

The FIRST-CENTENARIAN

Vision Statement: Build a healthy and diverse community of disciples of Jesus Christ.

VOLUME 17, NO. 31
SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2026

THIS WEEK AT FIRST-CENTENARY

SUN.
Sept 27th

8:30AM: Sanctuary Worship Service
9:30AM: Sunday School
10:45AM: Sanctuary and The Vine Worship Services
12:00PM: Free College Lunch
2:00PM: Oak Street Playhouse Show
4:30PM: Sunday Night Youth Group
5:00PM: Sunday Night Worship & Dinner
5:00PM: Positive Christian Singles Walk at Northgate Mall

MON.
Sept 28th

10:00AM: ABIDE Respite Ministry
12:00PM: Trustee's Meeting
3:00PM: The Centenary After-School Program
7:00PM: Death Penalty Action Presentation

TUES.
Sept 29th

10:00AM: Church Staff Meeting
10:00AM: ABIDE Respite Ministry
10:00AM: Crafty Capers
10:00AM: Positive Christian Singles Charley's Coffee Talk
3:00PM: The Centenary After-School Program
6:30PM: First Kids Children's Ministry Parking Cars
7:00PM: Faithful Resistance in a Warming World Watch Party

WED.
Sept 30th

10:00AM: ABIDE Respite Ministry
3:00PM: The Centenary After-School Program
4:45PM: Wednesday Night Youth Program
5:15PM: Prime Time Wednesday Dinner
5:45PM: JumpStart Children's Choir
6:00PM: Children's 4yr. - 1st Grade Choir
6:00PM: Chancel Ringers
6:30PM: Prime Time Wednesday Classes
6:30PM: Wednesday Night Children's Program
6:30PM: JumpStart Instrumental Music
7:00PM: Chancel Choir

THURS.
Oct 1st

10:00AM: ABIDE Respite Ministry
10:00AM: ABIDE Caregiver's Support Group
1:30PM: Aldergates Vibrations
3:00PM: The Centenary After-School Program

FRI.
Oct 2nd

3:00PM: The Centenary After-School Program
5:30PM: Kids Night Out

SAT.
Oct 3rd

9:00AM: Tennessee River Rescue at Renaissance Park
11:30AM: Positive Christian Singles Lunch at McAlister's
6:00PM: United Women in Faith Parking Cars

THANK YOU FROM THE CENTENARY!



A huge thank you to everyone who donated to help fill The Centenary Student Supply Closet these past few weeks! Your generosity will help provide students with the supplies they need to learn and succeed this school year. We are so grateful for your support!



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FIRSTCENTENARY.COM





CLERGY CORNER

Choosing Joy

I have been excitedly waiting for the first episode of the Bishop Looney podcast (Looney Sessions) to be published. I have about an hour commute to the church so I knew I would have ample time driving to work during the week to listen to it.

It published on a Saturday. I was running errands that day with my family. My husband said, "Let's listen to the Looney Sessions together!" It was not how I envisioned I would listen. I had thought (maybe selfishly) I would listen alone with undivided attention devoid of curious young minds asking questions and interrupting.

It took us time in the car on Saturday and Sunday to complete the one-hour episode. There were many times of pausing the podcast to answer questions, and to my surprise, many times I paused it to ask my family questions and hear what they thought about the insight shared. It was an unexpected joyful experience.

I recently read and reflected on Philipians 4:4 which says, "4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" It is important to remember, as a Christ-follower, to choose joy. Rejoicing in the Lord is not always a natural reflex. It is sometimes something that we must put intentional thought and effort into.

I was happy to see the podcast producer (and First-Centenary Lay Leader), Andy Johns, at church the day we finished the podcast. I told him what a joy it was to listen with my family and the great conversations we had because of it. I introduced him to my kids (who seemed almost star-struck). Afterwards, my oldest son said, "One of my favorite parts of the podcast was when Andy called the hot seat "strangely warmed." We laughed again at the Methodist joke. I encourage you to listen to the podcast and remember to choose joy every day.

~ Mary

PRIME TIME WEDNESDAY

Meal: 5:15 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. **Chancel Ringers:** 6:00 p.m.
Classes: 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. **Chancel Choir:** 7:00 p.m.
Children's, Youth, & College Programs: 6:30 p.m.



THIS SEASON'S CLASSES

Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia by Dennis Covington

led by Pastor Jason in the Prigmore Room

Unpacking the UMC Social Principles

led by United Women in Faith in The Vine

Eat Pray Art

led by Pastor Michelle in Oak Street Center Room 101/102

DINNER INFORMATION

Please make dinner reservations by 4 p.m. Monday



Costs:

Adult Meal: \$10
Child's Meal: \$5
Family Meal: \$30

Menu:

September 30th

Classic Spaghetti Pasta Bake, Roasted Seasonal Vegetables, Garden Salad, Garlic Bread, Buffalo Chicken Salad, Vegetarian Option: Falafel, and Red Velvet Cake



NEW PRIME TIME CLASS!

"The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness" - John Wesley. Wesley's reminder that "holiness is social" means our faith is meant to be lived out together, through deep community connection and care for the world. However, we can feel stuck and overwhelmed by all of the work that needs to be done. Join United Women in Faith as we unpack the UMC's Social Principles and explore ways that we can make a difference in our local community.



LEGACY LUNCHEON

If you are at least 70 years young, you are invited to be our guest for lunch. Join us on **October 9th at 12:00 p.m. in The Vine** for a delicious meal and entertainment by Conner Lorre, a Neil Diamond tribute artist. There is no cost to attend. Don't miss this fun fellowship time! **RSVP by 12:00 p.m. on October 2nd** by either calling the church office at 423-756-2021 or emailing Rev. Michelle Hunter at mhunter@firstcentenary.com.



The grocery store, doctor's office, playground, school, church... preschoolers go to a lot of places! This month's memory verse is perfect for our busy preschoolers: "God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9 ESV). Preschoolers cannot see God, but they need to know He is always with them which is why our bottom line this month is: God is always with me.



This month, we're starting a series called 'Frequency—Learning to Hear from God.' Have you ever tried to hear someone, but there was just too much noise? Or you were trying to focus, but everything just felt loud? It's not that the voice wasn't there—it was just hard to hear it. This month, we're going to discover something really important: God is speaking, and you can actually hear from Him! Our verse this month is: "My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27 NIV

Sunday School and Worship Opportunities

All Sunday School classes are located in the Children's Wing on the second floor.

- Early Service Childcare: 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday School: 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
- First Kids Worship: 11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
- First Kids Sunday Night: 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.



KIDS NIGHT OUT

Kids deserve a fun night too! Join us on **October 2nd at 5:30 pm. in the Student Center** for Kids Night Out. Drop the kids off, enjoy your evening, and know they're having a blast while supporting a great cause! Dinner will be provided. Suggested donation of \$10 per child with \$30 cap per family. To sign up visit our website's announcements page.



Join us **September 29th at 7:00 p.m. in Oak Street Center Rooms 101/102** for a watch party featuring environmentalist and 350.org co-founder Bill McKibben. Explore climate change as a moral and spiritual issue and discover how faith communities can respond with collective action. All are welcome, and registration is free! Visit our website's announcements page for more information.



2ND GRADE FAITH STEPS

As part of our new First Kids Faith Steps events, second graders will take a special look at one of the most meaningful parts of worship: Communion! On **October 4th during Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. in the Oak Street Theater**, kids will discover what Communion means, and hear from clergy why it's an important part of worship. It's a fun, interactive opportunity for our second graders to go behind the scenes and experience this part of their faith!



DEATH PENALTY ACTION

The United Methodist Church says, "The death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore, and transform all human beings" and "We oppose the death penalty (capital punishment) and urge its elimination from all criminal codes." (Social Principles

¶164.G) On September 28th at 7:00 p.m. in the Oak Street Center we will be joining Death Penalty Action for an evening of sharing and testimony in protest of the pending execution of Christa Pike. This event is co-sponsored by the Faith and Justice Committee and the United Women in Faith.



WESLEY CENTER FOOD PANTRY

The Wesley Free Fridge and Food Pantry is complete! This ministry will be open 24/7 outside the Wesley building to help feed food insecure students on UTC campus. We are asking for all types of foods and anything NOT expired to help support the first month of our new pantry being open. If it is non-perishable, you are welcome to leave it in the boxes provided in Welcome Center or outside each worship space. If it needs to stay frozen or refrigerated please connect with Kirsten Shipp at kshipp@firstcentenary.com to coordinate pickup/drop off. Financial donations are also welcome, please note "Wesley pantry" in your donation note.

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FALL FESTIVAL IS COMING UP!

Our annual Fall Festival is officially set for **October 28th**! Join us from **5:00-7:30 p.m.** for an evening full of games, inflatables, trunk-or-treat, a free dinner, and lots of fun activities for the whole family!

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED to help make the evening a success! You can help by:

- Running a game or activity booth
- Decorating a trunk for Trunk-or-Treat
- Helping run an inflatable
- Cooking and serving dinner

To volunteer, fill out one of the forms outside each worship space or contact Will Lauderback at wlauderback@firstcentenary.com.

CANDY IS ALSO NEEDED! Donations can be dropped off at the Welcome Center or in the buckets outside each worship space during the months of September and October.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

September 27th, 2026

Sanctuary Services:
8:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

"Is the LORD Among Us Or Not?"
Exodus 17:1-7
Rev. Dr. Alex Thompson

The Vine Service:
10:45 a.m.

"The Means of Grace: Baptism"
Acts 8:26-40
Rev. Dr. Will Lauderback

Mustard Tree Service:
5:00 p.m.

The Vine
Rev. Dr. Will Lauderback

Lectionary Readings:
Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
Acts 3:1-19
Matthew 21:23-32

WDEF-TV Televised Sermons:
11:30 a.m. Sundays & 12:35 a.m. Mondays

"Grace Ain't Fair, It's Free"
Rev. Dr. Will Lauderback