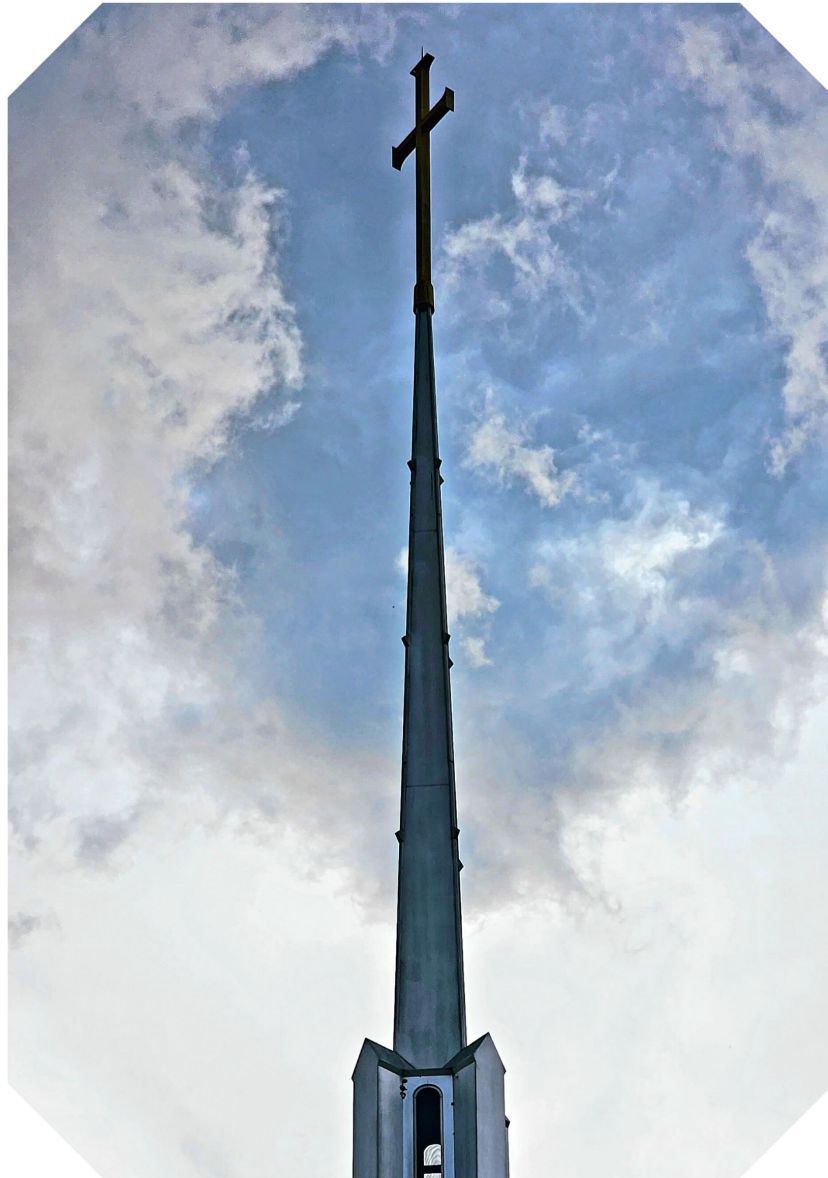




# THE CHURCH BELL



MAY  
2023



In our confirmation class just a few days ago, we remembered together a pretty astounding truth - there is very little mention of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. As often as we invoke, talk about, or sing of the Holy Spirit in worship, it is almost non-existent in the first thirty-nine books of the Bible. In fact, there are only *three* mentions of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Admittedly, there are times that God mentions “my spirit,” or the prophets describe “the spirit of the Lord,” but even they are few, because God simply doesn’t share God’s spirit much through most of scripture. Usually, God’s spirit, the spirit of the Lord, or the Holy Spirit is only invested in one person at a time for a special purpose in the Old Testament. God’s spirit might rest upon a king or a prophet who has a special task among the people of Israel.

That’s why it’s so amazing and almost outlandish when the prophet Joel prophesies, “Then afterwards I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:28-29).

In a world in which so few people on such rare occasions had received the gift of God’s Holy Spirit, it must have seemed unimaginable to Joel’s audience that God would pour out the gift of the Holy Spirit on *all* people, regardless of age, gender, or status.



*Who knew that blowing a tissue would prove to be such a great way of teaching kids in the Confirmation Class about the Holy Spirit?*

Things change, however in the New Testament. In the first chapter alone of Luke’s gospel, Elizabeth and Zechariah are filled with the Holy Spirit. Their son John (the Baptist) is filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth! Then Mary learns that the Holy Spirit will come upon her, and she will conceive a child. John the Baptist will later tell the crowds that Mary’s son Jesus will baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus preaches, teaches, heals, performs signs and wonders, and delivers people from demons and death. In John’s gospel, Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit upon his disciples. In Luke’s, he tells them to await the Holy Spirit and its power, which ultimately falls upon them in Acts 2 at Pentecost.

On **May 28th** we join Christians around the world in celebrating Pentecost. We will thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which guides, teaches, reminds, and empowers us to proclaim the good news of Jesus. If, like John Wesley, you’ve ever felt your heart “strangely warmed” by God’s love and presence, or if you’ve ever meant it with all your heart when you’ve sung “surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,” thank God for that Holy Spirit in your life.

This intimacy with God’s presence is something that the people of Israel could only imagine, even if they could imagine it. How grateful and humble are we, that God has chosen to share his presence and power with *all*—even us?

### What happened at the called Holston Annual Conference?

On Saturday, April 22nd, pastors and elected church members from across the Holston Conference met at Central United Methodist Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, for a special session of the Annual Conference. The 2019 General Conference of the United Methodist Church had allowed congregations a “limited right” to disaffiliate from the denomination “for reasons of conscience” related to human sexuality, and the purpose of this called session was to approve the disaffiliation of 264 churches who chose to exercise that right.

Those 264 congregations comprised about 31% of the total number of congregations in the Holston Conference. However, the roughly 31,000 members of those exiting churches make up only about 21% of the total membership of the Holston Conference. Only two congregations with more than one thousand members have disaffiliated. The other twenty-three congregations - including ours - with more than one thousand members remain in the United Methodist Church and Holston Conference.

What remains unclear is how membership may shift in the wake of this vote. For instance, members whose congregations disaffiliated may choose to transfer to congregations who have remained United Methodist, and members whose congregations have not disaffiliated may choose to join congregations who are no longer United Methodist. **The table on the right illustrates the result of the special session’s vote on our annual conference.**

	TOTAL CHURCHES	CHURCHES WITH 1,000+ MEMBERS	TOTAL MEMBERS
BEFORE APRIL 22nd	842	25	148,580
DISAFFILIATING CHURCHES	-264 (31.4%)	-2 (8.0%)	-31,202 (21.0%)
POST APRIL 22nd	578 (68.6%)	23 (92%)	117,378 (79%)

### Wasn’t Easter Sunday wonderful?

From a crowd gathered to see a magnificent sunrise over the Smoky Mountains to a morning filled with shouts of “Christ is Risen!” we were all united by the glorious news of Christ’s Resurrection.

Following the uncertainties of the past couple of years, it was marvelous to see so many people here celebrating Easter in a variety of ways. From the familiar songs of Easter to the special presentations by the choirs and praise band, celebration was certainly the theme of the day.



*This group of people came out on the Saturday after Easter to help out in the Habitat ReStore, a great way to Go.Do. in the spirit of the season.*

After the services, people were still hanging around catching up with people they hadn’t seen in some time and just basking in the glory of a beautiful day. You also gave from your heart to the tune of \$17,000 for the Easter Offering which goes toward a Habitat Home Build.

If you weren’t here for Easter Sunday or just want to look back on the highlights of the day you can do that on our website at:

[1stchurch.org/Easter](http://1stchurch.org/Easter)



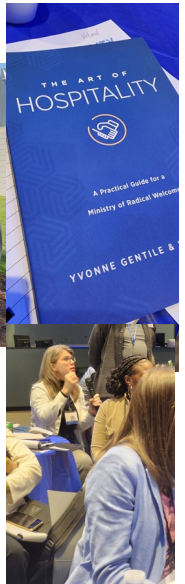
[1stchurch.org/easter](http://1stchurch.org/easter)

**5 things that I learned at the Art of Hospitality Conference**  
**By: Rev. Nathan Irwin**

1. *Hospitality has to be a culture not just a committee.*  
 (This means that we all have to focus on being a church that goes over the top to welcome all.)
2. *It is our tendency to focus on our own comfort, and doing so unintentionally builds barriers that keep others out.*
3. *We often want to invite others into what we are already doing, but that is not true hospitality.*  
 (We might have to do some things differently.)
4. *It is NOT enough to be a “friendly” church.*  
 (When a friend visits your house, you might pick up a little, but you aren’t going to roll out the red carpet like you are hosting an honored guest.)
5. *“I think Jesus cares more about people than He does about clean carpets.” -Rev. Adam Hamilton*



Julie George, Rev. Matt Irwin, Clayton Hensley, Rev. Matt Hall and Marcia Prill (not pictured) recently attended The Art of Hospitality Conference at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS.



This past week I took a group of 5 leaders from our church to Kansas City to attend *the Art of Hospitality Conference* that was taught by staff members and leaders at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection. We learned a lot more than five things, and you will be seeing many of these put into action in the coming months. But know that our 1st Impressions Team cannot do it alone.

We need **ALL** of your help to make sure that when a first-time guest comes through the doors of 1st UMC, they want to make it their home. Stay tuned this summer for things that you can do to help our efforts to practice *radical hospitality*.

**Connecting again!**

A note from Ron Werker and 1st UMC - Men’s Connection



**WOW!** When was the last time we had lunch together! Well, the Asbury Bistro is open. Carol and I had lunch there recently, so let’s see if Men’s Connection can pick up where we left off way back in 2020. The second Monday of the month is May 8th so let’s connect then.

If you are still interested in meeting, we’ll do so at 11:30 am on May 8th at the Bistro. Just let me know at [rwerker@bellsouth.net](mailto:rwerker@bellsouth.net) if you are still interested in meeting.

I will be there and hope to see you then. If you’ve never been to a Men’s Connection luncheon we would love to see you there too!

**Wednesdays at 1st winding down**

After May 3rd, children and youth choirs and Jr./Sr. High Youth Fellowship won’t be meeting again until the fall.

Children’s Bible Study will wrap up on May 10th.

Adult Bible Studies, Digging Deeper into the Big Questions continues through May 24th.

Celebrate Recovery program DOES NOT change. See page 6 for the May speakers and topics.

Please visit [1stchurch.org/Wednesdays](http://1stchurch.org/Wednesdays) for updated schedules and updates.



## NEWS

### A great way for your kids to Go.Do.

While the kids are out of school for the summer we have an amazing way to get them involved in their community and the church! Every Tuesday at 9:00 am we will pack meals for children in need then at 9:30 am we will get on the bus to deliver the meals.

When we return children will have lunch. Kids will either help make their own meal or it will be prepared for them depending on the activity that day. Kids will take part in various activities each week such as a cooking class, paper mâché, plant identification, etc. These activities will be led by different members of our church community. If you are interested in leading an activity email Kristi at [kalton@1stchurch.org](mailto:kalton@1stchurch.org).



### Sunday School for May

*The Perfect Game - The Early Church*

Learning about the gift of the Holy Spirit and how things weren't always easy, but God consistently showed that He was with the people in the Early Church.

### Kids Own Worship for May

*Heroic* - Stories from the New Testament and the Early Church that show that anyone can do great things for God.



### Weekly Youth Opportunities

*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

(Last day is May 21st)

### Coming Soon:

Wet Bible Studies

Sunday afternoons from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

(Stay tuned for locations and details)

We will recognize graduates in the next edition of *The Church Bell*. If you have a graduate you want us to recognize please send the following information to [communications@1stchurch.org](mailto:communications@1stchurch.org) :

- Student's name
- School they are graduating from
- Future plans
- Picture

**Deadline is June 19th.**

**STELLAR**  
SHINE JESUS' LIGHT

**VOLUNTEER and PARTICIPANT  
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!**



[1stchurch.org/VBS](http://1stchurch.org/VBS)

**VACATION  
BIBLE SCHOOL**  
JUNE 11th - 14th, 2023

- Bible Learning Activities
- Superstellar Songs
- Galactic Sized Games
- and much, much more!

WHERE WILL YOU  
SHINE JESUS' LIGHT?

Sign up by May 15th to get a VBS t-shirt!



Charles West and Chris Jacobs recently attended the Orange Conference for Family Ministry in Atlanta. We can't wait to hear what all they learned while they were there.



Thank you to those in the *Open Arms, Christian Living, and Christian Trendsetters* Sunday School classes who prepared and delivered meals to the Family Promise neighbors in need. The families very much enjoyed the tasty food and were so appreciative.

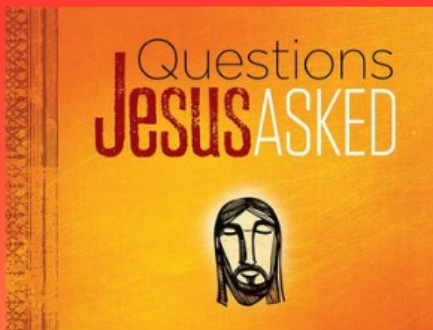
To help more families to have a place at the table, **Family Promise** will host **NO PLACE LIKE HOME**

on June 4, 2023 from 5:00-8:30 pm at the Showroom at Five Points (1529 E. Broadway, Maryville, TN). The Gala commemorates 10 years of serving homeless families in Blount County. The \$75.00 ticket offers an evening of fun, music, dancing, heavy hors d'oeuvres, and more. Dress is church clothes/casual business attire and red shoes are encouraged! The best way to get your tickets is to use the QR code on the right or call (865) 233-4737. You'll also find a link to get tickets at [1stchurch.org/Family-Promise](https://1stchurch.org/Family-Promise).



1<sup>st</sup>UMC's next host dates are **August 14th & 16th**.

Blessings,  
*Mavis Ziegler and Amy Large*  
Co-Coordinator of Family Promise at 1<sup>st</sup>UMC



**Small Group Study**  
**Thursdays 10:00 am - 11:30 am**  
**Starting May 11th**  
Led by Bernice Howard



Learn more and sign up at:  
[1stchurch.org/Jesus-Questions](https://1stchurch.org/Jesus-Questions)

Each Wednesday Night

# CELEBRATE RECOVERY

May 2022

May 10  
May 17  
May 24  
May 31

Jason Davis  
Lesson 23 Give  
Caroline Beidler  
Lesson 24 Yes



[CRMaryvilleTN.com](https://CRMaryvilleTN.com)



**Marilyn Turner and daughter, Rachel Turner**



**Debbie Arnold**



**Esme Welch and parents Zackary and Lauren**

***Christian sympathy extended to:***

Steve Hutsell and his family in the death of his wife Claudia on April 8th.

Carol Matthewson in the death of her sister, Lois Farrier on April 7th.

Joe Leatherwood and his family in the death of Joe's father, William Allen Leatherwood on March 29th.



**Music Ministry**

*In memory of:*  
John Kristy  
John Kristy

*Given by:*  
Jim & Susie Curtiss  
Larry & Mary Beth Towles

**Welcome Table**

*In memory of:*  
Don Watson

*Given by:*  
Turner & Marcia Fisher

**Claudia Hutsell**

**Joined First Church:**  
May 25, 2008

**Entered the Church Triumphant:**  
April 8, 2023

Maryville First United Methodist Church  
804 Montvale Station Road  
Maryville, Tennessee 37803  
Phone: 865-982-1273  
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**Thank you for your generosity!**



EASTER OFFERING  
2023 TOTAL  
**\$17,000**



**Staff Contacts**



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

**[1stchurch.org](http://1stchurch.org)**

The church phone number is 865-982-1273



**1stchurch.org**