

THE METHODIST WITNESS



JOYFUL
JOYFUL
we adore Thee



JOYFUL JOYFUL

WORSHIP SERIES • GENEROSITY CAMPAIGN • BUILDING PROJECT



Dear Friends,

February is here, and at First Church, we are celebrating our **Joyful, Joyful Generosity Campaign!** Joy is at the heart of our faith—not just a passing emotion but a deep and abiding assurance that God

is with us. As the scriptures declare, "**The joy of the Lord is your strength**" (**Nehemiah 8:10**). Our strength doesn't come from our own resources but from the overflowing grace of God, which fills us with joy and calls us to share it.

Mark Twain once said, "To get the full value of joy, you must have someone to divide it with." In other words, joy isn't meant to be hoarded—it multiplies when it is shared. That's why generosity and joy go hand in hand. Here at First Church, we have so much joy to share! We see it in our worship, in the lives being transformed, and in the ways we serve one another and our community.

As the great hymn reminds us:

*"Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life!"*

Let's keep marching onward in joy—giving, serving, and sharing the abundant life God has given us.

With joy,

Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Lentz, *Senior Pastor*

WHAT IS JOYFUL, JOYFUL ABOUT?

Last April our church embarked on something called Project Grow. It was a response to a call and desire for growth in the church in which church leadership laid out a plan. We believed God could use this plan to give growth to our First Church congregation and ministry, allowing us to better fulfill the mission of the church—making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Joyful, Joyful is an initiative born out of Project Grow designed to expand and enhance our worship of God through a focus on and building up of the beauty, comfort, and functionality of our sacred spaces. It involves new construction, renovation, and church planting to grow our ministry and our impact on the community in the name of Jesus Christ.

This is prayerfully being done through the three facets of Joyful, Joyful — a **Worship Series**, a **Generosity Campaign**, and a **Building Project**. We kicked off the worship series and generosity campaign on January 26 with a celebration with flowers and seeds. And our building project has been going on for the past few months. You've probably seen some of the construction that's been happening around campus. Throughout the campaign (which ends on March 2), we're celebrating what's been happening at First Church and talking about the opportunities ahead of us and the role we can all play in making our visions of growth a reality.

The heart of Joyful, Joyful is planting seeds for the future of our church, our worship, and our community. You may have heard us say that First Church is "a historic church that embraces the future." We say it all the time and we want it to be true. Joyful, Joyful is our opportunity to live it out.

JOYFUL, JOYFUL INFORMATION MEETING


Sunday, February 23 | 9:45 - 10:45am | 2nd Floor, Wesley Abbey

Want to find out more about the Generosity Campaign and Building Project? Join us for a special information meeting with our clergy and members of our building committee. The meeting will be held on the 2nd floor of Wesley Abbey (above our ICON worship space) in the large room that will be the future site of our ICON worship service. We hope you will join us as we dream about the future of First Church!


HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE CELEBRATION

Rejoice with us and join us in the “Joyful, Joyful Worship Series.” This is a celebration of worship and worship arts at First Church. Each week’s focus will come from a line of our theme hymn and an element of our worship. Celebrations will be based around Sundays but there will be extra activities involved during the week for those that would like to participate. We’ll also take a little time each Sunday to talk about the campaign and the progress of our building projects. Our schedule is:

JAN 26 *Kickoff Sunday - “Unfold Like Flowers”*
Celebration with Seeds and Flowers
Scan the QR Code to hear the message.



FEB 2 *“Reflect Thy Rays”*
Celebration with Candles and Light
Scan the QR Code the hear the message.

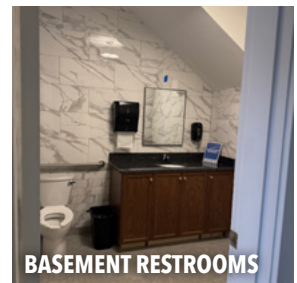
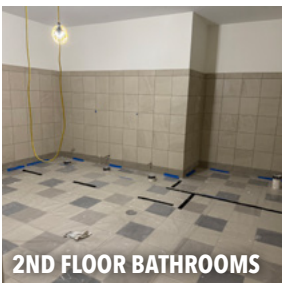
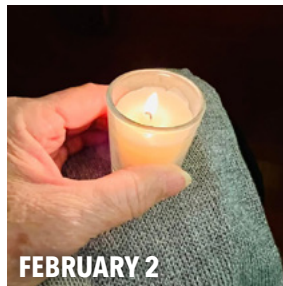


FEB 9 *“Teach Us, Lift Us”*
Celebration with Art and Architecture
 Activities: Art Show, stained-glass coloring pages, and interactive art

FEB 16 *“Join the Chorus”*
Celebration with Music
 Featuring new music from the Rev. Dr. Rick Branch and a U2charist in ICON (more info on [page 8](#))
 Activities: Join the ICON Choir for the U2charist, join the Sanctuary Choir anytime

FEB 23 *“March We Onward”*
Celebration with Movement and Dance
 Featuring dancers from In His Steps dance studio

MAR 2 *“Joyful, Joyful Sunday”*
 (also Transfiguration/Fat Sunday)
Dedication of Ourselves to the Future of the Church
Celebration Brunch and Lunch



DINNER • ADULT STUDY • AGE GROUPS • CHOIR

MIDWEEK

at First Church

FIND COMMUNITY HERE!

Wednesdays, through February 26

Dinner: 5:00pm | Programming: 6:00 - 7:00pm

FELLOWSHIP DINNER - FREE DINNERS THROUGH FEBRUARY

5:00 - 6:00pm | The Wright Place

Join us for dinner and fellowship with your church family! We are excited to announce we will be offering dinner free in the months of January and February. We will still take donations to help cover the cost of the food.

MENUS:

February 5: Ravioli Lasagna, Green Beans, Garlic Bread, and Dessert

February 12: Chicken Pot Pie, Salad, Yeast Roll, Dessert

February 19: Brunswick Stew, Coleslaw, Cornbread Biscuit, and Dessert

February 26: Chicken & Sausage Creole with Rice, Corn Pudding, Bread, and Dessert



SENIOR PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays, through February 19 | 6:00 - 7:00pm | The Wright Place

Join us for an exciting opportunity to dive deep into one of the most foundational texts of Christian faith: the Nicene Creed. We'll explore the rich history and profound meaning of this ancient statement of belief.

The year 2025 marks the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed. In 325 AD, Christian leaders from across the world gathered at the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea to address critical questions of unity and orthodoxy. Their work resulted in the Nicene Creed, a document that remains the clearest and most enduring expression of Christian belief.

In this study, we'll uncover the story behind the creed and walk through each article to examine the foundation of Christian doctrine. Whether you're familiar with the Nicene Creed or discovering it for the first time, this study offers a chance to deepen your faith and understanding.

MISSIONS MATCH-UP

Wednesday, February 26 | 5:45 - 7:15pm | The Consulate

[Click HERE to Register](#) - See [Page 6](#) & [7](#) for more information

Join us for a unique opportunity to meet our 2025 Mission Partners and find your match! You will have the chance to pick 2-3 mission partners to engage with while enjoying a special dessert. This "speed dating" style event is a great way to explore your next steps in ministry. Before our event, you can enjoy Fellowship Dinner in The Wright Place starting at 5:00pm. Contact Lisa Bond (LBond@FUMCPensacola.com) for more info.

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WEEKLY ADULT SANCTUARY CHOIR REHEARSAL

Wednesdays | 6:00 – 7:30pm | Choir Room

Weekly rehearsals take place on Wednesday nights from 6:00 – 7:30pm. No experience needed. Open to all adults and sings at either the 8:30 or 11:00am Main Sanctuary worship services.

MID-WEEK PROGRAMMING FOR KIDS & STUDENTS

FIRST KIDS: MID-WEEK (FOR PRESCHOOL-5TH GRADE)

Wednesdays | 5:50 – 7:00pm | Gym, Education Building
(Drop-Off In Gym)

This Wednesday evening program is a great time of fellowship and faith building for Preschoolers and Elementary kids. Each age group will have a devotion/story and play time while parents enjoy a class and fellowship with others.

FIRST STUDENTS: MID-WEEK

Wednesdays | 6:00 – 7:00pm | Youth Building

Students, 6th to 12th Grade, are invited to the Youth Building for fellowship, games, learning, and worship on Wednesday evenings.

NURSERY

5:30 – 7:00pm | Education Building

Nursery is available for infants up to 2 years old for parents attending class and choir practice. No registration required.

▶ MISSION SPOTLIGHT - KIDS FEEDING PROGRAM

KIDS FEEDING PROGRAM



The Kids Weekend Feeding Program is a mission of First United Methodist Church of Pensacola, and helps shop for, pack, & deliver food to local schools to meet the needs of hungry children at times when other resources are not available. They supply enough food to last them through the weekend until they return to school. This program began in October, 2007 at Allie Yniestra Elementary School with 58 children from 17 families. When the school year ended, we were feeding 73 children from 20 families.

We currently serve 292 children every week from Lipscomb Elementary, Ensley Elementary and Ferry Pass Elementary. Kids are identified by their teachers and school counselors throughout the year making this program flexible for itinerant/homeless families, or those in crisis. We are able to provide these meals for each student for \$2.53 per weekend or \$80.96 per year.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

This ministry is always looking for volunteers and is great for individuals and groups of all ages (4 and up). They meet on *Mondays & Thursdays, from 3:30 - 4:30pm* in the Franklin Building. Email Missions@FUMCPensacola.com for more information.

MISSIONS MATCH UP



FEB 26 | 5:45 - 7:15PM | THE CONSULATE

Join us for a unique opportunity to meet our 2025 Mission Partners and find your match! You will have the chance to pick 2-3 mission partners to engage with while you get to enjoy a special dessert. This “speed dating” style event is a great way to explore your next steps in ministry. *Before our event, you can enjoy fellowship dinner in The Wright Place starting at 5:00pm.* Contact Lisa Bond (LBond@FUMCPensacola.com) for more info.



Find your match!
Scan QR code to register.

See next page for more info
on our 2025 Mission Partners



MEET OUR 2025 MISSION PARTNERS

We serve as our way of giving glory and honor to God for all He has given to us. We serve so that we can fulfill Christ's call to love our neighbor. We serve as a way to put our faith in action.

First Church partners with many amazing non-profits throughout our community and the world. We would love to help you get connected with them to learn more about how you can find your place to serve.

Bright Bridge Ministries

Supports individuals who are experiencing homelessness, addiction, hunger, and more.

Disaster Relief

Assists communities experiencing disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods.

Embrace Florida Kids

Provides homes, healing and hope to vulnerable children who come from families in crisis, placed in foster care at no fault of their own.

Family Promise

Provides shelter for families with children experiencing situational homelessness.

Food Box Program

Helps supplement needed food for local families and shut-ins.

Gulf Coast Kids House

Advocacy center serving child victims of abuse.

Helping Hands

Provides minor repairs for our church and community.

Kids Feeding Program

Provides weekend food for underserved children.

Milk and Honey Outreach Ministries

Mentors children for school success and connects families to needed community resources, food programs, and local churches.

Night to Shine

Provides a special prom night experience for individuals with special needs in February each year. Opportunities include greeters, photographers, food prep, decorations and more.

Respite Ministry

Dedicated to fostering a compassionate community for individuals living with dementia and providing vital support for their caregivers.

Ronald McDonald House

Supports families of children with medical needs.

Serving the Hungry

Serves hot meals to people in our community who are experiencing food scarcity.

Teaming with Tanzania

Grows churches and helps develop leaders in the Tanzania UMC.


Thrift Store

Exists to share the love of Jesus with others and provide quality items at excellent prices! Our proceeds go to local and connectional missions.

United Ministries

Serves families in financial crisis who are at risk of homelessness.

Matthew 25:40 - And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'



SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY
CANNED FOOD
DRIVE
FEBRUARY 9

Make a difference in our community by bringing non-perishable canned food items for Manna Food Pantries Sunday, February 9 for “Souper Bowl Sunday”. Food will be collected in the Church Office and Wesley Abbey between services.

Manna’s current most needed items are :

- Canned Tomatoes (20 oz. or less)
- Canned Mixed Vegetables (20 oz. or less)
- Peanut Butter (2 lb. jars or less and to-go cups)
- Chicken or Tuna (cans 12.5 oz. or less, or pouches)
- Fruit Cups (in 100% juice, peel-off tops)
- Canned Fruit in 100% Juice (20 oz. or less)
- Oatmeal (boxes of single serve packets)
- 100% Fruit Juice Boxes or Bottles (8 oz. or less)
- Microwaveable Meals (e.g. Hormel Compleats)



U2CHARIST

Sunday, February 16 | ICON at 11:00am

On February 16 at 11:00am, as part of our Joyful, Joyful Worship Series, First Church will offer a unique worship service called the U2charist. The U2charist is a traditional worship service that combines the spiritually themed music of Irish rock band U2 with the ancient liturgy of the church. The U2charist features multiple art and sensory elements forming a creative convergence of both contemporary and traditional worship styles. The U2Charist service will include U2 songs, Holy Communion, and a sermon by Pastor Brandon. The music will be presented by the ICON worship band. You won't want to miss this unique service!

JOIN THE CHORUS: If anyone wants to "join the chorus" for the U2charist, the band would love to have a small group of singers join them on one song. Singers would have a short practice on Wednesday night and Sunday morning. Email ICON@fumcpensacola.com and say "I'd like to join the chorus."

FIRST CHURCH CARES

Congregational Care Ministry of FUMC Pensacola

If you would like to add an announcement or purchase flowers please contact: Ginger Raines at GRaines@FUMCPensacola.com

LOVE & REMEMBRANCE

Members who have died:

Sue Glenn on the death of her husband **Walter (Walt) H. Glenn**. Walt died on Tuesday, January 28, 2025. *Funeral arrangements will be forthcoming.*

Mary Nell Cowart on the death of her husband **William (Bill) K. Cowart Jr.** Bill died on Wednesday, January 29, 2025. *The service of death and resurrection will be held on Saturday, February 8th at 1:30pm in the Main Sanctuary.*

Loved ones who have died:

Cheryl Bray Sirota on the death of her uncle.

BIRTHS

Gwendolyn Joann Carter was born on Wednesday, January 29, 2025. Gwendolyn is the daughter of Julie & Daniel Carter. Proud big brother is Henry and proud grandparents are Cyndi & Rob Hermann.

CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to Gus Brown on Becoming an Eagle Scout. Gus's Eagle Scout ceremony was held on Sunday, January 26, 2025

BAPTISMS

William Michael Little, son of Amanda and Jim Little was baptized on Sunday, January 12, 2025

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

You may place flowers in the Sanctuary in honor, celebration or memory of someone. The arrangements are \$65.00 each.

January 5: In celebration of **Charlotte and "Coach" Schipman's 64th wedding anniversary** on January 6th.

January 19: In celebration of **Laurie Braden's 60th birthday** on January 20 by her family.

February 2: In celebration of **Neil and Jackie Jones' 60th wedding anniversary** on January 30th.

THE LIVING TRUST JANUARY 11 - FEBRUARY 4, 2025

The Living Trust is a special fund set up to receive gifts for memorials that you may wish to give in memory of or in honor of an individual. This is given to meet extra needs of the church above those of the annual budget. **If you would like to give towards The Living Trust, contact the finance department (accounting@FUMCPensacola.com).**

IN HONOR

Lora Millard
For the Children's Ministry

By Vesta Jones

Doris Reier

By Kay Richie, Amanda, Daniel, Kyler,
Kason, Kyren, Bennett

Don Worley

By Janet and Bob Olliff

IN MEMORY

Lynda Salter

By Kay Richie

Hoyt Hinson

By Kay Richie

WHAT'S HAPPENING at FIRST CHURCH for

FIRST KIDS

First Kids is our children's ministry at First Church. All children 3 years old (as of Sept. 1, 2024) through the 5th grade are invited to be a part of this ministry. We have a great time connecting with each other while singing, playing, learning about God, and learning about ourselves.

Lisa Bond

Director of Children's Ministry
LBond@fumcpensacola.com

FREE BALLET CLASSES

*Mondays (preschool) 3:45pm,
Tuesdays (elementary) 3:45pm
2nd floor Ed bldg*

Each week our Pensacola Little Theater ballet teachers teach a class called for the Love of Dance. These free ballet classes give children an opportunity to experience dance and develop dance skills. If you are interested, text Lisa Bond at 850-549-8967 to sign up.

STARTING TO THINK ABOUT SUMMER CAMPS?

Did you know that First UMC offers children's camps every week of the Summer? Last year's weekly camps included Sports Camp, Animal Planet, Pensacola Landmarks, Summer Splash and more. We have half day camps and full day camps. Information regarding the weekly camp themes will be available mid February. Spaces are limited.

COMMUNITY DAYS

*2nd Saturday | 10:00am - 1:00pm
The Consulate*

Mark your calendars for a fun family day every 2nd Saturday of the month. We have had events such as Dog Days of Summer, Touch a Truck, Kids Expo and Fall Festival. Each month is a different theme and a great opportunity for you to have a fun family day and invite friends to our church campus. Next one will be March 8. Watch for details.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL PRE-PARTY!

February - TBA

We need volunteers to help us put on one of our biggest ministry events. If you are interested in helping children in our church and community grow in their faith, please join us June 2 - 6. We have all size opportunities for you to help - teach a craft class, guide a group of kids from station to station, serve snacks, lead games, man the hospitality room, greet, love on children...whatever you are willing to give. We will have a VBS Pre-Party in February where we will introduce our theme, explore fun activities and build a team to make this happen! Interested in learning more? Contact Lisa.

BLUE LAKE SUMMER CAMP DATES

All 3rd - 5th graders are invited to attend any Blue Lake Camp this Summer. Mrs. Lisa will be attending BLAST July 21-25. Sign-up will begin in late February.

FIRST STUDENTS

First Students is our youth ministry at First Church for students in the 6th-12th grades. We have many combined activities and occasionally separate into mid-high and senior-high activities.

Rev. Heather Nysewander

Director of Student Ministries
HNysewander@fumcpensacola.com

CONFIRMATION 2025 (6th Grade)

Sundays | Feb 2 - Apr 13

9:45 - 10:45am

Meets every Sunday, excluding March 16 for Spring Break.

- The Bishop's Confirmation retreat will be from March 7 to March 9 and the sign up is on the Blue Lake website.
- April 26 will be a rehearsal for Confirmation Sunday.
- Confirmation Sunday will be on April 27 at the 11:00 am service.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

Senior-High Bible Study

Mondays | 7:30am | Panera on Bayou

Tuesday Evening Bible Study

Tuesdays | 6:00 - 7:00am

Starbucks on Gregory St.

Mid-High Bible Study

Thursdays | 7:00am

Whataburger on Gregory St.

RESPITE

Kirstin Norris

Respite Director

KNorris@FUMCPensacola.com

Respite ministry volunteers and director, Kirstin Gartner, will attend the annual Respite For All conference in Birmingham, AL, March 2 - 4. This is an opportunity for staff and volunteers to learn, share ideas and receive training from memory care professionals. All Respite volunteers are welcome and encouraged to attend. See Kirstin Gartner for details.

Respite ministry will also be present during the Alzheimer's advocacy days at the capitol in Tallahassee, FL, March 10 & 11. Kirstin will join representatives from the Alzheimer's Association and other memory disorder professionals to light the Florida State Capitol purple and speak with legislators about Respite.

FIFTY FORWARD

50 Forward is First Church's ministry for adults over the age of 50 (but all ages are welcome to participate). It provides opportunities for adults to be in community with one another and share in the gifts and graces of the more experienced members in our congregation.

Jennifer Piver

Director of 50 Forward Ministries
JPiver@FUMCPensacola.com

LUNCH OUT - COSSE'S PLACE

Thursday, February 13 | 11:30am

[Click HERE to Register](#) by Feb 11.

Join us for our monthly lunch outing with friends. We will gather at Cosse's Place in Pace for Traditional New Orleans Seafood, Po-Boys, Oyster Bar & more.

XYZ TRIP - PENSACOLA OPERA

Thursday, February 18 | 11:30am

FREE

[Click HERE to Register](#) by Feb 16.

Join us for a fun filled afternoon of fellowship and meet at the Pensacola Opera for one of their "Brown Bag Opera" performances. The Jan Miller Studio Artists perform arias and musical theatre pieces while you enjoy lunch. You bring a bag lunch and the Pensacola Opera will bring the music. Doors open at 11:30am (Curtain at Noon).

SILVER & GOLD

Thursday, February 27 | 11:00am

The Wright Place | \$10

[Click HERE to Register](#) by Feb 23.

Join us for a fun filled afternoon of fellowship with friends. It will include a delicious lunch provided by Ruth's Kitchen, along with a musical performance by Paul Martin, Mitzi Holt and Jennifer DelGallo. They will be performing "JOYFUL, JOYFUL" musical pieces from Broadway and Classic Movies. We will also have a special

performance by our MCA Preschool. Doors open at 10:30am.

COFFEE WITH FRIENDS

Tuesdays | 9:30 - 10:30am

Wright Place, 2nd Floor, Room 205

We have a small, friendly group that meets each week for coffee and fellowship in the Church Library. We have no agenda other than to get out of the house and enjoy time with friends... new and old. Anyone is invited to join us. Coffee and pastries are provided.

GRAND MONDAY NIGHTS

Mondays | 7:00 - 8:00pm

Grand Monday Nights is a free weekly webinar to help you grow as a Christian grandparent. In these webinars, you'll get practical ideas and information on grandparenting, learn how to nurture your grandchildren's faith and overcome obstacles, and find encouragement. This is a ministry provided by the Legacy Coalition. Register at legacycoalition.com/grand-monday-nights.

WEDNESDAY DINNERS

It's good to gather around the table with each other. It's a form of communion. The table is a place where strangers can become friends and friends can become family. So join us on Wednesdays this month for these delicious meals.

Dinners through February are FREE, however we are asking for donations to help cover the cost of food.

2/5: Ravioli Lasagna, Green Beans, Garlic Bread, and Dessert

2/12: Chicken Pot Pie, Salad, Yeast Roll, Dessert

2/19: Brunswick Stew, Coleslaw, Cornbread Biscuit, and Dessert

2/26: Chicken & Sausage Creole with Rice, Corn Pudding, Bread, and Dessert

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

PENSACON 2025

Pensacon returns February 14 - 16! Last year was such a great opportunity to help the thousands of visitors who came to our church feel welcome and loved. Your participation also helped to raise almost \$20,000 through parking and concessions that went to our Missions, Youth, and Youth Choir. It's time to do it again, and we need your help! It will take hundreds of volunteers to make this year a success. Volunteer to [SERVE](#) or [DONATE FOOD](#).

MISSIONS & OUTREACH

Mission and Outreach is at the heart of who we are at First Church. By supporting various missions and ministries, we strive to serve our community in love, sharing with them the message of Christ through example.

Lisa Bond

Director of Missions

LBond@fumcpensacola.com

NEEDS FOR FAMILY PROMISE BRIGHT BRIDGE MINISTRIES

For Family Promise, we are in need of twin air mattresses, a stand-up vacuum, Keurig pods, shelf stable snacks, fruit cups, applesauce cups. We have a Bright Bridge graduate who is setting up a new home and has asked us for a queen mattress (~\$200). Donations should be labeled and delivered to the front office.

SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES

IN-PERSON & ONLINE

8:30 & 11:00am in the Main Sanctuary
& ICON AT 11:00am in Wesley Abbey

stay connected   fumcpensacola.com



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

6 E. Wright St. • Pensacola, FL 32501 • 850.432.1434 • fumcpensacola.com
For pastoral emergencies, contact the Church Office or Ginger Raines at 850.259.3177