

First United Methodist Church *Messenger*

July

2026



From the Pastor's Desk

Attending the Annual Conference each year at beautiful Lake Junaluska, NC, is always a joy as opportunities abound to work together, to learn, to grow spiritually, to be inspired, and to worship. The business of the Annual conference includes resourcing churches for mission and ministry, approving candidates for ministry, and sending ministers and churches forth to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Geographically, the Western North Carolina Conference (WNCC) of the United Methodist Church covers the western half of North Carolina. Its geographic bounds extend from the Tennessee state line in the west to just east of Greensboro, and from the Virginia border in the north down to the South Carolina line. In relation to the UMC, an annual conference is part of a larger geographic body, called a Jurisdictional Conference, which is part of a Regional Conference, and ultimately part of the General Conference, which is global in nature.

Here in Lincolnton, we are part of the Catawba Valley District of the Western North Carolina Conference, which is part of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, the US Regional Conference, and ultimately part of the General Conference

Did you know that when you attend church here at First, you are connected to a world wide group of United Methodists? The beauty of this is that the UMC is relational, working together to reach the world for Christ. In that spirit, I offer a summary of what was accomplished this year at the Annual Conference. Turn to page seven.

Pastor Sarah

Ways We Serve

Greeters

5 Steve & Kathy Valentine
12 Cathy Thornburg & Wanda Lutz
19 Jerry & Gayle Park
26 Jason & Jennifer Ellis

Acolytes

5 Brooks Hardin
12 Helen Claire Hames
19 Owen Krech
26 Noah Hardin

Time For All God's Children

5 Kathy Douglas
12 Cale Thornburg
19 Billy Howell
26 Chrissie McGovern

Liturgists

5 Gordon Hubbell
12 Steve Herman
19 Jason Ellis
26 Levi Stroud

Pew Keepers

5 Steve & Jane Morton
12 Vickie Andrews
19 Beverly Beal
26 Kathy Valentine

Parking Valets/Security Monitor

5 Paul Douglas & Bo King
12 Jeff Noles & John Lantz
19 Steve Herman & Jason Ellis
26 Jerry Park & Paul Strachan

Safe Sanctuary Rovers

5 Rosalind Welder
12 Keith Dedmond
19 Kay Hermann
26 Rosemary Leonard

Communion Assistants July 5: Jason & Jennifer Ellis; Jeff Noles

Altar Guild: Billy & Carole Howell



Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.
- Mark 11:24

In Your Daily Prayers, Please Pray for:

OUR CHURCH FAMILY: Family of John Wesley Lockman (Joey Lockman's brother), Deanie Auton, Sally Brookins, Elvie Cranford, Jody Cronland, Shirley Drum, Jennifer Ellis, Jane Finger, Steve Ford, Ed Hatley, Susan Henthorn, Kelly Kinard, Randi Kolseth, Ginger Lowe, Judy Lowe, Pat Maddux, Faye Morris, Joann Parker, Steve & Suzanne Peeler, Randy Ramsey, Nancy Rhyne, Mary Catherine Robinson, Linda Shields, Randolph & Teresa Shives, Liz Strachan, Rev. Sarah Underwood, Linda Wolfe

FRIENDS & FAMILY: Thomas Allen, Laurie Anne Beyer, Terry Bruner, Jeremiah Buff, James Calvert, Lyn Campbell, Les Canipe, Greg Clarke, Rob Coles (son of Lyn Campbell), Janice Dellinger, Kenny Dellinger, Greg Eldridge, Ronnie Engle, Callen Evans, Barbara Fitzpatrick, Kim Fitzpatrick, Jim Fortenberry, Rev. Keiko Foster, Dale Gilmore, Nancy Harris, Donald Hartsell, Jayce Heff, Ray Hemmann, Denise Hobbs, Butch Humphries, Mark Johnson, Dolly Jones, Jack Jones, Isla Keener, Jane Kerr, Danny Kirkpatrick, Jim Love, Mark Ludwig, Danny Nicholson, Patsy Nicholson, Mary Novotny, Suzy Otterman, Joyce Parlier, Rico (from The Meating Place), Rachel Roy, Gracie Sceascea, Shedlass Family, Kenny Shrum, Anna Shuford, Laura Smallwood, Rhonda Swafford, Doris Taylor, Harold & Cindy Towery, Kevin Turner, Jamie VanDohlen, Veofa Wilfong, Margret Wetz, Carolyn Wirth, Rev. David Wyant, Joe & Josephine Young, all of our fallen heroes.

HOMEBOUND: Lou Beal, Winnon Cashion, Mary Robinson

CARE FACILITIES: Ron Ballard (Lincoln Rehab)

We would like to keep our prayer list updated. Please let the office know of any changes, names to add or delete.

Birthdays

- 1 Teresa Shives
- 3 John Lantz
- 4 Cheryl Cole & Betty Allen
- 6 Tenley Blackwell
- 7 Linda Graham & Kara Lawing
- 8 Drew Kirksey
- 11 Jan Duncan
- 13 Whitney King & Donna Noles
- 14 Calvin Blackwell
- 18 Nancy Rhyne
- 19 Jane Finger & Karmen Spencer
- 20 Sandy Eldridge
- 21 Alex Owen, Dianne Putnam, & Susan Wigley
- 22 Johnny Anderson, Samantha Ferris
- 24 Jerry Owen
- 25 Tres Abernethy III, Linda Church & Elvie Cranford
- 26 Jerry Park, Tom Owen
- 27 Barbara Rushing, Ann Setzer
- 28 Randolph Shives, Jr.
- 30 Mike Owen
- 31 Richard Beeker, Nancy Price & Kathryn Sledzewski

Anniversaries

- 9 Kenny & Jane Finger
- 17 Charles & Wanda Lutz



FUMC News & Updates



Vacation Bible School 2026

Mark your calendar for August 5-8! 5:30 – 8 pm. This year's theme is Road Trip: On the Road with God. Road Trip invites us on an exciting journey as we discover new places, new friends and ways that we can discover God's goodness and presence everywhere. We will serve a meal each night from 5:30 pm – 6:00 pm provided by one of our host churches. We will feature stories and activities for ages 3- 5th grade, with our youth helping lead the sessions. We will also have a class for adults each night, featuring the Dean of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary at Lenoir-Rhyne University.

There will be a volunteer meeting on Sunday, July 12 at 3 pm to make assignments and work on plans for VBS. As a part of this meeting, we will also have a Safe Sanctuary refresher course to review our policies and procedures. If you would like to volunteer, but have not been trained in our Safe Sanctuary policy, this session will count toward that training. Please let Robbie know if you are able to attend.

FUMC Shirt Orders

If you did not have chance to place an order for our new FUMC shirts, we will be placing a second order later this summer. We need a minimum of 24 of each screen print to place a new order, so if interested, contact Robbie in the church office for pricing information.

Financial Update

May 2026 YTD Revenue	\$ 188,379
May 2026 YTD Expense	\$ 184,549
May 2026 YTD SURPLUS	\$ 3,830

GE Massey School Supply Drive

Our church can help GEM with school supplies. The principal gave us a list of always needed items. They are:

- Kleenex
- Markers(washable)
- Wipes(baby and Clorox)
- Glue sticks
- Crayon packs
- Composition Books

A collection box will be at the entrance to the educational building. We'll collect for two months (July and August).

Thank you in advance for your help,

5th Wednesday Book Club

Calling all women of the church... Join us for our relaxed book club gatherings designed for all of you who love thoughtful conversation and a cozy atmosphere. We gather four times a year to share what we have been reading, learning, and thinking. The UMW bookshelves hold quite a bit of wisdom (as do we!), thought provoking content, warmth, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, forays into foreign cultures as well as specific book recommendations from the group. We'd love to have you join us. Our next meeting is July 29th at noon in our church library. And for those who want to keep going, we walk down to the Meeting Place and enjoy lunch out!

Mountain Top Team Commissioning

On June 28, a commissioning service was held for our Mountain TOP team, who will be heading to Tennessee early on Sunday, July 5th. Keep them in your prayers as they become the hands of Christ with their work team experience. They will return on Saturday, July 11th. advance of the Annual Conference and/or bring a contribution to Lake Junaluska as we join together in a connectional act of generosity, solidarity, and repair.

Healthcare Team Updates

Blood pressures checks will be taken on July 5th following Sunday school and morning worship.

The Healthcare Team will NOT meet for the month of July.

Four members of our committee provided a health-related topic in March thru June to four Sunday school classes. The response has been positive to these presentations,

so we have decided to continue with new topics beginning in September. If anyone has a topic of interest to suggest, contact Robbie in the church office. Class leaders will be contacted about desired class scheduling.

Parish Nurse Notes - Tick Talk

In this area when the weather gets warm, it means tick season. The avoidance precautions include things like wearing long sleeves and pants when walking in high weeds, or the woods. That is OK, but the little pests may come in your house on your clothing. It is beset to avoid leaving clothing that has been left outside in your bedroom because a tick may have hitched a ride. If you find an attached tick, pull it off immediately and destroy. Write on your calendar the date you removed the tick. For 3 weeks, watch for any redness or swelling of the bite area, rash or feeling ill. See your healthcare provided as soon as possible if symptoms appear.

Girl Scout News

Our Girl Scout Troop hosted a Father/Daughter Dance for Father's Day on June 13th in our Fellowship Hall. On July 18, they will host a Mother/Daughter Tea from 2-4 pm in the Fellowship Hall. They have invited the women of the church as their guests for this event. If you are able to attend, please RSVP to the church office by Sunday, July 12th.



The Girl Scouts have continued to help around the community, and appreciate the support of our church. The



troop presented Addie Ellis with her gold ropes at the West Lincoln High school awards day. They also made artificial flower arrangements and delivered them to several nursing homes, as well as assisting with the flag retirement ceremony and helping with "The Price is Right" night for the Child Advocacy Council.

Boy Scout News

Our Boy Scout troop has been busy assisting throughout the community, helping with the Memorial Day Ceremony at Post 30 Legion Hall, as well as many other special projects. They intended to assist with the Flag Day Remembrance and retirement service, but due to increased heat and the threat of thunderstorms, they decided to hold that later in the year.



On June 28th, Jake Tweed received his Eagle Scout award, surrounded by friends and family who have helped him along his journey. A reception followed in the fellowship hall of First UMC of Lincolnton. Jake will enter UNC-Chapel Hill in August. Congratulations, Jake!!

thank you

Dear FUMC Family –

Thank you guys so much for the graduation gifts! My blanket has been used every single day. I couldn't have done it without the support and love from the church. Thank you guys for all that you do.

--Jake

2026 Finance Update

First and foremost, we would like to thank everyone for their generosity in giving during the first half of our 2026 Budget. As a review of our 2026 budget, we estimated our annual income at \$423,000 with annual expenditures of \$465,124, being lenient on income and generous on the expenditures and knowing adjustments would be made as the year progressed and circumstances changed. We are on target for both income and expenditures year-to-date as of the end of May. We also want to give a special thank you to the donors who have graciously helped with our unbudgeted special projects and programs in both 2025 and 2026. See the 2025 Generosity Report below showing all of the mission and project support you have provided outside of your budget contributions.

First UMC recently received a bequest in the amount of \$250,000 from the Ann Ford estate. We want to be sure these funds are wisely invested and to achieve this goal we have consulted with the Methodist Foundation on the investment options available to us. An initial Investment Committee was established to recommend an appropriate strategy for these monies and for future bequests and/or large donations the church might receive. After much discussion with the Foundation staff and among the committee members, a recommendation was presented to the Church Leadership Council (CLC) at the June 8th meeting. The recommendation was approved. The church will establish 2 investment funds with the Methodist Foundation. One will be an Endowment Fund and the other a Diversified Fund under their Managed Funds program. The Endowment Fund is for long-term program investments with the principal restricted and returns usable by the church. The Diversified Fund is for both short-term and long-term program investments with the principal unrestricted and returns usable by the church. The Methodist Foundation has been very helpful and will be assisting us in establishing these Funds.

The Ann Ford bequest monies will be used to establish these funds. Initially the Endowment Funds will receive \$10,000 and the Diversified Fund will receive \$215,000. The remaining \$25,000 will be designated for a program to be established providing help to our neighbors in the community.

To ensure all the church investments are carefully monitored, an Investment Committee will be become a permanent committee under the CLC Finance Chair. This committee will include the Pastor, Treasurer, Finance Chair, Trustee Chair and 3 at-large members, with meetings at least every 6 months and more frequently as needed.

Thank you in advance for your continued generosity, First UMC is truly blessed!
-Dianne Putnam, CLC Finance Chair

2025 Generosity Review

To celebrate the generosity of the FUMC congregation, we would like to highlight 2025 contributions that were given in addition to the \$392,904 in contributions that flowed through the operating budget. An additional \$186,194 for special projects, missions, etc. was donated as shown below:

\$67,922	Audio/Visual system upgrade
\$60,500	Maintenance (outside painting, outside steps, lighting upgrades)
\$15,061	Missions
\$12,500	Parsonage
\$9,798	Backpack
\$7,204	Christian Ministry
\$13,209	Miscellaneous



CLC Recap for June 8, 2026

- We welcomed our two new council members: Bryan Beal (Convener) and Carol King (Worship Liaison)
- A motion was made to order replacements for the tube candelas in the window candlesticks. The candelas will be a cleaner option, not requiring a wax candle in favor of a liquid oil cartridge that will be replaced after a 25 hour burn time. The motion was accepted and approved.
- Dianne Putnam has offered to make a new set of white paraments for the pulpit and altar table.
- Nurture ministries continue to run smoothly: Grief-share is meeting informally for the summer, the healthcare team is working on new topics to share with Sunday school classes, we have coverage for teachers in our Sunday school classes, Backpack meals will resume in August
- We will have 10 of our members attending Mountain TOP. On June 28th, an orientation session was held to prepare for the trip. The team will leave at 6 am on July 5th and return home on July 11th.
- We have mostly received all of our initial shirt order. A few pieces were inadvertently left out and we are working to get them done. We would like to get another order in for anyone who did not order the first time, as well as to be prepared for the Apple Festival volunteers,
- Dianne Putnam, Finance Chair, presented a letter regarding possible investments and endowment opportunities, as well as the formation of an Endowment Committee to oversee these matters. The letter can be found elsewhere in this month's newsletter.
- Work is being continued at the parsonage with relation to the mitigation of mold and other dampness. Quotes are being received from different sources to address these issues.
- All the offices in the Education building have been renovated, with the exception of the Pastor's office, for which work is scheduled to begin in August.
- We are still working to improve upon security measures for our campus. Our valet/Security team has added new members, and we are able to better monitor entrances to the sanctuary and the education building.
- An employee policy handbook has been completed and has been given to all employees. A copy is available in the church office.
- Vacation Bible School will be August 5-8, 2026 from 5:30 – 8 pm. We will be coordinating volunteers with the four other LYNC churches, but anyone may volunteer. A VBS training event will be held on July 12 at 3 pm for volunteers.
- Special thanks were given to Bo King and Jennifer Ellis for their time on the CLC.
- Beginning July 1, the CPI alarms will be set for the church office and the fellowship hall. During regular office hours of 9:30 am until 1:30 pm, the alarm will be disarmed. After office hours, if you need access to the Fellowship Hall, contact Robbie.

CLC Officer Consecration

On June 28th, we consecrated our new CLC officers, as well as those who are returning to their positions.

New officers are:

Bryan Beal (Convener)

Carol King (Worship Liaison).

Returning officers are:

Richard Beeker (SPRC Liaison)

Keith Dedmond (Trustees Liaison)

Dianne Putnam (Finance Liaison)

Chase Hardin (Witness Liaison)

Steve Kirksey (Outreach Liaison)

Rosalind Welder (Nuture Liaison)

The church staff serve on the CLC with voice, but no vote:

Rev. Sarah Underwood – Pastor

Robbie Combs – Director of Ministries/Church Administrator (Recording Secretary of CLC)

Joanna Underwood – Director of Music

Neil Underwood – Assistant Director of Music/Organist/Handbell Director

Steve Herman – Property Manager

Important Outcomes of the 2026 Annual Conference

By Aimee Yeager, Director of Communications

The 2026 Western North Carolina Annual Conference was a time of worship, fellowship, learning, and faithful decision-making. As churches across our conference continue to navigate changing opportunities and challenges, members gathered to celebrate God's work among us and chart a path forward together. Bishop Ken Carter identified seven key outcomes from this year's conference that reflect our shared commitments, accomplishments, and hopes for the future.

1. We established an equity fund for the repair of historically Black Churches.
2. We affirmed a covenant relationship with the Ukraine-Moldova Annual Conference.
3. We reinstated the ordination of Lauren Scruggs who was required to surrender her credentials 32 years ago through our sin of exclusion.

4. We recognized a Deaconess and 3 Certified Lay Ministers, both of which acknowledge the calling of laity in the life of the church. We also licensed 16 local pastors, commissioned 12 clergy as provisional members, recognized the orders of 4 clergy, approved the transfer of 1 additional clergy, and ordained 1 Deacon and 7 Elders.

5. We approved an apportioned budget of \$10,893,315 for 2027, which is .01% less than the 2026 apportioned budget and elected Rev. Meredith Poe Martin as our Conference Treasurer.

6. We celebrated the retirement of 32 clergy which represented a total of 845 years of service and gave thanks for the lives of 28 clergy and 30 clergy spouses who entered the church triumphant this past year.

7. We learned from each other about rebuilding the church within our particular context and in those discussion groups experienced the connection at its best.



Memorials & Honorariums March 19 - June 20

Artie Shields

House of Pizza

Bobby Cherry

Shelley Early and Family
Stan & Rita Cronland

Carroll Heavner

Stan & Rita Cronland

Lynn Wilmoth

Mike & Letha Owen

Derrall Kinard

Mike & Letha Owen

Linda Smith

Wanda Lutz/Kaye Waters SS Class
Rosalind Welder & Carl Henline
Jerry & Gayle Park
Alta Saine
Ernie & Betty Parker
Dianne Putnam
Mike & Letha Owen
Carol Wise
Judith Caldwell
Charles and Pat Stevens

Mary Armstrong Coffey

Steve and Patsy Herman (for Backpack Mission)



201 East Main Street
Lincolnton, NC 28092

Sunday School at 10 am

Service at 11 a.m. each Sunday.

Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. M-Th

Office: 704.735.7489

Email: firstumclinc@gmail.com

Website: fumclincolnton.com



Follow us on Facebook and YouTube

Events this coming month

July 2 – CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED in observance of Independence Day Holiday

July 5 – Blood Pressure screening – during Sunday school and following morning worship

July 5 – 11 – MOUNTAIN TOP Mission Trip

July 12 – 9 am – United Methodist Women will meet in the Fellowship Hall. All women of the church are invited to attend.

July 12 – 3 pm – Vacation Bible School Volunteer Meeting in the Fellowship Hall

July 13 – 6 pm - Church Leadership Council in the Annex. All Church members are invited to attend regular CLC business sessions, but if a SPRC/Executive session is needed following the main meeting, only CLC members may attend.

July 18 – 2-4 pm - Girl Scout Mother/Daughter Tea in the Fellowship Hall. All ladies of the church are invited to attend. Please RSVP to the church office by Sunday, July 12.

July 29 – Noon – 5th Wednesday Book Club will meet in the church library. Lunch to follow at The Meating Place.



**FIRST UMC is a
Lighthouse Congregation
of the
Western North Carolina
Conference of the
United Methodist Church.**