

THE METHODIST WITNESS

SPECIAL EDITION
YEAR IN REVIEW
VOLUME 205 ISSUE 1



YOUTH SUNDAY



ASH WEDNESDAY



BICENTENNIAL EXHIBIT



WRIGHT STREET THRIFT STORE



WHITE CHRISTMAS



CHRISTMAS EVE



50-FORWARD CELEBRATES



COMMUNITY DAY



EASTER IN ICON



DO UNTO OTHERS CAMPAIGN - GRAFFITI BRIDGE MURAL



BACCALAUREATE SUNDAY



VBS



WOMEN'S RETREAT



ST. PATRICK'S DAY



CONFIRMATION



PALM SUNDAY



FIRST KIDS: MID-WEEK



CONFIRMATION



PENSACON



BURGERS & BINGO



EASTER FLOWER CROSS



PENTECOST



WILDERNESS TRAIL



RESPIRE



GREAT DAY OF SERVICE



CAROLING



Dear Friends,

As we step into the new year, I find myself reflecting with gratitude on all that God has done through First United Methodist Church of Pensacola over the past year. 2024 has been a year of significant growth, celebration, and new

beginnings, and I am deeply thankful for the faithfulness of our congregation in responding to God's call to serve and grow.

Key Ministry Highlights

Project Grow: One of our most exciting developments has been the launch of Project Grow in the spring. Focused on growing our membership, we've been blessed to welcome more than 100 new members into our church family.

Wright Street Thrift Store: Another milestone has been the opening of the Wright Street Thrift Store, a new outreach initiative that helps us serve our community while supporting the church's mission. Though only a few months old, this ministry is already creating ripples of impact, and we look forward to its continued growth.

Methodist Children's Academy Expansion: This year, we celebrated the launch of a second campus for the Methodist Children's Academy at St. Mark UMC. By expanding this ministry, we're able to provide quality care and education to even more families in our community, a testament to God's provision and our shared commitment to nurturing young lives.

Respite Program: Another significant new ministry is our Respite Program, offering care and support for individuals with

Alzheimer's and dementia and their families. This initiative reflects our commitment to serving "the least of these" and creating a church that welcomes and cares for all.

Construction Projects: We are currently in the midst of a construction project to expand our restroom facilities and make other essential campus improvements. These upgrades will help us better serve our congregation and visitors, and we are excited to see them completed in the coming year.

Looking Ahead

As we anticipate all that 2025 holds, our theme will be Joy—a reflection of the joy that has carried us through this season of growth and celebration. This year, we will complete our construction projects and have the honor of hosting the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference. These will be key moments of renewal and celebration for our church as we continue to follow God's lead.

It has truly been a year of blessings, growth, and new beginnings. I look forward to all that God has in store for us in 2025 as we continue to serve with joyful hearts. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our church's mission and ministry. It is a privilege to serve as your pastor, and I am filled with excitement and hope for the future of First Church.

Practice Resurrection,

Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Lentz
Senior Pastor

SPECIAL-CALLED CHARGE CONFERENCE

Sunday, January 12 | Noon | The Wright Place

After our leadership luncheon, we will have a special-called charge conference for all Church Council members. Contact Lacey (LAdair@FUMCPensacola.com) for more information.

COFFEE WITH THE PASTORS

Sunday, January 19 | 9:45am | Consulate Café

All visitors that are interested in knowing more about and/or joining First Church are invited to attend our Coffee with the Pastors. This small gathering is a great time to get to know each other, ask questions of our clergy, and find out more about the mission and ministries of FUMC, contact Lacey (LAdair@FUMCPensacola.com) for more information.

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YEAR IN REVIEW 2024

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- **Mid-Week: Winter Session** was January 10 - February 7. Pastor Geoffrey started a study on The "Bible Tells Me So: Understanding and Interpreting Holy Scripture".
- 50 women joined us for the **Breathe 2024 Women's Retreat** that took place on February 16 & 17 in Destin, Florida. Guest speaker was Rev. Meredith Poe Martin.
- **Church-Wide Lenten Devotional**, facilitated by Donell Seager, took place on Sundays, starting February 18.
- **Wednesday Nights in Lent** was February 21 - March 20. We had guest speakers Rev. Doreen Smalls, Rev. Dr. Mark Labranche, Rev. Stephanie Arnold, Rev. Gillian Walters, and Rev. Dr. Jay Cooper.
- **Mid-Week: Spring Session** was April 3 - May 8. We offered 3 adult classes including, "Hope is Here", "Being United Methodist Christians", and "Forging Forward in Faith".
- **Mid-Week: Fall Session 1** was August 21 - October 2. Pastor Geoffrey offered an adult study on "Living In Love: Learning From the Letter of John".
- Along with Center for Sacred Space, we hosted the **Finding Light in the Darkness, Mental Health Event** on Sunday, August 25 from 12:00 - 5:00pm.
- **Mid-Week: Game Night & Session 2 Preview** took place on October 9.
- **Mid-Week: Fall Session 2** was October 16 - November 20. We offered 3 adult classes/groups including "What Does It Mean to Be Chosen?", "The Journey Toward Wholeness", and a walking group.

- **Wednesday Nights in Advent** started on December 4 with dinner and an **Intro to Advent Class** with Pastor Geoffrey. On December 11, we had **Caroling** at Wesley Haven.
- **10 Adult Sunday School** classes regularly met on Sunday Mornings from 9:45 - 10:45am.

CHURCH-WIDE EVENTS, SERVICES, CONCERTS & CELEBRATIONS

- **Epiphany Concert - Journey to the Manger** took place on Thursday, January 4, 2024 at 7:00pm in the Main Sanctuary and featured local musicians from area churches.
- 5-Week, church-wide sermon series, **Project Nebo - Empowering the Generations**, began on Sunday, January 14 in all services. During this series, we also hosted Nebo Generation Groups on Sunday mornings. We concluded this series with this special celebration on Sunday, February 11.
- The **Fat Sunday Celebration** complete with pancakes and moonpies was held in the Activities Center on Sunday, February 11.
- **Burning of the Palms service** was held in front of the Main Sanctuary on Sunday, February 11.
- Two **Ash Wednesday Services** were held on February 14 at 7:00am & 6:00pm.
- **Palm Sunday Services** were on Sunday, March 24 at 8:30, 11:00, & ICON at 11:00am.
- **Easter Egg Hunt & Lunch on the grounds** was on Sunday, March 24 at Noon on the Lawn.
- During **Holy Week** we offered a **Labyrinth & Stations of the Cross** experience with Center for Sacred Space on March 25 - 27, in Wesley Abbey. We had a special **Holy Week concert, Journey to the Cross**, on March 26 at 7:00pm in the Main Sanctuary. We also offered a **Passover & Last Supper Remembrance Meal** on Thursday, March 28 at 5:30pm.
- We held two **Holy Week Services. Maundy Thursday** (March 28) & **Good Friday** (March 29) service at 7:00pm in the Main Sanctuary.
- We had **Easter** services on March 31, 2024 at 6:30am, 8:30am, 9:45 & two at 11:00am. We also offered a free brunch from 7:30 - 11:00am.

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CHURCH-WIDE EVENTS, SERVICES, CONCERTS & CELEBRATIONS CONT.

- In May we unveiled a new initiative called **Project Grow**. This project identified 10 initial areas of opportunity for growth.
- We had a **Pentecost Celebration** on Sunday, May 19. We celebrated the birthday of the church with balloons, cupcakes, and a special time of worship with special musical guests The String Farm Band. We also celebrated welcoming 58 new members during the **Great 50-Days Challenge**.
- We welcomed **Rev. Heather Nysewander** as our new Youth Pastor. Her first day in ministry was July 1 and had a meet and greet on Sunday, July 7.
- **4th of July Celebration Lunch** was held in the Activities Center on Sunday, July 7. We had a hot dog lunch, cake, and a bounce house.
- A six-week sermon series called **The Bread of Life** began on July 21. Each week attendees got to sample a different type of bread.
- We opened **Methodist Children's Academy - East Hill** at St. Mark UMC on September 3 under the direction of Shanda Soderlind. They ended the year with 23 children in attendance.
- We opened the **Wright Street Thrift Store** on October 12 in the existing Outreach Building under the management of Dani Russell.
- Throughout October we celebrated our pastors for **Pastor Appreciation Month**. On Wednesday nights, we celebrated each pastor by serving their favorite dessert during dinner.
- Throughout September and October (the 2024 political season) we introduced, **Do Unto Others — a campaign for kindness**, to FUMC Pensacola and our community. We came together on Friday, November 1 to paint Pensacola's iconic Graffiti Bridge with the campaign's slogan. Our church's story was published in multiple local newspapers and featured on the evening news.
- Our annual **Church-Wide Blue Lake Retreat** was held October 18 - 20. Guest speaker was Rev. Dr. Joy J. Moore.
- Sunday, October 27 was **Consecration Sunday**. It was the main event in our stewardship program, HEART. We filled out our Estimate of Giving Cards, and we had the opportunity to discern what we planned to give in 2025. We also had two, free celebration meals at 8:30 and 11:00am.
- **First Church Respite Ministry** launched on November 12 under the direction of Kirstin Garner. Respite hosted 6 friends living with dementia and 14 volunteers through the remainder of the year.
- The annual **Community Thanksgiving Service** was on Sunday, November 24 at 5:00pm and was hosted at Christ Episcopal Church.
- On **Heritage Sunday**, December 8, we recognized all our 50-year members in each of the worship services. We also unveiled a new history exhibit in the Consulate Café.
- We hosted many concerts and services during the 2024 Advent/Christmas Season including **Respite Advent Chapel Service** (December 5) **White Christmas Concert** (December 8), **Community Christmas Concert and Carol Sing-Along** (December 9), **Sanctuary Choir Christmas Concert with Orchestra** (December 15), **Electric Christmas Concert** (December 22), and **Longest Night Service** (December 19).
- We offered **Candlelight Christmas Eve Services** on December 24 at 4:00, 5:00 (ICON), 6:00, 8:00, & 11:00pm.
- We welcomed over **100 new members** in 2024!

CHURCH & SOCIETY

- 75 members of FUMC **JUST Pensacola Network** met in various homes during October to share their concerns about justice issues in Pensacola as the new cycle for JUST Pensacola kicked off.
- 40+ FUMC Just Pensacola Network Members attended the **Community Problems Assembly** in November.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

- **Good Shepherd** had almost 20 volunteers who served church members at home and in senior living communities in 2024, by providing phone calls, visits, cookie and casserole deliveries, and greeting cards.
- **Prayer Team** volunteers confidentially prayed over hundreds of individuals and families who submitted prayer requests.
- **Card Ministry** volunteers sent 284 cards of encouragement to church members and community members to let them know that First Church is praying for them.

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CONGREGATIONAL CARE CONT.

- **Prayer Shawl** volunteers provided hundreds of prayer shawls, prayer squares, and fiddle sleeves for our church members, community members and Tanzania friends to encourage them, assure them of God's love and provide comfort.
- **Flower Ministry** volunteers delivered almost 300 bouquets made from the flowers, Easter Lillies, and Poinsettias used during Sunday worship to church members.
- **Delivery Team** Volunteers delivered hundreds of Ruth's Kitchen casseroles, cookies and goodie bags for those in the church and community who were homebound, sick, returning home from the hospital/rehabilitation, grieving, or facing a challenging time.
- **Assisted Parking** volunteers greeted a great many of church members and guests outside of the Wright Place and assisted them inside to worship services.
- First Church hosted church members and community members with an 13-week **GriefShare** class.
- First Church re-launched **Stephen Ministry**, commissioning 3 Stephen Ministry Leaders and 3 Stephen Ministers.

FINANCE

- First Church's annual **Stewardship Campaign HEART**, culminated on October 27 on Consecration Sunday. As of January 1, 2025, 284 pledge cards were received for a total of \$1,437,531.

FIRST KIDS

- **First Kids Sunday School** had 30 - 40 Elementary and Preschool-age children each week in 2024. Our outstanding lay team of teachers included Robyn Sandfort, Dolores Boyd, Maya Sandfort, Bethany Hodges, Danielle Turner, Sarah Smith, Steve Smith, Alexandra Johnson, Matt Hawkins, Matt Fricks, Christy Foreman, Lauren Xhindoli, and Amanda Davies. In addition, we had storytellers and several special guests.
- **Kid Connect, Chilltime, and Choir Programming** took place on Wednesday afternoons from 3:00 - 5:15pm during the school year and had 60 - 75 kids participate.
- **First Kids: Midweek** on Wednesday Nights during the school year had about 20 kids each week.

- We offered **Elementary & MCA Preschool ballet** on Mondays and Tuesdays during the school year with 8 Elementary and 8 Preschool age in attendance.
- **Palm Sunday Parade & Family Holy Week Program** was on Sunday, March 24 from 9:45 - 10:45am.
- Over 203 kids joined us for **Vacation Bible School - Start the Party**, June 3 - 7. We welcomed special guests Anna Migerera from Tanzania, Embrace FL Kids Volunteers, and Youth Choir from Texas.
- 13 Students, 3rd - 5th Grade, attended the **Conference Summer Camp - BLAST**, July 22 - 26 at Blue Lake.
- **Sports Camp** was held in July and welcomed 40 kids.
- **Preschool Playdays** was on Thursdays in July and had 12 children each week.
- 12 students attended the **5th Grade Mystery Trip** on August 1 & 2 and went to Top Golf and Owa.
- **End of Summer Bash** was on August 7 at 5:00pm on Lawn. We had a water slide, hot dogs, and Kona Ice.
- **Blessing of the Backpacks** was held on Sunday, August 11 during all worship services.
- 11 Kindergartners received their first bible at **Kindergarten Bible Sunday** on August 25 at 11:00am in ICON.
- 8 Third Graders received their 2nd bible at **Third Grade Bible Sunday** on September 8 at 11:00am in the Main Sanctuary.
- We recognized 8 new babies into the life of our church at **Baby Recognition Sunday** on December 22 at the 11:00am Main Sanctuary Service.

FIRST STUDENTS

- 12 6th Graders completed **Confirmation** and became professing members on Sunday, April 7 in the Main Sanctuary.
- The Youth Choir hosted a **Tea Party Fundraiser** on Saturday, April 12.
- We took 42 students and 12 chaperones to **Wilderness Trail** from July 14 - July 20. For three days, students and chaperones backpacked through the Virginia wilderness, taking in God's beautiful creation along the Appalachian Trail.

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FIRST STUDENTS CONT.

- Students participated in **Sweat Week** on July 24 - July 26, partnering with Salem United Methodist Church's visiting youth from North Carolina. Students helped out with Family Promise by cleaning out a home for a family in need, serving a meal, and cleaning the church building at BrightBridge, then finished the three days by cleaning up our beaches with Ocean Hour. On the final day, they celebrated their work with a fun day at Laguna's.
- First Students kicked off their school year and the start of Student church events with their tradition of **Eggstravaganza** on August 18. Students took great joy in smashing raw and hard-boiled eggs on one another's heads.
- Students took part in the annual **Grandparent's Day Brunch** on September 8. We partnered with 50 Forward to bring the two generations together for breakfast and a morning of getting to know one another. Students met again with the 50 Forward crew for **Burgers and Bingo** in October.
- Students had another successful **Trunk-or-Treat** this year on October 27. We had numerous well-constructed trunks, hot dogs, face paint, and a donation to Family Promise. A vote was held through this donation for a pastor to receive a plate of whipped cream to the face. Pastor Brandon received the honor until a donation was made for all pastor's to receive a plate of whipped cream to the face.
- Students took over the **ICON service** on November 17, leading in every aspect of the service. Prayers, scripture, the children's sermon, and the service sermon were all led by our Students.
- To celebrate Thanksgiving, the Students took part in **Turkey Bowling** on November 24. Students took two frozen turkeys out of their packaging and bowled with them.
- Students completed their year with an **end-of-year celebration** at Grizzly Axes on December 20. Having been in competition throughout the semester, each student worked hard to earn points for their team. In a turn of events, Blue Team pulled ahead in the last week, earning free entry into the Rage Room at Grizzly Axes.

MISSION & OUTREACH

- 11,504 meals were served this year through our **Serving the Hungry** ministry.
- 62,850 meals were provided to local kids in the **Weekend Feeding Kids** program.
- 6,634 pounds of food was given through **food boxes** to families and shut-ins.
- **Souper Bowl Sunday** was held on February 11. Non-perishable goods were collected and donated to Manna Food Pantries.
- February 23-25, FUMC hosted thousands of **Pensacon** visitors from the greater Pensacola area and beyond on our campus. Missions, Youth, and Youth Choir, are sold parking and concessions as a fundraiser, raising almost \$18,000.
- **Great Day of Service** took place on March 2 from 8:00am - 1:00pm. 100 volunteers served 8 local agencies.
- **Missions Match-Up** was held on April 7. We matched up 60 participants to our 2024 Mission Partners.
- We held a **Backpack Blast** in July to provide backpacks complete with school supplies to 20 children in our community.
- **Vacation Bible School** raised over \$2,200 for "Start The Party!" in Tanzania, Africa!
- FUMC started a partnership with **Family Promise** of Escambia and was the first church to host local families overnight in September 2024. Families stayed in our new Family Promise "apartment" in The Wright Place 2nd floor. The non-profit's day center and offices began operating out of one of our unused buildings on campus.
- We hosted a **Tanzania Tea Fundraiser** on October 5 and raised about \$1,5000 for the Tanzania Missions.
- We led a **mission team** of 19 to **Tanzania, Africa** November 11 - 21. The teams included a pastor team, children's team, and UWF mentor program.
- Our congregation participated in **Angel Tree** and **Be a Santa to a Senior** this Advent season. We supported 98 children and over 130 seniors.
- During our **Great Day of Giving** event on December 8, we put together 75 food boxes, made gifts for our homebound, and hosted our 2024 Mission Partners giving them an opportunity to share information and raise donations from our congregants.

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MISSION & OUTREACH CONT.

- Attendees of our White Christmas Concert and Thrift Store tips donated over \$900 to **Embrace Florida Kids**.
- We hosted **Community Days** every 2nd Saturday. We opened our campus to kids & adults of all ages to gather, relax, and visit. We had special activities just for kids as well as local vendors and businesses. We were able to welcome about 2,000 people from all over our community. Special events included Dog Days of Summer, Touch-A-Truck, Kids Expo, and Journey to Bethlehem.
- Our facilities were utilized for monthly **Candlelight Concerts** and welcomed thousands of guests onto our campus.

SENIOR ADULTS - 50:FORWARD

- **Coffee With Friends** met weekly throughout the year for fellowship, coffee, and pastries.
- **Silver & Gold** took place throughout the year with lunch provided by Ruth's Kitchen and a special program.
- **Friday Night at The Wright Place** took place throughout the year with dinner provided by Ruth's Kitchen and a special musical program.
- **XYZ (Xtra Years of Zest)** Trips in 2024 included 7 trips to restaurants, museums or special programs, often in the church buses.
- **The Learning Table** offered educational on-line learning and in-person learning opportunities for our senior adults. They included the following topics: Grandparenting Matters, Exercises to Improve Your Strength, Nutrition Choices Through the Golden Years, Elder Law Issues - How to Protect Your Rights and Your Assets.
- First Church Students, both in the Spring and in the Fall, graciously hosted 50 Forward to **Burgers & Bingo**, including dinner, fellowship, Bingo and prizes.
- **50 Forward Celebrates**, our annual week-long celebration April 8 - 12, recognized our senior adult church members and celebrated our ministry together. This celebration included Lunch Out, XYZ Trips and a Banquet.
- Kids & Students of First Church and 50 Forward celebrated a special **Grandparents Day Brunch** in September, including brunch, fellowship, and games.

MUSIC

- **Music and Worship Arts Dedication Sunday** was held on October 13. Our children, tween, youth, handbell, & adult choir members performed along with the Perdido Brass during our Main Sanctuary services. They dedicated themselves to the ministry of music for this next year.
- The **Preschool Choir** had 8 Students, the **Elementary Choirs** had 40 students, and the **Youth Choir** had 29 Students. They sang at various services and events throughout the year including Wednesday Night Lenten Service, Palm Sunday, Easter, Sunday Mornings, Baccalaureate Service, Youth Choir Home Concert, Choir Dedication, and White Christmas Program.
- Our **Sanctuary Choir** had 70 members and the Handbell Choir had 10 members.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

- **Christmas Creations - Holiday Market** was on November 16 and hosted 32 vendors. They raised \$800 for missions.
- United Women in Faith currently have 11 active **circles**.
- **\$4408 was raised** in 2024 for the following missions: National/Conference, Embrace Florida Kids, Tanzania Children's Program, United Ministries, and Vacation Bible School.

DINNER • ADULT STUDY • AGE GROUPS • CHOIR

MIDWEEK

at First Church

FIND COMMUNITY HERE!

Wednesdays | January 8 - February 26

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

FELLOWSHIP DINNER

FREE DINNERS IN JANUARY & 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:

January 8: Spaghetti, Green Beans, Garlic Bread, and Dessert

January 15: Teriyaki Chicken, Fried Rice, Salad with Ginger Dressing, and Dessert

January 22: Baked Pork Chop, Lima Beans, Potato Romanoff, Roll, and Dessert

January 29: Chili, Grilled Cheese, Salad, and Dessert



SENIOR PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays, Starting January 8 | 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.

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.

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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.



SERVE IN THE CHURCH, THE COMMUNITY, & THE WORLD - At First Church, we believe God has called and equipped every member to serve so that we can be faithful to our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We will start 2025 by exploring how we can use our gifts and passions to serve in the church, the community, and the world. We encourage you to use the new 2025 Every Member in Ministry booklet (available January 12) to help you learn more about the many opportunities to grow and serve at First Church. We invite you to pay attention to where God is nudging you to grow and serve out of your giftedness. ***On Sunday, January 19, we will hand out Every Member in Ministry interest cards during all services.*** Together we will complete the interest cards and recommit ourselves to uphold the church with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Visit FUMCPensacola.com/Serve for more info.

▶ MISSION SPOTLIGHT - UNITED MINISTRIES

Our mission at Bright Bridge Ministries is to promote the dignity and well being of the homeless and under-resourced in our community. We are fueled by our belief in the resiliency of the human spirit and the power of God's love and grace. Since 2007, we've been working with Escambia County's most vulnerable and under-resourced residents: homeless individuals and families, children living in poverty, U.S. Veterans, mentally ill persons, former inmates, substance abusers and others in need. In 2019, we changed our name from Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries to Bright Bridge Ministries.

What We Do & How You Can Help:

- **His Place Shelter** - Residential program for men transitioning off the streets. **These men need mentors on their journey.**
- **Food Ministry** - Hot, healthy meals Monday through Friday from 10:00am-12:00pm for all. **Food is donated by community partners** and purchased by **donated funds from generous donors.** **We need kitchen prep help and serving help daily from 8:30-12:30.**
- **Hygiene Ministry** - We distribute hygiene products regularly. **Supplies are donated by community partners** and purchased by **donated funds from generous donors.** You can **donate supplies or funds** to this ministry. You can also **make the hygiene kits** or help **pass them out!**
- **Life Skills Classes & Educational Classes** - We offer many life skills classes and educational classes to our program residents and community members. All of our Life Skills Classes are free and open to the public. **We need professionals who would be willing to donate their expertise to teaching a class** for our friends who are eager to learn.
- **Recovery Groups** - We offer many recovery groups and all are free and open to the public. **We invite you to participate in our recovery classes** as you embody your own recovery journey.
- **Earn a Bike Program** - Earn a donated bike by volunteering with us for 20 hours. **We need you to donate used bikes** to this program and **we need people with bike maintenance experience** to help us get these donated bikes ready for our neighbors.
- **Mail Service** - Community guests are welcome to use our mailing address to send and receive mail. **We need mail sorters** and **volunteers to pass out mail** to our neighbors when they dine with us during weekdays.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN 2025



**DONATE
TODAY**

2600 W. Strong Street, Pensacola, 32505
BrightBridgeMinistries.org



In 2024, you helped us provide more than:

17,653 SHELTER NIGHTS FOR 334 MEN

109 NEW JOBS

STABLE HOUSING SUCCESS for 60 MEN

33,149 MEALS FOR OVER 1,700 community members

Contact Us To Get Involved:

Rev. Cheryl Hinnen, Assistant Director

cheryl@brightbridgeministries.org / 205-532-0494

WOMEN'S RETREAT

Breathe



JANUARY 31 - FEBRUARY 1 | EMBASSY SUITES, DESTIN

Join us for Breathe, 2025 Women's Retreat, January 31 – February 1. This twenty-four hour getaway is a chance to fellowship with other church friends, focus on your Christian walk, to relax and hear God speak to you, and a chance to breathe. It is truly a retreat. Our guest speaker is Peg Arnold.

REGISTRATION FEES & LODGING

Step 1: Visit [FUMCPensacola.com/Breathe](https://www.fumcpensacola.com/Breathe) and fill out the FUMC online registration form. The \$85 registration fee can be paid online or via cash/check ("Women's Retreat" in the memo line).

Step 2: Visit www.hilton.com (with code FUM) or scan the QR code to book a room. Hotel rooms are available for Friday and Saturday at \$119* (discounted) nightly rate. Accommodations must be made through Embassy Suites, Destin by Sunday, January 12 (EXTENDED) to get the discounted rate. Please note: It is the participant's responsibility to reserve their own hotel room and it is not included in the registration fee. You can also call Hilton Reservations at (800)701-0767.



ABOUT OUR SPEAKER | PEG ARNOLD

Feeling the need to recharge? We will explore God's faithfulness in life's challenges while being refreshed by the Living Water of Christ. Come, get away, and connect with God and others in memorable ways. Our speaker, Peg Arnold, brings a fresh approach to women's retreats with messages peppered with humor, and life experiences wrapped in God's word.

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:

The Family of Nancy Shealy. Nancy died on December 03, 2024.

Brett Worley, Craig Worley, Dawn Worley Ford and their families on the death of their father **Donald Richard Worley.** Don died on December 27, 2024.

Loved ones who have died:

Anne Aldridge on the death of her sister, **Jean Lee.**

Lorraine Hudson on the death of her mother, **Antoinette Hudson**

Richie Daniels on the death of his brother, **Scott Daniels**

CELEBRATIONS

The birth of Elena Grace Wimberly, born October 27, 2024. Elena is the daughter of Rachel and Evan Wimberly. Proud grandparents are Mecy and John Wimberly, Chuck Warren, Wendy Warren, and great grandmother, Clara Wimberly.

BAPTISMS

Caden James Smith, son of Laura Huxtable. Caden was baptized on Sunday, December 15, 2024.

Campbell Rose Synder, daughter of Hannah Kirkland Campbell and Devin Christopher Synder. Campbell was baptized on Sunday, December 22, 2024.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

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

December 8: Given in loving memory of COL F. Douglas (Doug) Mehle by David and Carolyn (Beanie) Dwelle, his brother-in-law and sister-in-law.

The rose in ICON was **given in loving memory of my husband, Doug Mehle,** by Laura Mehle.

December 15: The white Poinsettia basket was **given in loving memory of Paulette Woodroof and Christian Woodroof** by their family.

FUTURE FLOWER DATES AVAILABLE:

January 12 & 19

February 2, 9, & 23

March 2

April 27

THE LIVING TRUST DECEMBER 3, 2024 - JANUARY 10, 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 (accouting@FUMCPensacola.com).**

IN HONOR

Mr. Robert J. Walker
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Jim Fitzpatrick

Ms. Melissa Mackey
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Jim Fitzpatrick
By Sallie Brown
By Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Hart

Ms. Mackey Habisreitinger
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Jim Fitzpatrick

Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Hart
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Jim Fitzpatrick
By Sallie Brown
By Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Hart

Col. and Mrs. Richard Baxter
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Jim Fitzpatrick

Mr. and Mrs. Chris Baxter
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Jim Fitzpatrick

Mr. Gerald Baxter
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Jim Fitzpatrick

Mrs. N. A. Brown
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Jim Fitzpatrick
By Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Hart

Mr. and Mrs. Carlos Llanos
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Jim Fitzpatrick

Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Hart
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Jim Fitzpatrick
By Sallie Brown

Mr. Jim Fitzpatrick
For the J. Robert Mackey Scholarship
By Sallie Brown
By Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Hart

Julie Vickery
By Griff Vickery

Caden Smith's Baptism
By Vera and Stephen Huxtable

The Serve the Hungry Program
For the Serve the Hungry Program
By Alan Kulkin

Bob Olliff's Retirement
By Griff and Julie Vickery

IN MEMORY

Kenneth Tyrrell, my brother
In Memory of his 61st Birthday
By Kay Tyrrell Richie

Lori Jackson
For the Feed the Hungry Program
By Kay Richie and Family

Paul Saffo
By Janet and Bob Olliff

Bill Sneed
For Fifty Forward
By Glenda Sneed Williams

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

KIDCONNECT & CHOIR (FOR K-3RD GRADE)

Wednesdays | 3:00 - 5:15pm

Start in Wesley Abbey

All children, Kindergarten to 3rd Grade, are invited to join us for Kid-Connect, our midweek connection time with camp-style classes. Each week, from 3:00-4:25pm, kids will meet for worship, enjoy an extracurricular activity and connect with friends. Afterwards, from 4:30 to 5:15pm, they can join our Elementary Choir/Music program. Parents can drop off in the Wesley Abbey and pick up at 5:15pm in the gym.

CHILLTIME

(FOR 4TH & 5TH GRADE)

Wednesdays | 3:00 - 5:15pm

Start in Wesley Abbey

Each week, all 4th and 5th Graders are invited to join us for Worship and Chilltime in the Wesley Abbey Cafe. Just like our Summer Kaboodle Cafe, we will enjoy lots of fun activities along with a yummy snack while we chill out with friends. We will start in Wesley Abbey for worship with the other children, then we will have our own Chilltime in the cafe. We highly encourage you to invite your friends too!

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

SUNDAY NIGHT YOUTH KICK-OFF

January 12 | 4:30 - 7:00pm

We will kick-off a new year with a scavenger hunt, choir, and dinner!

YOUTH BUILDING CLEAN UP

Saturday, January 18 |

10:00am - 2:00pm

Massive clean up of the youth building. Adults and youth are invited.

CONFIRMATION KICK-OFF

Sunday, February 2

6th graders, stay tuned for more info!

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.

FIRST STUDENTS: MID-WEEK

Wednesdays | 6:00 - 7:00pm

Youth Building

NEW THURSDAY NIGHT EVENT

Thursdays, Starting January 16

5:30 - 7:30pm

Homework/Studying while watching The Chosen.

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

SILVER & GOLD - WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA CLUB

Thursday, January 23 | 11:00am

[Click HERE to Register by Jan 19.](#)

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 performance by the talented Washington High School Drama Club. They will be performing pieces from the musical "Open, Stay". This musical was written in 2022 by two college kids. 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.

MUSIC & WORSHIP

Since our beginning Methodists have been “a singing people,” and we especially love our Music Ministry at First Church led by Dr. Rick Branch with Heidi Branch (Assistant Music Director) and Brian Brown (Music Assistant and ICON Worship Leader). Anyone is invited to join our choirs, no matter the skill level. Check our choir schedules or contact Rick if you would like to be a part.

Dr. Rick Branch
Music Minister
RBranch@FUMCPensacola.com

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 worship services.

PRESCHOOL CHOIR PRACTICE

Sundays | 9:45 - 10:45am

1st Floor Education Building

3 and 4 year olds (as of September 1 of the current year) are invited to join this special choir program just for them on Sunday Mornings during their normal Sunday Morning Programming. They will participate in fun musical activities that will prepare them for the elementary program.

ELEMENTARY CHOIR PRACTICE

Wednesdays | 4:30 - 5:15pm

Choir Room

Kindergarten – Fifth Graders (as of September 1 of the current year) have the opportunity to participate in this choir program designed just for them.

YOUTH CHOIR PRACTICE

Sundays | 4:30 - 5:20pm

Choir Room

Open to youth in grades 6th -12th and rehearses on Sundays. This choir performs throughout the year and tours each summer.

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 in January & February are FREE, however we are asking for donations to help cover the cost of food.

January 8: Spaghetti, Green Beans, Garlic Bread, and Dessert

January 15: Teriyaki Chicken, Fried Rice, Salad with Ginger Dressing, and

Dessert

January 22: Baked Pork Chop, Lima Beans, Potato Romanoff, Roll, and Dessert

January 29: Chili, Grilled Cheese, Salad, and Dessert

RESPITE

Kirstin Norris
Respite Director
KNorris@FUMCPensacola.com

Respite will kick-off again on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 with a goal of increasing our daily attendance and volunteer numbers. We will host a Rally for Respite day in February 2025, an opportunity for those interested in enrolling a loved one or volunteering, to come and observe a day at Respite. A volunteer training day will be held shortly after, date to be determined. We will also attend the annual Respite for All conference in Birmingham, AL. Volunteers are encouraged to attend. See Respite director, Kirstin Gartner for more information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

NIGHT TO SHINE

Night to Shine is a global prom-like event celebrating individuals with special needs, and FUMC is thrilled to host it for the first time on February 7, 2025! If you'd like to volunteer or support this incredible event, please reach out to Caitlin Stephens (Caitlinstephens26@gmail.com). Visit FUMCPensacola.com/NightToShine for more information.

FAMILY PROMISE

We will be hosting families in need at FUMC Pensacola January 26 - February 1 and we are seeking volunteers to assist with evening meals for up to 14 people. Family Promise will be providing volunteer training (and a free meal!) on January 9 at 6:00pm and January 18 at 11:00am. Please let [Geoff Cook](#) know if you would like to be a part of this wonderful ministry or if you would like to support this ministry with donations.

**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