



# The First Epistle

First United Methodist Church  
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...make more and better  
disciples of Jesus Christ for the  
transformation of the world.

April 2019

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## From our pastor:

### *John 12:1-8*

Jesus has made his way toward Jerusalem in Luke's gospel. We switch to this passage from John 12 with Jesus at the home of his good friends Martha, Mary, and Lazarus in Bethany. They gather for a meal as many of us often do in our local churches.

Martha serves the meal. As usual, she knows what has to be done and she does it. Mary is quietly in the background until unexpectedly she anoints the feet of Jesus with a very expensive perfume, and she then wipes his feet with her hair.

Judas Iscariot criticizes Mary's action as a waste of what could have been given to the poor. John's Gospel immediately tells us that this is because he is a thief. Jesus quickly tells Judas that Mary has anointed him in preparation for burial and that it will ALWAYS be possible to serve the poor, but that Jesus will not always be there.

As a result, we rightly admire Mary's love and extravagant generosity, particularly since Jesus himself praises her.

Truthfully, we are often more like Martha or even Judas. We want to be sure that everything counts and nothing is wasted. Even within the church, we look for responsible budgets that make the best use of every penny. We want to be good stewards of what we have been given; however, Christian stewardship is founded on an overwhelming love that leads to what some people might consider waste.

While we are preparing to celebrate Easter and all the activities that go with it, millions of refugees live around the world in miserable conditions. Addiction and violent crime statistics continue to rise in our country. The list of hardship goes on and on, and includes pain, abuse, pestilence, greed, selfishness, prejudice, and destruction. How can we celebrate?

Like Mary, we celebrate because Jesus is with us. Mary expresses love and gratitude for what Jesus has done. As do we. And the poor are always with us—in many ways, we ARE the poor, and Jesus calls us to serve others with the very same expression of love.



**April 14 - Palm  
Sunday/ Easter  
Celebration**

**April 18 - Maundy  
Thursday**

**April 21 - Easter  
Sunday**

**April 27 - Food Pantry**

**April 28 - UMW Bake  
Sale**



## Around the church

### *Easter Celebration*



*Sunday, April 14*

*4:30 - 6:00 pm*

*Pine Street parking lot*

*There will be games, crafts, food,  
and egg hunt!*

*Join us for fun as we celebrate the  
Risen Lord!*

*For more information, email  
children@1stchurchjc.org*

### **SAVE THE DATE**



Camp in the Community is partnering again this year with First United Methodist Church in Johnson City to

provide a FREE Day Camp where children in our community can learn and grow through Christ. We are blessed to share in ministry with you again this summer! We will have organized activities throughout the week, including recreation, story time, crafts, games, and much more. This powerful summer camp experience is designed for children (rising K- 8th grade) from 9 am-3 pm, the week of June 17-21 at First United Methodist to share the gospel and invite people into our church community.



**Graduation Recognition** will be Sunday, May 19th during the 10:30 worship service, with a reception in the parlor. If you have a graduate in your family (high school, college, or other program), please send their information to [office@1stchurchjc.org](mailto:office@1stchurchjc.org) so they can be recognized during the service in the bulletin.

Here are some photos of our ASP work weekend in March. We had a great time working on Julie's home in the town of Watauga, TN. We had nine wonderful volunteers during the weekend. Julie and her 3 year old daughter, Annie Pearl, graced us with their love and banjo picking and singing.



### **Bishop Taylor announces District Superintendent appointments**

On March 10, Bishop Taylor announced that Rev. Jane Taylor will be appointed as the District Superintendent for the Clinch Mountain District, effective July 1, 2019. Congratulations to Rev. Taylor on this tremendous opportunity!

### **In Sympathy**

We extend our sympathy to:

The family of Carolyn Wood, who passed away in March;

The family of Ralph and Joan Garland, who both passed away within a couple weeks of each other;

Randy & Pam Johnson, in the death of Randy's mother, Edna Johnson;

Frank & Ann Mohap, in the death of Frank's mother, Margaret Mohap;



# Loaves & Fishes



**That's not the only thing that can be miraculously multiplied at 1stChurchJC**

*Being led by the Spirit to reach out brings challenges -  
but our church family is changing by leaps and bounds*

Just a few years ago, our children's department was getting smaller. We had about three children of elementary age attending. Many of the active youth group graduated and there were only a few teenagers. One of our church members, a teacher, brought a couple of students from school as guests. Another staff person challenged us to reach out to some children who were slipping through some of the other systems. These students and children did not have family that attended this church. We picked them up and brought them. And they wanted the van to come and get them again. They wanted back. And they brought a few friends and siblings.

Since then more staffing and additional volunteers of all ages have provided much needed leadership, love and guidance. We had strategized in committees and struggled with plans to take care of our church and prepare for the future. Many talked about various programs to reach out, Change is difficult. We had great ideas. Some of these stayed as ideas but bit by bit some ideas started becoming action steps. Shifting the focus to outside of our own church walls, to the neighborhood, to community schools, we found challenges we couldn't handle on our own. But, with God, we are finding ways. We have gone from a few children and a few youth to over a hundred and then some. We have struggled with finances on how to feed "our children" now. But we are feeding them. They eat together on Wednesday nights and Sunday nights. Sometimes they eat with other church members after church on Sundays. Also, we are feeding them more than food. And they are providing spiritual food for our church family as well. Our church has found grant money to help us do this. And because of this ministry, 1stChurch is attracting some young families who are excited about seeing a church that reaches outside of itself to find purpose in community.





## JOIN US FOR WORSHIP!

### Sundays:

9:15 Sunday School  
10:30 Worship Service  
4:30 Children and Youth activities  
4:30 Wayfinders  
5:30 Snack Supper  
6:15 The Branch worship service

### Wednesdays:

3:00 After school Arts and Music for youth  
4:15 Youth Choir  
5:45 Wednesday Niter  
6:15 Children and Youth programming  
7:30 Chancel Choir

For more information,  
visit the church website  
[www.1stchurchjc.org](http://www.1stchurchjc.org)

*Join us for special*



*Services:*

**April 14:** Palm Sunday service, celebrating of the joyful entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

**April 18:** Holy Thursday service. Supper at 5:30 followed by a contemplative service with Communion, remembering the betrayal of Jesus, the last words from the cross, and the closing of the tomb.

**April 21:** Easter Sunday. A joyful celebration of the resurrection of Christ and the victory over death.

