowers

October 4
Communion Sunday

October 11
In memory of what would have been Ann Harvey's 100th birthday given by her daughters Mara Harvey and Miranda Johnson

October 18
Given by Reba and Duane Dopkins in memory of Ted Hall and Jan Dopkins

October 25
Given by Carolynn Greenwood in honor of Alfred's birthday

Coffee Bar

October 4
Glenda Parker

October 11
Sue Cardarella

October 18
Open

October 25
Janet Tweed

Our Presence

In church average attendance for September-***102***

Worshiping together and celebrating God through music and scripture.

Helping with our Trunk or Treat event with candy, trunks, or your presence.

Our Gifts

Singing God's songs together during worship.

Sharing in God's grace for us.

Celebrating the praises of our church family.

Maintaining our plants throughout the building.
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Join Us!!

Save the Date!
We are celebrating 200 years in Ministry!
On Sunday, November 22nd we will have a special worship service and time of fellowship celebrating our church's 200th anniversary! This will be an incredibly special time for us to go down memory lane, break bread together and celebrate our church's long and storied history. There will be more details about our celebration coming soon but, in the meantime, mark your calendar for this amazing celebration on November 22nd!

District Day with the Bishop
On Thursday, November 19th, Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett will be with us in the Smoky Mountain District. She will spend the afternoon visiting some ministry sites and hosting leadership meetings with a few clergy groups. Then from 6-8 PM she will host a conversation with both the Laity and Clergy Laity at Seymour UMC. All are welcome to attend.

Bible Fellowship

George Whitfield attributed John Wesley's success to his ability to put together small groups that met and kept each other accountable with prayer and Bible study. Our group chooses the study topics so that we can find materials to fill those gaps. Currently we are working with Randy Frazee's *Think, Act, Be Like Jesus*. This study has minimal reading to delve into what we believe, think, and what we should do based on those beliefs. This study is deep into both the Old and New Testaments with weekly verses, ideas, questions, and research. Our time together begins after church and goes until about 1:15 PM. Those who wish to take turns bringing a main, side, or dessert to share for lunch may do so. We pray for each other and keep a running list of people and church related issues to pray for. We look for ways to support each other, missions, and church events. Each lesson is a standalone so people can come and go as needed. All are welcome for a visit or to attend regularly. Marlee Tierce provides the books and lessons and would love to answer your questions.

Joyful Ringers

Our happy handbell choir practices on the second and fourth Sundays at 2 PM. The music is color coded so that no one needs to read music to play. Red is the right hand, and green is the left hand. It is exciting to hear notes become music as we learn to play together. It does give us joy! We have 3 octaves of bells but only have players for 2 octaves. If someone cannot be there, those bells do not get played. Some of our members travel so we also need substitute ringers. We welcome anyone who would like to try it. We enjoy the challenge and there is no pressure to perform. Please consider coming to listen, ring a bell, or join our fun. Ask a member about the rehearsals and the expectations. Our goal is to have a player for every bell so that we can play a wider range of music. Christmas is coming! Enjoy the season with ringing! Marlee Tierce can answer any questions you may have.

Sticky Faith: What happens when an entire Church Community shows up for children

Trunk or Treat is just around the corner! For many, it can feel simple: buy some candy, decorate your car, show up, smile, pack up, and go home. Easy. Fun. Lighthearted.

But the reality is that something could be happening that is far more lasting than the candy.

You could be becoming one of the faces a child associates with church. One of the adults who makes them feel welcome. One of the people who shows them that church is a place of joy, belonging, and safety. This is vital.

In fact, when you look across trusted discipleship research—Barna, Awana and the Communio/Institute for Family Studies—it is so clear that faith "sticks" when kids experience relational discipleship, especially when it includes adults beyond their parents.

I believe this is one of the most important truths for the modern church to understand. Parents matter deeply—no research disputes that. But the data also shows something else: children who form meaningful, consistent relationships with Christian adults outside their home are far more likely to stay connected to church and faith as they grow into adulthood.

Talking about faith retention can feel scary and overwhelming. It is easy to hear statistics about young adults leaving the church and feel discouraged or unsure of what to do. But this research simplifies the conversation in a beautiful way. It tells us that the solution is not complicated programs, perfect parenting, or larger budgets. It is relationships. It is a church community that shows up for its children—at Trunk or Treat, in the nursery, in the hallways, at basketball games, and in everyday moments that seem small but echo for years.

Sticky Faith isn't built through grand gestures. It is built through consistency, intentionality, and involvement.

So, this month, as you buy candy and decorate your trunk, remember that when children grow up surrounded by Christian adults who know them, welcome them, and invest in them, they understand much more clearly their place in the church and why it matters.

My prayer is that you also remember that whoever you are, you do have a place in children's ministry in this congregation and in the Kingdom!

~Abby

Coordinator of Children and Family Ministries

TRUNK OR TREAT

Trunk or Treat on Sunday, October 25th!

FUMC will be hosting our annual Trunk or Treat event in our upper parking area. This event will be happening at the same time as several other church events across Madisonville. We are planning to have games, a bonfire for s'mores, children's crafts and plenty of vehicle trunks open with goodies. We will also have hot dogs grilled by our own Pastor Chris. Our Trunk or Treat will begin at 5:00 PM, with the grill turning on at 4:30 PM, and things will wrap up at 7:00 PM. ***We are already beginning to give out parking spots for this event so if you are interested in providing a trunk to give out candy, please sign up on the orange sheet in the welcome center. We Need Candy!*** You can participate by donating candy for folks to hand out. There is a tote in the Welcome Center for your donations.

Sue's October News

October 2026! Can you believe it? I heard someone on TV the other day say that it was just 12 weeks until Christmas. I did not believe them. Then I did the math. Do you know what it? It is true. Where has the year gone??

October is going to be another busy month. I am looking at the church calendar right now, and many of the days are filled with happenings at First UMC Madisonville. Sundays are filled with worship services, small group studies, bell practices and other events such as Trunk or Treat. Wednesday nights are busy with youth meetings, choir practices and Chris' Bible study. We also host many groups that are not directly connected with our church. Every Tuesday on the calendar has a Community Café' scheduled and we open our community room to Alcoholic Anonymous meetings on Friday evenings. The Lion's Club does free eye exams in our community room every month and they usually have a good response. Girl Scouts are here on Thursday evenings. Community groups (such as Kiwanis, Head Start and Isaiah 117) often use our building for meetings and special events throughout the year. For some folks, these special events and meetings are the only time that they enter a church building. Our church is a special place for many people in our community.

Read the newsletter from front to back! Watch for emails and announcements throughout the month as we update our events and service information. October is going to be exciting!

~Sue

Thank you for your faithfulness

As we look forward to the final months of this year, I want to pause and simply say **thank you**.

Thank you for your faithfulness, for your generosity and for the many ways you continue to support the ministry and mission of First UMC of Madisonville.

Every week, people give of themselves in countless ways in our congregation. Some give through their financial gifts. Others give their time, their talents, their prayers, their encouragement, and their willingness to serve. Together, these gifts make possible the ministry we share as a community of faith.

Our financial giving throughout this year has allowed us to continue the work God has entrusted to us—to worship together, care for one another, reach beyond our walls, support ministries that make a difference in our community and world and provide a place where people can encounter the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

Behind every dollar given is a story of faith, vision, and trust. Someone who believes in the mission of the church, or who wants to see children and families grow in faith. Someone who wants to help a neighbor in need, or who believes that the church still has a significant role to play in our world. **Your generosity is one of the ways that faith becomes action.**

The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "*Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*" (2 Corinthians 9:7) That spirit of joyful (and even fun) generosity is something for which I am deeply grateful. Our giving is not simply about meeting a budget or paying bills. It is about participating in what God is doing throughout the life of our congregation.

So, as we approach the final months of the year, please know how sincerely grateful I am for each of you and for all the ways you continue to invest in the mission and ministry of our church. **Thank you for giving, for serving, for praying, and for participating. Thank you for believing in the mission God has given us.**

May we continue to be good stewards of all that God has placed in our hands, trusting that when we offer what we have to God, He can use it in ways far greater than we could accomplish on our own.

With gratitude and thanksgiving,

Chris

What is happening around FUMC?

Meal and Mentorship for our Youth Ministry

Our youth ministry has consistently met on Wednesdays at 6:00 PM downstairs in our youth room for many, many years. Our youth experience fellowship, food, prayers, games, and a great lesson from scripture taught by our wonderful volunteer leaders Vanessa and Jerry Barr, with support from Dora Nelson, Hunter Cavett and Greyson Strickland. If you are interested in supporting our youth by providing a meal for them, or even offering your time as an adult leader/mentor please let Vanessa or Jerry know.

Senior Fellowship Lunch

Join us on Wednesday, October 28th at The Local Bite in Loudon at 11:30 AM. If you would like to carpool, meet us in the FUMC upper parking lot by 10:45 AM. See Regina Warfel with any questions.

Mostly Methodical Pastor's Bible Study Continues in October!

Throughout the month of October, Rev. Chris Black will continue to host the Mostly Methodical group on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM in classroom #5 (d*ownstairs by the Community Room*). This class takes a fun and inviting look at what it means to be a Methodist in the world today. We rely heavily on scripture but also delve into the history, theology, and experience of what it means to be a Methodist. It does not matter if you are new to our church or have been a Christian for many years you are welcome to join this unique group anytime. If you have questions about attending this class, please email Pastor Chris at cblack@firstumcmadisonville.org.

Would you be interested in making our nursery ministry your own?

Our nursery is an important part of our Sunday morning worship experience and is an invaluable ministry for our young families and our children. If you are interested in helping as a volunteer with our children who are 6 months-3 years old in our nursery then please sign up on the sheet in the welcome center. If we can get enough volunteers our hope will be to begin this ministry back in full this month. If you have questions or are interested in volunteering, please contact Abby Blair, our Children and Family Ministries Coordinator.

We are celebrating Erin and Greyson Strickland with a Baby Shower!

On Sunday, November 8th our United Women in Faith will be hosting a baby shower for Erin and Greyson Strickland from 1:30 PM-3:00 PM in our Gathering Area. Please feel free to make plans to attend, to shower them in gifts, and to celebrate with them!

Also plan to attend…

Welcome Drake Barr Party!

A Welcome Drake party will be held on Saturday, October 17th from 1:00 PM-2:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Drake is the new son of Jerry and Vanessa Barr and brother to Mia. He just turned 4 years old. He likes monster trucks like Blaze and tractors. Please come to meet and greet Drake, Vanessa, Jerry, and Mia. There will be kid friendly finger snacks. If you would like to bring a snack food, please contact Carolynn Greenwood at 423-253-5264 or Regina Warfel at 219-964-8989.