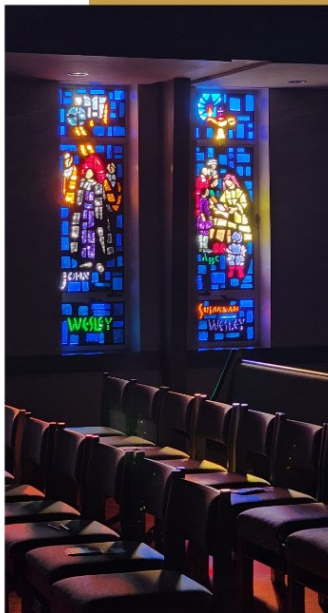


THE CHURCH BELL



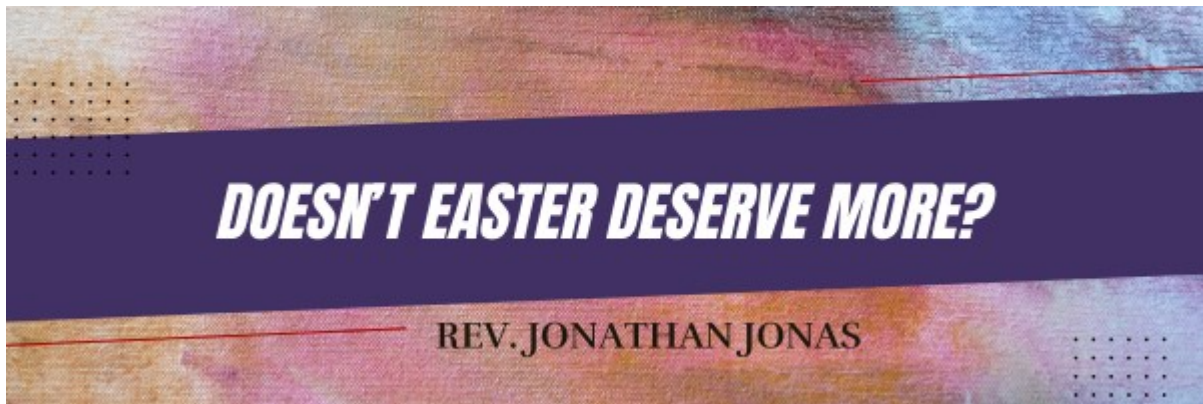
MARCH
2024

*COME THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING,
TUNE MY HEART TO SING THY GRACE;
STREAMS OF MERCY, NEVER CEASING,
CALL FOR SONGS OF LOUDEST PRAISE.*

UMC HYMNAL NO. 400

WORDS: ROBERT ROBINSON

**MUSIC: WYETH'S REPOSITORY OF SACRED MUSIC,
PART SECOND**



Today, I openly confess my confusion and curiosity. Of the two major holy days associated with Jesus' life, why have we chosen across the years to make Christmas the greater celebration by far?

Only two of the gospels tell the story of Jesus' birth. All four tell of his resurrection. In their later testimonies, the apostles never mention his miraculous birth, but they always celebrate his resurrection. In fact, there are very few witnesses to his birth, but there are several to his resurrection. We don't really know what day or even in which season he was born, but we know precisely that he rose on the first day of the week after Passover.

So, why does Christmas get all the holly, cards, candles, and gifts? Why aren't there Easter carols? Because in my view, our entire faith hinges on this month's holy day, Easter, the celebration of the resurrection.

Because Jesus rose:

- we can believe the testimony of the voice speaking from heaven at his baptism, saying "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased;"
- we can trust Jesus' words, "I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also;"
- we can take Jesus at his word when he says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me;"
- we have reason to believe that "the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed;"
- we trust and hope that "the Lord himself will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever;"
- we can look forward to that day when "God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away;"
- we are able to say with conviction that *nothing*—not even death—"will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I don't want to diminish Christmas. It's a beautiful annual reminder of God's willingness to reconcile us by becoming like us. It deserves celebration. But doesn't Easter deserve even more?

Afternoon worship at Clover Hill

Beginning this month, our congregation will offer a worship opportunity for residents of Clover Hill Senior Living on the third Sunday of each month at 2:00 pm. We will spend about thirty minutes with the residents, singing a few hymns and sharing a brief devotional message. Here's a great opportunity to share your musical gift - especially if you can accompany hymn singing with your guitar or by playing the piano.



Another volunteer opportunity is to share a ten-minute devotional message. If you would like to help out or know more, please contact Jonathan Jonas at jjonas@1stchurch.org. Clover Hill Senior Living is at 2317 US 411, across the road from the Maryville Walmart.

New role for Dr. Jennifer Anderson

In early October, our staff-parish relations committee began a search process for our congregation's next organist. After a widespread four-month search, the committee has promoted our assistant director of music ministries, Dr. Jennifer Anderson, to associate director, and her new responsibilities include the organist role.

We thank God for Jenny's gifts, talents, training, and years of hard work, and we are delighted that she will offer them now in an expanded ministry role. Please surround her with your love, prayers, and encouragement as she takes on these new responsibilities.



Honoring service and celebrating music

When in music, God is glorified! And that was certainly evident than the 1st UMC Sanctuary on February 11th. Throughout the service, the spotlight was on music which included presentations from the Chancel Choir, the Childrens Choirs, the Youth Choir, handbells and even a brass quintet. Afterward people gathered in Wesley Hall to thank Terry Wilson, Susan Daves and Dwain Pesterfield for their combined 100+ years of service to the church's music ministry.

What a day it was! Remember you can watch the entire service online at 1stchurch.org/watch or our YouTube channel. There are also clips on our social media channels.



Podcast celebrates 100+ episodes

Several months after the first episodes of the *Grace for All* podcast aired we have great news to share. As of February 25th, 100 episodes had been produced and posted.

Dr. Jim Stovall and Dr. Greta Smith have spearheaded this new digital ministry, but it would not be possible without your help. So far, more than 40 people in the 1st UMC congregation have been involved in the writing, recording, and production of the podcast. *Grace for All* has attracted more than 2000 unique listeners in 38 states and 24 countries.

If you are interested in helping, want to find out who upcoming episodes feature or just tune in, please visit: 1stchurch.org/podcast .



What's happening at Celebrate Recovery

- March 6th - Daily Inventory**
- March 13th - Testimony from Anthony**
- March 20th - Relapse**
- March 27th - Holy Wednesday,
Rev. Jonathan Jonas**



Garst Classes disbands

If you've been a part of 1st United Methodist Church at anytime since 1954, chances are you've heard about the Garst Sunday School class or knew people who were part of it. In February 2024, a class that started as a tribute to a medical missionary, made the difficult decision to disband.

According to the church history book, the first members of the Garst Class were inspired when Dr. Ronald J. Garst told the church "I'll go down in the well, if you folks here at First Methodist Church will hold the rope."



Over the years, the Garst Class met in many places, but their mission of nurturing each other and serving with each other were steadfast.

As part of their outreach the Garst Class raised money for the Organ fund, helped with an annual Nativity scene and in recent years supported the Boy Scouts and the Food Connection of Blount County.

Let us remember all the Garst Class did over the past seven decades and be thankful for how God worked through the lives of its faithful members as they each join other SS classes.

Discerning the call for a new ministry

How can we help people living with dementia and also help their caregivers? That was the key question at the February Church Council meeting. During this time, Lay Members Julie George, Jill Pope, and Pat Scruggs presented the group with several suggestions and strategies for creating day ministries and worship opportunities for people with Alzheimer's and dementia, as well as the people caring for them.

1st UMC @Sycamore Tree was mentioned as one possibility for such a ministry, but the main campus, specifically Wesley and/or Asbury Halls might serve as a home to this kind of ministry. There is still a lot of work to do before a new ministry program begins, but the groundwork has been laid and now it's time to pray for God's discernment in what to do next.

An Easter focus to SEND kids into mission

One of our core values as a church is to SEND people out into the community and around the world to further the mission of the Christ. Doing that can be difficult, but we do want to reach children in our community in effective ways. This Easter we have an OUT-OF-THE-BOX event we hope you will not only attend, but also encourage others to come out and participate,

The Walk in the Light, lantern making and Easter Parade lets kids be creative, encourages them to declare their faith, and invites others to be a part of the journey. On March 24th, families will gather at the Sandy Springs Pavilion (the Pavilion closest to Best Street) to worship, hear a short lesson about what it means to be a light in the world, and decorate lanterns for a parade!



From 3:00-4:15 we will worship & create. Then from 4:15-5:00 we will parade through the park with our lantern creations, celebrating & declaring that Jesus is King! At 5:00 we will all meet up back at the pavilion for dinner. Everyone is invited to "Walk in the Light." We

will have plenty of food & crafting supplies for any curious bystanders!


Help 1st Kids get ORGANIZED!!

OUTSTANDING ORGANIZERS

SUNDAY MARCH 17TH - 11:45 AM TO 2:00 PM

Room C12 - Lunch provided

All ages encouraged to serve!



Deep dive into VBS planning and preparation

On April 7th (after the 10:30 services) we will dive into the world of VBS! Staff doors will be decorated by different teams of people. A VBS church decoration plan will be developed with the help of creative minds! Plus, we will do important VBS curriculum & decoration prep work.

This event is great for those who are uncomfortable with serving during the week of VBS or are unable to due to schedules. This is also a fantastic time for previous VBS team members to share their knowledge from years before to help make this the best VBS yet!

A pizza lunch will be provided in Wesley Hall, all ages are encouraged to participate. Register link and more information about this years VBS at 1stchurch.org/VBS. Please sign up by April 1st.

NEWS



Important notes about Palm Sunday and Easter

Palm Sunday & Easter Sunday are two of the busiest days of the year in 1st Kids Ministries. On these days, we are flooded with precious young ones looking to learn and be loved.

To accommodate expected increases in the numbers of kids coming those two days, we MUST open extra classrooms. We need people willing to step up to teach & assist with our kids on these special days.

- During the Sunday School hour (9:15 to 10:15) we will be opening a class for second and third graders for both Sundays.
- We will also need to open an extra Kids Own Worship class open for Kindergarten and 1st graders during the 10:30 services.
- On Easter Sunday only we will be opening a second Nursery class for toddlers. Our nursery is full on a regular Sunday, but it is JAM PACKED on Easter Sunday.

If you would be willing to take time and serve as the hands & feet of Jesus for this generation please contact Kristi Alton.

Sunday School focus for March

The Great Surprise

No one expected the King of Kings to come to Earth as a baby, live a sinless life, die on the cross and conquer sin and death after 3-days. All month long children in Sunday School will learn about God's biggest surprise and the final days of Jesus' ministry.

Kids Own Worship focus for March

In the dark, a world of neon colors comes to life. Whether it's the soft green of glow-in-the-dark stars, or the bright colors of bioluminescent creatures, light can break through the darkness. Come explore Jesus' life leading up to Easter and learn how Jesus is the light in the darkness.

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



1stchurch.org/1st-kids



Chris Jacobs - cjacobs@1stchurch.org
1stchurch.org/students



Before & After School devotions & food!

It's great to see dozens of students walking from 1st Church to Maryville Junior High across the street every Tuesday morning. Our Rise and Shine breakfast devotion time on Tuesdays at 7:30 am (when school is in session) is open to all Junior High students.

There is now an after school opportunity for devotion and free food on Thursdays from 3:45 pm to 4:30 pm at the Chick-fil-A in Maryville for all High School students.



Renovation work at Sycamore Tree continues to progress. There are many hurdles to overcome but that is just the nature of the game. Meanwhile, the **Family Promise** staff is still hard at work and has success stories to report.

Despite limited shelter availability, three families were assisted with a new grant called HUMI (Help Us Move In). In the past month another eight families on the waitlist were able to obtain permanent housing with assistance from **Family Promise** case management.

One of these families consists of a single mother of four children. She reached out to request assistance with a utility deposit. She was working hard to rebuild a life for her and her children after escaping a domestic violence

Confirmation Class begins March 24th

Our pastors will lead a confirmation class for young people beginning on Sunday, March 24, which is Palm Sunday. In our United Methodist tradition, confirmation class is generally for adolescents in sixth grade or around twelve years old. The class focuses on what it means to be baptized, to be an intentional follower of Jesus Christ, and to be a faithful member of Christ's holy church.

The class will meet on Sunday mornings during the Sunday school hour from March 24th through May 12th. We will celebrate confirmation on the day of Pentecost, Sunday May 19th. To know more, contact one of our pastors.

Mark your calendars!

More information at 1stchurch.org/students

April 14th

First Future Informational Lunch
11:30 am to 12:30 pm in Wesley Hall

April 21st

Graduate Sendoff
From 11:30 am to 12:30 pm in Wesley Hall

June 9th through June 14th

Charleston Mission Trip
Early Bird (by April 1st) \$200

situation. For the first time, she is achieving independence on her own. She recently had two job interviews that went so well it left her torn between the two opportunities. She couldn't be more grateful.

There are far too many families that are dealt inconceivable blows beyond their control. Because of the aid from 1stUMC and other churches, families who otherwise would be homeless, are given a hand up when needed the most through **Family Promise**. Thank you for your love and action to see that no child is without a home.

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



Celebrate Recovery

In memory of: Pat Blankenship
 Jack Geis
Given by: Brad & Patsy Lunde
 Rev. Bill & Jenny Green

1st Kids Ministries

In memory of: Pat Blankenship
Given by: Steve & Martha Shields

Family Promise

In memory of: Lila Eby
Given by: Carolyn Yancey

Memorial Fund

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Wally Roberts	Steve & Martha Shields
Bill Wells	Janie Haley
Lee North	Herb & Bahallah Newton
John Thierbach	Jim & Sally Stovall
Pat Blankenship	Jim & Sally Stovall
Lee North	Beth Moore
Bill Wells	Virginia Hardwick
Pat Blankenship	Gayle Fox
Bill Wells	Diane Oliva
Lee North	Susan Gordon
Bill Wells	Bill & Elizabeth Pedersen
Bill Wells	Patti Kelley
Lee North	Robert L. Shaw
Pat Blankenship	Barbara Barton
Bill Wells	Scott Ricker
Len Mink	Steve & Martha Shields

Music Ministry

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Betty Bell	Ted & Nancy Spetnagel
Betty Bell	Allen Spetnagel
Betty Bell	Elizabeth Crowes
Bill Wells	Betsy Halliday

Welcome Table

<i>In honor of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Amelia Geis-Scott	Trendsetters Sunday School

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Bill Wells	Mary Helen Peery
Pat Blankenship	Mary Helen Peery
Pat Blankenship	Mary Helen Peery
Bill Wells	Brad & Patsy Lunde
Jack Geis	Brad & Patsy Lunde
Bill Wells	Doug & Emily Smith
Jack Geis	Doug & Emily Smith
Jack Geis	Trendsetters Sunday School



Robert (Bob) C. McMurray

Joined First Church:
 September 1, 1956

Entered the Church Triumphant:
 February 19, 2024


Christian sympathy extended to:

The family of Bob McMurray who died on February 19th.

Amelia Geis-Scott, her sons Jack and Liam in the death of Amelia's father, Jack Geis on February 8th.

Tina Meadows in the recent death of her mother, Louise Jackson Wright on January 29th.

Nancy Benson in the death of her sister, Betty Boring on February 6th.



Men's Connection is a time for men of all ages to connect with each other through a time of sharing. There is no lesson to study or other preparation, just an opportunity to be together.

**NEXT CONNECTION
 MARCH 11th AT 11:30 AM
 ASBURY PLACE BISTRO**

**Contact Ron Werker for more information at
 rwerker@bellsouth.net**

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

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

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER



March 24th

Palm Sunday Worship at 8:15 am & 10:30 am
Walk in the Light Children's Event at 3:00 pm
(Sandy Springs Park)

March 28th

Maundy Thursday Worship at 7:00 pm
Sanctuary (upper level)

March 29th

Good Friday Worship at 7:00 pm
1st UMC @Sycamore Tree

EASTER SUNDAY

March 31st

Sunrise Worship at 7:00 am
Montgomery Ridge Intermediate School

Traditional Worship at 8:15 & 10:30 am
Sanctuary (upper level)

Contemporary Worship at 10:30 am
Asbury Hall (gym, lower level)

EASTERINMARYVILLE.COM



Learn More