Dear First Murphy,

All Saints Day is one of my favorite holy days of the Christian year. And this year it actually falls on a Sunday, how wonderful! Several years ago, when I was still in seminary, I went back and visited my summer field placement church on All Saints Sunday. We made it to the church just before the processional began, and as the organ and bagpipe music grew to fill the sanctuary, one of the pastors leaned over and whispered, “This is it. This is what it is all about—hope, resurrection, the communion of the saints with God on earth and in heaven.”

That pastor was in the middle of several years of enduring painful cancer treatments. To talk about hope and resurrection wasn’t cheap, pie-in-the-sky kind of stuff. It was hope and resurrection power that mattered right here and now.

For the last several months we’ve been surrounded by predictions and then realities of startling numbers of people dying due to COVID-19. I remember the first time I heard someone suggest that we’d be doing well if only 200,000 people died. It felt like a doomsday prediction meant to sober us all up. We’re well past that now, and that death toll feels less abstract and more like a gut punch. In our own congregation, we still grieve the death of Lori Mercer, reminding us that every one of those 200,000+ has a name, a story, and there is an emptiness after their death.

That gives us well over 200,000 reasons to wear a mask, keep physical distance, and practice good hand hygiene. And that’s why we all need to be on the same team with the changes we’re making in worship and how we operate at church—thank you for your help and patience.

Death and grief, like everything during this time, have become more complicated. Families have had to say goodbye over video calls. Funerals have been put off. Family gatherings and shared meals aren’t happening like they used to. Friends don’t just stop by and sit a spell. The terrible power of death makes isolation even worse.

Dr. Allen Verhey has written a brilliant and hopeful book on *The Christian Art of Dying*. The “art” of dying might sound like a museum exhibit you’d prefer to avoid. Yet, Verhey makes the very good point that the centerpiece of the Christian story is the death of Jesus Christ, and his resurrection that undoes the power of death. And Jesus is the one who teaches us about the art of dying faithfully, and how, as our funeral liturgy says, we might “live as those who are prepared to die.”

This month in worship, I’ll be in a sermon series on Famous Last Words. In these four Sundays, I’m going to highlight some “last words” from people who’ve gone before us. And we’ll listen for how we can “live as those who are prepared to die,” how we can care for one another, and receive the ministry of Christ in moments of our own grief.

We’ll try to be vulnerable, honest and practical. But don’t worry, we won’t all be dressed in black and Suzanne won’t be playing dirges each Sunday. Some of the funniest stories I’ve ever heard were at funerals and visitations. Humor is one of God’s gifts that helps knock the teeth out of death.

(Continued on Page 2)
Also, starting on Sunday, November 8, I'll be leading a Zoom Sunday School class that's open to everyone. I know there's nothing like actually sitting in the same room together, but these days I'm thankful for Zoom that gives us a way to be together even when we can't be in the same room. For those three Sundays in November, two of the things we'll be doing are exploring some of the ideas from The Christian Art of Dying and getting real practical with ways we can bless our family and leave a legacy at the time of our passing. Sign up by email to the church: admin@murphyfirstumc.org and we'll send you a link each Sunday. We'll start about 10am and be done in time for you to refill your coffee cup before worship. Here's one of my favorite lines Verhey treats like a refrain in one of his chapters: "This [the resurrection of Jesus] was a story too good to be true. It could not be, unless God..."

Confusion, incompleteness, sadness, aloneness, grief all look to have the last word, unless God...

Remembering the resurrection of Jesus is the deep breath and the drink of cool water we could all use right about now. The peace of God which passes understanding keep you all,

Pastor Wil

Remember to set your clocks BACK 1 hour on Halloween night! Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, Nov. 1st!

During This Time of Loss

our sympathies & prayers are extended to . . .

◊ Kathi Taylor, family & friends upon Dick’s passing

In-person Sunday morning worship is now open for up to 25 people in addition to the worship team! To attend in person, you must reserve your spot(s) in advance by calling the church office, 828-837-2718. You must wear masks and an usher will seat you prior to the service and will direct you out at the end.

Drive-Thru Communion Sunday, November 1st following worship

From noon until 2pm on Nov. 1st, you can receive communion by driving through the church parking lot. You must wear a mask and remain in your car.
Thank you from Pastor Wil, Lea, Nathanael, and Nora:

I shared with our SPRC that I don’t think there’s a pastor in our county or our conference that feels more appreciated than I do! Thank you for the ways you blessed me and our family with your kind words and gifts on Pastor Appreciation Sunday.

And more than that you have also blessed me by your support during these last two months that I’ve taken paternity leave—full time in September and half-time in October. That time I was able to spend with Nora and our family was invaluable! And thank you for keeping our refrigerator full with delicious food. We are blessed beyond measure to be here!

The other day I read through all the cards you sent in for Pastor Appreciation, and with each one I became more and more grateful for you—not for any particular reason, but just because each of you is you. It’s funny the way it works, isn’t it, when you’re on the receiving end of genuine appreciation or love? It makes you more grateful, more loving. It inspires you to live into God’s economy of mutual love and thanksgiving. You all are teaching me about that. Thank you!

On Sunday, October 25 we dedicated our new playground! I cannot say enough what a big deal this is, nor can I overstate how amazed I am at the generosity of this congregation. From the first day of exploring the possibility of some sort of playground in the backyard, the congregation responded with great enthusiasm. When the Playground Committee presented our shoot-for-the-moon idea, it was amazing to see people get excited and help make it possible.

Several people were instrumental all along the way in making this happen: the Playground Committee (Karen Watson, Lea Posey, and Jennifer White), Freddy Lochaby, the Trustees and Finance Committees, and all the folks who gave their time and energy to dig the holes, stage and then install the equipment. Not to mention every contribution that made this a reality!

A few things I am particularly excited about with this playground: 1) The plastic components are made from recycled milk jugs. Instead of being in a landfill, some 30k milk jugs helped make up our playground! I think that we created a place for kids to play and honored God’s creation makes God doubly happy. 2) The 4 musical flowers are really unique and I don’t know any other playground that has something like it here—the chiming petals will add to the music of children’s laughter. 3) The surfacing is recycled, shredded rubber mulch. Again, using recycled materials that will last a long time, and help keep our kids safe while they play.

What do you love most about the playground?

Jesus said, “Let the little children come,” and so do we! The playground is open! Join me in offering this prayer of blessing:

God our Father, send your Spirit upon this playground, so everyone who comes here, can come alive through play, and come alive in You. Thank you for loving us. We love you too! Amen!
The Christmas Box Project for Murphy students has started. We are taking donations starting now through November 29th. Because the two women's Circles (Helping Hands & Willing Workers) are unable to meet, we will not be able to have our usual fundraiser (Auction) as in the past. If you would like to contribute to help buy Christmas for our local students, you can mail your donation to the church or give online. In past years with the auction and generous donations given by so many in the church, we were able to buy Christmas for as many as 64 students. Your continued support is appreciated in helping to bring a smile this Christmas for our students during these difficult times.
Alpha is doing great and meeting every Sunday @4:00. We bring chairs and stay 6 feet apart. This month we are in the middle of the series, "Love Like Jesus" It is based on 1 Corinthians 13. In the last few weeks, we have had some good discussions on how God has laid it out for us to love one another. We are living in a time now that love sometimes falls away from everyday life; we all need to show each other more love. We are gearing up for Toys for Tots - Alpha and FCA will be out in front of Lowes on Saturday, December 5th from 10:00 to 4:00. Yes, we will be wearing masks and observing all Social Distancing guidelines. Toys for Tots also has guidelines for us to follow. We want to give a big shout out to Grace Nelson for her acceptance to East Tennessee State. Huge shout out to Asher Brinke and his acceptance to Gardner Webb, Liberty University, and Western Carolina. Huge shout out to Georjah Allen and her acceptance to Gardner Webb University and Montreat College. Huge shout out to Isaac Brown and his acceptance to Mars Hill and Brevard College. Congrats to Chloe Decker for her acceptance for the Archibald D Murphey Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Good Citizen Award. Prayers are still going out to Lochlan Rogers as she recovers from knee surgery.

For specific information and more details on ALPHA, please contact Davis Bryant, our Youth Director, at 828-361-0254 or youth@murphyfirstumc.org.

NOTE: No meals needed during this different time of meeting, but we’ll let you know when we get a regular meeting schedule started again!

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**STEWARDSHIP OF TIME & TALENTS**

We ask that you continue to watch our Sunday worship livestream platform and stay in touch with your friends and family.

**Lay Reader/Liturgist:** various

**Greeters:** Livestream worship on YouTube

**Announcements:** various

**Offering Prayer:** Livestream worship

**Pew Maintenance:** N/A

**Communion Preparation:** N/A

**Fellowship Lunch Host:** N/A

**Counters:** Office staff & select counters.

**TRUSTEE On Call:** Tim Nicholson (828-557-8139)

**Communications Team:** Diane Barfield, Cobby Barfield, Sue Bell, Karen Crump, Nancy Jo Willis, Julie Hughes, Georjah Allen.

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Looking for a quick way to give a gift at any time during the year? REMEMBER that we have ELECTRONIC GIVING available? Just go to the church website (http://www.murphyfirstumc.org), click on “Donate” at the top right-hand side and follow the prompts. You can use this for general giving or for special/designated donations. Any questions, call Nancy Jo Willis, Treasurer (850-428-3636).
Pastor’s Adult Class—Class meets via Zoom at 10am on Nov. 8, 15 & 22. Sign up in advance via email at admin@murphyfirstumc.org.

Senior Adults Class—Class meets in Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings at 9:45am. (ON HOLD)

“Youngish” Adults Class—On break.

New “Welcome” Adult Class—Class meets in the “Parlor” above the choir loft on the 3rd floor of the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings at 9:45am. (ON HOLD)

Youth (high/middle) Sunday School—led by Davis Bryant and meets in the Education Building on the 3rd floor, Sunday mornings at 9:45am. (ON HOLD)

*NEW* Children’s Sunday School (for Infant to 4th Grade) - They meet at 10:00 am each Sunday via ZOOM. If interested in participating with your child/children, please contact Terry Stroup at efstroup@frontier.com or call the church office.

ANNOUNCING!!! We have created a new public Facebook page for the church that will provide news and information about us and will be a gateway to our private Facebook group pages. The link to this new page is www.facebook.com/fumcmurphy. If you are a Facebook user, please “like” our new page and share it with your Facebook friends. Anyone can view this page, and for members of the church’s private groups, it includes links to those group pages. The ALPHA youth group also has a Facebook page. You can use this link to get to ALPHA’s page: https://www.facebook.com/FUMCalpha/

Joyful Stitchers

Recently some shawls from the Joyful Stitchers were delivered. Words of thanks received included such phrases as “made me optimistic,” “I have already felt His peace surround me as I wrapped myself in it,” and “provided strength and courage.” One mentioned the shawl being not only handmade, but also prayed over as well. This is what our ministry is all about!

If anyone would like to request a shawl, throw, or baby blanket, call or email Totsie Gentile: 828-837-3554 or tatzi2347@gmail.com. The Church office can also be contacted at 828-837-2718. There is a good assortment available in many colors, shapes, sizes, and stitch variations. All items have been blessed and are tangible evidence of love and prayers for anyone in need.
WE HAVE A NEW CHILDREN & FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS which has started. It is for families with infants to 4th grade. They meet each Sunday morning at 10:00 am via ZOOM. If you are interested in participating with your child/children, please contact Terri Stroup at efstroup@frontier.com or call the church office.

In November, FLOWERS will be provided for worship by:

- November 1—Karen Crump
- November 8—Barbara Hughes
- November 15—Karen Crump
- November 22—Cornucopia
- November 29—Tom Payne

To reserve a Sunday in 2020 to provide altar flowers, call Sheila Snow at 828-361-6009.

The Greeting Card Ministry will not meet in November. For questions on the card ministry, call or email Sharon Francis, 828-644-1105 or at sharonk1017@gmail.com.

ARE YOU MISSING YOUR UPPER ROOM? The November/December copies of “Upper Room” are now in the church office. You can stop by the office on Tuesday mornings from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm to pick up a copy. You can also go to our website, www.murphyfirstumc.org/news, and about half way down that page, there is a link to the PDF format of the “Upper Room”. You can save the document to your computer or tablet or sign in to it daily to enjoy your meditation. We could also mail you a copy (please specify Large Print or Regular), if you will leave a message on the church phone line.
During this time the Willing Workers are continuing to stay in touch by email. We will not meet in November for our annual Auction. The money we raise at this auction goes towards Christmas for our local students. This is such a big event for both UMW Women’s circles and to be able to continue this community service at Christmas, we have opened the Christmas Box Project to the congregation. We are taking donations now through November 29th. If you would like to contribute to help buy Christmas for our local students, you can mail your donation to the church or give online. Please mark your donations as “Christmas Box Project”. In past years with the auction and generous donations given by so many in the church, we were able to buy Christmas for as many as 64 students. Your continued support is appreciated in helping to bring a smile this Christmas for our students during these difficult times. Continue to look for updates as we move forward. We will stay in touch with one another through email. If you have a need or are aware of a need within our group, please reach out to Karen Watson (828-361-9520) or Karen Crump (828-361-4504). Please stay well, and we are looking forward to meeting in person again soon!

Our verse for this year is from Matthew:

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

As much as we would like to pull both circles together to enjoy our White Elephant Auction, it is not possible this year. We must ask for your support through making donations for the following:

**World Thank Offering** – due by November 15th. This is one of the five important ways we support UMW Missions throughout the world and turn our “faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.” You can send a check payable to “Helping Hands” c/o Marilyn Jones, P. O. Box 838, Murphy, NC; or send a check to “FUMC Murphy” c/o P. O. Box 86, Murphy, NC; or donate online through our church website: murphyfirstumc.org by selecting the “Donate” button.

**Christmas Box Project** – due by November 29th. Each year at this time we raise funds to provide Christmas gifts for Murphy students who otherwise would not share in the joy of the holiday season. These donations can be sent in check form to “FUMC Murphy” c/o P. O. Box 86, Murphy, NC or by donating online through our church website: murphyfirstumc.org by selecting the “Donate” button. Please be sure to mark your donations for the appropriate cause.

Continue to reach out to family, friends, and neighbors in whatever safe ways are available to you. Stay in touch and stay connected! Any questions, call Nancy Jo Willis (850-428-3636). Thanks and God Bless!
Keep the following in your thoughts and prayers:

Ruth Vespasian; Emelene Crouch; Elleree Clonts; Kathy Kephart; Catherine Brown; WKRK Radio family (Tim, Donna, Tyler); all affected by the Coronavirus in our Country and our communities; Bob & Theresa Smith’s son Scott Adams; the firefighters in CO & CA and their families while they are away; Project AGAPE and Armenia due to military conflict; Liberia Group of ZOE Ministries; Kathi Taylor on the loss of Dick; George Ragsdale; Lochlan Rogers; Darlene Higgins; family of Ed Rife upon his death; BJ Thompson; Marilyn Jones; John Snow Jr.; voters as they cast their ballots at the polls; those affected by Domestic Violence; David Hoggard.

If you have specific prayer needs, fill out and submit a blue Prayer Request Card during the worship service, or call the church office or pastor (828-837-2718), or email the Prayer Team at: prayfumc@gmail.com.

FUMC KAYAKING & HIKING GROUP

We recently had a Kayaking Trip at Cherokee Lake. Several folks kayaked and several walked to the Spillway! We also shared a Picnic meal and had a marvelous time listening to each others stories. We hope to do an adventure or two before the weather gets too cold. If you’re interested in joining the FUMC Kayaking & Hiking Group, contact Cobb Barfield at cobbyb@yahoo.com or 828-557-2433.

Don’t Miss the DEADLINE!

for submitting information for the December edition of the newsletter!

Friday, November 20th
The First Sunday of Advent is Nov. 29th—time to get ready for CHRISTMAS!

Streamed Live

Watch each Sunday’s service live on our YouTube Channel
The Missions Team held a Zoom meeting on Monday, October 26. Due to your support and generosity, we are continuing to support people and organizations locally, regionally, and internationally. We are able to help the Hulbert-Johnson Friendship House, REACH, the UMAR House, the Sharing Center, the Crossnore School & Children’s Home of NC, the Pregnancy & Parenting Center, the Hinton Center, HAVEN, and the church's fundraising efforts to buy Christmas presents for local students. We also have made our third year contribution to Project ZOE to support our group in Liberia. They, like so many others, have been impacted by the pandemic. Of course, our COVID Relief fund is still in place to help those impacted by the virus locally. The members of the team thank you for your support for missions.

FINANCIALS:

Total Operating Budget for 2020: $344,292
Donations needed weekly: $6,621
As of September 30, 2020:

- General Oper. Funds Received YTD: $232,345.63
- Designated Funds Received YTD: $42,767.90
- Total Oper. Funds Avail. thru 9/30/2020: $127,763.96
- Total Desig. Funds on hand thru 9/30/2020: $28,385.03

NOTE: (1) Copies of the monthly financial statements are available in the church office for those who wish to review them. (2) The financial figures reflect the basic checking and savings funds of the church and do not include any information on Trustee or Foundation funds.
SCOUTING!!

CUB PACK 400 & SCOUTING BSA TROOPS 400 & 4400

SOME SCOUTING EVENTS WILL COME OFF COVID-19 HOLD SOON

Our dens will start meeting again early in November.

FOS BROCHURES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE EDUCATION BUILDING ON THE COMMUNICATION WALL. PLEASE MAKE AN ANNUAL FINANCIAL COMMITMENT TO THE SCOUTS.

JUST SEND CHECK TO:

DANIEL BOONE COUNCIL BSA,
333 WEST HAYWOOD STREET,
ASHEVILLE, NC 28801 — THANK YOU!

CAMP CARDS ARE STILL AVAILABLE. They are a great deal at $5. Ingles will still give you a $5 credit on a $50 purchase. This is the prime Scout fund raiser. Please help us out. Ask Dave Hotchkiss for as many as you want.

STILL NEED A SCOUTMASTER - (Troop 400) (boys) - Our current Cub Master is covering. Need a male or female. Talk to Dave Hotchkiss our Charter Organization Rep. (COR) or John Morton.

Here is the planned schedule...with status still on hold: (church will be available for meetings beginning last week of October):

PACK 400
--- (0X/XX/20) - Blue & Gold Banquet/Welcome Back Party (2:00pm-6:00pm) (location not selected)
--- (XX/XX/20) - Nantahala District Cub Scout Shooting Sports Day (Sheriff's Farm) (Spring 2021)
--- (11/02/20) - District & Roundtable Leadership Meeting (Andrews UM Church) (5:30pm/6:30pm)
--- (11/11/20) - Veterans Day and parade.
--- (11/12/20) - Popcorn Orders delivered.
--- (12/07/20) - District & Roundtable Leadership Meeting (Andrews UM Church) (5:30pm/6:30pm)

TROOP 400 & 4400:
--- (XX/XX/20) - Nantahala District Cub Scout Shooting Sports Day (Sheriff's Farm) (Spring 2021)
--- (11/02/20) - District & Roundtable Leadership Meeting (Andrews UM Church) (5:30pm/6:30pm)
--- (11/06-8/20) - Annual Lake Fontana Cleanup (Camping)
--- (11/11/20) - Veterans Day and parade.
--- (11/12/20) - Popcorn Orders delivered.
--- (12/07/20) - District & Roundtable Leadership Meeting (Andrews UM Church) (5:30pm/6:30pm)

If you want to enroll a boy or girl in Scouting, please contact our Cub/Boy Scout Master, Josh Frentz: (941-286-9827 or dodgehemi1981@yahoo.com) or Dave Hotchkiss (828-644-3372 or dahotch@brmemc.net) the Charter Organizational Representative (COR).
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| **1 Set Your Clocks Back 1 Hour**
10am Childrens Sunday School (Zoom)
10:55am Worship
4PM ALPHA, Prayer Garden
Rev. 7:9-17 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **2020** | Rev. 4 | Rev. 5 | 1-4pm Sanctuary for Learning | Rev. 19:4-8 | Colossians 1:15-20 | Phil. 2:1-11 |
| **8**
10am Childrens Sunday School (Zoom)
10am Adult Study (Zoom)
10:55am Worship
12:15pm Charge Conf
4PM ALPHA, Prayer Garden
Hebrews 11:1-2, 12:1-3 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| | Gen. 12:1-9 | 1pm Food Pantry (Drive Thru)
1-4pm Sanctuary for Learning | 1pm Food Pantry (Drive Thru)
10am Sharing Center Board Mtg. | Isaiah 55:6-11 | 1pm Food Pantry (Drive Thru) | Luke 1:26-38 |
| **15**
10am Childrens Sunday School (Zoom)
10am Adult Study (Zoom)
10:55am Worship
4PM ALPHA, Prayer Garden
Psalm 23 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| | Joshua 1:1-9 | 1pm Food Pantry (Drive Thru)
1-4pm Sanctuary for Learning | 1pm Food Pantry (Drive Thru)
| **22**
10am Childrens Sunday School (Zoom)
10am Adult Study (Zoom)
10:55am Worship
4PM ALPHA, Prayer Garden
| | Philippians 1:3-11 | 1pm Food Pantry (Drive Thru)
1-4pm Sanctuary for Learning | 1pm Food Pantry (Drive Thru) | Psalm 136 | Psalm 65 | Psalm 95:1-7 |
| **29 1st Sunday of Advent**
10am Childrens Sunday School (Zoom)
10:55am Worship
4PM ALPHA, Prayer Garden
Isaiah 64:1-9 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | Isaiah 55:1-5 | 1pm Food Pantry (Drive Thru)
1-4pm Sanctuary for Learning | 1-4pm Sanctuary for Learning | 1pm Food Pantry (Drive Thru) | 1pm Food Pantry (Drive Thru) | 5 |
The mission of First United Methodist Church is to grow disciples who know God personally, pray daily, celebrate worship, serve others, and reach out in witness.

STAFF:
Tracy & Lauren Allen, Custodians
davisbryant@murphyfirstumc.org
Rev. Wil Posey, Pastor
pastor@murphyfirstumc.org
Karen Crump, Admin. Assistant
admin@murphyfirstumc.org
Nikki Washburn, Nursery Director
music@murphyfirstumc.org
Suzanne West, Director of Music
music@murphyfirstumc.org

OFFICE HOURS:
During these challenging times our staff is often working from home and other locations. Thus, the church is officially open only on Tuesdays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

If you wish to speak with a member of our church staff, please call the church office at 828-837-2718 and leave a message, or call the desired individual on their cell phone.