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PENTECOST
Block Party

Sunday, June 5
Special Music. Communion. Food Trucks.
Sidewalk Chalk. Bubbles and More!

In the FIRST PLACE

REJOICING IN BAPTISMS

We have been blessed at First Church over the last months to celebrate quite a few baptisms. This singular moment in the life of a Christian is the recognition of God’s profound, ever-present grace. This grace is just as present for an infant as it is for an adult which is why we celebrate the sacrament of baptism for all ages. As we splash the water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we rejoice in the transformational love that is at work in every moment and at every stage of life. I like baptisms, if you can’t tell.

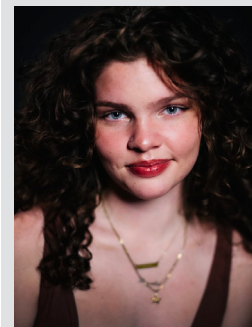
One of my favorite parts actually happens before anyone gets wet. After sin is renounced and faith professed, the pastor turns to the congregation and asks them to make a commitment. The pastor asks the congregation to love, care for, teach, pray over, and worship with the person being baptized. This promise is an essential part of the baptism, as it recognizes that a life of faith is meant to be lived in community. When someone is baptized, they are not just being recognized as beloved children of God, they are also being welcomed into the church family. There is power in this moment, especially when we make this commitment to the baby in the arms of the her parents. We look to that young family, just starting an incredible, challenging journey and say, “You don’t have to do this alone, we are here for you!”

This is not a small promise that we make, and yet I worry that at times we are unsure of how we can fulfill it. Over the last weeks, as I have moved into the position of Pastor to Kids and their Families, I have begun to realize the multitude of ways that we can uphold our promise to love and support our youngest disciples. It is not all about teaching Sunday School (don’t get me wrong, we need Sunday school teachers), but there are many opportunities for you to be a part of lives of the kids in our congregation. We need people who can rock babies in the nursery on Sunday. We need people who can help prepare our spaces for lessons and activities. We need creative minds who can help plan engaging and meaningful events. We need organized people who can help make our space more functional. We need hospitable people who can welcome families with a warm smile. We need people who can provide encouragement and wisdom to weary parents. And if you none of these opportunities sound right for you, we need patient, loving church friends who can lend a smile to the crying baby in the sanctuary or who can lead a lost family to the Children’s Area.

In the weeks to come we will have more baptisms, more smiling families, more curious kids, more congregational promises. Next time you proclaim “We Do!” when asked if you will support and love the child being baptized, I hope you will take an extra moment to consider what this commitment means. After you do, if you want to chat with me about ways you can be a part of the faith journeys of our youngest disciples, I’m easy to find. Give me a call, send an email, stop me on a Sunday because being a part of the lives our kids isn’t just important, it’s super fun!

Peace, Rev. Brittany

Celebrate Our Seniors of 2022 - Sunday, May 15



Maggie Collins
Central High School



Owen Melson
Central High School



Sean Mills
Arkansas Virtual Academy



Natalie Shalin
Central High School

Praying for YOU!
Months of separation and isolation have left us all feeling disconnected. To overcome that, we're searching for all kinds of ways to enhance people's sense of connection to one another and the church as a whole. That process begins with prayer. Each week, we'll be listing about 20 names in the newsletter for you to pray for during the week. Over the next several months, we'll be working our way through the church roll (backward alphabetically) so that everyone is lifted in prayer. You may not know these people personally, but that doesn't matter. Praying for someone by name is a powerful way to experience a connection beyond physical distance. We'll be connected by the Spirit and the power of praying for one another.

May 2 - 8
Katherine, Mary Lou, Lyle, Lael, Abby, Ella, Holly, Natalie, Nancy, John, Lynda, Ellen, Adam, Jill, Jude, Linda, Jennifer, Joey, Nolan, Cheri, Mark, Lindsey, Lilly, Hannah, Linda, Jennifer, Todd Helen, Mark, Janie, Leone, Jared

May 9-15
Hattie, Jordan, Tammy, Charlotte, Autumn, Hannah, Charles, Martha, Anthony, Becky, Toby, Joshua, Martha, Cynthia, Susan, Rex, Emily, Ruth, Laura, David, Phyllis, Jack, Nan

May 16-22
Michael, Beverly, Richard, William, Sara, Liam, Lee, Mauri, Amanda, Remmel, Robyn, Julie, Shane, Sam, Matthew, Addison, Tish, James, Gwen, Joe, Kelli, Samuel, Wesle, Janice, Angela, Brian

May 23 - 29
Phil, Linda, Karen, Jim, Tommy, Murl, Cody, Kate, James, Mary, Gary, Beverly, Greg, Lanny, Richard, Patty, Lee, Paula, Keith, Laura, Jonathan, Nate, Nathalie, Aiden, Hope, Caroline, Nathan, Tom

Lunch and Learn
Wed. at noon in First Cup, May 18 & 25
Bring your lunch, curiosity, and questions to a gathering in First Cup. Our time together is an opportunity to spend time with friends and expand our understanding of a topic relevant to our faith community.

May 18th – Tonya Hale will address the topic of gender and pronouns, when and why we use he/she/they.
May 25th – David Freeman will talk about the current state of the UMC in Arkansas and beyond.



All are welcome!



Food Truck Wednesday, May 18th, Crepe Coop Food Truck, Along Center St from 11-1 pm
Wednesday, May 18 (make up date from bad weather) the Crepe Coop food truck will be in our main parking lot along Center St. for anyone to come and grab some lunch, whether you are working downtown or just stopping by. They will be open from 11-1. They can be found on Facebook and Instagram at @thecrepecoop

Gearing up for Pentecost, June 5
I love the way our church makes such a big deal out of Pentecost. It really stands out as one of our highest holy days of the year. And you never know what's going to happen. We pretty much know what to expect with Christmas and Easter, but Pentecost is rarely the same. It's a day filled with surprises and excitement. Isn't that the purpose of Pentecost to begin with? When the Holy Spirit shows up we aren't really sure what's going to happen. It allows us to see new possibilities and experience God moving in different ways.

We're gearing up for this year's Pentecost celebration. Our music ministry is preparing extra special music to welcome the Spirit. We're planning a Block Party for after worship with delicious food trucks and fun activities. We want everyone decked out in red (the liturgical color for Pentecost). All of it is intended to let our spirits soar to the rafters, mingle with the Holy Spirit of God, and then settle back down within us where God continues to reside. I can't wait to share this day with you.

Gracefully, [Make your Pentecost lunch reservation at fumclr.org/pentecost](https://fumclr.org/pentecost)
David

Teacher Appreciation Week at CDC
Thank you to the teachers and staff of the Child Development Center for all you do to lovingly mold the little children under your wing. Daily tokens of our gratitude, during Teacher Appreciation Week, made a crescendo with a luncheon. Members of the Anderson-Sherman class transformed the CDC, second floor, staff lounge into a Cinco De Mayo – themed retreat under the vision of Marcia Adams. Beginning in the wee hours of Thursday morning, under the leadership of Melanie Churchill, the First UMCLR kitchen filled the church with the aroma of Mexican food. Between downpours, the food was transported to the CDC in time for the first of four shifts of hungry adults. Kim Keith directed the serving of 70+ meals of Fiesta Pile-Up (an old Churchill family recipe), brownies, lemon bars, and soda. We couldn't call it a day until Cal Biggers steered the clean-up committee. Thanks also to the Bowen Class who took treats to the teachers on Monday and the Koinoinia Class who provided apples for the teachers on Tuesday. The Anderson-Sherman Class took bath bombs to them on Wednesday and chocolate bars on Friday. It took a village of class members, but the smiles and verbal responses confirmed our tokens of gratitude were warmly received. ~ Caryn Taulbee



Backpacks for Kids Update, Donations Needed
We have placed our final order for the 2021-2022 school year for our Backpacks for Kids ministry providing weekend food bags to students. We need some help playing catch up on that account. You can support a one-weekend food bag for \$5.00. Please consider donating, so we can start the next school year successfully.

Thank you, Koinonia Class!
The Koinonia Sunday School class donated a picnic table to our Afghan family. It's set up in the backyard. Rev. Haley went to visit not long ago and family and friends were already gathered around it sharing in the beauty of the day.



Mask Policy - Updated April 21, 2022
Dear First Church,
After further consideration and consultation with health professionals, the Board of Stewards has made another change to our COVID protocols and mask policy. We will continue to follow the Community Levels defined by the Center for Disease Control. However, we are changing our mask requirements in the various Community Levels.

Our masking recommendations will be as follows:
High (Orange)= Masks required
Medium (Yellow)=Masks recommended
Low (Green)=Masks recommended

We hope this change will provide more physical comfort in worship and other activities while remaining cautious and responsible. We will still require masks and vaccinations for those working directly with children under 5.

Thank you for your patience as we continue to adjust.
Jill Fogleman- Chair, Board of Stewards

Organ Recital

J.S. Bach
Felix Mendelssohn
Florence Price
Frederic Chopin

MAY 19TH AT 7:00PM

Reception following hosted by the Music Ministry

FAMILY & FRIENDS
Congratulations on Baptism
Congratulations to Rob and Katie Walton on the baptism of their son Wesley on Sunday, May 8th during First Tradition.



Welcome New Member
We welcomed Kae Kae Wilson into church membership on Sunday, May 8th. Kae Kae joined by Profession of Faith. Please give her a warm First Church welcome!



Congratulations
Congratulations to Martin and Melissa Thoma on the birth of their granddaughter, Beatrix Martine Emmons on April 27th.

Congratulations to Craig and Nancy Wood on the birth of their great-granddaughter.

Sympathy
To Gordon, George, Murry, and John Newbern with the death of their father, David Newbern on April 24.

To Laura and Jonathan and the entire Coulter family and friends following the death of John Coulter on April 22.

To Larry and Lisa Spann following the death of Larry's father, Claude Wawak, on April 19.

To Jean Rolfs and family following the death of her father, Louis Rolfs, on April 16th.

To Margaret Norton and family following the death of her father, Bill Fountain, on April 4th.

New Text Messaging List
In today's busy world, we know everyone has their preferred method of communication. To make getting news, updates and other goodies easier—First Church is creating a Text Communication List. Please provide your cell phone number so that we can make sure you are on our list. No worries, you will be able to unsubscribe at any time. Texting is an easy and quick tool to stay informed! Email your cell phone number to Lesley at landrews@fumclr.org.