



2026 SMOKE SIGNAL

Our Mission Statement

Sharing the love of Christ with ALL people.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
Matthew 5:16

Burnt Factory Church
P. O. Box 399
Stephenson, Virginia 22656
burntfactory.org
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As I reflect on the last 20 years of being the pastor of Burnt Factory Church, I was looking through some old newsletter articles and stumbled upon the September 2014 issue. I was amazed to read it again after all these years. It reflected how I felt about the church and all of you then, and how it says exactly what I feel about you all now! It will give new members a little bit of history too. I hope you enjoy.

Grace & Peace

Sept. 2014

Where do I begin to thank all of you for your faithfulness, grace, and love? Where do I even begin to show you how much I appreciate your prayers, your presence, your service, your gifts, and your witness? I am humbled and so very grateful to be in ministry with all of you here at Burnt Factory UMC!

Over the last 8 years, I have been blessed to be a part of a faith community that truly embraced the paradigm shift of moving from a maintenance church that focused inwardly to a mission church that focused outwardly. I have been so encouraged by the steadfast faith of those members who have been at Burnt Factory UMC all their lives; whose faithful commitment and willingness to welcome change has initiated the growth we are enjoying now. Without their trust in God, constant prayers, and willingness to open their hearts to others; this growth would not have occurred. I love you all!

Without the willingness of new members to come and join in the fellowship and to be a part of the contagious spirit at work here, there would also be no growth. New members have radiated energy and excitement for the kingdom of God and have initiated new ministries and missions. We have been so blessed by all the many new members who have made Burnt Factory UMC their home and have supported the many ministries with their obedience to the Lord! I am so very blessed to be your pastor and count my blessings everyday for each and every one of you!

Just to give you an idea of what we have experienced in the last 8 years, let me share with you some numbers. In 2007, we enjoyed an average attendance of 96. In 2008, we crossed a barrier and averaged 110. By 2010, we were up to 130 and after adding our 8:30 service; our 2011 average went to 170 in combined attendance. By 2013, we were averaging 193 and we are on pace to top 225 per Sunday this year if not more. Praise God!

We have welcomed in that time period to date, 222 members of which 91 confessed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord. Our total membership stands at 366 and we have another 50 people who attend regularly. We have baptized 47 people in this time period. We have gone from a 90,000 dollar budget with one employee to a 300,000 dollar budget with 10 employees. Six of these employees are directly related to the ministry and care of youth and children!

Where do I even begin to share with you how much I appreciate your mission support? Do you know that 27% of our giving goes to mission? It would take 10 pages to tell about the many missions you have so faithfully participated in. Let me try to touch on just some of them.

- Our Relay for Life team, *The Believers* has been the leader in this community on the war against cancer. With various leaders stepping up to the plate year after year, *The Believers* team as set the example for continued diligence and perseverance in this important battle!
- Our support the last two years and this coming year of the *WATTS Mission* (The Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter) has been very exciting. It truly take a community, using all their different gifts and graces coming together to make this mission possible! Every night for a solid week we welcome, house, feed, and love those in our community who are homeless. Our younger adult members have initiated participation in *Color Runs Events*; where they also support *WATTS* along with enter city missional needs.
- The support of *CCAP* (Congregational Community Action Project) has long been a focus of Burnt Factory UMC. We have made them the recipients of any special offerings and also have given them budget and volunteer support. This vital, grassroots organization supports the poor in so many ways and we are glad to partner with them!
- Our United Methodist Men and Women's groups consistently provide mission support to many projects; the men have just recently completed their 16th handicap ramp. The women provide school kits for the conference and help in so many different ways, even providing bereavement support for those families who have experienced loss. These groups help fund scholarships for camp, for mission, and for special needs.

- The church has supported mission trips for both our youth and adults. We have sent youth to Joplin, Missouri, to the gulf coast, to the Dominican Republic and to the Bahamas. They have worked in the inter city of Roanoke and in the hills of West Virginia. The adult mission trips have included Hurricane relief in North Carolina, fire repair on a church on the Eastern Shore, building a small shelter in Mathias, W.Va. for a homeless man, and two trips to Haiti! There are many more that I could share with you and many more to come! Our youth provide a motel ministry where they support the working poor; we support *the Freemont Street nursery*. We support the *Laurel Center* (a home for abused and battered women.) We support the *Salvation Army* and the Social Services Department when they have special needs! We support the *Hearts Haven Home* (A home for mentally challenged adults.) The list goes on and on and I cannot be more humbled by your willingness to embrace mission! I have truly never been so involved with such a generous and Spirit led Church!
- We maintain a food pantry ministry where we help those who fall through the cracks of the system with food and other emergency needs. We plant potatoes every year and donate every one of them to the *Society for St. Andrews* and other area food banks.

This just touches on some of the many ways this church has demonstrated their continued commitment to reaching out to the world outside our doors and beyond our stained glass. It doesn't even mention the many hours and many expenses that never get recorded and are donated and given in quiet resolve and humility. Thank you and "well done good and faithful servants!"

As we move closer to beginning our expansion project at BFUMC and as we will be asking every member to consider giving even more sacrificially than ever before; as we will soon be embarking on a new era ---- it is vitally important to maintain our focus and unity! Jesus is our focus and fulfilling the mission of the church, as empowered by the Holy Spirit, provides our unity.

We are moving forward in faith and love; we are embarking on a million dollar expansion project for one reason and one reason only --- to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world --- and we transform the world one life at a time! Our church, our faith community is transforming lives! You are transforming lives! We are doing it by keeping our eyes upon Jesus Christ and by continuing to seek a balance between personal holiness and social holiness! We do it by being passionate for Christ! We do it by being outwardly focused instead of inwardly focused!

We will soon be asking each and every one of you: how might you want to support this expansion? We are going to ask each and everyone to bathe this church in prayer, to unceasingly with devotion and commitment, pray, pray, pray! We are going to ask that some recommit yourself to your church vows and that you seek ways to serve, continue to be present in worship, and continue to witness to the Gospel! And yes, we are going to ask that you consider extravagant giving and making sacrificial monetary gifts over and above your tithe.

We know that there are many ways to participate in this ministry of transformation and that many will participate in different ways with different gifts and graces. We welcome everyone's contributions in whatever form they come! With all of us pulling together, we can accomplish mighty things for God! As Rev. Martin Luther King said, "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. ---- You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love."

I want you to know church, that talking about money is not your pastor's favorite thing. I have been so blessed in so many ways by this church but especially blessed with your faithful giving! In 8 years, I have not had to, not one time; ask for extra monetary support for a mission or a need or a ministry opportunity. You have been so very faithful and extravagant with your giving. I have never even had to have a stewardship campaign because of your generous nature. This does not come easy for your pastor but it is incumbent upon me, as your pastor, to provide leadership, to the best of my ability, in this area. Having said that; let me assure you that I will try to handle this challenge with integrity, but also with resolve. The truth is, we cannot move forward without substantial and extravagant gifts.

We do not want anyone to give to a budget, we do not want anyone to give to debt retirement, we do not want anyone to even consider giving one penny to a building. We would rather ask that you consider giving to the marvelous vision generated by the love of God in Christ Jesus. What we are asking is that each and every one considers --- not giving - -- but investing!

It is our hope and prayer that you will come to see and come to know that your gifts are an investment in the continuing work of God; in the continuing establishing of His Kingdom, in the continuing work of the Holy Spirit! And in the continuing fulfillment of the mission!

Lives are being transformed, souls are being saved, and brokenness is being repaired! Lives are being touched and healed! People are being fed! People are being housed! People are being clothed! People are being forgiven! People are being loved! This is what we give to; this is what we are investing in! When we build a house based upon love, when we build a house devoted to our Lord; when we build a house committed to the less fortunate ---- when we build a house of worship where believers are lifted up and redemption is offered to the world; when we do these things ----- we help build the Kingdom of God!

God bless you and keep you!
Pastor Steve

My family and I love to go to amusement parks! Especially Disney World. Every experience is different, depending on who you are with, what stage of life you are in, and the timing, however one thing that is always the same, and something you can always count on is standing in line. We all know it, maybe we get lucky and its 10 minutes, but I have waited in line for an hour just to have a favorite experience. But we like to have fun with it too, we play games, chat with other people, and just enjoy the experience taking it all in! One thing for sure is that in this life, we are going to stand in line for something. The Grocery store, post office, specialty stores, DMV, drive thru's. It's inevitable that at some point in our day, we will stand in line. I would wait in line for 20 minutes for some good Chick-Fil-A! But can you imagine if we had to stand in line to get into church? Oh boy it would be amazing to see! What a vision to see people standing in line, sharing, laughing, praying together while waiting to get into the church. People waiting to get saved, to worship our Father God, to serve in Mission, and to share the love of God with all people, people get prayed over, healed, loved on, shown Hope! WOW! As a pastor, I would love to see Churches crowded, people desiring to be in the House of the Lord so much that there would be line out the doors! With September upon us, we are preparing to go into the month of the Harvest and bring in Autumn beauty. We Christians have some work to do. The Harvest is ready for the picking, are you willing to go out and bring people to Christ? It is time for us to go out into the world and making churches crowded, people standing in line to get to church! And trust me, standing in line for church has a greater joy in the end! Wishing you all a joyful and blessed September, the gate of Autumn.

Love,

Pastor Carrie

September Birthdays

4th Angela Wiseman
 Carol Delauter
 Zayne Bryant
 Cecilyn Bayliss
 Catherine Rhodes
 Linda Harrison
 Scott Melvin

5th Randy Willis
 Alice Reaves

8th David Werdebaugh
 Linda Bodkin
 Kay Longerbeam

9th Glen Boudier
 Sadie Blanchfield

16th Jennifer Stinnette
 Chrissy Sine

18th Brendan Luttrell
 Colton Luttrell

19th Sylvia Woods

20th Sequoia Britton

22nd Liz Duvall
 Brandy Woods
 Mallory Henschen
 Janice Morgan

23rd Zoey Corron
 Ruth Riemenschneider

26th Grant Henschen
 Kari Reed
 Phuong Lai

27th Jay Groce

30th Debbie Burke
 Carter Lynn Kerr
 Greg Duvall



Happy Anniversary

9th Steve & Melanie Melester

11th Don & Sue Ashley

21st Jim & Amy Shepley
 Eric and Robin Russell

25th Mark and Cheryl Jones

29th Sam and Catherine Rhodes

30th Gary and Kathy Dixon

**“Truly he is my rock and
 my salvation; he is my
 fortress, I will not be
 shaken.”**

Psalms 62:6



**School is now in full swing, and so is our new theme for Children's church:
Bible Heroes!**

Each week, our children will meet a different hero from the Bible and discover how God worked through their lives. We'll learn about their courage, their faith, their mistakes, and the ways they trusted God—even when things weren't easy.

But our heroes won't stop with the Bible! Each week, we'll also meet a Christian hero from today - someone who used their faith, gifts, courage, or compassion to make a difference in the world.

Through stories, games, lessons, and plenty of circus fun, our hope is that children will discover an important truth: **You don't have to be famous, perfect, or fearless to be a hero. You simply need to be willing to follow God.**

So come one, come all - **the greatest show is about to begin!** We can't wait to discover God's heroes together this month!

Erin Hartman - Director of Children's Ministries
E-mail: hartman03@yahoo.com
Cell: 540-535-5283

The Outreach Mission Statement

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 4:10-11

Burnt Factory Church is blessed to have many faithful stewards of God's grace, using the gifts they have received to serve others in our community.

In August, we had a very successful collection of school supplies for Bright Futures. Thank you to all who donated to this worthy cause.

A big thanks to Pastor Carrie for sharing her inspirational faith journey at the last Sisters in Faith meeting.

The Family Promise ministry was able to provide an extra 15 meals in August. Thank you to Robin Russell and Jim & Jo Anna Grayson for delivering all the meals to the motels.

The Mission Team had a very successful and meaningful week serving in Ashe County, NC.

There are many opportunities available to serve and be a part of sharing God's love:

- September 10th - There will be a blood drive in the church fellowship hall
- September 20th - Family Promise meals will be assembled and delivered to the homeless in motels
- September 25th - There is a Dementia Seminar planned
- The BFC WATTS team is busy making preparations for our week of hosting. Be on the lookout for more information coming soon

All the ministries in our church are active and important. If you're interested in learning more about these ministries, please feel free to contact me, or anyone on the committee. You can also join us at our next meeting on **Thursday, September 3rd**, at 7p.m. in the lower cottage. Hope to see you there.

Cheryl Jones

Outreach Committee Chair

cheryl_b_jones@yahoo.com



CCAP Mission: Guided by our faith in God and love of neighbor, CCAP is committed to helping our neighbors meet basic needs with food, clothing and financial resources.

We would like to thank our Volunteers who worked at the Saturday Food Pantry at CCAP on Saturday, August 8, 2026, from 9am until noon. Thank you to: Lisa Patterson, Sandy Burkhart, Vonnie Jenkins, Adam Woods, Larry and Kathy Dick.

Once again, the BLT lunch group met on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, for their fellowship lunch. The group provided items for the local Freedge on Cameron Street. Thank you to those who contributed to this community outreach program.

On Friday, August 14, 2026, CCAP held an ice cream social for their volunteers. It was an opportunity for volunteers to meet other people who volunteer in different areas of CCAP. The annual bike benefit bike tour was held on Saturday, August 22, 2026. All proceeds will go to the Congregational Community Action Project (CCAP), a non-profit homeless prevention program making this more than just a one-day bike tour but also an inspirational event where each cyclists' participation has an impact on the community of Winchester and Frederick County, VA.

Upcoming opportunities to help volunteer at CCAP (clothing House):

Rhea Lana pick up will be held on Wednesday, September 2, 2026, at the Sports Plex. The sorting of clothing will be on Thursday and Friday, September 3- 4, 2026. Our church is supporting the effort. In the past, this donation has been a huge blessing to the Clothing House. If you can donate an hour or two, please reach out to Kathy Dick or Patty Leonard.

The Freedges are stocked by your neighbors and community members with fresh produce, items they don't want to go to waste, pre-cooked meals, etc! Find them at these 4 convenient drop-off locations:

- **329 N Cameron** - on the Our Health Campus (you can park on Cameron St and walk across to the Our Health Campus to drop off donations)
- **102 Montague Avenue** at the Methodist Church
- **700 Aylor Road, Stephens City** at Abundant Life Church
- **The Wayside Inn- Middletown**

Donations are always accepted! Please date an item placed in the Freedges. This aides in the freshness of the items offered. Water bottles are always an excellent donation.

Once again, thank you for the continued support of this important ministry.



Mission Team to Ashe County, NC

Our 2026 mission team is singing God's praises after an amazing week of service in Ashe County, NC! We just love the community there, the families we served and the refreshing experience of the NC mountains and streams. The UMVIM staff there is superb. Projects were well thought out, materials were on site and their construction coordinators were right there with us.

The first day and a half-involved demo. Our team of 10 took down 3 decks, one ramp and an above ground swimming pool. All were in significant disrepair and unsafe. Working at 2 different sites, two new decks and a handicapped ramp were built. At a third home, the support structure for an aluminum skirt was built around a double wide trailer.

Ashe County had been hit by Hurricane Helene in September 2024. They received over a foot of rain, severe flooding and destructive mudslides. A ten-foot wall of water went through Lansing, NC, one of the communities we served. It will take years to remediate the damage; we plan to continue to send a team every year to continue the rebuilding process.

Since our initial family arrived in Winchester in March 2022, Burnt Factory Church has come alongside a total of 6 refugee families (40 individuals) in our community. Five are Afghan, all of whom served the U.S. in Afghanistan. We also assist a Syrian family whom the United Nations brought here 10 years after they fled the war in Syria which took the lives of over 3 million civilians. Our Syrians' extended family has been resettled in countries all over the world: Norway, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Australia.

In general, all 6 families are doing well. All are gainfully employed and learning English, the children are moving forward in school, and the families have adjusted well to life in the U.S. Four of the families have green cards (legal permanent residence). The other two families are eligible for their green cards and submitted their applications months ago. Unfortunately, the U.S. has paused the processing of these applications indefinitely, which leaves them feeling unsure of their immigration status and ineligible for food assistance and other Social Services.

That being said, there are many praises:

1. Farhan, our 2026 graduate of Handley HS is starting as a FT student at Laurel Ridge. He will study engineering.
2. There has been much success at DMV: our Syrian mother is our first woman to get her driver's license, 4 more refugees got driving permits this summer, one earned his CDL license and is driving long haul and one has a CDL permit and is taking classes for his license.
3. All of our adults are in ESL classes. Learning English and learning to drive are important ways to empower refugees.
4. Our initial family (currently 12 members) was able to buy a house, with four adults working full time to make that happen.

Prayer concerns:

1. Two families have lost their food assistance through Social Services, putting 4 adults and 11 children at risk.
2. Four adults will lose their health and dental insurance October 1. The cost of insurance on the marketplace or through their work is prohibitive.
3. Church World Services Winchester (CWS) will close effective September 30. All of the resettlement agencies in the U.S. are struggling or have closed altogether. CWS has provided the over 500 refugees in Winchester with advocacy, education and support. This will be a huge loss for many families. At the same time, we celebrate the work CWS has done here since 2022.

Brothers in Faith



Guys - Please consider coming to our next Brothers In Faith meeting on September 12th at 9 am in the church's fellowship hall. Free breakfast and a speaker (TBD) will be on the agenda.

Brothers In Faith Leader
Dennis Loeffler

Sisters in Faith

Sisters in Faith continues to grow as an integral part of Burnt Factory's mission to equip and educate women in our congregation as well as helping each woman reach her full potential as a follower of Christ.

At its August meeting, our speaker, Pastor Carrie Fair, talked to us about her faith journey. She detailed how God led her through tumultuous times which taught her the compassion, trust and skills she needed to fulfill the role she now performs in our congregation. Her very personal testimony gave each of us an example of how God goes before us to prepare us for challenges we might face in the future.

Also at the meeting, members discussed and evaluated our "Christmas in July" project which shared a party with residents of Rose Hill Nursing Home. There were many suggestions as to how we could improve our involvement so that the party would be more helpful to the residents. After a spirited discussion, members agreed that "Christmas in July" was a valuable addition to our role in bringing the love of Jesus to our community and therefore we would repeat it in 2027.

Our next meeting will be October 17, and all women of the church are invited to join us for a precious time of sharing, learning and fellowship.

Burnt Factory is hosting its next blood drive on September 10th, 2026. There are lots of slots available. You can schedule yourself on RedCrossBlood.org and enter “burntfactory” as the sponsor. Or I will be available after services to assist you too.

Dennis Loeffler

HELLO KITTY
AND FRIENDS

x

 American
Red Cross



Giving blood is super kind!

Blood Drive
Burnt Factory Church
Main Room
1943 Jordan Springs Road
Stephenson, VA 22656
Thursday, September 10, 2026
12:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: burntfactory to schedule an appointment.

Maximize your blood donation. Help more patients.
If you are an eligible type O, B - or A - donor, consider making a Power Red donation.
Red blood cells are the most commonly transfused blood component.


Scan to be attached to
RapidPass®

The American Red Cross and Hello Kitty are releasing exclusive NEW merch! Come give blood Sept. 1-20 for a supercute Red Cross x Hello Kitty collectible item, while supplies last!


Scan to schedule
an appointment

1-800-RED CROSS | RedCrossBlood.org | Download the Blood Donor App

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October 2026 donations for the Laurel Center

We do not accept travel sized items, clothing, toys, stuffed animals, or books, unless there is a specific need listed.

We are currently in need of the following items:

- Cases of Bottled Water
- Individually Wrapped Snacks
- Juice Boxes
- 13 Gallon Trash Bags
- To Go Water Bottles
- Umbrellas
- Q-Tip's
- Facial Tissues
- Deodorant
- Heating Pads (electric or non-electric)
- Paper Towels
- Toilet Paper
- Gift Cards for Martins and Walmart and Visa Gift Cards

Hospitality Team Help

The **Hospitality team** needs additional help with set up of the food table on Sunday morning at 8 am. All you need to do is put the food and drinks out on the table and make coffee. All items are purchased ahead of time by me. **I need of 1 – 2 people on the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays of each month.** Please contact Cathy Barley if you can help with this. My phone number is [540-664-6018](tel:540-664-6018) and my email is barley1084@outlook.com

Have you given your email address to Keith Roberts, yet?

Pastor Steve has special notices he needs to send to those who attend Burnt Factory. The notices will include not only prayer concerns but also schedule changes during bad weather.

Keith keeps an email list in his computer for just such purposes. Your email address is protected, and emails are sent, recipients not disclosed, to protect your privacy.

Kindly send your email address to Keith Roberts at john.k.roberts@comcast.net with the message:

“ADD ME TO THE CHURCH EMAIL LIST”

Would you like to receive the Smoke Signal Newsletter by email?

Kindly send an email to Becca Ratliff at beccalea.ratliff@gmail.com with a subject:

“Add me to the Smoke Signal Newsletter email distribution”

September 2026 Calendar

September 1–15

Date	Time	Event
Tues 1st	5:00 PM	Praise Team
	6:30 PM	Choir Practice
Wed 2nd	9:30 AM	Pastor's Office Hours
Thurs 3rd	6:30 PM	Boy Scout Troop 63
	7:00 PM	Outreach Meeting
Sun 6th	8:30 AM	Worship
	11:00 AM	Worship
	12:30 PM	Confirmation Classes
	4:00 PM	Youth Group
Tues 8th	12:00 PM	2/4 BLT
	5:00 PM	Praise Team
	6:30 PM	Choir Practice
Wed 9th	9:30 AM	Pastor's Office Hours
Thurs 10th	12:00 PM	Blood Drive
	6:30 PM	Boy Scout Troop 63
Sat 12th	9:00 AM	Brothers in Faith
Sun 13th	8:30 AM	Worship
	11:00 AM	Worship
	12:30 PM	Confirmation Classes
	4:00 PM	Youth Group
Tues 15th	5:00 PM	Praise Team
	6:30 PM	Choir Practice

September 16–30

Date	Time	Event
Wed 16th	9:30 AM	Pastor's Office Hours
	12:00 PM	Pathfinders
Thurs 17th	6:30 PM	Boy Scout Troop 63
Sat 19th	10:00 AM	Sisters in Faith
Sun 20th	8:30 AM	Worship
	11:00 AM	Worship
	12:30 PM	Confirmation Classes
	4:00 PM	Youth Group
Tues 22nd	12:00 PM	2/4 BLT
	5:00 PM	Praise Team
	6:30 PM	Choir Practice
Wed 23rd	9:30 AM	Pastor's Office Hours
Thurs 24th	6:30 PM	Boy Scout Troop 63
Fri 25th	TBD	Dementia Seminar
Sun 27th	8:30 AM	Worship
	11:00 AM	Worship
	12:30 PM	Confirmation Classes
	4:00 PM	Youth Group
Mon 28th	7:00 PM	Mission Team Meeting
Tues 29th	5:00 PM	Praise Team
	6:30 PM	Choir Practice
Wed 30th	9:30 AM	Pastor's Office Hours

For more info, view the calendar on our website: [Calendar](#) | [Burnt Factory Church](#)