

THE CHURCH BELL



NOVEMBER
2024



DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING,
BUT IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER AND
SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING LET YOUR
REQUESTS BE KNOWN TO GOD.
PHILIPPIANS 4:6



“But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said . . .” (Genesis 20:3).

In this passage, God speaks to a person through a dream for the very first time in scripture, but certainly not for the last. At key moments throughout the Old and New Testaments, God offers warnings, commands, and glimpses of the future through dreams and visions.

Across the years of my ministry, people have sometimes asked, “Is it possible that God is speaking to me through this dream?” I often reply, “God certainly has a track record of speaking to people through their dreams.”

Not only has God chosen to speak to people through dreams, God has also given people the gift of dreaming dreams. Joel 2:28, echoed by Peter at Pentecost in Acts 2:17, says, “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.”

It is safe to say that the first promised gift of the Holy Spirit is to see - at least in glimpses - as God sees through our dreams and visions. I found it profound when a pastor friend of mine once lamented that the church so often fails to have “God-sized dreams.” It does seem a pity not to embrace the Spirit’s power to dream, envision, and imagine.

Through November, we will celebrate dreams that have come true among us, and we will share our dreams for what God might do through 1st Church in the days, weeks, and years to come.

Last October 29th, we gathered at 1st UMC @Sycamore Tree and Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett proclaimed a message of hope as we imagined how God might bless our community and world through that facility. One year later . . .

. . . **Family Promise of Blount County** has its offices in that facility, and in just a few weeks from now, several families will make their temporary homes on the upper level, where there are newly constructed rooms and renovated restrooms with showers.

. . . **Compassion Counseling** - which was also a dream of this congregation a few short years ago - provides timely, welcoming, accessible, and affordable mental health counseling and education for *all* in their office and counseling space at Sycamore Tree.

. . . **DayBreak Dementia Respite** - only a dream last November - is now providing care for individuals and families living with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia three days per week at Sycamore Tree.

All this is in addition to the dreams-come-true and ongoing ministries in our primary facility on Montvale Station Road and as we live our witness and ministry out in the community.

What God-whispered, God-inspired dreams-come-true are yet before us? God only knows. We eagerly await. We attentively listen. We boldly dream. We faithfully do.

A flood of support in the wake of disaster

In late September, Hurricane Helene along with a powerful storm that preceded it led to catastrophic flooding in Central Appalachia. While Western North Carolina received the heaviest damage, many parts of the Holston Conference (East TN & Southwest Virginia) watched water levels rise past historic levels damaging or destroying homes, businesses and even several churches.

Even before the floodwaters receded and the extent of damage came into better view, United Methodists were organizing relief efforts. UMCOR (the United Methodist Committee on Relief) began sending cleaning buckets and hygiene kits into the impacted regions while churches throughout the Holston Conference began working to provide immediate relief and to start raising money for the long term.

1st UMC - Maryville has raised **\$32,000**

so far toward the

**Holston
Conference
Flood Relief
Fund**

and collected...

- 36 cleaning buckets
- 452 hygiene kits
- and hundreds of bottles of water



Members of 1st United Methodist Church - Maryville brought in 36 Cleaning buckets, 452 Hygiene kits and hundreds of bottles of water (which were needed in the early stages of relief). In addition, to date, you have contributed \$32,000 toward the Holston Conference Relief Fund. You can still give online by going to 1stchurch.org/giving, writing "Flood Relief" in the memo line. You can also make out a check to 1st UMC with "Flood Relief" in the memo line. At the moment, we are not accepting any more hygiene kits or cleaning buckets. The ones we have will be taken to the staging centers soon.

We also want to give a shout out to Wade and Rachael Neisner and Miles Carter who traveled up to Upper East Tennessee to Go.Do. They helped unload some of the 500,000+ supplies that had been dropped off at Trinity UMC in Greeneville then headed to a local farm to help with flood cleanup.

Spreading the message to Love First

While the Love First sermon focus wrapped up at the end of October, the theme will continue from now through next September.

More than a hundred of you ordered t-shirts with the **Love: God, Others, Self** emblazoned on the front. We saw a lot of them at the Fall Festival at 1st and saw folks posting pictures on social media wearing them to various activities. Let's keep that up and keep showing this message to others through the t-shirts and the yard signs!



While we don't have any more t-shirts on hand, we may order more in early 2025. So keep watching for how to order them.

There are still some yard signs left and we'd love to see them in your yard and have you share pictures of them too. Tag us on social media or send the pictures to communications@1stchurch.org. We also have some **Love: God, Others, Self** stickers if you want to decorate your cups, suitcases or put some on your car. There are lots of ways to spread this message and we encourage you to help out in all the ways you can.

It's not too early to think about shopping for Christmas gifts

Thanksgiving is just a few weeks away and we all know Christmas happens like the next day. Well, not really, but the holiday shopping rush definitely reaches a fever pitch starting on Black Friday. For many years, 1st United Methodist Church has offered up an alternative to gift shopping that not only helps you cross off gift items early, it also helps out local ministries, fair trade organizations and non-profits. In essence, for every gift you buy at the Alternative Gift Fair, you are "giving twice."

This year's Alternative Gift Fair happens from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on Sunday, November 3rd in Wesley Hall and room 202. We have more than a dozen vendors on hand with a couple of new ones this year. In addition, we'll also have a table of 1st UMC branded merchandise for sale, with all proceeds going to the Holston Conference Flood Relief effort.



For a list of vendors and to learn more about the Alternative Gift Fair please visit:

1stchurch.org/gift-fair

Thanksgiving Celebration

Celebrating, dreaming and good eating all come together at this year's Churchwide Thanksgiving Dinner. The annual event happens on November 10th in Asbury Hall at 5:00 pm.

This year, we celebrate the 1-year anniversary of our devotional podcast, "Grace for All," thanking all the folks who have contributed over the past twelve months and hopefully encouraging even more to help out in the future.

During the dinner, we will also be asking you to name some of the wildest dreams for the congregation of 1st UMC as well as recognize a few of the dreams realized recently like the Daybreak Dementia Care Ministry and other work happening at 1st UMC @Sycamore Tree.

Please let us know you are coming by signing up at **1stchurch.org/Thanksgiving** or calling **865-982-1273**. Please bring side dishes and desserts to share!



LIVING THE DREAM 
FORWARD IN FAITH THROUGH DREAMS

November 10th
We Can't Outdream God

November 17th
God Honors Our Dreaming

November 24th
God Makes Us All Visionaries and Dreamers

SERMON & GENEROSITY
FOCUS
NOVEMBER 2024

1stchurch.org/worship

Improving communications channels

There are multiple ways we work to help communicate with our 1st Church family and we are working to find out which ways are working best and where we need to make improvements. In order to do help us better evaluate the various communications channels we are working on a special survey we will release at the beginning of December.

The survey will be one you can fill out in just a few minutes and no personal information will be collected. There will be an online version as well as a printed one for those who do not have online access.

The Witness Team put together the survey questions and will compile the results to help make future decisions regarding communications. Be watching for an email about the survey along with other notices as we get closer to December.



Crazy costumes, creatively decorated trunks and cookies all helped define this year's Fall Festival at 1st. Hundreds of kids (of all ages) turned out on a beautiful fall afternoon for trunk-or-treating, games and more. We want to thank everyone who helped make the event a success and also thank the Maryville Police Department and Fire Department for participating. (Both were a big hit with the kids!)



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT 1ST KIDS

Contact the 1st Kids Director Kristi Alton

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✉ kalton@1stchurch.org

☎ 865-982-1273 ext. 712

Are you ready to celebrate the birth of a savior?

We are working to make this year's 1st Kids Christmas Celebration one of the best ever. Here's a quick look of what we have planned for the evening of December 8th and how you can help.

4:00 PM:

Festivities kick off in the Sanctuary as our talented 1st Kids Choir, hand chimes, and bell ensemble lift our spirits with beautiful music!

Around 5:00 PM:

The celebration moves downstairs to the Contemporary Worship space (Asbury Hall/Gym) for an evening packed with fun, food, and creativity!

Craft Stations Galore:

Kids will dive into the world of creativity with **8 exciting Christmas craft options!** Our hope is that kids will use their crafts to share the true meaning of Christmas with their friends and neighbors.

Free Food: Everyone is invited to enjoy a meal together with pizza, chili, various sides, and our annual tradition of cookie cake! Have any dietary concerns? Don't hesitate to reach out to Kristi Alton—we want everyone to enjoy!

Volunteers Needed!

Join the fun and help us create a magical evening that will remind everyone of the true meaning of Christmas! We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers of all ages to assist with food service, craft stations, and cleanup.

If you're ready to help, contact Kristi Alton at kalton@1stchurch.org or call **865-982-1273**.

Don't miss this chance to connect with families, celebrate the season, and make lasting memories together! Bring your holiday spirit and let's make this Christmas Celebration truly special!

Are you an outstanding organizer?

We want to invite people whose gift is organization or who have a heart to serve to continue the process of organizing the Kid's Area & Storage closets at Outstanding Organizers. 1st Kids is a busy ministry with lots of moving parts and supplies used to engage children in their faith journey. Serving behind the scenes with Outstanding Organizers is a wonderful way to support this vital ministry. Even children are encouraged to be a part of this important work, as we have had children as young as preschool assist in this way in the past year!

We will meet on November 17th after 10:30 service in C12, so around 11:45.

There will be a simple sandwich lunch provided. We will finish by 2:00. If you or your child is interested in participating, please email kalton@1stchurch.org, which will ensure that there is enough food for all participating.



Christmas Celebration

**December 8th
4:00 to 6:30 pm**

- Kid's Performance
- Christmas Crafts
- FREE pizza!

1stchurch.org/Christmas



Sign up for Resurrection 2025

One of the most anticipated events each year is the Resurrection youth event over in Pigeon Forge, TN. We would like to take a big group again and now is the time to start signing up.

Just visit the website at:
1stchurch.org/resurrection
to register (and pay).

The event is happening
January 24th - January 26th.
Cost is \$150 per person.



1stchurch.org/students
info@1stchurch.org

No Rise and Shine on November 5th
No Sunday Night youth on Dec. 1st



November is a time to gather with family and friends to celebrate all there is to be thankful for. Thanks to Family Promise more families will be able to celebrate having a home to live in. A mom and her son will move out of Static Shelter into their own rental property.

Multiple families were assisted with the Prevention/Diversion phase of the program which saves them from being evicted from their home. One example is a single mother of two children who was informed their school bus would not be running. Without any family to help, her only option was to transport her children herself. This caused her to miss work hours and left her short on rent money. Thankfully Family Promise was able to make up the difference and get her in touch with the school's Family Resource Center to help avoid future problems.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving with your loved ones and thank you for helping to bless the hardworking and less fortunate neighbors of Blount County.

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

WELCOME TO



Please take time to welcome
Allan & Janet Griggs to the 1st UMC family.
They joined the church on October 13th.





IN MEMORIAM

Grant Reynolds
Joined First Church: June 25, 1992
Entered the Church Triumphant:
September 30, 2024



Celebrate Recovery

In memory of: John Cochran
Given by: A Friend

Community Food Connection

In memory of: Larry Ladd
Given by: John & Marion Paulk
Larry Ladd Steve & Martha Shields

Daybreak

In memory of: John Cochran
Given by: Charlie & Barbara Barton

Family Promise

In memory of: Larry Ladd
Given by: Steve Daves

Memorial Fund

In honor of: George & Linda Otwell
Given by: Gene & Frances Lovell
George & Linda Otwell The Stallers
George & Linda Otwell Doug & Emily Smith
George & Linda Otwell Phyllis Bostick
George & Linda Otwell Barbara Hammond

In memory of: John Cochran
Given by: Jerry & Frances Hodge

Music Ministry & Choir

In memory of: John Cochran
Given by: Jim & Susie Curtiss
Larry Ladd Kevin & Vanessa Painter
Larry Ladd Carolyn Kristy

Welcome Table

In honor of: Bernice Howard
Given by: Sally Gross
In memory of: Jama Mandrell
Given by: Bookie Reynolds
Collins Meeigs Mary Abbott
Jama Mandrell A Friend

Christian sympathy extended to:
Mike and Elizabeth Reynolds and the Reynolds family in the death of their son Grant Reynolds on September 30th.

The Church Office will be closed on November 28th & 29th in observance of Thanksgiving.

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.

In search of a Christmas elf!

During the Advent & Christmas season, our sanctuary is a truly special place with all of our activities, music, and worship. The decorations are put up to reflect that something different happens during this part of our church year, something new, something special!



That's why each year the decorations are a bit different too. We should be excited to see what's new each year as we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Would you be someone who can help keep our Sanctuary looking special during the holiday, an apprentice Elf to come learn the ropes and what happens when?

Please call Leslie Ragland at **334-301-2978** if you feel led to help keep the Sanctuary decked out for the holidays.

Maryville First United Methodist Church
804 Montvale Station Road
Maryville, Tennessee 37803
Phone: 865-982-1273
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MAKE PLANS TO CELEBRATE
CHRISTMAS

@ **1st UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MARYVILLE**

**DECEMBER 1ST
CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP MUSIC SPECIAL**

**DECEMBER 8TH
MORNING GLORY CHORUS CHRISTMAS CANTATA
1ST KIDS CHRISTMAS SPECIAL**

**DECEMBER 15TH
CHANCEL CHOIR CHRISTMAS CANTATA**

**DECEMBER 24TH
CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
(2:00 PM, 7:00 PM & 10:00 PM)**

1STCHURCH.ORG/CHRISTMAS



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