

# The VINE

*The newsletter of Soddy United Methodist Church*



May / June 2025

## From the Southern kingdom to the Northern kingdom

Within the Holston Conference, clergy refer to the “Northern kingdom” and the “Southern kingdom” when it comes to appointments. It’s a play on the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah in the Old Testament. The southern kingdom of Holston Conference is from Knoxville to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, while the northern kingdom extends from Knoxville up to Radford, Virginia.

As most of you know, I’m being reappointed in June. I’ll take over at two churches, First UMC and West Galax UMC in Galax, Virginia (about 20 minutes southeast of Wytheville). I’m going from the Southern kingdom to the Northern kingdom of Holston. It’s the first time the two churches have

*continued*



First United Methodist Church, Galax, VA



West Galax United Methodist Church

***From Pastor Todd, continued***

been on a circuit together, and the first time I've ever been responsible for two congregations.

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee has already met with your new pastor. He and his wife have their own home in Hixson, so they won't be living in the parsonage. The Trustees and administrative board will be in dialogue about what to do with the parsonage going forward.

Felicia, Rigby, and I will miss you all very much! You've been our family for the past 11 years, and we couldn't have asked for a better one. You took us in after we'd spent five years in a harsh, toxic appointment that had just about taken everything from us. We arrived here broken, angry, hurt by the church, and deeply wounded by the conference. And you welcomed us in, accepted us, loved on us, gave us time and space to heal, and repeatedly demonstrated your grace, generosity, and devotion. Now that the time has come to say goodbye, I know that we're leaving much healthier and happier. You've been a healing balm for our family, and I don't think we can ever repay your kindness, gentleness, hospitality, and love.

This will be my last newsletter for you. It will be passed off to the Communications Team, who will be responsible for deciding how best to continue communicating with the congregation.

My final Sunday will be June 15 (Father's Day). We'll be celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper that day rather than on the usual first Sunday in June. The message will be "I Have Eagerly Desired..." which comes from Luke 22:15—*Jesus said, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins."* As Jesus longed to spend his final hours with his closest friends, I want us to share in holy Communion together one last time. We'll also be doing a Litany of Farewell and Thanksgiving from the United Methodist Church's Book of Worship.

The final two Sundays in June will be covered by Cindy Cunnyingham and Kathy Jones. Your new pastor will hold his first worship service on Sunday, July 6.

My friends, words cannot express my love and gratitude for this congregation. Even though our friendship will continue, and we'll all be reunited on that distant shore in glory one day, it's nevertheless difficult to say goodbye. But I take solace in knowing that God holds every one of us, and our churches, in his hand. He will not lead us where he is not already present and at work. His plans for us are *not* finished.

I'm reminded of the old Michael W. Smith song "Friends Are Friends Forever," released in 1983. It's beautifully appropriate for saying goodbye:

**Packing up the dreams God planted / In the fertile soil of you  
I can't believe the hopes He's granted  
Means a chapter of your life is through**

*continued*

*From Pastor Todd, continued*

**But we'll keep you close as always / It won't even seem you've gone  
'Cause our hearts in big and small ways  
Will keep the love that keeps us strong**

**[Chorus]**

**And friends are friends forever / If the Lord's the Lord of them  
And a friend will not say never / 'Cause the welcome will not end  
Though it's hard to let you go / In the Father's hands we know  
That a lifetime's not too long / To live as friends**

**[Verse 2]**

**And with the faith and love God's given / Springing from the hope we know  
We will pray the joy you live in / Is the strength that now you show**

I leave you with Paul's prayer from Ephesians 1:15-20, which is also my prayer for you:

*<sup>15</sup> Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, <sup>16</sup>I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, <sup>17</sup>asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. <sup>18</sup>I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. <sup>19</sup>I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power <sup>20</sup>that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.*

Thank you, my friends!



*How lucky I am to  
have something that  
makes saying  
goodbye so hard*

- WINNIE THE POOH



# Upcoming birthdays!

## May

- 7 Ray Woodall
- 9 Mike Parrott
- 11 Steve Wortham
- 12 Carson Wood
- 13 Marion Wood Wagner
- 20 Evelyn Caldwell
- 24 Annaliese Mullins  
Aiden Mullins
- 25 Donna Graham
- 28 Charles Bain
- 29 Vivian Stulce
- 31 Rebecca Musgrave



## June

- 4 Jim Mulkey
- 6 Sue Hultgren
- 9 Sid Parrott
- 11 Becky Stulce  
Hannah Musgrave  
Kathy Vinyard
- 12 Marti Hendrix  
Bennett Hendrix
- 15 Marie Musgrave
- 24 Matthew Kingrea
- 28 Matt Lyon
- 29 Kellsea Hendrix

# Upcoming wedding anniversaries!

## May

- 11 Rick & Sarah Williams
- 23 Tripp & Kathryn Mullins
- 27 Matt & Jessica Lyon



## June

- 4 Charles & Gena Bain
- 6 Arnie & Becky Stulce
- 17 Jeff & Karen Ward
- 24 Vic & Sharon Rogers



**Our next potluck meal will be held on Wednesday, May 7, at 5:30 p.m.** The church provides meat and drinks. Bring your favorite dish or dessert to share!



*Scholarships to Camp Lookout are once again available to children and grandchildren of Soddy UMC members.* Contact Marylu McDonald at (423) 596-9236 or email [usaapple@epbfi.com](mailto:usaapple@epbfi.com) for more information.



# 2025 HOLSTON ANNUAL CONFERENCE HANDS-ON MISSION PROJECT SCENIC SOUTH DISTRICT



## FOOD BUCKETS FOR LIBERIA



- 1 bag of rice (2 lb.)
- 1 bag of dried beans (2 lb.)
- 1 bottle of cooking oil (48 oz. or less)
- 1 box of powdered/dry milk (56.4 oz. or less)
- 1 bag of self-rising flour (4 - 5 lbs.)
- 2 canned meats (2 lbs. TOTAL)  
Ham, tuna, Spam



**NOTE:**  
A \$5.00  
donation for  
packing and  
shipping is to  
accompany  
each kit.



**PACK ALL ITEMS IN A NEW 5-GALLON BUCKET WITH LID.**

***PLEASE LEAVE COMPLETED KITS  
IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL.***

**ALL KITS MUST BE TURNED IN BY SUNDAY, MAY 25th!**



Pastor Todd and Felicia will be out of town from May 14 - 18 for the wedding of their oldest son, Brett, in Gray, Tennessee. If you have any special needs during this time, please contact Cindy Cunnyingham at (423) 645-4539.



# Easter Egg Hunt 2025





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# May



**Sunday, May 4th**

**SODDY UMC 165th ANNIVERSARY  
WORSHIP SERVICE**

*with special guest speaker Holston Conference Bishop Debra  
Wallace-Padgett. Catered lunch to follow.*

**Tuesday, May 6th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

**Wednesday, May 7th**

*Potluck dinner (5:30 PM)*

**Thursday, May 8th**

*Choir practice (6:30 PM)*

**Sunday, May 11th**

***Mother's Day**  
"The Mother Who Named God"*

***Happy  
Mother's  
Day***

**HANDS-ON MISSION KIT BUCKETS AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP**

**Tuesday, May 13th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

**Sunday, May 18th**

**GUEST SPEAKER** Cindy Cunnyingham

**Tuesday, May 20th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**  
*United Women in Faith (12:00 PM)*

**Sunday, May 25th**

*"Four Things Every Leader Needs"*

**ALL HANDS-ON MISSION KIT BUCKETS DUE**



**Monday, May 26th**

**MEMORIAL DAY**

**Tuesday, May 27th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

**Wednesday, May 29th**

*Choir practice (6:30 PM)*







**NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO WEDNESDAY POT LUCK DURING JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST**

**Sunday, June 1st**

**GUEST SPEAKER** Kathy Jones

**June 1st - 4th**

**HOLSTON ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**Tuesday, June 3rd**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

**Sunday, June 8th**

**PENTECOST**

*"Your Guide To The Future"*

**Administrative Board meeting (5:00 p.m.)**

**Tuesday, June 10th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

**Sunday, June 15th**

**PASTOR TODD'S FINAL SUNDAY**

**FATHER'S DAY**

*"I Have Eagerly Desired..."*



**Tuesday, June 17th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

*United Women in Faith (12:00 PM)*

**Sunday, June 22nd**

**GUEST SPEAKER** Cindy Cunnyingham

**Tuesday, June 24th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

**Wednesday, June 25th**

***MOVE DAY FOR TRANSITIONING CLERGY***

**Sunday, June 29th**

**GUEST SPEAKER** Kathy Jones

