



# The First Epistle

Newsletter of First United Methodist Church June 2021

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## A Message From the FUMC Reopening Committee

The Covid pandemic has been a long and disruptive event for our world, our country, and certainly our houses of worship. Thankfully, the current trajectory of the outbreak seems to be moving quickly in a positive direction— thanks to vaccinations and precautions taken by the population.

Our First Church Family has been faithful in following the recommended guidelines given to us by the Holston Conference and put forth by the Reopening Committee. We have been moving toward our goal of resuming worship for our congregation. Many positive steps have been taken gradually throughout the past few months which reflect the relaxation of the original safety restrictions:

- March 7: resumed in-person worship
- March 14: youth began meeting outside
- March 25: discontinued color-coded gathering protocol (essentially keeping everything open indefinitely)
- March 27: held in-person Egg Hunt for the community
- April 4: reopened balcony for seating, stopped seating charts, shifted to stickers on pews
- April 11: stopped seating by ushers, only giving directions as needed
- May 2: added more worship participants/singers
- May 9: resumed nursery, started printing paper bulletins, Bibles & hymnals can be returned to sanctuary
- May 16: resumed Sunday School, loosened restrictions for entry/exit for building and sanctuary

Recent news from government agencies and from the Holston Conference will allow FUMC to move forward with more changes to ease restrictions while we worship together:

The Holston Conference asks all worship participants to continue wearing masks while inside the church. This is intended to continue to protect all attendees at a time when we may have vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals at our services. Beyond this requirement, and as an effort to move the worship service to a more “normal” setting, the congregation will be invited to participate in praying The Lord's Prayer, responsive readings, and congregational singing. Our staff has done advance planning for services (special music, soloists, readers, etc.) so these additions will be on a gradual basis. Please follow the guidance of our pastors and worship leaders as they guide us in congregational participation. Bibles and hymnals will be in each pew.

*(continued on next page)*

Anticipated dates for additional steps toward fully reopening:

- May 23: Lord's Prayer in unison (and other simple responses)
- May 30: Responsive Call to Worship and Confession
- June 6: Responsive Communion liturgy/prayer
- June 13: one congregational song

The "new" elements each week will be added to the previous elements and continue from that date forward. Additionally, we will no longer require worshippers to be escorted to specific seats at the beginning of the service, nor to be dismissed by rows at the end of the service. Please, also feel free to spend time in fellowship with others before and after the service.

We are excited about other events in the coming weeks and encourage your participation:

- Johnson City Doughboys baseball game outing: June 16
- Youth mission trip: June 20-25
- Camp in the Community: July 5-9

We are also pleased that the food pantry has stayed open throughout the pandemic! Please know that our pastors, staff, and committee members welcome these continuing steps toward a complete reopening of our church home and look forward to seeing each of you in the weeks ahead.

## Prayer List

Bill Carter	David McElveen
Catherine Cartus	Tom Palmer
Kristen Daniels	JoAnne Paty
Fran Dennison	Zander Pritt
Barbara Devault	Sam Reid
Vivian Eckerson	Cathie Rosecrance
Joe Faber	Samantha Sams
Jim Furches	Mary Shomaker
Juanita Gray	Nancy Stevenson
Nannie Green	Summer Strasser
Tom Holmes	Phil Torbett
Traci Honeycutt	Linda White
Deb King	Family Promise
Linda Kostreva	Brother's Keeper
Mary Lewis	Haven of Mercy
Barbara Marrs	Kairos Ministry

### We extend our sympathy to:

Billie Farthing and family in the loss of her mother, Hilda Farthing, on May 10, 2021.

*If you would like to add or remove prayer concerns from this list, please contact Pastor Jodie at [jodie.ihfe@1stchurchjc.org](mailto:jodie.ihfe@1stchurchjc.org)*

## Holston Annual Conference Update

The 2021 Holston Annual Conference will be a hybrid of online and in-person gatherings. The online or virtual gathering will be held via Zoom webinar for a time of worship and reporting. The clergy session will also be online. The in-person gathering will be a time of discussion and voting held at a later date. The in-person gathering will be live-streamed, but only those who are present will be able to discuss and vote. The in-person gathering, due to space restrictions, will be limited to voting members of the Annual Conference only. The schedule of events is listed below. Please note, all dates and times are subject to change based upon CDC restrictions and each venue's safety protocols.

**June 8, 2021:** Virtual Clergy Session

Zoom webinar- 2:00 pm

**June 12, 2021:** Virtual Annual Conference

Zoom webinar- 1:00 pm

**August 27, 2021:** Memorial Service

First Broad Street UMC- 3:00 pm

**August 27, 2021:** Ordination Service

First Broad Street UMC- 7:00 pm

**August 28, 2021:** In-Person Annual Conference

MeadowView Conference Resort & Convention Center- 12:00-6:00 pm

Visit [ac.holston.org](http://ac.holston.org) for all the latest news concerning the 2021 Annual Conference schedules.

# Congratulations, Graduates!



*Caleb Bumpass, Science Hill High School*



*Stephen Cradic, Science Hill High School*



*Kendal Fox graduated from ETSU with AuD, Doctorate of Audiology. She will continue working at Mountain Empire Hearing and Balance in Norton, VA. She is the spouse of Sean Eden and the parent of Quinn & Lennox.*



*Frankie Cradic graduated Magna Cum Laude from East Tennessee State University with a B.S. in Communication and Leadership Studies. She is the daughter of Drew & Sharon Cradic and the granddaughter of Steve & Suzy Cradic.*



*Mikeal Dukes, Science Hill High School*

*Andrea E. Hall graduated from the University of Florida with a PhD in Communication in August 2020. She is the daughter of Delbert & Kathy Hall.*

*Jeremy Leon Hensley graduated from the University of Tennessee with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. He is the grandson of Libby Hatcher.*



*Madison Hunter Mahoney graduated from Science Hill High School. She will attend ETSU in the fall and major is business. She is the granddaughter of Dan & Katie Mahoney.*



*Kyle Andrew Meredith graduated with honors in History & German from Baylor University in Waco, TX. He was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Air Force and will be assigned a position as a Nuclear Missileer after training. He is the grandson of Calvin & Nancy McMann.*



*Rowan Mills, Science Hill High School*



*Preston Trent, Science Hill High School*



*Taylor Grace Wascko graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of San Diego with a Masters Degree in Marriage & Family Therapy with a focus on Teenagers & Children. She is the granddaughter of Frank & Ann Mohap.*



*Jay Wilkinson graduated from the University of Iowa with an MA in Speech Pathology. He will be doing an internship with Jefferson Health in Philadelphia, PA. He is the son of Steve & Donna Wilkinson.*