The Copperhill Courier

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

September 27

Everyone is invited to our 137th Homecoming Service. A potluck lunch will follow the 11 a.m. service.

From the Pastor's Desk, continued

But Homecoming should be more than remembering what the church was. It can also remind us why the church is here. The people who came before us did not preserve this congregation merely so that we could remember them. They handed the ministry to another generation. Now it is in our hands. One day, we too will be among those being remembered. The question is what kind of church we will hand to those who come after us. September's Scriptures offer an answer. Let it be a church where love is the debt we never finish paying. Let it be a church where disagreement does not automatically become division. Let it be a church where people are welcomed rather than immediately judged. Let it be a church that celebrates God's generosity instead of trying to decide who deserves it. Let it be a church grateful for yesterday but still listening for where Christ is leading tomorrow.

The church does not belong only to those who have been here the longest. It does not belong to the pastor, a committee, a family, or even the present congregation. The church belongs to Jesus Christ. We are simply the people entrusted with its ministry for a little while. So, as we enter September and eventually gather for Homecoming, may we give thanks for those who came before us. May we welcome those who are among us now. And may we make room for those whom God has not yet brought through our doors. After all, we are all workers who have been invited into the vineyard. And every one of us lives by the generosity of God.

Pastor Buddy

Volunteer Spotlight

Snack In a Back Pack Summer Meal Delivery:

Pictured are
Kathy and Joe Dusombre (left)
and Elaine Morgan (center right).
Not pictured:
David Hungerford and Ann Rymer

September brings us into a collection of Scripture readings that, at first glance, may not seem to belong together. We begin with Paul telling the Romans that love fulfills the law. Then we hear him address disagreements within the church. We move to one of Jesus' more unsettling parables, where workers who labored only an hour receive the same wage as those who worked all day. Finally, we gather for Homecoming, remembering the people and stories that have shaped our congregation. Yet perhaps there is a thread running through all of these scriptures. What kind of community does the grace of God create?

Romans 13:8–14 begins with a remarkable command, "Owe no one anything, except to love one another." Paul gathers several of the commandments together and says they are summed up in the words, "Love your neighbor as yourself." For Paul, Christian love is much more than an emotion. It is a way of living toward another person. Love refuses to harm the neighbor. Love considers the needs of another. Love asks us to see people not simply according to what they can do for us, but as people whom God loves. That sounds simple until we actually have to live it.

Churches are made up of people with different personalities, histories, opinions, expectations, and experiences. We do not always agree about what the church should do. We may disagree about worship, money, politics, theology, traditions, or what the future ought to look like. Sometimes we even disagree about things that each side considers terribly important. Christian community has never meant that everybody thinks alike. That becomes especially clear in Romans 14:1–12. Paul describes Christians who disagree over what they may eat and which days should be observed. These were not trivial questions to the people arguing about them. They involved deeply held convictions about what faithfulness to God required. Interestingly, Paul does not solve the disagreement by simply announcing which group is right. Instead, he turns their attention toward how they are treating one another. "Welcome those who are weak in faith," he says, "but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions." A few verses later he asks, "Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister?" Those questions remain painfully relevant.

We often assume that Christian unity will come when everyone finally agrees with us. Paul imagines something different. Christian unity is possible because our belonging ultimately rests not upon our agreement with one another but upon our belonging to Christ. Paul reminds both sides that they stand before the same Lord. That does not mean convictions are unimportant. Nor does it mean that every disagreement is insignificant. It means that even our deepest convictions do not give us permission to stop loving one another. The person sitting across the aisle from us is not merely "the person who is wrong." That person is our brother or sister for whom Christ died.

Then Jesus makes things even more uncomfortable. In Matthew 20:1–16, Jesus tells the story of a landowner who goes out early in the morning and hires workers for his vineyard. He returns several times during the day and hires more workers. Some work all day, others work only part of the day, and some barely have time to get their hands dirty before the workday ends. Then payday comes. The landowner gives the workers who came last a full day's wage. Naturally, the workers who had been there all day assume they will receive more. But when their turn comes, they receive exactly what they had been promised, and they grumble. We probably understand why. Something inside us says, "That isn't fair." But Jesus is describing a kingdom built upon something greater than our calculations of who deserves what. The landowner asks, "Are you envious because I am generous?" That question gets close to the heart of grace.

We love grace when we are the ones receiving it. Grace becomes harder when God is generous toward somebody whom we think deserves less. Yet none of us stands before God because we have worked enough hours in the vineyard. We stand because God is generous. Perhaps that is one of the lessons the church continually needs to learn. We are not the owners of God's grace. We are its recipients.

That brings us to Homecoming. Homecoming naturally invites us to look backward. We remember people who worshiped here before us. We remember Sunday school teachers, pastors, musicians, cooks, volunteers, friends, parents, grandparents, and others whose lives became part of the story of this congregation. We remember weddings and funerals, baptisms and Communion services, meals and meetings, laughter and tears. Those memories are important. We did not create this church by ourselves. We inherited something that others loved and served.

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, 6-7 p.m. (Legacy Hall)

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays:
16 Juline Mixon
17 Melissa Brock
21 Ramona Cook
24 Kathy Thompson
25 Louise Arp
27 Adam Turner
28 Joe Dusombre

Anniversaries:
19 Charles and Evelyn Stemmann 56th

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, September 2, at 10 a.m. After our business meeting, we will be working in the UWF room to organize supplies and table decorations. Please bring a sack lunch. All ladies are cordially invited to attend. We will also meet on September 30 at 2 p.m. to make plans for UWF Sunday. We will not meet in October.

Card of Thanks

Dear friends, please accept our family's deepest appreciation for your attendance and participation in the memorial of Dennis Mixon in July. Juline had the best time celebrating her husband of over sixty years and visiting with his friends and family. She commented several times that it was the perfect service and that he would have loved the music. It meant so much to all of us that you came to the memorial and shared stories and praise for Dennis. He was an outstanding person, husband, father, and grandfather. His gentle loving personality has been the best gift and example of how a person should live life and love others. We miss him every day but we know heaven is his reward.
Truly grateful,
Juline, Sherri, Michelle, Wendy and all the family

September Events

The **SPPR Committee** will meet on Sunday, September 6, immediately following Worship.

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, September 7, in observance of **Labor Day**.

Bible Study in Legacy Hall: from 5 to 7 p.m. on the following dates: September 6, 13, and 20.

Baby Shower for Bonnie and Dusty Graves on Saturday, September 12, 2-4 p.m. in Legacy Hall.

The **Church Council** will meet on Tuesday, September 22, at 4:30 p.m.

We will celebrate **Homecoming** on Sunday, September 27. A potluck lunch will follow the service.

You are Invited!

A drop-in Baby Shower for
Bonnie & Dusty Graves
will be held on
Saturday, September 12,
from 2-4 p.m. in Legacy Hall
Registry at Walmart and Amazon.

Looking ahead to October

Our **Annual Charge Conference** will be held on Sunday, October 18, immediately following our worship service.

Our last **Potluck Fellowship Supper** of 2026 will be held on Wednesday, October 28, at 6 p.m. Bring your favorite dish and come enjoy good food and fellowship.

Friends of the Library Fall Book Sale

October 9-11: Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Members Only Preview on Thursday, October 8, 4-6 p.m. Blue Ridge Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 235 Orvin Lance Drive. Mountains of used books, rare and collectible books, DVDs, CDs, jigsaw puzzles, etc. will be for sale! Special bag sale on regular books and 50% off sale on collectible and rare books on Sunday. Parking available at rear and front of church. Entrance at rear. Call Heidi Rule at 706-455-7941 if you have donations or for information.
Volunteers are needed for setting up the sale on Tuesday, Oct. 6 3-6 p.m. and Wednesday, October 7, beginning at 9 a.m.

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
July 26	44	6	$2,749.13
August 2	Church cancelled due to road flooding		$ 502.75
August 9	35	8	$4,382.75
August 16	30	8	$1,622.75
August 23	36	7	$2,929.25
		Total:	$12,186.63
Average:	**29**	**6**	**$2,437.33**

Our cash balance for payroll, utilities and general expenses is very low. The capital expenditures (roof repair, etc.) fund has been sufficiently replenished. Please direct all "above and beyond giving" to our budget. Thank you for your generosity.

Additional giving:

Local Missions:	$10.00
Pastor's Benevolence Fund:	$403.25
Community Meal:	$10.00
Love Offering:	$100.00
Roof Repair Fund:	$675.00
Scholarship Fund:	$50.00
Holston Home for Children Fifth Sunday Offering:	$51.00

Members in Service to FUMC

Ushers: Elaine Morgan, Ron Singleton
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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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
Heidi Rule, Secretary
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: Cathy Turner
By: Neila Pace, Kathy and Jerry Panchyshyn, John and Claretta Cheek, the Rebuck family, John and Karen Drake, Bill and Flora Grindstaff, Donald and Kellie Nuckolls, Keith Lewis, Linda Lewis,

Scholarship Fund in Memory of:
Brady Singleton By: Neila Pace

General Fund in honor of:
Loretta Loudermilk By: David and Joy Turner
Loretta Loudermilk By: Cathryn McCarter

Loudermilk Loving Offering in honor of:
Loretta Loudermilk By: Joe and Kathy Dusombre

Prayer Concerns

Our Congregation: *Janis Martin (heart procedure), *Christine Dowlin, Kathy Panchyshyn, Lisa Loudermilk, 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, ^Jennifer Clamon (Sonshine Manor in Blairsville), ^T.J. Thompson (Pruitt Health), ^Barbara Collins, Margaret Self, ^Don Loudermilk
Others in our prayers: *Annette Loudermilk, (sister in law of Loretta), *Laura (lupus), *Michael Rheaume, bladder cancer (brother in law of Kathy P.), *Simon Grant (on transplant list), *Jody Muchnok (daughter of Barb B.), *Elizabeth, cancer (cousin of Buddy), Tom Rodman (grandfather of Dylan), Julia Allison (recovering from surgery), Carol Green (knee surgery), Bily Timmons, ~George Hood, Van Williams (surgery), Melissa Pittman, Jerry Pack, Jason, Susie Skelton (bone marrow transplant), Katelyn Murdoch, Henry, Chloe Walker, 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.), 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, peanut butter, jelly, rice, soup, chili, pasta, spaghetti sauce, spaghetti, shelf stable milk, canned vegetables.

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.

Diaper Drive

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