The Copperhill Courier

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

From the Pastor's Desk, continued

Perhaps one of the most comforting passages comes when Paul says that the Spirit helps us in our weakness. There are seasons when we simply do not know how to pray. Our words fail us. Our emotions overwhelm us. We may not even know what we need. Paul assures us that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with "sighs too deep for words." What wonderful news that our prayers do not depend upon eloquence. Even when we cannot find the right words, God hears the cries of our hearts through the ministry of the Spirit.

The chapter reaches its glorious climax with one of the greatest affirmations in all of Scripture. Paul asks, "If God is for us, who is against us?" He does not promise that life will be easy or free from hardship. In fact, he lists many difficulties believers may face. Yet he declares with complete confidence that nothing, not hardship, not suffering, not death itself can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. That promise has sustained generations of Christians through persecution, tragedy, uncertainty, and ordinary daily struggles.

As we journey through these passages together in July, my hope is not simply that we will understand Paul's words more clearly. My prayer is that we will experience the freedom they proclaim. We all know what it is like to struggle. We all know what it means to fall short. But we also need to hear again the good news that our lives are not defined by our failures. Through Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Through the Holy Spirit, we are being transformed. Through God's unfailing love, we are held securely today and forever.

I invite you to join us each Sunday as we explore these remarkable chapters together. Bring your questions. Bring your struggles. Bring your hopes. Most of all, come expecting to hear once again the good news that God has not given up on His people. The One who began a good work in us is still at work, and by His grace He will continue shaping us into the image of Christ until the day He makes all things new.

Pastor Buddy

June 24th Fellowship Supper

Pictured: Evelyn Stemmann, Charles Stemmann, Cathryn McCarter, Elaine Morgan, Randy Loudermilk, Pastor Buddy Butler, Ron Singleton, Shirley Singleton, Pam Wray, Ron Wray, Heidi Rule. Not pictured: Maria Ruark, Frank Rule.

Living in the Spirit: A Journey Through Romans 7 and 8

Every summer I look forward to slowing down just enough to spend a little more time walking through a single section of Scripture. This July our worship will center on Romans 7 and 8 which is a very rich part of scripture. These passages have comforted Christians for nearly two thousand years because they speak honestly about the struggles we all know while also proclaiming the hope God gives through Jesus Christ.

Many people assume that the Christian life should become easier after we begin following Christ. We imagine that faith should remove temptation, erase doubt, and eliminate our struggles with sin. Then reality arrives. We discover that we still lose our patience, still carry fears, still wrestle with selfishness, and still find ourselves doing things we wish we had not done. For many believers this creates a question, "If I still struggle, am I really growing in faith?" The Apostle Paul answers that question with remarkable honesty.

In Romans 7 Paul opens a window into the human heart. "I do not understand my own actions," he writes. "For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." Those words have echoed across the centuries because they describe something every honest person has experienced. We know what is right, yet we fail to do it consistently. We make promises we cannot seem to keep. We determine to change, only to discover old habits still clinging to us. Paul is not celebrating failure or making excuses for sin. Instead, he is describing the frustrating reality of life when we rely upon our own strength. The problem is not that God's law is bad. The problem is that the power of sin reaches deeper than good intentions.

Thankfully, Romans 7 does not have the final word. Paul's anguished cry, "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" is immediately answered with, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" That cry leads us directly into Romans 8, which many Christians have called the mountaintop of Scripture. Here Paul shifts our attention away from our own ability and toward God's gracious work through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8 begins with one of the most liberating declarations in the Bible: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Notice what Paul does not say. He does not say there is no struggle. He does not say believers never fail. He does not say Christians become perfect. He says there is no condemnation. Through Christ, our standing before God no longer rests upon flawless performance but upon God's grace. That does not make sin unimportant. Rather, it means that our failures no longer have the final word because Christ has already spoken the decisive word through His death and resurrection.

Paul goes on to describe life in the Spirit. Sometimes Christians misunderstand this language, imagining that living by the Spirit means having extraordinary religious experiences or dramatic emotional moments. Certainly, God can work in remarkable ways, but Paul's emphasis is much more practical. The Spirit changes the direction of our lives. The Spirit reshapes our desires. The Spirit gives us strength to become the people God created us to be. This transformation usually happens slowly, often quietly, and almost always through ordinary practices of faith, which include worship, prayer, Scripture, fellowship, repentance, and daily obedience.

One of the encouraging themes throughout Romans 8 is that the Spirit works not only in us but also among us. We are not called to walk the Christian life alone. God gathers His people into the Church where we encourage one another, bear one another's burdens, pray for one another, and remind each other of God's promises when our own faith grows weak. Christian maturity is never simply an individual achievement. It is formed within the community of faith.

Paul also reminds us that salvation is both present and future. We have already been reconciled to God, yet we still await the complete renewal of all creation. We live in what theologians sometimes call the "already and not yet." God's kingdom has begun, but it has not yet reached its fullness. That helps explain why faithful Christians still experience suffering, illness, grief, disappointment, and loss. These things do not mean God has abandoned us. Rather, we live in a world that is still awaiting its final redemption. Even creation itself, Paul says, groans in eager expectation for the day when God makes all things new.

Those words may be especially meaningful in our own time. We live in a world filled with uncertainty. We worry about our families, our communities, our nation, and our future. Many carry private burdens that few others know. Some struggle with loneliness. Others battle illness or care for loved ones whose health is declining. Still others carry grief that remains long after the funeral service has ended. Romans 8 does not pretend these realities do not exist. Instead, Paul assures us that God meets us in the middle of them.

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. in the Parlor. 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.

AA Meeting: Thursdays, 7-8 p.m. in Legacy Hall

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays:

7 Jennifer Clamon
21 Donna Ratzlaff
22 Janice Brooks
28 Linda Haney, Dura Montgomery
30 Quinn Loudermilk

Anniversaries:

7	Buddy and April Butler	31st
17	Ron and Shirley Singleton	33rd
17	Ron and Pam Wray	55th

Your birthday or anniversary not listed?

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

United Women in Faith

Our next **UWF Meeting** will be on Wednesday, July 1, at noon. All ladies are cordially invited to attend.

We will have a potluck lunch followed by a business meeting. Please bring your ideas for future programs or guest speakers.

The UWF will not meet in August.

Bible Study Offered

A Sunday Bible Study will begin on August 2 in Legacy Hall. Rev. Corey Feldman, Presbyterian Minister, will lead the study from 5 to 7 p.m. on the following dates: August 2, 9, 16, 30 and September 6, 13, 20. There is no charge for the study, and everyone is invited to attend.

July Events

UWF Potluck Lunch Meeting at noon on Wednesday, July 1.

Celebration of Life Service for Denny Mixon: Akins-Cobb Funeral Home in Blue Ridge, on Saturday, July 11. Visitation will be 1-3 p.m. with the service following at 3 p.m.

The Church Office will be open 1 to 4 p.m. on July 16.

Our **Potluck Fellowship Supper** will be held on Wednesday, July 22, at p.m. Bring your favorite dish and come enjoy good food and fellowship.

The **Church Council** will meet on at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 28. All members are encouraged to attend.

Looking ahead to August

Bible Study in Legacy Hall: from 5 to 7 p.m. on the following dates: August 2, 9, 16, 30. Continues in September on the first three Sundays.

The **Scenic South District Conference** will be held on Sunday, August 16 at 3 p.m. at Tyner UMC.

Our **Potluck Fellowship Supper** will be held on Wednesday, August 26, at p.m. Bring your favorite dish and come enjoy good food and fellowship.

It's a Girl!

A baby shower for Bonnie McDonald Graves will be held on Saturday, September 12, from 2-4 p.m. Bonnie will be registered at Walmart and Amazon.

Roof Repair Campaign

The flat part of our church roof has been cleaned, and the roof resealed at a cost of $10,000.00. Our 2026 budget for capital expenditures has been depleted already by the installation of a new heating and air conditioning unit and water heater for our parsonage to replace items that were no longer working

If you can make a donation toward our roof repair above and beyond what you already contribute for our budget it would be greatly appreciated.

Contributed to date: $5,143.25

Community Meal

The Community Meal is held on Mondays, 4 to 5:30 p.m. Around 200 free 'to go" meals are served weekly. Designate donations to help pay for food and supplies "Community Meal" on memo line of check or envelope. The Community Meal does not currently need donations of plastic bags.

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 (usually by Monday afternoon), we'll also post the link on our Facebook page @ **First United Methodist Church-Copperhill.**
Please like and share so others see our posts!

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
May 31	38	6	$3,390.75
June 7	29	5	$4,615.75
June 14	36	6	$2,998.75
June 21	37	7	$3,170.75
Average:	**35**	**6**	**$3,544.00**

Additional giving:

Local Missions:	$35.00
Pastor's Benevolence Fund:	$195.00
Community Meal:	$35.00
Love Offering:	$100.00
Roof Repair Fund:	$1,295.00
Holston Home for Children Fifth Sunday Offering:	$385.00
Peace With Justice Sunday Offering:	$195.00

Members in Service to FUMC

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

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

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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
Heidi Rule, Secretary
Bethany Allison, Choir Director
Matt Scoggins, Accompanist
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:
Anna Lucas Panter By: Cathryn McCarter
Carl Panter Sr. By: Cathryn McCarter

General Fund in honor of:
Our 49th Anniversary By: Jerry and Kathy Panchyshyn

Celebration of Life Service

On Saturday, July 11, there will be a Celebration of Life Service for Denny Mixon. It will be held at the Akins-Cobb Funeral Home in Blue Ridge. Visitation will be from 1-3 p.m. with the service following at 3 p.m. His daughter, Wendy Crow, invites everyone to attend.

Prayer Concerns

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

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: *Jerry Pack, *Jason, *the family of Jerry Sisson, *the Lowe family, *Susie Skelton (cancer treatment), Katelyn Murdoch, Suzy, Henry, James Edward Abernathy, Ryan and Randy Panchyshyn, Peter, Elizabeth, Richard Rohler (brother of Ann Rymer), Sandra (sister-in-law of Joy Turner), Lacy, Frankie Robbins, Gabriel Putnam (great grandson of Joy Turner), Linda Reeves (friend of Shirley S.), Barbara (sister of Lisa L.), Buggs Arp (father of Freda A.), Christina Stemmann, James Wood, Tom, Kiera and Madeline - daughters of Jennifer Gibson, Angela Santa Maria, Will Hoffman, Tim Garrett, Charles Nicholson, Norma Bean, Rush Phillips (brother of Flora), Gina (burns), Kimberly Curcio (paraplegic), Dennis Wray, Gary Hooper (brother-in-law of Pam Wray), Mackenzie Ray, Hannah Geren, Jerrie Sue Massengale, victims of natural disasters, first responders, firefighters, armed forces members, world leaders, turmoil in the Middle East

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

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

Food Donations

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

Diaper Drive

Unscented diapers (size 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!