

The Church Bell

REACH - CONNECT - EQUIP - SEND

APRIL
2026



The Easter Jesus

Rev. Jonathan Jonas

I don't generally recommend Will Ferrell's movie *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby* as a source of theological enlightenment. It may, however, be a helpful source of insight into our human nature toward the stories of Jesus.

In one scene, Ricky prays before a meal and continually addresses "baby Jesus" in the blessing. His wife reminds him, "Jesus *did* grow up. You don't always have to call him 'baby.'" Ricky replies, "Look, I like the Christmas Jesus best."

He may speak for all of us.

For instance, there are a few beloved and well known Easter hymns, but certainly not as many as at Christmas, and we don't give them a special name like *carols*.

We may decorate our homes for Easter, but certainly not to the same extent as at Christmas. Nor do we observe an Easter Eve, or exchange gifts, or send cards, etc.

Maybe we all like the Christmas Jesus best.

It's understandable to some extent. The birth of a baby is beautiful and hopeful. The betrayal, persecution, and death of the Son of God is ugly and painful.

Nevertheless, it's ironic. Where only two gospels - Luke and Matthew - tell stories of Jesus' birth, all four gospels tell the story of his death and resurrection, and all four gospel writers suggest that these are the climactic and most meaningful moments of their gospels.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul underscores this, saying, "If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain . . . If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:14,17).

Paul seems to like the Easter Jesus most—or at least he considers the Easter Jesus more crucial to our faith and to our eternal relationship with God. Our faith simply does not make sense or even exist without Jesus' resurrection.

I'm certainly not suggesting that we have to choose which image of Jesus we like best. To the contrary, *all* the stories of Jesus reveal God's love and grace. So, perhaps we should simply acknowledge that we really *love* the Christmas Jesus and strive to love the Easter Jesus more fully and faithfully.



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.



Projected appointments

In the United Methodist Church, clergy are appointed to serve a church (or churches) for one year at a time. Through a process of consultation involving District Superintendents, pastors and staff/parish relations committee, the Bishop makes appointments each year.

Recently, Holston Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett announced projected appointments which will become effective on July 1st.

- Rev. Sarah Slack is projected to be the senior pastor here at 1st Church;
- Rev. Teanna Black is projected to join 1st UMC as an associate pastor;
- Rev. Dr. Don Jones is projected to continue as associate pastor of Recovery and Nurture Ministries;
- And Rev. Jonathan Jonas is projected to be senior pastor of Church Street UMC in Knoxville.

These projections are subject to change until the Holston Annual Conference in late May/early June, when pastoral appointments are officially finalized (or “fixed” in United Methodist terminology).

Keep watching for updates on plans to welcome Teanna to 1st Church, and to thank Jonathan for his years of service at 1st.

Celebrating something good this Easter in Maryville!

If you’ve been paying attention over the past few weeks, you have come to understand many of the ways “good news” is alive in the world.



During the week of March 29th (Holy Week), you will continue to hear “good news” as we take a closer look at the final days of Jesus’ ministry. Some of what happens may be difficult to consider as “good,” but it all gives us a better sense of what makes Easter a day for celebrations.

Palm Sunday (March 29th) provides a poignant reminder of the dark days ahead while inspiring us to act.

Maundy Thursday (April 2nd) features worship with Holy Communion. Before worship you are invited to walk through the **Stations of the Cross** in Wesley Hall. Each station features art work from the people of 1st UMC along with scripture readings from Holy Week. The stations will also be open the following day from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm.

Good Friday (April 3rd) often has us asking “what is good” while also reminding us that Jesus’ ministry was not defeated by death, only interrupted.

At Sunrise and throughout the day on Easter Sunday (April 5th) we celebrate the news that “Christ is Risen!”

2026 Easter Offering

Putting faith into action is part of how the people of 1st United Methodist Church work to carry out the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Throughout the year, the church calls people to Go.Do. In a number of ways in an effort to SEND the love of Christ into the world.

Each Easter, 1st Church asks people to donate to a special offering, usually designated for one organization or ministry.

In 2026, the Easter Offering will help boost a number of Go.Do. initiatives. These include:

- Doubling the number of meals prepared for Rise Against Hunger,
- Boosting the amount of money given to the Holston Conference Hands On Mission efforts for Ishe Anesu in Zimbabwe,
- Providing more UMCOR flood buckets.

Give by using the Easter Offering envelopes, giving online, or mailing your check to the church.

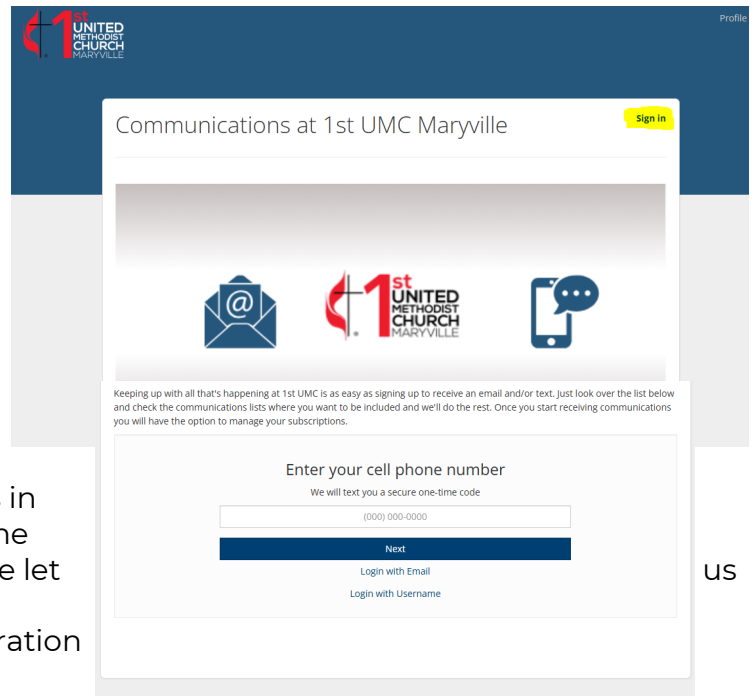
Staying in touch and up to date

Whether it's *The Church Bell*, the weekly email from Jonathan, or a text about 1st Youth from Brayden, there are many tools the church uses to help stay in touch and keep you up to date. You probably have heard us mention that we are implementing a new Church Database system called TouchPoint. The intent of making this switch, is to help us consolidate existing communications, registration and financial tools.

The pastors and staff have been receiving training on how to use TouchPoint, and the Mobile App that comes with it, is currently in the beta testing phase. TouchPoint will also be integrated with the church's website which is currently undergoing an overhaul. All these things take time and you will be asked to help along the way. In the end, you can expect easier registration for events, new ways to keep up with your giving, enhanced check-in and attendance tools, and ways for you to make sure your information in the system is accurate.

As we make this transition it is necessary for you to sign up for the email lists you are currently subscribed to. Look for the link in future emails or go to 1stchurch.org/communications to subscribe to email lists.

When you reach the registration page, look for the words "sign in" to the right of the "Communications at 1st UMC Maryville" title. Clicking here and following the prompts may make it easier for you to sign up by auto-filling several of the fields. However, the cell phone number and/or email must match up with what is in the TouchPoint System to work properly. If for some reason using your information isn't working, please let us know and we'll take a closer look. You can also subscribe to emails by simply filling out the registration page. Once you are signed up you will be able to manage your subscriptions in the future.



If you have any questions please send an email to communications@1stchurch.org.

Compassion Counseling fundraiser moves to May



Each year, Compassion Counseling Center (located inside 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree) hosts a fundraiser to help raise awareness for mental health and to honor people making an impact in the community by supporting mental health efforts. The Inspiring Hope event is usually held in October, but in 2026, the event is moving up to May 19th (at 6:30 pm) to align with Mental Health Awareness Month. The event will be at 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree (1830 Clydesdale Street in Maryville.)

Check out the details and get your tickets by visiting cmaryville.org/inspiring-hope.

CALLING ALL FAITH EXPLORERS!



FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ABOUT
1ST KIDS



Contact the 1st Kids Director
Kristi Alton

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✉ kalton@1stchurch.org

☎ 865-982-1273 ext. 712

This summer step through the mist into Rainforest Falls, a place overflowing with wild waterfalls, towering trees, and colorful creatures. Sit beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys, while kids plunge into a lifelong adventure of discovering the nature of God.

Vacation Bible School (June 14th through 17th) is a place where children explore what it means to be rooted in relationship with God, their creator, a safe place in life's storms.

Registration for your 3-year old through 5th graders is NOW OPEN! 1stchurch.org/VBS.

Volunteer signups will be opening soon! Check your calendars and keep an eye out for other church communications so you can save your spot for this event. Be praying for those who will be participating in our Rainforest Falls VBS in June.

The Hallelujah Hat Parade: Easter Praise in the Park

Date: Sunday, March 29th

Time: 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm

(Community Time and Hat Crafting ongoing)

Parade Times: First Parade: 3:30 PM | Second
Parade: 4:30 PM

Where: Sandy Springs Pavilion,
702 Best Street, Maryville

Barrier-free Worship @ Sycamore Tree

Since October, 1st Church has been offering barrier-free worship every second Sunday at 2:00pm at 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree. The intent of this service is to offer the opportunity to worship and grow in faith to anyone in the community who might prefer a shorter and less formal service.

Worship could be for someone who has cognitive impairment, prefers to move, vocalizes, needs physical accommodations to participate, or other needs not met in a traditional service.

The service is 30 minutes long and focuses on a positive message, participation in prayer and in favorite hymns, all followed with a time of fellowship.

Find out what it's all about in person! on April 12th at 2:00 pm. You can also volunteer to help as an usher, musician, companion, or planner. **Contact Jill Pope** director@daybreakcare.org or **Pastor Jonathan** JJonas@1stchurch.org if you are interested in helping or need more information.



WEEKLY PROGRAMMING 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

For more information contact Brayden York,
1st Youth & Student Ministries,
at: byork@1stchurch.org



DayBreak News
from Jill Pope

Trinity Grant helping with improvements

The weather slowed us down, but the first phase of the outdoor project is finished. The handrails are installed and the grass seed has been sown. Now we are ready to begin work on a shade pavilion over the new patio. It should be ready by the end of March! Once that is finished we will install raised planters for DayBreak programming. We can't wait.



Step out to help find a cure for Alzheimer's

In Tennessee, more than 120,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's. On April 25th, we want you to step up and step out to join the Foothills Walk to Make Alzheimer's a Memory. This event happens at Alcoa High School.

If you would like to help the DayBreak 1st Dreamers Team support the mission of Alzheimer's TN, please consider joining our efforts, even if you can't come to the event.

No donation is required to join the team or attend the event, but we have set a goal to raise \$500, so consider making a contribution. If you have any questions, please contact Jill Pope at 865-315-2371 or email her at director@daybreakcare.org. You can find a link to join the team at 1stchurch.org/DayBreak.



Walmart Grants

We would like to thank Walmart and their Spark Good program for again supporting the mission at DayBreak by recently contributing \$500 to our program. This will go a long way toward purchasing snacks and supplies for our day program. Sign up for the Round Up program through the Walmart app or at Walmart.com. You can also help DayBreak by making purchases from the Amazon Wish Link (link at 1stchurch.org/DayBreak).

For more news about DayBreak sign up for the "Morning Light" updates at DayBreakCare.org.



At Easter Christians everywhere celebrate Jesus' resurrection. This Easter, Ranay and her two children celebrate entering the Emergency Shelter program at Family Promise of Blount County. This allows them to have a stable roof over their heads.

Ranay is now able to pick up extra shifts at work which will help her family move more quickly into their own home. The people of 1st UMC have reason to celebrate this too, for the support they have given to make Family Promise a success.

God bless everyone who has given their time, talents and resources in the past, the present, and will do so in the future to make certain every family has a home.

Yours In Christ,
Mavis Ziegler
Coordinator of Family Promise at 1stUMC

Building Fund

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Betty Badgett	Buzz & Lisa Thomas
Betty Badgett	William Borden
Betty Badgett	Friends
Betty Badgett	Steve & Shirley Stinnett
Betty Badgett	Carl & Gail VanHoozier
Betty Badgett	Joe & Becky Swann
Betty Badgett	Karl & Sherry Miller
Betty Badgett	Randy & Laney Lambert
Betty Badgett	Rebecca Badgett
Betty Badgett	Linda Parnell
Betty Badgett	Doetla Stogner
Betty Badgett	Kaylee Pickliser

Celebrate Recovery

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Naomi Cunningham	Beth Willocks
Naomi Cunningham	Wally & Nan Werner
Carol Werker	Wally & Nan Werner
Marsha Johnson	Steve & Shirley Stinnett
Naomi Cunningham	Jerry & Lin Reichelt

Memorial Fund

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Brent Johns' Father	Steve & Shirley Stinnett

Welcome Table

<i>In honor of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Bernice Howard	Sally Gross

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Loretta Cate	Joe & Janet Tipton
Loretta Cate	Jim & Susie Curtiss
Loretta Cate	Steve & Martha Shields
Loretta Cate	Matthew & Martha McClelland
Loretta Cate	Wally & Nan Werner
Barbara Howarter	Rick & Bonnie Betteridge
Barbara Howarter	Steve & Sue Kiefer
Barbara Howarter	Ronald & Linda Longmire
Barbara Howarter	Bert & Becky Emmerson

APRIL AT CR



Every Wednesday
5:30 Dinner
6:30 Worship & Message
7:40 Share Groups
CRat1st.com

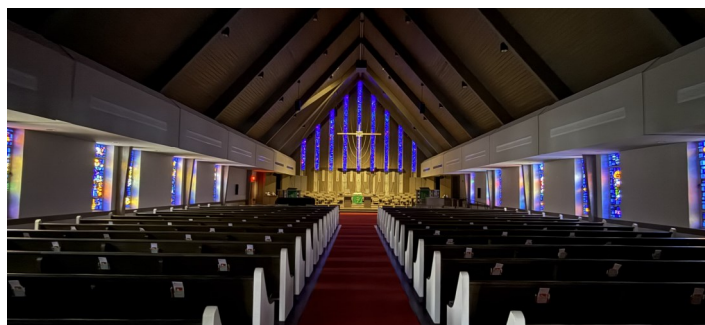
April 1st
The Last Supper (Holy Communion)
April 8th
Crossroads
April 15th
Guest Speaker
April 22nd
Daily Inventory
April 29th
Guest Speaker



Betty Jo Badgett
Joined First Church
April 1, 1949
Entered the Church Triumphant:
February 26, 2026

LeRoy Rud
Joined First Church
November 7, 1993
Entered the Church Triumphant:
March 9, 2026

Elizabeth Porter
Joined First Church
February 9, 2014
Entered the Church Triumphant:
March 10, 2026



Christian sympathy extended to:

Beth McDaniel in the death of her cousin, Mitchell Inman on February 18th.

Rocky Rochelle in the death of his brother-in-law in February.

The family of Betty Jo Badgett who passed away on February 26th.

Sharon Rud (and family) in the death of her husband, LeRoy on March 9th.

David Porter (and family) in the death of his wife, Beth on March 10th.

Herb & Barbara Sadler in the death of their son, Bert on March 15th.

Leenie Lardeiro in the death of her sister.

Maryville First United Methodist Church
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Maryville, Tennessee 37803
Phone: 865-982-1273
Change Service Requested

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Easter Sunday in Maryville

7:00 am

Sunrise Worship Service
Montgomery Ridge School Parking Lot

8:15 am

Traditional Easter Worship Service
Sanctuary

10:30 am

Traditional Easter Worship Service
Sanctuary

10:30 am

Contemporary Easter Worship Service
Asbury Hall

11:30 am

After Worship Celebration
(refreshments, selfie station, directory
pictures and fellowship)
Wesley Hall

Learn more about all the special events during
the Lenten and Easter seasons at:
EasterInMaryville.com



1stchurch.org

Mark your calendar for April 26th for the Go.Do. Mission Fair