



THE SPIRIT

FOUNTAIN CITY UMC
JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

New Year...So...

There's something magical about January 1, isn't there? The busyness of the past year (and the holidays) comes to a halt and people slow down for a fresh start.

But... uhm, did anything really change?

The habits I had yesterday didn't really disappear. The hustle at work is glad to meet you on your first day back. And the dreams you had for 2025 are still, well, dreams. So, I keep coming back to the question, "What would it take for 2026 to be different?" Seriously.



Scripture does not glamorize "new year, new you." It offers something better: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed... his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22-23). God's renewal is not a once-a-year event. It is a daily gracious gift.

Over the years I have heard plenty of New Year's resolutions, and I have watched many fail (mine included). What has helped me is less about grand promises and more about faithful practices:

- Instead of constantly adding more to my plate, I cut out non-priorities to focus on what matters most. (This should be easy, but I find it VERY hard.)
- Instead of riding the rollercoaster of being "productive" (which can become an idol), I try to build on momentum day-by-day. (Which I have found requires some intentional journaling.)
- Instead of longing for a day off, or a vacation, I try to structure each day and each week to fuel me. (Sabbath is actually a little elusive for those who work in the church.)

If you want 2026 to be different, consider choosing one "instead of" for the next seven days. Not a resolution to impress anyone, but a small act of trust. Put ten minutes with Jesus on the calendar. Say no to one thing that drains you. Show up for worship with expectation. Serve one neighbor. Offer one prayer that tells the truth.

God is already at work, not just changing plans, but changing hearts. Let's step into this year together, with new mercies and steady hope.

On this Christian Walk With You,
Pastor Don

New Worship Series Begins January 4, 2026

Words shape us more than we realize. The phrases we return to, the truths we build on, and the wisdom we carry with us form the foundation of our daily lives.

This January, join us for a new worship series, *Five Sayings That Will Change Your Life*, as we explore the words and scriptures that help us build our lives on solid rock. Each week, we'll reflect on simple but powerful sayings rooted in faith; ones that offer clarity, hope, and direction for everyday living. Looking for an easy way to invite someone? Say: "Come sit with me."

INVITATION TO PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP

Are you ready to move forward in your relationship with GOD? Personal discipleship is a step in the right direction. One way to do this is to commit to reading through the Bible in one year. Starting January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026, we will follow the chronological timeline of Scripture.

Daily Scripture reading will require a new commitment to growing your relationship to GOD. Let's start together and finish strong! Check out the reading plan with this QR code.



**PRAYERS, PRESENCE, GIFTS,
SERVICE, AND WITNESS**

OUR GIFTS:

WEEKLY OFFERING

Nov 17-23	\$28,348.06
Nov 24-30	\$14,826.89
Dec 1-7	\$70,929.53
Dec 8-14	\$23,165.00
Dec 15-21	\$27,036.00

FAITH PROMISE

Faith Promise Sunday is January 28. Please mail your check to the church office or go to fountaincityumc.org and click on "GIVE" to make your commitment.



January Menus

We want to honor our past and present church members. Each Wednesday night meal in January will have a featured recipe from the Fountain City UMC Cookbook!

- 7** Chicken Artichoke Casserole
Submitted by Mark Biagi
- 14** Baked Pork Chops
Submitted by Debby Dykeman & Sarah Clay Freeland
- 21** Chicken and Dumplings
Submitted by Carol Sterling Bellgrau
- 27** Caroline's Meatball Dinner
Submitted by Caroline Thomas

- There will be a "light meal" option each week
- All sides will be announced weekly due to availability
- Meal are \$5 per person | Students eat free

Please help the kitchen staff plan by registering for meals. This also helps us manage our resources and reduce waste. You can register by writing it on a pew pad in the notes section, by calling the church office at 865-689-5175, or using this QR code.



January 2026 Calendar of Events

- January 6:** Un-deck The Halls | 9:30 a.m.
- January 7:** Fountain City Fellowship Resumes 5:30 pm
- January 11:** Second Sunday Discussion | 9:45 a.m. | WH
- January 15:** Lunch Bunch | 11:30 a.m. | Rami's
- January 23-25:** Resurrection in Pigeon Forge | Youth
- January 24:** Community Meal | 5:30 p.m. | WH
- January 31:** Father Daughter Dance | 5:30 p.m. | Gym

Let's Un-Deck The Halls
Tuesday, January 6 | 9:30 a.m.
 Calling all volunteers looking for fun and fellowship as we "un-deck" our tree-lined hallways. We need your assistance taking down and storing Christmas trees and decorations. Just show up!

The Work of Christmas
By Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
 when the star in the sky is gone,
 when the kings and princes are home,
 when the shepherds are back with their flock,
 the work of Christmas begins:
 to find the lost,
 to heal the broken,
 to feed the hungry,
 to release the prisoner,
 to rebuild the nations,
 to bring peace among brothers,
 to make music from the heart.

Teisha Clapp, FCUMC Food Director, will offer pasta making classes on Monday, February 2 and Tuesday, February 3, 2026 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. These classes will be available on a first come, first serve basis due to limited space in the kitchen.

A sign-up sheet will be in the kitchen/office, or you can email spirit@fountaincityumc.org to secure your spot. Pasta made from the classes will go toward a pasta feast at our Fountain City Fellowship Meal on February 4, 2026!

Fountain City Fellowship returns for the winter session on January 7, 2026. Find connection, grow in faith, and learn how to take your next steps in following Jesus Christ on Wednesday nights at Fountain City UMC. Please review the class options below and join in on Wednesday nights this winter!

FOUNTAIN CITY FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship Meals | 5:30 p.m. | Gym

Let's share great food and fellowship each Wednesday night! Please register for meals so we may be good stewards of our church finances and reduce waste.

Programming | 6:30 p.m. (unless noted otherwise)

Saving Grace: A Better Way to Talk About Money

January 7-February 11

Have you ever taken *Financial Peace* or heard stories from folks who have? Well, Saving Grace is like that... except without the shame, pressure, or "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" energy. Rooted in Wesleyan theology, Saving Grace offers a compassionate, practical approach to earning, saving, spending, and giving. It names the real struggles people face with money and gives tools that actually help—while reminding us that grace, not guilt, is at the center of our lives with God.

If you're looking for a study that's honest, supportive, and won't make you feel terrible about buying a latte, this is it.

Facilitators: Walden Buttram, Charlie Gray, and Sandy Morgan

Register >>



The Cost of Discipleship

January 7-28

This class, created through the Candler Foundry, invites us to explore the life and wisdom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer—pastor, theologian, and courageous resister of the Nazi regime. Bonhoeffer is best known for his deep commitment to discipleship, his writings on costly grace, and his unwavering belief that faith must be lived out in solidarity with others, especially in times of injustice. Instructor Donnell Williamson will lead us through how Bonhoeffer's insights continue to speak into our lives today, helping us consider what faithful action, community, and courage look like in our own context.

Facilitators: Donnell Williamson & Pastor Rachel

Register >>



Prayer Journaling and Prayer Beads

A Fervent Journey | January 7-April 29

In this class, we will explore how prayer can become more focused, powerful, and personal through two practical tools—prayer journaling and prayer beads. Using insights from Priscilla Shirer's book *Fervent*, we'll learn how to approach prayer with intention and strategy, turning our conversations with God into a source of strength and peace. Each session will guide you in:

- **Prayer Journaling:** Recording your prayers, scriptures, and reflections to deepen your walk with God and track His faithfulness over time.
- **Prayer Beads:** Discovering how this simple tool can help you slow down, focus, and engage in prayer with greater consistency.
- **Scripture and Strategy:** Drawing from Shirer's book, *Fervent*, to help identify areas where the enemy tries to distract us and how we can pray with boldness, clarity, and purpose.

New to prayer journaling? Curious about prayer beads, or looking to renew your prayer life with fresh direction? Come ready to grow, create, and discover new ways to stay fervent in prayer.

Facilitators: Melissa Charles and Andrea McCarter

Register >>



The Chosen

January 7-April 29

The Chosen Season 4 follows Jesus' final year of ministry as his enemies close in, culminating in the raising of Lazarus, and focusing on the disciples' struggles with faith, forgiveness, and their own ambitions. Come join us! We start at 4 p.m. and finish at 5:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Carol Sewell, Sandy Failing, Lynn Dare

Three Simple Questions:

A Six-Week Study with Bishop Rueben Job

February 4-March 25

Join in for a six-week study that leads us more deeply into our understanding of our faith and who we are as United Methodists. Using Bishop Rueben Job's Three Simple Questions as our guide, we'll explore three foundational questions—Who is God? Who am I? Who are we together?—and discover how they shape the way we live, worship, and serve. Pastor Don Hanshew will lead this study with his thoughtful, down-to-earth teaching style, creating space for reflection, conversation, and growth as we lean into the heart of our Wesleyan identity. This study runs for six total weeks, organized into three two-week sessions with brief breaks in between.

Facilitator: Pastor Don Hanshew

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday nights!

ADULT MINISTRY

Join Rev. Rachel Collins on a Wesley Heritage Tour, starting at \$4,746 from Knoxville, TN, departing on November 4, 2026. You will see the English countryside of Coventry, the Cathedral, and the charred ruins of the old cathedral standing side by side as a tribute to the indomitable spirit of the British people.

On to Epworth, the childhood home of John and Charles Wesley, St. Andrews Church, Cotswolds, Stratford-upon-Avon, William Shakespeare's birthplace, where he also courted his wife, Anne Hathaway, and Holy Trinity Church, where he is buried. Oxford is next, where you will see Christ Church College at Oxford University, the ancient port city of Bristol, the "New Room," which is the oldest Methodist building in the world, Charles Wesley home, the spa town of Bath, where the warm waters have refreshed, healed and much more!

Check out the details and register >>



Couples Event | March 20-21, 2026

We are so excited to be planning a couples event at FCUMC! Mark your calendars for a fun, engaging, eye-opening weekend. Whether you are married, engaged, or even just thinking about it, you and your partner are invited to be a part of our inaugural weekend!

But first, we'd love to hear from you - please complete a short (we promise!) survey about what would help make the MOST of a couples ministry, and be the first to know what's coming!

Survey >>

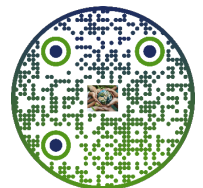


The Scroggie Mission Endowment Fund is given each year to support missions that impact our community, nation, and world.



Thanks to the generosity of Lucy Scroggie, Fountain City UMC is able to support mission and ministries that make a difference and change the lives of hurting people through the Scroggie Mission Endowment Fund. Decisions to award money to mission projects are made by the Scroggie Mission Endowment Committee. The Call for Applications for the 2026 Scroggie Mission Endowment Fund is now open. All applications are due no later than January 31, 2026.

Please check out the guidelines and application on our website using this QR code. If you have questions regarding the application, please contact Ashley Garren at ashley.garren@fountaincityumc.org.



FOUNTAIN KIDS



23rd Annual Father Daughter Dance Saturday, January 31, 2026 | 5:30–8:00 pm

Fathers, grab your best girls and head on down to FCUMC for our ever popular Father Daughter Dance! DJ Tara will join us once again. We will also have a special photo booth opportunity. Let's make some memories!

Tickets are \$25 per daughter and father/father figure, and \$5 per additional daughter. This is one of the biggest fundraisers for our Fountain Kids Ministry! Everyone is invited so share with your friends, your family, your neighbors, and your coworkers! All ages are encouraged to celebrate the special relationship between fathers and daughters!

Over half of the tickets have already been purchased so don't delay! Register today with the QR code above!

January 7 | K-5th Graders

Fountain Kids Back to Wacky Wednesday Nights with a Silent Disco & Glow Party

January 14 | Kids Club Board Games

Theme: Old Testament lessons and Jenga

January 21 | Joseph and Chutes & Ladders

January 28 | The Israelites and Battleship

Sunday Morning Fountain Kids for January

Faith Skills: Hear from God, Pray to God, Talk to God, Live for God.

YOUNG ADULT

Looking for a place to get connected? There are a couple of great ways to jump in.

Join the Damascus Class on Sunday mornings or gather Sunday evenings from 6:00–8:00 p.m. for fellowship and book study. During January, the group will finish a study of *First Advent in Palestine*, and beginning in February, the conversation will move into *God Didn't Make Us to Hate Us*.

Whether you're new, returning, or just curious—every Sunday is a good Sunday to join. Come as you are and find community, thoughtful conversation, and space to grow. For more details, reach out to Britney Barthol at connections@fountaincityumc.org.

Rooted & Renewed 2026

Roots hold stories. They tell how new growth continues to reach for the light. God has deepened our roots so that our faith, hope, and love might grow stronger.



Our Rooted and Renewed campaign invites us to live into that same story. Giving is not about equal gifts but about equal sacrifice. When we each give in gratitude and trust, our shared generosity becomes a living witness to what God can do through us.

This year also brings an important and hopeful change. **The ministry once called Faith Promise, which supported local, national, and international mission partners, will now grow from the same root system as our general ministry budget.** By uniting all giving into one shared commitment, we are expressing a deeper truth. Everything we do is mission.

There's still time to make your financial commitment for 2026. Consider how your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness can nurture the roots of this church and extend its branches of love even further as you prayerfully complete your commitment card. Rooted in faith and renewed by grace, together we will grow.

Make your commitment >>



YOUTH MINISTRY



Resurrection 2026 | January 23-25, 2026
LeConte Center, Pigeon Forge, TN

Resurrection is an annual weekend retreat filled with worship and spiritual growth for youth and their mentors. Each year over 12,000 individuals come together in Pigeon Forge, TN, to celebrate the God of The Resurrection. Through inspirational words and music led by nationally-known speakers and musicians, young people encounter the Lord in new and deeper ways. FRVR FREE is leading worship

again this year, and the speaker is Paul Taylor Smith.

Students in grades 6th-12th grades (and parent volunteers!) are encouraged to register! Registration includes lodging in a cabin (the Legacy Lodge in Pigeon Forge), entry to the event, and some meals. A deposit of \$50 is suggested and the total cost per student is \$100. Scholarship opportunities will be available to cover some of the expense for students who participate in our January fundraisers!

All students who have attended multiple youth group events in the last six months are invited to sign up, including new events leading up to Resurrection. If you have a question about your student's or your student's friend's eligibility, please contact Matt Randle at Matt.randle@fountaincityumc.org.

This registration is for Youth Only. If you are interested in being an adult chaperone, please contact Matt at matt.randle@fountaincityumc.org. A parent meeting will be announced soon to discuss Resurrection as well as information for the coming year.

Register >>



Fountain City United Methodist Church received an Emergency Food Insecurity Grant in the amount of \$1500. We are very thankful to receive this grant. Our church has multiple outreach programs that have and will continue to allow us to provide meals for our members and neighbors.

This grant allowed us to provide meals on four Tuesday nights for our Celebrate Recovery Worship participants and others from the community who are able to come. We offer a free Community Meal each month for our unhoused neighbors, the community, and church members. These meals provide discipleship opportunities, involve multi-generational volunteers, and feed up to fifty people who may suffer from food insecurity. The additional funds were used to provide our last Fellowship Meal, which we serve prior to Wednesday night programming.

We are grateful for this opportunity. As the number of unhoused neighbors continue to increase and the economy remains uncertain, this type of funding will be essential to churches being able to provide essential resources to both church members and the community.

Sincerely,

Gail Clift,
Community Outreach Team



OUR PRESENCE
Celebrating With Our Church Family

**Please join us in celebrating
the following blessing!**

The birth of Sallie Hensley Snyder on November 19,
2025. Proud parents are Bonnie & Sadler Snyder.
Congratulations!

IN MEMORY & IN HONOR

General Fund

In Honor of Lori Stanley by Mike Rogers
In Honor of Lee Iglehart by Holston Foundation

UMCOR

In Honor of Gary and Patty McMahan by Tom Cloud
In Honor of Becky Ripley by Tom Cloud
In Honor of Sandy Morgan by Tom Cloud

Choir Fund

In Memory of Fran Burroughs by Lee & Susan Iglehart
In Memory of Mike Hueser by Anonymous
In Memory of Bill Routh by UWF Executive Board

Kelly Family Fund

In Memory of Katie Green Walker by Marianna Kelly &
Erine McGaughey

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If Knox County Schools are closed due to weather related concerns, all church activities will be canceled unless otherwise noted. Notifications will be shared through Realm, email and social media.

Please be mindful of your safety when attending in person events during winter weather. While we strive to maintain clear pathways, parking lots and sidewalks may still be icy or snow-covered, especially after overnight precipitation. Use caution and take your time as you navigate these areas.

Fountain City United Methodist Church
212 Hotel Road, Knoxville, TN 37918
Phone: 865-689-5175
Office Hours
M-T: 9 a.m.-3 p.m
Friday: 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Email: spirit@fountaincityumc.org
Website: www.fountaincityumc.org
Social Media: [@fountaincityumc](https://www.facebook.com/fountaincityumc)

Introducing A New Group!

Welcome to an all-new group for those in the retirement season of life. Those seniors who want to be connected, involved, and grow together will find new opportunities for fellowship, shared experiences, and meaningful engagement in the **Young at Heart Group** - all while creating space for friendship, faith, and purpose. Along the way, the group will explore ways to grow in faith through conversation, learning, and serving together, while enjoying the freedom and wisdom this season brings.

Young at Heart



Young At Heart Lunch Bunch

A new group is forming, and it's all about good food and good company. The Lunch Bunch will gather once a month to enjoy lunch together while exploring new local spots.

This group will meet on the third Thursday of each month, beginning on January 15. Participants are invited to bring lunch money and either:

- Meet at church at 11 a.m. to ride the bus together for a fun and unique travel experience, or
- Meet the group at the restaurant at 11:30 a.m.

For January, we're keeping it close to home and heading to Rami's for our first lunch outing. This group is sponsored by the Young at Heart Group, and all are welcome. Come join us as we share a meal, laughter, and time together around the table!

Young at Heart Bible Study

Beginning on Thursday, February 5, the Young at Heart Bible Study will meet weekly from 10-11 a.m. This study will offer space to dive more deeply into what it means to be a Christian, a United Methodist, and to live with hope for the world. Together, participants will explore faith, ask good questions, and reflect on how discipleship continues to take shape in our lives.

Our next community meal will be **January 24 at 5:30 p.m.** in Wesley Hall. Join us as we open our doors to the community for a warm meal and fellowship! This event is open to everyone in the church, our housed and unhoused neighbors, and of course, anyone else who is HUNGRY. We have some great cooks so come and eat with us!

FOUNTAIN CITY UMC
**COMMUNITY
MEAL**

