



Murphy First

United Methodist Church

February 2026



Dear Murphy First,

We just journeyed through Advent, Epiphany Sunday, Baptism of our Lord, and right before this newsletter came out, we enter the five Sundays after Epiphany, which lead up to Transfiguration Sunday, which is followed by Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. What happened so quietly at Christmas is about to take a different turn. Ash Wednesday arrives for us on February 18 this year. It marks the first day of a seven week period before Easter.

When I was in college (back in the Stone Age), I was introduced to the idea of giving something up for Lent. Pretty sure I didn't take it seriously but was still aware that a lot of my peers were making sacrifices. I remember a classmate giving up chocolate, and I could not wrap my head around why someone would even attempt something so stupid. Other things that people have laid down have been the use of negative language, television, coffee, desserts, and bread, to name a few.

I do remember the first time I decided to really be serious about this. The choice for me was to give up all sugar, which proved to be very difficult. It wasn't enough for me to just give something up. Every time I thought about taking pleasure in a sweet treat, I would try to make the conscious choice to instead find treats in God's word. One of the things that I have discovered in my 40+ years (ok, 60+ years) is that God's word is a huge treasure chest.

It is good to be intentional during Lent to follow Christ more closely. Hopefully this is something we are always working for, but Lent affords 40 days to really focus on being the best Christian we can be. I rarely get it right but strive to keep working at it. As we enter into this reflective season, there are so many options to pick from. From devotion books, to Bible studies, to a structured prayer time, our possibilities for finding new ways to discover God are numerous. The journey to the cross for Jesus was one of sacrifice. In the song "Via Dolorosa" one of the verses states "that He chose to walk that road for me and you". Hopefully our journey is for him.

In Christ's Love,

Suzanne West, Music Director

UPDATE ON HARSHAW CHAPEL:

All of the electrical work has been done. We are waiting for the final inspection. Once that has been done, we can hook up the electricity to the building and we will have heat and power again. Then we can hire a painting crew to finish inside and complete a few final details. A new light will illuminate the plaque and it is motion sensitive too.

We expect a grand re-opening celebration to happen **around May 1st**.



If you don't see your group meeting listed on the calendar, you haven't scheduled it with Maggie. Remember that she has to approve activities that take place within our campus.



THANK YOU! For ordering luminaries during Advent – these are special ways to honor/memorialize loved ones, and you also supported our youth ministry.

- * **2/1 – 4pm** Youth @ FUMC, Service Project night at church
- * **2/8** – no youth, long weekend break

During Pastor Wil's renewal leave, Erin Simons will be our main youth leader, so parents can expect to hear from her. We have other great volunteers and dinner providers who will be with our youth too.



Young Adult Sunday School meets at 9:45am in Room 301 in the Education Building.

Seekers Sunday School meets at 9:45am in the Library.

The Nursery (Room 202) is available for children aged 0 yrs to Kindergarten from 9:45am-Noon.

Children's Sunday School meets in the Education Building at 10am.

Worship Readiness (Room 304) for children aged Kindergarten through 5th grade meets during worship after the children's moment.

Children are welcome in worship and will then be released after Children's Time to return to their nursery or Children's Church. Older children (5th grade+) should remain with their parents in worship.



- 02/02—Pati Sims,
- 02/04—Carmen Lance; Judi Teston
- 02/05—Chris Mintz; Linda Ray
- 02/07—Kathryn Jenkins
- 02/12—Caleb Fokakis; Karen Watson; Celia Fish
- 02/14—Patrick Allen; Anna Brinke
- 02/15—Gary Hall
- 02/16—Sara Sherrill
- 02/19—Mary Lou Sharkey
- 02/21—Roy Mendoza
- 02/23—Lucas Fokakis; Ralph Hudson;
- 02/25—Julie Hughes;
Joseph Brady & John Parker Watson
- 02/26—Bill Schuller

If your birthday does not appear above, something happened with our software update and we do not have a valid date for you. Please contact Maggie in the church office to correct this.



- 02/10—Noland & Charlene Smith
- 02/19—Thomas & Becky Nelson



As each church Task Force, Team and Committee gather for their first meetings of the new year, and leaders are selected for each group, **PLEASE** notify Maggie in the church office. In addition, please review your group member list in the app and let us know of any additions or deletions.

Lent Devotional 2026

Ash Wednesday is February 18 and begins our season of Lent as we journey toward Easter. In the busyness of our everyday lives, take time during Lent to be intentional as we reflect and wait. We are inviting our congregation to contribute to a Lenten Devotional booklet that will begin on Ash Wednesday. This year, we will focus on the Gospel of John, so please select your scripture from John's gospel.



Please use this format to develop your devotional that will become part of the church wide booklet.

- Title for your devotional (optional)
- Scripture that accompanies your devotion - preferably from the Gospel of John (1-2 verse maximum)
- 1-2 paragraphs of what the season of Lent and Easter mean to you. (Try to keep it as brief as you can for space purposes!)
- Sentence prayer or a closing statement to sum up your devotional
- Your name

You must submit your devotion by **Sunday February 8** to be included in the booklet. Email your devotion to D'Anna Liber @ liber765@comcast.net.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact D'Anna Liber (770-853-6814)

As this season begins, let us begin our journey toward Easter together.



**HELP
WANTED**

Urgent help needed in the Sound and Video booth on Sunday mornings. The system is simpler than it has been in the past and our three regular volunteers can help get new volunteers up to speed, so they can be part of the rotation. Reach out to Kevin Mendoza if you are interested: KevinNBMendoza@gmail.com. More hands make a lighter load!



The Children's Ministry Team is beginning an exciting season of dreaming and big picture ministry planning for our children and young families. We would love to have you join us! If you are interested in being involved, or want more information, please contact Kendra Fokakis (601-466-3089) or Pastor Wil.



Upcoming Events:

2/18/26—Children's Ministry Ash Wednesday Service at 3:30pm

2/19/26 –Children's Ministry Team Meeting at 11:30am in the Education Bldg.

Church Family, we need your help! Please consider becoming an offering counter. We count on Tuesday mornings and will train you on our procedures. Please contact Maggie in the church office if you are interested in helping. Thank you!



2025 Giving Statements will include all monies received by December 30, 2025. The statements were available for pick up before worship on January 18th and 25th. Remaining statements not picked up were mailed out this past week. If you have any questions or concerns about yours, please feel free to email me at admin@murphyfirstumc.org or call me at the church office. Thanks for your continued generosity to Murphy First UMC!

Maggie Corrigan, Financial Secretary

*welcome
Baby*

Wells Morgan Budzinski

Born January 21, 2026

Weighs 5lb 12oz; 19 inches Long. Baby and family are doing well!



Our sympathies are extended to Anita Sloan and family upon the passing of her sister, Sarah Frances Sloan.

February and March 2026
Lenten Readings: The Gospel of John



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
FEB.			18	19	20	21
			John 1: 1 - 28 Ash Wed.	John 1: 29 - 51	John 2	John 3: 1 - 21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	John 3: 22 - 36	John 4: 1 - 42	John 4: 43 - 54	John 5	John 6: 1 - 21	John 6: 22 - 71
MAR.	2	3	4	5	6	7
	John 7 1 - 24	John 7: 25 - 52	John 8: 1 - 11	John 8: 12 - 39	John 9	John 10: 1 - 21
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	John 10 22 - 42	John 11: 1 - 44	John 11: 45 - 57	John 12: 1 - 10	John 12: 12 - 36	John 12; 37 - 50
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	John 13 1 - 20	John 13 21 - 38	John 14	John 15	John 16	John 17
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	John 18 1 - 14	John 18 15 - 40	John 19	John 20: 1 - 23	John 20: 24 - 31	John 21





United Women in Faith

Willing Hands is our United Women in Faith Circle affiliated with the Smoky Mountain District and Western North Carolina Conference.

Our mission statement is, "United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global com-

munities." In 2026 it is our intention to lean into this focusing on four listed requirements to produce the predicted outcome.

In January we celebrated the installation of our new officers with a pot luck lunch and welcomed hearing from Lisa Bacon, Smoky Mountain District UW Faith President. Lisa explained the formation of United Women in Faith over 150 years ago and inspired us with snowflakes.

In February the hard work starts with the formation of committees for the upcoming year.

Budget Committee, Liz Pipes, Chair

Creation Care Committee, Open

Education and Interpretation Committee, Nancy Jo Willis, Chair

Fund Raising Committee, Sarah June, Chair

History Committee, Charlene Smith, Chair

Meals/Food Insecurity Committee, Open

Membership, Nurture and Outreach Committee, Gail Peck, Chair

Social Action Committee, Karen Watson, Chair

Spiritual Growth Committee, Ann Smith, Chair



Please join us for our next meeting Wednesday, February 18th (Ash Wednesday) from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. For additional information please reach out to Sarah June (828) 316-1330 or Gail Peck (407) 529-9354.

EVER READ GENESIS? Our Small Group Study that meets on Wednesdays from 1:00-2:15pm welcomes new participants who would enjoy a deep understanding of *Genesis* and how it informs the rest of the Books of the Bible through reading and focused discussions. This coming Wednesday, February 4th, we will be focusing on chapters 4 and 5 in the Book of *Genesis*. We meet in the Fellowship Hall and hope you'll join us!

Free Tax & Financial Clinic

Serving households with incomes under 225% of federal poverty level.

Free Services Include:

- ◆ Tax Preparation
- ◆ Tax Resolution Assistance
- ◆ Affordable Care Act Help
- ◆ Financial Counseling & Planning



By Appointment Only • Call (866) 862-2220

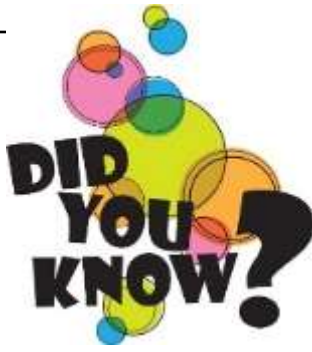
Remote Services Available – Mention "Remote Services" when calling.

Starting Tuesday, January 27th at



Murphy First
United Methodist Church

We have a Church App!!! It has the directory, events, calendar, giving, a way to check in on Sunday morning (that's right you can register your attendance with the app!), and a lot more.



You can find it by searching your app store for "My Church Home", it is free, and available on any smart phone. You'll need to get "authenticated" in order to have access to things like the directory, so first email Sue Bell (suzie1028@gmail.com) for access.

And we have a new look for our website! www.murphyfirstumc.org The services are now live streamed to both the website and our FaceBook page and is always available on our YouTube channel.

Prayers
lease

Keep the following in your thoughts and prayers:

Ukraine and its people;
Bill and Barbara Hughes;

Carl Auvil; Richard Douglass; Jack Cassidy; John Morton; Teresa; Lori; Freddie Lochaby; Emma; The Family of Frances Sloan Pearson; Family of Kevin Stetcher; Alice & Ron Lewis; Cindy; Carolyn

Prayer Team: prayfumc@gmail.com.

In an effort to have room for all prayer requests we will rotate off the names every 3 weeks unless indicated, either by a notation on the blue prayer request card or by calling the church office.

828-837-2718 or email:

admin@murphyfirstumc.org

Prayer Requests can be submitted through our mobile app, on our Facebook page, YouTube live stream or by calling the church office.

**Trustee on Call for February
Ursula Lasky**

Contacts

HOUSEKEEPING HELP! Whenever a group or event you are part of is ending, please be sure to:

1. Turn off the lights
2. Reset thermostat to **66** when room is not in use.
3. Lock doors.
4. Following Sunday worship, please take your bulletin & inserts home with you.



THANK YOU!

Pastor Wil Posey

pastor@murphyfirstumc.org

Suzanne West—Director of Music

music@murphyfirstumc.org

Maggie Corrigan—Admin Asst

admin@murphyfirstumc.org

Jack Frahmann—Treasurer

treasurer@murphyfirstumc.org

Bridget Esterhuizen—Preschool Dir.

preschool@murphyfirstumc.org

FEBRUARY “LET’S HELP” MONTH:

The Hurlburt-Johnson Friendship House (our Murphy homeless shelter) regularly needs a lot of supplies for the people it helps. Each year in February Murphy First provides a month’s supplies. The supplies are listed below and all donations can be left on the pew outside the receptionist’s office. **Thank You For Caring!!**

SUPPLIES NEEDED EACH MONTH

Liquid Laundry Detergent – three (3) of the large jugs a month

Laundry Powers – two (2) boxes a month (64 oz load size)

Toilet Paper - 300 rolls a month

Paper Towels - 60 rolls a month

Dish Soap - five (5) bottles (1/2 gallon) a month

All Purpose Cleaner – four (4) gallon jugs (makes 64 qts)

Windex (window cleaner) - one (1) gallon a month

Toilet Bowl Cleaner - eight (8) bottles a month

Trash bags - large and kitchen size (13 gal)

In addition, the shelter is looking for some larger items: metal bed frames, bed bug covers (30), a stackable washer and dryer.

These are approximate figures and can vary according to number of residents and type of weather we are having. Food items are always appreciated.



2026 Soul Table Every Thursday in 1st Quarter

Soul Table is a ministry of our church to feed the food insecure in our community by serving a warm, nutritious lunch every Thursday from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm. Participation in Soul Table tripled from January 1st until the 4th Thursday from 32 to 77 meals served. So blessed and thankful to all the volunteers who make this mission a success.

A special thank you to the women who create the hats and to the Mission Team who provide the mittens and sleeping bags and just in time! We handed out 3 sleeping bags to young men sleeping in their car and had to limit hat distribution to 2 per person. We also were successful in helping someone to a meeting they desperately needed.

Upcoming menus include:

February 5, TBD

February 12, Chicken Parmesan Casserole, garlic bread, roasted carrots

February 19, TBD

February 26, Chicken Noodle Soup and grilled cheese sandwiches

All served with drinks and desserts



Please plan to join us and discover the joy of Soul Table and/or volunteer, donate, pray for the success of this mission. For additional information, please contact Cobby Barfield (828-557-2433), Sarah June (828-361-1330) and/or Grant Corrigan (727-282-9607).



The month of February is designated for our congregation to collect supplies for the Murphy Homeless Shelter. Please bring donations to the church any time during the month. At the end of February the supplies will be taken to the shelter. Members of the Mission Team will purchase any supplies not collected through donations. A list of needed supplies can be found on page XX of this newsletter.

Mission Team:

After many years of incredible leadership, Anita Sloan has decided to step down as chair of the Mission Team. Cobby and Diane Barfield will step in for one year to make sure the projects of the team continue. If you are interested in joining the Mission Team, please contact the Barfields for more information. The Mission Team projects include: supporting Empty Bowls, Zoe Empowers, Service Sunday, VBS support, Soul Table, Alternative Christmas, S'mores and Popcorn Station. Additional projects might include feeding students during gap times when no school lunches are available, hosting a potluck, providing hats, gloves and sleeping bags to those in need, handing out blessing bags, providing scholarships, and supporting local charities. The Mission Team strives to help many local charities and individuals through the generous donations of the congregation.

Big Changes for Soul Table: Soul Table began 3 and a half years ago by serving one meal a month. Through funding from the church and grants, the program was able to expand to two meals a month. Now, with the addition of enthusiastic and devoted volunteers, there will be a Soul Table every Thursday! Another change that is coming is that Cobby Barfield (founder of the program) will be stepping down beginning in June. For personal reasons, Cobby and Diane will no longer head up the team that serves on the first and third Thursdays of each month. This leaves an opportunity for even more people to step into the Soul Table family!!! If you are interested in helping with the preparation and serving of the meals, please contact Grant Corrigan or Wil Posey.

FELLOWSHIP!!!

On Sunday, February 15th, following worship we will be enjoying our regular monthly potluck Fellowship Luncheon in the Fellowship Hall. The Administrative Council will be hosting this event and all are invited to attend. Bring a special goodie from someone's kitchen and join us!



FUMC TASK FORCES FOR 2026

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Vera Confer	Chair
TBD	Vice-Chair
John Morton	Lay Leader
Jack Frahmman	Treasurer
Chris Mintz/Linda Ray	Finance Chair
Kathryn Jenkins	SPPRC Chair
Noland Smith	Foundation Chair
Bruce Peck/Ursula Lasky	Trustees Chair
Lea Posey	Preschool Chair
Kendra Fokakis	Children's Council Chair
Sue Bell/Nancy Jo Wilis	Communications Chairs
TBD	Welcoming Chair
Cobby & Diane Barfield	Missions Chairs
Charlene Smith	History Chair
Kathryn Jenkins	Parsonage Chair
Sarah June Ely-McCollum	UWF Chair
TBD	Congregational Care Chair
TBD	Membership Chair
James Jallah	Annual Conference Delegate
Tyra Nelson	Youth Representative
Hayden Hughes	Young Adult Representative

AT LARGE MEMBERS

Kevin Mendoza	Class of 2026
Randy Allman	Class of 2027
Gerri Schutes	Class of 2027
Dan Stroup	Class of 2028
Judy Eicher	Class of 2028
Gary Woods	Class of 2028




STAFF

Wil Posey	Pastor
Suzanne West	Director of Music
Maggie Corrigan	Administrative Assistant

Updated 1/29/26

<u>TRUSTEES*</u>		
<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Mark Mobley Freddy Lochaby	Marie Kumar Ursula Lasky, Vice Chair	Bruce Peck, Chair David Liber Tim Nicholson
Wil Posey, Staff	Blake Hughes	
<u>FINANCE*</u>		
<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Linda Ray, Vice Chair Chris Mintz, Chair Wil Posey, Staff Jack Frahmman, Treasurer	Kim Barber Alex Budzinski Vera Confer, Adm Chr John Morton, Lay Ldr	Terry Fortner Edward Palmer Bruce Peck, Trustees TBD, Founda- tion Kathryn Jen- kins, SPPRC
Maggie Corrigan, Fin Secretary		
<u>SPPRC*</u>		
<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Liz Pipes Judi Teston Russell Matthews Wil Posey, Staff John Morton, Lay Leader, (Ex-officio)	D'Anna Liber Paul Schutes	David Lamb Kathryn Jen- kins, Chair Noland Smith
James Jallah, Annual Conference Delegate, (Ex officio)		
<u>NOMINATIONS & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT*</u>		
<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Janie Forrister David Hughes Wil Posey, Staff John Morton, Lay Leader, (Ex officio)	Gail Peck Carl Hymen Nancy Jo Willis	Terri Stroup Lori Nicholson Charlene Smith



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:45am Sunday School 10:55am Worship 11:15am Children's Church 4pm Alpha	2 8am Preschool 10:30am Yoga 11:30pm Chair Exercises	3 9am Tax Prep. 5pm VRR	4 8am Preschool 11:30pm Chair Exercises 1:00pm Bible Study 3:15pm Children's Choir 4:30pm Wesley Ringers 5:30pm Chancel Choir	05 9:30am Mon's Morning 11:30 pm Soul Table	06 8am Pre-school 11:30pm Chair Exercises	07 9:30am Al Anon
08 9:45am Sunday School 10:55am Worship 11:15am Children's Church	09 8am Preschool 10:30am Yoga 11:30am Chair Exercises 5:30pm Preschool Committee Mtg.	10 9am Tax Prep. 5pm VRR 5:30pm Trustees	11 8am Preschool 10m Worship Mtg 11:30am Chair Exercises 1:00pm Bible Study 3:15pm Children's Choir 4:30pm Wesley Ringers 5:30pm Chancel Choir	12 9:30am Mom's Morning 11:30 pm Soul Table	13 8am Pre-school 11:30am Chair Exercises	14 VALENTINE'S DAY 9:30am Al Anon 
15 9:45am Sunday School 10:55am Worship 11:15am Children's Church 12:15pm Potluck Lunch 4pm Alpha  Monthly Potluck Lunch	16 8am Preschool 10:30am Yoga 11am Missions Team Mtg. 11:30am Chair Exercises	17 SHROVE TUESDAY 9am Tax Prep. 5PM VRR	18 ASH WEDNESDAY  8am Preschool 10am Worship Mtg 11:30am Willing Hands 10:30am Greeting Cards 11:30am Chair Exercises 1:00pm Bible Study 3:15pm Children's Ash Wednesday Service 4:30pm Wesley Ringers 6:00pm Ash Wed Svc.	19 9:30am Mom's Morning 11:30am Soul Table 11:30am Children + Families 5:30pm Finance Committee	20 8am Pre-school 11:30am Chair Exercises	21 9:30am Al Anon
22 9:45am Sunday School 10:55am Worship 11:15am Children's Church 4:00pm Alpha	23 8am Preschool 10:30am Yoga 11am Mission Team 11:30am Chair Exercises 5:30pm SPPRC Deadline 4 Newsltr Input	24 9am Tax Prep. 12pm Centering Prayer Group 5pm VRR	25 8am Preschool 10am Worship Mtg 11:30am Chair Exercises 1:00pm Bible Study 3:15pm Children's Choir 4:30pm Wesley Ringers 5:30pm Chancel Choir	26 9:30am Mom's Morning 11:30 pm Soul Table	27 8am Pre-school 11:30am Chair Exercises	28 9:30am Al Anon
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Murphy First

United Methodist Church

P. O. Box 86 (73 Valley River Avenue)
Murphy, NC 28906

TO:

#BeUMC



STAFF:

Rev. Wil Posey, Pastor

pastor@murphyfirstumc.org

Maggie Corrigan, Admin. Assistant

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Jack Frahmman, Treasurer

treasurer@murphyfirstumc.org

Suzanne West, Director of Music

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Bridget Esterhuizen, Preschool Dir.

preschool@murphyfirstumc.org

OFFICE INFO:

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/fumcmurphy/

YouTube: www.youtube.com/

[@murphyfirstunitedmethodist4890](https://www.youtube.com/@murphyfirstunitedmethodist4890)

Our **Mission** is to live as a community transformed by God's grace, sent to love and serve like Jesus.

Our **Vision** is to build communities of hope where all people experience belonging and abundant life.