

SUMMER 2026



REGISTER ONLINE

# VBS



For kids  
entering  
PreK 4 thru  
5th grade

SNOWBALL  
MOUNTAIN  
CHALLENGE

FIND  
YOUR  
STRENGTH  
IN GOD



# JULY 13-17

MONDAY-FRIDAY

8:30AM-11:30AM



amazon  
wishlist

Contact Jackie Kitchingham if  
you would like to serve at VBS!  
Scan our Amazon Wishlist QR code  
to help purchase VBS supplies!

# THANK YOU!

# SENIOR PASTOR



REV. DR.  
BRIAN MERCER

PastorBrian@  
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

WITH LOVE IN CHRIST,  
*Pastor Brian*

Summer has arrived in Monroe—long days, warm evenings, and a season that naturally invites us to slow down, breathe deeply, and pay attention to the things that matter most. As we move into these months together, I want to invite you into a new sermon series that will carry us through the heart of the summer: **THE TWELVE — ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY CALLING.**

This series grows naturally out of the journey we've been on this year. We walked through the wilderness of Lent. We stood at the foot of the cross during Holy Week. We rejoiced in the garden of resurrection. We reflected on blooming where God has planted us and we've focused on Jesus the Greater. Now, we turn our eyes to the very first people Jesus planted His ministry in—the disciples.

### A STORY THAT BEGINS BY THE SEA

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell the story with a kind of holy simplicity.

**The First Four:** Jesus was walking along the Sea of Galilee when He saw two brothers—**Peter and Andrew**—casting their nets. A little farther down the shoreline, He saw **James and John**, mending nets with their father, Zebedee. These were not scholars. Not priests. Not community leaders. Just fishermen doing what they did every day. And Jesus said to them: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." With those words, everything changed.

**The Invitation** Jesus didn't simply ask them to believe something. He invited them to become something. He took their familiar world—nets, boats, fish—and reframed it with Kingdom purpose. He didn't erase their identity; He redirected it.

**The Response** Matthew and Mark tell us they immediately left their nets. Luke adds the detail that they left behind the greatest catch of their lives. They walked away from boats, careers, and even family expectations because something in Jesus' voice awakened something in their souls.

The Gospels show us that Jesus' call was not limited to fishermen. **Matthew**, a tax collector, was called from his booth—leaving behind a lucrative career and a complicated reputation. Others followed as well: **Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James the Less, Simon the Zealot, Thaddeus, and Judas Iscariot.** Luke tells us that before choosing the Twelve, Jesus spent an entire night in prayer. This was not a random selection. It was a divine appointment. The calling of the Twelve is more than a historical moment. It is a mirror held up to our own discipleship.

### 1. A Radical Shift

Jesus' call always disrupts something—our routines, our priorities, our assumptions about what our lives are supposed to be.

### 2. A Diverse Community

Fishermen and tax collectors. Zealots and doubters. Brothers and strangers. Jesus built His Kingdom with ordinary people from ordinary places—just like us.

### 3. A Turning Point

The calling of the Twelve marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. It is the moment the mission becomes shared.

And that is still true today. The ministry of Jesus continues through the people He calls—through you, through me, through this church.

### A SUMMER OF LEARNING, GROWING, AND FOLLOWING

Each week this summer, we will explore one disciple's story: Who were they before Jesus called them? What changed when they followed? How Jesus shaped them. How their story speaks into our lives today. My prayer is that this series will help each of us hear Jesus' invitation again—fresh, personal, and full of possibility. Because the same voice that called fishermen by the sea still calls people in Monroe today.

## WALK WHERE THE DISCIPLES WALKED

**HOLY LAND TRIP, MAY 2027** - As we study the Twelve this summer, I want to remind you of a special opportunity next year. In May 2027, I will be leading another guided pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We will stand on the shores of the Sea of Galilee where Peter and Andrew dropped their nets. We will walk the roads the disciples walked. We will pray in the places where Jesus taught, healed, and called ordinary people into extraordinary purpose. I would love for you to join me. First Methodist Monroe family, I am grateful for the way God continues to shape us. We are a congregation with deep roots and new growth. We are a people learning, step by step, what it means to follow Jesus in our time and place. This summer, may we listen closely. May we respond courageously. And may we discover again that Jesus still calls ordinary people—people like us—to be part of His extraordinary work—this will help us in #BecomingPeopleofChrist

You can learn more or register here:

<https://www.eo.travelwithus.com/tours/hl27050327153353#eotours>



**REV. JOHN O'LEARY**

John@FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

# DON'T FORGET YOUR SON SCREEN

I can remember my mom saying to me before I run out the door: "Don't forget your sunscreen!" She said it to protect me, and because she loved me. And every time I forgot I paid the consequences of red skin and a few blisters.

What if I told you the most important protection you could apply this summer cannot be found in a bottle? What if the most powerful rays you need to guard against — and at the same time run toward — are not coming from above the clouds, but from the very Son of God?

This summer our sermon series will look at the twelve men who spent the most time with Jesus. When Jesus called His first disciples — fishermen, tax collectors, ordinary people — He didn't hand them a plan. He simply said, "Follow me." And in following Him they were exposed to rays of truth that changed their lives. They watched Him heal the sick, still the storms, and raise the dead. Day after day, they were in His presence — and it showed. Their fears began to fade. Their priorities shifted. Their courage grew.

Here were the benefits of having their own personal "Son Screen"

1. **It protects.** Romans 8:31 reminds us that if God is for us who can be against us. Paul reminds us in the same passage that Jesus is pleading to God for us. Wow, what a special promise.
2. **It transforms.** Jesus was always about his father's business and the disciples were exposed to teachings that changed their priorities.
3. **It redeems.** Jesus tells his followers to be the light to the world. When the faith family is living as lights to the community, they reflect the Son and bring light to darkness. This is our calling.

The summer is a perfect time to sit and be exposed to the Son. The more time we spend with the Son, the safer we are against the rays of the enemy. May we take time this summer to get burned by the Son and allow his love and grace to change our hearts as we #becomepeopleofchrist. Join us by reading through the Gospels, talk with Jesus as the disciples did, and learn to live in his patience as you reflect his light.

## SUMMER SERMON SERIES BEGINS JUNE 7



# THE TWELVE



**MARCY HALL**

Marcy@FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

# THE GREAT FLIP FREEZE

Make plans to join us on Friday, July 3, for an evening of fellowship, music, and summertime fun! This year, we are excited to add a sweet new tradition to our Red, White, & Bayou celebration — The Great Flip Freeze! Beginning at 6:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall, this homemade ice cream social is in memory of longtime choir member Flip Spooner and celebrates her years of friendship, music, and faithful involvement in

the life of our church. You are invited to bring your favorite homemade ice cream to share, or simply come enjoy the treats and fellowship together before the evening festivities begin. Following the ice cream social, we'll continue with our Red, White, & Bayou celebration featuring patriotic music by the bayou in a relaxed outdoor setting. Be sure to bring a lawn chair and enjoy this special church tradition with family and friends.



50+ ADULTS



NANNETTE FLOWERS

NFlowers@FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

ADULT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

THE Bee ATTITUDES

WITH PASTOR BRIAN & PASTOR JOHN

AUGUST 24-26 10:30AM-1PM

Pick up a registration form at the church office or scan the QR code to register online.



90+ RECEPTION

Sunday, June 14th is our "90+ Reception" honoring our members who have been blessed to experience 90 plus years of life. Be sure to walk through the parlor from 10:30-10:50 a.m. to greet these special folks!

Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, or ninety, if our strength endures - Psalms 90:10

50+ Adult Happenings at the church

BRIDGE is Wednesday, June 10, from 1-4pm in the Friendship classroom. If you play contract bridge and are interested in participating as a substitute, please contact me.

TECH CLASS is Wednesday, June 10, 1-2:30pm to assist users with their technology questions. Bring your phone, laptop or tablet and passwords. Class is limited to 15 people so RSVP to nflowers@firstmethodistmonroe.com to reserve your seat!

CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA WORKSHOP is Monday, June 15, 11am in room #6. Join us for a compassionate look at understanding dementia, supporting a loved one through daily challenges, finding medical help, and caring for your own heart and well-being along the caregiving journey. RSVP to nflowers@firstmethodistmonroe.com to secure a seat and printed materials.

50+ Adult Happenings outside the church

LUNCH AND LEARN is a field trip on Thursday, June 11, to a working blueberry farm where you'll tour and pick blueberries, or pre-order fresh or frozen berries, juice, jelly, and/or baked goods to take home. Depart from the east side parking lot in our new Ford transit van at 8:30am. Dutch treat lunch & dessert in Oak Grove before heading back to Monroe. RSVP to me with \$5 for transportation.

"MAJESTIC CITIES OF CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE," a small exploration group tour, is June 5-18, 2027. For more information, visit https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1369681

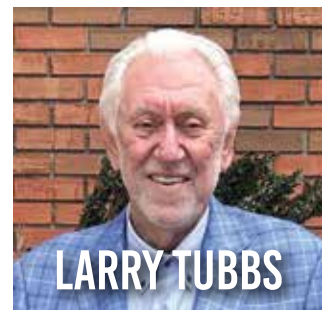
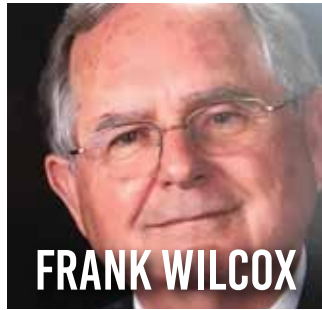
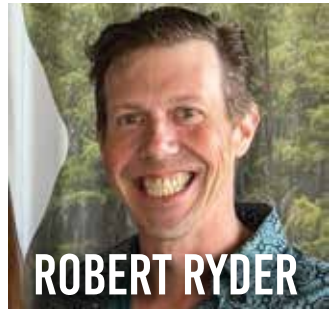
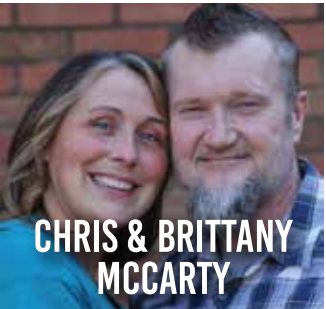


"BE FIT" EXERCISE CLASS AT THE ABIDING IN THE VINE MINISTRIES' "BOUQUET OF TABLES" LUNCHEON



PATRIOTIC CELEBRATION SUNDAY, JUNE 28

# New Members! WELCOME



LET YOUR ROOTS  
*grow* DOWN  
INTO *Him*, & LET  
YOUR *lives* BE BUILT  
ON HIM. COLOSSIANS 2:7

# Worship ON THE BAY U

SUNDAYS AT 7AM | ALL SUMMER!



# RISE YOUTH MINISTRY (6TH -12TH GRADE)

This summer, pray for Rise Youth as we plan to take on our youth Summer Camps in Happy, Texas! We are believing that our students and volunteers will arrive to camp with open hearts and are given a renewed spirit! While we're in West Texas and celebrating the rest and fun summer brings, we are also excited for God to move both in the stillness and the fun. Having fun in the sun is great, but believing what the Son can do for you this summer is even more important.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2026 CONFIRMANDS!

Reese Breen, Kaylee Campbell, Braxton Dove, Zoe Hinton, Blake Mercer, Connor Reitzell, Jackson Rials, Roderick Starr, Melodi Waldrup



**MACKENZIE MILLER**

Mackenzie@FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2026 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES!



Kara Grace Barclay  
Mary Margaret Cain  
Katie Chere Caldwell  
William Case Cruse  
Jackson Henry Goode



Kaylee Elise Gordon  
Steven Michael Hanlon  
Charles Sherman Harris  
Jefferson McCain Jarrell  
Bentley Elizabeth Lewis

John Bennett McNabb, Bailey Morrison, Jack Nathan Neal, John Mark O'Leary, Evans Peters, Jeremy "Preston" Reynolds, Noah McLean Reitzell, Oliver Sivils, Davis Stewart Shelby, Emma Grace Wilkes

**ONE WAY CAMP!**

**JUNE 8-12**

COMPLETED GRADES 6TH & 7TH

**JUNE 15-19**

COMPLETED GRADES 8TH-12TH

**RISE STOCK SALE**

**LAST CHANCE!**

Invest in our youth & help support their summer camps and outreach projects! Thank you!!



**Scan Me!**

# KINGDOM KIDS MINISTRY (K-5TH GRADE)

Do you enjoy serving? Does the sound of 400 kids singing, laughing and playing warm your heart? Are you being called to step out of your comfort zone? If you answered yes to any of these questions, God might be calling you to join us at VBS. Below is a description of the areas you could serve:

**TEACHER** - Leads the lesson or gives directions for the activity with the help of others, maintains control in the classroom. Lessons and materials are provided.

**TEACHER ASSISTANT** - Assists teacher with the lesson. Provides support to the teacher. Runs for extra supplies or materials

**SHEPHERD** - Work in pairs. Responsible for traveling with a group of kids from room to room. Assist kids with classroom activities. Need to be able to keep up with 20-30 kids. A strong voice will benefit you.

**NURSERY HELPER** - Watch & love on volunteers' babies that are not old enough to participate.

**DÉCOR** - Assist with planning and preparing for set-up day.

**YOUTH HELPERS** - Youth entering 6th, 7th and 8th grades will be placed in a classroom to assist with activities and help with the kids. Youth entering 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades will be shepherds assisting with moving groups of kids from place to place.

If you have questions about any of the volunteer roles, please join Ann and me on **Sunday, June 7 at 10:10 AM** in the Parlor for a **VBS question and answer session**. We want to equip you with all you need to know to ensure a fantastic VBS.



**JACKIE  
KITCHINGHAM**

Jackie@  
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

firstmethodist  
m o n r o e

## REPORTING OUR FAITHFULNESS

**04/05/26**

EASTER SUNDAY

Here 1736

Online 1863

TV Area Wide

**WE GAVE**

\$66,656

**04/12/26**

2ND SUN OF EASTER

Here 731

Online 2771

TV Area Wide

**WE GAVE**

\$29,749

**04/19/26**

3RD SUN OF EASTER

Here 772

Online 3024

TV Area Wide

**WE GAVE**

\$47,575

**04/26/26**

4TH SUN OF EASTER

Here 814

Online 1121

TV Area Wide

**WE GAVE**

\$33,573

**ONLINE GIVING**

\$70,556

TEXT "GIVE" TO

318.217.8383

### FOUNDRY

**WE GAVE**

\$1,924

**WE GAVE**

\$1,677

**WE GAVE**

\$713

**WE GAVE**

\$1,315

**ONLINE GIVING**

\$4,143

## MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

In memory of Marty Samoza given by Erin & Brett Barclay

In memory of Ted Holmes given by Ann Bellue

In memory of Ted Holmes given by Dr. & Mrs. Dolecheck

In memory of Ted Holmes given by Nancy Meinel

In memory of Ted Holmes given by Aldersgate Class

In honor of Mrs. Leslie G. Calhoun & Ryan Kersh Ganaway given by Nancy Meinel

In memory of Marty Samoza given by Trey & Kim Hutson

In memory of Marty Samoza given by Joe & Linda Walker

In honor of Shepherd Gray McClain given by Nancy Meinel

**CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE  
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A  
MEMORIAL OR HONORARIUM  
318-325-7335**

# SUMMER 2026

**firstmethodist**  
m o n r o e  
3900 LOOP ROAD  
MONROE, LA 71201-3125  
CALL OR TEXT 318.217.8383

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Monroe, LA  
Peregrine

## JUNE

- 7 VBS MEETING 10:10AM
- 10 50+ ADULT BRIDGE 1PM
- 50+ ADULT TECH CLASS 1PM
- NACHOS & NERF GUNS 6PM
- 11 50+ ADULT BLUEBERRY FARM TRIP 8:30AM
- 14 BLOOD DRIVE
- 90+ RECEPTION 10:30AM
- 15 CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA 11AM
- 21 FATHER'S DAY
- 28 PATRIOTIC CELEBRATION

50+ ADULT BE FIT AT 10AM  
MON., JUNE 1, 8, 15, 22, 29  
WED., JUNE 3, 10, 17, 24

MEN'S BIBLE STUDIES 10AM  
TUES., JUNE 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

## JULY

- 3 RED, WHITE & BAYOU 6:30PM
- 8 50+ ADULT BRIDGE 1PM
- FAMILY SCAVENGAR HUNT 6PM
- 13-17 VBS 8:30-11:30AM
- 26 5TH GRADE FARWELL 10:10AM

50+ ADULT BE FIT AT 10AM  
MON., JULY 6, 13, 20, 27  
WED., JULY 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

MEN'S BIBLE STUDIES 10AM  
TUES., JULY 7, 14, 21, 28



The poster features a dark background with a central church icon in a blue circle. The text 'RED WHITE & BAYOU' is prominently displayed in red, white, and blue. The date 'FRIDAY, JULY 3' is in red. Two event times are listed: '6:30PM THE GREAT FLIP FREEZE FELLOWSHIP HALL' and '7:30PM MUSIC & FIREWORKS ON THE BAYOU'. The design is decorated with stars and musical notes.

**RED**  
**WHITE &**  
**BAYOU**  
**FRIDAY, JULY 3**

**6:30PM**  
**THE GREAT FLIP FREEZE**  
FELLOWSHIP HALL

**7:30PM**  
**MUSIC & FIREWORKS**  
ON THE BAYOU