

First United Methodist Church *Messenger*

October

2026

St. Francis & The Animals

St Francis of Assisi, Umbria, Italy was born in 1181 AD. His father was a wealthy cloth merchant and therefore Francis led a privileged, carefree youth. He later served as a soldier and became a prisoner of war. His experience of war then matured him into a more somber and religious man.

Following a pilgrimage to Rome, he returned home to Assisi, ready to renounce all his worldly goods and devote his life to the Christian Faith.

His evangelical preaching attracted many followers. In 1209, Pope Innocent III approved the founding of the Franciscan Order of Preaching Friars. St Francis loved all of creation, especially animals. In fact, the first living nativity set was created by St. Francis.

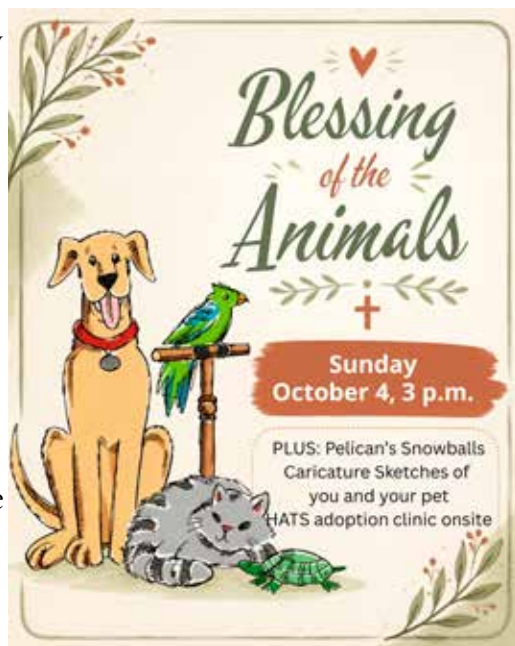
It is in his honor that October 4 is a Feast Day in the Roman Catholic church, and due to his love for animals many churches sponsor a Blessing of the Pets service, just as we will be doing on October 4th at 3pm.

Please join us in the Lighthouse Parking Lot, located behind the church at the corner of Sycamore and Academy Streets. A blessing for each animal will be given, animals will be available for adoption from the local Animal Shelter, and we are asked to bring bags of cat or dog food for donation to the Shelter.

Many other fun activities are planned. You may bring your pet on a leash or in a carrier. If your animal is nervous around crowds of people, or your beloved pet passed away recently, please bring a picture for us to see and to bless. We look forward to having you join us!

Blessings,

Pastor Sarah



Ways We Serve

Greeters

- 4 Dianne Putnam & Wanda Lutz
- 11 Jerry & Gayle Park
- 18 Jason & Jennifer Ellis
- 25 Steve & Jane Morton

Acolytes

- 4 Helen Claire Hames
- 11 Brooks Hardin
- 18 Helen Claire Hames
- 25 Noah Hardin

Time For All God's Children

- 4 Kathy Douglas
- 11 Billy Howell
- 18 Cale Thornburg
- 25 Chrissie McGovern

Liturgists

- 4 Chase Hardin
- 11 Steve Herman
- 18 Katie Hardin
- 25 Billy Howell

Pew Keepers

- 4 Kathy Valentine
- 11 Chase & Katie Hardin
- 18 Jeremy & Emily Krech
- 25 Dianne Putnam

Parking Valets/Security Monitor

- 4 Paul Douglas & Bo King
- 11 Jeff Noles & John Lantz
- 18 Steve Herman & Jason Ellis
- 25 Jerry Park & Paul Strachan

Safe Sanctuary Rovers

- 4 Keith Dedmond
- 11 Rosalind Welder
- 18 Kay Hermann
- 25 Rosemary Leonard

Communion Assistants October 4:
Calvin & Cathy Thornburg; Jeff Noles

Altar Guild: Kay Lowe & Patsy Herman



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: Deanie Auton, Elvie Cranford, Jody Cronland, Shirley Drum, Jan Duncan, Jennifer Ellis, Jane Finger, Steve Ford, Ed Hatley, Carl Heline, Susan Henthorn, Billy Howell, Randi Kolseth, Ginger Lowe, Judy Lowe, Pat Maddux, Faye Morris, Jerry Owen, Joann Parker, Steve & Suzanne Peeler, Randy Ramsey, Linda Shields, Randolph & Teresa Shives, Rev. Sarah Underwood, Linda Wolfe.

Birthdays

- 1 Brant Eagle
- 3 Bucky Kinard
- 4 Debi Ballard & Rosemary Leonard
- 5 Lyneen Campbell
- 6 Taylor Gazdeck, Ash Wirth & Betty Parker
- 7 Steve Peeler
- 10 Karen Leonhardt
- 17 Bill Leonhardt
- 18 Ben Beal
- 20 Vickie Andrews
- 23 Rita Cronland & Ann Howell
- 24 Laura Lineberger, Levi Stroud & Kristen Willis
- 26 Grant Gazdeck
- 31 Thad Lowe

Anniversaries

- 12 Doug & Debi Ballard
- 26 Gabe & Anna Ellis

FRIENDS & FAMILY: Avery (Mountain Top Leader), Thomas Allen, Laurie Steve Abernethy, Avery (Mountain Top Leader), Thomas Allen, Laurie Anne Beyer, Terry Bruner, Jeremiah Buff, James Calvert, Lyn Campbell, Les Canipe, Eddie Cannon, Greg Clarke, Rob Coles (son of Lyn Campbell), Anthony & Cathy Davis, 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, Denise Hobbs, Butch Humphrey, Mark Johnson, Shelby Jones, Dolly Jones, Jack Jones, Isla Keener, Jane Kerr, Danny Kirkpatrick, Jim Love, Ellis Grace McPherson (Jason Ellis' great niece), Grant Newsome, Danny Nicholson, Patsy Nicholson, Mary Novotny, Suzy Otterman, Joyce Parlier, Kristin Parrish, 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 and Denise Wyant, Joe & Josephine Young

HOMEBOUND: Lou Beal, Winnon Cashion & Mary Robinson

CARE FACILITIES: Ron Ballard (Lincoln Rehab), Linda & Phillip Graham (The Wexford House, Denver)



Please review the prayer list and notify the church office or Sarah of any updates.

FUMC News & Updates

Project Agape Christmas Shoeboxes Update

Pastor Sarah writes: *I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the response given to this project! We collected 66 shoeboxes for the children of Armenia. These have now been delivered to First UMC in Lenoir. From there they will be taken to our WNCC Warehouse, inspected, and prepared for distribution overseas. Your generosity is truly a way that others will know the love of God and of the church here in Lincolnton.*

Project Agape began as a partnership with the Western North Carolina and North Carolina Conferences of the UMC in 1993, upon the invitation of the Armenian Apostolic Church and registered by the State Council Committee on Religious Affairs. The Project cooperates well with the Armenian Apostolic Church and received the first state registration in 1994.



LYNC Update

Our LYNC program got off to a great start in September! Over two weeks, the kids and youth learned about the importance of being the hands of Christ in the world, learning that God is the great Potter and He molds us so that we may help mold others. They also learned that, through our hands, we can provide sustenance to those who are hungry – that we might feed their bodies, as well as their souls.

For the month of October, our LYNC meetings will take place at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 2639 NC Hwy 150.

The dates for the October gatherings are:

LYNC Youth – Oct 4th and 18th, from 6 - 7:30 p.m.

LYNC Kids – Oct 7th and 21st, from 5 - 6:30 p.m.

Invite your friends to join for a great time of fellowship and fun!!!

Griefshare Fall Session Begins

The fall session of our Griefshare group will begin on Monday, October 12th, from 10:00 am until 12:00 pm in our Lighthouse Building (formerly Drum's Florist), located directly behind the church. If you are interested in signing up, please visit <https://find.griefshare.org/groups/300458> or see our out Griefshare leaders: Joe Lockman, Sheila Beeker, or Katie Hardin.

First UMC Barbecue at Apple Festival Time Again!

First UMC's famous barbeque, cooked by the Noles brothers, will be back again this year at Apple Festival on Saturday October 17 from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. (or until we run out). Enjoy delicious BBQ in the comfort of our Fellowship Hall, as you are treated to video of our church and its many ministry and mission opportunities. This is a FUNDRAISER to assist with FUMC's local missions such as Backpack Ministry, Christian Ministry, Prison Ministry, Hesed House and others.



There are many ways you can help:

- Volunteer to work a shift during the day
 - Provide individually wrapped deserts (cookies, brownies, etc.)
 - Help with advertising the event, share on Facebook, put up posters, spreading the word)
 - Pre-sell BBQ to area businesses
 - Make deliveries to area businesses
- Buy and take plates to neighbors, public service officers, and others

COME AND EAT AND INVITE FRIENDS!

If you would like to help, please contact Rosalind Welder at 704-472-0128, see her at church or call the church office.

Mark Your Calendar! Homecoming!

SAVE THIS DATE! NOVEMBER 15, 2026! HOME-COMING AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH!! We invite all members of our church family, current and former, to join us for a wonderful day as we celebrate First United Methodist Church. We will have special music from our Chancel and Handbell Choirs, and a wonderful covered dish feast following morning worship. There may even be a few surprises!! Invite your friends and reach out to former members to join us for this special day! More details to come, so watch this space!!

Charge Conference November 1

Our annual Charge Conference will take place on Sunday, November 1, following morning worship. Rev. Sarah Underwood will preside over this meeting, which sets our apportionment giving for the coming year, as well as affirming the pastor's compensation package. All church members are welcome to stay for the Charge Conference, but only members of the Charge Conference (Member of the Church Leadership Council) may vote.

Financial Update

August 2026 YTD Revenue	\$ 232,837
August 2026 YTD Expense	\$ 295,791
August 2026 YTD Deficit	\$ (12,954)



The Women of the Church would like to begin a FAMILY GAME NIGHT. This is open to ALL ages and will be held in the youth room on **Tuesday evening, October 6th from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm**. We hope to make this a regular event, hopefully monthly. If you plan to attend, you are asked to contact the church office so we can plan for refreshments. For this first night, there will be pizza, beverages and drinks.

The Youth Room already has a number of table games available, but board and card games for all ages will also be available. You are also invited to bring your favorite game from home to play with your family, or mix and mingle. We hope to see you there!!

Healthcare Team Report

In prior months, 4 members of the Healthcare Team provided a brief health-related topic to the 4 adult Sunday school classes. Due to the positive response to these classes, we voted to continue with another series of topics beginning in October. The same people as before will be leading: Billy Howell, Betty Parker, Jan Duncan and Sherry Shrum. The Sunday school class leader/president will be contacted ahead of time to arrange topic presentation at the convenience of the class.

In addition, Steve Valentine has offered to again teach a CPR class for our church members. If you are interested, please contact the church office your name, phone number and whether you would prefer a daytime class or an evening class. Betty will contact you regarding scheduling the best time and date to make the CPR class available.

Parish Nurse's Note

As people age, most of us reduce the level of our exercise. Often the reduction of exercise is due to physical changes and limitations.

My preferred exercise is walking and I could always reduce my weight by that method until I was affected by numerous joint problems. Also, the risk of falls and potential for serious injury goes up as we age.

If you have limitations, professional evaluation and guidance is important before you increase or changes your exercise program. After any indicated tests are completed, physical therapists are most often the best source of guidance. Fortunately, physical therapy is usually covered by Medicare.

The other issue is motivation to exercise when energy level goes down and movement may cause some discomfort. Try to find some positive reinforcement for exercise:

- Have a companion to work out with
- Participate in a game which requires physical movement
- Plan a reward if you maintain your exercise for a period of time
- Find a friend to compete with, even if not together.

Keep moving if you can and you will be better for it!
-- Betty

LINC Meals

Our church has sponsored a route for Christian Ministry of Lincoln County for decades.



If you volunteer, YOU are giving of your time, love, and energy so well balanced meals can be distributed to people who are home bound due to handicap, advanced age, or convalescence from an illness.

It takes about an hour to deliver and you can deliver once or twice a month. Some have assigned days (as first Monday) while others simply respond to a weekly text asking for a volunteer for a specific day. To volunteer, contact Rosalind at 704-472-0128. YOU are needed!

Sunday School for All Ages!

First UMC offers multiple Sunday school classes for all ages. Here is a complete guide to our classes and what they provide:

- **Nursery thru age 4** gather in the Children's Nursery, located below the sanctuary

- **Grades K thru 5th Grade** meet in the Noah's Ark room, 2nd floor of the education building. Jan Duncan is the teacher.

- **Be Bold (Youth)** class is for grades 6-12 and meets in the Young Disciples room on the 2nd floor of the education building. The teachers for this class are: Chase and Katie Hardin, Steve Kirksey, Cale Thornburg and Molly Tweed. The focus of this class is to help you understand the questions that youth most often ask about themselves, God, or their faith. It offers a safe space where youth can connect as they seek answers and explore their questions together.

- **Be Bold (Adult)** class is open to all church members, parents grandparents or guardians of our youth, and utilizes the same curriculum that the youth study. The focus of this class is to foster discussion between parents, guardians and youth. This class meets in the Fellowship Hall, with Levi Stroud as the class leader.

- **The CRAVE Class** meets in the Annex on Main St, adjacent to the Fellowship Hall and is led by Jennifer Carroll. This is a class where you can just be yourself and enjoy the company of others who yearn to be a devoted follower of Christ. Through the study of God's word, this class explores various Christian issues, current events and other important topics.



- **The Good News Class** meets on the first floor of the education building and is led by Bryan Beal. This class studies a variety of topics from noted theologians. Through personal insights, the class explores how God speaks to us through scripture as we seek to understand our own questions of faith.

- **The Kay Waters Class** meets in the Philathea Room, located behind the sanctuary and is led by a variety of teachers. This class is for ladies and based in biblical studies and discussions to encourage spiritual growth, thus building a stronger relationship with God.

- **The Men's Bible Class** is for men from their 30s to their 90s and discusses Biblical ideals and how they pertain to real world settings.

Beginning next month, we will highlight each Sunday school class and hear from some of the members of each class to emphasize the importance of Sunday School.

thank you

Dear FUMC Family,

Thank you for all the wonderful birthday wishes, the lovely flowers, beautiful music and for the birthday song! It is a blessing to be part of this wonderful congregation.

Pastor Sarah



CLC Recap for August 2026

The following is a recap of the items brought up at the September 14th CLC meeting:

- Be Present: How Can We Support Foster Families and Children? Event will take place on Tuesday, Sept 29th at 5:30 pm at Events on Main. Be Present brings pastors, mission leaders, and outreach leaders from Lincoln County and surrounding communities together for a dinner of real stories, a short word from Scripture, and a clear, low pressure way for your church to get involved. Some of our member will be attending this event.
- Backpack ministry and LINC meals going well
- A suggestion was made as to how to increase engagement with LINC Meals by inviting some of our older member to accompany our current drivers on their routes. These would be members who are still active, but may not be able to drive themselves to whatever reason. More discussion on logistics of this to come.
- We are beginning to start recruitment for next year's Mountain TOP Trip. We will be presenting to the LYNC Youth groups in October to start generating interest.
- Apple Festival BBQ – Plans are progressing well. Rosalind shared how the funds raised last year were distributed and the various local groups those donations benefited. We will again have a video of our church events playing during the Apple Festival BBQ.
- We will again be sponsoring Angels from GE Massey for our Angel Tree Christmas collection.
- A concern was raised by Jan Duncan from our Children's Sunday school class regarding coverage and Safe Sanctuary policy adherence during the Sunday school hour. The Safe Sanctuary team, along with the teachers, will meet to address these concerns and seek possible solutions.
- Budget and pledge letters will be going out late September/Early October
- All upgrades to the education building have been completed with the exception of the two restrooms, which are currently under remodeling.
- The kitchen/laundry room renovation project for the parsonage is still progressing. We have asked for a new quote on updating the oven/range/stovetop and microwave to go along with the cabinet and countertops. The fridge and dishwasher are staying.
- Dates have been set for the remainder of the year for worship and other special events.
- Questions of the best way to communicate to the community with the myriad of activities that we offer was discussed. With relation to our upcoming Homecoming

festivities and the holiday schedule, flyers will be sent out to the current membership, and cards will be printed for distribution to those who attend the Apple Festival. Other ideas are also being considered. To this end, we will be going through the membership database to reach out to former members through print and digital media.

- Charge conference assignments have been sent out to the appropriate CLC members for them to complete prior to our Charge Conference.
- Sarah provided an update on the Fostering Grace ministry, which is using our Lighthouse building for storing baby and children's items for distribution as needed.
- Sarah expressed her thanks for the generous response with the Project Agape shoeboxes. Steve Kirksey will deliver the packed boxes to the drop off point at First UMC Lenoir the week of Sept 20th
- The Life, More Abundantly Faith and Mental Health Summit will take place on Oct 1 from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. Between 50 and 75 registrations so far. All sessions will take place in the Fellowship Hall. A shuttle will run from the parking area at Gaston College to the church. We could still use some volunteers to help direct participants and provide hospitality.
- We had a great start to our LYNC program, with 14 youth on Sunday evening, and 6 kids on Wednesday evening. Thanks to Cale Thornburg for helping to lead the activity, and to our volunteers for their help with the meal and crown control. Our next activity will be on Sunday, Sept 27th for youth, and Wednesday, Sept 30th for kids. This will be a cooking activity where the participants will make their own mini pizzas, and the lesson will be about finding unity in our diversity. Holy Cross Lutheran Church will be the host church in October.
- As the city has changed their Halloween plans to move away from the drive-thru Trunk or Treat, discussion has begun to plan our own church Trunk or Treat for Saturday, Oct 31 from 5-7 pm at the Drums parking lot. Anyone interested in taking part can reach out to the church office.
- Beginning with the October newsletter, we will highlight our Sunday school. October will feature a complete listing of each class, following in subsequent months with a highlight from each individual class.



Over the past few years, we have joined with other downtown businesses to take part in a Drive Thru Trunk-or-Treat for the community, and we've had a great time!! This year, the city has decided to go a different route with this annual activity, but that doesn't mean we can't create our own event! Join us in the Lighthouse Building Parking Lot (Drum's Lot). Costumes encouraged but not required! Come and decorate your car trunks, pickup truck beds or whatever vehicle you have, and help as we provide this outreach opportunity to our friends and neighbors. Interested in taking part? Contact Robbie or Pastor Sarah.

Memorials and Honorariums – June 20 - September 22 2026



Honorarium:

Charlie and Wanda Lutz
Becky Sigmon

Memorials:

Linda Smith
Bo and Carol King

Becky Hurt
Mike and Letha Owen

York Rudisill
Bo and Carol King

John Lockman
Rosalind Welder and
Carl Henline
Kenny and Jane Finger
Mike and Letha Owen



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



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

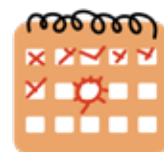
Website: fumclincolnton.com



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upcoming events



Oct. 1 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Life, More Abundantly: A Summit on Faith and Behavioral Health – Fellowship Hall

Oct. 4 10:30 - 11 a.m. and following worship – Blood Pressure Checks in the Breezeway

3 p.m. Blessing of the Animals – Drum's Parking Lot

6 - 7:30 p.m. LYNC Youth program – Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 2639 NC Hwy 150

Oct. 6 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. FAMILY GAME NIGHT – Fellowship Hall

Oct. 7 5 - 6:30 p.m. LYNC Kids program – Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 2639 NC Hwy 150

Oct. 11 9 a.m. United Methodist Women – Fellowship Hall – All women are invited to attend.

12:15 p.m. Healthcare Team meeting in the library, immediately following morning worship

Oct. 12 10 a.m. Grief Share begins its Fall Session – Lighthouse Building

6 p.m. Church Leadership Council – in the Annex

Oct. 17 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. FUMC APPLE FESTIVAL BBQ – Fellowship Hall

Oct. 18 11 a.m. Children's Sabbath Service – Special Music from the FUMC Preschool

6 - 7:30 p.m. LYNC Youth program – Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 2639 NC Hwy 150

Oct. 21 5 - 6:30 p.m. LYNC Kids program – Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 2639 NC Hwy 150

Oct. 25 8 a.m. United Methodist Men's Breakfast – All men are invited to attend.

Oct. 31 5 - 7 p.m. FUMC Trunk or Treat – Drum's Parking Lot

****Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, November 1 at 2:00 am. Be sure to "Fall Back" one hour on Saturday, October 31.**

Quilting Ministry gathers each Monday morning at 10 a.m. in the Quilt Room, 2nd floor of Middle Bldg

Handbell Rehearsal is every Wednesday at 6 p.m. in the choir room

Choir Rehearsal is every Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the choir room