

The Church Bell

REACH - CONNECT - EQUIP - SEND

MAY
2026



Alleluia

FILLED with the Holy Spirit

Rev. Jonathan Jonas

One of the greatest celebrations of the Christian year is the day of Pentecost, when we celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit - both to the earliest followers of Jesus Christ and to his followers in 2026. As that pente- prefix suggests, Pentecost occurs fifty days after the Passover in Judaism, so we celebrate it seven weeks after Easter.

This year, Pentecost falls on May 24th, when we will celebrate our confirmation class. On that day, we anticipate celebrating baptism and confirmation both in our sanctuary and in the Little River near Camp Wesley Woods.

In that celebration of confirmation, our young people will answer perhaps the most important question of their lives: "Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races?"

Minutes later, we will pray over them perhaps the most important prayer of their lives: "The Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit, you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ."

As part of that same covenant of baptism and confirmation, we the congregation make this commitment: "We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life."

May I ask you to begin praying that prayer now? Will you please pray for the members of the confirmation class, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life?" Because here's the truth - God is perfectly willing to fill them with the Holy Spirit, and we will be perfectly sincere in our prayer that the Spirit will work within them. However, it is entirely up to these young people to determine the extent to which they will serve Jesus Christ as their Lord. Even our most casual observation confirms what Jesus taught in the parable of the sower: "As for the seed that fell among the thorny plants, these are the ones who, as they go about their lives are choked by the concerns, riches, and pleasures of life, and their fruit never matures" (Luke 8:14).

May that not be true of the confirmation class of 2026. May they be filled with the power of the Spirit by which God created the universe, parted the waters, inspired the prophets, and gave wisdom to the kings!

May they be filled with the power of the Spirit that rested upon Jesus at his baptism and enabled him to perform signs and wonders, to heal, to exorcise, and to restore life!

May they be filled with the power of the Spirit that encouraged the apostles, sustained the saints, and inspires the holy work of God's holy church. May they be Spirit-filled. **Amen.**



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.

A place to call their own

For more than 30 years, 1st UMC has partnered with Blount County Habitat for Humanity to help make the dream of home ownership a reality. The church has not only sponsored homes, but a core group of people from the church family have helped provide labor for the builds.

On Wednesday, April 22nd, the latest build sponsored by 1st UMC (and several other organizations) was dedicated. Mathiang Gutnyin, his wife, and four children received the "key" to their new home. Rev. Sarah Slack gave the blessing as part of the afternoon's event and several people from 1st UMC took time to wish the family well.



Back in 2015, Mathiang Gutnyin, one of the "Lost Boys of Sudan" spoke to a group of people attending a Sunday School event here. 1st UMC also built a church in the village of Pukuka which has since been "lost" due to a Civil War.



Pinwheels for prevention

You might have noticed the blue and silver pinwheels turning in the breeze as you enter the church near the Porte Cochere. This "garden" puts the spotlight on preventing child abuse. New Hope Advocacy Center (one of the many organizations 1st UMC supports) "plants" these each April to mark Child Abuse Prevention month.

Do "nut" let polio prevail

Mavis Ziegler, on behalf of the Rotary Club, brought the staff some special purple donuts. These symbolized the "Purple Pinkie" some kids are given after receiving a polio vaccination. 1st Kids Director, Kristi Alton just happened to be wearing the same color when they were delivered.



DayBreak participates in annual walk

This year's Foothills Walk to Make Alzheimer's a Memory was held on April 25th. As you can see from the picture above, several DayBreak volunteers were on hand to help make the event a success. DayBreak director, Jill Pope wants to thank everyone who walked, joined the team, made a donation, or generally supported their efforts in our community.

(Check out more DayBreak news on page 6.)

Thank you for supporting the

2026

Easter OFFERING



TOTAL SO FAR: \$10,500

FOR GO. DO. PROJECTS

A time for transitions and celebrations

In just a few weeks, hundreds of people from across the Holston Conference will gather at Lake Junaluska, NC to carry out the business of the Annual Conference. During this year's event, which runs from May 31st to June 3rd, incoming associate pastor Teanna Black and 1st UMC Member, Greta Smith will both be ordained during a ceremony on the first evening.

This year's theme, *Loving Boldly*, continues building on the previous year's theme, *Together in New Beginnings*. You can learn more about Annual Conference at holston.org/annual-conference.

Mark your calendars for **June 14th**. After worship on that day we'll have an Ice Cream Social in Wesley Hall to say "goodbye" to Rev. Jonathan Jonas and his family as he gets set to be Senior Pastor at Church Street UMC in Knoxville.

And on **May 20th**, the Smoky Mountain District says hello to incoming District Superintendent, Rev. Sam Dzobo and farewell to outgoing D.S., Rev. Angela Hardy Cross. This will be a come and go event at the Holston Conference Center in Alcoa (first floor) from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm.



Slide into summer

Come cool off at this year's All-Church Pool Party. Enjoy the slide, the diving board and all the water fun on **June 5th from 6:30 to 9:00 pm**. at the Springbrook Pool in Alcoa.

In order to make sure there are enough life guards at the pool party, please sign up (by June 1st) to let us know you are coming.

The church will be providing a "main dish." Please bring a side dish and/or dessert to share.

Sign up at: 1stchurch.org/pool

Upcoming dates to remember

Over the next couple of months, people will be celebrating graduations, taking vacations, and taking more time to enjoy the outdoors. With all the busyness in mind, we want to make sure you have a few dates on your calendar.

May 10th

Graduate Recognition

On this day we put the spotlight on the achievements of our graduating students. We'll also celebrate them in the next edition of "The Church Bell." In addition to our High School graduates, we also want to recognize college graduates. If you have someone in your family graduating from college, please send that information to communications@1stchurch.org.

May 24th

Pentecost

Come celebrate the "birthday" of the church during all three worship services. Be sure and wear colors of the flame.

Confirmation Sunday

You are invited to celebrate this year's confirmands as they begin a new chapter in their faith journey.

READY TO EXPLORE? SIGN UP NOW!



This summer your kids will experience a journey they will never forget. Rainforest Falls Vacation Bible School is the destination, a world of wild waterfalls, colorful creatures and lessons on how to stay rooted in God's love.

Registration for this event is OPEN! Vacation Bible School happens here at 1st United Methodist Church, June 14th through 17th.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT 1ST KIDS



Contact the 1st Kids Director
Kristi Alton

.....

✉ kalton@1stchurch.org

☎ 865-982-1273 ext. 712

Registration for your 3-year old through 5th graders is NOW OPEN along with registration for volunteers (which we need a lot of). Just go online to 1stchurch.org/VBS and sign up NOW!

Continue to pray for all those who will be participating in our Rainforest Falls VBS this June.



Summer Service and Surprises

Looking for a fun and meaningful way to keep your child engaged this summer? Our Summer Service & Surprises program gives kids the chance to

- serve others,
- connect with their church community,
- and explore new activities

We will meet on Tuesdays: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. (Kids will ride the bus to deliver meals in the morning, followed by lunch and activities back at church.)

Meeting Dates:

- Tuesday, June 2nd
- Tuesday, June 9th
- Tuesday, June 23rd
- Tuesday, July 7th
- Tuesday, July 14th
- Tuesday, July 21st

You can sign up your child for any (or all) of these opportunities at:

1stchurch.org/summer-service

Contact Kristi Alton if you are someone who is willing to share your gifts, hobbies, and talents with our kids!



Summer is almost here, but opportunities for fun and growing in faith will continue.

The last Wednesday Night Dinner and Bible Study will be on May 13th. Meanwhile, the Sunday Night Youth Group will transition into summer Life Groups. Those will start on May 24th from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. The time together will include dinner, hanging out/ staying connected, and a time for sharing testimonies and engaging in small group devotionals.

In addition to the regular Sunday evening meetings, 1st Youth can expect several opportunities to help with service projects and go on a few fun trips.

Further details were provided in a recent email and will be posted on the 1st Youth section of the church website 1stchurch.org/Students.

For more information contact Brayden York,
1st Youth & Student Ministries,



DayBreak News
from Jill Pope

Memory Garden Gathering

Mark June 6th on your calendars! Beginning at 10:00 am, at 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree, DayBreak hosts a Memory Garden Gathering. There will be live music provided by some of your favorite local musicians: Dave Slack, Bill Robinson, and Tom Myers. You can buy some Vienna Coffee and pastries too.



At 10:30 am we will be dedicating our outdoor improvements. We will honor all those who helped make the project a reality: Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee for the \$50,000 grant they awarded us; our members who assisted in the planning; and the construction companies who built it. Bring a chair and come enjoy the morning with us!

A Labyrinth at Sycamore Tree

One of the finishing touches to the side yard at 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree will be a labyrinth made with **Engraved Bricks** that are part of a fundraiser for DayBreak. If you have family members or friends that you would like to honor or remember, please fill out an order form - or two. For all questions contact Jill Pope. Digital order forms are available at daybreakcare.org and via the DayBreak Facebook Page. Paper order forms are available in the Church Office (see Rebecca).

Barrier-free worship

We are in the process of discerning whether we can expand this service to a weekly offering. If you are interested in supporting this ministry by providing music, food, ushering, or being a friend, please let Jill and or Rev. Jonathan Jonas know.

For more information about DayBreak please contact Jill Pope anytime at 865-315-2371 or email director@daybreakcare.org .



The Emergency Shelter for Family Promise, located inside 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree, has been a beehive of activity. One mom and her three children recently moved out and into their own apartment. They were participants in the Transitional Housing program, where they paid \$500 a month rent. After this family

moved out, a mom and dad with a little son moved into the Emergency Shelter. Within days of moving in, the dad started a job as a supervisor. In addition to that, another family was kept from being evicted from their own home as a result of the Eviction Prevention branch of Family Promise.



This organization and 1st UMC's participation in it, is such an impactful, lifesaving mission. Thank you to all of those who expressed an interest to help during the recent "The Good We Do Ministry Fair." Every person in the congregation has a unique gift to offer that can make life-altering aid to families with children to ensure they have their own bed to sleep in. That gift could be just a few hours of one's time to share a meal, or sleep overnight at the Emergency Shelter once or twice a year.

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

Find more information at:
1stchurch.org/family-promise

Building Fund

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Betty Badgett	Bill & Jane Morton
Betty Badgett	Jim & Susie Curtiss
Betty Badgett	Judy Green
Betty Badgett	Janey Haley
Betty Badgett	Bill & Susan Metzler
Betty Badgett	Tommy & Carol Hunt

Celebrate Recovery

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Naomi Cunningham	Tommy & Carol Hunt
Ashley Peery	Tommy & Carol Hunt

DayBreak

<i>In honor of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Jim Stovall	Lucinda Coulter
Sally Stovall	Lucinda Coulter

Grace for All

<i>In honor of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Betty & Emmit Rawls	Jim Stovall

Memorial Fund

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Sandy Ross	Maryville HS Class of '59
Sandy Ross	Tommy & Carol Hunt
Carroll Huffine	Tommy & Carol Hunt

Welcome Table

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Betty Badgett	Tim & Trish Badgett
Loretta Cate	Rush & Lea Powers
Loretta Cate	Bettye McCall
Loretta Cate	Tommy & Carol Hunt



Sandy Ross

Joined First Church

December 4, 1966

Entered the Church Triumphant:

March 29, 2026

Wayne Doede

Joined First Church

May 18, 2008

Entered the Church Triumphant:

March 2026

Christian sympathy extended to:

Chris Ross , Lisa O'Connor and family in the death of their mother, Sandy Ross on March 26th.

The family of Wayne Doede who died on March 21st.

Eric Harris and his family in the death of his father, Phil Harris, on April 1st.

Clerlinda Mynatt in the death of her brother, Jimmy Norton, in April.

Welcome to 



Molly Bundy



Grayson & Lauren Shockley (Son) Eben was baptized.



COMING UP...

May 13th
Recovery Soldiers

May 20th
Gratitude

May 27th
Give

June 3rd
Guest Speaker

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

CRat1st.com

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

NON-PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID MARYVILLE TN PERMIT NO. 113



1stchurch.org

