

 **MUNSEY**

MAY 2025

MESSENGER

A monthly publication for family and friends of Munsey Memorial United Methodist Church



May 4 is Confirmation Sunday.
We'll join together in one combined worship service
at 11:00am in the Sanctuary.
We hope you'll plan to join us for this special day!

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR KIP



In his bestselling book, *Disappointment with God*, Philip Yancey relates a touching story from his own life. One time on a visit to his mother who had been widowed years earlier, in the month of Philip's first birthday, they spent the afternoon together looking through a box of old photos. A certain picture of him as an eight-month-old baby caught his eye. Tattered and bent, it looked too banged up to be worth keeping, so he asked her why, with so many other better pictures of him at the same age, she had kept this one.

Yancey writes, *"My mother explained to me that she had kept the photo as a memento, because during my father's illness it had been fastened to his iron lung."* During the last four months of his life, Yancey's father lay on his back, completely paralyzed by polio at the age of twenty-four, encased from the neck down in a huge, cylindrical breathing unit. With his two young sons banned from the hospital due to the severity of his illness, he had asked his

wife for pictures of her and their two boys. Because he was unable to move even his head, the photos had to be jammed between metal knobs so that they hung within view above him, the only thing he could see. The last four months of his life were spent looking at the faces he loved.

Philip Yancey continues, *"I have often thought of that crumpled photo, for it is one of the few links connecting me to the stranger who was my father. Someone I have no memory of, no sensory knowledge of, spent all day, every day thinking of me, devoting himself to me, loving me . . . The emotions I felt when my mother showed me the crumpled photo were the very same emotions I felt that February night in a college dorm room when I first believed in a God of love. Someone is there, I realized. Someone is there who loves me. It was a startling feeling of wild hope, a feeling so new and overwhelming that it seemed fully worth risking my life on."*

His father's love, even though he has no real memory of his father, helped him move forward in life. And, as he would be the first to acknowledge, any parent's love is but a pale reflection of the love God has for each of us.

The month of May marks the celebration of Confirmation Sunday and Mother's Day, which reminds us how important faith formation is in our lives, and how we bare the exciting responsibility to pass on our faith in important ways to the generations that come after us.

May will also be a time when I will be sharing my final sermon series with you – "Victory in the Valleys of Life." In this series that will culminate on June 15, my intention is to share with you the biblical pictures and stories of people just like us who walked through challenging times, but found the strength to press forward in a way that strengthened their faith. That is my sincere hope for all of us.

So please mark your calendar, bring your friends and family, and join me for these important days together. I look forward to seeing you in worship each week!

Pastor Kip

CAMP BAYS MOUNTAIN

Camp Bays Mountain summer camp registration is open! We hope to have several campers from Munsey attend again this summer and are offering partial scholarships to Munsey children or youth who register for summer camp at Bays Mountain. If you're interested in registering for camp with a Munsey scholarship, please contact Amanda Onks (amanda@munsey.org).

WAYNE ANDERSON PRAYER GROUP

The Wayne Anderson Men's Prayer Group meets **Thursday mornings at 6:30am** in the Christian Life Center Meeting Room. We invite all men of all churches to join us for study, prayer, and fellowship. For more information, please email Bill Darden (billdarden7@aol.com).

WOMEN'S STUDY GROUP

Our Women's Study Group meets on **Monday mornings from 9:30-11:00am** in the Parlor through May 19. All women are welcome, and please let Amanda Onks (amanda@munsey.org) know if you have questions or would like to join us!

WEDNESDAY NIGHT PROGRAMS

We have programs for all ages from **6:00-7:15pm each Wednesday through May 14!** If you would like to bring your dinner with you before programs begin, tables are available around the gym floor from 5:30-6:00pm. We have these studies for adults each week:

- Women's Community Group led by Gwen Sitsch and Amanda Onks: a group of women in various stages of life who are looking deeply into the life of Jesus and encouraging one another to recognize the presence and movement of God in the day-to-dayness of life (Gathering Place)
- Men's Community Group: a group of like-minded Christian men from diverse backgrounds wanting to strengthen their faith through weekly discussions and fellowship (Parlor)

DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP

Are you caring for someone with Dementia? If so, we would like to care for you! This group is a wonderful opportunity to hear from others who share the same struggles and have the same questions. Our next meeting is **May 12, at 2:30pm** in the Parlor. For more information, please contact Emily Ham at parishnurse@munsey.org.

MEAL MINISTRY

Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who have cooked casseroles for our meal ministry! We are now ready to open up this ministry to the church!

Who can receive a casserole?

Anyone who needs some extra love or support. Is someone in your Sunday School class sick or having surgery? Did you just talk to a friend going through a hard time? If so, bring them a casserole!

How does it work?

First, call the person who would be receiving the casserole and make sure they don't have any allergies. Next, go to the freezer (access through the walk-in refrigerator) and look for the pink signs. The casseroles are labeled, and there is a clipboard to sign out who is delivering, who is receiving, etc. This helps ensure that we do not deliver multiple meals, and it helps me know who I need to check on! Finally, deliver the meal and make someone's day a little easier!

When can I drop by to pick up a casserole for delivery?

The church has Connection Point volunteers Monday - Thursday mornings, but it is best to call the office at 423-461-8070 before coming. Of course, you can always grab one when you come for worship on Sunday mornings.

What if I can't deliver it?

If you know of someone who could benefit from this ministry, but you are not available to deliver, that is okay! Please contact me, and I will do my best to deliver it or find a volunteer.

What else do I need to know?

Make sure your casserole has been labeled with the cooking instructions. The labels sometimes come off due to the extreme cold. The date listed is the expiration date; frozen casseroles should last 3-6 months, but we are using 3 months as our expiration. If you would prefer to take the casserole home, cook it, and deliver it as a full meal with salad and bread, please do!

How can I help continue this ministry?

We cannot have too many volunteers! If you would like to be on the list of people we contact when the supply is running low, please let me know. We will be opening up this ministry very soon to include bread and desserts. If you would like to help with that or if you could deliver occasionally, please let me know. *Emily Ham, RN* parishnurse@munsey.org

EASTER OFFERING

The updated Easter offering amount is \$11,589. This offering enables us to rebuild homes in Embreeville, TN and to assist Alexander Memorial UMC in Bishop, VA for flood recovery. Thank you for your generosity!

LADIES' LUNCH

All ladies are welcome to join us on **Monday, May 19, at 12:00pm** at Ole's Guacamoles, and we look forward to lunch and fellowship together. Please let Amanda Onks know (amanda@munsey.org) if you plan to be there so we can save you a seat.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

Sunday, May 4, is Confirmation Sunday, and we'll join together in worship to affirm this holy day in the life of our church and Confirmands. We'll have one combined service at 11:00 in the Sanctuary. Open Door worship and Sunday School will meet as usual. We hope you'll plan to join us for this special day! Our Confirmands are featured on the cover and they are **Ben Williams, Cooper Onks, Caleb Comerford, Jacob Walser, Coleman Boyd, Lucy Swearingen, and Isabella Tewell**.

MISSIONS UPDATES

MELTING POT

The Melting Pot and Anthony Jackson, Melting Pot Facilitator, were featured on News Channel 11 (WJHL) with coverage of the Easter breakfast and service held on April 20. Coverage included information about the weekly Shepherd's Breakfast (served on Saturdays) and the weekly Open Door worship service (held on Sundays). In his interview, Anthony shared, "We just really try to keep it focused on people's situations. So people who are not really used to being in a traditional church setting, they often don't receive a traditional message the same way. We just try to tailor towards how Jesus is relevant in their life and their situation. We just want them to know that he's always present." Watch the news segment at www.wjhl.com/news/local/munsey-memorial-umcs-the-melting-pot-serves-johnson-city-for-easter/.

April was a busy month for the ministries of the Melting Pot. The Shepherd's Breakfast served more than 300 people and began distributing food boxes. The Melting Pot is able to be the hands and feet of Jesus through the volunteer efforts of many individuals and groups, including ETSU med school students and the Women Hikers of Northeast Tennessee. To learn more about the Melting Pot and its ministries, the Shepherd's Breakfast and the Open Door worship service, please contact Anthony Jackson at anthony.jackson@munsey.org.

FLOOD RECOVERY TASK FORCE

The generosity and hospitality of the Munsey congregation was evident throughout April with the hosting of 5 work groups and 47 volunteers as they shared their time and talents with Appalachia Service Project (ASP) to rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricane Helene flooding. Munsey also hosted 20 Holston Conference disaster recovery case workers who underwent a week-long UMCOR disaster training at Munsey. Since September, ASP has built more than 20 homes (with a goal to rebuild or repair 200 homes), and Munsey has provided support with financial gifts in addition to hosting volunteer groups. The year's generous Easter offering will enable us to donate over \$11,589 for rebuilding homes in Embreeville, TN and recovery efforts in Bishop, VA.



The first picture above is the original site of three homes owned by the White family. "For generations, they lived together in a community known as Bumpus Cove, but when Hurricane Helene hit, everything changed. Their homes were destroyed, and they were forced to live apart in borrowed campers." (ASP April newsletter). The second and third photos show one of the new White family homes and the progress made by work groups hosted by Munsey.

Munsey is hosting an Intergenerational Mission Week through ASP June 22-28 and is looking for a few more volunteers. Contact Amanda Onks (amanda@munsey.org) and stay tuned for more details if you'd like to be involved.

SHEPHERD'S BREAKFAST COMPANIONS

(serving breakfast from 7:45am - 9:15am on Saturdays)

MAY 3	Toree Baldwin, Mary Hughes School
MAY 10	Women's Hiker Group of East Tennessee
MAY 17	ETSU Health Bridge Students, Aidan Morrell
MAY 23	Aidan Morrell; additional helpers needed
MAY 23	Aidan Morrell; additional helpers needed

To serve or learn more about our Saturday morning ministry for our downtown neighbors, contact Anthony Jackson at anthony.jackson@munsey.org or Sharon Pickering (423-491-4616 at sharonpickering520@gmail.com) or scan the QR code or visit www.munsey.org/meltingpot to sign up.



Scan here to sign up for Open Door worship or Shepherd's Breakfast!

NORTH SIDE ELEMENTARY--- A GREAT PLACE TO BE!

Dr. Sibylle Kranz wrote about the effects of hunger that, "...having children who are well-fed and not hungry makes a difference in their individual performance." It has been well documented that students do better on standardized testing if they are not hungry. At North Side, 139 students in third through fifth grade took TCAP tests for four days starting on April 15.

Munsey came to the rescue! Thanks to the Context and Open Door Sunday School classes, numerous individuals, and the designated funds for North Side, we were able to donate the following:

- 663 drinks (juice and water)
- 476 cereal bars
- 520 cheese treats
- 574 fruit snacks



With all these generous snacks, the children will not go hungry during testing! In addition, 6 pairs of sweatpants, 2 pairs of leggings and boys' tank tops and 10 pairs of girls' briefs were added to last months' giving.

In April, we collected Kleenex for the classrooms and water for field day. May's collection will be Related Arts supplies. There will be a list at the Missions table, and items can be placed in the green barrel near the Connection Point.

Thank you, Munsey, for making North Side Elementary a great place to be! ~Susanna Chinouth

OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CZECHIA



The Czech Mission Team is delighted to announce that Katya Bruckernova will be coming to Johnson City for a two-month job-shadowing internship in physical therapy in late July. Katya attended the softball camp that Munsey helps organize each summer in her hometown, Litoměřice, and has gone on to become one of our coaches now that she has aged out of the camp. Katya is completing a degree in Physical Therapy at the University Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem in Czechia (formerly the Czech Republic). The job-shadowing she will do in Johnson City is part of the required practicum hours for her program. Katya has a black belt in karate and recently came in fifth place for her age group in the Karate World Championships in Japan. She is really looking forward to being here with us for two months. If you would like Katya to speak to your Sunday School class in August or September, or if you have any questions about her time with us, contact Jason Bemby (jabembry@milligan.edu).

INTERGENERATIONAL ASP WEEK

It's not too late to join our intergenerational Appalachia Service Project summer mission week to help with flood recovery in our region! Students 7th grade or older and adults are invited, as individuals or families. Let Amanda Onks (amanda@munsey.org) know if you'd like to join the team and register by paying \$50 to reserve your spot (noting ASP Mission Trip in memo).

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Church Council meetings are open to any Munsey member, and each is at 6:00pm in the Christian Life Center Meeting Room on the following dates this year: **May 15, July 17, September 18, December 4**. To learn more about our teams and committees, you can find a list of them in the brochure racks and at www.munsey.org under resources.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE CHAIRS SPRING UPDATE

As we step fully into spring and continue looking forward to what God has in store for Munsey Church this year, we hope you'll join us on **Sunday, May 18, at 10:00am** in the Gathering Place for coffee and donuts to hear from some of our key church leaders who guide our Trustees, Finance, and Staff-Parish Relations Committees. They'll share updates about what has been going on from their team perspectives lately and what we can look forward to through the rest of this year. We hope Sunday School classes, small groups, and individuals will plan to join us.

EASTER LILIES

Thank you to those members who bought Easter lilies that decorated our altars. After Easter, the leftover lilies were delivered to our shut-ins and nursing home residents. They brought a smile to many of our members that are no longer able to worship in person.

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT FROM CASEY & JAMIE PRICE

For us, Munsey represents an oasis of reasoned Christian practice firmly emplaced within East Tennessee's ephemeral religious landscape. Jamie and I experienced incredibly disparate upbringings regarding church life despite similar backgrounds. It took us many years to synthesize each perspective into a viable analytical framework for growing together as Christians. During our process, we attended several types of local churches. Some more traditional congregations seemed parochial and alienating. We attended other less traditional congregations that tend to materialize in old Dollar General buildings, which felt like a mixture of a 90s rock concert and a live infomercial. We realized many of these churches espoused values predicated on fear and insularity, often reflecting mercurial interpretations of trendy social issues. These experiences helped us define the nature of the type of congregation we sought to augment. After having two children, we realized the necessity of finding a church aligned with our journey to understand Jesus's teachings better and how to implement them in our interactions with others.



We have known Jay and Sunny Sandos, as well as Dr. Tom Lee, for many years. We knew both emphasized the same Christian attributes we value and had witnessed them many times implementing these in their lives. We began attending Munsey, hoping that others in the congregation would reflect the same thoughtful approach to Christian life as they do. Munsey's members exceeded our expectations. Upon attending Sunday School at Dr. Lee's invitation, we found members of the group conducting the communal and often vexing theological work required to better understand and incorporate the teachings in an ancient text few of us can read. The discussion reflected the type of critical engagement with Biblical texts we find fosters a holistic perspective of God's connection with each of us individually and collectively. We knew we were among our people. We thank everyone that has been so welcoming to us and each other. We are proud to be a part of a church community in East Tennessee that exemplifies Christianity's foundational tenant of love for God and each other, *tout le monde*.

FAMILY MINISTRIES STAFF RECEPTION

We've been delighted to bring Charity Damrau and Mindy Moore on board this year as our Directors of Children's and Youth Ministries, and our Staff-Parish Relations Committee invites you to drop by the Gathering Place after 11:00 worship on **Sunday, May 18**, to warmly welcome them and their families to Munsey. Charity and Mindy have already been doing such good work with our children, youth, and their families, and we are so very grateful to have them on our Family Ministries Staff. We know you'll want to drop by and get to know them and their families on May 18 and extend a warm Munsey welcome to them!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES - Charity Damrau, Director of Children's Ministries (charity.damrau@munsey.org)



VBS

Embark on an exciting journey with *Road Trip VBS*, based on Joshua 1:9 – "The LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Discover God's presence everywhere as we explore new places, make new friends, and experience God's goodness together.

Join us in a fun-filled adventure on the open road, taking all the kids (Travelers) on thrilling journeys to exciting destinations. Led by the Navigator and an adventurous pup Scout, kids will learn that God is always with them. Through engaging stories from the Navigators' Guide (the Bible), Travelers will delve into timeless tales of faith from the Old and New Testaments. Get ready for twists, turns, and excitement as they face new challenges and find strength in God's presence on this unforgettable trip!

Road trips are a great way to build strong relationships and create indelible memories. This makes *Road Trip VBS* not only a fun experience for kids, but also an opportunity for them to strengthen their faith and bond with others in their community. With engaging activities, interactive games,

and meaningful lessons, children will have a blast while they grow in their understanding of God's love and promises for everyone.

Registration opens on May 1 for Munsey Kids' Road Trip adventures, which will take place **June 16-19, 9:00am – 12:30pm**, for ages 3 years – (rising) 7th grade. Registration will once again be staggered to give priority to our Munsey kids while ensuring we have adequate staffing for a successful and enjoyable VBS. Registration will be open exclusively to our Munsey families and to families enrolled in Munsey Preschool & Kindergarten May 1-15. You may register throughout the month, but registering during this window will ensure a spot for your child. The remaining available spots will open to the community beginning May 16. If you have questions, please contact Charity at charity.damrau@munsey.org. Registration is required and spots are limited, so please register early!

YOUTH MINISTRIES - Mindy Moore, Director of Youth Ministries (mindy.moore@munsey.org)



YOUTH FELLOWSHIP
Our May Youth Fellowship is on **May 4 from 5:00-7:00pm** at Ole Guacamole (1805 N Roan St.), all 7th-12th graders are welcome! We will be celebrating the end of the year with a fun dinner out. Please send money with your youth. Please let Mindy Moore (mindy.moore@munsey.org) know if your youth plans to go.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PICK UP
Middle School Pick-Up for 7th & 8th graders is on **Wednesday, May 7**. We'll pick up from Liberty Bell and Indian Trail. We will be going to Paradise Acers to play mini golf, and students from other schools are welcome to join us there. They will need \$12 cash to golf and any extra money for any snacks they might want. Please let Mindy Moore (mindy.moore@munsey.org) know by **May 5** if you plan to join in on the fun.

For more information about our Children's and Youth Ministries, please see our Family Ministries Newsletter.



EASTER EGG HUNTING FUN

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS



Roslyn Morris



Barrett family



Price family

A LOOK AT YOUR WEEKLY GIFTS AND ATTENDANCE

	3/30/25	4/6/25	4/13/25	4/20/25	4/27/25
Weekly Budget Offering	\$23,474	\$18,376	\$13,951	\$9,267	30,791
Weekly Budget Requirement:				\$29,970	
Missions Offering	\$4,835	\$2,072	\$1,177	\$11,829	2,195
Worship Attendance	293	269	319	505	297

MESSENGER DEADLINE: The deadline for May Messenger submissions is **MAY 23, 2025**.

WORSHIP AT MUNSEY– MAY SERMON SCHEDULE

MAY 4
"Fanning the Flame"
One combined service in the Sanctuary for Confirmation

11:00am Sanctuary
 Rev. Dr. Kip Laxson
preaching

9:00am Open Door
 Anthony Jackson
preaching

MAY 11
"A Great Delivery"
Mother's Day

11:00am Sanctuary
 Rev. Dr. Kip Laxson
preaching

11:00am Journey
 Rev. Jeff Moore
preaching

9:00am Open Door
 Anthony Jackson
preaching

MAY 18
"A Shepherd in the Valley"

11:00am Sanctuary
 Rev. Dr. Kip Laxson
preaching

11:00am Journey
 Rev. Beth Sullivan
preaching

9:00am Open Door
 Tom Campbell
preaching

MAY 25
"A Little Man with a Big Problem"

11:00am Sanctuary
 Rev. Dr. Kip Laxson
preaching

11:00am Journey
 Rev. Beth Sullivan
preaching

9:00am Open Door
 Nehemiah Kaufman
preaching

WORSHIP SERVICES AT MUNSEY

- ♦ The 11:00am Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary features traditional music with the Chancel Choir.
- ♦ The 11:00am Journey Worship in the Christian Life Center Gym features contemporary music with the Praise Band.
- ♦ The 9:00am Open Door Worship is held in the Melting Pot and is our most informal service. Coffee and pastries will be available from 8:30-9:00am.

Holy Communion is traditionally offered the first Sunday of the month in all worship services.

201 South Roan Street, Johnson City, Tennessee 37601
 Web: www.munsey.org | Email: info@munsey.org | Phone: 423-461-8070
 Parish Nurse: parishnurse@munsey.org