



Following our church council strategic planning session on Sunday, April 27, updates are necessary related to two topics we addressed – prayer and church communications.

**First, prayer.** We talked about both the *need* and the *desire* to pray, as well as the ongoing *challenge* of consistent prayer practice. Busy schedules—work, family responsibilities, overcommitments, or simple disinterest—can make it hard to join scheduled times of prayer, even for those who *want* to pray regularly. It could be that church folks want to pray, but reconsidering our pathways to a shared prayer life would benefit many. Let's concede that giving up on prayer is not an option, so we want to experiment by adjusting our approach.

Beginning April 27, a prayer prompt will be shared – and hopefully each week. Prompts may draw from a recent or upcoming scripture, sermon theme, or particular need in the church or world. Use the prompt throughout the week – in your car, at home, or on the ball field – wherever life happens. As you pray, you will join others across our congregation in a way that strengthens connections and supports spiritual growth.

**Prayer prompt for the week of April 27:** “Lord, Help me (us) to know your voice, to listen to your voice, and follow your voice. Help me (us) discern your voice from all others. Amen.”

**Prayer prompt for week of May 3:** “Lord, lead us beyond the gate to promised pasture, where we can still hear the shepherd's voice.”

**Now, church communications.** I didn't know exactly, so I had to ask where those four words came from; you know – “Pray, Love, Praise, & Grow.” Participants seem to recall they were suggested by a former pastor and included on Sunday bulletins and other communications. I asked if those four action words still resonate with us. Our conversation would suggest, mostly, yes, but the last word *grow* warranted more discussion. Every church wants to *grow* somehow, and the desire to grow spiritually is noble. However, *grow* may carry an ambiguously negative connotation, too. Someone outside the church may associate the word with growth in numbers, attendees, property, giving, etc., more so than active church participants. To the faithful, *grow* likely speaks of spiritual formation. But here's our challenge; church communications should be geared towards those *outside* the church at least as much as those *inside* the church, especially if our mission is to make disciples. If words matter, we must consider the perception of those words from the groups we want to reach. For this reason, we arrived at the word *share* as a substitute for *grow*.

Share what? Share the gospel, share our witness, share community – share life! *Share* is likely to be more favorable than *grow* with unchurched populations. Unchurched parents teach children to *share*, and people *share* with others in need regardless of faith. These are favorable expressions of sharing and the kind of language we want to convey to a world in need. As was stated, if we are faithful to *pray, love, praise, and share*, we can't help but grow in the end. We understand growing as an end, not a means. To get there, let's ensure we are a *sharing* congregation as well. Look for these words - “Pray, Love, Praise, & Share” more to come.

In Christ,  
Ryan Heatherly, Pastor McMinnville First UMC



**Taylor Barrett Lyle** is the daughter of the late Joe Lyle and Lea and Alex Street. She graduated early in December from WCHS but will still walk with her classmates in May. She loves reading, drawing, funny videos and her 3 dogs. Taylor will continue working at the McMinnville Enrichment Center as the Assistant Activity Director. She also loves volunteering with our special needs community through McMinnville Special Games.





## MISSIONS TEAM

The church will be ordering these shirts, with proceeds going to Missions. Deadline to order will be May 31st and shirts will be distributed June 7th in time for us to wear them at the church yard sale.

Shirts will be \$25 for sizes ranging from Youth Small - X-Large and \$28 for 2XL +.

Money and order forms can be given to Tena in the office. Please make your payments out to FUMC and put shirts on the memo line. Payments are due when you place your order.

Emily Holt



**Join us for a night of music! Robert Hicks will perform a special organ recital on Tuesday, May 19 at 7:00pm in the Historic Sanctuary.**

**All are welcome! This event is open to the public, so we encourage everyone to come and invite your friends in the community.**

**Robert will play at FUMC for the last time on May 24th, so come enjoy his talents while you can.**

### You're Invited

Please join us after the recital on May 19 in the **Fellowship Hall** for a special reception honoring our church organist, **Robert Hicks**.

Robert has faithfully served as our organist for the past 7½ years, playing with excellence and dedication. He will be greatly missed, and we want to celebrate his service and wish him well in his future endeavors.

**We will be having finger foods. Bring your favorite to share.**

If you would like to bless Robert with a monetary gift, you are welcome to bring it in a card. A basket will also be available at the reception for a love offering.

We hope you will join us for this time of appreciation and fellowship.



### You're Invited

Please join us on **Sunday, May 31 at the conclusion of 10:30 service** for a special **Potluck Celebration**.

This will be a joyful time as we come together to honor **Bruce Watson** for his exceptional service as Youth Director over the past 1½ years. We will also celebrate our graduates, **Taylor Lyle, Levi Hicks** and **Triston Luman**, as well as rejoice in our **confirmand baptisms**.

**Please bring a dish to share.**

A basket will be available for cards or love offerings honoring Bruce. Additional baskets will also be available for those who would like to give optional graduation gifts.

We hope you will join us for this meaningful time of fellowship and celebration!





Mrs Carolyn always does the most amazing puppet shows. I'm so thankful for how she pours into our children :)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,  
Summer is approaching fast! We've had a great month in the children's department. We had a great Easter egg hunt/scavenger hunt. Pastor Ryan even taped Easter eggs to his shirt and let the kids chase him down for eggs! What a good sport! We are winding things down on Wednesday nights before our break for the summer. With summer comes VBS. Our theme this year is Snowball Mountain Challenge and it sounds like a blast. We will be doing VBS a little differently this year. We will do a one day VBS, an all day Saturday event. I will need all the volunteers that I usually do for VBS but will not be requiring days of participation, only one day. I would like to have it sometime in late July/early August, depending on when fits best for our volunteers schedules. I need volunteers to run stations (science, crafts, recreation, bible story telling) and decorators as well. If you would like to sign up for any of these positions please let me know by calling/texting me at 931-259-2137. You guys always show up and show out for VBS and the children who attend. I know you will this year too! Stay tuned for more VBS info coming soon.

With much Christian love,  
Julie Holt  
Director of Children's Ministry

### SAFE GATHERINGS

Safe Gatherings is a comprehensive system that incorporates an online application, online abuse prevention training, several levels of background checks, and paperless reference checks for people who volunteer or are employed with churches, schools, and organizations that serve or work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Safe Gatherings also provides access to Clergy and Ministerial Ethics training, a two-hour online course that covers the top ethical and congregational boundary issues faced today by clergy and other ministry leaders.

FUMC uses this program to do online safe sanctuary training and background checks. If you plan on volunteering you need to contact the office and let Tena know so she can send you a link to do the online training and background check. A few volunteers will not need to complete the training until their certification expires within the three year time frame. Those who are currently certified are Dewayne Fox, Stacie Harris, Destiny Marney, Patrisha Marney, Wes Newman, Beverly Schmidt, and Lucinda Smith. Any other volunteers including staff will need to complete the training again if you are working with children and youth.

### Thank you for Giving Gifts

To: General Fund & Choir  
In Memory Of: Eulalia Jones  
Given By: Jim & Nancy Glenn, Brenda Stubblefield



**THANK YOU TO BETH HEATHERLY FOR HER HARD WORK PAINTING THE FELLOWSHIP HALL AND LOBBY. IT LOOKS GREAT! THANKS TO BEVERLY SCHMIDT FOR TRANSFORMING THE OLD SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS INTO A BRIDAL CHANGING ROOM FOR THE WEDDING OF TARA & KYLE. THANKS TO ROBERT SCHMIDT, DEWAYNE FOX, & JIMMY HALEY FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK CLEANING THE PRAYER GARDEN AND OUTSIDE AREAS. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HAPPY COUPLE WHO WERE MARRIED APRIL 25 IN THE HISTORIC SANCTUARY.**





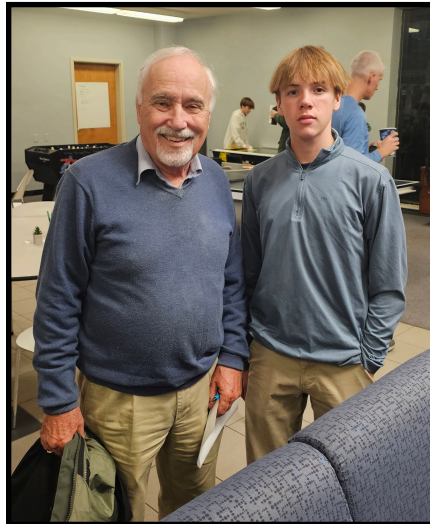
M. Levi Hicks is the son of Jennifer Hankins. Levi is graduating with a 4.3 GPA with advanced placement classes. Levi has been on the Warren County Wrestling Team the past three years, helping them to be district champions for many reigning years. He enjoys weight lifting, personal health, outdoor activities, playing the ukulele, and drinking Dr. Pepper. Levi is shipping out to Paris Island on August 18th for the United States Marine Corps. He will be doing aviation mechanics. He plans to make the Corps a lifetime career while also doing wrestling and other sports in the USMC.



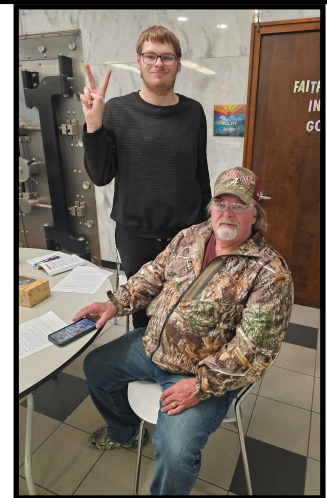
Triston Lee Luman is the adopted son of Llyod and Sherry Luman. The nephew of Ronald E. Montgomery Jr. Triston came to live in McMinnville, TN in 2024 with his uncle after the passing of his mother. One of Triston's life goals was to complete high school and get a diploma. Through many challenges and hard work, he achieved his GED with many thanks to from the help of McMinnville First United Methodist Church. He hopes to gain employment and to become self-sufficient or mostly so. He has also accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior, completed confirmation class, wishes to be baptized, and to become a formal member of MFUMC.



Thank you to our wonderful Prayer Shawl ladies for creating these beautiful blankets for our two graduates.



Youth Night



Dear Church Family,

Grace and Peace to you all.

Since the first Sunday of September in 2024 it has been my great honor and privilege to serve as Youth Director and Sunday School teacher for our young people. It has been a rewarding, sometimes challenging, and very fulfilling experience for me personally. I stepped in at a challenging time in our church life. We had come through COVID, the general conference after which so many of our members departed, followed by the resignation of the previous youth director and departure of that much beloved family.

It was a challenging proposition, one the Lord led me into. During that time, I feel the Lord has accomplished much through those efforts and with the help of so many of you.

That fall we took a good sized group to fall retreat at Lakeshore. For me it was a memorable experience and one that produced good fruit in the lives of several of our youth. We had an outstanding and well received Easter program in the spring, "Jesus is all the Books of the Bible ". We had a Sunday evening program at my home where we ate a meal, watched "The Chosen ", played games and where I believe some of the real work in the spirit was done. It was here where I really came to better know the parents, the families, and the way they interacted within their families as well as with others. It was here, in my home, where I came to feel a deep connection and responsibility for these children and their families. These nights were more than a 45 minute Sunday School lesson, more than a 45 minute to an hour long worship service. For me, they were a sometimes three hour window into the daily lives of these church families. We had a successful fundraising car wash, a summer program that though not well attended reaped, again, good fruit in the lives of most of those who participated and I believe, planted seeds in the lives of all who participated. This past summer our Sunday evenings were dropped to every other week and brought to church because some thought we needed a break and the evenings should be less structured. This past fall our Sunday School attendance dropped sharply. Fortunately, we began a much needed and, I believe, successful Confirmation Class, which I can take very little credit for other than the push to have one. Ryan led the class and it reached a successful conclusion. This included a very successful trip which I feel certain you've all heard about in which we traveled to the South Cincinnati area to visit The Creation Museum and The Ark Encounter, a personal goal of mine.

I could not have accomplished any of these things without the help and support of so many. Wes Newman and Stacie Harris have been excellent assistants with Sunday School. Stacie has filled in as teacher in my absence and Wes has been my good, constant, wingman. The parents have been of enormous help, particularly Brenda Spanjer, Sarah Dodson and Jennifer Hankins. Our wonderful mentors for the Confirmation Classes were so wonderfully committed and willing without much direction or the ability to intercede in any way on their own other than by their presence and prayer. So to Steve Tepley, Dennis Kronlage, Skip Zwemmer, Marsha Newman, Jim Pierce, Ken Murray, Mac McWhirter, and Bobby Boyd, thank you for stepping up and going above and beyond your normal excellence in being mentors to us all and specifically taking one of our children under your very capable wings. To McKenzie Holt-Miller for assisting with Confirmation Classes I say thank you. And, to so many others of you who supported us by showing up for our open house or contributing to the car wash or the youth program financially or for your prayers and positive reinforcement, I offer my deepest thanks. To Ryan and sweet Beth, who did more than her share of washing dishes and cleaning and to Ryan for the opportunity, I say thank you.

And finally, for trusting me with your children, I say thank you church family.

I share and say all this to you to give you a final report as I am stepping down as Youth Director as of May 17th. This decision grieves me to some extent, but in light of my current health issues Ryan and I have decided on this exit strategy. I am not leaving the church though and want to assure everyone of my continued support and love for all of you and our church programs. I look forward to seeing what the Lord, and Ryan perhaps, have for me next. And if God should decide to heal me specifically of Parkinson Disease, in general, in this life, I would happily return to this position. As a matter of fact, were it not for the Parkinson's, I would not so willingly give up the position. These last things, as well as my replacement are all things I would ask you to join me in prayer concerning.

Finally, I am very happy to announce we will be having at least two baptisms as a result of all these things. Rowdy Hicks and Triston Lumans will both be baptized, God willing, on May 31st with the possibility of one or more others to come. Details to follow.

And to the kids, I am always here for you whether youth director or not. If you need a ride to church or anywhere, if you need a friend, if you're in need of advice or a mentor, I am definitely, not leaving you. I am still here for you. You are all unique creations of our heavenly Father who I believe will bring to fruition all the seeds God has allowed me through Him to sow into your lives.

I love you all...

Peace and Love in Him,  
Bruce Watson  
Youth Director  
FUMC



Grace and Peace to you all.

## AC2026 Offering | Hunger Ministries Rekindling Our Call: Meeting Hunger with a Faithful Response

Hunger exists in every corner of our conference and many TWK congregations are faithfully feeding their communities through food pantries, meal ministries, and partnerships that reflect Christ's love. Our [2026 Annual Conference offering](#) will support TWK local church feeding ministries across our area. Thanks to the generosity of Encore Ministries Foundation, every dollar raised through our Annual Conference offering will be matched dollar-for-dollar.

**We encourage you to collect an Annual Conference Offering with your local congregation.** Funds may be [donated online](#) or brought to the annual conference and placed in the offering basket.

## District Gatherings | May 3 in All Districts

It's always a joy to gather in districts to prepare for Annual Conference together. These important gatherings will be happening again this year on Sunday, May 3. Through reflection, teaching, and table conversation, we will practice holy conferencing, review upcoming resolutions, and engage a shared process of discernment. Grounded in connection, this time will help us listen for God's movement among us and strengthen the relationships that sustain our shared ministry - so we may enter Annual Conference ready to be led by the Spirit who roots us in power, love, and a sound mind. [District Gathering Registration](#)



**Immerse yourself in nature.** Try forest bathing (using all your senses to connect to your environment), hiking, enjoying a park, hunting for waterfalls and wildflowers, going to a botanical garden or arboretum, getting out on the water in a sailboat, kayak, or canoe. Renew your commitment to care for the nature that renews you.

**Lead the next generation to love nature.** Create a scavenger hunt or play I Spy that is age-appropriate for your children, grandchildren, or neighborhood children. Invite them to observe and wonder. Add a sketch pad and colored pencils or allow them to use phone cameras to document their treasures from the day. Talk about God's call to us to take care of creation.

**Pick up litter.** Take a walk in a park. With a bag and gloves, where you see litter, pick it up and dump it in available trash cans. Other people may see your actions and be prompted to care for their own rubbish or perhaps join your efforts.

**Leave no trace.** Have a picnic and then be sure to clean up all leftovers or debris. Pack it in/pack it out. Take your trash home with you. Before you leave, challenge children to see if they can find any indication that someone was there. Teach by example.

**Walk on established pathways**—concrete, asphalt, wood chip trails. Staying on the path keeps green areas green. Remind children that the green spaces are home to critters who are God's creation too and deserve our respect.

**Protect wildlife.** Microplastics from degraded discards like plastic bottles and bags are ingested by birds and other animals, which endangers them. Prioritize removal of plastics from parks and other public areas.



Dear Pastors and Church Leaders,

Greetings and Happy Easter 2026! It is with grateful hearts that we thank you for all your support in 2025. Thank you for helping us journey with over 50 young women and their babies, to spread the Gospel message of the love of Jesus Christ. Thank you for helping us to grow and expand our services at the Pregnancy Care Center of McMinnville.

We are preparing for our annual Baby Bottle Drive, which is one of two fundraisers we do each year. We are excited to continue collaborating with the churches and organizations to ensure that we can continue this ministry to support life and to spread the Gospel.

We will have your 2026 Baby Bottles available for you to pick and take with you! If you would like an informational video please let us know and we can forward in an email. If you are not available to come by the center at 101 Magness Drive, McMinnville, TN 37110 on a Monday or a Thursday between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. please reach out to us at 931-474-2273.

As a reminder we are asking that you have the baby bottles available to your congregation from Mother's Day to Father's Day. We ask that you return to us at the Center on a Monday or Thursday as soon after Father's Day as is possible.

We could not do this beautiful work for the Lord without the support of each and every one of you! We thank you so much for your partnership in helping us to secure the lives of the unborn and share the Gospel message to a world in need. We are incredibly grateful for the relationship we have with you and pray God's blessings will be ever present with you and your congregation.

In Christ,

Jennifer L. Wilson  
Executive Director

Pregnancy Care Center of McMinnville

[Jennifer.wilson.pcc@gmail.com](mailto:Jennifer.wilson.pcc@gmail.com)

[www.pccmcmtn.com](http://www.pccmcmtn.com)

## **A Mother's Hands, A Father's Heart**

*A Mother's Day Devotion*

"Her children rise up and call her blessed..." — Proverbs 31:28

There is something sacred about a mother's hands — hands that have carried, comforted, corrected, and covered in prayer. Hands that have wiped tears in the midnight hour and folded in quiet surrender before the Lord.

A mother's love often looks like small things — meals made, clothes folded, prayers whispered, moments no one else sees but heaven records.

Yet in those unseen places, God is at work.

For every mother who has felt weary,  
who has wondered if her labor matters —  
know this:

God sees every seed you've sown in faith.  
Every scripture spoken over your children,  
every tear cried in intercession,  
every act of love poured out when you had little left —  
none of it is wasted.

You reflect the heart of God in ways that words cannot fully capture.

In your nurturing, we glimpse His compassion.

In your protection, we see His covering.

In your persistence, we witness His unfailing love.

Even in your imperfections, His grace shines through.

And for those who carry the ache of motherhood —  
whether through loss, longing, or distance —

God draws especially near today.

He is the One who holds every broken place  
and redeems every story with tender care.

So today, we honor you.

We bless you.

We thank God for you.

May you be refreshed in His presence,  
strengthened in His promises,  
and reminded that your life is a living testimony  
of love that reflects heaven itself.

### **Prayer**

Lord, thank You for the gift of mothers.

Strengthen them, encourage them, and surround them with Your peace.

Let them feel seen, valued, and deeply loved today.

May their hearts be filled anew with joy,

and may they know that their labor in You is never in vain.

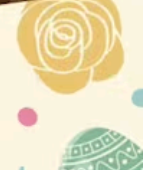
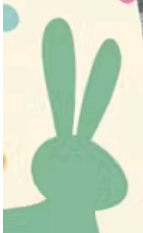
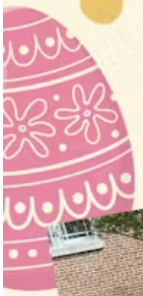
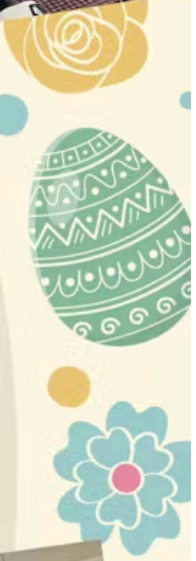
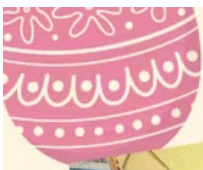




# Birthdays & Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				Friday, May 1  <b>FUMC Basketball @ 8:00pm at Bobby Ray against First Baptist</b>	1 <b>Eulalia Jones Celebration of Life Visitation @11am Service @ 1:00pm</b>  <b>Women's Retreat @ Beersheba</b>  <b>Nancy Glenn</b> <b>Peter Sands</b>	2 <b>Women's Retreat @ Beersheba Springs Assembly</b>
3 <b>Women's Retreat @ Beersheba</b>  <b>Caney Fork River District Gathering from 3-5pm at Cookeville FUMC</b>  <b>SPRC Meeting @ 6:30pm</b>  <b>Sam Young</b>	4	5 <b>Chris &amp; Emily Hennessee</b>  	6 <b>Wed. Night Meal @ 5pm</b> <b>Worship Training @ 6pm for Liturgist and serving communion</b>  <b>Darlene Duggin</b>	7 <b>Good Neighbors</b>		9 <b>Jon &amp; Belinda Ivins</b>  
10 <b>Mother's Day</b>    <b>Teri Biles</b>	11 <b>Prayer Shawl @ 10am</b>  <b>Nancy Wallace</b>	12 <b>Staff Meeting Birthday Lunch @ 11</b>	13 <b>Wed. Night Meal @ 5pm</b> <b>Worship Training @ 6pm for acolytes and media (running slides &amp; camera)</b>  <b>Donna Campbell</b>	14 <b>Shepherding Team Meeting @ 10am</b>  <b>Joe Harvey</b>	15 <b>David Holt</b>	16
17 <b>Ascension Sunday</b>	18	19 <b>UMW Meeting @ 9:30am</b>  <b>Recital @ 7:00pm by Robert Hicks</b>  <b>Steve &amp; M'Liss Miller</b>  	20 <b>Reception for Robert Hicks 6:00pm</b>	21 <b>Good Neighbors</b>	22 <b>Last Day of School</b>  <b>Marsha Newman</b>  <b>Reese Holt</b>	23
24 <b>Day of Pentecost</b>  31 <b>Potluck for Graduates and to honor Bruce Watson after 10:30 service</b> <b>Baptisms</b>	25 <b>Memorial Day</b>  <b>Office Closed</b>	26	27 <b>Karen Ethridge</b> <b>Sara Dodson</b>  <b>End of School Year Celebration at Rocket Park @5:00pm</b>	28  Make sure your t-shirt orders are turned in and paid for before the deadline.	29	30 <b>Robert Schmidt</b>







Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026: Confirmands & Mentors Recognition

