

# THE CHURCH BELL



MAY  
2024

EVER SINCE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD  
GOD'S ETERNAL POWER AND DIVINE NATURE,  
INVISIBLE THOUGH THEY ARE, HAVE BEEN SEEN  
AND UNDERSTOOD THROUGH THE THINGS GOD  
HAS MADE. SO THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE.

**ROMANS 1:20**



As you receive this edition of *The Church Bell*, the general conference of the United Methodist Church is meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina. This conference meets every four years - except during pandemics - to discern and determine the official policy of the entire denomination.

Eight hundred sixty-two delegates from around the world, including twelve from our Holston Conference, are meeting for ten days to consider one thousand ninety-nine petitions. After being considered, amended, edited, and approved by a committee and then by the entire conference, a petition can become an official policy. All these officially adopted policies become *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*.

We United Methodists have a long history and rich heritage of what we sometimes call *holy conferencing*. In fact, the very first Methodist denomination was born in conference. Back in 1784, early American Methodists gathered on Christmas Eve and met for ten days in what has become known as the Christmas Conference, from which the Methodist Episcopal Church, our earliest predecessor denomination, emerged.

We were not the inventors of holy conferencing, though. No, much earlier in the Christian church our ancestors in the faith learned that there was great value in getting together to speak with each other, and more importantly, to *listen* to each other.

As Acts 11 begins, the earliest Christians, converts from Judaism, are upset with Peter, and they criticize him for sharing meals with (gasp!) *the uncircumcised!* You would think they might have learned something from Jesus' example, but they apparently had not. When Peter tells them about his encounter with the Holy Spirit *sending* him to the gentiles, Acts 11:18 says, "Once the apostles and other believers heard this, they calmed down. They praised God."

From criticizing Peter to praising God, this conference in Jerusalem allowed early church leaders to experience a needed change of heart. We believe that God's Holy Spirit still works between and among the hearts of the faithful when we get together and *listen*.

Please pray for our general conference - that the delegates will listen to each other, and more importantly, that they will listen faithfully to the promptings of the Spirit. Then, later, as we learn what the general conference has discerned (details on page 3), let's get together here to listen to each other's reactions and perspectives. Conferencing will stretch us and grow us.

To keep up with the news of general conference, visit:  
[www.umnews.org](http://www.umnews.org) or [www.resourceumc.org/gc2020](http://www.resourceumc.org/gc2020).



### Progress and planning at Sycamore Tree

In the last edition of *The Church Bell* we brought you the news of Compassion Counseling Center moving to the 1st UMC at Sycamore Tree property. CCC joins Family Promise in this growing mission hub. Moving forward there are still plans for Family Promise to use the upper floor of the building for housing people in its program. There are still many details that need to be worked out before this happens. We'll keep you updated.

Plans are also in the works for a ministry to help people living with dementia and their caregivers. The Sycamore Tree facility is one possibility for housing such a program.



On Good Friday, around 100 people came out to 1st UMC at Sycamore tree for worship.

### A time for holy conferencing

On **Monday, May 20th, at 6:30 pm**, Rev. Jonathan Jonas will lead an information session to summarize the decisions made at the General Conference of the UMC.

This time together will allow us an opportunity for *holy conferencing* (see Jonathan's column on page 2) as we consider what the actions at General Conference mean for us.

Please join us in Wesley Hall for this evening of sharing and conversation.

### Sending the Go.Do. spirit

When we SEND people out into the community or SEND items we've collected as part of a **Go.Do.** Project, we are demonstrating one part of our mission to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." In March and April the **Go.Do.** spirit was in the spotlight many times.



Less than a week after Easter, a small group of 1st UMC-ers braved some chilly weather to represent the church in the Alzheimer's Tennessee Foothills Walk in Alcoa.

In the middle of Holy Week, hundreds of packages of diapers, pull-

ups and wipes made their way to the True Purpose Women's Home. These items were collected as part of a **Go.Do.** project and loaded into Amy Large's car for delivery. As you can see from this picture that was a lot of diapers and wipes!



The **Go.Do.** collections for April and May are part of a Holston Conference wide effort to collect items for the Ishe Anesu Project in Zimbabwe. Some of you may recall hearing about Ishe Anesu during Rev. Sam Dzobo's message at the 2023 Churchwide Thanksgiving Dinner.

**Blount County Habitat for Humanity®**

**EASTER OFFERING 2024**

**\$17,000 raised so far**

### Celebrating the work of the Church

For several weeks our worship focus has been on ways we might anticipate the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Throughout this journey we have looked at ways the Holy Spirit has been revealed in both the Old and New Testaments and how the Holy Spirit works in our own lives.

On May 19th, we observe Pentecost, a time when the disciples received the Holy Spirit in a special way. (You'll find the story in Acts 2). The word Pentecost itself comes from a Greek word meaning fiftieth. In the Christian tradition, Pentecost falls on the 50th day after the resurrection.

Traditionally, we celebrate the work of the church and the Holy Spirit in the life of the church on this day, something we will continue to do this year. Members of our Confirmation Class will step forward to begin the next chapter of their faith journeys. It will certainly be a special time for all. We hope you can join us, and be sure and wear the colors of the flame on that day to add to the celebrations!



### Flat Jesus is ready to travel again

A few years ago, we introduced you (and the world) to Flat Jesus. This stick figure went all over the world that summer with people in the 1st Church family taking everyone along for the trip. On **May 19th**, Flat Jesus returns. We hope you will welcome Him into your family and take him wherever you go for the next few months. Please take pictures of Flat Jesus on your travels, post them on social media (#1stFlatJesus) and tag the church in those posts. You can also email pictures to [communications@1stchurch.org](mailto:communications@1stchurch.org) and we'll post them on our channels. We can't wait to see where he goes this time!

### Welcome to the 1st United Methodist Church Family

The last time we introduced you to the newest members of the 1st UMC family was back in the September issue of *The Church Bell*. We apologize for falling behind. Please take time to extend a hand of welcome to these folks if you haven't already.

We'll be working to make sure all their information is in the online directory soon.

Learn how to access it at: [1stchurch.org/directory](http://1stchurch.org/directory).

*Christy Daugherty and Ty Heath*

*Robin North*

*Jim and Julia Hurst*

*Josh & Rachel Davidson*

*Mollianne and Will Hubbs*

*Bobby and Rikki Eason*

*Diane Lawhern*

*Linda Lamb*

*Janie Haley*

*Eamonn Lawhern*

*Don and Nan Chunn*

*Bobbie and Eric Harris*

*Beth and Terry McMahon*



## Another surprising summer

Summer vacation is right around the corner and we want to make sure it's filled with amazing things for kids to do starting with

the return of Summer Service & Surprises! This weekly program is an amazing way to get 2nd through 5th graders involved in their community and their church!

Here's a look at what happens on a Summer Service and Surprises Day!

- Gather to pack meals at 9:00 am
- Deliver meals starting at 9:30 am
- Return for lunch (kids will either make their own meal or it will be prepared for them depending on the activity of the day)
- After lunch: participate in various "surprise" activities led by different people in the 1st UMC family. Possible "surprises" may involve an all about fish activity, water color painting, campfire safety, or a sports day.

If you are interested in sharing your hobbies and talents with our children, are willing to prepare lunches for our Tuesday kids, or participate in this service ministry in any way please contact Kristi Alton.

## Sunday School focus for May - New Creation

After meeting Jesus, Paul was completely transformed. He went from hating Christians to preaching the Gospel wherever he went. He would be beaten, imprisoned and sent to stand trial in Rome. Paul was God's messenger to the gentile, or non-Jewish, world. God used him to perform miracles and show His great power. No matter what, Paul would say that it was Christ working through him to spread the Gospel.

## Kids Own Worship focus for May - Blast Off

If you're a grown-up and you've been following Jesus for a while, you've probably figured out a few ways to grow spiritually. The kids you're parenting, on the other hand, aren't grown-ups, so they might need a little help from you to figure out how, exactly, to grow spiritually. **So what should spiritual growth look like for a kid?** We like to think about it in terms of four spiritual habits. To help a kid grow spiritually, **teach them to spend time with God, spend time with others, use their gifts, and share their story.** These are the 4 keys to discipleship that will help kids launch their faith.

## NEWS



**Kristi Alton**

*1st Kids Ministries, Director*  
[kalton@1stchurch.org](mailto:kalton@1stchurch.org)  
865-982-1273 ext. 113

## Scuba (VBS) lessons start soon!

Vacation Bible School season is here and it will soon be time to DIVE IN to the world of SCUBA!. VBS at 1st UMC happens June 23rd through June 26th. Each evening begins with a meal at 5:30 then VBS programming from 6:00 to 8:00. Not only do we want children to attend, but we want our church halls to be full of youth and adults

demonstrating the love of Christ to all who walk through our doors!

The fun begins long before the start of VBS week! We are collecting supplies, cutting, decorating, planning, and preparing all the things needed for Vacation Bible School to run smoothly. So, even if you aren't available during the week of Vacation Bible School does not mean you cannot play an integral part in its success!

Starting June 17th we will begin decorating the church to create an inviting atmosphere full of wonder!! You do not have to be creative to help decorate you just need a willing heart!

Lastly, during the week of Vacation Bible School all this needs to happen:

- food needs to be prepared with Chef Amelia;
- registration tables need to be organized;
- things need to be set up for each day;
- and children need to be shown what it means to have a relationship with God full of depth!

On the last day, Wednesday June 26<sup>th</sup>, we need people to help take down decorations that will be given to another church plus clean the building for Sunday use.

Everyone is needed for this amazing undersea adventure!!



Chris Jacobs - [cjacobs@1stchurch.org](mailto:cjacobs@1stchurch.org)



On Easter Sunday, First Future Students greeted people along Montvale Station Road and at the doors of the church.



Family Promise board members and coordinators recently met to give an update on the status of the program.



The remodeling of the Sycamore Tree facility for use as an Emergency Shelter remains a priority. Currently, Family Promise Staff uses the facility for office space with plans still in the works to use the upstairs space for emergency housing.

While not as many families can be assisted in the absence of emergency housing, the work of Family Promise in Blount County helps families in distress in a number of ways .

**Upcoming First Future Events**

**Visit [1stchurch.org/students](http://1stchurch.org/students) for details!**

**May 5th from 6:30 to 8:00 pm**

Cinco de Mayo at Close Encounter

**June 9th - June 14th**

Charleston Mission Trip

**June 24th - June 28th**

Jr./Sr. High Assembly

**July 12th at 5:00 pm to July 13th at 9:00 am**

Summer Lock-In

**July 28th at 3:00 pm**

Lake Day (more information coming soon)

**August 4th from 3:00 pm**

Water War



On April 21st our First Future students graduating from High School this year got a special "Send-Off"

New grant funding allows an initiative called Prevention and Diversion to keep families from being evicted from their homes.

In one recent week, not one but two families were kept from being evicted. Further, the proper framework was put in place so they will not have to face that process ever again. What a win!

Thank you 1stUMC for helping make good things happen.

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



All men are invited to join the Men's Connection.

This monthly lunch meeting happens on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Asbury Place Bistro.

**NEXT CONNECTION:**  
MAY 13th AT 11:30 am  
ASBURY PLACE BISTRO

Contact Ron Werker at:  
[rwerker@bellsouth.net](mailto:rwerker@bellsouth.net) for more information

### Family Promise

*In memory of:* Lila Eby  
*Given by:* Jerry & Lin Reichelt

### Habitat for Humanity

*In memory of:* Roy Stinnett  
*Given by:* Shirley Stinnett

### Heritage Sunday School Class

*In memory of:* Anne Hand  
*Given by:* Nephew in Alaska

### Memorial Fund

*In memory of:* Bob Carroll, Tom Click, Bob Carroll  
*Given by:* Tommy & Carol Hunt, Charlie & Barbara Barton, Steve & Martha Shields

### Music Ministry

*In honor of:* Terry Wilson, Susan Daves, Dwain Pesterfield  
*In memory of:* Anne Hand, Anne Hand, Anne Hand  
*Given by:* Jerry & Lin Reichelt, Jerry & Lin Reichelt, Jerry & Lin Reichelt, Kathy Dorner, Nieces in Texas, Richard & Connie Swett



### Welcome Table

*In memory of:* Tom Click, Anne Hand, Jack Geis, Bill Wells, Tom Click, Anne Hand, Jack Geis, Tom Click, Bill Wells, Pat Blankenship, Jack Geis, Anne Hand, Tom Click, Tom Click, Bill Wells, Don Watson  
*Given by:* Randy & Laney Lambert, Gerald & Betty Smith, Tommy & Carol Hunt, Tommy & Carol Hunt, Tommy & Carol Hunt, Tommy & Carol Hunt, Sara Culvahouse, James & Elizabeth Ratledge, Mike & Ibbey Davis, Mike & Ibbey Davis, Mike & Ibbey Davis, Mike & Ibbey Davis, Steve & Martha Shields, Steve & Martha Shields, James & Regina Watson



Mary Alice Hart

**Joined First Church:**

April 5, 1981

**Entered the Church Triumphant:**

April 11, 2024

### Christian sympathy extended to:

Dwight Dockery in the death of his uncle  
Donnie Bookout on April 3rd.

The family of Mary Hart who died on April 11th.

### 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

**IS YOUR NOSE ALWAYS IN A BOOK?**  
If so, we've got a great way for you to read and share what you discover in the pages of each book!  
The 1st UMC Book Club meets on the 3rd Monday of each month from 10:00 am until 11:00 am (currently meeting in the Library, Room 205).  
Come join us!  
**1st UMC Book Club**  
May 20th  
*Grandma Gatewood's Walk* by Ben Montgomery  
June 17th  
*Tom Lake* by Ann Patchett  
Learn more at:  
**1stchurch.org/book-club**

A Christ-centered recovery program  
**CELEBRATE RECOVERY**  
CRMaryvilleTN.com  
EACH WEDNESDAY EVENING  
5:30 PM - DINNER  
6:30 PM - WORSHIP & MESSAGE  
7:40 PM - SHARE GROUPS

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**1<sup>st</sup> UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MARYVILLE**

# Grace

**FOR ALL**

PODCAST

Coming in June: Do Not Fear

Find episodes at [1stchurch.org/podcast](https://1stchurch.org/podcast) or most everywhere you get your podcasts.



**MUSIC @ 1<sup>st</sup> UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MARYVILLE**

## EMERALD SAILS

### MEN'S VOCAL ENSEMBLE

from Maryville, TN

**Saturday, May 11th at 5:00 pm**



MARYVILLEFUMC



1STMARYVILLE



MARYVILLE1STUMC



[1STCHURCH.ORG](https://1stchurch.org)