The Copperhill Courier

First United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 538
Copperhill, TN 37317
December 2025-January 2026

Address Changes Requested

December 24, 5 p.m.

Holy Communion

Please invite your friends and neighbors.

Giving Tuesday is December 2. When Aid is Cut. Hope Can Still Shine.

This Moment Matters. Your Gift Matters. Your faithfulness makes our work possible.
AREAS OF FOCUS: We have identified **five key areas** of urgent need for United Methodist Global Ministries response efforts.

Agriculture and Food Security: Global efforts to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition are moving in reverse, due to the elimination of many U.S. foreign aid programs. In Africa, we are expanding the **Yambasu Agriculture Initiative** to help communities in areas directly impacted by the withdrawal of U.S. foreign aid and providing food security grants.
Education: For decades, Methodists have prioritized educating leaders for the church and the world and provided access to education through scholarships and support of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Methodist-related institutions. We reaffirm our commitment to breaking cycles of poverty and systemic inequality to work for educational opportunity that empowers the next generation of transformative leaders.
Global Health: Cuts to U.S. foreign aid have devastated global health programs, impacting tens of thousands. We are working to fund some of these suspended initiatives—supporting health systems in underserved areas, partnering with African health boards to address preventable diseases, and helping to provide continued access to lifesaving treatments, vaccines and essential healthcare for those in need.
Migration: Forced migration uproots lives as people flee war, poverty and disaster with little but hope. In response, we support legal aid, partner with faith-based immigration advocates and provide essential services—food, shelter and medical care—to refugees and displaced individuals, helping restore dignity and justice to those forced from their homes.
Peace: Many areas of the world are under siege from war and conflict. Places like Gaza, D.R. Congo, Ukraine and Sudan continue to suffer under ongoing warfare. Working through trusted partners, we provide humanitarian aid to impacted communities and bolster peace initiatives.
By giving to **"Global Ministries – Where Most Needed"** (Advance #01138A) or **"UMCOR – Where Most Needed"** (Advance #999895) you will help us uphold the gospel message to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry and care for the sick. You can learn more at ThisMomentMatters.org.

Hope in the Stump and the Stable

Advent always seems to arrive right on time. Just when the news feels heavy, our bodies feel tired, and our hearts feel worn thin, the church dares to light a candle and whisper, “Come, Lord Jesus.” This year our Advent and Christmas readings invite us to listen to an old friend, the prophet Isaiah. His words span centuries, but they speak right into our lives, into our fears, our deep weariness, and our longing for a world made new. Alongside Isaiah, we’ll hear again the familiar Christmas story from Luke’s Gospel, where all of God’s promises come down to earth in a child laid in a manger.

Isaiah 11:1–10 begins in a place most of us know well, the stump. “A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse.” God’s people had watched their hopes be cut down, their kingdom shattered, their future unclear. All that remained looked like a dead trunk in the ground. There were no branches, no beauty, no visible life. Many of us know what “stump seasons” feel like when plans fall apart, relationships crack, health fails, or the church itself feels small and fragile. Yet Isaiah dares us to look closer. God is not finished. From what looks dead, a tiny green shoot begins to grow. This shoot is the promised king from David’s line. He will not rule with spin or power or fear, but with wisdom, understanding, and delight in the fear of the Lord. Under his reign, wolves and lambs share pasture, and a little child leads them. Advent reminds us that Christian hope is not wishful thinking; it is the stubborn trust that God can bring new life out of what looks completely done.

If Isaiah 11 speaks into our disappointment, Isaiah 35:1–10 speaks into our weariness. “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom.” Wilderness in Scripture is not just a place on the map; it’s a condition of the soul. Maybe this past year has felt like that for you: dry, thin, empty, with more questions than answers. Isaiah promises that God does not leave us in the wilderness. The desert itself begins to sing. Hands that hang down are strengthened. Weak knees are made firm. Those who fear are told, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.” The highway of holiness that Isaiah describes is not a private escape route for the super-spiritual; it is a road for any who have been redeemed, limping along with joy, supported by the grace of God. During Advent we walk that road together, not alone, and not without song.

Then we hear a quieter promise in Isaiah 7:10–16. King Ahaz is panicking, threatened by armies and political pressure. In his fear, he refuses to trust God and refuses to ask for a sign. God, however, is more faithful than our fear. “The Lord himself will give you a sign,” Isaiah says: “Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.” Immanuel means “God with us.” It is not God above us in cold judgment. It is not God far from us, politely interested. God with us in the middle of political turmoil, family stress, sleepless nights, and all the unknowns we carry. The sign God gives is not a warrior on a horse, but a baby in the arms of a mother. Advent teaches us that God’s answer to fearful hearts is not always bigger force, but deeper presence.

On Christmas Eve we hear this promise of “God with us” become flesh in the familiar story from Luke. Augustus issues a decree. Quirinius is governor. The world’s powerful names are on the record, but God chooses a barn on the edge of town. There in the dark, Mary gives birth to her firstborn son, wraps him in bands of cloth, and lays him in a manger because there is no room in the inn. Out in the fields are shepherds, people who did not matter much to the movers and shakers of their day. And suddenly, they are bathed in light. “Do not be afraid,” the angel tells them, echoing Isaiah’s cry. “I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Notice that, “to you is born.” Not just to the world in general. Not just to the especially devout. To you, in your life, with your mix of faith, doubt, joy, and heartache. The child in the manger is the green shoot from the stump of Jesse, the sign of Immanuel, the One who will make deserts bloom and lead us home on the highway of holiness. In him, all the threads of Isaiah’s promises are gathered up and woven into a story you can actually hold: a baby, a family, a night sky full of song.

Finally, as Christmas moves into the days that follow, we hear Isaiah 63:7–9 calling us to look back and remember: “I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord.” Advent teaches us to wait. Christmas teaches us to receive. Isaiah 63 teaches us to remember. We look over the landscape of our year, its joys and sorrows, its gains and losses, and dare to say, “Surely they are my people…so he became their Savior in all their distress.” Isaiah says that in all their suffering, God suffered too; that the angel of his presence saved them; that God lifted and carried his people all the days of old. That is not just ancient history. It is the story of who God is for us now. He is the One who does not stand at a distance, but enters our pain, carries us in our weakness, and refuses to give up on us.

My prayer is that this Advent and Christmas, as we light candles, sing hymns, and gather around scripture and table, God will reshape our vision. That we will learn to see the word of God not only on the page, but in the world around us, in small acts of kindness, in stubborn hope, in shared tears, and in laughter that returns after a long silence. The stump is not the end of the story. The wilderness will not have the last word. Immanuel has come, is coming, and will come again.

Come, Lord Jesus. Make our lives, our church, and our world blossom with your redeeming love.

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

It's a Baby Shower!

St. Luke's Church Events

Annual Christmas Bazaar, Saturday, December 6, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Handcrafted items, candies, cheeseballs, homemade frozen casseroles, etc. Silent Auction. Proceeds go to mission projects.

Christmas Concerts:
Saturday, Dec. 20, 6 pm & Sunday, Dec. 21, 3 pm
Featuring the Misty Mountain Wind Quintet, the St. Luke's Singers and many other musicians. Tickets are $10 and must be purchased in advance. St. Luke's Church at 706-632-8245 for more info.

Young Harris College Concerts

Saturday, December 6 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, December 7, at 3 p.m. A festive celebration featuring top talent from the YHC Department of Music and special guests. Bethany Allison is one of the performers! Tickets $10 at yhc.edu.

4th Annual Community Band Concert

Saturday, December 13, 3 p.m. in Epworth at 125 Schoolhouse Road. Classic Christmas tunes presented by the Tri-State and Epworth Community Bands. Free admission. Donations received for The Appalachian Mountain Regional Campus Council nonprofit. Everyone is invited!

United Women in Faith

Our next outing will be a trip on December 14 to Blue Ridge Community Theater to see a play: *Miss Bennett: Christmas at Pemberley.*

Our January meeting will be held at noon on Wednesday, January 7. We will have a potluck lunch – please bring your favorite sandwich, soup, or dessert. Our Pledge Service will follow the lunch. All ladies are cordially invited.

December Events

Join us on Sunday, December 21 for our Choir Cantata, *What Christmas Really Means*. Invite your friends and neighbors.

Our **Christmas Eve Service** will be held on Wednesday, December 24, at 5 p.m. Holy Communion will be observed.

The **Church Office** will be closed December 23-26 and January 1. Bulletin information for the December 24 & 28 bulletins is due by Monday, December 22 at 10 a.m.

Legacy Hall is reserved on Saturday, December 13 and Thursday, December 25 for private functions.

Upcoming in January

Human Relations Day Offering – January 18. Our gifts are part of building beloved community through faith-based volunteer programs, community developers and programs that work with at-risk teens. For more than 60 years United Methodist have observed this churchwide special Sunday in recognition of the message Jesus demonstrated during his life: **each of God's children are equally important.**

The **Church Council** will meet on Tuesday, January 27 at 4:30 p.m. All members are asked to please attend.

Brasstown Ringers Winter Concert Series

Friday, December 5, 7 p.m. Franklin First UMC, Franklin, NC
Sunday, December 7, 5 p.m. Hiawassee UMC, Hiawassee, GA
Saturday, December 13, 4 p.m. Rabun Gap Presbyterian Church, Rabun Gap, GA
Sunday, December 14, 5 p.m. Sharp Memorial UMC, Young Harris, GA
Featuring Church Choirs/Sing-a-longs
Free Admission – Donations appreciated. Everyone is invited!

Birthdays and Anniversaries

December Birthdays:

2	Jill Pierce
3	Brian Pierce
10	Haley Loudermilk
14	Janis Martin
16	Alex Loudermilk
18	Ron Singleton
20	Gabriel Montgomery
25	Tonya Callihan
27	Sam Grindstaff
28	Shirley Singleton
31	Colin Limburg

January Birthdays:

8	Hannah Geren
11	Marti Lane
13	Cathy Turner
14	Chloe Cook
16	Beatrix Rymer
20	Nathan Callihan
21	Wayne Brooks, Jr.
23	Lauren Callihan Lei
24	Charles Stemmann
28	Erica Turner Putnam
30	Bill Simonds

December Anniversaries:
12 Joe and Kathy Dusombre 13th

No anniversaries in January

Your birthday or anniversary not listed? Contact the church office at 423-496-4931 or firstumc@etcmail.com

Online Worship Opportunities

You may access **Sermon** by Phone at 1-423-226-6437. Check out the page titled **Sunday Worship Highlights** on our website, fumc-copperhill.org. All recordings can be found on buzzsprout.com/197301 and on Spotify https://open.spotify.com/show/3dxrFeeZSteYC0GRYTbJdz?si=4183b072c5e94dd5.

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.

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
November 2	39	7	$3,335.00
November 9	40	6	$3,171.83
November 16	38	7	$4,566.00
			Total: $11,072.83
Average:	**39**	**7**	**$3,690.94**

Additional giving:

Local Missions:	**$10.00**
Pastor's Benevolence Fund:	**$532.00**
Community Meal:	**$385.00**
Missions – White Christmas:	**$100.00**
Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Shipping:	**$140.00**

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

December Ushers: Smokey Brooks, Shirley Russell
January Ushers: Elaine Morgan, Ron Singleton
Audio Visual Technicians: Marti Lane, Randy Loudermilk, Ann Rymer, Jeff Walker

Food Drive

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. *Thanks to all who contribute—the families are always grateful.*

Operation Christmas Child Update

Thank you! 18 children will have a happier Christmas because of your generosity! OCC shoebox gifts will delight the hearts of boys and girls in more than 100 countries where local partners of Samaritan's Purse deliver the gifts along with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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: 1-423-226-6437

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 Memory/In Honor Giving

General Fund in memory of: Denny Mixon
By: David and Joy Turner, Ron and Shirley Singleton
Barb Bender

General Fund in memory of:
Janice Burger By: Ron and Neila Pace
Carolyn Smith By: Ron and Neila Pace

Community Meal Fund in honor of: Lonney McDonald
By: Garry and Linda Day

Community Meal Fund in honor of: Ann Rymer
By: Garry and Linda Day

Prayer Concerns

Our Congregation: *Evelyn Stemmann, *Brenda Chatham, *Emily Hodskins, Bill Grindstaff, Juline Mixon, Smokey and Janice Brooks, Kathy and Jerry Panchyshyn, Donna Ratzlaff, Barry Abbott, Sheppie Dunn, Ann Record, Barb Bender, Maria Ruark, Bill and Glenda Simonds, Stephanie Silvani, Sally Patterson, Mary Mills, Lily Loudermilk, Elaine Crowe, Lisa Loudermilk, Ron and Shirley Singleton, Ron and Neila Pace, Hannah Geren (having new treatment)

Homebound/Assisted Living: +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: *Mary Sharp (cancer), *Tracy, Wendy, Stephanie, Cheryl, Misha (sisters of Jennifer G.), *David Farmer (on heart transplant list—friend of Ann Rymer), Bill Dalton, cancer (neighbor of Randy L.), Bennett, Walt, Kim Swinehart, April Goff, Melissa Dillard (friend of Kathy P.), Jake Mayfield, Kierah and Madeline (daughters of Jennifer G.), Elizabeth Payne (cancer), Doug Hudson (brother of Linda H.), Emily Ginn (mom of Dylan S.), M/M Lloyd Mays, Pamela Gamble, Rodney Patterson (cancer), Gail Scheren (friend of Flora), Larry Collis, Jeremy Collis (friend of Lisa L.), Sue Talley (sister of Marti), Monica Errington, David Gibson, Kelly Pace, (d-i-l of Ron and Neila) Norma Bean (cancer), Sue Beaver, Simon Grant (on organ transplant list), Jean Miller, cancer (cousin of Kathy P.), Madison Satterfield (auto accident), Lena Talley, Polly Perkins, Hope Loudermilk, Ryan Panchyshyn, Annette Loudermilk, Micheline Bennett, Phil Young, pancreatic cancer (grandson of Ann Record), Dennis Wray (chemo), Garry Smith, Jodi and John (daughter and son-in-law of Barb B.), Jerry Williams (Shirley's husband), Mackenzie Ray, Ed and Jerrie Sue Massengale, victims of natural disasters, first responders, armed forces members, world leaders

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

Please contact the church office to add someone to our Prayer Concerns list.

White Christmas Food Bags

Shopping List for Copper Basin Elementary School (CBES) & Community Meal Food Bag recipients
Items needed for food bags:

- **Canned green beans**
- **Canned corn or cream corn**
- **Canned fruit (fruit cocktail or other)**
- **Whole or jellied cranberry sauce**
- **Stuffing Mix**
- **Instant Mashed potatoes**
- **Packages of gravy mix**
- **Box of instant oatmeal**
- **Large jar of spaghetti sauce**
- **Box of pasta**
- **Large can chicken breast meat**
- **Large can of chicken noodle soup**

Please bring canned or dried goods to the church through Sunday, Dec. 7. Cash donations are also accepted and will go towards IGA gift certificates so families can buy a meat and/or dessert. Please make your checks payable to the church and write "Missions Christmas" in the memo line.

Your generosity is appreciated!

-The Mission Committee