

 **MUNSEY**

**JANUARY 2026**

# MESSENGER

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



**Munsey has been such a meaningful part of life for the Fortune & Heins family. Read about what being “All In” means to them on page 6.**

## A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR CHRIS



There is a hymn sung in the church from time to time in our United Methodist Hymnal entitled, *This is a Day of New Beginnings* (#383). The hymn was written by Brian Arthur Wren for a New Year's Day service in 1978. The first stanza appeals to us to "lay...to rest the pain that's gone." Stanza two reminds us that the life and death of Christ made it possible for all to have a new beginning as "faith and hope are born again." The hymn ends with the promise "God is making all things new."

I find the hymn to be a lovely reminder of the opportunity that a new year brings for us to begin again. Some of us may set goals for a new year. Others of us may anticipate changes and events that will take place in a new year. Still, others of us may be looking for a "fresh start" in some area of our life. Here at Munsey Church, 2025 brought a lot of change, but we are looking forward with great hope!



What the new year may look like for many of us might be hard to discern. But as we begin a new year, we are reminded of Paul's words to the Corinthians in the second letter, chapter 5, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." So yes, the new year is a time to begin again. But consider the new year an opportunity for your life and the lives of those around you. And if you need to lay something to rest, do it. This is a day of new beginnings.

Continued Christmas blessings to all of you and a Happy New Year! ~Pastor Chris

## PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY RESUMES WEDNESDAY. JANUARY 14

Pastor Chris' Bible Study resumes on **Wednesday, January 14**, with the 1:00pm (Conference Room) and 6:00pm (Christian Life Center Meeting Room) options. The study follows the scripture for the upcoming Sunday on the Revised Common Lectionary (a three-year calendar of scripture). We recently began Year A, which focuses on the Gospel of Matthew. The semi-continuous Old Testament readings focus on major Genesis narratives, the covenant with Moses, and the establishment of Israel in the Promised Land. The second, New Testament, readings are from Romans, Philippians and 1 Thessalonians. For a link to the calendar, go to [www.lectionarypage.net](http://www.lectionarypage.net).

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT PROGRAMS

We have programs for all ages from 6:00-7:00pm each Wednesday, resuming **January 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 available for adults, and information on children and youth can be found in our Family Ministries Newsletter:

- Pastor's Bible Study led by Rev. Chris Brown: a discussion-based study of the lectionary text for the following Sunday (Christian Life Center Meeting Room); a daytime option is available at 1:00pm in the Conference Room for those who prefer not to drive after dark.
- 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)

## LEADERSHIP DEDICATION SUNDAY

We're grateful to begin a new year of leadership with our 2026 Church Council, and we will bless leaders in all services on **Sunday, January 18**. After 11:00 worship, we'll have a Leadership Lunch and Learn as an onboarding session for Church Council and to allow our resource teams (Trustees, Finance, SPRC, and Nominations) and ministry team chairs time to meet and plan together. Leaders will receive more information on the lunch via email, and we're looking forward to a great new year together!

## MEAL MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

Our stock is once again depleted. Since the church office is closed from 12/25-12/26 and 12/29-1/2, we will start collecting meals after the new year. We want to add soup as a new option—any kind is fine, but please label with type and date, and freeze flat in Ziplock bags. We will also continue offering chicken and rice, pasta, breads, and desserts. Contact Emily Ham, RN at [Parishnurse@munsey.org](mailto:Parishnurse@munsey.org) for recipes. Thank you for supporting this ministry!

## WOMEN'S STUDY GROUP

Our Women's Study Group meets on Monday mornings from 9:30-11:00am in the Parlor and will resume on **January 12**. We'll be studying *Keep the Faith: How to Stand Strong in a World Turned Upside Down* by David Jeremiah. All women are welcome, and please let Amanda Onks ([amanda@munsey.org](mailto:amanda@munsey.org)) know if you have questions or would like to join us!

## CARING FOR OUR CONGREGATION

We are always willing and grateful to reach out in care to our congregation members. If you or one of your Munsey friends is in the hospital, having surgery, dealing with illness, or could use extra care, please let our Parish Nurse, Emily Ham, know by contacting her at ([parishnurse@munsey.org](mailto:parishnurse@munsey.org) or 423-282-8970). Thanks for helping us stay informed to care for each other!

## 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 **January 12 at 2:30pm** in the Parlor. For more information, please contact Emily Ham at [parishnurse@munsey.org](mailto:parishnurse@munsey.org).

## LADIES' LUNCH

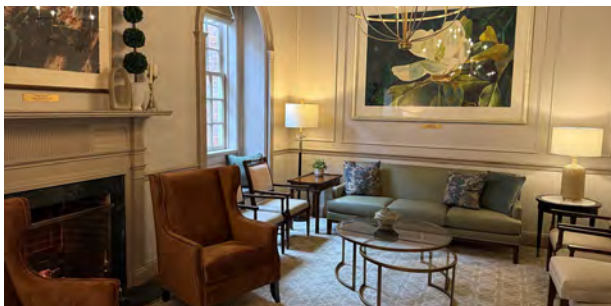
All ladies are welcome to join us on **Monday, January 12, at 12:00pm** at Ole's Guacamoles, and we look forward to lunch and fellowship together. Please let Amanda Onks know ([amanda@munsey.org](mailto:amanda@munsey.org)) if you plan to be there so we can save you a seat.

## 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](mailto:billdarden7@aol.com)).

## PARLOR REFRESH

We're blessed by the generosity of a donor to make our Parlor renovation possible, and it's had quite the refresh over the last few weeks. It looks beautiful, and we know you'll want to stop by next time you're at church to see it finished!



## NEW MEMBER INTEREST

We're grateful to have these new members join in December and hope you'll introduce yourself to them! We are always glad to include more in our Munsey family! If you're interested in joining our congregation, please reach out to Rev. Chris Brown ([chris.brown@munsey.org](mailto:chris.brown@munsey.org)). He'll be happy to answer any questions you may have and to help you join Munsey Church.



Brian & Leslie Schoettes



Lewis LaFon  
& Tammy McDaniel



Cheyenne French



Bob & Elaine Warehime

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, we follow Johnson City Schools' schedule for church programs. If schools dismiss early or close on a weekday, we won't have evening activities at Munsey that day. The church office will be open on weekdays, as staff are able to safely travel to the church. Sunday morning schedules will be adapted and shared online as needed for weekend snow.

## MISSIONS

### CONNECTIONAL SUPPORT: ALEXANDER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Because of the generosity of Munsey's congregation, we were able to provide Daniel Bradley, the pastor at Alexander UMC in Bishop, Virginia, with a variety of food items, including pasta, cereals, soups, canned meats, fruits and vegetables and children's snacks as well as hats, gloves and coats for distribution to the Bishop community. We appreciate the continued prayers and support of our congregation as we continue to grow our relationship and support for the Bishop community. For more information on this ministry, please contact Karen Peko at [ktpeko@hotmail.com](mailto:ktpeko@hotmail.com).



### SHEPHERD'S BREAKFAST COMPANIONS

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

JANUARY 3	Gaye Cooper, <b>sign-up slots still available</b>
JANUARY 10	Liz Hughes, <b>sign-up slots still available</b>
JANUARY 17	<b>Sign-up slots still available</b>
JANUARY 24	<b>Sign-up slots still available</b>

To serve or learn more about our Saturday morning ministry for our downtown neighbors, contact Anthony Jackson at [anthony.jackson@munsey.org](mailto:anthony.jackson@munsey.org) or Sharon Pickering (423-491-4616 at [sharonpickering520@gmail.com](mailto:sharonpickering520@gmail.com)). We have plenty of open spots to help serve on Sunday mornings too, & you can scan the QR code or visit [www.munsey.org/meltingpot](http://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!



Ruth Carter Stapleton once said, "Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most." In December, as part of our monthly giving, our congregation showed the light of love in the most amazing way! In two weeks' time, we collected 205 toys and games for the neediest children at North Side. The counselor picks families that have not been "adopted" to go to a Christmas Shopping event at the school. Parents are given a certain number of items that they can take to give to their children at Christmas. Our Open Door Sunday School class donated over \$300 worth of toys, and Gini Buchanan purchased a car full. (photo on left)



In addition, 8 children (6 boys and 2 girls) were adopted by our Open Door Sunday School class. Jo and Chris Hemphill purchased 8 shirts, 2-3 pairs of pants, a three-in-one coat, socks, underwear, shoes, pajamas, dresses for the girls, and toys for each child. The women in the class then held a wrapping party so that all the items could be delivered to school before break. (photo on right)

Our Brown Fellowship class adopted two children for Christmas, sent their bi-monthly snacks for the Special Ed class, and spent \$170 on food items for kids to take home during the Christmas break. We are so thankful for their continual support!



Due to a grant received by Anthony Jackson, we were able to give a ham or turkey plus two pies to every member of the staff and faculty! Our generosity and acknowledgement of their hard work is so appreciated by them.

In January, we will be collecting Clorox wipes and Kleenex for our monthly giving. As the kids return to school, so will their germs! Thank you for giving the light of love. You truly help make North Side a great place to be! ~Susanna Chinouth

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## DAY OF RESPITE / COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR

For our 4<sup>th</sup> *Day of Respite/Community Health Fair* in 2025, we had 130 people come through the door to access medical care and other resources, including lots of giveaways and haircuts. We also gave out 6 food boxes to hungry families.

Thank you ETSU Family Medicine, ETSU Health Bridge, Appalachian Highland Care, Crown Cutz, Appalachian Warriors, Believer's Church, Tri-Cities Mutual Aid and Solidarity, Gray UMC, One80, Project Victor and Feeding in Action (lunch) for joining us and serving our neighbors.



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## MUNSEY SPOTLIGHT - "ALL IN" WITH THE FORTUNE AND HEINS FAMILY

For the Fortune and Heins family, Munsey isn't just a place they attend on Sundays. It's been the foundation of their lives for decades. "I went to Kindergarten at Munsey," Butch Fortune shares. In 1980, he married Susan and brought her into the Munsey family. They raised their children, Rob and Lyndl, in the same pews where Butch grew up.

What keeps them connected to Munsey? "This congregation loves the Lord and supports and encourages each other and believes in missions, both globally and locally," Butch explains.

For their daughter Lyndl, married to Alex Heins, the connection runs deep: "Mom and Dad instilled the importance of Christianity from the get go. We were born and raised in the church; we were baptized at Munsey. Munsey will always be home to me." When Alex joined the Munsey family, he immediately felt that warmth: "Everyone is so nice and peaceful and very welcoming."

Their son, Rob, who now lives in Charlotte, finds that Munsey remains a touchstone even from a distance. "When I think of Munsey, I think of fellowship, love, and community. Those are the things that always bring me home." He recalls his early years at Munsey fondly, including getting his start playing live music with the youth praise band.

The family has served Munsey in countless ways over the years, from youth ministry and music to hospitality and Church Council leadership. When asked what "all in" means to them, Susan puts it simply: "To me, being all in is when you're all in for God, and you want to please Him and do the right thing for Him." Lyndl adds, "It means fully investing and committing your heart, your time, your gifts, and your service to the community of the church."

Looking ahead to 2026, the family is excited about new leadership and fresh possibilities.

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



### PARENTS' NIGHT OUT: FEBRUARY 13, 5:30-7:00PM

This Valentine's season, let us take care of the kids while you enjoy an evening off. Munsey Spark is excited to host a *Pizza and Pajamas Movie Night*!

For Munsey K-5th Graders: a cozy movie night

For Munsey Preschoolers: fun and supervised care in our regular nursery

Kids should come dressed in their favorite comfy PJs with a pillow and blanket in tow. We'll provide the pizza, snacks, and plenty of fun!

Requested Donation: \$5 per child (maximum \$10 per family)

### DOWNLOAD THE PARENT CUE APP!

Designed to help bridge the gap between church and home, the Parent Cue app provides timely, age-appropriate cues and conversation starters for every phase of your child's life. From weekly Bible story videos and recaps to insightful talking points about faith and character, the Parent Cue app equips you to continue Sunday's conversations throughout your week.

Download it today or visit [theparentcue.org](http://theparentcue.org) – because what you do at home matters even more than what we do at church.

### MUNSEY WEEK AT CAMP BAYS MOUNTAIN

Munsey Week at Camp Bays Mountain is **June 14-19, 2026**, and Chris Brown will be the Minister in Residence that week! We look forward to giving out more Munsey camper scholarships, and we hope to have lots of our children and youth attend camp together. Registration will open this month, so stay tuned for more information!

## YOUTH MINISTRIES - Mindy Moore, Director of Youth Ministries ([mindy.moore@munsey.org](mailto:mindy.moore@munsey.org))



### YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Our Youth Fellowship is Resurrection, **January 23-25**. On **January 11**, we will have a Resurrection informational meeting for parents, youth, and chaperones. We'll meet in the CLC Meeting Room right after the 11:00am services, and I will just need 30 minutes of your time. During this meeting, I will pass out a schedule and packing list.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL PICK-UP

Middle School Pick-Up for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders is on **Wednesday, January 14**, and we'll have pizza and watch a movie on the Youth Floor. We'll pick up from Liberty Bell, Indian Trail, and University School. We're excited to share that 1<sup>st</sup> UMC will be joining us for Middle School Pick-Up. A red van driven by Pastor Gary Ihfe from 1<sup>st</sup> UMC will be picking up University School students. **If your youth needs to be picked up from University School, please email [penleye@etsu.edu](mailto:penleye@etsu.edu), saying that your student will be picked up by Pastor Gary Ihfe from 1<sup>st</sup> UMC on Wednesday, January 14. All parents, please let Mindy ([mindy.moore@munsey.org](mailto:mindy.moore@munsey.org)) know by January 12 if your youth plans to join in on the fun.** Friends are always welcome!

**LIFE GROUPS WILL RESTART JANUARY 14, AND HIGH SCHOOL PRAYER BREAKFAST WILL RESTART JANUARY 15.**

**For more information about our Children's and Youth Ministries, please see our Family Ministries Newsletter at [www.munsey.org](http://www.munsey.org).**

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## ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

It is time to begin thinking about the application process for Munsey scholarships. This year things will be similar to last year, including being able to upload your transcript. The application is on the website at [www.munsey.org/youth](http://www.munsey.org/youth), and it will be submitted online. You can also use the QR code to fill out the form.

Please read the first page of the application to make sure you understand the purpose, what the scholarships are based on, and that you qualify. Remember that you must be a Munsey member to apply. The deadline for online submission of your application is **January 31, 2026**. If you have any questions, please contact me at [jimgayle@gmail.com](mailto:jimgayle@gmail.com).

Gayle Hughes  
Scholarship Committee Chair



**FESTIVE CHRISTMAS SWEATER DAY**



**HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS: FOOD. FELLOWSHIP. & SONGFEST**



**BROWN FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY**



**UNITED WOMEN OF FAITH CIRCLE 10 CHRISTMAS PARTY**



DECEMBER 7 WITH BISHOP DEBRA WALLACE-PADGETT



ADVENT WORSHIP



JINGLE JAM



VIRGIL ANDERSON SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY



## A LOOK AT YOUR WEEKLY GIFTS AND ATTENDANCE

	11/30/25	12/7/25	12/14/25	12/21/25
<b>Weekly Budget Offering</b>	<b>\$38,085</b>	<b>\$42,943</b>	<b>\$89,161</b>	<b>\$13,158</b>
<b>Weekly Budget Requirement:</b>				<b>\$30,577</b>
<b>Missions Offering</b>	<b>\$972</b>	<b>\$2,055</b>	<b>\$6,342</b>	<b>\$4,019</b>
<b>Worship Attendance</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>314</b>

**MESSENGER DEADLINE:** The deadline for February Messenger submissions is **January 23, 2026**.

## WORSHIP AT MUNSEY– JANUARY SERMON SCHEDULE

<b>JANUARY 4</b> 9:00am Sanctuary Matthew 2:1-12 Rev. Chris Brown preaching	<b>JANUARY 11</b> 9:00am Sanctuary Matthew 3:13-17 Rev. Chris Brown preaching	<b>JANUARY 18</b> 9:00am Sanctuary John 1:29-42 Rev. Beth Sullivan preaching	<b>JANUARY 25</b> 9:00am Sanctuary Matthew 4:12-23 Rev. Chris Brown preaching
11:00am Sanctuary Matthew 2:1-12 Rev. Chris Brown preaching	11:00am Sanctuary Matthew 3:13-17 Rev. Chris Brown preaching	11:00am Sanctuary John 1:29-42 Rev. Beth Sullivan preaching	11:00am Sanctuary Matthew 4:12-23 Rev. Chris Brown preaching
11:00am Journey Matthew 2:1-12 Rev. Beth Sullivan preaching	11:00am Journey Matthew 3:13-17 Rev. Beth Sullivan preaching	11:00am Journey John 1:29-42 Rev. Chris Brown preaching	11:00am Journey Matthew 4:12-23 Rev. Dr. Jeff Moore preaching
9:00am Open Door Anthony Jackson preaching	9:00am Open Door Anthony Jackson preaching	9:00am Open Door Anthony Jackson preaching	9:00am Open Door Anthony Jackson preaching

### WORSHIP SERVICES AT MUNSEY

- **9:00am Worship in the Sanctuary** features communion served weekly.
- **11:00am Worship in the Sanctuary** features traditional music with the Chancel Choir.
- **11:00am Journey Worship in the Christian Life Center Gym** features contemporary music with the Praise Band.
- **9:00am Open Door Worship in the Melting Pot** 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.

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 Parish Nurse: [parishnurse@munsey.org](mailto:parishnurse@munsey.org)