



THE CHURCH BELL



AUGUST

2023



In our confirmation class each spring, we share a session and lesson called “Covenant and Community,” in which we remember our call to love and serve God in community with others.

In our baptism covenant, we say “we are initiated into Christ’s holy church,” and promise to serve Jesus Christ as Lord “in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races.” As part of that baptism service, we share the Apostles’ Creed, in which we profess our belief in “the holy catholic church” and “the communion of saints.”

We use all this corporate language because God created us and calls us to live in community. In Genesis 2, the first thing God says about the newly created first human is, “It is not good that the man should be alone.” Through the rest of the book, God forms the community of Israel and later *commands* that community to love God and neighbors.

In the New Testament, there is *never* a time that a person follows Jesus alone. The movement begins as Jesus calls two sets of brothers to follow him—together. The community expands dramatically at Pentecost, after which Luke describes the early church, “All who believed were together and had all things in common . . . day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2:44,46). We were created and are called to follow Jesus Christ *together*.

Over the next month, small groups will be a primary topic of conversation at 1st Church. Sometimes referred to as life groups, cell groups, or covenant discipleship groups, these groups of around twelve are intended to offer each other intentional community as we strive to follow Jesus Christ more closely together.

Groups of this kind are integral to our Methodist DNA and identity. John and Charles Wesley were participating in such a small group—Oxford University’s Holy Club—when they were first called Methodists because they were so intentional about growing in their faith.

A few years later, in 1739, John Wesley organized the United Society, in which believers “united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.”

For me, watching over one another in love is at the heart of this small group initiative in 2023. The purpose is to gather intentionally with fellow followers of Jesus Christ to pray together, to encourage each other, to grow to trust each other, to care for each other, and to come closer and closer to that early church community that “had all things in common.”

Here’s an important distinction—these groups aren’t meant to replace Sunday school. Their emphasis is less upon *learning* together than upon *living faith* together. Some churches describe them as “doing life together.”

I expect you’ll hear a lot more in the month ahead. In the meantime, will you please pray for this effort to “watch over one another in love?” Will you please pray about whether God is calling you to be part of such a group? I promise I will join you in those prayers.

Embarking on a new adventure - Rev. Nathan Irwin

Do you want to know something that I have learned about my faith? When I look back at my life and pay close attention to the times when I have grown the most, I can see that those times have something in common. That common denominator was not great preaching, mission work, or even my time in seminary. All of those things are good, but the times of greatest growth in my faith have been driven by close friendship with others who were also seeking to grow their faith and to build community.

1st Church is embarking on a new adventure, and we are “starting small”. Over the coming month

**Start Small - A Sermon focus for August
Rev. Jonathan Jonas**

On Sunday mornings in August, we'll set the stage for the launch of our new small group emphasis by exploring together some of the benefits of following Jesus intentionally together in small groups. Using John Wesley's words from 1739, we'll begin by remembering that small groups allow us better to “watch over one another in love.”

Over the following Sundays, we'll consider together what North Point Community Church calls the ABCs of small groups - accountability, belonging, and care. There's plenty of evidence that we're better able to stick to a diet or workout plan if we have partners to encourage us and to hold us accountable; that same sense of accountability helps us to experience more fruitful growth in our love and faith.

our sermon series will focus on the importance of communal faith in small groups. **In September** we will launch several small groups, and we want you to join us in this life changing adventure. These groups will meet weekly in homes, at restaurants, and all over our community.

Though the groups are small, they have the power to change lives. So stay tuned as we share stories of the ways that small groups can intentionally build community, broaden our faith, offer us support, and help to enrich our lives. Join us this fall as we “start small”.



Similarly, we're better able both to feel a sense of belonging and to offer each other effective care in smaller settings than in the larger connection of the congregation.

Join us on Sundays through August as we make the case for 1st Church's effort to “start small” in the Fall of 2023. Already convinced that you want to be a leader or participant in a small group this Fall? Contact Nathan Irwin at nirwin@1stchurch.org.

**Moving forward with
new ministry**



The Sycamore Tree Campus of 1st UMC has been buzzing with activity over the past few weeks as we prepare the building for a new chapter in ministry.

In July dozens of people turned out for Prayer Walks and tours of the facility which will be the future home of Family Promise of Blount County.

Groups from across the country have been helping Family Promise get the building painted and cleaned.

There is still work to do, but already there are plans for some future 1st Church activities at this campus in West Maryville.

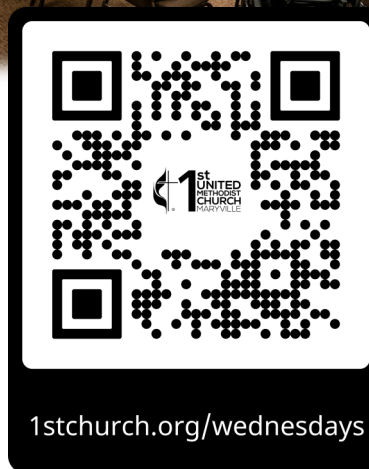
Stay tuned for updates at:
1stchurch.org/sycamore-tree.

Wednesdays at 1st returning soon

Our second season of Wednesdays at 1st kicks off **August 9th** and we hope it will be even bigger and better this round. If this is something new to you let's remind you what all happens during this special night each week. Wednesdays at 1st features music programming, Bible Studies and other opportunities for people of ALL ages.

Celebrate Recovery is also a part of our Wednesdays at 1st with worship at 6:30 and Share Groups at 7:40 pm. Everyone comes together for a meal at 5:30 pm. No sign up is necessary, but if you have an especially large group coming for dinner or you have questions about the meal please email us at communications@1stchurch.org.

Be sure and check out the schedules, the upcoming studies and more on the website. Also, if you have a student interested in choir please sign them up at 1stchurch.org/music-at-1st by **August 7th**.



Blessings for a new school year

What happened to summer vacation? That's probably a question many of us have as a new school year gets underway for most students, teachers and staff in the area.

On Sunday, July 30th we had our annual Blessing of the Backpacks, a chance for us to pray over students, teachers and staff that God will bless each person as the new school year unfolds. Participants also received a special tag reminding them that God's hope is in them all day long.



After church, kids and families gathered for lunch and the Bayou Back to School Party. This was a great time for some water fun.

On August 3rd we'll be welcoming Maryville Junior High Students back to school with some bottles of water and some snacks.





What a busy summer it's been at 1st Kids Ministries. Our Summer Service and Surprises program was a big success. The kids (and other participants) packed up more food bags than we ever have with this program. In all more than 1000 pounds of food was delivered in June and July. But that was only part of the fun. Thanks to a wide range of volunteers the kids were surprised with exercises in woodworking, meditation, sign language, learning about travel & missions and much more. Can't wait to see where this program goes next year!



Here's a quick glance at what's coming up in August & September! Find more details at 1stchurch.org/1st-Kids or scan the QR Code.

Sunday School
Incredible Inventions

Kids Own Worship
Wonder Full

1st Kids Bible Study - Wednesdays at 1st
Trackers of Truth (Starting August 9th at 6:15 pm)

S'more Prayer Event
2:00 pm on Sunday, September 10th at Sycamore Tree

Camp Not a Lot of Woods (an overnight stay at the church)
September 15th
8:00 pm until 9:00 am



We are putting the Future First in our plans for the new school year. Students in 6th through 12th grade have new and expanded opportunities to connect with each other and get equipped to grow more in their faith. Please check out the offerings in this section and seek out more details online.

Sunday, August 6th

Sunday School at 9:15 am - Wesley Hall (each Sunday)
Parent Meeting after 10:30 am worship - Wesley Hall

Each Sunday starting August 6th - 6:30 to 8:00 pm

Close Encounter Gathering - Wesley Hall

Tuesdays starting August 8th

Rise & Shine for 6th - 9th graders - Wesley Hall

Wednesdays starting August 9th - 5:00 to 6:00 pm

Deep Space Bible Study - Wesley Hall

Thursdays starting August 10th

Rise & Shine for 9th - 12th graders at Chick-fil-A in Alcoa



Text "Info" to
865-999-0099
for updates
from
First Future



Although summer has not yet passed, summer vacation has and it is back to school time and back to work. 1stUMC and Family Promise never stopped working. For those who were able to tour the newly acquired Sycamore Tree property, the first-hand view of all that space was impressive. Since the tours, volunteer groups from Next Steps have made many improvements but there is still much to do.



This youth group from Trinity Lutheran in Hudson, WI came in July to help Family Promise paint and do other work at the Sycamore Tree campus.

When the facility does become a home, once again there will be room for families in the *Emergency Shelter* phase as when rotation among churches was utilized. That will free the *Transitional Shelter* housing spaces for families who advance in the mission until they can move into their own home.

In all, the number of families served will double because of this fantastic opportunity made possible by 1st UMC of Maryville. The new set-up also means the return of an opportunity to sit down and have a meal with the families or spend an evening among them. These interactions between guests and hosts have often been cited as so very beneficial. That is true no matter which side of the table one sat.

Thank you 1st UMC for your dedication and your service.

Yours In Christ,
Mavis Ziegler and Amy Large, Co-coordinators of Family Promise at 1st UMC

EVERY WEDNESDAY

5:30 Meal
6:30 Worship
7:40 Share Groups

Join us in-person or online!



An evening of music, prayer and time together.



Special guest speaker

When we get stuck we need to take ACTION so that we can continue on our recovery journey.



When in recovery, do I need a sponsor or an accountable partner?



CRMaryvilleTN.com

Memorials & Honorariums

Memorial Fund

In honor of:
Leland & Lisa Blackwood
In memory of:
Claudia Hutsell

Given by:
Brad & Patsy Lunde
Given by:
Bonny Kate Sugg

Welcome Table

In honor of:
Leland & Lisa Blackwood
Leland & Lisa Blackwood
In memory of:
Ed Green
Ed Green
Ed Green
Ed Green
Ed Green
Ed Green
Paul Bay
Claudia Hutsell
Ed Green
Ed Green
Ed Green

Given by:
Elizabeth Blackburn
Jean Blackburn
Given by:
Beverly Atchley
Betty Lowe
Rene Jennings
Larry & Lynn Ladd
Peggy Norris
Dian Troselaieu
Phil & Amy Large
Brad & Patsy Lunde
Brad & Patsy Lunde
Margaret Murrin
Gayle Fox

Staff Contacts



You can find staff and ministry contacts under the "Inside at 1st" tab on the church website:

1stchurch.org

The church phone number is 865-982-1273



The next meeting of Men's Connection is August 14th at 11:30 am at the Asbury Place Bistro. Contact Ron Werker with any questions at rwerker@bellsouth.net.

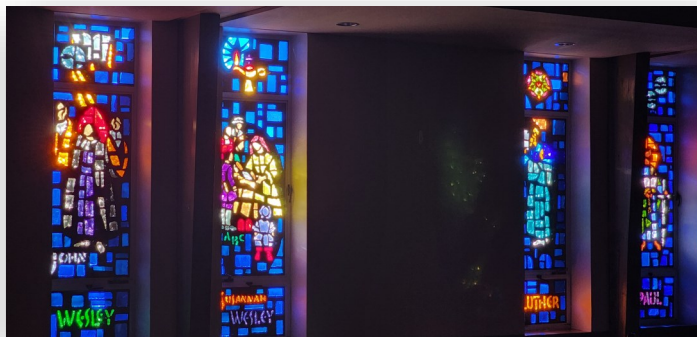


Sue Wolf

Joined First Church: April 18, 2004
Entered the Church Triumphant: July 12, 2023

Ginny West Case

Entered the Church Triumphant: June 24, 2023



Christian sympathy extended to:

Danielle Robinson in the death of her brother Jancer Eugene Hunt Ackermann on June 26th.

The family of Sue Wolf who died on July 12th

The family of Ginny West Case who died on June 24th.

MEDIC

BLOOD DRIVE

The event set for August 13th has to be changed. Stay tuned for updates.



SPONSORED BY
1ST UMC MEN'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Maryville First United Methodist Church
804 Montvale Station Road
Maryville, Tennessee 37803
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At this year's All-Church Tailgate we kick off a lot more than just the fall season. We are gearing up for some new initiatives that are worthy of celebrating in a big way.

This annual event will have all the fun traditions of past years like tailgating stations hosted by Sunday School Classes, plenty of food and worship under the Big Tent. However, this year we will be turning things up a notch with some new and exciting announcements. We'll also have some new 1st UMC merchandise for purchase.

Mark your calendars now and plan on being here on September 3rd. Tailgating begins at 9:00 am and worship is at 10:30 am.

1stchurch.org/tailgate



1STCHURCH.ORG

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Maryville, TN 37803
865-982-1273