

THE CHURCH BELL



REACH - CONNECT - EQUIP - SEND



1stchurch.org

SEPTEMBER 2025



1stchurch.org



**Love does no wrong to a neighbor;
therefore, love is fulfilling of the law.**
Romans 13:10



On September 1st, we will celebrate Labor Day, perhaps least understood among all the federal holidays. More than just the unofficial end of summer, it is a day to celebrate the importance of labor - and especially organized labor - in our society.

Organization was so important because the workplace could become so dangerous and even callous toward human life. In the nineteenth century, productivity could be valued over the person. So, the labor movement arose to protect workers' rights and lives.

The church lifted its voice too. In the 1908 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, our predecessor denomination adopted the first Methodist Social Creed, which began:

**The Methodist Episcopal Church stands –
For equal rights and complete justice for all in all stations of life.**

The creed continued to name other values—especially related to labor—for which the Methodists of 1908 were willing to take a stand:

**For the protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases,
injuries and mortality.
For the abolition of child labor.
For a release from employment one day in seven.
For a living wage in every industry.
For the suppression of the “sweating system.”**

In 2025, we describe industrial plants employing the “sweating system” as “sweatshops.” We imagine them in faraway lands, using child labor and other deplorable labor practices. Then we realize that they were once here until labor organizations and the church lifted voices to take a stand against these inhumane conditions.

It's probable and perhaps even likely that the owners, operators, and managers of those 1908 industrial plants understood themselves to be fine Christian people. No doubt the same was true sixty-four years earlier when the Methodist Episcopal Church split over slavery. Those slaveholders probably understood themselves to be fine Christian people.

With the benefit of hindsight, however, we believe they were wrong. We believe that they failed to love slaves and factory workers as neighbors, using them instead as human machinery.

So, when we celebrate Labor Day on September 1st, I will also celebrate the church of 1908 and for its willingness to take a stand.

I will also pray for the church of 2025. We are fine Christian people. May we never again be blind to the ways in which we oppress or participate in systems of oppression. May we still and always be people who stand for “equal rights and complete justice for all.”

Love First: The next steps

For the last year, we have focused on what it means to Love First. This began at last year's All-Church Tailgate as we offered up new ways for you to help spread this commandment spelled out in Matthew 22:37-39. Over the last few weeks, you've heard a lot about Micah 6:8 and our call to, "Do justice. Love kindness. And to humbly walk with God." Now that the sermon focus on this has wrapped up, it's time to take the next steps.



Many of you have already received new t-shirts spelling out these steps. We encourage you to wear them to the All-Church Tailgate on **August 31st**, wear them to sporting events, festivals or just going out to the grocery store. If you haven't picked them up yet, they will be available at the tailgate. These were pre-ordered, but we do have a few extras and if needed we'll do another order in the future.

Wearing the t-shirts is an opportunity for you to reach and connect with others with the message to "Love First." We'll also have new yard signs and stickers with this new theme, with more items in the works. If you have any questions please email communications@1stchurch.org.

DayBreak honored at local event

DayBreak director Jill Pope and the ministry's volunteers would like to thank everyone who came out to support DayBreak at the 100 Women of Blount event and donors who were unable to attend. In total, DayBreak received 60 donations and was selected as the charity for the evening.

Community checking out DayBreak



Individuals and organizations throughout the area looking to see what DayBreak is all about are always welcome. A group from Asbury is set to visit on August 26th and September 17th. It is part of DayBreak's mission to educate people about the program and issues related to cognitive decline.

If you know of a group that would like to learn more about the mission and services, please reach out to Jill Pope at director@daybreak.org.



Memory Café

We continue to build awareness about our Memory Cafe. If you know of someone who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia and is in the early stages of symptoms, share with them that we have a support group and social time just for them and their family members. We meet every 4th Tuesday at 2:00 pm in the DayBreak center.

Come ruin your dinner with us!

DayBreak will be hosting an event September 21st from 5:00-7:00 pm. Help support families coping with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. Eat desserts and listen to Pistol Creek Catch of the Day.

Buy tickets now at the link below or scan the QR code:

<https://daybreak.betterworld.org/events/dessert-jam-2025>



Who is your neighbor?

Over the last few weeks we've heard a lot about doing justice and loving kindness, now it's time to walk the walk and REACH out to our neighbors. But who exactly are we talking about when we say "love your neighbor?"

The answer to that question can be quite varied, but whatever the definition, we are obliged to love first. Scriptures in different parts of the Bible paint pictures of our neighbors being people with whom we hold important things in common and people we've never connected with before.

Please join us as we ask the question Mister Rogers made famous on his PBS show, "Won't you be my neighbor?" [Learn more at 1stchurch.org/worship](http://1stchurch.org/worship) .

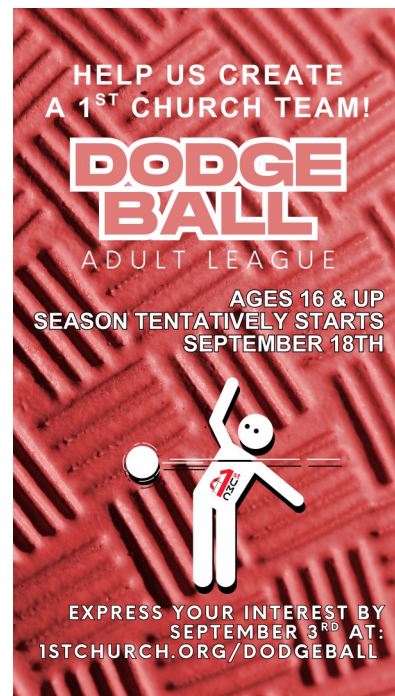


Help spread the word about Fall Festival

It's never too early to tell people about all the fun they can have at the Fall Festival at 1st coming up on **October 26th**. This year's event will feature all the favorites like food, inflatables and of course trunk-or-treating.

During the All-Church Tailgate on August 31st, we encourage you to pick up a Fall Festival at 1st Yard Sign to help spread the word. You can also come by the church office during business hours (M-F) to pick up one, while supplies last.

And lots of volunteers will be needed to make this event a success, so stay tuned on ways you can serve at the Fall Festival.



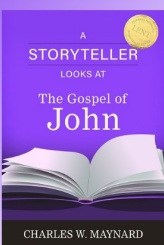
A storyteller looks at the Gospel of John

Whether or not you've read the Gospel of John, we are offering a way to learn more about it through the eyes of a storyteller. This unique take on the Gospel comes from Holston Conference's own, Rev. Charles Maynard (former Superintendent of the Smoky Mountain District). In his book, Charles puts his storytelling hat on to help you gain a new perspective on John's gospel.


Bernice Howard will lead this book study on Thursday mornings at 10:00 am, starting on September 11th. Participants will need to order a copy of the book (which is available on several sites online) before the first session. Please sign up at 1stchurch.org/storyteller.

If you have any questions please email Bernice at bernicehoward@gmail.com.

bookstudy
Led by Bernice Howard



**Thursdays
10:00 am
starting
9/11/25**



1stchurch.org/storyteller



September Sunday School: God is Trustworthy

By giving the law to His people, God showed His commitment to the Israelites' well-being.

Joshua was rewarded for trusting God despite others' fear. God was trustworthy as He led the Israelites to victory in Jericho. Samson's life showed that even when people fail, God remains faithful and merciful, ready to redeem those who turn back to Him. Our stories reveal a God who is constant, powerful and worthy of trust in all circumstances.

Monthly Memory Verse:

Those who know Your name put their trust in You. (Psalm 9:10)

September's Game Plan for K.O.W.



On your mark, get set, go! When a shepherd named David became king, it was a whole new ballgame! He had some big wins and some big losses, too, but he also had a great plan for how to overcome his challenges. In September, during Kids Own Worship, we team up with David and learn that **making peace, following God, showing kindness, and practicing forgiveness** are all part of **God's game plan** for us!

September 14th - Bible Presentation (Kindergarten & 3rd Grades)
During both 10:30 services



The new school year is off to a big start. Our regular programming is back on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Sundays.

Weekly Schedule

Sundays

9:15 am Youth Sunday School

6:30 pm Youth Fellowship

Tuesdays

7:30 am Rise and Shine

Wednesdays

5:00 pm Youth Gathering

6:00 pm Youth Choirs

6:45 pm Youth Bible Study



Brayden York
Director of Youth & Student Ministries
byork@1stchurch.org

On **September 21st**, we'll SEND 1st Youth out to help with the Dessert Jam, a benefit for the DayBreak Ministry.

They will serve from 3:30 to 8:00, probably doing some shifts in case people can't be there the whole time. This will be in place of the regular Youth gathering that night.



News

FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ABOUT
1ST KIDS



Contact the 1st Kids Director
Kristi Alton

✉ kalton@1stchurch.org

☎ 865-982-1273 ext. 712

Kids Own Worship for September

September 7th

Making Peace

Is part of God's Game Plan

September 14th

Following God

Is the best Game Plan

September 21st

Showing Kindness

Is God's Game Plan

September 28th

Forgiveness

Is always God's Game Plan

But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.
Psalm 33:11



Be sure and invite a friend to Rise n' Shine, each Tuesday at 7:30 am in Wesley Hall

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It's almost time for 1st UMC to serve as hosts at 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree. This is happening **September 7th to 14th**. There are a number of ways you can help make this host week a success.



The first way is to consider volunteering. To do that, you must attend one of our training sessions which happen every Thursday. You can find a link to the sign up sheet for training at 1stchurch.org/family-promise.

Another way to make a difference is to help provide some of the food for the meals served to the families throughout the week. This DOES NOT require any training, but there are certain foods that are needed. If you are interested in helping in this way, please visit 1stchurch.org/family-promise and fill out the Meal Interest form.



Mavis Ziegler and Amy Large,
Co-Coordiators of Family Promise at 1stUMC

Celebrate Recovery with us!

While you're enjoying the All-Church Tailgate on August 31st, take some time to stop by and talk to Rev. Don Jones and others about all the great things happening at Celebrate Recovery and what's coming soon.

In August, we celebrated one person giving his life to Christ and his Baptism a short time later. Celebrate Recovery is changing lives and helping people recover from their hurts, hang-ups and habits.

Here is a look at what's coming to CR!

September 3rd

Action (Matthew 5:5 & Romans 12:1)

September 10th

Guest Speaker: Dianne Kelly

September 17th

Guest Speaker (TBD)

September 24th

Sponsor (Matthew 5:8, Lamentations 3:40)

October 1st

Moral (Matthew 5:8; Lamentations 3:40)

Ready to



and put your
FAITH IN ACTION?

CURRENT WAYS TO SERVE



**HELP ASSEMBLE
UMCOR FLOOD BUCKETS**

**Saturday, September 27th
10:00 am in Wesley Hall**

- **Serve as a greeter or assistant share group leader at Celebrate Recovery.**
- **Help prepare and serve meals during Wednesdays at 1st**
- **Prepare and serve meals at Welcome Table on Thursdays.**
- **Serve in 1st Kids Ministries as a Sunday School lead, assisting with Kids Own Worship, or working the Check-in desk.**

**Interested or have questions?
Send and email to:
communications@1stchurch.org**

**EVERY
WEDNESDAY**

**CELEBRATE
RECOVERY**

**5:30 Dinner
6:30 Worship & Message
7:40 Share Groups**
CRMaryvilleTN.com



DayBreak Dementia Respite Care

In memory of:
Jim Scruggs
Jim Scruggs

Given by:
Ray & Brenda Ramsey
Emmit & Betty Rawls

Music Ministries

In memory of:
Jim Scruggs

Given by:
Sandra Davis

Welcome Table

In honor of:
Phyllis Bostick

Given by:
Beverly Skinner

In celebration of the hard work that helps build our strength, prosperity and well-being, the church offices will be closed, September 1st in observance of the Labor Day Holiday.



Staff Contacts



You can find staff and ministry contacts under the "Reach" tab on the church website:

1stchurch.org

The church phone number is 865-982-1273.



Jimmie Lynn Eaves

Joined First Church

November 14, 1976

Entered the Church Triumphant:

July 28, 2025

Pauline Mary Nelson

Joined First Church

July 2, 1995

Entered the Church Triumphant:

August 15, 2025

George Thomas Teague

Joined First Church

September 13, 1998

Entered the Church Triumphant:

August 15, 2025

Christian sympathy extended to:

Pam Antosiak in the death of her husband, Joe.

The family of Jimmie Lynne Eaves, who died on July 28th.

The family of Pauline Nelson who died on August 15th.

Trudy Teague and family in the death of Trudy's husband, George on August 15th.

Cindy Nelson in the death of her father, Cecil who passed away on August 11th.

Lisa Autry in the death of her father on August 15th.

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