

THE CHURCH BELL



SEPTEMBER
2024

KNOW THIS, MY DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS:
EVERYONE SHOULD BE QUICK TO LISTEN, SLOW
TO SPEAK, AND SLOW TO GROW ANGRY.
JAMES 1:19 (CEB)



One beautiful fall Monday afternoon thirty-five years ago, I was on the football practice field at Emory & Henry College. I was barely eighteen years old, and it was my first semester of college and season of college football. Amid the noise, the dust, the sweat, and the bravado that afternoon, I hadn't noticed that a small Buick sedan had pulled up alongside the practice field and that the driver was speaking to our head football coach.

Seconds later, the coach's voice called out, "Jonas! Come over here!" I looked up and was slightly horrified to see him standing beside the Buick driver, Dr. Charles R. Davis, the college's director of choirs.

As I approached, Dr. Davis told me that he and Coach Wacker had just worked out an agreement that I could leave football practice early each Monday afternoon so that I could attend choir practice. Now, I was not only horrified, I was mortified. I tried every excuse. "Dr. Davis, I'm dirty and sweaty." He said, "Don't worry about that. Get in!"

I rode in his Buick in my full practice uniform, and when we arrived at Byars Hall for choir rehearsal, I started to carry my helmet and shoulder pads into the building. He said, "Just leave them in the car. I'll give you a ride back to the fieldhouse later." I tried to back out again. "I probably shouldn't wear my cleats inside." He said, "Just leave them in the car too." And so, I walked into my first college choir practice wearing a football practice uniform with only socks on my feet.

Truthfully, I was much more interested in playing football than in singing in the choir. Of all people, Dr. Davis knew I could do both. He certainly had. During his college days nearly forty years earlier, he had lettered in four sports and had played quarterback for the Emory & Henry football teams that played in two consecutive Tangerine Bowls. By my time on campus, he was not only a professor, but also a member of the college's sports hall of fame. Left to my own initiative, I probably wouldn't have gone to that first choir practice. In fact, I probably wouldn't have gone to any choir practices. I would have been content to say that I had a schedule conflict.

But Dr. Davis was invested in me. He saw potential, and he wanted me to develop *all* my gifts. So, he was willing to overcome the obstacles. He wouldn't settle for the easy no.

Across four years in college, I probably spent more time with him than with any other mentor. He not only helped to shape my voice, but also my faith and my call to ministry. Decades have passed since my last football game. Opportunities to sing and praise are ever before me.

I wonder if I have Dr. Davis' tenacity. Would I get into the Buick, make the arrangements, shake off the excuses, and invest in a person as he did? Do I have that willingness to see another's potential, to mentor, and to facilitate growth? In the moment, I may have wished that he had driven by. If I were him, I might have driven by. I'm grateful he didn't. I hope I don't.

Connected and equipped and ready to Go.Do.

Part of the mission of 1st United Methodist Church is to SEND people into the mission field. And while that happens year round, we do emphasize the call to Go.Do. each September. The activities and collections are designed to inspire you to open your hearts and reach out your hands to offer others hope. We'll announce the Go.Do. Collection items a bit later in September, but here are two Go.Do. events we hope will be part of your plans for the month.

Packing Meals for Rise Against Hunger

September 7th at 10:00 am in Asbury Hall

Please register up until the morning of the event at:

1stchurch.org/Go-Do .

Assembling Hygiene Kits for UMCOR

September 28th at 10:00 am in Wesley Hall



Another way you can help Go.Do. is to keep stocking the Blessing Box in the church parking lot. Many people are using this and sometimes the box is going empty. An easy way to help is to remember to bring items (non-perishable) each time you come to the church. You can also volunteer to help with missions like Welcome Table, Celebrate Recovery or with the new DayBreak ministry.

Showing signs of love in worship and beyond

On September 29th, we will begin a new worship focus called “Love First,” but these two words are so much more than a mere title. “Love First” is a command, a life rule, a way of living and will be a theme we continue throughout the year.

When lawyers and scribes asked Jesus to name the greatest commandment, he said something like, “love first,” when he told them to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love neighbor as self.

At the last supper, Jesus said something like, “love first,” when he gave his disciples a new commandment—to love each other as Jesus loves.

In his first letter to the church in Corinth, the apostle Paul said something like, “love first,” when he said faith, hope, and love endure, but love is the greatest.

In 2024, when people are so critical and condescending, so defensive and divisive, and especially in this election season in which the distances and disagreements seem so insurmountable, it is crucial that Christians remember to “love first,” in our interactions—particularly as we relate to those with whom we differ.

In our congregation, as we live, love, and serve, we might imagine that this is the way we sign our love letter to the community around us, “Love, First.”

From September 29 through October 27, we will remember together that the commandments to love—whether issued by God the Father or Christ the Lord—continually require us to open our hearts more broadly and widely to ever-growing ways of loving in God’s name.

In our United Methodist tradition, we embrace and cherish the sanctifying grace God that enables us grow into the image of Christ as we “go on to perfection” in love. As we strive to become more and more Christlike, the message is clear—among all our virtues and values, we pursue **love first**.



Are you coming to Wednesdays at 1st?

Now that the school year is back in full swing, so is our Wednesdays at 1st programming. This activity packed evening includes Bible Studies for ALL ages, Music Ministry opportunities for children, youth and adults, and our regular Celebrate Recovery worship and share groups. Of course there's dinner too!



The Adult Bible Study for the next few weeks is based around the book "The Wesleyan Way: A faith that matters." by Scott Jones. The Wednesday Bible Studies generate lots of conversation and you don't have to be there every week to be a part of it. The same is true for the 1st Kids, "Trackers of Truth" Bible Study and the Youth Bible Study. So, if you haven't been a part of a Wednesday Evening Study, come on over. We'd love to have you be a part of it all.



Welcome back Wesley Day School

There are very few times during the week when there isn't something going on at the church, but during the summer things do slow down a bit. That's why it's so great to have Wesley Day School back in session!



On the first day back for all the students, a few church staff members were there to greet students (and their parents) as they arrived.

As you can expect there were mixed emotions from all as this part of the weekly routine gets going again.

We are blessed to have WDS here and wish teachers and students the best over the next few months. And we hope the dinosaurs return for another visit.

Digital Disciples

Whether it's social media, emails, the *Grace for All* Podcast or live streaming, there are a number of digital avenues 1st Church uses to communicate. And while people often think of these as ways to tell others what's happening, the goal is to dig deeper and use these tools for digital discipleship.



Recently, the Witness Team talked about ways to use our digital channels as more effective tools in ministry. What came out of those discussions is the creation of a new Digital Disciple program. Our Digital Disciples will help you learn ways to spread God's word using our digital channels and help our online audience grow so that we can REACH, CONNECT, EQUIP and SEND more people to be disciples of Christ and transform the world.



Learn more about WDS please visit: wesleydayschool.com



All men are invited to join the

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



NEXT CONNECTION:
SEPTEMBER 9th
AT 11:30 am
ASBURY PLACE BISTRO

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

CAMP For grades 3rd-5th
NOT A LOT OF WOODS!
 Overnight Event at Church
 September 20, 2023
 \$15 per child

Register at 1stchurch.org/camp
 by September 15th, Space limited!



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



Kid's Trackers of Truth Bible Study 6:15-7:00 in Room C11



Currently focusing on the New Testament

Missions: Sunday School Focus for September

Jesus instructed His followers to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God chose each of us to share the good news about Him with others! The good news is that Jesus died, rose again and made a way for us to be free from sin and have a relationship with Him forever. We can share this news with everyone, whether that is here in our neighborhoods or around the world as missionaries!



Monthly Bible Verse: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)



Lead the way in Kids Own Worship

In the jungle, every day is an unpredictable adventure! But to safely navigate the vines, animals, and tricky terrain, we'll need a guide to help lead us.

This four-week focus, starting in September, follows the life of Moses and his journey to leading the Israelites out of Egypt. Through his story, we'll discover how God teaches us how to lead, and learn how to follow God's lead as God leads us to safety, and to what we need.

Rise & Shine

Our morning devotional and breakfast ministry called Rise & Shine is off to a great start. This happens every Tuesday morning at 7:30 am. It's open to all students in 6th - 12th grades. If you know someone who would like to participate, let them know.



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

Welcome Back MJH students

The students of Maryville Junior High got a treat earlier this month when members of the 1st UMC staff met them on the church lawn with some after school snacks. It's always great to have them back in school.



Progress at 1st UMC @Sycamore Tree continues and we are much closer to the day homeless families in Blount County will be able to use it as a temporary home. A group of retirees helped put up walls there late in August. This work comes none too soon for those who find themselves in such a dire situation.



Nationwide 2.5 million children will experience homelessness this year. In Blount County there are 33 families on the Family Promise wait list. That's 45 adults and 70 children. These families may find refuge in a motel room, with friends, camping or in a car. Children who are homeless are at greater risk for serious health issues, more likely to drop out of school, repeat a grade, suffer from depression, and attempt suicide.

The reasons for homelessness are many. The severe shortage of affordable housing compounded by rising rental costs and wages not keeping up, leaves low-income families at risk for eviction. With healthcare insurance being unaffordable for some workers or not covering enough of the expenses for others, an illness or injury often puts a family in the streets. Other reasons are job loss, fleeing domestic violence and discrimination.

To raise both awareness and money to sustain the Family Promise mission, people are invited to participate in Night Without A Bed happening on September 28. The youth at 1st UMC have participated in this event many times over the years, but it is open to everyone. Challenge your Sunday School class, co-workers, neighbors, etc. The rules are simple: sleep on the sofa, in a car, tent, or cardboard box, but NOT in a bed.

Pre-teens and teens are encouraged to participate at Family Promise (inside 1st UMC @Sycamore Tree) where there will be games, bathrooms, food purchase options, box city competitions and prizes. Each participant donates \$10.00 at the time of registration prior to 9/28/2024.

For more information visit our website at 1stchurch.org/family-promise or go directly to the event website by scanning the QR code. Thank you for helping to make a difference in our community so that no child is without a home.



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



Ed Harmon

Joined First Church: December 8, 2002

Entered the Church Triumphant: August 22, 2024

Gayle Fox

Joined First Church: April 10, 2005

Entered the Church Triumphant: August 11, 2024

Christian sympathy extended to:

Linda Whitehead in the death of her mother, Phyllis Ann White Leming on August 16th.

The family of Gayle Fox who passed away on August 11th.

The family of Ed Harmon who died on August 22nd.



Celebrate Recovery

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>In memory of:</i> | <i>Given by:</i> |
| Jama Mandrell | Brimi, Reinhart, Janney Families |
| Matt Wilks | Mike & Ibby Davis |
| Jama Mandrell | Wendy Blair |
| Jama Mandrell | Peggy Gates |
| Jama Mandrell | Bob Haresnape |
| Jama Mandrell | Blount Community Church |

Memorial Fund

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>In memory of:</i> | <i>Given by:</i> |
| Mary Alice Hart | Jerry & Lin Reichelt |
| Gayle Fox | Nancy Lynn Jenkins |
| Pat Collier | Suzanne Stratton |

Music Ministry & Choir

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>In memory of:</i> | <i>Given by:</i> |
| Bill Wells | Susan Daves |
| Taylor Sykes | Susan Daves |

Welcome Table

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>In memory of:</i> | <i>Given by:</i> |
| Pat Collier | Mike & Ibby Davis |
| Jama Mandrell | Pokey's Sports |
| Jama Mandrell | Phil & Amy Large |
| Jama Mandrell | Leland & Lisa Blackwood |
| Jama Mandrell | Bernice Howard |
| Jama Mandrell | Virginia Hardwick |
| Jama Mandrell | Larry & Lynn Ladd |
| Jama Mandrell | Lee Huffaker |
| Jama Mandrell | Michele Nichols |
| Jama Mandrell | Robert & Suzanne Inmon |
| Jama Mandrell | Mike & Ibby Davis |
| Jama Mandrell | Karen Towle |
| Jama Mandrell | Wendy Blair |
| Jama Mandrell | Stephen Whitcomb |
| Jama Mandrell | Laura Treese |
| Jama Mandrell | Jim & Susie Curtiss |
| Jama Mandrell | Steve & Martha Shields |
| Jama Mandrell | Shirley Stinnett |
| Jama Mandrell | Phyllis Bostick |
| Jama Mandrell | Karl & Sherry Miller |
| Jama Mandrell | Sharron Kull |
| Jama Mandrell | Ronald & Pamela Scott |
| Jama Mandrell | Judy Green |
| Jama Mandrell | Nancy French |
| Jama Mandrell | Bob Haresnape |
| Jama Mandrell | Nancy Cooper |
| Jama Mandrell | Susan Daves |
| Jama Mandrell | Chuck Conner |
| Jama Mandrell | Robby Paul |

The Church Office will be closed on September 2nd in observance of Labor Day.

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
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