



The First Epistle

Newsletter of First United Methodist Church Sept. 2021

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Dear First Church Family,

This has been a difficult and long 18 months. We had hoped all of this would be over by now, and we could get back on track with our ministries and mission. I know many of us are disappointed about needing to wear masks again and keeping our distance. We worry about the safety of our children and vulnerable adults. We are concerned that businesses, churches, schools and more might shut down again. And there are natural disasters across the country and throughout the world, while other nations are in the grip of violence. There is a lot to be uneasy about, and believe me, I feel it too. For many of us, this past year and a half has felt like more than we can handle.

Yet, in the midst of all of the stress, struggle, and worry, I find comfort in the presence of God. While all of this stuff may be more than I or any of us can handle, it is never more than God can handle. God says through the prophet Isaiah: *Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.* (Isaiah 43:1-3)

Through these words, God claims us and promises to be with us in the most difficult times. But God does not say that all the troubles will go away. God says "when," not "if" you pass *through*. We will all experience difficult times, and right now may be the most difficult time that some of us have had to face. But no matter what we go through, God will be with us because the Lord is our Savior. And for that, we give thanks.

Blessings,
Pastor Jodie

Neighborhood Center Renovations

The Congregational Development Committee of the Holston Conference graciously awarded a grant to First Church for the renovation and improvements of the Neighborhood Center. The Trustees' Sub-Committee for these improvements is currently in the process of replacing all the light fixtures throughout the building and installing a new air conditioning unit for the first level.

Plans for the near future include structural repairs on the outside of the building and exterior painting. Also, more work on the interior is anticipated – including bathroom upgrades, additional floor work and painting. When completed, the building will have a nice facelift for new and existing ministries.

Prayer List

Susie Barker	Mary Lewis
Brendan Barnard	Barbara Marrs
Bill Carter	David McElveen
Catherine Cartus	Betty McGaha
Scott Combs	John Melendez & family
Vernon Crawford	Tom Palmer
Ernie & Jo Cross	JoAnne Paty
Ryleigh Cyrier	Bob & Athena Peebles
Kristen Daniels	Cathie Rosecrance
Fran Dennison	Judy Rust
Hank Devault	Samantha Sams
Vivian Eckerson	Mary Shomaker
Jim Furches	Nancy Stevenson
Alex Garrison	Summer Strasser
Juanita Gray	Phil Torbett
Nannie Green	Family Promise
Tom Holmes	Brother's Keeper
Traci Honeycutt	Haven of Mercy
Deb King	Kairos Ministry
Linda Kostreva	Afghanistan
Robert Lee	Haiti
James Lessly	Hurricane victims &
Roy & Sharon Lessly	workers

If you would like to add or remove prayer concerns from this list, please contact Pastor Jodie at jodie.ihfe@1stchurchjc.org

COVID-19 Response Update

The Church Reopening Team met on August 12 in response to the recent significant increase in COVID-19 cases in our community. We understand that meeting in person is important to the members of our church. In order to do so safely, we are asking the following of anyone planning to attend any church activities in person over the next few weeks:

- We ask that anyone, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask at all times during indoor activities
- We ask that everyone please spread out in all gathering spaces to allow for proper social distancing between households
- We will be pausing congregational singing temporarily
- We ask that meals take place outside

We strongly recommend these safety protocols because we have vulnerable populations that cannot be vaccinated and those who are already vaccinated can still be at risk for serious illness from this virus. This is especially true for people with certain underlying health conditions. We expect these actions to be temporary and hope that COVID numbers will begin going down soon.

Thank you for doing your part to keep everyone safe.

Debbie Eddy, Church Council Chair
Steve Gross, Staff Parish Relations Committee
And the First UMC Reopening Team

The Outreach Committee of FUMC is collecting UMCOR Hygiene Kits and Cleaning Kits to be given to victims of natural disasters. These were recently distributed to middle Tennessee and with Hurricane Ida, there is an immediate need for more kits. Please leave all donations in the print room by **September 30**.

Hygiene Kit

Materials:

- **1 hand towel**, 15x25 inches to 17x27 inches. Kitchen, cleaning, & microfiber towels NOT acceptable
- **1 washcloth**
- **1 toothbrush**, adult size only. Do NOT remove from original packaging
- **6 adhesive bandages**, 3/4 inch-1 inch size
- **1 bath-size soap**, 3 oz. and larger sizes only. No Ivory or Jergens soap due to moisture content. Do NOT remove from original packaging
- **1 comb**, sturdy and longer than 6 inches
- **1 metal nail file or nail clippers**. No emery boards please
- **1 plastic bag**: 1 gallon sealable bag only
- **\$1 to purchase toothpaste**. UMCOR is now purchasing toothpaste in bulk to be added to the kits before shipping to ensure that the product does not expire before they are sent.

Assembly Directions:

Set the \$1 aside. Lay out the hand towel. Lay the washcloth flat in the center of the towel. Place all remaining items on top of the washcloth. Fold over the sides of the towel to cover all of the items. Fold over one end of the towel so that it covers all of the items. Grasp the bundle of items tightly and roll over the remainder of the hand towel tightly. Place the tightly rolled bundle in the plastic bag. Remove as much air as possible and seal the bag.

Important:

- All items must be new
- Do not wash any of the items
- Please remove all packaging, unless otherwise specified above
- Please only include the requested items, NOTHING MORE
- UMCOR requires that all patriotic symbols be removed from the kit contents

Cleaning Kit

Materials:

- **One 5-gallon bucket with lid** (14.35" h x 12.19" w x 12.19" d). No screw lids. May be used, but must be clean
- **One 32-64 oz. bottle liquid laundry detergent**
- **One 16-40 oz. bottle liquid concentrate household cleaner**. No spray cleaners
- **One 16-34 oz. bottle liquid dish soap**
- **One 4-8 oz. pump spray air freshener**
- **One 6-14 oz. pump spray insect repellent** (or pack of 10-20 wipes) Bottles must have protective covers
- **One scrub brush**, with or without handle
- **18 reusable cleaning wipes**— no terrycloth, microfiber, or paper towels. Remove from packaging
- **5 scouring pads**— no stainless steel or pads with soap in them. Remove from packaging
- **36-50 clothespins**
- **One 50-100 foot clothesline** (cotton or plastic)
- **24 roll of heavy-duty trash bags (33-45 gallon sizes)**, remove from packaging
- **Five N95 particulate respirator dust masks** (1-3 mm thickness), no surgical masks
- **2 pairs kitchen gloves** Remove from packaging
- **One pair work gloves**, cotton with leather palm or all leather

Assembly Directions:

- Place all liquid items on the bottom of the bucket
- Place remaining items in the bucket, fitting them around and between the liquid items
- Scouring pads and trash bags may be separated in order to fit all items in
- Clothespins may also be placed in a small resealable bag
- Secure the lid on the filled bucket

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT!

Many of our youth participate in extracurricular activities. Here is where you can find some of them in action this fall:

Hank Berning– University School Golf

Alex Uelhof– Science Hill Marching Band

Mikah Dukes– Science Hill Football

Kendal Bumpass– Science Hill Football

Zane Huff– Science Hill Football

Chloe DeWitt– Science Hill Cheerleading

Talia Blair– Science Hill JROTC

Finn Kidner– Science Hill Swim & Dive Team and Mountain Biking

Macy Shell– Science Hill Swim & Dive Team

Carpenters Crew

This fall we are launching a new ministry at First Church called the Carpenters Crew. This group will work in our community on yard work and home repair projects for persons in need. If you or someone you know is in need of this kind of assistance, please reach out to Rev. Gary Ihfe (gary.ihfe@1stchurchjc.org) If the cost of labor and supplies means something around your house is not safe, we want to help! To begin with our project will include carpentry, painting, and yard work. If you know of projects we could help with please reach out to us.

If you are looking to share your skills, tools, and time to help your church family and our neighbors, please contact Grady DeWitt (910-585-3719) If you are looking to learn some skills this could be a great way to work alongside others who could help you learn.



Highlights from the Back to School Splash and the first Wednesday Niter for the Youth & Children