



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.

August 2019

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We are so excited to be the new pastors at First United Methodist Church in Johnson City. We look forward to meeting you and getting to know our church family. So, we would like to introduce ourselves to our new church and community. We have been married for 12 years and have two friendly and energetic daughters, Lydia (7) and Lily (5). And here is a little more about each of us.

Rev. Jodie Ihfe – Senior Pastor

I was born in Calhoun, TN and attended Calhoun United Methodist Church where I was very active in church and youth activities. I felt a call to ministry in my early teens, and became more involved by leading groups, teaching classes, and speaking at churches. By the time I graduated from high school, I knew I wanted to be in ministry. I attended Emory & Henry College in Virginia where I studied Religion and Psychology. During that time, God continued to work on me and refine my calling to pastoral ministry. Once a very shy, reserved person, I grew to love speaking, teaching, and preaching during those formative years. I continued my education at Duke Divinity School where I received my M.Div. While at Duke I met Gary when we served at interns at the same church. We married and moved back to the Holston Conference to continue in ministry. I served as the associate pastor at Gray United Methodist Church for five years, then moved to New Salem United Methodist Church in Rising Fawn, GA where I served for 6 years. Gary has also served many churches over the past 11 years, but since those early days of seminary we have longed to serve together. Now at First Church we are able to work side by side with our whole family. On a personal note, I enjoy spending time with my family, adventuring outdoors, and being creative and crafty. I like painting and pottery, baking and decorating cakes, and decorating and organizing my new home.

Rev. Gary Ihfe – Associate Pastor

I was born in San Antonio, TX and grew up there, attending Sunset Ridge Church of Christ. Strengthened, encouraged and affirmed by the children and youth ministry there, I felt called to pursue ministry after I graduated from Trinity University with a B.A. in Communications. I headed off to Duke Divinity School wanting to learn more about other Christian denominations so that I could do youth ministry with a wider range of youth. At Duke, I learned much more than I anticipated. I studied scriptures with more attention and care than ever before. I met people from all walks of life, all sharing the same calling towards ministry in some form. I also met Jodie during my second year at Duke. As our time at Duke ended, we were married and moved back to the Holston Conference. I served at Wesley Memorial in Johnson City for 4 years where I felt called to pursue pastoral ministry. I spent one year as the Supply Pastor for Austin Spring UMC and then Jodie and I moved to Chattanooga, where I served several churches and went back to school to finish all the requirements needed for me to be ordained an Elder in The United Methodist Church. If you want to know me better, I really enjoy playing with my daughters. I like to cook and play sports. I also enjoy watching movies and listening to audiobooks and podcasts and learning new things. I am beginning to learn the joys and pains of being a homeowner and getting an ever-growing list of things around the house that need fixing. As fall approaches, I should probably mention to you that as a Duke Alum I cheer for their football and basketball teams as well as UT (though you may not recognize the color of orange that I wear to do so). I would tell you the NBA and NFL teams I cheer for but I don't want to cause anyone to stumble into jealousy!

We could not be happier to be in Johnson City working together at a church as we did when we first met. We have been welcomed so lovingly by everyone thus far and can't wait to get to know all of you better.

Blessings – Rev. Jodie Ihfe and Rev. Gary Ihfe

Around the church



**We welcome the Reverends
Jodie and Gary Ihfe!**

Sunday, June 30th was a special day at FUMC. Our church participated in a unique service, “An Order of Farewell to a Pastor”, for Reverend Jane Taylor as

she departed for her new appointment as the District Superintendent of the Clinch Mountain, Virginia District. Additionally, there followed “An Order for the Celebration of an Appointment” for Pastors Jodie and Gary Ihfe, who will be the new Senior and Associate Pastors of the church. Jodie and Gary, who are both graduates of Duke Divinity School, are coming to us from two separate churches in the Chattanooga area. We also welcome their daughters, Lydia (7) and Lily (5).

1stChurch Neighborhood Center



After sustaining interior damage from a leaky roof, the upper level of the 1stChurch Neighborhood Center is under renovation. The roof has been replaced and improvements are now being made to all of the rooms upstairs.

The Center, which is located on

the corner of Maple and Buffalo streets across from the plasma center, is where church members distribute items from our food pantry and clothing closet each month to families in need.

This renovation is for the purpose of creating more room for our rapidly expanding children and youth programs, as well as to make it desirable for other groups to use.



The work is being done by volunteer labor, comprised of both church members and members of our community. To date, we have removed all the old carpeting to accommodate new wood floors, washed walls, painted rooms, and replaced lighting and ceiling tiles. However, there is much yet to do. Without money in the church's budget to pay for the materials, we are fundraising and doing the work as can be afforded. If anyone is interested in becoming involved, please call 423-747-4671 and leave a message. We will get back to you quickly .

FUMC Member Receives Honor for Service

A longtime member of First United Methodist Church was recently honored by the Manna House Organization as they expanded their local outreach in the southside area of Johnson City. A second location was secured, and it will be named the “Johnny Humphreys House” in recognition of the outstanding service Johnny has provided to the men in these transitional housing facilities. Johnny has served as a chaplain and resource to the men who live there, both onsite and in the local hospitals.

Thank you Johnny, for being such a personal ambassador of FUMC, and for the many changes to lives that have come about because of your ministry.



As you are cleaning out your closets this summer, please consider donating to Clare's Closet. Any donations of warm winter outerwear (coats, hats, gloves, hoodies, etc.) would be appreciated! We are already beginning to prepare for our first distribution date in the fall. All sizes are needed but we are especially in need of adult sizes. Thank you!

Are you interested in sports? Do you want to get to know others from 1st Church? We are looking for men and women (ages 16 and up) for our church co-ed softball team! Please contact Kristen Clements at (423) 426-3296 or keclements4@gmail.com to sign up. Practices start mid-August.

In Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to:

Kathie & Fred Tucker, in the loss of their daughter, Franny Knouse, on June 1st;

Bill McClellan and family in the death of his wife, Mary McClellan, on July 22.

Youth and Children's news



Montreat

On the last week of June, 17 youth and 4 adults attended the Worship and Music Conference held on the campus of Montreat College. Eight hundred musicians and theologians from around the country gathered to sing, worship, and discuss ways the church can meet the needs of people living in and around our communities. Classes were offered in music education, faith development, modern hymnology, and exploring economic justice in the New Testament. The youth enjoyed recreation, graded choirs, art, drumming, instrumental ensembles and discussion groups.



Senior High Youth meets weekly every Sunday and Wednesday night. We welcome you to visit our youth. Come be part of a loving, welcoming community.

Sundays – 4:30

Wednesdays – 5:30

Please email with any questions – Sharon.cradic@1stchurch.jc.org

Children's Ministry

Birth – 4th Grade

Sunday School: 9:15 am

Classes for 3 years thru 4th grade; nursery available

Sunday Afternoons: 4:30 pm

Bible study for 3 years thru 4th grade followed by snack supper and worship at 6:15; nursery available

Wednesday Evenings: 6:15 pm

Dinner at 5:30 followed by Bible study for 3 years thru 4th grade; nursery available

For more information, please contact

Kati Uelhof at (423) 557-6844

or kati.uelhof@1stchurchjc.org



COME and share in the love of Jesus and experience his grace and mercy in your life!

In the Children's Department:

We strive for each child to know and enter into a personal relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We strive to provide purposeful small group experiences to encourage children on their faith journey.

We strive to create meaningful relationships with others – children and adults - in their church family.

We strive to assist children in living a Christ-centered life at church, at home, and in their community.

We are all children of God!



We had another successful year at Camp in the Community. Such a fun and interactive way to grow closer to God! Sixty-four campers, rising K thru 8th grade, participated. Trained counselors from the Holston Conference lead devotions, activities, worship singing and more, assisted by volunteers from the church. It is provided at no cost to the campers. We look forward to having it again next June!



"I loved.....octaball!"

"My favorite thing about camp was the games we played, and how some of them connected to the Bible lessons."

"The thing that I loved about camp...was how nice some of the people are.....and the games are really fun!"

Wayfinders Young Adult Program

The transition from youth to adult can be a difficult one for many young people. It is a time of questions. They may be searching for identity, purpose, and community while navigating the new challenges of living on their own and supporting themselves. It helps to journey together. That is the concept behind the Wayfinders at 1st Church. The Wayfinders are a diverse and inclusive group of young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who gather weekly for food, conversation, and spiritual formation. Group meetings are every Thursday at 6pm, with opportunities for service and involvement in the life of the church on Wednesdays and Sundays. Please contact Steve Reis, steve.reis@1stchurchjc.org, if you would like to learn more.



Saturday, August 3rd

Ages Birth - 4th Grade

Fun and Fellowship at Hands on! Discovery Center

Meet there at 10:00

Entrance fee will be covered!

Regular Wednesday children's activities will resume August 7, starting with dinner at 5:30, followed by Bible Study at 6:15



The 1st Church family enjoyed a night of fellowship at the Johnson City Cardinals game on Wednesday, July 17th. (Photos courtesy of Sharon Cradic)



Youth Mission Trip

1st Church took 22 youth to Smoky Mountain Outreach this summer. We had a fantastic time helping others while worshipping and building our youth relationships as a group. The mission trip was Sunday thru Friday. Our daily routine consisted of eating breakfast together at the camp, morning devotion, off to worksite, afternoon activity choice, dinner together, and worship. This year's service work included helping at the Good Samaritan Food Bank, yard work, pressure washing, roof repair, gutter cleaning, painting, and deck repair. The worship was one of the highlights of the trip. After a long day of working hard, the music and message was very powerful. We ended the week with a group trip floating down the river. Yes! we have great memories that will last a lifetime.





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

Join us **Sunday, August 4th**, for our



We will be offering free haircuts, as well as giving away personal hygiene products.

4:30-5:30

Join us for dinner and worship afterward!



August 3 - Children's trip to Hands-On Discovery Center

August 4 - Back to School Bash

August 16 - FUMC serves at The Melting Pot

August 17 - Love JC United day of service

August 24 - Food pantry Distribution