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

FUMC Communicator – November 2026

Dear Friends,

Recently, I have been thinking about the Mission and Vision of our church. This month on November 15, we will have our Charge Conference, which is when we Methodists reflect on the work of the past year and prepare for the work of the year ahead. (Alas, it also means a lot of paperwork sent to the Annual Conference. We Methodists are nothing if not methodical.) Part of the work we do in preparation for the year ahead is constructing and approving a budget.

Working on a budget in a church can sometimes feel like the opposite of ministry: just numbers on a page representing bills to be paid. But I believe that everything we do in church is connected to ministry and should be treated theologically. So, I understand a budget to be a document showing how we want to use God's abundant resources.

Which is why I've been thinking about our Mission and Vision. We have these two great statements which can and should guide us in figuring out how we want to use God's abundant resources, and I'd like to reflect a little on them here.

The statements are on the cover of our church bulletin every Sunday, but here they are again:

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.

First, the Mission. Our mission, as I see it, has two parts. The first is living as a community transformed by God's grace, and the second is living as a community sent to love and serve like Jesus. Both parts are necessary.

As Methodists, we believe that God's grace transforms us. God's unearned love molds and shapes us into people who resemble the character of Jesus more and more. Grace shapes us before we are ever aware of it, leading us toward the love of Jesus. But once we become aware of God's

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grace and begin to intentionally receive it, that's when the transformation really begins. God not only forgives us of our past sins, but also makes us spiritually new, softening our hearts to make us more moldable. And as we continue to intentionally receive God's grace through Christian practices (like prayer, worship, reading Scripture, fasting, and receiving Communion – what John Wesley called "means of grace"), we find that we are transformed bit by little bit into people who are more Jesus-like.

So, we at Murphy First UMC want to use God's abundant resources to help make that grace-filled transformation happen in as many people as we can.

If God's grace is transforming us, then we are also being sent out to love and serve like Jesus. Love and service is where such transformation must lead. So, how does Jesus love? As we see in the Gospels, he loves universally with mighty acts of healing, exorcism, forgiveness, and restoration. He loves with a special attention to the poor and marginalized. He loves by disrupting systems of injustice (casting out money changers, etc.). He loves by feeding people. He loves by offering words of comfort and words of truth. And he does all this love and service in a posture of humility.

Thus, we at Murphy First want to use God's abundant resources to love our neighbors, both near and far, in these same ways.

Now, the Vision. A vision is the specific way that we want to accomplish our mission, and our vision here at Murphy First is to be transformed and to love like Jesus specifically by building communities (notice the plural) of hope.

We are absolutely living into this vision, I'm excited to say. Just look at what Soul Table has become. It is definitely a community of hope where people experience belonging and abundant life. Recently, we have been offering a Soul Table fellowship at the end of the meal with a song, a Jesus story, a time for sharing, and prayer, and I have seen God's grace moving as folks have shared their stories and prayed. It is exciting.

And Soul Table is far from the only example. We are building little communities of hope in the church through choirs and Bible studies and hiking groups and Alpha and Roots345 (our tween ministry). There is so much good stuff happening!

In the next month, you will hear me talk more about the budget and preach about stewardship of God's abundant resources. We are not doing a stewardship campaign. But I will be asking you to pray about how you want to support the mission and vision of Murphy First UMC. I hope you will do so with a spirit of hope for what's ahead.

With peace and gratitude,

Pastor Evan



Charge Conference

During our potluck on Sunday, November 15, we will hold our annual Charge Conference to present the 2027 budget, approve new task force members for 2027, and celebrate this past year's ministry.



Donor Advised Funds

Looking for a way to teach your kids about giving back? A Donor Advised Fund through the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina acts like a personal family giving account. You can start one with just $1,000! Put funds in, receive a tax deduction, and let your kids help choose where the money goes. It's a hands-on way to pass down your faith and values.

Between school schedules, sports, and budgeting, finding a rhythm for family giving can be tough. That's why we love Donor Advised Funds (DAFs) through the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina.

It works like a personal foundation for your family—and it can be started with as little as $1,000. You can contribute cash or appreciated investments, receive an immediate tax break, and then involve your kids in choosing exactly how to distribute those funds to our ministries over time. It's a flexible, tech-friendly, and tax-smart way to build a legacy of faith together.

Learn more at United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina.



Following worship on Sunday, November 22. Please stay and help us decorate!



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.

Trustees Corner

This month the Trustees have focused on these needs:

- Completion of the installation of a new HVAC system in the preschool.
- Rerouting of the condensate line that has been draining onto the waiting bench pad in the playground for several years.
- Installation of the ceiling access trim in the Harshaw Chapel ceiling.
- Installation of a new air conditioning coil in the sanctuary.
- Repair of leaks in two education building mini-split cooling/heating systems.
- Replacement of the church sign light that had been run over by a car.
- Upgrade of two lights in the Alpha room to LED fixtures for better lighting.
- Received bids to remove a hazardous tree in the Harshaw chapel cemetery that was struck by lighting and threatening the former Scout building.
- Replacement of damaged electrical conduit at the edge of the children's playground.

We are also involved in the twice monthly mowing of the Harshaw Chapel cemetery that happens on the second and fourth Thursday of the mowing season. Some arrive as early as 7:00 a.m.; others roll in around 8:00 a.m.. This dedicated group of around 10 church volunteers arrives with mowers both big and small, weed eaters and blowers, and keep the lawn in shape. We may be done for this season, but if you would like to join in the spring, please let Ursula Lasky or Bruce Peck know. We would be happy to have more workers.

We have several smaller landscaping needs if you would like to volunteer around the church and the fellowship hall. All these needs create not only opportunities for service but provide a chance for fellowship with other members of our church community.

Sincerely, Bruce Peck, Chairman

To the Harshaw Mowing Crew,



I cannot explain in words how Blessed I feel having such an amazing group help this year at the Harshaw Chapel. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered at Harshaw this past season. It has been a difficult year for me, and I have missed being with the group. I pulled up today (10/22/26) and nearly cried. I found everything looking amazing for those who visit the Chapel and for those visiting loved ones who are no longer with them but with God. I took on heading up the crew because I feel it is important that people know we do not forget those who have gone before us. I may not know any of the families; however, we are all God's children and I want them to feel God and His Love through what we do. I am looking forward to spring and working with everyone. For next year we will have a second ride-on mower. We will just need someone to ride it as I prefer to weed eat.

Feeling blessed,

Ursula

SOUL TABLE

On the last Thursday in September, something new got started at Soul Table. Pastor Evan began what we're calling "Soul Table Fellowship." He picks up his guitar and leads us in a few songs, shares a short story about Jesus, and then opens things up for honest conversation around the table. We close out in prayer together.

We're excited about this. Soul Table started with a hot meal and an open door, and it keeps growing into something more — a place to be fed in body and in spirit. If you've been meaning to come out on a Thursday, now's a good time. Pull up a chair. There's room for you.

On Thursday, November 17, we will be serving a full Thanksgiving meal to our guests and would appreciate donated pumpkin pies to offer for dessert. We will not have a Soul Table meal on Thanksgiving Day, but Mainstreet USA in downtown Murphy will be serving a free meal that day.

Finally, we would appreciate extra desserts each week to offer our guests as we've been running short lately.













Shown here is a photo from the early 1970's of a party at the home of John and Sheila Snow. Identified from left to right are the Drs. Blossoms sitting and standing. Behind them are Charles Smith and Bob Temple with their wives seated at the far right. Then with the wives seated and the husbands standing behind them are the Harry Jarretts, the Hubert Wells, Carl Auvil, the John Snows and the Wally Avetts.

POTLUCK PICS





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

The FUMC Children's Center is pleased to report steady growth for all enrolled children. Favorite October works were "tonging corn" and the math "exchange game". The children finished the month of October with a pumpkin carving event and a costume parade with trick-or-treating among our local businesses downtown.

Ms. Bridget is now almost halfway through a Montessori Teacher Certification program through the Global Montessori Educators Institute. Our new Assistant Teacher, Ms. Chelsea, is doing a great job in her role and is an essential part of the classroom routines!

In November, students will begin more challenging works throughout the classroom including works in Language, Math, Care of the Environment, Cultural Studies, Geography and Botany.

The teachers and students wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving!!







Roots345 will meet on the afternoon of **November 8**. Parents of third, fourth, and fifth graders, check your email for more information to come!

Joining Sunday



NOVEMBER 22

Taizé

Within the historic setting of Harshaw Chapel, join us on Thursday, **Nov 12 at 6 p.m.** for a Taizé service. Peaceful reflection is beneficial!

Prayers Please

Keep the following in your thoughts and prayers:

Ukraine and its people; Members of the Armed Forces; Barbara Hughes; Carl Auvil; Cissy Dyer; John Satto; Beth McClure; Maureen Ripper; Friends, Family and Relationships; Elizabeth Garrett.; Angela; Donna Stuart; Dixie Major; Cat; Melanie Rogers; Dee; Jane Payne; Ralph Hudson; Larry Muller.

In an effort to have room for more prayer requests in the Sunday bulletin, 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 November

Marie Kumar

Contacts

Pastor Evan Hill
pastor@murphyfirstumc.org
Suzanne West—Director of Music
music@murphyfirstumc.org
Maggie Corrigan—Admin Asst
admin@murphyfirstumc.org
Jack Frahmann—Treasurer
treasurer@murphyfirstumc.org
Bridget Esterhuizen—Preschool Dir.
preschool@murphyfirstumc.org

"**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.

What a wonderful and productive month the United Women have had in September. September 16 , we met at our new time and it went well. We elected a new Treasurer. Thank you, Penny Dieffenderfer for agreeing to serve as both the Secretary and Treasurer. We postponed the November 1, 2026, Chili Cook Off until February. Then we scanned the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, Chapter 4, and a discussion was held. After we socialized for lunch and met again to discuss defining UWF at Murphy First and Christmas for Our Children.

Christmas for Our Children is the renamed Christmas Box Program. Please read the article in this newsletter for additional information. People interested in volunteering to shop, wrap, coordinate, etc., please plan to attend our planning meeting November 18 following the While Elephant Sale. Additionally, UWF will not be hosting Memories with Santa this year.

The American Red Cross Blood Drive October 16 was yet another success. 45 units were collected. Thank you, Carole Goffus, for your continued support of this mission and your homemade cookies!

So thankful to host the Smoky Mountain District Mission's Festival held here on October 24. So blessed to have District President, Lisa Bacon lead us and all the ladies from our district in attendance. A special thanks to Pastor Evan for leading us in prayer and joining us for brunch. Thank you, Celia Fish for a fantastic book summary of *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* and all the women volunteering and/or providing food. The highlights of the Missions provided a glimpse into history of each mission as well as a tasty cookie treat from the states where the Missions were located.

WHITE ELEPHANT AUCTION Wednesday, November 18 11 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Open to congregation and community. It's really just an opportunity for us to swap all our stuff and make money to support our Christmas for Our Children project. It is a lot of fun, please join us if you're able.

Upcoming Events;

Sunday, November 1, Chili Cook Off postponed until February 2027

Wednesday, November 18, Fellowship Hall, Greeting Card Ministry, 10:30 a.m. followed by United Women of Faith White Elephant Sale, Noon - Lunch (soup provided, please bring sandwich and drink), 12:15 p.m. brief monthly business & planning meeting.

Sunday, November 22, Start of the Christmas for our Children project.

Sunday, December 13, Deadline for Christmas for our Children project.

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.

CHRISTMAS FOR OUR CHILDREN



The United Women of Faith are committed to providing "Christmas for our Children". These children are selected by Murphy Middle and High School counselors based on their fiscal need. To provide a greater impact for these kids, our Willing Hands unit of UWF is inviting the entire congregation/community to consider supporting this effort. In addition to this announcement, notices will appear the upcoming Sunday Church
Bulletins. A final giving deadline will be December 13 to allow for gift wrapping and distribution prior to the Christmas Break. "Christmas for our Children" will work much like an Angel Tree project. Coming soon, sign-up sheets with the children's sex, wishes and size(s) will be displayed in the Narthex. Thank you for your support and prayers to make this project a success.

MISSIONS



Again this year, the Mission Team will sponsor our Alternative Christmas program. Our procedures for the Alternative Christmas will be presented to the congregation on November 22 and 29 with donations collected on December 6 and 13. For those who are not familiar, this is a way for our church to support local ministries and gives members an opportunity to make a donation to one of these ministries in someone's name. The donor receives a Christmas card with a slip describing the charity being blessed, and the card can then be given to the individual, letting them know that a gift has been given in their honor.

The s'mores and popcorn station will be manned in front of the church during the annual Murphy Christmas Parade on December 5 from 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. We serve free s'mores and popcorn to anyone who wants some! Come join us for fun and fellowship.

Several members of FUMC Murphy participated in the "Sleep in Heavenly Peace" project at Hinton Center. Volunteers from many different organizations met to build beds for children in need. Ricky Hill, Judy and Rob Eicher, Gail and Bruce Peck, and Cobby and Diane Barfield helped build 30 beds. This activity will be repeated, so watch for the opportunity!









11/15—Paul & Gerri Schutes
11/19—Gary Hall & Debbie Pound
11/24—Chris & Monica Mintz;

If your anniversary does not appear above, we do not have a valid date for you. Please contact Maggie in the church office to correct this.



11/02—John Morton
11/05—Jerry Sims
11/13—Jackson Matthews
11/15—Jay Jenkins
11/16—Clarence Jones
11/17—Rosemary Wells
11/18—Robin Burnette
11/20—Mary Ellen Kelley
11/21—Keith Nevel
11/25—Ursula Lasky
11/27—Joseph Watson II
11/28—Paul Schutes
11/29—Debbie Pound
11/30—Paula Widstrom

If your birthday does not appear above, we do not have a valid date for you. Please contact Maggie in the church office to correct this.

ALPHA PUMPKIN CARVING



MFUMC TRUNK OR TREAT CREW



TRUNK OR TREAT






















Happy Halloween




Trunk or Treat


FRUIT of the SPIRIT








BOO









FUMC



2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
01 FALL BACK 1 HR ***9:45 a.m. All SS Classes*** ***11 a.m. Worship*** ***4 p.m. ALPHA***	**02** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** ***10:30 a.m. Yoga*** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	**03** 5 p.m. VRR	**04** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** ***10 a.m. Worship Staff Mtg*** **11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises** ***1 p.m. Bible Study*** ***4:30 p.m. Handbells*** ***5:30 p.m. Choir***	**05** ***9:30 a.m. Mom's Bible Study*** ***10 a.m. Ann's Study*** **10 a.m. Quilters** ***11:30 a.m. Soul Table***	***06*** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** **11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises**	**07** 9:30 a.m. Al Anon
08 ***9:45 a.m. Adult SS*** ***11 a.m. Worship*** ***4 p.m. ALPHA*** ***4 p.m. ROOTS***	**09** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** ***10:30 a.m. Yoga*** ***11:30 a.m. Mission Team*** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	**10** 9 a.m. Mtn. Project 5 p.m. VRR ***5:30 p.m. Trustees***	**11** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** ***10 a.m. Worship Staff Mtg*** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises ***4:30p.m. Handbells*** ***5:30 p.m. Choir***	**12** ***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***	**13** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	**14** 9:30 a.m. Al Anon
15 ***9:45 a.m. All SS Classes*** ***11 a.m. Worship*** ***12 p.m. Pot Luck & Charge Conference*** ***4 p.m. ALPHA***	**16** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** ***10:30 a.m. Yoga*** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	**17** 5 p.m. VRR	**18** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** ***10 a.m. Worship Staff Mtg*** ***10:30 a.m. Greeting Card Ministry*** ***11 a.m. UWF*** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises ***1 p.m. Bible Study*** ***4:30 p.m. Handbells*** ***5:30 p.m. Choir***	**19** ***9:30 a.m. Mom's Bible Study*** ***10 a.m. Ann's Study*** 10 a.m. Quilters ***11:30 a.m. T'giving Soul Table*** ***5:30 p.m. Finance Committee***	**20** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	**21** 9:30 a.m. Al Anon ***10 a.m. Set up the Christmas Tree***
22 JOINING SUNDAY ***9:45 a.m. All SS Classes*** ***11 a.m. Worship*** ***12 p.m. Decorate the church*** ***4 p.m. ALPHA*** 4 p.m. AA Dinner Mtg	**23** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** ***10:30 a.m. Yoga*** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises ***5 p.m. SPPRC***	**24** 5 p.m. VRR	**25** Newsletter Input Deadline ***8 a.m. Preschool*** ***10 a.m. Worship Staff Mtg*** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	**26** THANKSGIVING DAY - OFFICE CLOSED 	**27** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	**28** 9:30 a.m. Al Anon
29 ADVENT BEGINS ***9:45 a.m. All SS Classes*** ***11 a.m. Worship*** ***4 p.m. ALPHA*** 4:30 p.m. AA Dinner Mtg 	**30** ***8 a.m. Preschool*** ***10:30 a.m. Yoga*** 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	01 5 p.m. VRR	02 *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*	03 *9:30 a.m. Mom's Bible Study* *10 a.m. Ann's Study* 10 a.m. Quilters *11:30 a.m. Soul Table*	04 *8 a.m. Preschool* 11:30 a.m. Chair Exercises	05 9:30 a.m. Al Anon

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 Frahmann, Treasurer
treasurer@murphyfirstumc.org
Suzanne West, Director of Music
music@murphyfirstumc.org
Bridget Esterhuizen, Preschool Dir.
preschool@murphyfirstumc.org

#BeUMC



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