

The Church Bell

REACH - CONNECT - EQUIP - SEND

JULY
2026





I grew up on a hill in the community of Maybrook in Giles County, Virginia. On that hill were my aunt, uncle, and cousin at the bottom, my grandparents in the middle, and our home (where my momma, brother, and I resided) at the top. Across the creek, on the next hill, lived my grandparents' siblings, and almost at the top was the homeplace of one of my great grandmothers.

This close connection to multiple generations led me to develop deep relationships with my extended family. I learned commitment through their strength and determination. I saw faith lived out daily. I heard the stories of my ancestors and could see their legacy embodied in my family.

I have been gone from that community for 30 years. I do go back a few times a year and it will always be home. I know that my upbringing is very different from what many of our families experience now, my own children included.

Many of us are far from blood family connections. But what we have, within our church community, is a family who have pledged to love and serve together. We are made of people from every living generation and each of us has something to offer. We are not too young or too old to bless each other and all of us are created as we are to enhance the body of Christ.

In worship, during the month of July, we will look at stories and themes that show us God's promises are for people of all ages and we are best when we see each other as important to the church family. We will embrace wisdom and innovation as we work together to fulfill our mission to follow Jesus.

July 5: Standing on the Promises | Luke 2:25-38

Every generation stands together in the same hope of Christ, bearing witness to God's enduring promise. Each generation's particular gifts and experiences become a blessing to all.

July 12: I'm Really Listening | 1 Samuel 3:1-14

God speaks through every generation. When we humbly listen to one another—whether the truth comes as comfort or challenge - we make space to hear God's voice more clearly together.

July 19: Formed and Freed | 1 Timothy 4:6-16

We are called to form and free one another - to ground others in faith and then release them to use their gifts boldly for God's new work.

July 26: Where You Go, I Will Go | Ruth 1:1-18

God calls us to belong to one another - not for what we can do, but for who we are - choosing steadfast love and companionship across generations, even when life feels empty or uncertain.

Check out more about Worship at 1st at 1stchurch.org/worship .

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.

Email is: info@1stchurch.org

A new chapter in 1st Church leadership

As July begins, so does a new chapter here at 1st United Methodist Church. After more than a decade serving as an Associate Pastor, Rev. Sarah Slack steps into the position of Senior Pastor, the 40th since the church was founded in 1865. (Thomas H. Russell was the first).

1st Church welcomes, Rev. Teanna Black as an Associate Pastor. During Holston Annual Conference, Teanna was ordained as an elder. She comes to Maryville from Powell UMC in Knox County.

Teanna and her husband, Michael have five kids and will be living in the church parsonage on Belle Meade Drive. You can come meet Teanna and her family at the BBQ & Bluegrass event on July 5th.



Celebrating ways of “Loving Boldly Together”

As this story is being written, the Church Council of 1st UMC is getting ready to hear reports from the people who attended this year’s Holston Annual Conference at Lake Junaluska, NC.

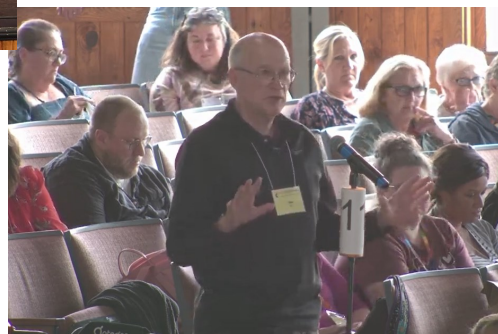
Delegates approved a \$6.045 million budget for 2027, sent more than 3500 kits to Liberia, gave \$78,000 to missions and voted to sell the building in Alcoa that currently houses the Conference Offices. And at the ordination ceremony, Rev. Teanna Black was ordained as an elder and Rev. Dr. Greta Smith was ordained as a deacon.

This year’s theme, “Loving Boldly Together”, comes from the new United Methodist Church vision statement you’ve been hearing about the past few weeks in worship.

We hope to have more on what 1st UMC’s representatives at Conference experienced in the next edition of “The Church Bell.”



Rev. Sarah Slack has been creating altar displays at Annual Conference for many years. At this AC, she enlisted the help of Rebecca Jordan (our Admin. Assistant) to paint the lighthouse seen in this picture.



1st UMC member, Mike Swift made his way to the microphone during one of the business sessions at Annual Conference. This was his first time as a delegate to AC.

Did you make the trek to Rainforest Falls (VBS)?

From the great opening music ...



To time spent making crafts ...



And making the most of the time playing games ..



So many smiles and so many people to thank!



Thanks for the Memory Garden

If you haven't visited the 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree property in awhile, you might want to pop in for a visit. On June 6th, people gathered to dedicate a new Memory Garden, complete with a new pavilion to enhance the outdoor opportunities.

DayBreak leaders would like to thank all of our volunteers who

helped work at the event and everyone who attended. That includes a huge shout out to the fabulous musicians.

Everyone had a wonderful celebration of the DayBreak mission, ministry, and collaboration within 1st UMC and in the community! Here's to many more celebrations in the years to come. *(More news from DayBreak on page 6).*

Splashing into summer!

Spending time at the pool is a big part of summer for many people.

It was great seeing so many people turn out for the All-Church Pool Party back at the first of June. Hope to do it again in 2027!



What does it mean to be age friendly?

by Rev. Don Jones

Our congregation was recognized as an Age-Friendly Congregation during Holston Annual Conference this year. The recognition comes from the work undertaken by the 1st UMC Nuture Committee

and the DayBreak Dementia Respite Care ministry. The program itself comes from a partnership with Encore Ministries, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga College of Nursing and Holston Conference Office of Intergenerational Ministries.

Participants in this program received information and training in advocating and ministerial practice for older members of our congregation and the community, caregivers, and helpers. One recommendation was for special worship services for people who cannot attend an hour-long worship service. Our Barrier-Free Worship fits that description nicely. That is just one example.

Congregations are often too focused on youth. We should be raising and discipling children, youth and young adults for Jesus Christ. We

forget those faithful older disciples of Jesus who can no longer take part without special care. As we learned in the training, the number of people in the United States over the age of 65 will soon be greater than the number of people who are ages 18 and under. 1st UMC is getting prepared for this eventuality.

Strike up the band, serve up the BBQ

While it's great to see all those fireworks on the 4th, we're really looking forward to our annual BBQ & Bluegrass event coming up on **July 5th at 5:00 pm in Asbury Hall (lower level).**

If you've signed up, remember to bring side dishes and/or desserts to share. The more the better! And it's a great way to show appreciation for our new Associate Pastor, Rev. Teanna Black, who you will get a chance to meet (along with her family) during the event.

This year, we welcome back, Gary 'Biscuit' Davis on banjo, Jimbo Whaley on guitar, David Slack on bass and Abbey Tungett playing fiddle and providing vocals.



Still time to catch the bus for Summer Service & Surprises

Our groups for Summer Service and Surprises keeps getting bigger! It's so wonderful seeing kids SERVING JOYFULLY by helping pack and deliver food bags to area families in need. After the deliveries are done, the kids come back to the church for lunch and a "surprise." The bus will be making a few more runs before summer is out, so why not get your kids involved.



News

FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ABOUT
1ST KIDS



Contact the 1st Kids Director
Kristi Alton

.....

✉ kalton@1stchurch.org

☎ 865-982-1273 ext. 712



2026 Meeting Dates:

Tuesday, July 7

Tuesday, July 14

Tuesday, July 21

Sign your kids up at: 1stchurch.org/summer-service.



Crank up the summer fun in July with 1st Youth

After all the fun on the 4th, there are still plenty of opportunities for youth to have fun before the school year starts again. On Sunday evenings, **July 12th, 19th and 26th**, the summer Life Groups meet here at the church beginning at 5:30 pm. On **July 9th**, we are working on a Hiking or Tubing Day. **July 16th** we'll have another Service Day and we're still working out details on when to go see another Knoxville Smokies game.

Check out 1stchurch.org/students for more updates.



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





The work to ensure every child has a home is ongoing. A mom and her three children suddenly had to vacate the home where they were living. No prior notice was given

and they had nowhere to go. Thanks to God's handiwork, a mom and her two children were just moving out of the Emergency Shelter at 1st UMC @ Sycamore Tree and into transitional housing. Now, the family in crisis no longer agonizes over whether they will have a roof over their heads and stay safe. The mom's focus is now on her job and getting another home.

Being able to help families like these is possible because neighbors in Blount County, like those at 1st UMC, step in to give families in dire circumstances help through the Family Promise program.

Looking for a way to help? We have a host week coming up **JULY 6th through JULY 10th**. There are no words to express what a truly remarkable impact spending just a few hours of your time or a few dollars can make in the lives of these families.

Please save the dates SEPTEMBER 14th through 18th and NOVEMBER 2nd through 6th. These will be the next host weeks.

For more information or to express your interest in serving at Family Promise, please click on the "Contact Coordinators" button at:

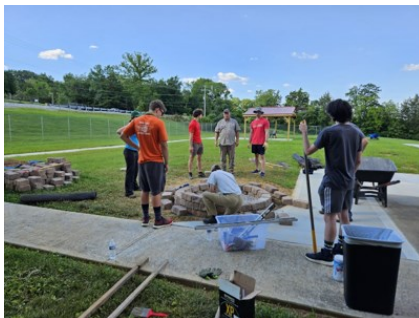
1stchurch.org/family-promise, then fill out the form.

Blessings,
Mavis Ziegler
Coordinator for
Family Promise at 1st UMC.



DayBreak Happenings

June has been a busy month. Cecilia Stair came for a visit to offer up some music therapy. John Simpson shared his storytelling talents with DayBreak participants. There was also a celebration of birthdays and time to say goodbye to a friend moving to Florida.



Thanks for the new addition

In addition to the Memory Garden (mentioned on page 3), you'll notice new raised planters when you come for a visit. We would like to thank Dylan and his Scout buddies who helped build them. DayBreak volunteers and participants are caring for the flowers in them as part of the Day Program. Congratulations on your soon to be Eagle Scout status, Dylan!



Serve Joyfully at DayBreak

The programs at DayBreak wouldn't be possible without volunteers. The need for both the programs and the volunteers continues to grow quickly. This trend is expected to continue as we have heard that one of the other Blount County adult day programs is closing.

Looking to find a way to help? We have a training scheduled in July. This would be the perfect time to check out volunteering with DayBreak. If you can sit around and laugh, enjoy eating cookies, and would like to work a puzzle, DayBreak is the place to volunteer. There are also opportunities to help with Barrier-free Worship which is looking to expand to a weekly offering in the future.

Learn more at:

DayBreakCare.org



Latvia Missions

In memory of:
Carol Werker

Given by:
Kevin & Kimberly Proffitt

Music Ministry

In memory of:
Terry Wilson

Given by:
Steve & Martha Shields

Welcome Table

In memory of:
Loretta Cate

Given by:
Kevin & Kimberly Proffitt



Terry Wilson Joined First Church:

May 10, 1981

Entered the Church Triumphant:

June 17, 2026

Welcome to



Joe and Larua Nix
presented their son
Henry for Baptism on
June 14th.



Christian sympathy extended to:

The family of Terry Wilson who died on
June 17th. Prayers especially for Terry's wife,
Brooke and their daughter, Lindsey.

Denny LaSage in the death of his brother.

Mike Swift in the death of his brother.

Congratulations!
from your friends and family at

1st UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MARYVILLE

2026

COLLEGE

Carter Cox
Caroline Cox
Jackson Brinkley
Sara Kate White
Delaney White
Megan Carroll
Ethan Werker
Grace Jonas
Maddy Stewart
Charlie Harris
Hayden McKinnis

COMING UP...

July 8th *Rev. Don Jones' Testimony*

July 15th *Denial (Matthew 5:3)*

July 22nd *Guest Speaker*

July 29th *Powerless (Ephesians 5:13-14)*

Every Wednesday
5:30 Dinner
6:30 Worship & Message
7:40 Share Groups

C **ELEBRATE**
@ 1st
R **ECOVERY.**

CRat1st.com

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ALL-CHURCH
TAILGATE

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026



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