



THE CHURCH BELL



APRIL

2023



Dust to dust and ashes to ashes, ***but*** life to life!

Several weeks ago, we began the season of Lent by observing Ash Wednesday. Like generations of Christians before us, we began this holy season acknowledging the reality of grief and mourning. We recalled our mortality, confessed our sinfulness, and because of those two realities, we admitted there is reason to grieve. So, we embraced symbols of grief and mourning that have been part of our faith tradition for thousands of years.

We read Old Testament stories of our ancestors in the faith who wore sackcloth and covered themselves in ashes, whether to express their grief or repentance. Then, to acknowledge our absolute reliance on God for forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life, we marked ourselves with those symbolic ashes. To make the symbolism even richer, we used the ashes from previous years' Palm Sunday palm branches—perhaps to remind us that the ones who lauded him on Sunday cried out for his crucifixion on Friday, perhaps to remind us that when they shouted *hosanna*, or “save us now,” that salvation came at great cost.

As we marked our foreheads with those ashes in the sign of a cross, we heard these solemn, somber words: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” And we are.

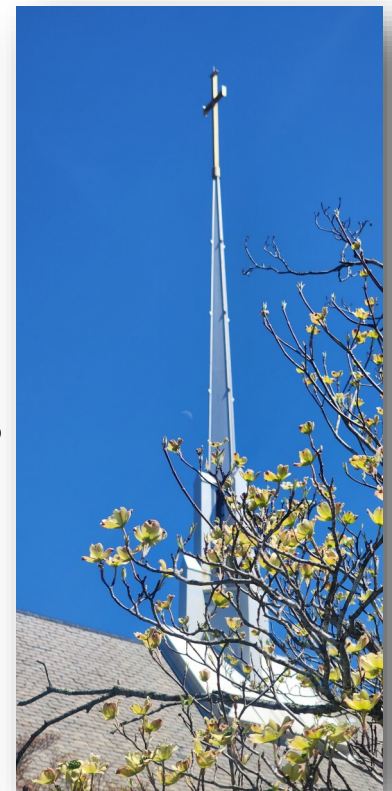
It's a curious way to begin a season, isn't it—with our eyes toward the end? We prefer beginnings that are full of optimism, possibility, and encouragement. It is sobering and humbling to begin a season by facing the reality that our lives will end.

As April begins, we're only days away from Good Friday, that painful day of acknowledging the reality of sin, suffering, human frailty, human cruelty, and death. The story of Jesus' life, which began in a borrowed manger, seemingly comes to an end in a borrowed tomb.

But—we're also only days away from celebrating Easter! Ironically, the season that begins with our acknowledgment of death ends in the miracle of life! Restored life! New life! Eternal life! Easter is not a denial of death. Good Friday painfully and clearly reminds us of that reality. So does our human experience. We are finite and mortal. We are dust, and to dust we shall return.

Easter is, however, a denial of the dominion of death. We return to the dust, but through Jesus Christ, we are eternally reconciled to the one who formed the first human from the dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life!

One day our lives will end, dust to dust, and ashes to ashes. But we know what God can do with the dust of the earth. The miracle of Easter is that through the resurrection of Jesus, we will rise from the dust and ashes, life to eternal life!



See you at the coffee station - Rev. Nathan Irwin

You may notice some new appliances around the church in the coming weeks. You might even smell them before you see them. We're talking about the return of coffee stations!

We are currently in the process of installing self-serve coffee stations in several locations around the church. These will be available on Sunday mornings near the church office, the narthex below the balcony, and in Asbury Hall (gym). In our efforts to be a more hospitable church, we are learning that a key element to that is providing natural times and places for people to spend a few minutes getting to know one another. So even if you don't enjoy coffee (we'll have options for tea drinkers too), please stop by and check out the stations and spend a few minutes getting to know someone that you haven't met yet.

You might even get to be the reason that a visitor feels welcomed into our church family! If you would like to save paper, you can bring your own mug, and if you would like the help contribute to the coffee stocks, you can bring k-cups by the church office to donate. **See you by the coffee station!**



Making a difference with devotions

Every day since Ash Wednesday, people have been receiving a daily devotion in their email inbox, reading them online via Facebook or the website, or seeing them in a printed booklet made available in various spots around the church. This Lenten Daily devotional series was made possible by various members of the 1st Church Family who took time out to write these inspirational passages, each based on a particular Bible verse.

We hope you've been enjoying the devotional series which you can find at 1stchurch.org/40-days-devotions. The engagement online with each posting along with the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. We've even had a suggestion that we continue the daily devotions year round. Great idea, don't you think?

If you've participated in this past devotional project, a past one or want to get involved in the future, let us know by emailing communication@1stchurch.org. If we can get a strong enough core group of devotion writers then we'll try and take this project a step further. Thanks again to everyone who helped get us the devotionals during the Lenten season.



Having Wesley Day School here at 1st Church is a true joy, especially when it's time for "Dinosaur Day!" How many of you remember all those special Jurassic Jukebox Tunes?

Got questions about faith? Nearly all of us do. In the weeks after Easter and leading up to Pentecost in late May, we'll try and answer tough questions about our faith. These questions and answers to them will be the focus of the sermons at all three services on Sunday mornings, and we'll dive deeper into them Wednesday Nights during Adult Bible Study at 6:15 pm. The kids are even getting to ask faith questions as part of the ***Popsicles with Pastors*** event on Sunday, April 16th (kids questions need to be sent in advance by April 12th to kalton@1stchurch.org).

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2023



We all know Easter is one of those days when a lot of people you've never seen (or haven't seen in awhile) come to worship. The message of Christ's resurrection is reason to celebrate and no matter where we may stand on a certain issue, the Good News of Easter is one that unites us all. As we move forward through Holy Week and into Easter Sunday there are many opportunities for you, your family and your friends to experience the story of Jesus Christ and the hope it brings to each and everyone of us.



People waving palm branches, children processing down the aisles, and voices raised in choruses of "Hosanna!" **Palm Sunday (April 2nd)** marks the beginning of a week where we remember Jesus' last days. This year, everyone will receive a palm branch to wave. After the service we ask you to take the palm leaves with you. Post pictures of you *and/or* your family with the palm leaves to your social media as a "welcome" for others to hear the stories of Holy Week and Easter. You can also email pictures to communications@1stchurch.org and we'll share them on our channels.



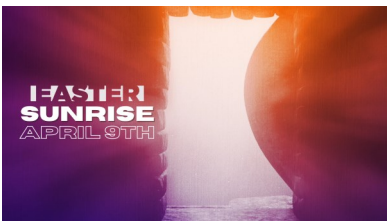
What happens "in the waiting" days between Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday? It's a question Rev. Matt Hall examines during a special Holy Week edition of *Celebrate Recovery* on **April 5th** at 6:30 pm.



Jesus gave us a commandment to love one another as he had loved us. It's the focus of what Jesus told his disciples on the night before his crucifixion. During the **Maundy Thursday Worship Service at 7:00 pm (April 6th)** we use music, a special message and Holy Communion to help illustrate the need for us to love others as Jesus did.



The extravagance of Jesus' love comes to light on Good Friday as the story of Holy Week takes a dramatically dark turn. On the night of **April 7th (7:00 pm)** we gather in Asbury Hall (gym, lower level) to remember Jesus' descent into death in a service of Tenebrae, or "shadows." Throughout worship there will be music, special readings and the extinguishing of candles until the room becomes dark. Everyone will leave with the hope that Sunday is coming.



As the sun comes up over the Great Smoky Mountains we invite you to gather to be the first to hear the GOOD NEWS of Christ's resurrection. "Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!" Our **Sunrise Service (April 9th) begins at 7:00 am** in the parking lot of Montgomery Ridge Intermediate School at 835 Montgomery Lane.



The celebrations of Easter get bigger as the morning moves along. The Morning Glory Chorus and the 1st UMC Chancel Choir come together to present music at both the **8:15 and 10:30 Traditional Worship Services (Sanctuary, upper level)**. And at the **10:30 Contemporary Worship Service (Asbury Hall/Gym, lower level)** the Praise Band gets you on your feet in celebration that "Christ is risen." Prior to the Contemporary service there will be refreshments, coffee and juice to help get your morning started.

CHECK OUT THE HOLY WEEK/EASTER SCHEDULE AND DOWNLOAD SOCIAL MEDIA INVITES AT:
[1STCHURCH.ORG/EASTER](http://1stchurch.org/easter)



Taco Time

Plan on celebrating Cinco de Mayo this year, or at least going out to enjoy a Mexican Meal? If so, we can take your kids for a few hours as we bring you **Taco Time: Parent's Night Out on May 5th from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.**

Kristi Alton
Director of 1st Kids Ministries
kalton@1stchurch.org
865-982-1273 ext. 113
1stchurch.org/1st-kids

This taco-tastic good time comes with lots of games, crafts and time with friends. This night away from the kids costs you \$5 per child.

Please register online at:
1stchurch.org/taco-time before **April 30th** to include your kids in this fun event.



The End of Jesus' Ministry

In the final days of His earthly ministry, Jesus defeated death and made a way for all of us to live forever with Him. In His interactions with those who were closest to Him, we see the grace, peace, and forgiveness that He offers each of us. Throughout April in Sunday School, we'll take a look at what happened as Jesus' earthly ministry came to an end and how it continues centuries later.

What the New Testament says about Easter

On a farm, life has a daily rhythm (for plants, animals, and people, too). "Life" is what the "Rise & Shine" series is all about, because we're talking about Easter and Jesus' triumph over death!

Over five weeks in Kids Own Worship we explore the stories leading up to and following Easter Sunday. Together, kids will discover we can stick with Jesus even when our days are dark, and that because Jesus is alive, we can spend our days meeting with him, trusting he's there for us, and sharing his love — not just today, but every day!



Looking forward to a STELLAR summer!

Mark your calendars! Vacation Bible School comes your way June 11th - 14th, each night from 6:00 to 8:00 pm (Dinner at 5:30 pm). Launch kids on a cosmic quest where they'll have a blast shining Jesus' light to the world. STELLAR VBS rockets kids on an out-of-this-world adventure that's light years of faith-building fun. Stay tuned for registration information for kids 3 years old through 5th grade. We'll also have sign ups to serve in a variety of ways.



Weekly Youth Opportunities

Wednesdays at 1st
5:00 pm - Youth Study & Fellowship, Wesley Hall
6:00 pm - Youth Choirs, Room 249

Sunday Mornings
9:15 am Youth Sunday School, Wesley Hall

Sunday Evenings
6:45 pm - 8:00 pm Jr. and Sr. High Youth Fellowship, Wesley Hall

Senior Recognition is coming up on **Sunday, April 30th.** Christ Jacobs, director of 1st Student Ministries, is working out the details on ways to honor our graduates. If you know a graduate we need to recognize please send us a picture of them along with the name of the school they are graduating from, and a sentence about their future plans.

Please email this information to Chris at cjacobs@1stchurch.org by April 21st.



With Easter quickly approaching a keen awareness is present of Jesus's resurrection and his life everlasting with his Father, our God. Christians around the world rejoice during this holiest of days with prayers, time with family enjoying a special feast and maybe even an Easter egg hunt. For the homeless families fortunate to have found shelter through **Family Promise**, the celebration is all the more endearing.

Even with all the blessings bestowed through **Family Promise**, much remains to be done. The waiting list continues to grow to an all-time high. Blount County director, April Smith, wants to obtain more static shelters so more families can be served.

The Thrift Store is one means to raise funds. It is located at 705 E. Lincoln Rd., Alcoa, TN. Hours have been extended Tuesday through Friday from 10 am to 6 pm. Monday and Saturday hours are still 10 am to 4 pm. There are a multitude of items worth checking out. People may also help by donating items instead of adding them to the dump. They can be dropped off where they will then find a much welcomed second home. Kindly spread the word to others about this treasured resource.

Our church will be serving as dinner hosts for the two families currently in static shelter on April 24th and 26th. We have a sizable list of folks from several Sunday School classes who have offered to help with meal prep. You will be contacted soon if you're needed this time around. If you would like to be added to this list, please let Amy Large know at pelarge@charter.net or **865-789-0721**.

Wishes for a blessed Easter,
Mavis Ziegler and Amy Large
Co-Coordinator of Family Promise at 1stUMC

A promotional banner for "Celebrate Recovery" with a sunset background. The text on the left reads: "Each Wednesday Night", "CELEBRATE RECOVERY", "April 2023", and "Learn more at CRMaryvilleTN.com". On the right, there is a list of dates and names: "April 5th In the waiting", "April 12th Daily Inventory", "April 19th Relapse", and "April 26th Prudence Spencer". A photo of a band performing on stage is shown on the right side of the banner.

Each Wednesday Night

CELEBRATE RECOVERY

April 2023

Learn more at CRMaryvilleTN.com

April 5th
In the waiting

April 12th
Daily Inventory

April 19th
Relapse

April 26th
Prudence Spencer

Christian sympathy extended to:

Julie George in the death of her father, Dave Griffin on February 25th.

Justin Small in the death of his stepsister, Heather Patterson on March 23rd.

Pam Sanford in the death of her mother.

Marietta Mason in the death of her mother, Betty Marvin.



Jean Gibson

Joined First Church:

January 13, 1985

Entered the Church Triumphant:

March 21, 2023



1st Kids Ministries

In memory of:

R.T. Ousley

R.T. Ousley

Given by:

Jimmie Eaves

Tommy & Carol Hunt

Memorial Fund

In memory of:

John Kristy

Hal Turner

Given by:

Eric & Judith Poggemeir

Steve & Martha Shields

Music Ministry

In memory of:

Joe Campbell

Joe Campbell

John Kristy

John Kristy

Joe Campbell

Joe Campbell

Joe Campbell

R.T. Ousley

Given by:

Leland & Lisa Blackwood

Karl & Sherry Miller

Karl & Sherry Miller

Wayne & Joan Burlison

Ronnie Burke Family

Steve & Vicky Turner

Tommy & Carol Hunt

Steve & Vicky Turner



Family Promise

In honor of:

Julie George

In memory of:

James Griffin

Given by:

Trendsetters Sunday School

Given by:

Trendsetters Sunday School

Welcome Table

In memory of:

Roger Scott

Ginger Waters

John Kristy

Ginger Waters

Roger Scott

Ginger Waters

Given by:

Tim & Rebecca Rials

Leland & Lisa Blackwood

Larry & Lynn Ladd

Tommy & Carol Hunt

Tommy & Carol Hunt

Judy Keller

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This year's Easter Offering goes toward our next Habitat for Humanity Build. 1st UMC Maryville, Broadway UMC, the Holston Conference and several other area churches are coming together for this Faith Build.

Ways to give:

- Online at 1stchurch.org/giving
- Marking your check "Easter Offering" and putting it in the collection plate
- Mail your check to

1st UMC Maryville
804 Montvale Station Road
Maryville, TN 37804

- Bring your check to the church office

Staff Contacts



You can find staff and ministry contacts under the "Inside at 1st" tab on the church website:

1stchurch.org

The church phone number is 865-982-1273



1stchurch.org