



# Murphy First

United Methodist Church

January 2026



## THE FUMC COMMUNICATOR

Dear Murphy First,

For a few months now, I have been planning toward a 4-week Spiritual Renewal Leave beginning on Monday, January 5. It is actually 4.5 weeks. I will begin returning to work on Wednesday, Feb. 4. This sort of leave is a tremendous gift made available to UM clergy every 4 years as a normal rhythm for life and ministry.

This is the first time in 13 years of full-time ministry that I've taken this sort of leave, and I am deeply grateful for the support of our SPPRC, Administrative Council, and our District Superintendent. I have also been grateful for the blessings and support I've received from so many of you as I get ready for this time away.

During this time, I will be completely disconnecting from work in order to be more fully present to God, my family, and unhurried rhythms of renewal. To make that possible I have been working on plans with the leadership of this church as well as other pastors.

Revs. Marji Hill and Rob Rollins will be "on call" if you need pastoral care—including in the event of a surgery, hospital visit, and any other instance in which you might wish to speak with a pastor. In the event of a death, Rev. Rob Rollins will be present in ministry with family members and help plan a funeral or, if a family desires me to have a role, plan for a memorial service that takes place once I've returned. Both of their numbers are available through the church office.

While I am away, you will be blessed by some wonderful guest preachers on Sunday mornings: Ann Smith, Ann Miller Woodford, Rev. Beth Crissman (District Superintendent, Smoky Mountain District), and Rev. Paul Christy (Senior Pastor, FUMC, Hickory), and Rev. Dr. Adam Daniels (Chaplain, Young Harris College).

I've been coordinating with other leaders in the church in several areas of ministry to help make sure adequate plans and schedules are in place. In those ministry areas where you might have typically heard from me, you will be hearing from another leader in that ministry area.

I won't be checking email or other messages. Any I receive, I'll check and return once I'm back.

I will miss the church and our shared ministry while I'm gone. But I have also come to experience how planning for leave is an exercise in trust/faith in the Holy Spirit who continues to be at work in you (all).

These last few years together, especially this last year, have been full in every sense, and while I've been trying to give it all I've got, I'm too often running on fumes. This renewal leave is coming at the right time for me. I am looking forward to this unhurried time when I can say "yes" to my family, spend unhurried time with God, seek renewal of energy in my own spirit and joy in ministry. I would be grateful for your prayers while I am away.

At the end of the worship service on Sunday, January 4, our former and new SPPRC chairs will lead a brief blessing at the start of my leave. Then after the Epiphany Party that night, my leave will fully begin.

... Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1 . . .

I'll begin this time of leave and season of Epiphany with one of my favorite prayers of blessing from scripture:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-20)

On the journey,

Pastor Wil



THANK YOU! For ordering luminaries during Advent – these are special ways to honor/memorialize loved ones, and you also supported our youth ministry.

- \* **1/4 – 5pm** Epiphany Party at Parsonage. Potluck, games, and bonfire celebrating the start of Epiphany. Bring any greenery from Christmas you'd like to add to the fire :-)
- \* **1/11 – 4pm** Youth @ FUMC
- \* **1/18** – no youth, MLK Jr. holiday weekend
- \* **1/25 – 4pm** Bowling night! Meet at Ultrastar Multi-tainment Center
- \* **2/1 – 4pm** Youth @ FUMC, Service Project night at church
- \* **2/8** – no youth, long weekend break

During Pastor Wil's renewal leave, Erin Simons will be our main youth leader, so parents can expect to hear from her. We have other great volunteers and dinner providers who will be with our youth too.



From all of us on staff at FUMC, THANK YOU for your generosity in providing Christmas bonuses! It is a joy for us to be in ministry with you here in this congregation!





**Young Adult Sunday School** meets at 9:45am in Room 301 in the Education Building. (on break in December)

**Seekers Sunday School** meets at 9:45am in the Library in the Fellowship Hall.

**The Nursery** (Room 202) is available for children aged 0 yrs to Kindergarten from 9:45am-Noon.

**Children's Sunday School** meets in the Education Building at 10am.

**Worship Readiness** (Room 304) for children aged Kindergarten through 5th grade meets during worship after the children's moment.

Children are welcome in worship and will then be released after Children's Time to return to their nursery or Children's Church. Older children (5th grade+) should remain with their parents in worship.



As each church Task Force, Team and Committee gather for their first meetings of the new year, and leaders are selected for each group, **PLEASE** notify Maggie in the church office. In addition, please review your group member list in the app and let us know of any additions or deletions.



01/03—Dianne Fitts

01/05—Cobby Barfield

01/06—Tyra Nelson;  
John Teel

01/11—Ron Lewis;  
Mark Mobley

01/12—Sheila Jordan;  
Edward Palmer

01/16—Ricky Hill

01/17—Richard Douglas

01/23—Kyle McClure

01/24—Bohdi Budzinski;  
Bud Sims

01/28—Amy Brown

01/29—Mary Robertson



01/05—Rick & Debbie Alringer

01/23—Tom & Linda Pritchard

01/29—Matt & Jennifer White

# Lent Devotional 2026

Ash Wednesday is February 18 and begins our season of Lent as we journey toward Easter. In the busyness of our everyday lives, take time during Lent to be intentional as we reflect and wait. We are inviting our congregation to contribute to a Lenten Devotional booklet that will begin on Ash Wednesday. This year, we will focus on the Gospel of John, so please select your scripture from John's gospel.

Please use this format to develop your devotional that will become part of the church wide booklet.

- Title for your devotional (optional)
- Scripture that accompanies your devotion - preferably from the Gospel of John (1-2 verse maximum)
- 1-2 paragraphs of what the season of Lent and Easter mean to you. (Try to keep it as brief as you can for space purposes!)
- Sentence prayer or a closing statement to sum up your devotional
- Your name

You must submit your devotion by **Sunday February 8** to be included in the booklet. Email your devotion to D'Anna Liber @ [liber765@comcast.net](mailto:liber765@comcast.net).

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact D'Anna Liber (770-853-6814)

As this season begins, let us begin our journey toward Easter together.



If you don't see your group meeting listed on the calendar, you haven't scheduled it with Maggie. Remember that she has to approve activities that take place within our campus.



**Urgent help needed** in the Sound and Video booth on Sunday mornings. The system is simpler than it has been in the past and our three regular volunteers can help get new volunteers up to speed, so they can be part of the rotation. Reach out to Kevin Mendoza if you are interested: [KevinNBMendoza@gmail.com](mailto:KevinNBMendoza@gmail.com). More hands make a lighter load!



The Children's Ministry Team is beginning an exciting season of dreaming and big picture ministry planning for our children and young families. We would love to have you join us! If you are interested in being involved, or want more information, please contact Kendra Fokakis (601-466-3089) or Pastor Wil.



**Church Family, we need your help! Please consider becoming an offering counter. We count on Tuesday mornings and will train you on our procedures. Please contact Maggie in the church office if you are interested in helping. Thank you!**



Please keep Richard Douglass and his family in your prayers upon the death of our sister in Christ, Dell.



The Christmas Eve offering raised **\$3537.37** for the community food initiative.

**Trustee on Call for January**  
**Blake Hughes**



The History Committee has a meeting planned for Wednesday, January 21st at 5pm in the Library of the Education Building. Anyone interested in our church history is invited and encouraged to attend. If you have any questions or would like more information, reach out to Lori Nicholson (828-360-4899) or Charlene Smith (828-361-1519), or use the Groups feature in the church app to indicate your interest in joining the group.



## United Women in Faith

To all women in our church family as well as our friends and family in the community, please join Willing Hands' first meeting of 2026, January 21, at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. We will celebrate our past officers, install our new officers and enjoy a potluck lunch (main dishes provided). Additionally, this is an opportunity to learn from our Smoky Mountain District President, Lisa

Bacon, a brief history of United Women in Faith as well as discuss how our unit can help the district and explain the resources provided by the organization. We will also celebrate our outgoing officers for their contributions to Willing Hands, United Women of Faith, our church, our community, and our members. Thank you, Nancy Jo Willis, Co-Chair, Karen Watson, Co-Chair, and Marilyn Jones, Treasurer. Vera Confer, Secretary is continuing in her role for the next term. We are thankful and blessed that each retiring officer plans to support Willing Hands to maintain stability in providing information, advice, and recommendations.

A tremendous thank you to all the women who participated in making our December plans a reality. From the Christmas Box Project to Memories with Santa, Willing Hands stepped up. Our United Women of Faith expressed our thanks through our actions and we also donated \$500 to the Love Offering, expressing our gratitude to our church employees.

In February, we will get down to the business of scheduling priorities, assigning committees, budget discussions, and growth opportunities. Please plan to join us then, February 18th, Ash Wednesday.

Anyone interested in additional information please reach out to Sarah June (828) 316-1330, Incoming President or Gail Peck (407) 529-9354, Incoming Membership, Nurture and Outreach Coordinator.



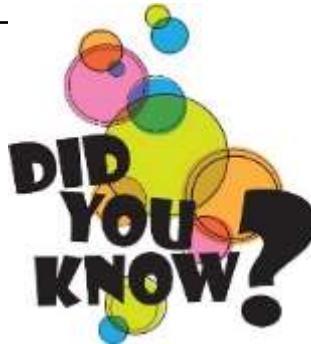
## We have a Church App!!!

It has the directory, events, calendar, giving, a way to check in on Sunday morning (that's right you can register your attendance with the app!), and a lot more.



You can find it by searching your app store for "My Church Home", it is free, and available on any smart phone. You'll need to get "authenticated" in order to have access to things like the directory, so first email Sue Bell ([suzie1028@gmail.com](mailto:suzie1028@gmail.com)) for access.

**And** we have a new look for our website! [www.murphyfirstumc.org](http://www.murphyfirstumc.org) The services are now live streamed to both the website and our FaceBook page and is always available on our YouTube channel.



**HOUSEKEEPING HELP!** Whenever a group or event you are part of is ending, please be sure to:

1. Turn off the lights
2. Reset thermostat to **66** when room is not in use.
3. Lock doors.
4. Following Sunday worship, please take your bulletin & inserts home with you.

**THANK YOU!**



## Keep the following in your thoughts and prayers:

Ukraine and its people; Maria Mcleod; Bill and Barbara Hughes; Ken Brant; Keith Barber; Billy Major; Michele Leone; Carl Auvil; Pam Meintel; John & Susan Satto; Jeff King; Melanie Rogers; Mathew Stiles; Joe Hartman; Libby Simpson; Carl Eicher; Sarah Gleason; Harry Burgis; Richard Douglass; Jack Cassady; Anne Hymen; Wally Avett; John Morton; Jake; Hanna & baby Samuel; Earl Riggs; Debbie Pound's sister; the Family of Dell Douglass.

**Prayer Team:** [prayfumc@gmail.com](mailto:prayfumc@gmail.com).

*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](mailto: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.**

# Contacts

Pastor Wil Posey

[pastor@murphyfirstumc.org](mailto:pastor@murphyfirstumc.org)

Suzanne West—Director of Music

[music@murphyfirstumc.org](mailto:music@murphyfirstumc.org)

Maggie Corrigan—Admin Asst

[admin@murphyfirstumc.org](mailto:admin@murphyfirstumc.org)

Jack Frahmann—Treasurer

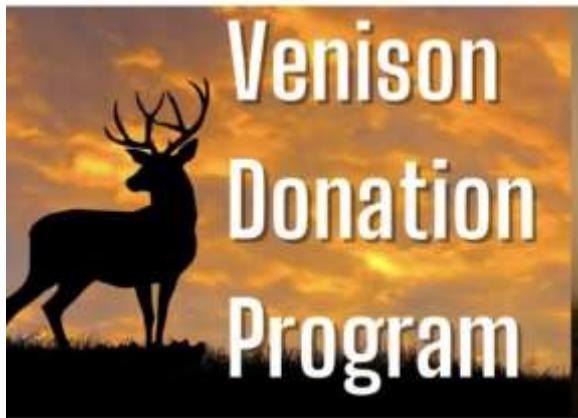
[treasurer@murphyfirstumc.org](mailto:treasurer@murphyfirstumc.org)

Bridget Esterhuizen—Preschool Dir.

[preschool@murphyfirstumc.org](mailto:preschool@murphyfirstumc.org)

**2025 Giving Statements will include all monies received by December 30, 2025. The statements will be available for pick up before worship on January 18th and 25th. After that, any statements not picked up will be mailed out. If you have any questions or concerns about yours, please feel free to email me at [admin@murphyfirstumc.org](mailto:admin@murphyfirstumc.org) or call me at the church office. Thanks for your continued generosity to Murphy First UMC!**

**Maggie Corrigan, Financial Secretary**



Thank you to the NC State Extension, and Marlana Baker in particular, for coordinating this program with NC Hunters for the Hungry and Adam Farm Processing to provide legally harvested deer to various food programs working to assist in ending food insecurity.

Our Soul Table program, which will serve a hot meal every Thursday at 11:30am starting on January 1st, 2026, through the end of March, received a donation of venison today.



## **2026 Soul Table Every Thursday in 1st Quarter**

Soul Table was established over two years ago to serve the food insecure in our community by offering a free lunch to people on the first and third Thursdays of each month. Now as a blessing and a challenge, Soul Table is expanding to include every Thursday from 11:30am - 1pm in the first quarter of 2026, starting with January 1st, when we will host a special New Year's lunch.

Upcoming menus include:

- Jan 1st - pulled pork, collard greens, black eye peas, cornbread\*
- Jan 8th - Cincinnati chili and fruit cup
- Jan 15th - Mexican cornbread casserole and English pea salad
- Jan 22nd - lentil stew with sourdough bread
- Jan 29th - turkey pot pie and side salad



\*Communion to follow January 1st Soul Table meal. What a great way to begin 2026. Marji Hill will lead us in communion at 1pm in the Sanctuary.

Please plan to join us and discover the joy of Soul Table and/or volunteer, donate, pray for the success of this mission. For additional information, please contact Cobby Barfield (828-557-2433), Sarah June (828-361-1330) and/or Grant Corrigan (727-282-9607).



The Mission Team ended the year with the December 6 S'mores and Popcorn station. Everyone had a great time making and eating s'mores. The popcorn was declared to be "as good as movie popcorn".

At the December meeting the team decided to continue supporting these local organizations: Homeless Shelter, Senior Center (Meals on Wheels), Hinton Center, REACH, the Ministerial Association, and the Sharing Center. Our international mission will continue to be ZOE Empowers, thanks to the support of our congregation.

The Soul Table Christmas lunch was a great success. The guests were served turkey, ham, potatoes, sweet potato souffle, green beans, biscuits and desserts! The fireplace was lit, the room beautifully decorated by the Willing Hands and members of the mission team and there was a special guest—SANTA made an appearance! Soul Table is thriving thanks to the wonderful support of the congregation and the community. Beginning in January, plans are to serve a meal EVERY Thursday.

FUMC has served as a temporary food pantry during the fall to help with food insecurity. December 23 was the last day to receive food from the pantry. A HUGE thanks goes out to the Valley River Pickleball group who donated over 300 pounds of food! Thanks also to members of the congregation who donated and who volunteered to hand out food. We helped many families who were struggling.

The Alternative Christmas Project was once again successful. Here is a breakdown of the donations that were received.

REACH - \$100

Hulbert-Johnson House - \$75

Big Brothers/Big Sisters -\$35

ZOE - \$535

Sharing Center -\$55

Hinton Center - \$30

Valley River Humane Society - \$1200

Soul Table - \$2270

Cherokee County Ministerial Association - \$465

Total Donations - \$4765

Anita Sloan announced that after five years of service, she will be stepping down as chair of the Missions Team. Starting in January, Cobby and Diane Barfield will serve as temporary chairs. Each member of the team has a responsibility and will continue to serve to keep the ministries active.

Thanks to Cobby and Diane, Sarah June and Bette Feistkorn and Bruce Peck for deep cleaning and organizing the kitchen.



# FUMC TASK FORCES FOR 2026

## ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Vera Confer	Chair
TBD	Vice-Chair
John Morton	Lay Leader
Jack Frahmann	Treasurer
Chris Mintz/Linda Ray	Finance Chair
TBD	SPPRC Chair
Noland Smith	Foundation Chair
TBD/Mark Mobley	Trustees Chair
Lea Posey	Preschool Chair
Kendra Fokakis	Children's Council Chair
Sue Bell/Nancy Jo Wilis	Communications Chairs
TBD	Welcoming Chair
Cobby & Diane Barfield	Missions Chairs
Charlene Smith	History Chair
Kathryn Jenkins	Parsonage Chair
Sarah June Ely-McCollum	UWF Chair
TBD	Congregational Care Chair
TBD	Membership Chair
James Jallah	Annual Conference Delegate
Tyra Nelson	Youth Representative
Hayden Hughes	Young Adult Representative

## AT LARGE MEMBERS

Kevin Mendoza	Class of 2026
Randy Allman	Class of 2027
Gerri Schutes	Class of 2027
Dan Stroup	Class of 2028
Judy Eicher	Class of 2028
Gary Woods	Class of 2028

## STAFF

Wil Posey	Pastor
Suzanne West	Director of Music
Maggie Corrigan	Administrative Assistant

<u>TRUSTEES*</u>		
<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Mark Mobley, Vice Chair	Marie Kumar	Bruce Peck
Ursula Lasky	Blake Hughes	David Liber
Freddy Lochaby		Tim Nicholson
Wil Posey, Staff		
<u>FINANCE*</u>		
<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Linda Ray, Vice Chair	Kim Barber	Terry Fortner
Chris Mintz, Chair	Alex Budzinski	Edward Palmer
Wil Posey, Staff	Vera Confer,	TBD, Trustees
Jack Frahmann,	Adm Chr	TBD, Founda-
Treasurer	John Morton,	tion
	Lay Ldr	TBD, SPPRC
Maggie Corrigan, Fin Secretary		
<u>SPPRC*</u>		
<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Liz Pipes	D'Anna Liber	David Lamb
Judi Teston	Paul Schutes	Kathryn Jenkins
Russell Matthews		Noland Smith
Wil Posey, Staff		
John Morton, Lay Leader, (Ex-oficio)		
James Jallah, Annual Conference Delegate, (Ex oficio)		
<u>NOMINATIONS &amp; LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT*</u>		
<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Janie Forristier	Gail Peck	Terri Stroup
David Hughes	Carl Hymen	Lori Nicholson
Wil Posey, Staff	Nancy Jo Willis	Charlene Smith
John Morton, Lay Leader, (Ex oficio)		



# FUMC



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 9:45am Sunday School 10:55am Worship 11:15am Children's Church 4pm Alpha	29 10:30am Yoga 11:30pm Chair Exercises	30	31 11:30pm Chair Exercises <b>OFFICE IS CLOSED</b>	<b>01 NEW YEARS DAY</b> <b>11:30 pm Soul Table</b> 	<b>02</b> 11:30pm Chair Exercises	03 9:30am Al Anon
<b>04</b> <b>9:45am Sunday School</b> <b>10:55am Worship</b> <b>5pm Alpha Epiphany Party @ the Parsonage</b>	<b>05</b> <b>10:30am Yoga</b> 11:30am Chair Exercises	06	<b>07</b> <b>8am Preschool</b> <b>10am Worship Mtg</b> 11:30am Chair Exercises	<b>08</b> <b>9:30am Mom's Morning</b> <b>11:30 pm Soul Table</b>	<b>09</b> <b>8am Preschool</b> 11:30am Chair Exercises	10 9:30am Al Anon
<b>11</b> <b>9:45am Sunday School</b> <b>10:55am Worship</b> <b>11:15am Children's Church</b> 4pm Alpha	<b>12</b> <b>8am Preschool</b> <b>10:30am Yoga</b> 11:30am Chair Exercises <b>5:30pm Admin Council</b> <b>5:30pm Preschool Committee</b>	13 <b>5:30pm Trustees</b>	<b>14</b> <b>8am Preschool</b> <b>10am Worship Mtg</b> 11:30am Chair Exercises <b>3:15pm Children's Choir</b>	<b>15</b> <b>9:30am Mom's Morning</b> <b>11:30am Soul Table</b> <b>3:30pm Friends of Harshaw Chpl</b> <b>5:30pm Finance Committee</b>	<b>16</b> <b>8am Preschool</b> 11:30am Chair Exercises	17 9:30am Al Anon
<b>18</b> <b>9:45am Sunday School</b> <b>10:55am Worship</b> <b>11:15am Children's Church</b> <b>12:15pm Potluck Lunch</b> 	<b>19</b> MLK Day <b>10:30am Yoga</b> <b>11am Mission Team</b> 11:30am Chair Exercises	20	<b>21</b> <b>8am Preschool</b> <b>10am Worship Mtg</b> <b>10:30am Greeting Card Ministry</b> <b>11:30am Willing Hands</b> 11:30am Chair Exercises <b>3:15pm Children's Choir</b> <b>5pm History Committee</b>	<b>22</b> <b>9:30am Mom's Morning</b> <b>11:30 pm Soul Table</b>	<b>23</b> <b>8am Preschool</b> 11:30am Chair Exercises	24 9:30am Al Anon
<b>25</b> <b>9:45am Sunday School</b> <b>10:55am Worship</b> <b>11:15am Children's Church</b> 4pm Alpha	<b>26</b> <b>8am Preschool</b> <b>10:30am Yoga</b> 11:30pm Chair Exercises <b>12pm SPPRC</b>	27 <b>Deadline 4 Newsletter Input</b>	<b>28</b> <b>8am Preschool</b> <b>10am Worship Mtg</b> 11:30pm Chair Exercises <b>3:15pm Children's Choir</b>	<b>29</b> <b>9:30am Mom's Morning</b> <b>11:30 pm Soul Table</b>	<b>30</b> <b>8am Preschool</b> 11:30pm Chair Exercises	31 9:30am Al Anon



# Murphy First

## United Methodist Church

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

TO:

**#BeUMC**

### STAFF:

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**Maggie Corrigan, Admin. Assistant**

[admin@murphyfirstumc.org](mailto:admin@murphyfirstumc.org)

**Jack Frahmann, Treasurer**

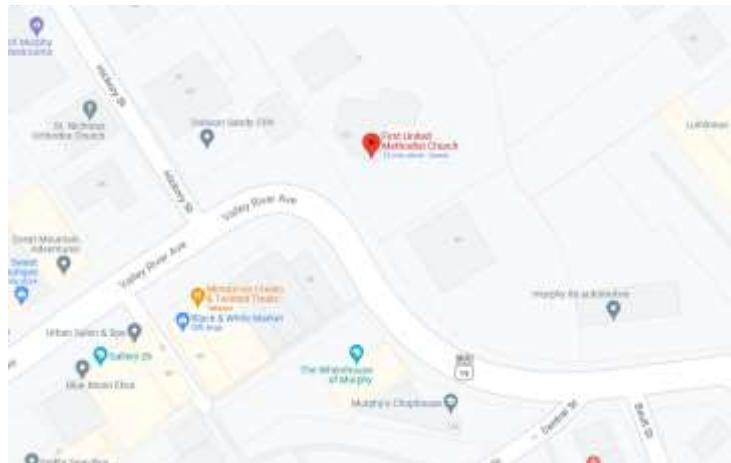
[treasurer@murphyfirstumc.org](mailto:treasurer@murphyfirstumc.org)

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**Bridget Esterhuizen, Preschool Dir.**

[preschool@murphyfirstumc.org](mailto:preschool@murphyfirstumc.org)



### OFFICE INFO:

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Website: [www.murphyfirstumc.org](http://www.murphyfirstumc.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/fumcmurphy/](http://www.facebook.com/fumcmurphy/)

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

*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.*