



Murphy First

United Methodist Church



Office Open: Tuesday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Phone: (828) 837-2718 (Office)

(828) 837-9735 (Fax)

Email: admin@murphyfirstumc.org

Website: www.murphyfirstumc.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/fumcmurphy/

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/
@murphyfirstunitedmethodist4890](https://www.youtube.com/@murphyfirstunitedmethodist4890)

FUMC Communicator — October 2026

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday before worship, someone leaned over and whispered in my ear, “You know, you’ve been here for almost three months. It’s hard to believe.” I had to pause for a second and think through the calendar. They were right. The past three months have been so chock full of people and places and things to learn that they have flown by quickly. But learning is exactly what the first three months of a new church appointment are supposed to be about for a new pastor (and the congregation).

Since I’ve been through this 90-day learning crunch, I would like to use this space to share some of what I’ve learned about Murphy First UMC thus far in the listening sessions and through general observation. What follows is a list of observations in no particular order:

- **Murphy First excels at welcoming all kinds of people.** Whether in Sunday Worship or at Soul Table, I have heard many stories of people feeling immediately at home because of how they were greeted and spoken to. These stories have come from a wide assortment of folks from different backgrounds.
- **We have a healthy culture of service and cooperation.** At the listening sessions, several people remarked about how many people serve within the church and how willing they are to cooperate. Even when there are disagreements, you know how to resolve them and keep moving forward.
- **We have very strong leaders.** After committee meetings or informal chats in the hall, I am continually impressed by the wisdom, insight, and passion of our leaders. They love Jesus, and they want to use their gifts to ensure His ministries thrive at Murphy First. I am blessed to be working alongside all of our leaders.
- **The church building draws people to the Lord.** People come to our church just because it is a beautiful place. For some, the beauty of the sanctuary is a balm for the soul and helps them feel the Lord’s presence. In a way, the church building itself proclaims the good news to Murphy.

...Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1...

- **Murphy First wants to see its children's and youth ministries thrive.** One of the hopes I heard the most in our listening sessions was that our ministries with young people would grow. You delight in seeing children in worship, and you want our youth to engage creatively in the faith. You are proud of the Montessori School and the good work that it is doing.
- **There is more of a Martha culture than a Mary culture in the church.** The church tends to value the active life (service to our neighbors) over the contemplative life (prayer and meditation). So, like Martha, you excel at hospitality and service yet run the risk of spiritually wearing yourselves out. The active life and the contemplative life are both necessary.
- **Our Methodist theology is important to the church.** You appreciate the Methodist emphasis on God's grace and putting our faith into action. You appreciate that we are rooted in the traditional beliefs of Christianity, and yet there is room to engage questions without feeling judged.
- **You love being outdoors.** Whether it's hiking, paddling, boating, fishing, hunting, gardening, yard work, or playing pickleball, you love being outside. Many of you feel closest to the Lord when you are immersed in the beauty of Creation.
- **There is an underlying concern about finances.** The church is in general not an anxious place, but where there is anxiety, it is always about the budget. You understand the reality of the economy and how culture is changing around us, and you want Murphy First to be a light in the community for generations to come. You want to be good stewards and ensure the church fulfills its mission, yet you feel like this task is growing more difficult.
- **You are hopeful.** We are in a season of transition, yet you are not looking backwards. You see that God is up to some good things at Murphy First, and you are eager to see what's next. You are actively investing in the future of the church with your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

The more I learn about Murphy First, the more I give God praise that I get to be here among you. Thank you for being faithful disciples of Jesus.

With peace and gratitude,

Pastor Evan



The **History Committee** will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, October 20 at 4pm, in the library beside Pastor Evan's office. Anyone who is interested is welcome and encouraged to attend!

Murphy First United Methodist Church

Halloween Trunk or Treat

Saturday October 31

4:00 -7:00 PM

Need Church Family Members to help with the event either by donating candy and/or participating.

Candy

- Please bring candy and/or treats into the main office by Thursday October 29.
- Please email Vera Confer at vaconfer@gmail.com by Thursday October 22 if you want to participate or ask questions.
- Arrive by 3:15 PM to set up
- Once parked in Trunk or Treat area, the vehicle must stay in that spot until the event is completed. (It is too dangerous to leave with the pedestrian traffic)
- If not able to stay the entire time, help in handing out candy is always appreciated
- Please no pets
- Dressing up and decorating your trunk or your table is optional
- We serve our community by this event and geez it really is fun.

On Saturday October 31st at 12:00 PM we will be closing off the church parking lot.

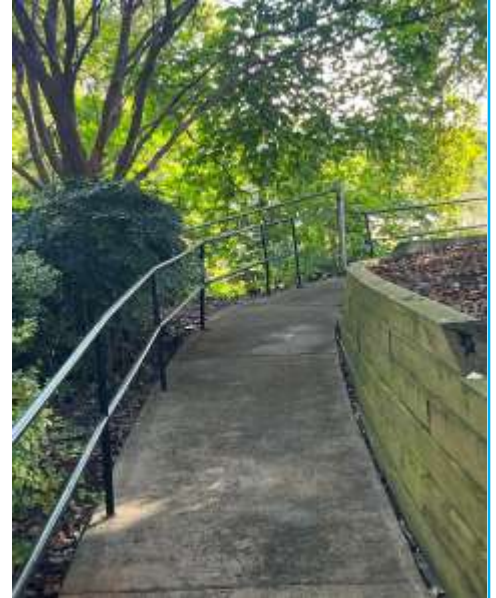




Trustees Corner

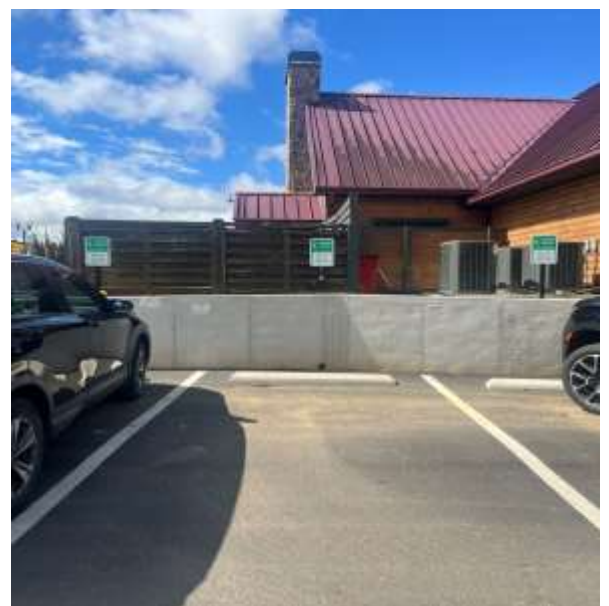
Searching for a volunteer with a pressure washer that wants to make this ugly ramp and entry to the Fellowship Hall beautiful and clean again. If interested, check with Bruce Peck or Ursala Lasky.

Yoga room with new paint job and added fans. If you want to join them, It is every Monday at 10:30 a.m. or ask Ann Smith for more information. This room is above the choir loft in the Sanctuary.



The parking spaces with these signs are reserved for Civic Credit Union customers Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please refrain from using them during these times.

Stop and check out the centennial plaque that has been added on the corner of the sanctuary, thanks to the History Committee.



Sincerely, Bruce Peck, Chairman



OCTOBER 11!

In the sanctuary following Worship, a **Church Conference** to discuss and decide changes to the completion of the Parking Lot project will be held. All active members of the church are eligible to vote and are encouraged to attend.



American Red Cross

BLOOD DRIVE

Friday, October 16, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Fellowship Hall.



Keep the following in your thoughts and prayers:

Ukraine and its people;

Members of the Armed Forces; Barbara Hughes; Carl Auvil; Cissy Dyer; Rex Odom; Bob Parker; Eric Brant; Keisha Licata; Karen Forker; Natalia Donley-Telmosse; Evangeline and Mother Sonia; Sheila Snow; Laura; Joni Langston; Mario Howdeshell; Joe Ebbing; Scot Kleinhanzl; Tammy Pulliam; Kathy; John Satto; Beth McClure; Flooding Victims; Maureen Ripper; Friends, Family and Relationships; Elizabeth Garrett.; Angela; Ursula Lasky and Family; Donna Stuart; Ralph Hutson; Alex Higdon; Dixie Major.

In an effort to have room for all prayer requests we will rotate off the names every 3 weeks unless indicated, either by a notation on the blue prayer request card or by calling the church office.

828-837-2718 or email:
admin@murphyfirstumc.org

Prayer Requests can be submitted through our mobile app, on our Facebook page, YouTube live stream or by calling the church office.

Trustee on Call for October Blake Hughes



Contacts

Pastor Evan Hill

pastor@murphyfirstumc.org

Suzanne West—Director of Music

music@murphyfirstumc.org

Maggie Corrigan—Admin Asst

admin@murphyfirstumc.org

Jack Frahmman—Treasurer

treasurer@murphyfirstumc.org

Bridget Esterhuizen—Preschool Dir.

preschool@murphyfirstumc.org



On October 11, **Roots345** will hike Panther Top and spend time learning about finding God in nature. The third, fourth, and fifth grade group will meet at the church at 3 p.m. to carpool to the hike. A packed picnic meal will be provided. Reach out to Kendra Fokakis, [601-466-3089](tel:601-466-3089), for more information.



Parents' Night Out is on Oct. 2 from 5-8 p.m. Children will enjoy a fun night of activities and dinner while parents get a little time to themselves! Parents should be on the lookout for email communication to come with more details.

Wanted - Volunteer To Manage Harshaw Reclaimed Framing Timbers

I am looking for a volunteer who wants to try to sell the ceiling timbers from Harshaw Chapel. They are being stored in the city's storage unit close to the current sanctuary. These beams are left from the construction project and include the original 1860's hand hewn timbers and poles that once supported the old roof. Another option to selling these would be to make something out of them or just throw away what is not useful. If this is a project you think you could take on, contact Marji Hill for more details at [828-371-5520](tel:828-371-5520).



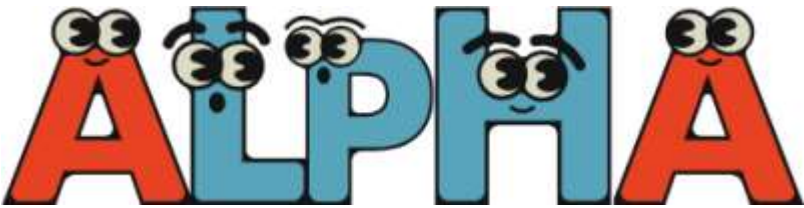
Finance
Committee

Ways to Give

Do you need to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA before the end of the year? A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) allows you to give some or all of the

RMD amount to a charity, like Murphy First UMC, so the withdrawal will be excluded from taxable income but still count towards the RMD requirements. If you'd like to know more about this way to give, you can contact the church office or your financial advisor.

ALPHA YOUTH HAD A TERRIFIC TIME RAFTING ON SEPT 26







Within the historic setting of Harshaw Chapel, join us on Thursday, **Oct 8 at 6 p.m.** for a Taizé service. Peaceful reflection is beneficial!



Monthly Potluck Lunch

Our potluck lunches on the 3rd Sunday of the month following worship have returned. The History and Finance Committees will host the October meal.



Mission Team News

The FUMC Mission Team is excited to welcome five new members! Thanks to the Volunteer Fair and our representatives who shared information with the congregation, excited, eager volunteers have joined our team. For the past few months the Mission Team has focused on preparing for the holiday season. In November and December we will have projects including The Angel Tree, The s'mores and Popcorn Station and Alternative Christmas.

The Angel Tree Project helps children in the community receive Christmas gifts. Trees are placed in several locations around town by the Cherokee County Social Services. The trees display wishes from children in the foster system. Our team takes those wishes and purchases as many as possible. ANYONE in the congregation who wants to join in on this project can do so as an individual or part of our group. We welcome any donations and participation.

The s'mores and popcorn station takes place on the day of the Murphy Christmas Parade (usually the first Saturday of December). We serve free smores and popcorn to anyone who wants some! Come join us for fun and fellowship. Details will be shared with the church before the event.

Our procedures for the Alternative Christmas will be presented to the congregation the last two Sundays in November, and the project will take place before and after service on the first two Sundays in December. For those who are not familiar, we will be describing the project in detail during service. This is a way for our church to support local ministries and gives members an opportunity to make a donation in someone's name. More to Come in the next newsletter!

Find us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/fumcmurphy.

The New Headstone in Harshaw Cemetery



Every now and then, people ask if there is space for a new burial at Harshaw Cemetery. The short answer is no, because there are many unmarked graves in the cemetery. Awhile back, a group of students came and surveyed the cemetery using LIDR equipment and discovered human remains everywhere. Tim Nicholson could tell you more about it.

Recently we had a different kind of inquiry. This time the question was whether a headstone could be upgraded and replaced. That is why we have a very new looking headstone for Reid Mitchell Davidson.

Reid Davidson was only 40 years old when he died of an acute illness in a St. Louis, Missouri hospital. He was the son of former Cherokee County Sheriff Samuel Winslow Davidson and his second wife, Elizabeth (Reid) Davidson. Born in Murphy in 1904, he died in 1944, leaving two children: Margaret and Robert "Bobby" (age 12). He was a divorced bread salesman for Wonder Bread Company. His body was returned to Murphy where he was buried next to his father and grandfather.

The new headstone (shown in photo) was purchased by Reid Davidson's grandson, Robert Davidson, Jr. who arranged for it to be placed there by S&P Monuments of Murphy. Robert Davidson told us that it had always been his father's wish to replace the very small existing monument with something more proper, but that his father had passed away before completing that task. Robert Davidson, Jr. traveled from Grover, Missouri to complete this task, honoring his father's wish.





HINTON
C E N T E R
Retreat. Reflect. Renew.

Hinton Rural Life Center is partnering with the Blairsville chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace to host a community bed build on Saturday, Oct. 17, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Hinton's Educational Tool Barn.

Community volunteers will work together to build beds for children in Clay County who do not have a bed of their own.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace is a national nonprofit organization with a simple mission: "No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town." Through local chapters and community volunteers, the organization builds and delivers beds to children who are sleeping on floors, couches, air mattresses, or in other inadequate sleeping arrangements.

"A bed is something many of us take for granted, but for a child who doesn't have one, it can mean comfort, security and dignity," said Dr. Jacqueline Kilgus Gottlieb, President and CEO of Hinton Rural Life Center. "This partnership is a wonderful example of what can happen when neighbors come together to meet a very practical need. In just a few hours, volunteers can help create something that will make a difference in the life of a child right here in Clay County."

No woodworking or construction experience is necessary. Sleep in Heavenly Peace provides the tools, materials, safety equipment and instruction, and volunteers work together at stations to measure, cut, sand, drill and assemble the beds.

Individuals, families, churches, businesses, civic organizations, and other community groups are encouraged to participate. Volunteers age 12 and older are welcome; minors must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. **Closed-toe shoes are required.**

Advance registration is requested, so organizers can plan appropriately for volunteers, materials and workstations.

Event Details

Volunteer registration: <https://bit.ly/ClayCounty-Hinton-Center>

Sleep in Heavenly Peace Community Bed Build

Saturday, Oct. 17, 2026

9 a.m.–2 p.m.

Hinton Rural Life Center — Educational Tool Barn

[2330 Hinton Center Road, Hayesville, NC 28904](https://www.hintoncenter.org/2330-Hinton-Center-Road-Hayesville-NC-28904)

2026 "MOVING UP!"



Project Agape Mission Boxes and Dolly Day Blessing Box Ministry



Notes from Ms. Bridget at The FUMC Children's Center:

Ms. Bridget reports we have had a great start to the fall semester with a full roster of 20 students, and several hoping to join from the wait list. More than half of the families enrolled in preschool this year are new to the school and our graduates are having wonderful starts in the surrounding public schools!

We have an exciting field trip planned to the pumpkin patch at Darnell farms for mid October, as well as some Halloween fun at the end of the month. We are most thankful and appreciative for the new air conditioning and heating units and are enjoying a very comfortable environment!



"Happy fall yall!"  from the teachers and students of

The FUMC Children's Center 



DOLLY GOOD DEEDS DAY WAS TERRIFIC!

Robin Burnette and Paula Widstrom volunteered for the reading table at the town of Murphy's "Dolly Good Deeds Day" on Friday, "9-25". They read books to children on the stage in downtown Murphy. It was nice to see people doing good deeds for others from "Nine to Five" on Friday. May the spirit continue!



"United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities." In 2026, it is our intention to lean into this, focusing on the four listed requirements to produce the predicted outcome.



United
Women
in Faith

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the AGAPE Armenia Box Project. We collected 41 boxes, which exceeded our expectations. A special thank you to the Quilters who provided 12 beautiful quilts to accompany our boxes. They also knitted prayer shawls for our local community.

"The United Women in Faith" are so grateful that the Mission's Team chose one of our projects, the Blessing Box located at the 4 Square Head Start Preschool, in remembrance of Dolly Parton on Friday, September 25. The congregation responded by providing supplies that will last for weeks. Thank you all and to Robin Burnette who serviced the box for the remaining weeks in September. And thank you, Dolly Parton. Your life remains an inspiration to us all.

At our September 16 meeting, we voted to change our meeting times as follows:

10:30 a.m. Greeting Card Ministry

11 a.m. UWF/Willing Hands Meeting & lunch. Soup provided; please bring drink & sandwich.

12 p.m. Planning and Strategy Meeting

We also voted to sponsor the Chili Cookoff event that had been previously handled by the United Methodist Men's group and are thankful to Mr. Payne for giving us a blueprint to follow. The Chili Cookoff is scheduled for Sunday, November 1 after Worship, and we are asking for our congregation's and community's support. Proceeds from the Cookoff will support our youth Christmas project. A special meeting to discuss the logistics will be held on Monday, October 5 at 11:45 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Anyone interested in submitting a chili, please contact Penny Dieffenderfer (912) 657-4467.

Saturday, October 24, 9:30 a.m. – noon is an important Smoky Mountain District Missions Festival, held here! Brunch will be served from 9:30 a.m. - 10 a.m. followed by the meeting. This is an opportunity to meet our District leaders, and to discuss a book project along with highlights of four missions we believe are worthwhile. Please make plans to join us!

Upcoming Events;

Monday, October 5, 11:45 a.m. Planning and Strategy Meeting. Fellowship Hall.

Friday, October 16, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Blood Drive. Fellowship Hall.

Wednesday, October 21, Greeting Card Ministry, 10:30 a.m. followed by United Women of Faith monthly meeting in Fellowship Hall, at 11 a.m.

Saturday, October 24, 9:30-12 p.m.. Smoky Mountain District Missions Festival. Fellowship Hall.

Sunday, November 1, Noon. Chili Cook Off, Fellowship Hall.

Anyone interested in additional information regarding United Women of Faith, please reach out to Sarah June at (828) 361-1330 or Gail Peck at (407) 529-9354.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 9:45 a.m. All SS Classes 11 a.m. Worship	28 8 a.m. Preschool 10:30 a.m. Yoga 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises 5 p.m. SPPRC	29 5 p.m. VRR	30 8 a.m. Preschool 10 a.m. Worship Staff Mtg 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises 3:15 p.m. Children's Choir 4:30 p.m. Handbells 5:30 p.m. Choir	01 9:30 a.m. Mom's Bible Study 10 a.m. Ann's Study 10 a.m. Quilters 11:30 a.m. Soul Table	02 8 a.m. Preschool 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises 5-8 p.m. Parents Night out	03 9:30 a.m. Al Anon
04 9:45 a.m. Adult SS 11 a.m. Worship 4 p.m. ALPHA	05 8 a.m. Preschool 10:30 a.m. Yoga 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises 11:45 a.m. UWF Chili Cookoff planning meeting	06 5 p.m. VRR	07 8 a.m. Preschool 10 a.m. Worship Staff Mtg 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises 1 p.m. Bible Study 3:15 p.m. Children's Choir 4:30 p.m. Handbells 5:30 p.m. Choir	08 8 a.m. Harshaw Mowing 9:30 a.m. Mom's Bible Study 10 a.m. Ann's Study 10 a.m. Quilters 11:30 a.m. Soul Table 6 p.m. Taize Worship @ Harshaw	09 8 a.m. Pre-school 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	10 9:30 a.m. Al Anon
11 9:45 a.m. All SS Classes 11 a.m. Worship 12 p.m. Church Conference 3 p.m. Roots456 - Hike Panther Top 4 p.m. ALPHA	12 8 a.m. Preschool 10:30 a.m. Yoga 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	13 5 p.m. VRR 5:30 p.m. Trustees	14 8 a.m. Preschool 10 a.m. Worship Staff Mtg 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises 3:15 p.m. Children's Choir 4:30 p.m. Handbells 5:30 p.m. Choir	15 9:30 a.m. Mom's Bible Study 10 a.m. Ann's Study 10 a.m. Quilters 11:30 a.m. Soul Table 5:30 p.m. Finance Committee	16 BLOOD DRIVE 10 a.m. Blood Drive 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	17 9:30 a.m. Al Anon
18 9:45 a.m. All SS Classes 11 a.m. Worship 12 p.m. Potluck Lunch	19 8 a.m. Preschool 10:30 a.m. Yoga 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	20 5 p.m. VRR	21 8 a.m. Preschool 10 a.m. Worship Staff Mtg 10:30 a.m. Greeting Card Ministry 11:30 a.m. UWF 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises 1 p.m. Bible Study 3:15 p.m. Children's Choir 4:30 p.m. Handbells 5:30 p.m. Choir	22 8 a.m. Harshaw Mowing 9:30 a.m. Mom's Bible Study 10 a.m. Ann's Study 10 a.m. Quilters 11:30 a.m. Soul Table	23 8 a.m. Pre-school 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	24 9 a.m. UWF District Missions Festival Mtg 9:30 a.m. Al Anon
25 9:45 a.m. All SS Classes 11 a.m. Worship 12 p.m. AA Dinner Mtg 4 p.m. ALPHA	26 8 a.m. Preschool 10:30 a.m. Yoga 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises 5 p.m. SPPRC	27 Newsletter Input Deadline 5 p.m. VRR	28 8 a.m. Preschool 10 a.m. Worship Staff Mtg 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises 3:15 p.m. Children's Choir 4:30 p.m. Handbells 4:30 p.m. AA Dinner Mtg 5:30 p.m. Choir	29 9:30 a.m. Mom's Bible Study 10 a.m. Ann's Study 10 a.m. Quilters 11:30 a.m. Soul Table	30 8 a.m. Pre-school 8 a.m. Show Me Montessori 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	31 9:30 a.m. Al Anon 4 p.m. Trunk or Treat 



Murphy First

United Methodist Church

P. O. Box 86 (73 Valley River Avenue)
Murphy, NC 28906

TO:

STAFF:

Rev. Evan Hill, Pastor

pastor@murphyfirstumc.org

Maggie Corrigan, Admin. Assistant

admin@murphyfirstumc.org

Jack Frahmman, Treasurer

treasurer@murphyfirstumc.org

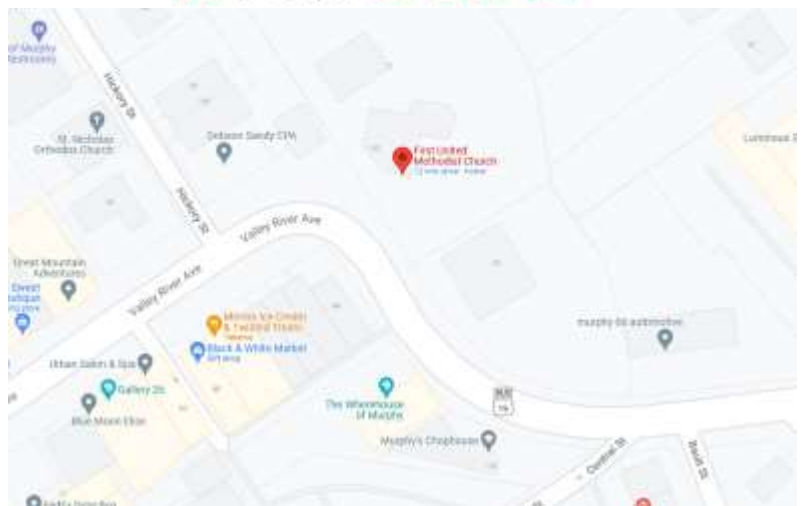
Suzanne West, Director of Music

music@murphyfirstumc.org

Bridget Esterhuizen, Preschool Dir.

preschool@murphyfirstumc.org

#BeUMC



Our **Mission** is to live as a community transformed by God's grace, sent to love and serve like Jesus.

Our **Vision** is to build communities of hope where all people experience belonging and abundant life.