

The Church Bell

REACH - CONNECT - EQUIP - SEND

AUGUST
2026





When I was 17 years old, I started my journey in Higher Education at Emory & Henry College. This was a place where, when I walked on campus for the first time, I knew I was home (it helped that the campus was next to a cow field).

One of the things that made E&H feel like home was the way my friend group interacted. Every day, we had lunch together. We would get our trays, sit at the table, race to see who would pray (or thumbs up so we didn't have to), and enjoy our meal together. Then, when we were finished, we would get up and hug one another before we set off for class. Every day, I sat in community and every day I was hugged and knew I was loved.

It was a very hard transition when I went to seminary. I found a group to eat lunch with a couple days a week (schedules were very different for graduate school classes) but no one hugged me when we parted. I did not realize for a little while why I didn't feel the same kind of connection. I also realized, a little later than I probably should have, that my college experience was quite unique.

My experience at Emory & Henry embodied a vision of God's community for me. A place where there is room at the table, where all are welcome and valued, and love abounds.

In today's world, it is a lot harder for us to embody God's community because so much of this life is done digitally and in solitude. Many work from home, we order our groceries, food is delivered, doctors' appointments are via telehealth. We don't have to interact with others, and we miss out on community. Observing the widespread and severe effects of social disconnection on Americans' health, Dr. Vivek Murthy (former Surgeon General of the United States) says that "loneliness and isolation represent profound threats to our health and well-being."

This is not how we were created. We are created to be in community. In Genesis 1:26 we read, "God spoke: 'Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature.'" God used the words "us" and "our" referring to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Together, in community, the three in one. Community is an image in which we were created. Another is love (God is love. 1 John: 4).

During worship in August, we will reflect on God creating us for connection and community. Drawing on the experiences of the early church in scripture, we will relearn how God leads us into lives of meaningful relationship with Godself and one another.

Additionally, we are bringing back opportunities for you to meet our community through "Name with a Face." These are hour-long gatherings to help us get to know one another. You are welcome to come to more than one event to meet more folks!

Monday, August 17th, 5:00 pm
Tuesday, August 18th, 7:00 pm
Wednesday, August 19th, 10:00 am
Saturday, August 22nd, 10:00 am
Sunday, August 23rd, 3:00 pm

Have you met the new associate pastor yet?

If you haven't been at 1st UMC or watching worship online for the past few weeks, chances are you haven't had a chance to "meet" the new associate pastor. Rev. Teanna Black started in her role at the first of July and was officially introduced on July 5th during worship services and again during the BBQ & Bluegrass event.

She, her husband Michael, and their five children have been settling into the parsonage, and Teanna has been unpacking boxes in her office, filling the bookshelves and diving into a daily routine here at 1st Church. Of course, she's also been leading worship and planning out ways she can help with ministry efforts like Outreach. Teanna also serves as a chaplain with the Knoxville Police Department, something you'll likely hear more about in a future *Church Bell*.

One great way to get to know Teanna a bit better is to be here on Wednesday evenings starting August 5th, when she will lead a study called "Beyond the Sermon." It's at 6:30 pm in Room 202 and will focus on the previous week's sermon, giving you a chance to take the lessons a bit further. No registration is required and no books are required. Hope to see you there.



During BBQ & Bluegrass, Rev. Teanna Black got a chance to meet people in the 1st UMC family, like Laura Derr.



A group of DayBreak volunteers and participants take a snack break, enjoying a popsicle on a hot summer day.

Another year of respite care

Can you believe that two years ago in July, the dream of starting a Dementia Respite Care Ministry became reality? That's when DayBreak started on the 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree campus. Thanks to the dedicated effort of everyone involved, the ministry has grown steadily.

DayBreak is growing rapidly and starting a waiting list for our day program. **DayBreak Needs Volunteers!** If you have considered volunteering, now would be the perfect time to check out the ways you can [Go.Do.](#) by serving in this ministry.

If you can sit around and laugh, enjoy eating cookies, and would like to work a puzzle, DayBreak is the place for you to serve. We also need volunteers outside of the day program if that fits your schedule or interests more. Because of the growth in this ministry, DayBreak is looking to hire a part-time employee. If you are interested or know someone who would like to work 15-20 hours a week, please contact Jill Pope at DayBreak at director@daybreakcare.org.

As we expand our services in the community all of our needs expand with it.

Ready to dive deeper into scripture?

Area students aren't the only ones getting ready to settle back into studying. In August, there are new opportunities for you to participate in a study. In addition to going "**Beyond the Sermon**" with Rev. Teanna Black on Wednesdays at 6:30, Rev. Don Jones is leading a new study on Sunday evenings, starting August 9th. This one examines the promised blessings found in the Gospel of Matthew. It will be at **6:00 pm in Room 202**. You do not need to sign up for the study, but will need to purchase the book, "**Matthew: The Gospel of Promised Blessings**" by Matthew L. Skinner. It is available through Amazon.com and other online booksellers.

Bernice Howard is leading the other new study. It focuses on the Great themes of Scripture found in the New Testament. The study starts **August 13th at 10:00 am in Room 202** and meets each Thursday through September 17th. Please sign up on the church website. Participants will need to purchase the book, "**The Great Themes of Scripture/New Testament**" by Richard Rohr and Joseph Marcos.

Training for new ministry opportunities

- Have you ever considered how to be helpful to another disciple in need?
- Did you ever wish you knew what to do during a crisis?

If God is calling you to answer these questions, you may be ready to participate in a new Caring Congregation program here at 1st UMC. There is an introductory meeting on August 17th at 6:30 in room 202. This ministry will eventually include serving communion in homes along with other congregational care needs.

Pastors, congregational care teams, certified lay ministers and the Celebrate Recovery team will attend a two-day training event in early November at Fountain City UMC. There, the group will learn the basics of how the Caring Congregation program works.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Rev. Don Jones.

A new lineup for Wednesdays at 1st

As students and teachers get settled into a new school year, 1st UMC is getting ready for a new season of Wednesdays at 1st programming starting on August 5th. While most of the schedule has remained the same, like DINNER at 5:30 pm, we do want to let you know about a few changes and additions.

NEW Adult Bible Study, "Beyond the Sermon" 6:30 pm
in room 202
Led by Rev. Teanna Black

NEW time for Youth Bible Study 6:50 pm
in room 151

In addition to the new times for Wednesdays at 1st activities, we want to remind you that **1st Kids and 1st Youth Music** are part of the fun. If your child is interested in being a part of this, please visit 1stchurch.org/Wednesdays. There you can also find the full schedule and links to sign up for music. Hope to see you here on Wednesday nights!



Were you here for BBQ & Bluegrass? There was plenty of great food, toe tapping music and a chance to get to know Rev. Teanna Black and her family.



Check out the photo gallery at 1stchurch.org/BBQ and add your photos from the event if you have them.

It's almost Tailgating Time!

Can you hear that bacon sizzling on the grill, people laughing at someone's jokes, see the kid's playing or music coming from under the big tent?

The All-Church Tailgate is happening on September 6th in the church parking lot.

The gathering starts at 9:00 am (tailgaters set up at 8:45 am). Worship is at 10:30 am.

More details on the back cover and 1stchurch.org/tailgate.

(NEW FOR 2026) Foamtastic Fun awaits!

School is back in session, but summer isn't over just yet! Join us for one last summer hurrah on **August 16th**. It all starts with lunch at noon, then get ready to disappear into a sea of bubbles! After pizza in Asbury Hall (lower level), the fun heads outside as the courtyard transforms into the Foam Zone for 90 minutes of bubbly fun!

A giant foam cannon will fill the outdoor space with mountains of fluffy foam while music plays and kids jump, dance and build foam creations. Expect endless giggles as kids play together! Whether they're making foam beards, tossing bubbly "snowballs," or simply running through the bubbles with friends, this is one summer celebration they won't forget!

Who is invited? **EVERYONE!**

Children of all ages can join the fun with a parent or adult guardian accompanying them.

Tracking the truth this fall

Join 1st Kids on Wednesday nights for Trackers of Truth Bible Study for elementary age kids in Room C11!

Children in preschool and under will spend a special time with God in Tots of Truth which happens in room C3.

Make sure to sign in your kids at the 1st Kids Check-in desk when you arrive.

1st Kids Music is another part of the Wednesday fun, so be sure and sign your kids up at the link at 1stchurch.org/Wednesdays.



News

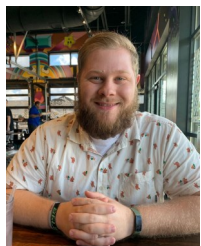


FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ABOUT
1ST KIDS

Contact the 1st Kids Director
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Brayden York
1st Student Ministries
byork@1stchurch.org

As the new school year begins, there are a few changes in the 1st Youth schedule heading into the fall.

- On Wednesday evenings there will be a 1st Youth Bible Study from 6:50 pm until 7:30 pm **starting on August 5th**.
- Sunday evening youth group will meet from 5:30 pm until 7:00 pm each week **starting on August 9th**.
- The first Rise and Shine of the season is on **August 11th** from 7:30 am to 8:00 am. There is free breakfast and a time for devotion and prayer.

The summer of 2026 has been a busy one for 1st Youth. There have been several opportunities to Go.Do. and help each other including making banana pudding at DayBreak. The group also went out for ice cream and a game of putt-putt as well as a trip to a Knoxville Smokies game.





Summer vacation has come to an end, and students and teachers across the area are back in the classroom.

Meanwhile, the children in the Emergency Shelter program at Family Promise have the school supplies they need thanks to the generosity of the people at 1st UMC. What a blessing these kids do not have to go without the things they need for school!

Another blessing is the camaraderie the full house of families at 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree share. Each are in the Emergency Shelter phase of the program. When a new family moved in recently, a 5-year-old boy showed the new 6-year-old girl the ropes. The parents help one another

as well. The staff explains it this way, "We absolutely love the culture of community the families and our volunteers have fostered."

You can be a part of this blessed ministry that helps homeless families get into their own home. A one-time training is required for those who have not served in the ministry before. You can arrange the training upon request.

The next host weeks are September 14th - 18th and November 2nd - 6th.

For more information about serving at Family Promise, or to contact coordinators please visit: [**1stchurch.org/family-promise.**](http://1stchurch.org/family-promise)

Blessings,
Mavis Ziegler,
Coordinator of Family Promise at 1st UMC



Checking in with DayBreak

July has been a fun month over at the Sycamore tree campus. Students with 1st Youth came over to DayBreak to hang out, and Chef Amelia taught everyone how to make banana pudding! Everyone enjoyed the time together and the yummy dessert.

There was also a visit from Ollie and Pastor Jennifer, time for an occasional summer treat, weekly concerts and sing-alongs, and some

Aging and memory sessions

DayBreak is partnering with 1st Church and Senior Helpers to offer a free education series. The first session will be August 25th at the Sycamore Tree campus. There will be refreshments at 12:45 pm and at 1:00 pm. Dr. John Kriese of Senior Care Partners will speak about aging and memory. There will be more information available on the DayBreak website and Facebook page. Please RSVP so organizers can plan accordingly.

Busy a brick to support DayBreak

One of the finishing touches to the side yard at 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree will be a Labrynth made with engraved bricks. You can purchase a brick to honor or remember a specific person or request a favorite scripture or inspiring words. Order your bricks through the DayBreak website or come by the church office for a paper form.



Learn more at:
[**DayBreakCare.org**](http://DayBreakCare.org)



Plans for expanding worship

Plans are in the works to expand the Barrier-Free Worship service to a weekly gathering. If you are interested in providing music, food, ushering, or being a friend, please contact Rev. Don Jones of DayBreak Director, Jill Pope.



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ALL-CHURCH TAILGATE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6th

It's time to start reaching out and inviting people to one of the biggest events of the year. The All-Church Tailgate features lots of food, fun and worship under a big tent. This is a great opportunity for people to meet and gather for worship in a much more casual setting.

Hope to see you there and be sure to bring a friend or two!

- Tailgating begins at 9:00 am (8:45 for those setting up tailgating sessions)
- If you aren't part of a group, bring your breakfast dish or treats to the "Welcome Tent"
- Worship is at 10:30 am (There will not be an 8:15 service or 10:30 Contemporary service.)
- Throughout the event, walk around and greet your neighbors, take pictures (and post them).



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