

**FOLLOWING JESUS IN BOSSIER:
A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR**

*Rev. Donnie Wilkinson,
Senior Pastor*



Staying In The Room

If you pay even a little attention to the news or to social media, you can feel it.

The temperature in our country is rising.

Conversations feel sharper.

People assume more and ask less.

And the distance between us often feels wider than it used to.

Most of us do not experience this as abstract debate. We feel it at family tables. In group texts. In comment sections. In conversations with people we love and respect. Many of us are quietly asking the same question.

What does faithfulness to Jesus look like in a tense and divided time?

I have been spending time with a framework called **Three Practices for Crossing the Difference Divide**. What I appreciate most is what it does not try to do. It does not give talking points. It does not tell you what to think. Instead, it offers practices. Simple. Demanding. Formational.

The authors name three practices. I want to share them with you exactly as they do.

Practice 1: "I'll be unusually interested in others."

This is more than being polite. It is choosing curiosity over quick conclusions. It is listening long enough to understand another person's experience rather than preparing your response. This practice slows us down. It echoes the way Jesus so often engaged people. He asked questions. He noticed. He paid attention before he spoke.

Practice 2: "I'll stay in the room with difference."

Staying in the room does not mean agreeing. It does not mean avoiding boundaries. It means resisting the impulse to withdraw, dismiss, or write someone off when conversations become uncomfortable. Jesus stayed present with people who misunderstood him, challenged him, and opposed him. Love often looks like remaining when leaving would be easier.

(continued inside)

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Practice 3: "I'll stop comparing my best with your worst."

This practice names a habit that quietly poisons relationships. We tend to judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their extremes. We give ourselves context and grace while flattening others into caricatures. This practice calls us to humility. To remember that every person is more complex than their loudest moment.

Here is why I want us to pay attention to these practices as a church.

Our everyday conversations are part of our mission.

If we are serious about renewing the life of our community and becoming fully alive in Christ, then how we speak and how we listen matters. This is not extra credit discipleship. This is faith lived in ordinary places with real people.

When we are unusually interested in others.

When we stay in the room with difference.

When we stop comparing our best with someone else's worst.

Something changes. The temperature lowers. Trust becomes possible. And Christ is made visible in ways arguments never accomplish.

So this month, I invite you to pay attention to your conversations. In person. Online. With people who think like you and with people who do not.

Be unusually interested.

Stay in the room.

Practice humility.

You may not change someone's mind. But you may change the climate of a relationship. And in God's economy, that kind of faithfulness is never wasted.

Grace and peace,
Donnie



BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

ANNIVERSARIES

Ed & Nell Carpenter
Charles & Barbara Varnell
Dennis & Cindy Murray
Carl & Pam Combs

BIRTHDAYS

Keith Bange
Gavin Ratzburg
Tom Holladay
Mark Goins
Sasha Toms
Anna Kate Beville
Becky Halbrook
Shannon Kelley
Kinzley Little
Colleen McCown
Aaron Stanfield
Madyson Pittard
Becky Collins
Jaclyn Santure

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2/12
2/18
2/24

BIRTHDAYS

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Mary Ann Delaney
Wright Johnston
Sue Willis
Anna Driskell
Chris Ardoin
John Sellers
Betty Smith
Renee Spalding
Nakiva Williams
Ronnie Murphy
Miles Allen
Donnie Wilkinson
Audrey Hines
Mildred Nickel
Cynthia Stanfield
James Toms
Floy Saucier
Hayden Smith
Jane Saylor
Carolyn Lewis
Katie Wilson
Melanie Flores

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CHECK OUT OUR CHURCH APP

- Register & pay for events
- Check-in for service/events
- Church Calendar
- Giving/Offering



A DAY IN THE LIFE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

FUMC BOSSIER



FIRST FRIENDS CHRISTIAN LEARNING CENTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT SHANNON KELLEY AT SKELLEY@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG



February is a joyful month at First Friends as we celebrate God's love, friendship, and kindness. This month, children will learn that love comes from God and that we are called to show His love through our words and actions.

Registration for the upcoming school year 2026-2027 also opens this month!

We invite families to watch for registration details and secure their child's spot for the new school year. Please reach out if you have any questions, we are happy to help.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ELISA HINES AT CHILDREN@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Hello First Families!

February is here and it's full of good things—family time, kindness, and lots to look forward to! We're excited about what's happening in Kids Church and what's coming next as we look ahead to warmer days and fun-filled events. We love seeing our kids grow in their faith each week in Kids Church! February is a great time to keep those conversations going at home too—talking about how we can love others, serve our community, and prepare our hearts for all that God has planned this spring.

👉 Breakfast Club - Family Brunch: We're inviting the whole family to join us for Breakfast Club, a potluck-style brunch! Bring a favorite breakfast or brunch dish to share and enjoy a relaxed morning of food, fellowship, and fun together. February 21 at 9:00 AM

👉 Souper Bowl Food Drive: Because of the Super Bowl, Kids Group will not be meeting—but we're still tackling hunger together! We're collecting canned goods for our Souper Bowl Food Drive. Bring your donations to church, help make a big difference in our community, then head home, enjoy some snacks, and cheer on your favorite team! 🏈

👉 Looking Ahead to Spring: We're starting to gear up for warmer weather and spring events, and we can't wait to share more soon. Be on the lookout for upcoming activities, outings, and opportunities for kids to grow, serve, and have fun together!

👉 Save the Date - VBS 2026! June 22-26

Kingdom Quest: An Epic Journey to Discover God's Kingdom

Kids will go on an unforgettable adventure learning what it means to follow Jesus and live in the light of His kingdom. Mark your calendars now—this is a week your kids won't want to miss!

Theme Verse: "Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, 'I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.'" John 8:12

We are so thankful for your families and the ways you support Kids Church. We're excited for all God is preparing in the months ahead!

Love and Blessings,
Elisa

STAY UP TO DATE WITH PARENT INFORMATION ON GROUP ME →

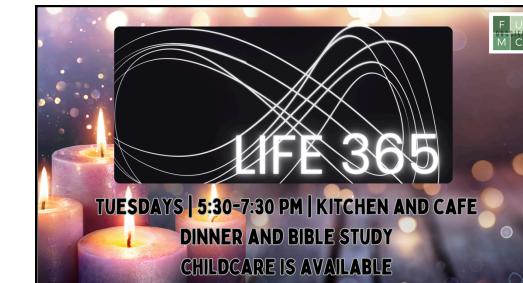


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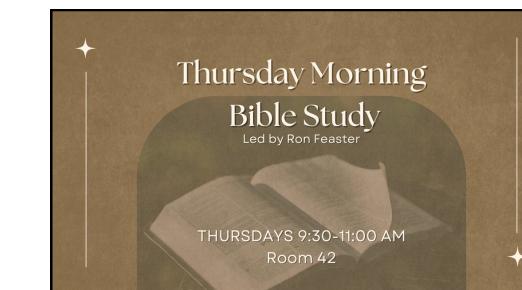
GET CONNECTED TO A SMALL COMMUNITY

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG



THE GOOD AND BEAUTIFUL BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday Nights - 6:00-7:00 PM - Midyett Room
The Good and Beautiful Bible Study continues.



THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

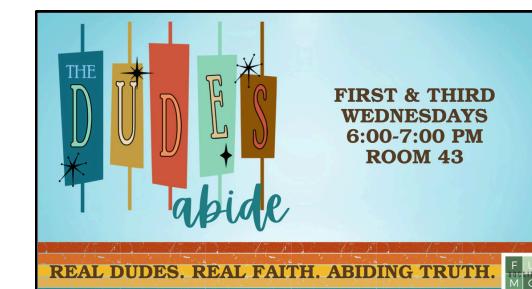
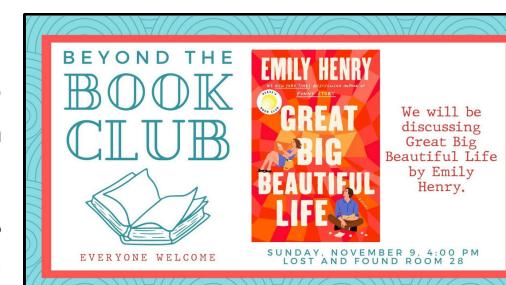
Thursdays at 9:30am- Mary Ewing Room
Study is led by Ron Feaster.



BEYOND THE BOOK CLUB

TBA at 4:00pm - Lost and Found Room
We will be discussing *Great Big Beautiful Life* by Emily Henry.

Everyone is welcome!
Our November meeting was postponed. A new meeting date will be announced soon.



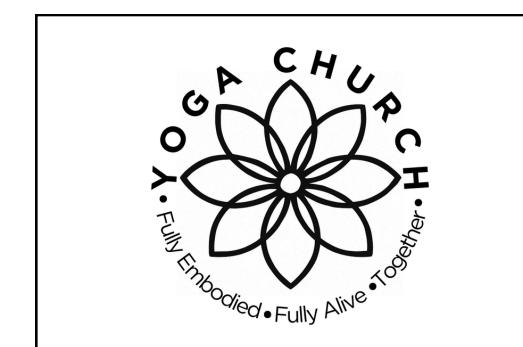
THE DUDE'S ABIDE-MEN'S GROUP

First and Third Wednesdays 6:00-7:00 PM Room 43
The Dudes Abide is a group of men and dads devoted to abiding in Christ, growing in God's Word, and encouraging one another to live authentic, Spirit-led lives.



THE SWEET SHUFFLE

Fourth Friday- 6:00-8:00 PM Fellowship Hall
February 27- We can't wait to play some games and eat some treats! Everyone welcome.



YOGA CHURCH

Third Sunday- 4:00-5:30 PM - Fellowship Hall
NEW! A worship service that blends breath and body with Scripture and Holy Communion. Yoga Church is designed to help us prepare our whole selves-- body, mind and spirit-- to encounter Christ in the reading of the Gospel and in the bread and cup.
If you long for a quiet, embodied, contemplative space... If you desire to feel more fully alive in God's presence... If you're simply curious... we would love for you to join.
Please, bring a yoga mat and a water bottle.

www.fumcbossier.org

MISSIONS THAT MATTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

MAGNOLIA MANOR MISSIONS

We will serve communion on the First Monday of the month, February 2.



MAGNOLIA MANOR MISSIONS

Communion, Bingo, & Special Activities



WOMEN IN MISSION

February 17-- 10:00 AM- Room 49

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month. Come join us if you would like to help with our Mission Projects.

GRIT & GRACE



MISSION TEAM

MILITARY FAMILIES MINISTRY

Our mission is to serve those who serve, reflecting Christ's love through community, care, and connection.



SOUPER SATURDAY

February 28- 8:00 AM - FUMC BOSSIER KITCHEN

Come pack meals or deliver meals to the home bound & those who receive meals on wheels. We provide meals the last Saturday of each month.

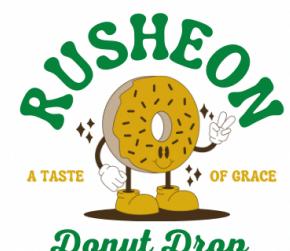


HELPING HANDS FOOD PANTRY

Open Monday-Thursday 9:00-11:30 AM

Helping Hands Food Pantry -Through generosity, compassion, and service, Helping Hands helps to ensure that no one in our community goes hungry.

We are looking for Volunteers. If interested contact Kiersten Whelby.



RUSHEON DONUT DROP

Tuesdays- 7:20 AM - Following the Bossier School Calendar

Every week we gather at Rusheon's crosswalk to greet students with a smile—and a free donut! It's our way of offering a taste of grace to kids as they start their day. With a quick hello, a word of encouragement, and a sugary treat on the go, this ministry helps brighten mornings, build connections, and remind students that they are seen, valued, and supported—one donut at a time.

YOUTH MINISTRY

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT SARAH MCCURLEY AT SMCCURLEY@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

MISSION TRIP COMING SOON!

The snow storm has all of us off our routine especially at the beginning of the new year! I hope that February brings more routine and rhythm to our lives. We are currently taking sign ups for our summer mission trip to Blueprint Ministries in San Antonio, TX. Summer is my favorite time of year in our youth ministry--I can't wait for the warm weather and good memories. Please get signed up ASAP for the trip!



I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan which is Christ Jesus himself.
Colossians 2:2

YOUTH MEAL TRAIN

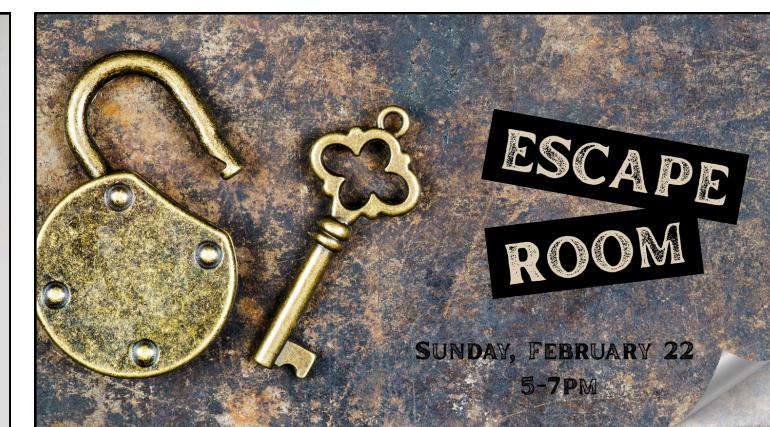
LOOKING FOR MEALS EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT TO FEED BETWEEN 15-20 PEOPLE. CONTACT SARAH FOR MORE INFO!

Thank you so much to all who fed our students last year! Our dates for 2026 through May are NOW available! Reach out to Sarah for more info on how to sign up for the meal train.

FEBRUARY YOUTH NIGHTS



Sunday, February 8 @ 12-3pm



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

5-7PM

ESCAPE
ROOM

STAY UP TO DATE WITH FUMC BOSSIER YOUTH TEXTS

Text @2020fumcy to 81010 - students

Text @2020fumcp to 81010 - parents

FUMC YOUTH MINISTRY

SARAH MCCURLEY
YOUTH DIRECTOR

318-742-3823 Ext 128

smccurley@fumcbossier.org

www.fumcbossier.org/youth2

THE SILENT WITNESS

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG



For the six Sundays of Lent, the Worship team will present a series of "silent witnesses" – inanimate objects which were used in the last week of Jesus' life to humiliate and kill Him, but which can possibly give us new insight into our own behavior and God's redeeming love for humankind.

Let us listen with spirit ears to what they can tell us today. The Palm Branches watched early in Passion Week, knowing the double-mindedness and fickleness of the crowd that waved them. The Cup was at the last supper and felt the trembling lips of the disciples, knowing their frailty and weakness. The 30 Pieces of Silver knew that money would not get Judas what he wanted and that fanatics do not deal fairly. The Whip had no say in the brutal whipping, but it recognized these precious welts and knew that by His stripes we are healed. The Crown of Thorns could not control its being placed on the sacred head, but it knew this Jesus was truly the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. As the Nails were driven in, they were awash with the innocent blood of the Lamb. The Cross stood silent as the Lamb was fixed upon it, a willing sacrifice for the redemption and reconciliation of all creation. The Stone alone witnessed the resurrection and rolled aside for all to see He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!!

Each of the scenarios depict fallen humankind and gives us pause to ponder the forces behind them, forces bent on evil. But here is the good news of the Gospel, "in all things God works for the good of those who love Him." What man meant for evil so long ago, God used for good! Let us not be silent, but witness to His goodness and shout to the world HE LIVES.

THE CHURCH MOUSE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

February is here with so many events for this second month of the year. It's the shortest month with 28 or 29 days. The odds are about 1 in 1,461 making Leap year babies (leaplings) a rare occasion. The month is filled with lots of history, national holidays and cultural festivities. February is the only month that can pass without a single moon. This phenomenon will next occur in 2037. It's a month of many celebrations – cultural festivals to national holidays. Planet Pluto was discovered February 18, 1930, but later reclassified as a dwarf planet.

Heart is a word heard a lot during this month as emphasis is placed on having a healthy Heart – the hollow muscular organ that sends the blood around your body. It can also be defined as the central or innermost part of something – the central part. As I travel around the church, Church Mouse gets to see a lot of people at FUMC- Bossier who have a Heart filled with God's love.

HEART Idioms to ponder:

Change of Heart (attitude change)

Heart of gold (very kind person)

Find it in your Heart to do something (able or willing to do something)

From the bottom of your Heart (in a sincere way)

By Heart (using only your memory)

Heart and Soul (a lot of energy and enthusiasm)

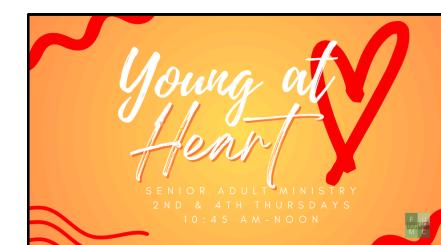
Give somebody Heart (make feel positive)

Happy Valentine's Day,
Church Mouse



SENIOR ADULT MINISTRIES

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG



YOUNG-AT-HEART

2ND THURSDAYS EACH MONTH- 10:30 AM-FELLOWSHIP HALL

February 12- Lunch, drinks and dessert provided. Cost is \$5.00. Call the church office to make your reservation.

SILVER FOXES FITNESS

Mondays and Fridays 10:00 AM-Fellowship Hall

Join our Silver Foxes for a Chair Exercise Class.



CHURCHWIDE EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG



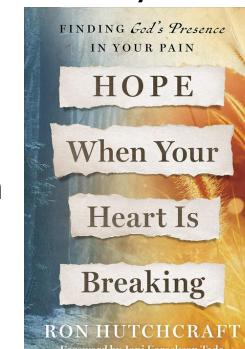
FAITHFUL FAVORITES

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Each month, we highlight a podcast, book, song, or other resource to encourage reflection, growth, and connection in your faith journey. Whether it's music that uplifts, a book that inspires, or a podcast that sparks conversation, our monthly pick is chosen to nourish your spirit and spark meaningful moments in your life.

For February, Shannon Kelley chose the book *Hope When Your Heart is Breaking* by Ron Hutchcraft.

We have all experienced some sort of loss in our lives. Loss of a loved one or spouse, job loss, financial loss, divorce, broken dreams and health challenges. This book emphasizes the power of our choices, and how those choices can destroy us by causing us to become bitter and hard, or build us up to find peace and joy. The author gives personal and real life examples of loss but shines the light of hope. He focuses on how our choices can lead to healing or to more hurting. Throughout this book, the author supports his points with Scripture and focuses the reader on deepening a relationship with Jesus, a Secure Anchor who can be trusted. I found this book very helpful in my own life and plan to share it with friends going through some of life's challenges.



STIRRING THE SPIRIT

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Cupid Popcorn for Valentine's Day

Cupid Popcorn is a fun and delicious treat idea. Make it with your kids to enjoy as a family or bag it up to give as valentine gifts to friends, neighbors or school classmates.



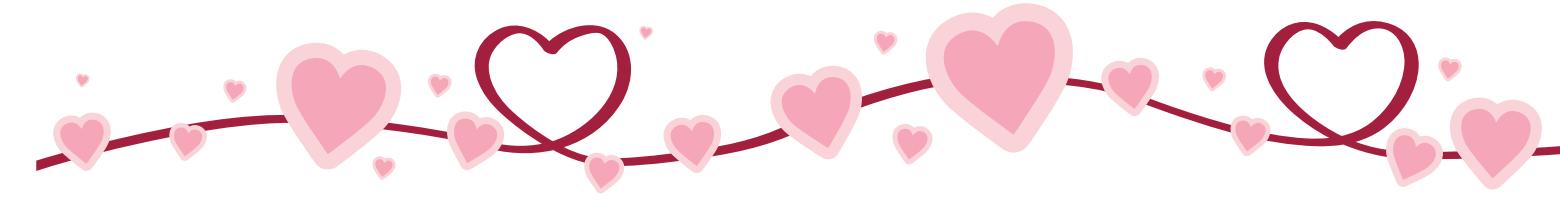
Ingredients

- 1 3.2 oz bag of microwave popcorn
- 1/2 cup white chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup conversation hearts
- 1/4 cup Valentine's M&Ms
- Pink food coloring for candy

Instructions

- Pop the popcorn in the microwave and remove any unpopped kernels by making a very small opening in the top of the bag, holding it upside down, and shaking until the unpopped kernels fall out.
- Add popcorn to a bowl and melt chocolate in a microwave-safe container for 60 seconds, stirring after 30 seconds, and then stirring after 10 seconds until completely melted. Be careful not to overheat and seize the chocolate.
- Add food color to the white chocolate until it reaches your desired shade of pink and pour over the popcorn while it's still warm. Gently fold the chocolate into the popcorn until it's evenly coated, being careful not to break popcorn.
- Spread popcorn in an even layer on a piece of parchment paper, sprinkle with conversation hearts and M&Ms and allow to set for at least one hour.
- Separate if necessary and store in an airtight container or bag it up and give it to friends and neighbors!

Recipe submissions for Stirring the Spirit: Drop off at the church office for Elisa or email children@fumcbossier.org



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

2025 Financial Review: Clarity, Faithfulness, and Forward Momentum

As we reflect on 2025, we are grateful for the faithfulness of God and the generosity of the people of First United Methodist Church of Bossier City. This past year required careful stewardship, honest assessment, and steady leadership. And because of your generosity, the church ends the year grounded and hopeful.

Like many congregations, we navigated real financial challenges. Some operating expenses exceeded projections, and leadership worked diligently to manage resources with prudence and restraint. We believe transparency is essential to trust, and we want you to know that these realities were faced thoughtfully and faithfully.

At the same time, there are encouraging signs of momentum. **Total income for the year slightly exceeded budget**, and while annual statements summarize totals rather than month-by-month patterns, leadership observed **stronger and more consistent giving in the second half of 2025**. The direction of the story matters—and the direction is positive.

As we look ahead, that momentum becomes even clearer.

For 2026, **98 households have pledged \$567,998**, compared with **92 pledges totaling \$448,466 in 2025**. That represents **6 additional pledging households** and a **26.7% increase in pledged giving**. These commitments reflect growing confidence in the mission and ministry God is shaping among us.

As we closed the year, the church remained financially stable. Importantly, we carefully distinguish between **general operating funds**, which support the ongoing ministry of the church, and **designated funds**, which are reserved for specific purposes and used only as donors intend. This clarity ensures that every gift is honored with integrity.

Thank you for your faithfulness, generosity, and trust. Because of you, First UMC enters 2026 prepared to continue renewing the life of our community...together.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

By the Numbers**2025 Financial Snapshot****General Operating Ministry**

- **Total Operating Income:** ~\$708,000 (slightly above budget)
- **Total Operating Expenses:** ~\$806,000

Year-End Financial Position

- **General Operating & Designated Cash (combined):** ~\$651,000
- Includes both operating funds and donor-designated funds reserved for specific purposes
- **Renovation Loan Balance:** ~\$158,000
- **Endowment Balance (Dec. 31):** \$605,085.89
-

Looking Ahead to 2026

- **Pledging Households:** 98
- (up from 92 in 2025 – +6 households / +6.5%)
- **Total Pledged Giving:** \$567,998

(up from \$448,466 – +\$119,532 / +26.7%)

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Our monthly newsletter is a collaboration by all members of our church staff. If you notice any discrepancies please let us know so we can address them.

If your group or class has anything for the newsletter or bulletin you can turn it in at the office or email it to office@fumcbossier.org

Photos, information, recipes, etc. can also be sent to the office as well.

Please, make sure to submit all information for the newsletter by the **20th of the month** to ensure it is included in the upcoming month's issue.

Thank you!