



Bookwalter United Methodist Church

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September 2026

Bailey Hueser, Choir Director
Todd Spangler, Pianist

Reverend Stephen K. Doyal, Pastor
Betsy Payne, Secretary

Edie Jo Hall, Children's Director
Taylor Stephens, Youth Director

*Sharing God's love with our neighbors,
inviting them to share in the joy of Jesus Christ.*

ARTICLE

I have held Dolly Parton in such high regard for so long, it feels like losing a family member. I can trace my first knowledge of her back to my mother who also grew up poor in Sevier County and went to school with her. I think this was at least part of Mom's love of butterflies. She told me about Dolly singing at a talent show in high school and getting laughed at when she told everyone she intended to go to Nashville to be a country star. Of course, Dolly got the last laugh.

Her music and everything "Dolly" became further ingrained in my life when Silver Dollar City became Dollywood where I worked during my summers off from college. My wife and I met at the park where she was a foods supervisor, and I was a train robber. We would end up having our wedding reception at Aunt Granny's.

Once while I was travelling in Africa, the group leader shared with our African guide that I had worked at Dollywood. I was on safari deep in the heart of Kenya and this guy fawned over me the rest of the trip: "You know Dolly Parton? Tell me about Dolly!"

While I enjoyed her music and movie roles, my respect for Dolly had more to do with how she lived her life. As everyone knows, she is the classic rags to riches story, and she never forgot from whence she came. That ingrained humility influenced everything she did from her philanthropy to her genuine compassion and acceptance of people from all walks of life.

Dolly was clearly a woman of faith and a bearer of light in dark times. During the pandemic, she helped fund vaccine research. She invested millions in royalties from Whitney Houston's rendition of "I Will Always Love You" into a historically black area of Nashville. With her "My People" fund she helped victims of the Gatlinburg fires get back on their feet. The family that bought my folks Sevier County home were able to do so with Dolly's help.

She was truly a fine example of how to live this human life. She once said, "I'm no angel. I'm no saint. I'm just a seeker, like everybody else, but I just try to do my best. And I just try to love people." Words to live by.

Steve

OUTREACH MEETING

The Outreach Team will have its next meeting on Saturday, September 12 at 11 a.m. in the Chapel Class.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The Church Council will meet Monday, September 14 at 7:00 p.m. at the church in the Chapel Class and by Zoom.

NOMINATIONS TEAM

In preparation for Charge Conference, we will meet to prayerfully select people for leadership roles in our church. This will be done via Zoom on Thursday, September 10th at 7:00 p.m.

CHARGE CONFERENCE

Our annual meeting with the District Superintendent will be held on Wednesday evening, October 21st at 6:00 PM. This year Heiskell will join us at Bookwalter.

A DAY TO TREASURE

On September 20, we will collect items for the Treasure boxes for teachers at Inskip Elementary. These are small items that students earn as rewards that teachers usually provide out of pocket.

Suggested items are individually wrapped candies, little packets of candy, small appropriate toys, cute pencils, cute erasers and fidget toys.

Coincidentally, the day before is National Talk Like a Pirate Day so it seems fitting to be gathering treasure.

TRUNK OR TREAT

Trunk or Treat is on the calendar for Sunday, October 25th. We will start at 5:30 pm and stop when we run out of people or candy, whichever comes first.

HOMECOMING

Jamie Johnson's friend and classmate Greg Chandler with Smoky Mountain Health and Hospice will be our speaker. November 1st. Mark your calendars.

FROM THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT



2026 Christmas Concert Information

Christmas may still feel a little ways away, but preparations are already beginning for one of our favorite traditions of the year!

Mark your calendars for our 2026 Christmas Concerts:

Saturday, December 19 at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 20 at 3:00 p.m.

This year, we are excited to continue our partnership with local high school students and support their fundraising efforts through our Christmas Concerts. This partnership has been such a blessing, not only to our church but especially to the students we have been able to support.

Last year, one student shared that the gifts received through our concerts made the difference between being able to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime experience with classmates or having to stay home. Stories like that are a wonderful reminder that what we do together reaches far beyond the walls of our Sanctuary. Through music, generosity, and community, we have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of young people right here in our community.

We cannot wait to share another incredible weekend of Christmas music with you!

Countdown to Christmas Board

Did you know that Wednesday, September 16 marks exactly 100 days until Christmas? To celebrate the countdown and help fund this year's Christmas Concerts, we are launching our Countdown to Christmas fundraiser beginning Sunday, September 6 in the Sanctuary!

You will find festive boards featuring a total of 100 envelopes, numbered \$1 through \$100. Each Sunday, simply stop by and choose an envelope that speaks to you:

The Shepherd's Share: \$1–\$25

The Angels' Chorus: \$26–\$50

The Wisemen's Gifts: \$51–\$75

The Star of Bethlehem: \$76–\$100

Once you've chosen an envelope, place your donation inside along with the attached sticky note with your name. If you would like your gift to be made in honor or in memory of someone special, simply include that information on the sticky note as well.

Completed envelopes may be placed in the offering plates. We will tally the gifts, and our final giving tiers and recognitions will be included in the Christmas Concert programs, just as they have been in years past.

Every envelope matters, whether it's \$1 or \$100. Stop by the boards, choose yours, and help us count down the 100 days to Christmas together!

Instrument Sponsor Tree

Want to make your Christmas Concert gift even more personal? This year, individuals and families will once again have the opportunity to sponsor one of our instrumentalists and have that musician's chair named in honor or in memory of someone special.

Look for our Instrument Sponsor Tree on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall, where you will find ornaments representing each of the instruments featured in this year's concert. Choose the instrument you would like to sponsor, complete the information on the back of the ornament, and return it with your donation.

Your special chair recognition will then be included in our Christmas Concert programs!

Whether you choose an instrument because you love its sound, because someone special to you played it, or simply because you want to support the music, this is a meaningful way to help bring this year's Christmas Concert to life.

There's a Place for YOU in the Choir Loft!

Have you ever sat in the congregation during one of our Christmas Concerts and wondered what it would be like to be part of the choir?

This might be your year!

Christmas Concert rehearsals begin Sunday, September 27 at 4:30 p.m., and we would love to welcome some new faces into the choir loft.

You don't have to be the next Taylor Swift. You don't need to have years of choir experience. You don't even have to know whether you're a soprano, alto, tenor, or bass before you walk through the door! All you need is a willingness to sing, worship, learn, and have a little fun along the way.

There is something incredibly special about spending the fall preparing music together and then experiencing a Sanctuary filled with the sounds of Christmas after months of hard work. If you've ever wondered what it's like to worship together almost exclusively through song, come give it a try.

And, as an added bonus, it's another opportunity to hear Todd at the piano outside of Sunday morning worship!

Come join us Sunday, September 27 at 4:30 p.m. There is a seat waiting for you in the choir loft!

Bailey



BIG DAY AT BIG RIDGE

Many thanks to everyone who came to Big Ridge State Park this past Sunday, August 30 to support and witness four youth being baptized. It was a great turnout for a blessed milestone in the lives of these young people: Zane Cannon, Lizzie Banks, Gabriella Deer and Haylee Arwood-Womble.

