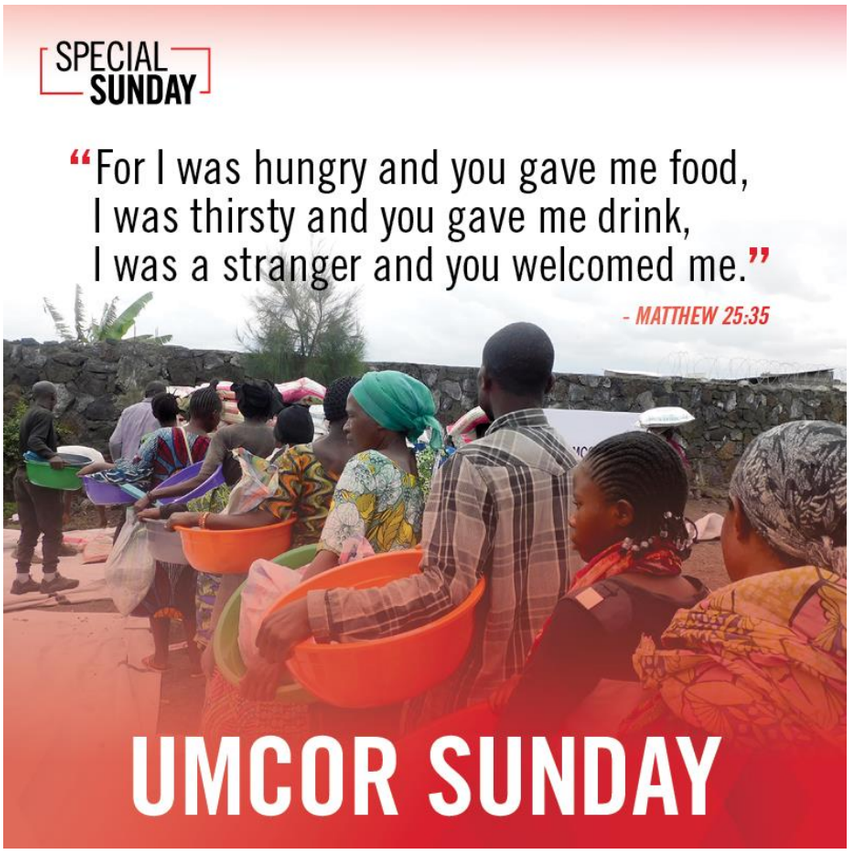
The Copperhill Courier

First United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 538
Copperhill, TN 37317
February 2026

Address Changes Requested



Mark your calendars for UMCOR Sunday!

On March 15th join us in supporting the incredible work of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Your gifts cover UMCOR's operational costs, ensuring 100% of other donations go directly to relief efforts. Together, we can bring hope to those in need worldwide.

This Special Sunday is an opportunity to strengthen our connection to global ministries that provide disaster relief, aid for refugees, sustainable agriculture, and more. Every gift makes a life-changing impact.

From the Pastor's Desk, continued

Genesis 2:15–17
We conclude the month with a return to the beginning. In Genesis, humanity is placed in the garden "to till it and keep it." This is a call to stewardship. The first human vocation is care for creation and care for the trust God has placed in us. This passage reminds us that obedience is relational. God's command is given not to restrict life, but to protect it. The responsibility entrusted to humanity reflects God's own care for what God has made. As Lent begins, this text asks us to consider how we are tending the gardens entrusted to us, our relationships, our community, our resources, and our world.

A Coherent Call
Taken together, February's Scriptures form a unified call. God desires a people shaped by justice, humility, repentance, and care. Worship that does not lead to transformation is incomplete. Spiritual practices that do not open us to compassion miss the point.

As we move toward Lent, these texts invite us to slow down, listen deeply, and realign our lives with God's purposes. They remind us that faith is not simply what we believe, but how we live before God, with one another, and within God's creation.

May this month be a time when we not only hear God's Word but allow it to shape us into the people God is calling us to be.

Pastor Buddy

Walking the Way God Desires

As February unfolds, our Sunday Scripture readings lead us on a carefully shaped journey. It is a journey that moves from God's call for justice, through the transformation of worship, into repentance and renewed responsibility. These texts are not isolated snapshots of faith; together they invite us to examine how we live, how we worship, and how we walk with God in the everyday realities of our lives.

Micah 6:1–8

We begin the month with one of the most familiar and unsettling questions in Scripture. Through the prophet Micah, God brings a legal case against the people, not because they have failed to be religious, but because they have misunderstood what faithfulness truly looks like. The people respond by asking what offerings might satisfy God: burnt offerings, thousands of rams, rivers of oil. They assume that more religion, more sacrifice, or more religious show will somehow repair the broken relationship.

God's answer cuts through all of that noise: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Faith, according to Micah, is not about excess but about alignment. Justice is not optional, kindness is not sentimental, and humility is not weakness. Together, they form a way of life that reflects God's own character. Micah reminds us that God is not looking for performance but for a people whose lives reflect God's heart for the world.

Isaiah 58:1–9a

Isaiah picks up this same concern and presses it even further. The people are fasting, praying, and worshiping with intensity, yet God declares that their worship rings hollow. Why? Because their religious practices are disconnected from how they treat others. They seek God while ignoring injustice. They bow their heads in humility while exploiting workers and turning away from the hungry.

God's definition of worship is strikingly concrete. It is to loose the bonds of injustice, to share bread with the hungry, to welcome the homeless poor. Isaiah makes clear that worship is not proven by how sincerely we sing or how faithfully we show up, but by how deeply our faith reshapes our relationships and priorities. This passage invites us to consider whether our spiritual disciplines are forming us into more compassionate, just, and generous people, or whether they have become ways of avoiding the very transformation God desires. True worship, Isaiah insists, always spills outward into the world.

Exodus 24:12–18 (Transfiguration Sunday)

Midway through the month, we ascend the mountain with Moses, and later with Jesus at the Transfiguration. In Exodus, Moses enters the cloud of God's glory, remaining there for forty days and nights. The mountain is a place of awe, mystery, and encounter. God's holiness is overwhelming, and the people wait below as Moses is drawn into God's presence.

Transfiguration Sunday reminds us that God's glory is real and transformative, but his presence is never meant to be hoarded. The mountaintop experience prepares God's people to return to the valley with renewed clarity and courage. Encountering God does not remove us from responsibility; it deepens it. These moments of glory serve to reorient us. They remind us who God is before we are sent back into the ordinary, often messy work of faithfulness. The light we glimpse on the mountain is meant to illuminate our path forward, not distract us from it.

Psalm 51:1–17 (Ash Wednesday)

As Lent begins, Psalm 51 gives us language for repentance that is honest and hopeful. This is not a prayer of excuses or self-justification. It is a prayer that dares to tell the truth: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me."

The psalmist understands that what God desires most is not sacrifice for sacrifice's sake, but a heart that is open to transformation. Ash Wednesday reminds us that repentance is not about shame, it's about freedom. Naming our brokenness is the first step toward healing. Acknowledging our limits opens space for God's grace. This psalm invites us to enter Lent not as a season of spiritual self-improvement, but as a season of honest self-examination and deep trust in God's mercy.

Continued on reverse

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.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays:
6 Barb Bender, Lexi Loudermilk
12 Catherine Lange
13 Buddy Butler
14 Daniel Loudermilk, Lily Loudermilk
25 John Brooks, Sheppie Dunn
28 Elaine Crowe
29 Ciera Butler, Brenda Chatham

Anniversaries:
28 Lloyd and Elaine Minor 39th
29 Leo and Ariana Morris 6th

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

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

Card of Thanks

Words can't express how thankful Donna and I are to our church family for the prayers, cards, food, your singing of Happy Birthday (beautiful!) and countless other acts of kindness you have showered upon us, following my hospital stay. I'm slowly getting stronger and look forward to returning to church ASAP.

Marti

United Women in Faith

Our next **United Women in Faith** meeting will be at noon on Wednesday, February 4. We will have a potluck Valentine's Day lunch and a Valentine card making session led by Ann Rymer.
All ladies are cordially invited!

The March meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 4, at noon. We will have a potluck lunch and our Call to Prayer and Self Denial Program. Please bring your favorite dish. All ladies are invited to attend.

February Events

The **UWF** will meet on Wednesday, February 4, at noon.

We will have a **Fellowship Potluck Lunch** after worship on February 8. Bring your favorite dish and join us for good food and fellowship.

Our service will be February 18, at 5 p.m.

March Events

The UWF will meet on Wednesday, March 4, at noon.

Daylight Savings Time begins on March 8. Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour on March 7.

We'll have a **Fellowship Potluck Lunch** after worship on March 15. Bring your favorite dish and come fellowship with us.

The **UMCOR Sunday** offering on March 15 underwrites UMCOR's administrative costs. This offering allows UMCOR to use 100% of all funds given to humanitarian response and recovery efforts directly to communities in need. These gifts ensure UMCOR can respond swiftly to disasters around the world and as a source of hope and healing for those left most vulnerable.

The **Church Council** meets on Tuesday, March 24, at 4:30 p.m.

On March 29 we will receive the **Fifth Sunday Offering for Holston Home For Children**.

Officers and Leaders for 2026

Church Council

Chair	Dura Montgomery
Secretary	Evelyn Stemmann
Lay Leader	Garry Day
Treasurer	Linda Day
Financial Secretary	Lynn Turner
Annual Conference Delegate	Shirley Starling
Annual Conference Delegate (alt)	Dura Montgomery
Sunday School Superintendent	Randy Loudermilk
Membership Secretary	Cathryn McCarter
Trustees President	Randy Loudermilk
Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Chair	Elaine Morgan
Missions Chair	Ann Rymer
Scholarship Chair	Linda Day
UWF Chair	Heidi Rule
At Large Members	Bill Simonds, Jeff Walker

2026	2027	2028
S/PPR		
Flora Grindstaff	Joe Dusombre	Charlie Stemmann
	Pam Wray	Freda Abbott
	Elaine Morgan	
Trustees		
Brett McDonald	Ron Wray	Randy Loudermilk
Neila Pace	Heidi Rule	Barry Abbott
Sheppie Dunn	Jeff Walker	
Nominations Committee		
Elaine Minor	Shirley Russell	Joy Turner
Elaine Morgan	Kathy Dusombre	
	Evelyn Stemmann	

Finance Committee
Pastor, Financial Secretary, Lay Leader, Annual Conference Delegate, Church Council Chair, S/PPR Chair, Trustees Chair, Treasurer

We Remember Our Promise

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

2025

	Worship	Sunday School	General Fund
November 23	37	8	$3,361.08
November 30	35	7	$2,911.69
December 7	34	7	$1,983.00
December 14	47	5	$3,883.00
December 21	46	8	$4,725.00
December 28	32	4	$7,306.00
			Total: $24,169.77
Average:	**39**	**7**	**$4,028.29**
Christmas Eve:	**76**		

Additional giving:

Christmas Eve Offering for Copper Basin Crisis Center and Family Connections: $1,036.00

Local Missions:	$10.00
Pastor's Benevolence Fund:	$252.50
Community Meal:	$120.00
Staff Gifts:	$800.00
United Methodist Student Day Offering:	$240.00
Holston Home for Children Fifth Sunday Offering:	$473.00
Mission Christmas Project:	$900.00

2026

	Worship	Sunday School	General Fund
January 4	30	7	$3,634.00
January 11	30	5	$1,973.00
January 18	22	3	$1,915.00
			Total: $7,522.00
Average:	**27**	**5**	**$2,507.33**

Additional giving:

Local Missions:	$10.00
Pastor's Benevolence Fund:	$40.00
Community Meal:	$35.00
Human Relations Day Offering:	$70.00

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: **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:
Carl Panter, Jr. By: Cathryn McCarter

Community Meal Fund in memory of:
Walt Zovistoski By: Jerry and Cathy Panchyshyn

Missions Fund in honor of:
Lonney and Brett McDonald By: Brenda Chatham
Ann and Leland Rymer By: Brenda Chatham

Scholarship Fund in honor of:
Cathryn McCarter By: Garry and Linda Day
Ann Rymer By: Garry and Linda Day
Lonney McDonald By: Garry and Linda Day

Prayer Concerns

Our Congregation: *Marti Lane, *Loretta Loudermilk, *Evelyn Stemmann, Emily Hodskins, Smokey and Janice Brooks, Jerry Panchyshyn, Donna Ratzlaff, Sheppie Dunn, Barb Bender, Maria Ruark, Bill and Glenda Simonds, Mary Mills, Hope and Aiyana Loudermilk, Ron and Shirley Singleton, Ron and Neila Pace

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

Others in our prayers: *~June (aunt of Evelyn S.), *~Marilyn Dusombre (mother of Joe), *Maria, hip replacement (friend of Ann Rymer), *Charles Nicholson, *Norma Bean, *Rush Phillips, recovering from surgery (brother of Flora), *Gina (burned in fire), *Kimberly Curcio (paraplegic), *the family of Walt Zovistoski (uncle of Kathy Panchyshyn), *Kenny Kelly (cousin of Ron Wray), *the John Ritchie family, *Gary Hooper (brother-in-law of Pam Wray), Dennis Wray, Mackenzie Ray, Hannah Geren, 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.

Food Drive

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

Diaper Drive

Unscented diapers (size 2 and 3) and unscented wipes to help a Foster Family with two babies are needed on an ongoing basis and can be placed in the box in the Narthex. Your gifts are appreciated!

Snack in a Backpack

Small boxes of raisins, packs of individual applesauce and packs of cheese crackers are needed by Snack in a Backpack – there's a box in the Narthex for donations.

CBES Strawberry Sale

$30 for a flat or $15 for half a flat of freshly picked strawberries. Money due by 2/1 with delivery end of February or first part of March. Contact April Butler to order. Proceeds benefit Copper Basin Elementary.