Study the Bible

Are you reading the Bible with any regularity? According to studies from Christianity today and the Barna Group, the numbers are really low, 10-16% depending on which study you read. I know it is hard to get into the habit of reading the Bible much less developing a lens through which we study the Bible. Even for a preacher, it is hard to get into the habit and easy to get out of the habit. It takes intentionality, prioritizing, and devotion to do the kind of study needed for the Christian life. The importance of reading and studying the Bible for a Christian cannot be overstated.

The study of scripture is not merely for knowledge. Combined with prayer, it is the Holy Spirit who uses your knowledge of scripture to form convictions in you that help transform your life according to the teachings of the Lord. Because of the way the books of the Bible were written, this is a journey of discovery and not simply following a formula. With that being said, there are certain methodologies that can be applied to help you on this journey. The important thing to remember is this is a daily time where you are seeking the help of the Holy Spirit to form and shape you in the Christian life. There is no end point as there will always be room to grow in your faith.

As we begin our journey into studying the Bible, it's important to start by observing the text carefully. Observation means paying close attention to what the Bible is saying before we try to understand what it means. First, read the passage a few times, slowly and thoughtfully. You might want to read it in different translations to get a clearer picture of the meaning. Pay attention to the context. Look at the verses before and after to understand the bigger picture. Ask yourself: What is happening here? Who is involved? Where and when is this taking place?

Next, notice any words or phrases that stand out. Are there any words that are repeated or seem important? These can often point to the main message of the passage. Look for verbs, action words, because they show what's happening and what God or the people are doing. Think about the literary style of the text. Are there metaphors or comparisons that help explain the message?

Take notes on what you see. You don't need to have all the answers right away, just write down anything that catches your attention or that you don't understand. And ask questions: What does this tell me about God? About people? Finally, use the Bible's footnotes or cross-references to see where else similar ideas appear in Scripture. This will help you connect the dots and understand the Bible more fully. By carefully observing the text, we lay the foundation for deeper understanding and life-changing application of God's Word. This process may take time, but the more we study, the more we will see how God is speaking to us.

Interpreting a Bible passage is the next step after observation. Once you've carefully read and noted what stands out in the text, it's time to understand what it means. The goal of interpretation is to discover the message that God intended for the original audience and how it applies to us today. Start by asking: What did this passage mean to the people who first read it? Understanding the original context is key. Consider the culture, history, and situation the author was addressing. For example, a letter written to a church facing persecution might have a different message than one written to encourage believers in a time of peace. Look at the surrounding verses to understand how this passage fits into the larger story or teaching.

Next, think about the meaning of key words. Often, the Bible uses simple words, but their deeper meanings can reveal important truths. For example, the word "love" in the Bible might mean something deeper than what we think of as love in everyday life. Use a dictionary or Bible study tools to look up these terms. Ask: What is the main message or teaching in this passage? It could be a command, a promise, or a lesson about God's character. Try to summarize it in your own words.

Finally, ask: How does this passage apply to me today? While the Bible was written in a different time, God's Word is still relevant. Reflect on how the message might shape your life, decisions, and relationship with God. Interpretation is not just about understanding the text, but about letting it speak to your heart and life today.

Applying the Bible to our lives is the final step in Bible study. After observing and interpreting the text, it's time to ask, how does this passage apply to me today? God's Word is not just for understanding; it's meant to change us and guide how we live. Start by reflecting on the main message of the passage. Ask yourself: What is God teaching me through this text? It might be a command, an encouragement, or a lesson about who God is. For example, if the passage talks about loving others, you might ask, how can I show love in my life today?

Continued on reverse.

The Copperhill Courier

First United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 538
Copperhill, TN 37317

June 2025

Address changes requested

THE HOLSTON ANNUAL CONFERENCE meets June 1-4 in Lake Junaluska, N.C. Clergy and lay representatives of local churches will vote on a "district realignment" (reducing districts from nine to six) and four proposed constitutional amendments resulting from last year's General Conference.

WHO ATTENDS ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND HOW ARE THEY CHOSEN?

All clergy members in full connection—elders and deacons—automatically serve on annual conference. Each United Methodist charge elects lay members equal to the number of appointed clergy members to that charge. Additionally, each district elects at-large lay members to match the number of clergy members serving in specialized ministries, such as chaplaincies, campus ministries and camps ministries.

Pastor Buddy Butler, Shirley Starling, and Elaine Morgan will attend from First UMC. Shirley as our representative and Elaine as an at-large lay member for the Hiwassee District.

WHAT DOES THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE DO?

The annual conference's responsibilities are numerous and include:

- Electing members to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, held every four years
- Nominating episcopal candidates from among its elders
- Approving the conference budget
- Receiving reports and acting on recommendations from ministries and programs
- Adopting new policies and initiatives
- Voting on resolutions that affect the conference
- Ordaining new elders and deacons
- Recognizing retiring clergy
- Honoring deceased clergy
- Providing worship and fellowship opportunities during the conference

WHY IS WORSHIP A PART OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE?

United Methodists view annual conference sessions as spiritual gatherings guided by the Holy Spirit. Worship during these sessions reaffirms the church's mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. These moments of shared prayer, celebration, remembrance and affirmation foster unity and spiritual growth among members.

Visit AC.Holston.org for more information, including the schedule, *Book of Reports*, and *Worship Book*.

From the Pastor's Desk, continued

Consider how the text speaks to your current situation. Is there something you need to change in your life? Maybe the passage calls you to trust God more, forgive someone, or seek peace. Apply the message to real-life situations by asking, what does this look like in my daily routine, my relationships, or my work? Sometimes the application will involve prayer. Ask God to help you live out the truths you've discovered in His Word. For example, you might pray for strength to forgive someone or for wisdom in making decisions. You can also use the text as a guide for your actions such as serving others, showing kindness, or being more patient.

Remember, application doesn't always mean doing something big; it can be small steps of obedience and faith. As you grow in your understanding of the Bible, let the text shape your choices, attitudes, and interactions with others. Bible study isn't just about learning; it's about living out what you've learned.

So, there you have it, a detailed methodology for the journey ahead. Again, this is about the journey more than reaching an end destination. As you read, take time to look around, see the sights, smell the flowers, even take notice of the unpleasant things we don't want to see. Talk to the people and ask questions of them, and don't be afraid to be surprised, or shocked, or overjoyed on this journey. Most importantly, talk to the Lord about your reading and little by little, step by step, you will grow in your faith.

Pastor Buddy

Weekly Events

Sunday School: Sundays at 10 a.m.
Son Seekers meet in the Parlor

Choir Practice: Sundays at 10 a.m.

Worship: Sundays at 11 a.m.

Life Group Meeting: Sundays at 6 p.m.
This is an exploration of the early Methodist class meetings. All are invited.

Community Meal: Mondays from 4-5:30 p.m.
All are invited. "To Go" only meals available.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

1 April Butler, Emily Hodskins, Shirley Russell
5 Sharon Luke
7 Ann Rymer
20 Lisa Loudermilk
23 Abby Butler
25 Christian Geren
28 Sharon Dunton
29 Glenda Simonds

Anniversaries

2	Daniel and Haley Loudermilk	17th
11	Barry and Freda Abbott	25th
11	Brian and Jill Pierce	17th
12	Dennis and Juline Mixon	60th
14	Brett and Lonney McDonald	39th
15	Jerry and Kathy Panchyshyn	48th
18	Frank and Heidi Rule	42nd
19	T.J. and Kathy Thompson	53rd

Your birthday or anniversary not listed?

Please contact the church office at 423-496-4931 or firstumc@etcmail.com.

United Women in Faith News

Our June meeting will be on June 4 at 11 a.m. Bring your favorite dish for a potluck lunch. A representative from First Fruits will attend to share details of their food ministry with us. All ladies are invited to join us.

The UWF will not meet in July.

Our August Meeting will be on Wednesday, August 6, at 11 a.m. Please bring your favorite dish for a potluck lunch. A representative from Her Hope Pregnancy Center, Inc., in Blue Ridge, will attend to share details of their ministry. The Center makes "Mama Bags" for their moms when they go into the hospital. They like to put the following in the bags so if you can bring any of these items they would be greatly appreciated: cup/or mug, devotional book, body wash, lotion, nail polish, pair of socks for hospital.

The United Women in Faith will be collecting these items July 6-August 3.
Thank you for your donations!

United Women in Faith

June Events

Holston Annual Conference will be held June 1-4 at Lake Junaluska. Pastor Buddy and Shirley Starling will attend representing First UMC and Elaine Morgan will attend as a delegate at large from the Hiwassee District.

UWF Meeting: June 4, at 11 a.m. Potluck lunch and speaker.

Pentecost Sunday is June 8. Guest speakers June 8 and 15.

Happy Father's Day—June 15

Peace with Justice Sunday—June 22: Gifts on this Sunday fund programs that advocate for peace and justice in the United States and around the world. These programs empower United Methodist to speak out for removing structures and systems that harm God's children globally.

We will receive the **Fifth Sunday Offering** for Holston Home for Children on Sunday, June 29.

Upcoming in July

The Church Office will be closed on Friday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day.

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, July 14, and will be open July 16-18 that week.

A **Church Council Meeting** will be held on Tuesday, July 22, at 6:30 p.m.

Missions Committee Update

Thanks to the monetary and time contributions by several of our members, our church has been active helping Snack in a Backpack. Now that schools are winding down their school year, we are preparing to help distribute food to families in need in Polk County. There is already a network in place to get food to Fannin County, GA students and families, but we have had to put one in place for east Polk County, TN, students in need. We will be distributing food bags once weekly for the Summer Meals program. While some families will be able to pick those up at our central distribution point at East Polk Library, others will rely on home deliveries if transportation is an issue.

Thanks to our church, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, St. Catherine Laboure Catholic Church, the East Polk Book Club, and a few others in the Copper Basin for helping make this work. We will start distributing meals on Thursday, June 5 and will continue weekly through July 24, 2025. If you know someone who has children under the age of seventeen in their household who could use this assistance, please let Ann Rymer know.

Online Worship Opportunities

You may access Sermon by Phone at 423-226-6437 to hear the current service, plus several previous ones. Check out the page titled **Sunday Worship Highlights** on our website,
fumc-copperhill.org.

As each becomes available, we'll also post the link on our Facebook page @ **First United Methodist Church-Copperhill.**
Please like and share so others see our posts!

Video and/or audio of our services will be available online and Sermon by Phone by Monday afternoon.

Food for the Needy

Please donate nonperishable food items in the Narthex box - canned meat, tuna, flour, sugar, stove top stuffing mix, peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti sauce, spaghetti, pasta, rice, soup, chili, shelf stable milk, oatmeal, cereal, canned vegetables, mac and cheese.
Thanks to all who contribute—the families are always grateful.

We Remember Our Promise

To participate in our church's ministries by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness…

	Worship	Sunday School	General Fund
April 27	47	7	$2,393.94
May 4	36	7	$3,958.25
May 11	44	7	$5,330.52
May 18	29	3	$1,810.25
		Total:	$13,492.96
Average:	**36**	**6**	**$3,373.24**

Additional giving:

Snack In a Backpack (for summer meals for East Polk students)	$550.00
Missions:	$210.00
Native American Ministries Sunday Offering:	$166.00
Pastor's Benevolence Fund:	$20.00
Memorial Fund:	$50.00
Scholarship Fund:	$100.00
Shipping for food buckets:	$44.00

The Mission Committee also received an Operation Round-Up Grant for $4,000.00 to help fund Snack In a Backpack Summer Meals

2025 Hands-On Mission Project Update

Hiwassee District Goal: 500 Food Buckets for Liberia

Twelve buckets were filled and delivered to First UMC in Cleveland to begin their journey to Liberia. Thank you for your donations!

Did you know you can Donate Online?

Scan this QR code to link directly to the church's website to donate. You can also donate securely online on the church webpage: fumc-copperhill.org.

Our Vanco giving page can also be accessed at: https://secure.myvanco.com/YJXP/home

Members in Service to FUMC

Ushers: Shirley Starling, Charlie Stemmann, Joy Turner

Audio Visual Technicians: Marti Lane, Randy Loudermilk, Ann Rymer, Jeff Walker

First United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 538 • 146 Scenic Drive
Copperhill, TN 37317

Email: firstumc@etcmail.com
Visit us on the web at www.fumc-copperhill.org
Like us on Facebook:
First United Methodist Church-Copperhill
Office Hours: 9 a. m.—3 p. m. Monday, Thursday & Friday

Church Office: 423-496-4931
Parsonage: 423-761-6999
Pastor's Cell: 423-429-3820

Sermon by phone: 423-226-6437

Gilbert "Buddy" Butler, Pastor
Bethany Allison, Choir Director
Matt Scoggins, Accompanist
Heidi Rule, Secretary
Christine Dowlin, Custodian

The mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In Loving Memory…

Our former Pastor, **Thomas Matney Reed** of Athens, Tennessee, passed away peacefully on May 11, 2025, just shy of his 74th birthday. A service to celebrate Tom's life was held Friday, May 23, at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Etowah, Tennessee. Gifts may be made to the Reed Scholarship at Tennessee Wesleyan University. Checks can be made to: Tennessee Wesleyan University, Attn: Reed Scholarship, 204 E. College Street, Athens, TN 37303 Online gifts may be made at www.tnwesleyan.edu/give; please select "Reed Scholarship" from the drop-down menu to ensure proper designation. Please keep Tom's family in your prayers.

In Memory / In Honor Giving

General Fund in memory of:

Sonny Panter	By: Cathryn McCarter
Tom Reed	By: David and Joy Turner

Memorial Fund in memory of:

Weldon Self Jr.	By: Ron and Neila Pace
Jean Callihan	By: Ron and Neila Pace
Mary Jones	By: Ron and Neila Pace

Our Prayer Concerns

Our Congregation: *Barry Abbott, *Brett McDonald, *Ciera Butler, Ann Record, Barb Bender, Maria Ruark, Bill and Glenda Simonds, Stephanie Silvani, Sally Patterson, Mary Mills, Ariana Morris, Donna Ratzlaff, Sheppie Dunn, Lily Loudermilk, Heather Turner, Erica Turner Putnam, Elaine Crowe, Lisa Loudermilk, Ron and Shirley Singleton, Ron (having new therapy) and Neila Pace, Juline and Denny Mixon, Kathy and Jerry Panchyshyn, Elaine Minor

Homebound/Assisted Living: Janice Burger, Louise Arp, ^Cathy Turner (Pruitt Health), ^Jennifer Clamon (Sonshine Manor), ^T.J. Thompson (Pruitt Health), ^Barbara Collins, Margaret Self, Don Loudermilk,

Others in our prayers: *Paul Carter (surgery), *the family of Tom Reed, *Jean Miller, cancer (cousin of Kathy Panchyshyn), *the family of Steve Wood, *Madison Satterfield (auto accident), *Richard (brother of Ann Rymer), *Carol Green, *the family of Edd Pelfrey, *Julie Young (daughter of Barb Bender), Lena Talley, Polly Perkins, Mary Jane, Margaret Fleming, broken rib (Dura's sister), Chad (brother of April Butler), Hope Loudermilk, Ryan Panchyshyn, Annette Loudermilk (aunt of Randy), Micheline Bennett, Brenda Turner (sister of David Turner), Phil Young, pancreatic cancer (grandson of Ann Record), Norma Bean, Dennis Wray (radiation and chemo), Betty Gwynn (car accident), Garry Cheyne, the Berry family, Ava Smith, plane crash victims, Jodi and John (daughter and son-in-law of Barb Bender), Sandra Williams (sister-in-law of Joy Turner), Jerry Williams (Shirley's husband), Mackenzie Ray, Ed and Jerrie Sue Massengale, Hannah Geren, victims of natural disasters, first responders, armed forces members

**new to concerns +Hospital or Rehab ^Assisted Living/Nursing Home ~ Hospice*

Memorial Bricks

Bricks may be ordered to memorialize or honor a friend or loved one. Profits from this sale will be used for many local mission projects. Each brick costs $50.00 and entitles you to your choice of three lines of engraving with up to 20 characters per line. Please use the worksheet below to send in your brick order. Please note that spaces and periods each count as a character, only one character can appear in each box, and a box must be left empty between words.

Your Name: _____

Address:_____

Phone #: _____

Bricks Ordered: _____ Total enclosed: _____

Mail to: First United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 538, Copperhill, TN 37317