



# First Methodist Church

## OF CONOVER

A GLOBAL METHODIST COMMUNITY

### Monthly Newsletter for June 2026

*It's commencement time for students, which made me think of this story. It's a good word for us to consider.*

The first day of school our professor introduced himself and challenged us to get to know someone we didn't already know. I stood up to look around when a gentle hand touched my shoulder. I turned around to find a wrinkled little old lady beaming up at me with a smile that lit up her entire being.

She said, "Hi handsome. My name is Rose. I'm 87 years old. Can I give you a hug?" I laughed and responded, "Of course you may!" and she gave me a gentle squeeze.

"Why are you in college at such a young, innocent age?" I asked. She jokingly replied, "I'm here to meet a rich husband, get married, and have a couple of kids..."

"No seriously," I asked. I was curious what had motivated her to be taking on this challenge at her age. "I started college when I was young but had to quit. Now I'm finally back!" she told me. After class we walked to the student union building for a chocolate milkshake.

We became instant friends. Every day for the next three months, we would leave class together and talk nonstop. I was mesmerized listening to this "time machine" as she shared her wisdom and experience.

Over the course of the year, Rose became a campus icon and easily made friends wherever she went. At the end of the semester, we invited Rose to speak at our football banquet.

When she took the podium, she nervously dropped her index cards. Instead of panicking, she leaned into the microphone and joked, "I'm sorry I'm so jittery. I gave up beer for Lent and this whiskey is killing me! I'll never get my speech back in order so let me just tell you what I know."

As we laughed she cleared her throat and began, "We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. The secret to staying young, being happy, and achieving success is to laugh and find humor every day. You've got to have a dream. When you lose your dreams, you die. We have so many people walking around who are dead and don't even know it!

"Remember, there is a huge difference between growing older and growing up. If you are 19 years old and lie in bed for one full year and don't do one productive thing, you will turn 20 years old. If I am 87 years old and stay in bed for a year and never do anything I will turn 88. Anybody can grow older. That doesn't take any talent or ability. True growth comes from embracing change, taking on new challenges, and learning continuously. Have no regrets. The elderly usually don't have regrets for what we did, but rather for things we didn't do. The people who fear death the most are those with regrets."

She concluded her speech by courageously singing "The Rose." She challenged us to study the lyrics and live them out in our lives. At the year's end, Rose finished the college degree she had begun all those years ago. One week after graduation, Rose died in her sleep. Hundreds of college students attended her funeral in tribute to the woman who taught by example that it's "never too late to be all you can possibly be."

In Ecclesiastes 3:12-13, Solomon writes: "**I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift.**" Enabling us to live a full, abundant life was part of Jesus' plan for you. That's a good word for us all.

Grace and Peace!

*Pastor John*

# Sisters in Christ



**Ladies' lunch out  
June 12 at 11:30 at King Fish.**

**Sign up at Beth's office door.**

If your birthday is in May or June, you will be our special guests!

Join us for a lunch out with lively fellowship and a special celebration of the ladies with birthdays in May or June. If you let us know you have a birthday in those months, your lunch will be paid for. All others are "Dutch Treat" until it's your special month!

Please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board or contact the church office or Kim Reed.

## CHURCHWIDE FELLOWSHIP DINNERS IN THE CFLC

**MAY 30  
JUNE 27  
JULY 25  
5:00**



**SAVE THE DATES!  
JOIN US FOR THESE FUN CHURCHWIDE FELLOWSHIP EVENINGS.  
WEAR YOUR NAMETAG AND MEET A NEW FRIEND!**

## YOUTH FAMILY GATHERING AT THE GRAY HOUSE



**Friday, June 5 at 5:30**

Current 5<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders and 2025 high school graduates and their families are invited to a cookout at the GRAY House on Friday evening, June 5.

We'll gather for a casual dinner together to kick off plans for future youth events. We want to hear your hopes and dreams!

Any high school graduates that haven't had a chance to paint their handprint on the wall are invited to do that on this evening!

**Please RSVP to Beth by June 3.**

336-480-4551  
beth.woods@fmconover.org

## YOU'RE INVITED



**Queen Esther Circle  
Wed, June 10 at 1:00  
Faithbuilders Classroom**

**Christian Yoga/Exercise Class for All**

**Thursday, June 18  
and June 25  
9:30 am**



## First Methodist Men



**Thursday, June 18 at 6:00 in the CFLC**

June 28 at 2:00

Help us celebrate Robin's 23 years of service to First Methodist!

Our Administrative Assistant, Robin Mays, is retiring after almost 23 years of faithful service to our church. Please join us for a reception in her honor on June 28 at 2:00.

A love offering will be taken on June 14 and 21 or can be given to Ryan Garrison, chairperson of the Staff/Parish Relations Committee at any time.

If you were not able to fill out this form already, please do so and turn in to the church office or send it to Beth.

Please help us update our systems! (Yes, everyone!)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

member or regular attendee

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

frequent visitor

\_\_\_\_\_

new visitor

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Do you use texting? Yes No

Landline phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_ Anniversary: \_\_\_\_\_

**For special announcements (funerals, weather, big event reminders), do you prefer:**

phone call (recorded voice call) - which phone number?  text

**For newsletter and other regular communication, do you prefer:**

US mail (printed)  email  both printed and emailed

Use the back if you need to tell us anything else! Thank you!



*The Worship Committee has decided to offer monthly communion for the summer months. So, we will have Holy Communion in both services on June 7, July 5, and August 2. If you are willing to be a communion server for any of these dates, please let Beth Woods or Gail Sanders know.*



On Sunday, June 21, we will have the privilege of hosting Nara Melkonyan in our worship services. Nara is the Executive Director of Project AGAPE (American Greater Armenian Partnership Efforts), a North Carolina Methodist ministry to the people of Armenia.

Christians in Armenia are literally an oasis of Christianity, surrounded by the Muslim nations of Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and the largely atheist nation of Russia.

Oppressed by war and religious persecution and upended by a series of devastating earthquakes, Project AGAPE seeks to care for the Christians in Armenia (many of whom have been dislocated from their own homes and cities) in very tangible and specific ways.

From physical resources like Christmas boxes, clothing, blankets, household supplies, etc., to vocational training and prayer support, Project Agape is building a program of support for these beautiful Christian sisters and brothers.

Project Agape has been a partnership between the Methodists of North Carolina for more than 30 years. Our partnership with them goes beyond disaffiliation - Project Agape is independent of the U.M.C. You can learn all about how Project Agape is making a difference in the lives of this Christian war- torn country, at <https://projectagape-armenia.org>.

## *Thank You*

To my church family and the congregation of First Methodist Church of Conover,

I am writing to you with a heavy heart, but also with deep gratitude, to thank you for all the wonderful moments we have shared over the last eighteen months. You have become such an important part of my life and my family's life as well.

Thank you for your warm embrace, for your acceptance of me and my family, and for allowing us the privilege of serving our Lord alongside each of you. It has been such a blessing to get to know you and walk together in faith.

But the time has come for me to say goodbye and to step into a new season of life. Please know that my departure from First Methodist is my way of saying "yes" to the Lord's next chapter for me and my family. Many have asked where I am going and what I will be doing. The answer is simple: I am striving to be obedient to God's call on my life. I feel compelled to share His Good News with everyone, everywhere, because if I fail to do so, I feel unfulfilled in the purpose He has given me.

Please pray for me and my family as we enter this new season—that God would lead us clearly, and that in His grace, He would use us to teach others about Jesus and deepen their understanding of His precious Word.

I have been truly blessed by this church, and I sincerely hope that I have been a blessing to you as well. Keep fighting the good fight, keep the faith, and finish strong.

With love and gratitude,  
Your brother in Christ Jesus

*Pastor Jason*

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)



**Planning meeting  
May 31 at 4pm**

**Workdays  
(cut, assemble, etc)  
June 4: 10am  
June 25: 1pm**

**Decorating workday:  
June 27: 10am**

**VBS for KIDS**  
(age 3- completed 5th gr)

**July 8-11 (Wed-Sat)**  
**5:30 dinner. 6-8 program**

**Register  
online!**



[www.myvbs.org/first-methodist-conover](http://www.myvbs.org/first-methodist-conover)

**VBS for ADULTS**  
(We want to have fun, too!)

**July 7-9 (Tu-Th) 10am - 12 noon**  
**lunch afterward**

**Register with Beth!**

336-480-4551 (cell)  
[beth.woods@fmccconover.org](mailto:beth.woods@fmccconover.org)  
828-464-4635 (office)

**We still need volunteers for crafts,  
games, snacks, leading groups of  
children, registration, decoration and  
more! Please contact Beth or come to the  
meetings and workdays! Volunteers can  
also sign up online at the same site as the  
children's registration.**

**NEEDED for VBS CRAFT:**

**Clean jars (like pickle or jelly jars) 16-20 oz. Need large  
enough opening to put a tea light into. Please remove label  
and place clean jars in collection box outside Beth's office.**



## Greeters

- May 31** 8:45 - Crystal Hefner & Barbara Stines  
11:00 - Chris & Coby Tekieniewski
- Jun 7** 8:45 - Toni & John Dilley  
11:00 - Gene & Bev Swithenbank  
Inside Hall - Tommi Anderson
- Jun 14** 8:45 - Ryan & Angela Garrison  
11:00 - Sylvia Hansmann & Martha Robertson  
Inside Hall - Tommi Anderson
- Jun 21** 8:45 - Jeff & Connie Hendren  
11:00 - Don & Vata Shook  
Inside Hall - Tommi Anderson
- Jun 28** 8:45 - Kim & Susan Sigmon  
11:00 - Robin & Windy Mays  
Inside Hall - Tommi Anderson
- July 5** 8:45 - Marsha & David Phillips  
**11:00 - Can you help?**

## Nursery Help



- May 31** 8:45 - Lindsay Keisler  
11:00 - Emily & Emilia Abernathy
- Jun 7** 8:45 - Angela Garrison  
11:00 - Angie Williams
- Jun 14** 8:45 - Connie Hendren  
11:00 - Cindy Clark
- Jun 21** 8:45 - Bev Swithenbank  
**11:00 - Can you help?**
- Jun 28** 8:45 - Beth Travis  
**11:00 - Can you help?**
- July 5** **8:45 - Can you help?**  
**11:00 - Can you help?**

# Thank you!

*Dear First Conover,  
I would like to thank each and every one of you  
that sent cards, brought food, and prayed for  
Mary Ann during her illness and death.  
Chris Cooke & family*

Dear church family,  
Thank you so much for your support and prayers during our trip to  
Kenya in April and May. You truly are the light of Jesus to a hurting  
and dark world!

Beth Woods

FMCC,

Thank you for providing 2 church vans and the use of the church  
parking lot on April 14th.

This greatly assisted the "Live Informed Tour" of the Catawba  
County Non-Profit organizations and Resources.

Sincerely,

Anita Deal, Ashure Ministry

## WITH LOVE & SYMPATHY



Mary Ann Cooke, 70, of Conover passed away on April 27, 2026 at Carolina Caring in Sherrills Ford.

Mary Ann was the wife of Chris Cooke and a member of First Methodist Church of Conover.

A memorial service to celebrate Mary Ann's life was held on Friday, May 1, 2026 at 4:00pm at First Methodist Church of Conover. Rev. John Woods officiated. The family received friends prior to the service from 3-3:45pm at First Methodist Church. The family requested memorials be made to First Methodist Church of Conover or to the Catawba County Humane Society.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Chris, their son, Blake, and daughter Lindsey Cooke.

# Stewardship Report

## By Our Presence April 26, 2026

Sunday School:	130
8:45am Service -	133
11:00am Service -	<u>167</u>
Total	300

### God's Tithe & Our Gifts

**General Fund	\$18,908.00
Children's Bank	172.00
Pastor's Disc. Fund	1,000.00
Puerto Rico Mission Trip	<u>1,800.00</u>
Total	\$21,880.00

## By Our Presence May 3, 2026

Sunday School: Not Reported

10:30am Service -	<u>305</u>
Total	305

### God's Tithe & Our Gifts

**General Fund	\$16,220.00
Children's Bank	<u>101.90</u>
Total	\$21,880.00

## By Our Presence May 10, 2026

Sunday School:	74
8:45am Service	236
11:00am Service -	<u>134</u>
Total	370

### God's Tithe & Our Gifts

**General Fund	\$14,272.00
Children's Bank	126.60
Ashure Ministry	50.00
Music Fund	22.47
Puerto Rico Mission Trip	<u>1,210.00</u>
Total	\$15,681.07

## By Our Presence May 17, 2026

Sunday School:	111
8:45am Service	158
11:00am Service -	<u>167</u>
Total	325

### God's Tithe & Our Gifts

**General Fund	\$16,484.00
Children's Bank	50.00
Columbarium Fund	1,350.00
Puerto Rico Mission Trip	<u>500.00</u>
Total	\$18,384.00

# Stewardship Report

## By Our Presence May 24, 2026

Sunday School:	116
8:45am Service	162
11:00am Service	<u>149</u>
Total	311

### God's Tithe & Our Gifts

**General Fund	\$12,703.00
Children's Bank	<u>58.00</u>
Total	\$12,761.00

On April 19th's financial summary, an amount was left off from the Fund and Deposit Summary.

Trustees Fund \$2,090.00, which then made the Total correct at \$16,731.00.

## Memorial gifts

### General Fund

In memory of Mary Ann Cooke by:

Mark & Rita Deal

Scott & Melinda Hodge

## Honorarium

### General Fund

In honor of Arden Michele Keisler by:

Adam & Meredith Keisler

## Methodist Men Report

The Methodist Men group wants to thank Delane Bowman and Summer Andrade for their program with information about Sipes Orchard Home. We hope to provide our church family with more info about all they do for those in need in our area.

Outside Beth's office on a table are some brochures about this organization and a sign-up sheet to give them the your email address so they can send you information about Sipes Orchard Home...We hope to get our church more involved with this group! Thanks!



**First Methodist Church**  
OF CONOVER

410 First Avenue North  
Conover, NC 28613

*Return Service Requested*

**FIRST CLASS  
MAIL**

## Contact us!

Senior Pastor	Rev. John Woods pastor@fmconover.org (336) 480-4550 208 2nd St NE, Conover	Organist	Kevin Haney khaney01@gmail.com (704) 914-6510
Minister of Youth/Outreach	Pastor Jason Shoup jsgodson@yahoo.com (828) 381-1174 1409 5th St. Ct. NE, Conover	Preschool Director	Julie Robinson (828) 466-3158 preschool@fmconover.org
Coordinator of Lay Ministries	Beth Woods woods777@aol.com (336) 480-4551	Lead Nursery Worker	Pilar Tobar (828) 781-1224
Office Administrator / Financial Secretary	Robin Mays office@fmconover.org	Custodian	Luisa Toro Bryan
Music Director/Choir	Jon Rogers jsrogers99@gmail.com (828) 244-7019	Church office	(828) 464-4635
Music Director/Praise Team/ Pianist	Shannon Rogers srog101@gmail.com (828) 244-6124	Website	www.fmconover.org
		Streaming	Facebook and YouTube

