

THE CHURCH BELL



REACH - CONNECT - EQUIP - SEND



Istchurch.org

MARCH 2025



Istchurch.org



Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.
Proverbs 3:5-6



“Where is Ash Wednesday in the Bible? I can’t find it anywhere.”

A guest posed that question about twenty years ago in a church I previously served. Though she had attended the Ash Wednesday service with a friend, she was clearly reluctant. So, after the service, we had a lively conversation over whether we ought to be engaging in something that’s not in the Bible.

I feel certain she left unconvinced, even though I pointed out that other cherished habits of the church - including Sunday worship and celebration of Christmas on December 25th - are not specifically mentioned in scripture either.

Nevertheless, they are meaningful rituals of the church - ways of joining with fellow followers of Jesus across time and space to remember and celebrate the depth of God’s love and grace.

Centuries ago, our ancestors in the faith found symbolic beauty in celebrating the baptisms of new believers on Easter Sunday morning. Just as Christ rose from the grave, new disciples rose from the waters of baptism.

To prepare them for this holy occasion, the church invited those new followers to observe a season of repentance before their baptisms. Just as Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness preparing for the commencement of his ministry, new believers spent forty days of penitence preparing for their lives of discipleship.

Since Easter always occurs in spring, so does this forty day season of preparation. Earlier English speakers called the spring season *lencten*, so we refer to this forty day season as *lent*.

The season begins on Ash Wednesday, which is March 5th this year, and forty days later, we will celebrate Easter Sunday on April 20th. If you count consecutive days on your calendar, you’ll find that there are actually forty-six days from March 5th to April 20th. However, Sundays are not included in the calculation of forty days, since Sundays are always meant to be celebration days.

We begin the season on Ash Wednesday with a service in which we confess our sinfulness and mortality. See - even though Ash Wednesday is not specifically mentioned in scripture, its emphases of confession and penitence are. Think of the people of Nineveh in the book of Jonah, rolling in ashes and mourning their wickedness, for instance.

How will you observe this season of preparation? Some take advantage of this season to give up a bad habit as an act of reverence before God. Some give up something they cherish for forty days as a reminder to cherish God even more. Some try to take up a holy habit, like daily prayer or devotions.

Like those new disciples centuries ago, let’s observe this season as a time to prepare ourselves to experience God’s grace and love with even greater joy on Easter Sunday!



Finding your way through the Lenten Season

Throughout the Christian tradition, we have seen images of following in the way or path of God’s will. In the earliest days of the Christian church, the movement was apparently known as “the way.” As we journey through the Lenten Season (which begins March 5th and goes through Easter on April 20th) we will explore together ways that we travel “The Way” as disciples of Jesus. We hope you’ll join us in-person or online as we follow “The Way.”

March 9th

The One Who Shows the Way

March 30th

A Way Back

March 16th

A Way Out

April 6th

A Narrow Way

March 23rd

The Long Way Around

Find scriptures for each week
and more at:
1stchurch.org/Worship

Focusing on faith and practice

The Lenten Season begins with Ash Wednesday, a time when we focus on our sinfulness before God and our human mortality. This holy day is the start of a period of 40 days (not counting Sundays) that lead up to Easter Sunday. This year’s Ash Wednesday Worship Service will be at 6:30 pm (March 5th) in the Sanctuary.



As part of the service you will be invited to have ashes put on your forehead in the shape of the cross as a visible marker of your faith and practice. The imposition of ashes will also be included in the Celebrate Recovery Worship Service, downstairs in Asbury Hall.

Bernice Howard begins her Lenten Bible Study on March 6th. Get more information and sign up at: 1stchurch.org/

Selection from local author is next choice for Book Club

The 1st UMC Book Club invites you to join them in reading and discussing the club’s next selection, “The Three Lives of Kamala” by 1st UMC’s Timothy Lomperis.

This book is a cultural gateway into the classical world of Medieval India. It is available through Amazon.com and other online book sellers.

Book discussion happens on March 17th in Room 205 at 10:00 am.



WELCOME
TABLE
SHARING MEALS...SHARING COMMUNITY

Welcome Table relies on volunteers to bake or purchase cakes, cookies, pies, or brownies each week. We have need of volunteers who could help one week a month.

If you would be willing to help, please text Bernice Howard at 865-201-2774 and she will call you to discuss details.

Busy times at new DayBreak ministry Update from Director, Jill Pope

January and February have been busy months at DayBreak.

- We hosted an 8 hour training, *Dealing with Dementia*, offered by Caregiver Superheroes.
- Church members came out to tour our space during an Open House for 1st UMC @Sycamore Tree.
- We welcomed a steady stream of visiting families and potential volunteers.
- And a ribbon cutting was set for February 26th (as this newsletter was going to print).



In addition to all of these wonderful things, we have started hosting a Memory Café for people with memory related diagnoses experiencing early symptoms. This new program will be an opportunity to connect with people with similar experiences and serve as a time of support.



Simultaneously, our very own Julie George, who is with Blount Memorial Home Services, sponsors a Caregiver and Coffee support group.

The planning process for the Alzheimer's Tennessee Foothills Walk is underway. Alzheimer's Tennessee has supported DayBreak, and many families in our church. **Keep Saturday, April 26th on your calendar** as the walk happens at Alcoa High School. We invite you to join our team - DayBreak 1st Dreamers.

We will be walking to support the work of Alzheimer's Tennessee on behalf of all those impacted by Alzheimer's. We have a small fundraising goal to help them, but we would love for you to come join us, walk, show your support, and learn about area services.

For updates or questions:

- Visit the website at DayBreakCare.org where you can sign up for DayBreak emails,
- Call or text, Jill Pope at **865-315-2371**,
- or send an email to director@daybreakcare.org



Help spread the message

Easter brings with it a message of hope as well as a message about God's love for us. As we approach this important day in the life of the church, we will provide you with several tools for inviting people to be a part of the celebrations as well as ways to continue spreading the message for each of us to "Love First."

Stay tuned for more information on our social channels, bulletins and emails.



From making Valentine's themed crafts to handing out "Love First" Valentine's, our 1st Kids were busy in February spreading the message about the ways God loves us.

Seeing the BIG picture in Kid's Own Worship

Every great movie tells a great story. When we see those stories played out on the big screen, we can learn a little more about ourselves and the world around us.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT 1ST KIDS

Contact the 1st Kids Director Kristi Alton

 ✉ kalton@1stchurch.org
 ☎ 865-982-1273 ext. 712

Jesus knew how powerful stories could be, and he made them a big part of how he taught his followers. During Kids Own Worship in March, kids will hear some of the stories Jesus shared that can help them see the BIG PICTURE of a life spent following God.

Kids will see that God helps us know what's true, the ways we can give back to God, how God sends us helpers, that God gives us second chances, and how we belong in God's family.



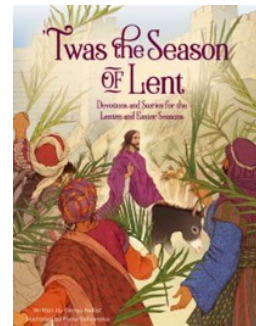
Discover in Sunday School that Jesus cares about US!

Time and time again, Jesus showed that He cared for everyone, regardless of their social standing. He paid special attention to the poor and the marginalized.

Jesus spent His time with the outcasts of society and chose to be the ultimate sacrifice for everyone. Throughout March kids will explore this theme during Sunday School during our "Pet Palooza!"

Special resource for the Lenten Season

'Twas the Season of Lent is a 40-day devotional and storybook that explores the life, words, and works of Jesus and encourages families to draw closer to God during the Lenten Season. From beloved author Glenys Nellist, this book focused on Jesus's mission to the least, the lost, and the lonely, with each story and accompanying prayer prompt encouraging children to try to be more like Jesus and to do what God calls them to.



If you are interested in receiving a book & devotional for your child or grandchild, please contact Kristi Alton at kalton@1stchurch.org

Special Sunday School Activities during Spring Break:

March 9th

Scavenger Hunt Sunday School Experience

March 16th

Bible Bingo Day

Wednesday, March 12th

No Children's or Youth Music. Also, no Youth Bible Study or Children's Bible Study.



Volunteers Needed. 1stchurch.org/1st-Kids



“Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” - Matthew 7:7

When the Holston Conference offered to convey the property of the former Sycamore Tree UMC to 1st UMC there were many dreams about ways it could be used to help Blount County neighbors. Since then many of those dreams have been realized. 1st UMC @Sycamore Tree is now:

1. Providing affordable mental health treatment through Compassion Counseling Center;
2. Serving those with Alzheimer’s and other types of dementia while giving respite to their caretakers through the DayBreak ministry;
3. And starting in mid-March, Family Promise of Blount County will begin using the upper level for housing families in the Emergency Shelter phase of the program.

Making #3 a reality was the result of tireless efforts of staff and volunteers working diligently to meet all the requirements needed to provide shelter for homeless families.

Now, the Co-Coordinator of Family Promise at 1st UMC are asking YOU to seek a way to give back to neighbors in Blount County who are homeless. Everyone who will meet face to face with the guests will need to undergo a training to cover all the bases for the new set-up. This includes both past and new volunteers. While training is not required for volunteers who will not be in the presence of the families it is still strongly encouraged as it will lend a lot of insight into the program.

Training will be at 1st UMC @Sycamore Tree (1830 Clydesdale St., Maryville) on **April 8th from 10:00 am - 11:15 am** and again from **6:30 pm - 7:45 pm**. Should one of those times not work for YOU, there will be other trainings to follow.

In other amazing news, Family Promise was fully funded for three grants presented to the United Way of Blount County:

- The Transitional Housing Funds grant garnered \$30,000,
- Prevention & Diversion Funding received \$35,000
- and Shelter Funding was awarded \$30,000.

Good things are happening because people like YOU ask how can I help; seek the necessary training; and knock out a solution. Thank you so very much.

Blessings,
Mavis Ziegler and Amy Large (Co-Coordinator of Family Promise at 1st UMC)



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

Each Sunday at 9:15 am
Sunday School in rooms 147 & 151

Each Sunday at 6:45 pm
Youth Fellowship in Wesley Hall (upper level)

**Schedules subject to change.*

Every Tuesday at 7:30 am
Rise and Shine devotion and prayer time
Wesley Hall (upper level)

Every Wednesday at 5:00 pm
Youth Bible Study in Room 151

Every Wednesday at 6:00 pm
Youth Music

Memorial Fund

<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Evelyn Ross	Tony Aikens
Evelyn Ross	Steve & Margaret Carr
Evelyn Ross	Gary & Sherry Hensley
Evelyn Ross	Dottie Kidd
Evelyn Ross	Robin Spears
Evelyn Ross	Mr. & Mrs. Gary Consorto
Evelyn Ross	Mary Miller

Welcome Table

<i>In honor of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Brenda Meadows	Phyllis Bostick
<i>In memory of:</i>	<i>Given by:</i>
Sarah Mason	Glenn & JoAnn Doig
Ray Pack	Shirley Stinnett
Ray Pack	Bookie Reynolds
Ray Pack	Singles Dinner Club
Ray Pack	Phil & Amy Large
Ray Pack	Sharron Kull
Ray Pack	Leland & Lisa Blackwood
Ray Pack	Jerry & Frances Hodge
Ray Pack	Rocky & Julie Rochelle
Ray Pack	Rocky & Julie Rochelle
Larry Ladd	Rocky & Julie Rochelle
Anne Hand	Rocky & Julie Rochelle
Lila Eby	Rocky & Julie Rochelle
Pat Collier	Rocky & Julie Rochelle

James Ray Pack
Joined First Church: September 9, 1979
Entered the Church Triumphant:
 February 4, 2025

Charlotte "Dianna" Faircloth
Joined First Church: January 15, 1984
Entered the Church Triumphant:
 February 10, 2025

Nancy Carolyn Wilkerson
Joined First Church: February 1, 1964
Entered the Church Triumphant:
 February 14, 2025

David Raymond Smith
Joined First Church: February 24, 2019
Entered the Church Triumphant:
 February 9, 2025

Christian sympathy extended to:

Marilyn Hodge in the death of her son Cooper on February 15th

Marty Klebba in the death of his mother.

Bobbie Flower in the death of her brother.

The family of Ray Pack who passed away on February 4th.

Ron Faircloth and his daughter Carmen Faircloth in the death of Ron's wife (Carmen's mother), Dianna on February 10th.

The family of Nancy Wilkerson who died on February 14th.

The family of David Smith who died on February 9th.

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.

Congratulations to:

Emily and Cole Grubbs on the birth of their son, Chandler William on February 4th.

Nancy Kemp on the birth of her new granddaughter, Cora.

A Christ-centered recovery program **EACH WEDNESDAY**

CELEBRATE RECOVERY

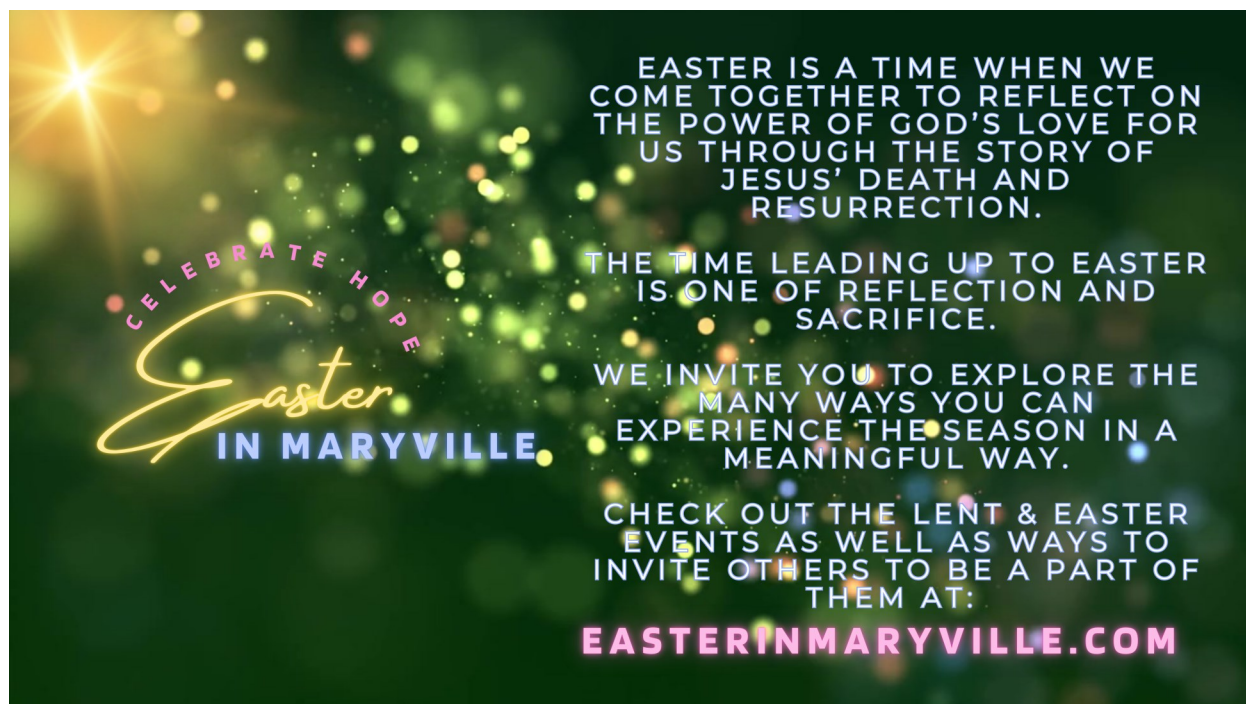
5:30 PM - DINNER
 6:30 PM - MUSIC & MESSAGE
 7:40 PM - SHARE GROUPS

CRMaryvilleTN.com

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



CELEBRATE HOPE

Easter
IN MARYVILLE.

EASTER IS A TIME WHEN WE
COME TOGETHER TO REFLECT ON
THE POWER OF GOD'S LOVE FOR
US THROUGH THE STORY OF
JESUS' DEATH AND
RESURRECTION.

THE TIME LEADING UP TO EASTER
IS ONE OF REFLECTION AND
SACRIFICE.

WE INVITE YOU TO EXPLORE THE
MANY WAYS YOU CAN
EXPERIENCE THE SEASON IN A
MEANINGFUL WAY.

CHECK OUT THE LENT & EASTER
EVENTS AS WELL AS WAYS TO
INVITE OTHERS TO BE A PART OF
THEM AT:

EASTERINMARYVILLE.COM



MARYVILLEFUMC



1STMARYVILLE



MARYVILLE1STUMC



1STCHURCH.ORG