

# The Anchor

A vibrant church, making Christian disciples and enriching lives through outreach.

## December 2025

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### Sunday's Schedule

9:00 a.m.:	Traditional Service
10:30 a.m.:	Modern Service
10:30 a.m.:	Faithlink Class
10:30 a.m.:	Searchers Class
10:30 a.m.:	Rise Children's Ministry
4:00 p.m.:	Women in the Word
6:00 p.m.:	Elevate Youth
6:00 p.m.:	Junior Youth

### Staff

<b>Senior Pastor</b>
Brian Sixbey
<b>Office Manager</b>
Kassandra Brown
<b>Music Director/Organist</b>
Mark Biondolillo
<b>Accompanist</b>
Andrew Blackmon
<b>Youth Director/Worship Leader</b>
Larissa Luma
<b>Treasurer</b>
Ruth Simpkins
<b>Part-Time Sexton</b>
Mikell Bond
<b>Nursery Attendant</b>
Chelsea Kyme



## “Swimming Upstream”

In the early years of the church, right after Jesus' death and resurrection, some practices were tried that we are still trying to understand today. One of them was using a fish to indicate where people gathered for worship. The fish was drawn on the ground, in the sand, and sometimes on buildings or places where believers met. You may still see fish symbols today on car bumpers, keychains, or necklaces. There is no *definitive* explanation of how and why the fish was used, but I have heard two theories—or metaphors—that I'd like to explore with you today.

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### **The fish that reminds us to “go with the flow.”**

This metaphor encourages letting things run off us. If someone mistreats or wrongs you, the idea is to do what the fish does: keep swimming. Don't hold on to the wrong, but forgive and move forward. This image is similar to the saying about letting sin go “like water off a duck's back,” meaning we aren't meant to hold on to grudges, but to be free—because we have been freely forgiven by Jesus' sacrifice for us.

### **The fish as swimming upstream, against the current.**

According to this theory, Christians swim against the current of the world's practices and customs. Like salmon that fight for hundreds of miles to return to their birthplace to spawn, we are striving to return to the ways of Jesus. And if we push the metaphor further, we are helping the Holy Spirit bring new life into our lives and the lives of others.

I appreciate both metaphors, because both contain truth. It is far too easy to get caught up in the wrongs done to us or the wrongs we have done to others. When we are mistreated, lied about, gossiped about, or abused, those hurts form hard memories that cling to us. Letting go of that hurt is not easy—but if we remember what Jesus did for us, what we could not do for ourselves, then “letting go and letting God” becomes easier. It is also biblical: *“You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.”* (Leviticus 19:18) Romans 12:19 and Hebrews 10:30 echo this teaching.

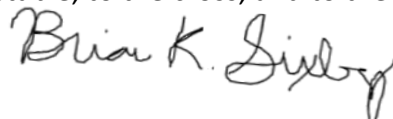
But in this season, I find the metaphor of swimming upstream to be especially helpful. As our culture becomes more politicized, and as more people distrust institutions—especially the church—we are swimming upstream. Some claim the name of Christian while visiting retribution on their “enemies.” Others call themselves Christian but follow a Jesus who, in their minds, has no power to save or transform lives. It is harder to follow the ways of Jesus and recognize his power and authority. It is hard because we do not get to take vengeance, and hard because we are commanded to love and pray for our enemies.

We face a fundamental choice: Do we follow the ways of the world—swimming downstream and doing what feels good to us—or do we follow the ways of Jesus, swimming upstream and staying in line with him,

knowing we may suffer as he suffered? The Son of God became incarnate, taking on our flesh and blood so that he could obey the Father's will and die on the cross. Now that he has risen to the Father and sent us the Holy Spirit to empower our mission, he asks us:

### **Will we stay true to him as he stayed true for us?**

You see, the message of Christmas is not only about a child born in a stable, but also about his invitation to be born as both child and King of Kings in our hearts and lives. Will we let him be Lord of our lives so that the world may be saved through him? As a friend of mine says, “There has never been a better time to be a Christian than today!” For my part, I am glad to have you with me as we journey together to the stable, to the cross, and to the skies.



### **Worship Notes**

The first Sunday of December, December 7, will not be a communion Sunday because Pastor Brian will be on the Navajo reservation for the annual pastor training event. Shan Sixbey, a certified lay servant, will be bringing the Word.

Likewise, on the final Sunday of December, December 28, Pastor Brian will be with his family in Knoxville for a Kelso family reunion, and Pastor Becky will bring the Word.

Between those Sundays, we will celebrate Music Sunday on December 14 with a single 9 a.m. service. As an added bonus, we will also give thanks for Reverend Tommy Markham's 17-year tenure as our assistant pastor.

### **Christmas Eve**

As in previous years, we will have two Christmas Eve services this year—at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. The main difference between the two is that the 4 p.m. service will be slightly shorter and more child-friendly, while the choir will be present at the 7 p.m. service.

### **Let Your Neighbors Know About Us!**

Throughout the season of Advent, we have Christmas yard signs available for you to place in your yard. When the season is over, you may keep the sign or return it, depending on its condition and whether you feel it is too worn to reuse.

# Financial Fundamentals December 2025

This report briefly addresses finances at FUMC Fox Hill. The latest information is in the weekly bulletin available at church or through our web site.

As I write this a few days before Thanksgiving, it is a perfect time to again share the thanks that accompany our offerings and all support for First UMC Fox Hill. When we make our donations to the church, it is an opportunity to thank God for our many blessings, large and small, every day. It is your donations of time, talent, and certainly “treasure” which allow us to provide support to our community close to home and worldwide. Without funds, we would not be here and our programs would not be happening. As an organization, we thank you for your generous support. This has been a challenging year with huge costs for our new roof, boiler, and related expenses. Thank you for your continuing support as we work to pay off our very substantial loan. Your support is also putting us in a position to pay all of our Apportionment obligations by year end while keeping us current on our operating expenses. As you show your thanks for the blessings you receive, we thank you for your support.

Speaking of the loan, we appreciate your on-going donations specifically for that purpose as they help with our monthly payments. We are eager to make some direct additional payments on the principal of the loan to save on long-term interest costs. You may want to make a special, additional gift at year end and designate it for that purpose.

And, as the year ends, this is an important time for us all to ensure our finances are in the best shape possible. Your giving can help ensure your church starts the new year on the best financial footing possible. Whether you are giving cash or checks, in-person or on-line, we appreciate it. If you are sharing from your investments, e.g., IRAs or actual stocks, be sure to discuss the procedures with your tax and/or financial advisor and touch base with Bill Bryan, Finance Chair, before taking any unfamiliar action, but don't delay.

Remember, your regular giving to the General (One) Fund can help your cash flow and the church's. Use the method that works best for you. You may want to use our web site [www.firstumcfoxhill.org](http://www.firstumcfoxhill.org) where you

can click on Give. If you are reading this online, [click here](#) for easy on-line access. Or use your camera to scan this QR code which is regularly seen in our publications and live stream.

Please direct concerns/questions about FUMC FH finances to our financial staff via the office or Bill Bryan, Finance Chair, at (757) 851-0748 or by e-mail to [billb-1111@cox.net](mailto:billb-1111@cox.net).

Total One Fund – Through October 2025		
Income for Planned Expenses <sup>1</sup>		\$404,482
Total One Fund Expenses (excludes pass through <sup>2</sup> )	Planned	\$497,020
	Actual	\$413,914
Pass Through Income <sup>2</sup>		\$1,110
Pass Through Expense <sup>2</sup>		\$4,178
“Pay-It-Forward” Contributions		\$2,185
LUMENs Fund Raiser Income		\$25
LUMENs Fund Raiser Expense		\$0
Roof & Boiler Repair Income 2025 <sup>3</sup>		\$96,411
Roof & Boiler Repair Expense 2025		\$218,847
Loan Balance – Nov1		\$159,156
<sup>1</sup> Includes regular and memorial contributions, building use income, interest, not listed, etc.		
<sup>2</sup> Represents contributions for non-budget items, e.g., flowers, special mission programs, not listed, etc.		
<sup>3</sup> Does not include \$153,922 net loan for roof project.		





# Announcements

## Fifty Plus

Don't miss out on any of the Fifty Plus activities.

- **Reserve immediately for our Saturday afternoon, December 13 outing to see *A Christmas Carol* presented by the Williamsburg Players.** This traditional holiday classic for the entire family is guaranteed to fill you with the Christmas spirit and warm your heart. **Trip cost is \$19.00 plus your meal afterward.**
- Coming up for **Saturday morning on January 17** we are **planning our annual breakfast at the Poquoson Dinner....**mark your calendars.
- A **Spring trip** is in development with expected mid-April dates. Be watching for details soon and be ready to grab a seat while they are available.

More to come. Watch First Fox Hill publications for more details and contact Anne or Bill Bryan to sign-up – in person, at [abandbb1@cox.net](mailto:abandbb1@cox.net), or by phone to 757-851-0748.

## Thank You!

For all those who helped provide Angel Tree gifts for the children of our community, for those who provided shoeboxes for children around the world, and for those who have helped us be in mission here and throughout the world, thank you!



### Parent's Night Out

\* FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> | 5:30-9:00PM

GET YOUR CHRISTMAS PREP DONE WHILE YOUR KIDDOS ENJOY AN EVENING WITH PIZZA, CRAFTS, GAMES, AND A HOLIDAY MOVIE!

REGISTER HERE!  


HOSTED BY:  
*Elevate Youth*  
TO RAISE MONEY FOR THEIR  
UPCOMING MISSION TRIP  
TO KNOXVILLE, TN



HANDCRAFTED AND  
HOMEMADE ITEMS FROM OUR  
YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

JOIN US FOR A  
**CHRISTMAS  
BOOTH**  
DECEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup> BEFORE AND  
AFTER MUSIC SUNDAY SERVICE



ALL PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT  
OUR MISSION TRUP TO  
KNOXVILLE, TN THIS SUMMER!



**SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 21  
6:00-8:00 PM**

**ELEVATE YOUTH  
Christmas  
Party**



**POTLUCK | GAMES | FUN  
IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL**



## Birthdays

Paul Avery	12/1	Tori McFadden	12/13	Jim Dickert	12/22
Kevin Malinowski	12/1	Bonnie Harper	12/14	Richard Pollock	12/23
Benjamin Garner	12/2	Josiah Biondolillo	12/16	Melissa Doughty	12/23
Tarah Spencer	12/3	Lori Gillespie	12/16	Tyler Brown	12/24
Mary Gore	12/3	Marilyn Eubank	12/16	Becky Felix	12/24
Debra Kravitz	12/4	Kerri Black	12/16	Shelby Williams	12/26
Rose Peretin	12/4	Iris Avery	12/16	Kris Wayman	12/27
Vandy Belbin	12/4	Trent Lumpkin	12/17	Eddie Ridout	12/27
Emily Capriotti	12/4	Sally Lewis	12/17	Andrew Townsend	12/27
Taylor Winston	12/6	Gail Gulla	12/17	Jessica Evers	12/28
John DeShetler II	12/7	Debbie Charlton	12/18	David Richardson	12/28
Austin Ellison	12/8	Mary Parker	12/18	Laura Sandford	12/28
Anne Bryan	12/11	Kyla Pereira	12/18	Kellie Hoyt	12/29
Samantha Seguin	12/11	Scott Williams	12/18	Gary Greer	12/29
Helen Brooks	12/12	William Hoyt	12/19	Barbara Groover	12/29
Kim Quinn	12/12	Ben Kessler	12/20	Paul Hogge	12/29
Samantha Johnstone	12/12	Bruce Guthrie	12/20	David Klass	12/30
Sophia Tricarico	12/12	Sara McNeil	12/20	Ryan Tuttle	12/30
Kathleen Moffat	12/13	Jim Weaver	12/21	Eva Francis	12/30
				Nancy Stout	12/30

## Anniversaries

Rick & Karen Nolin	12/6
Woody & Joyce Wilson	12/7
Chuck & Roxanne Farmer	12/14
Bob & Glenda Helms	12/18
William & Christine Woods	12/20
Chuck & Holly Blackmon	12/20
Jeff & Peggy Doughty	12/30
James & Susan Stephens	12/30
Tori & Michael McFadden	12/31



## December

**December 1 & 4 Church Office Closed**

**Friday, December 5**

5:30 p.m. Elevate Youth: Parent's Night Out: FH Stage  
6:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 1038 Lock in: Ed Wing

**Monday, December 8 Church Office Closed**

6:30 p.m. Finance Committee Meeting: ESR

**Wednesday, December 10**

10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting: Tri-X Room

**Saturday, December 13**

12:45 p.m. Fifty Plus Outing: Williamsburg Players

**Sunday, December 14**

9:00 a.m. Music and Pastor Tommy Appreciation Service

**Saturday, December 15 Anchor Newsletter Deadline**

**Tuesday, December 16**

7:00 p.m. PPSRC: Tri-X Room

**Wednesday, December 17**

5:30 p.m. Howe Farms HOA Meeting

**Monday, December 22**

6:00 a.m. Phoebus Women's Club Meeting: Faithlink Room  
7:00 p.m. Ballroom Dance Class: FH

**Tuesday, December 23**

8:00 a.m. Facilities Team Meeting

**Wednesday, December 24**

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Carols & Communion Family Service  
7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Carols & Communion Service

**Saturday, December 27**

2:00 p.m. Book Club: Robinson Home

**Sunday, December 28**

9:00 a.m. Single Combined Service

**Monday, December 29 Church Office Closed**

## Martha's Ministry

Martha's Ministry is a wonderful group of ladies who give their dedicated service and outpouring of love to grieving families in their time of need. These ladies graciously prepare a reception for family and friends either at the church or in their homes. This ministry of the church, can always use more help! If you are interested, please call or email Marilyn Eubank.

**December Team Leader:** Marilyn Eubank

**December Members:** Anne Bryan, Ann Drummond, Donna Fleenor, Gail Gulla, Bonnie Hulton, Betty Knaub, Karen Nolin, Sue Morehouse, Jennifer Williams, Marilyn Eubank

## Small Groups

**Monday**

10:00 a.m. Yoga: FH Stage  
1:00 p.m. "The Book" Club: Tri-X Room

**Tuesday**

10:00 a.m. Shawl Makers: ESR  
12:00 p.m. Dominoes: FH Stage

**Wednesday**

9:30 a.m. Soul Sisters: Faithlink  
3:00 p.m. Love Unites: ESR  
5:45 p.m. Wesley Bells Rehearsal  
7:00 p.m. 1st Fox Hill Family Choir Practice

**Thursday**

5:00 p.m. TABS: Tri-X Room  
6:00 p.m. Karate for Christ: FH Stage

**Saturday**

9:00 a.m. Saturday Morning Sisters in Christ: Faithlink  
6:00 p.m. Elevate Youth: The Collective  
7:00 p.m. Worship Team Rehearsal: Sanctuary

## Scouts

**Tuesdays:** 6:30 p.m. Pack 151 Meeting: FH  
7 p.m. Scout Troop 151: FH

**3rd Thursday** 6:30 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 1038: Ed Wing

**2nd & 4th Friday** 6 p.m. Crew 1151 Meeting: Tri-X

## AA Meetings

**Wednesdays & Fridays - 6 p.m.**

Buckroe New Hope AA Group: FH - Kitchen

**Saturdays - 9 a.m.**

Buckroe Men's AA Group: FH - Kitchen

## UMW

**Thursday Morning Circle:** 1st Thurs., 10 a.m.: FH

## UMM

**Dinner and Meeting:** 3rd Mon., 6:30 p.m.: FH

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