



Smoky Mountain Methodist Church

February 2025 Newsletter



From Our Pastor

Reverend Parker Benson

Yesterday, January 26, I preached on our Vision for 2025. I feel very strongly about this. We have got to get ourselves across the finish line! We have got to clear our land and start building.

Phase One will be our Worship Center, complete with restrooms, nursery, classrooms, kitchen, office space, storage, mechanical & electrical rooms, etc. But first, we have to clear the land. This includes excavation, grading, fill-in, clear the trees, brush, level it, culverts, drainage, etc. We have to put in ingress & egress, parking, and a septic system. All of this has to be done before we can move in.

Our Design Team, led by Sandy Lybrand (a professionally trained designer who has designed numerous churches and million-dollar homes), is working very hard on all this. Our architect is Mr. Don Shell with Community Tectonics, and as soon as his drawings are ready, we will put them on display in the cafeteria.

Once we complete Phase One and move in, we will turn our eyes toward Phase Two, our Sanctuary. As I said Sunday, this will be a Holy and beautiful place. It will command reverence and awe. As Winston Churchill said, "We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us." Plus, we will be worshiping on our own property while we watch them build our Sanctuary.



We have a plan. But we all must work together. Satan will try to sabotage, hinder, and destroy us. Satan will try to divide us. He *“prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”* Please, be positive. Be an encourager. Do not participate in gossip, innuendo, and negativity. Jesus said, *“A house divided against itself cannot stand.”* I plead for unity – not that we aren’t united, but because I know Satan will try to divide us. He wants to destroy us because we are building a Church!

But as long as we keep our eyes on Jesus, we will be safe. We are His church and *“the gates of hell will not prevail against us.”*

Semper fi!

Love in Christ,

Parker



ISAIAH 54:17

“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.”

KING JAMES VERSION (KJV)



Smoky Mountain Global Methodist Church

MONTHLY MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

Meet Cindy Wilson



1. Where were you born and raised? Born-Washington, D.C.
Raised-Gaithersburg, MD

1a. How long have you lived in Tennessee? 30+ years

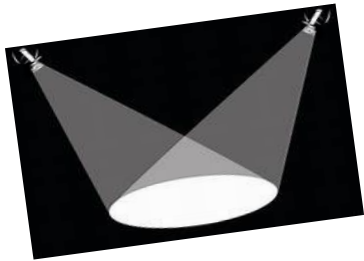
2. Name something unique about you that very few people know. I have visited all 50 states. Tent camped in most of the states including Alaska.

3. What is the hobby that you are most passionate about today?
Traveling to see kids and grandsons!

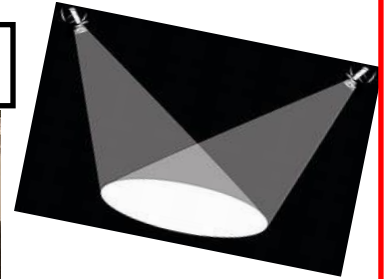
4. What qualities do you admire most in others? Biblical knowledge,
A great heart for others.

Smoky Mountain Global Methodist Church

MONTHLY MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT



Meet Dave Wilson



1. Where were you born and raised? Kokomo, Indiana

1a. How long have you lived in Tennessee? 30+ years

2. Name something unique about you that very few people know. My dad's family has lived in Blount County since 1782 (before statehood).

3. What is the hobby that you are most passionate about today? Golf

4. What qualities do you admire most in others? Honesty, Great Conversationalists with Interesting People.



4th Audrey Pettis
4th Mike Martin
5th Bebe Gillooly
8th Lana Parham
8th Don Smith

15th Donna Hart
20th Jewel Smith
21st Larry Campbell
23rd Archie Anderson
27th Kent Shepherd



Men's Luncheon
Monday, February 17th
@11 am—Calhouns



A cheerful *heart*
is good medicine,
but a crushed spirit
dries up the bones.

Proverbs 17:22

I have hidden
Your Word
in my *heart*
that I might not
sin against You.

Psalms 119:11

**"Art is at the very heart of worship.
The Creator of heaven and earth,
He that adorns the universe with
stars and mountains and flowers
and the multi-million shapes, colors,
and sounds of beauty,
thus pours His artistic Spirit
into the hearts
of the children of men."
*Patrick Henry Reardon***

6 Spiritual Disciplines to Carry Through the New Year

1. Daily Bible Reading [Psalm 119:105](#) says, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." The word spoken of here is the Bible. The Bible is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. Without the Bible, we would be lost as to what to do. God's direction and divine guidance cannot be revealed to us apart from reading the Bible. The Bible is infallible, which means it is perfect in every way and cannot let us down.

Start working on bringing daily Bible reading into your New Year by taking time each day to read God's Word. Paul tells us, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)). By reading the Bible each day, we will be able to learn about God as well as teach others.

Thorough study of the Bible will equip us with everything we need in order to live holy and righteous lives to the Lord. Ultimately, this is what God wants for our life. By reading the Bible, we become conscious of God's teachings and we strive to live in obedience to Him. Daily Bible reading will keep God's commands upon our hearts and encourage us to faithfully follow Him. When we are living in sin, the Bible will be able to bring us back to repentance.

2. Daily Prayer In addition to daily Bible reading, we also need to carry out daily prayer in the New Year. Prayer is our direct line of communication with God. This is a great privilege as we don't need to overlook this beautiful blessing. Sadly, many people believe we burden God with our prayers. This is not true as He wants us to bring all of our worries, concerns, and troubles to Him ([1 Peter 5:7](#)).

When you go to God in prayer each day, tell Him everything you want to tell Him. You don't have to worry about a prayer being too long, too short, too big, or too confusing. God understands all of your prayers and thoughts, and He will answer them in accordance with His will. However, how will He answer your prayers unless you bring them to Him?

God already knows what we are thinking, what we need, and what we desire, but we have to bring these requests to Him. This is part of acknowledging our dependence on Him. God knows what we need, yet He wants us to freely come to Him. If we never go to Him in prayer, we will be sending the message that we don't believe in His power, goodness, or blessings. Take up the practice this year to go to God in prayer every day and watch your relationship with Him be transformed.

3. Spending Uninterrupted Time with God Spending uninterrupted time with God means both Bible reading and prayer time, but it also means we go somewhere where we will not be interrupted by others. Personally, it can be hard to find time to spend by myself and this affects my walk with the Lord. Daily devotional time will be much more beneficial if we can spend it with just God. The constant notifications from our phone, the conversations of other people around us, or even the noise of an air conditioner can cause us to become distracted.

Instead of allowing these things to interrupt our time with God, we need to sit quietly as His feet alone. Maybe this means coming up with your own prayer closet, as popularized in the Kendrick Brothers film, "War Room." Set up a time where you can go into this closet and spend uninterrupted time with God. The privacy will be beneficial as you are pouring your heart out to Him. You will also benefit from the quiet silence as you listen to God speak through His Word.

4. Getting Involved with a Local Church Many Christians stop going to church because of a traumatic event. This is a sad reality as even Christians can hurt other Christians. If you have been hurt by a church or Christians in the past, know my heart goes out to you. All of your pain is valid and God sees every tear that you shed ([Psalm 56:8](#)).

When you are ready, maybe it will be time to start going to another church. Don't return to the church you went to before, but rather, try out a new church. Maybe this could be a church your friends go to or one you have heard great things about. If going in person feels too much right now, know that is okay too. You can try a few online churches if you want or listen to podcasts that cover different Bible topics.

If you don't have a history of church trauma or abuse, try to get involved with a local church in your area. Get involved with their community outreach program, their food kitchen, or their evangelism efforts. All of these things can help your Christian growth and make you a stronger believer in the Lord. It will take much discipline to show up to each church event and Sunday worship service, but you will be cultivating this skill for life.

5. Meeting Up with Other Believers to Encourage Them Outside of seeing believers at church, you also need to meet up with other Christians in order to encourage them and build them up. Maybe this means going to visit a friend who has been struggling in their faith. Or maybe this means spending time with a shut-in who used to go to your church. Think about who needs your encouragement and go to them.

Each week this upcoming year, try to meet up with other believers to encourage them. You will quickly discover that your own heart will be encouraged the more you encourage others. God will be pleased when you go out of your way to help other believers and build them up. In truth, when we encourage other believers, we will be fulfilling the biblical teaching of, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" ([1 Thessalonians 5:11](#)).

6. Applying the Bible into Your Life Another spiritual discipline to carry out in the New Year is to apply the Bible into your life. Applying the Bible into your life is told to us by the half-brother of the Lord, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" ([James 1:22](#)). As James tells us in this passage, we need to do what the Bible says. Only listening to the Bible, but not doing what it says, is like a man who has forgotten what He looks like despite just looking at his reflection ([James 1:23-25](#)).

Applying the Bible is a challenge, yet it is worth it. Every time we apply a biblical teaching into our life, we are bringing glory to God. We are bringing glory to God because we are truly living in obedience to Him. Obeying God helps us to live a life that is pleasing to Him. Not only this, but it also helps us to grow in our walk with Him.

No longer will we live for ourselves. Instead, we will live for God. Throughout this New Year, we need to continue to apply the Bible into our lives and overtime, our life will reflect the Lord's love. Whenever we are struggling to apply the Bible, we can turn to Jesus and He will help us apply each teaching into our life. **Vivian Bricker—Crosswalk**

Dave Wilson's family has owned land in Blount County for 10+ generations (since 1782 and before Tennessee became a state).



no matter
how **softly**
you whisper
your prayers
GOD always
♥ hears

...You clothed me
with joy,
that my **heart**
may sing your
praises
and not be silent.
Psalms 30:11-12



Don't be Shy.....
Introduce yourself
to someone you
don't know.

Please wear your
name tags!!
Thanks!



Meet Dave & Sandy Tubbs





Valentine's Dinner



SMMC's Valentine Party will be at The Everett Senior Center on
Thursday, February 6th from 6:00 - 8:00 pm.

The meal is being catered by **Amelia Scott.**



MENU



Champagne Chicken



Party Potatoes



Green Beans



Spinach Salad



Rolls



Red Velvet Cupcakes

And Gluten Free Cookies

*This menu meets the guidelines for diabetic, celiac and gluten free,
except for the rolls and cupcakes.*



There will be music and Jeopardy, so it will
be lots of laughs and fellowship!

*Since this is being catered, please let
Danita Goddard know if you signed up
and are unable to attend.
(865-607-8148) Thank you!!*





*Create in me
a pure heart
oh God,
and renew a
steadfast spirit
within me.*

Psalm 51:10

Five Simple Morning Prayers

Here are a few examples of morning prayers to inspire you. Choose one that speaks to your heart or use it to create your own personal prayer. Let your prayer reflect your needs and requests to God. Starting your day with prayer helps keep your faith strong and your love for God alive, even through life's distractions and challenges:

1. **Simple Morning Prayer:** Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of a new day. I offer this day to you. May everything I do today be done with love and for your glory. Guide my thoughts, words, and actions, and help me to be a source of kindness and encouragement to others. Amen.
2. **Morning Prayer of Thanksgiving:** Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of this new day. I am grateful for the blessings of life, health, and the opportunity to serve You. Please guide my thoughts, words, and actions today, and may everything I do be in accordance with Your will. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.
3. **Prayer for Strength and Guidance:** Heavenly Father, as I begin this day, I ask for Your strength and guidance. Help me to face the challenges ahead with courage and grace. May Your Holy Spirit be my constant companion, leading me in the path of righteousness. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.
4. **Prayer for Peace:** Lord Jesus, grant me Your peace this morning. Help me to let go of worry and anxiety, knowing that You are in control. Fill my heart with Your tranquility, and grant me the wisdom to navigate the day with a calm spirit. Amen.
5. **Morning Dedication:** O God, my Creator and Sustainer, I dedicate this day to You. Use me as an instrument of Your love and grace. Help me to be a blessing to others and to reflect Your light in all that I do. May my life be a testimony to Your glory. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Crosswalk



Smoky Mountain Methodist Church

Council Meeting January 9, 2025

HIGHLIGHTS

From the Pastor: At the next council meeting (2/6/2025) Kenny Anderson, software engineer and son of members Joella and Archie Anderson, will explain to council members how he suggests we market our church.

Finance: Mark Woelke provided a wrap-up of 2024:

SMMC ended the year with tithes and donations at nearly 160% of the annual target (\$240K - v- \$380.5K)

Expenses were \$38.7K less than projected

SMMC has no debt; cash in the bank is \$719.2K, of which \$664K is available for the church project fund

A MOTION by Mark Woelke: Ask the Church Council to approve the opening of a brokerage account to be used exclusively for receiving donation of marketable securities. SECOND by Steve McGee. The motion was approved unanimously.

Trustees: Steve McGee reported the committee is seeking someone to repair the chimney of Trinity House.

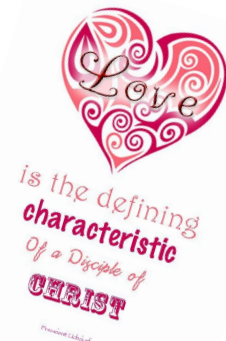
SPPR-Associate Pastor: Bonnie VanPelt and her committee will target a list of GMC-approved seminaries as SMMC searches for an Associate Pastor. Bonnie plans on having conversations with youth directors from Fairview Church and Alcoa Methodist Church to gain knowledge on programs.

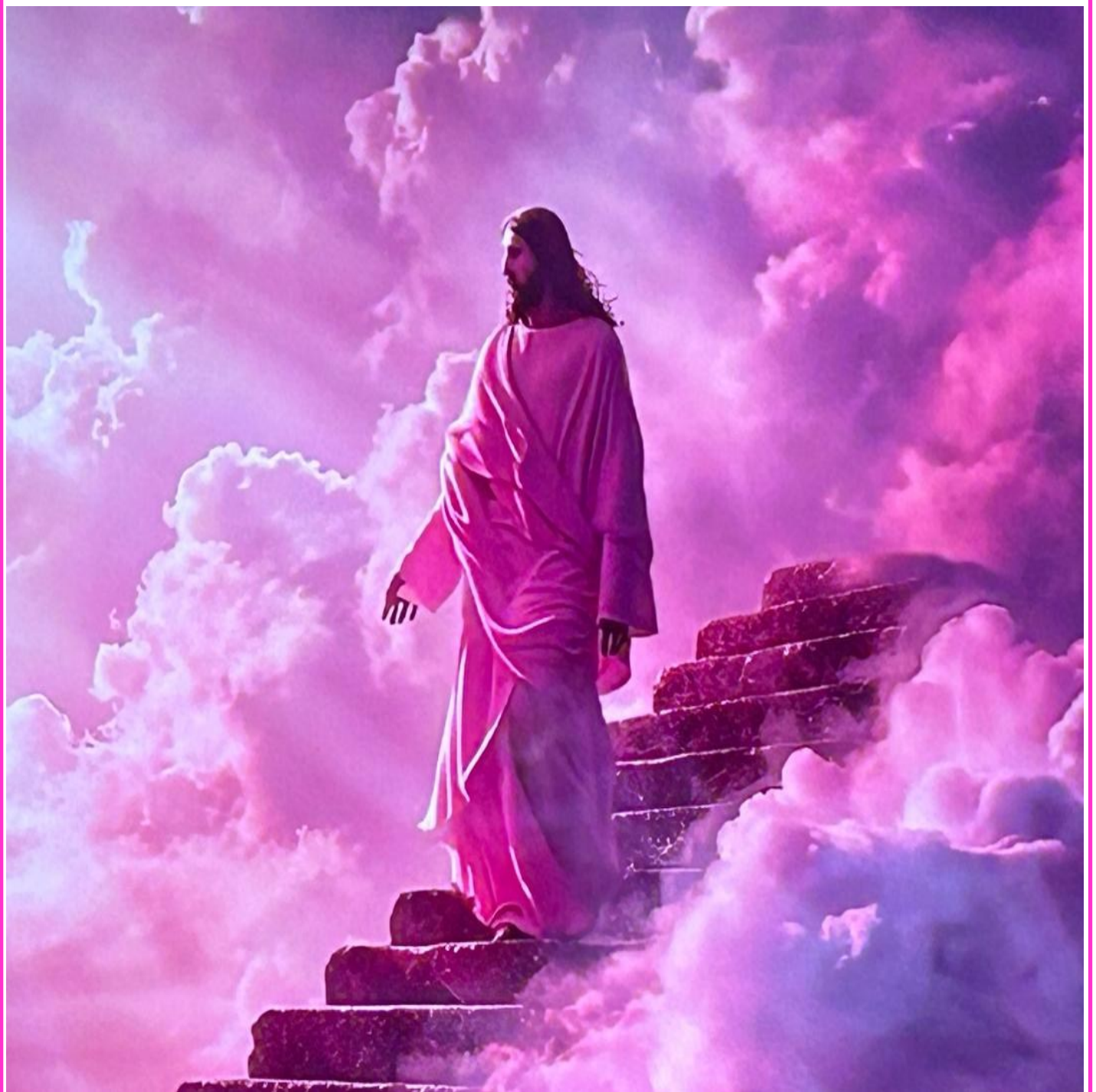
Outreach Committee: Members will host a Valentines Day party at the Everett Senior Center on February 6, 2025 from 6:00p-8:00p

Items from the Chair: George Lybrand indicated its time to develop a new 5-year plan for SMMC. Council members were asked to assist in its development.

The church has accomplished many goals and has fallen short on a few. Some work needs to address growing the SMMC membership which has plateaued; therefore, George believes an Evangelism Group should be established.

George suggested we officially adopt the name of "Smoky Mountain Methodist Church" (leaving out "Global" from the name). After much discussion most council members agreed it is the right thing to do. All of the church's legal documents have only referred to "Smoky Mountain Methodist Church".





Jesus replied:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind.

Matthew 22:37