

THE CHURCH BELL



REACH - CONNECT - EQUIP - SEND



Istchurch.org

NOVEMBER 2025



Istchurch.org



Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him; bless his name. - Psalm 100:4

When is it most difficult to feel grateful?

Rev. Jonathan Jonas

I think there could be a variety of good answers to the question of “When is it most difficult to feel grateful?”

- when we think more about what we want than what we have;
- when we’re painfully aware of what we’ve lost or who we’ve lost;
- when we’re experiencing frustration or disappointment;
- when we’re anxious, fearful, or worried.



When does feeling thankful come most naturally?

- when we realize the abundance in which we live;
- when we are surrounded by people who are dear to us;
- when we are thriving, accomplishing, or succeeding;
- when we are optimistic, hopeful, and confident.

Isn't it true that the circumstances surrounding us often have a great bearing on our capacity to feel appreciative, thankful, or grateful? But what if gratitude is more than a feeling?

Putting feelings aside, when is it easiest or most difficult to be grateful? I believe the answer to this question has less to do with the circumstances around us than with the circumstances within us. I believe it has to do with our own mindfulness of God's grace and love.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Paul writes, “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” It's as if Paul is telling the church - both then and now - to rise above the circumstances in which we find ourselves to remember God's love, grace, mercy, and abundance.

Translation - be grateful whether or not you feel grateful.

In this month of November in which we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday - there's plenty that might affect the way we feel. We'll have complaints about governments. We will grieve suffering in the world and maybe even among our friends and family members. We will encounter those moments when what we have - materially, financially, emotionally, or spiritually - will not seem to measure up to what we lack.

In November, as in all months, there will be times when we don't particularly feel grateful. My prayer for us, though, is that we will be grateful anyway. The love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit are with us in all circumstances. So, may we be people who give thanks in all circumstances. **I'm thankful for you.**



THE SEASON BEGINS
NOVEMBER 30TH

CHRISTMAS IN MARYVILLE



CHRISTMASINMARYVILLE.COM

Grant for DayBreak to improve accessibility

DayBreak is excited to announce that the Trinity Health Foundation awarded the ministry a \$50,000 grant to improve the campus at Sycamore Tree. The grant recipients were announced at a luncheon on October 23rd.

The money will go to build an ADA compliant ramp at the rear entrance, a mobility friendly walking path, and raised planters.

These new features will be used in DayBreak programming, but they will also enhance the campus for all groups that use 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree. We can't wait to get started!



DayBreak still growing!

DayBreak is now serving the most families it ever has. The dementia respite care ministry continues to grow in a number of ways.

The ministry has expanded the number of programs offered to the community. This includes:

- a day program, three days a week,
- a monthly memory cafe/support group,
- and our new monthly barrier-free worship service (more info on page 3).

If you are interested in volunteering, now is the time!

Contact Jill Pope at **865-315-2371** or email her at director@daybreakcare.org. Visit the website at daybreakcare.org to sign up for updates or follow DayBreak on Facebook.

Help make Thanksgiving a blessing for others

As the holidays approach, there is one great way to show how to **LOVE FIRST**. Throughout the month of November help get the First UMC Blessing Box overflowing with items to help make a Thanksgiving meal.

Here are some suggestions:

- Boxed Dressing/Stuffing
- Canned Green Beans
- Canned Pumpkin
- Canned Sweet Potatoes
- Gravy Packets
- Boxes of Macaroni & Cheese
- Instant Potatoes



If there isn't room in the Blessing Box, you can bring items into the area in front of the Church Office.

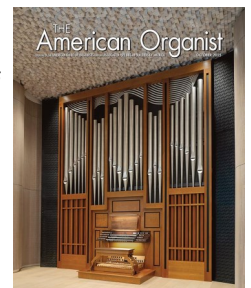
Organist Award

This past spring, our Associate Director of Music, Jenny Anderson, prepared for and successfully passed the exam for the Service Playing Certification through the American Guild of Organists.



The Service Playing Certificate is a widely recognized organ credential among churches and employers. The ten-part exam mirrors the flow of a worship service and is designed to assess an organist's ability to confidently and competently lead service music. Jenny's accomplishment was noted in a recent edition of *The American Organist* magazine.

Congratulations Jenny!



THE GOOD WE DO

There are so many ways YOU help make the ministries of 1st UMC happen. If you haven't already done so, please consider filling out a 2026 commitment card to help us continue to "do good, be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share."

1stchurch.org/Generosity

You can also pick up a commitment card at various locations throughout the church.



A new kind of worship service begins

Innovation in worship can mean a lot of things, so what happens when you strive to make a worship service accessible to more people? Well, at 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree there is a monthly service aimed at taking out the barriers that may keep folks from enjoying a time of praising God.

At the first service in October, around 20 people participated. DayBreak Director Jill Pope said the best part of the entire day (and maybe year) was when a young neurodiverse friend came up to her and gave Jill a hug saying the service was perfect.

The next service is set for November 9th at 2:00pm at the 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree campus. If you would like to support this new worship service, please reach out to Jill Pope or Pastor Jonathan.

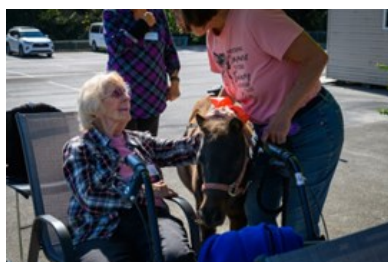


The STARs come to DayBreak

Some four legged friends made their way to the DayBreak Day program at the beginning of October. The folks from the Shangri-La Therapeutic Academy of Riding (STAR) brought two miniature horses to visit. As you can see from the pictures (taken by Cliff McCartney), the horses were a hit.



DayBreak participants, caregivers, volunteers, a couple of grandchildren, and church members gathered to pet, brush, and play with the horses. Everyone hopes to see them again next year.



Shopping with a purpose

The Christmas shopping rush can definitely create stress, and no one likes that. So, what if there was a way to find great gifts and help others in the process? Guess what, there IS!

For many years now, 1st United Methodist Church welcomes vendors representing non-profit groups, fair trade organizations and various ministries into the church to help YOU get a jump start on your holiday shopping.

Each gift purchased delivers a double dose of good by supporting a mission and/or ministry, bringing joy to the person you are gifting. So, in essence with every gift you're giving TWICE! That sounds NICE doesn't it?

Come check out the Alternative Gift Fair on November 2nd from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm in Wesley Hall on the upper level of the church. More than a dozen vendors are expected. (Check them out on the website). And be sure and spread the word!



November 2nd
9:00 am to 1:00 pm
**Alternative
GIFT FAIR**

Shop with purpose

2025
Alternative
GIFT FAIR

1st
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

1stchurch.org/gift-fair



Sunday School IS the MAIN ATTRACTION in November!

God is always with His people. Even in times of human failure, God’s presence remains steadfast, showing that He is not confined to a place or dependent on human actions. No matter what our circumstances are, God is with us. Throughout November, 1st Kids learn how God is the Main Attraction during the Sunday School hour.

Monthly Memory Verse

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
-Psalm 46:1

Full speed ahead Christmas is coming soon.



If you wander the halls of the church at certain times of the week, you’ll likely hear some Christmas music. That’s because our 1st Church Music Ministries are hard at work planning for the Advent & Christmas season. In late October, our 1st Kids started work on the musical, “A Day in a Manger.”

This presentation is part of the 1st Kids Christmas Celebration which comes your way on December 7th at 4:30 pm. After the musical acts, the celebrations move from the Sanctuary down to Asbury Hall where everyone can enjoy some pizza, snacks and time making Christmas crafts. It’s going to be a great night, so be sure and invite some friends.



How long can you stay awake?

That’s a question people will be asking on Saturday, November 8th as the 1st Youth get “locked-in” to the church in what’s promising to be a super night.

Once the lock-in ends, the Youth are planning to be in worship, so you might see a few yawns and stretches.

If you have someone in 6th through 12th grades that you think would enjoy this “lock-in” event, please have them sign up so Brayden and volunteers can better plan for it.

You’ll find the sign up link at: 1stchurch.org/students



News



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT 1ST KIDS

Contact the 1st Kids Director Kristi Alton

.....

✉ kalton@1stchurch.org

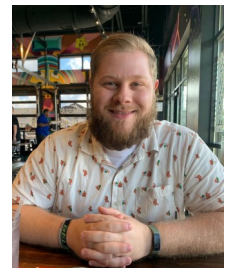
☎ 865-982-1273 ext. 712



Kids Own Worship for November

Superheroes aren't heroic only when they feel like it - they're brave each and every day. The best heroes can even inspire the people around them to be brave, faithful, and hopeful in their own lives, too.

Over the course of four Sundays, kids will learn more about what it looks like to see God as the hero of our story as they hear the story of Ruth and Naomi. They'll see how **God gives them companions, opportunities, boldness, and hope** so they can be heroes, too!



Brayden York
1st Student Ministries
byork@1stchurch.org



More than 80 people came out on October 15th to kick off a new season of Celebrate Recovery at 1st. The night was filled with powerful stories of the ways CR has worked to change lives after people faced roadblocks with hurts, habits, and hang-ups. What's coming up down the road? Here's a look ahead to CR at 1st in November.

November 5th

A New Season of Gratitude (Holy Communion)

November 12th

Guest Speaker: Jackie North

November 19th

A New Season of Service

November 26th

Gratitude For Life

Learn more about the ways Celebrate Recovery can work in your life and watch services at CRat1st.com.

Family Promise in Blount County survived the challenges presented over the past few years. In large part because of the efforts of 1st UMC, the organization was able to establish a permanent **Emergency Shelter** for the families entering the program.



The shelter at 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree is at capacity, but Nick and Desiree will soon be moving with their children Sean (6) and Vincent (3 mo.) into the **Transitional Shelter** while another family moves into their own home! The next family on the wait list is more than ready to move in. Words cannot express how grateful these families are for the help they have received.

Recently people from 1st UMC were reminded, "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (Hebrews 13:16). While the Co-Coordinator at 1st UMC are most appreciative of all the help people at the church have given this mission, more volunteers are needed.

Please consider sharing a few hours of your time to host during December 7th - 13th or preparing a dish for a meal. For those not trained contact Case Manager Ciara Humphrey at **(865) 253-3463** or chumphrey@blountfamilypromise.org.

William Blount High School boys' and girls' soccer teams will host their annual Turkeys and Hens Game to support **Family Promise**. Please mark your calendars for **Thursday, November 20th**. Game time will be posted on the 1st UMC website and entry is a new toy. For those unable to attend, another way to support the shelter would be to select something from the Amazon wish list. A link to it is available at 1stchurch.org/family-promise.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving and thank you for the good you share.

Yours In Christ,
Mavis Ziegler and Amy Large,

DayBreak Dementia Respite Care

In memory of:
Jim Scruggs

Given by:
Mike & Ibby Davis

Memorial Fund

In memory of:
Jimmie Eaves

Given by:
Ben & Bonny Sugg

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.

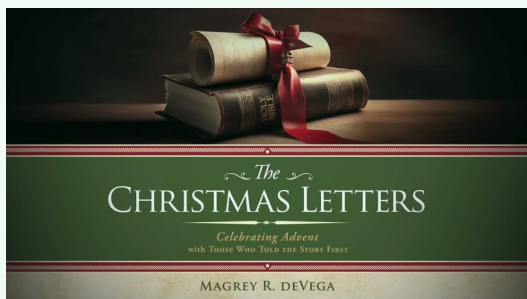
A study for Advent

Many of you may like to hear your origin story or that of someone else. This can help us better understand who we are. As we prepare for Christmas, Bernice Howard will lead a study on the book "The Christmas Letters." It was written by Rev. Magrey deVega, the Senior Pastor of Hyde Park UMC in Tampa, FL.

Through this study you will hear about Christ's birth through the words of those who first told the story.

Participants will need to purchase the book prior to the first session which will be on **November 20th**. The group will meet again on December 4th and each Thursday from 10:00 to 11:30 am through December 18th.

Please sign up online at **1stchurch.org/letters** or call **865-982-1273**.



Beverly Fint

Joined First Church

April 29, 1951

Entered the Church Triumphant:

October 14, 2025

Bill McCall

Joined First Church

June 9, 1985

Entered the Church Triumphant:

October 21, 2025

Ashley Peery

Joined First Church

May 22, 1988

Entered the Church Triumphant:

October 24, 2025

Christian sympathy extended to:

The family of Beverly Fint who passed away on October 14th.

Bettye McCall and her family in the death of her husband, Bill on October 21st

Clyde Peery in the death of his son, Ashley on October 24th.

Welcome to the 1st UMC Family!

On October 12th 1st UMC welcomed Lola Fredrickson to the church through infant baptism. Her parents are Nick & Lucy Fredrickson. Lola is the granddaughter of Gordo & Rhonda Watson.



Photo courtesy of Sara Gregory

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

Churchwide Thanksgiving Dinner



Sunday, November 9th
5:00 pm in Asbury Hall

Please sign up by
November 3rd.

The Church provides the
main course. Please bring
side dishes & desserts to
share.



1stchurch.org/thanksgiving

or call 865-982-1273

1STCHURCH.ORG



MARYVILLEFUMC



1STMARYVILLE



MARYVILLE1STUMC

