

# The FIRST-CENTENARIAN

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

VOLUME 17, NO. 03  
JANUARY 23RD 2026

## THIS WEEK AT FIRST-CENTENARY

**SUN.**  
Jan 25th

Youth Resurrection  
**8:30AM:** Sanctuary Worship Service  
**9:30AM:** Sunday School  
**9:30AM:** Confirmation Refresh  
**10:45AM:** Sanctuary and The Vine Worship Services  
**12:00PM:** Free College Lunch  
**4:00PM:** The Power of Sacred Spaces at Second Presbyterian Church  
**4:30PM:** Sunday Night Youth Group  
**5:00PM:** Sunday Night Worship & Dinner  
**5:00PM:** Positive Christian Singles Walk at Northgate Mall

**MON.**  
Jan 26th

**10:00AM:** ABIDE Respite Ministry

**TUES.**  
Jan 27th

**10:00AM:** Church Staff Meeting  
**10:00AM:** ABIDE Respite Ministry  
**10:00AM:** Crafty Capers  
**10:00AM:** Positive Christian Singles Coffee Talk at Jacks  
**10:30AM:** United Women in Faith Chris Bowles Circle

**WED.**  
Jan 28th

**10:00AM:** ABIDE Respite Ministry  
**12:00PM:** Church Council Meeting  
**4:45PM:** Youth Program  
**5:00PM:** College Program  
**5:00PM:** Positive Christian Singles Movie Night  
**5:15PM:** Prime Time Wednesday Meal  
**6:00PM:** Children's Program  
**6:30PM:** Prime Time Classes  
**7:00PM:** Chancel Choir

**THURS.**  
Jan 29th

**10:00AM:** ABIDE Respite Ministry  
**1:30PM:** Aldersgate Vibrations  
**5:30PM:** The Centenary Parent's Night

**FRI.**  
Jan 30th

No events scheduled

**SAT.**  
Jan 31st

**1:00PM:** Oak Street Playhouse Reading Workshop



Interested in what our youth are learning during confirmation? Missed out on confirmation growing up? Need a refresh? Join Pastor Will in **the Chapel at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays until March 29th** and explore some of our foundational beliefs as Christians and as United Methodists.

January 25th: The Story of Jesus  
February 8th: The Story of the Church  
February 15th: I Believe (The Creeds)  
February 22nd: The Story of Methodism, p1  
March 1st: The Story of Methodism, p2  
March 8th: The Way of Discipleship  
March 15th: The Way of Salvation  
March 22nd: Wesleyan Quadrilateral  
March 29th: Worship and Sacraments



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**FIRSTCENTENARY.COM**





## PRIME TIME WEDNESDAY

**Meal:** 5:15 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

**Children's Music:** 6:00 p.m. & 6:15 p.m.

**Classes:** 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

**Children's, Youth, & College Programs:** 6:30 p.m.

**Chancel Choir:** 7:00 p.m.

## CLERGY CORNER

I usually read a few books at a time. One or two related to sermons or bible studies, something fun, something educational (political theory, history, monetary theories, etc.), and something I deem a "heavy lift." This might be a classic I need to reread or a book I know will challenge me and I am embracing the challenge. My heavy lift right now is "The Need to be Whole: Patriotism and the History of Prejudice" by Wendell Berry.

Rev. Dr. Will Lauderback

If you have never encountered Berry's writings before, I encourage you to pick one up. This farmer, poet, author, theologian, and storyteller, is a voice that has been informing my growth since my college years and regularly challenges me to be a better version of myself. Written in 2022, "The Need to be Whole" seems even more appropo in the last few days and weeks. An insightful account that ties our pain and division back to the land and our innate need for community as human beings. Berry presents a master-class, as only the 90 year old argo-theologian can, that helps the reader find themselves in the pages and inspires them not to stay in the pages, but turn their eyes outward and upward.

I was struck by these words at the end of the section entitled "Work." "The capacity of goodness-- goodness that is true and actual-- does not extend far beyond the scale of the heart and conscience and physical reach of individual humans. Can human goodness, heavenly and eternal as I believe it to be but only human in scale and power, outlast the machinery of extraction and war? We don't know. We know only that it is futile-- it is impossible-- to employ the machinery and attitudes of evil in the service of goodness. We know we have no right not to employ the forces of goodness--lovem truth, beauty, beautiful work-- in the service of goodness. We have no right to refuse, even in defeat, the happiness of good work in the service of love. We must never be seduced by the devil's logic of fighting death with death and fire with fire." (p 444-445)

In a time of shootings, protests, charged reporting, political divisions, and ideological differences, I want to remind us as those who follow the way of Light that we are called and empowered by the spirit to see and cherish the humanity and created worth of every person in our midst. Let us not fall into the ways of the world "fighting death with death and fire with fire," but rather clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

In Christ,  
Will

## THIS SEASON'S CLASSES

January 14th - March 25th

### The Vision of Ephesians

January 14th - February 11th

led by Pastor Will in the Oak Street Center Room 101/102

### The Other Side of Change: Who We Become When Life Makes Other Plans

January 14th - March 25th

led by Pastor Michelle in the Parlor

### Bible Study on the Book of Zechariah

January 14th - March 25th

led by Pastor Barry in the Prigmore Room

### Restored: Finding Redemption in Our Mess

February 25th - March 25th

led by Pastor Jason in the 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:

**January 28th**

Brunswick Stew, Potato Salad, Coleslaw, Cornbread,

Classic Chicken Salad, Vegetarian Protein: Vegan

Plant-Based Chik'n Strips, and Honey Bun Cake

## CLERGY CORNER CONTINUED...

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. ~ Colossians 3:12-17



This month our Preschool theme is Book Fair: The Bible Teaches Me the Best Things! There are a lot of books that teach a lot of things. But there is only one book that teaches the best things – things like how to live for God, hear from God, pray to God, and talk about God to others. We can find all of those best things in the Bible! Our monthly verse is John 17:17.

This month's elementary theme is Gameplan: Growing Stronger in Faith Every Day! Practicing something every day helps you learn how to do it better. When we follow Jesus and actually live out the things we hear and learn, the Holy Spirit helps our faith grow. Our monthly verse is 1 Timothy 4:8.

**Join us in the Children's Wing for our Sunday School and Worship Opportunities!**

- 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.

**S.P.R.C. ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is excited to announce the creation of an Executive Pastor position to support First-Centenary UMC's growing ministries. This role will provide strategic leadership over our financial and operational systems, enabling our congregation to continue to grow our missions and ministry.

We are thrilled to welcome Rev. Mary Thompson as our Executive Pastor beginning February 1st. Mary is coming to us from the Holston conference office where she has been serving as the Executive Director of Camping and Retreat Ministries for the last 9 years. She is married to Rev. Alex Thompson, a professor at Tennessee Wesleyan University, and mother to Beckett and Oliver. We look forward to welcoming Mary and her family in worship on February 8th.

This transition allows us to integrate the Business Manager responsibilities into the Executive Pastor role. Karen Gates, who has served faithfully in the Business Manager position for 18 years, will assist with Mary's onboarding to ensure continuity. We are deeply grateful for Karen's dedicated service and the countless ways she has supported our ministry. Our best wishes and prayers to Karen for the future.

Please do join in welcoming Mary and her family as they join our church community. ~ Sydney Crisp



**CENTENARY REPORT**

See the great things that went on at The Centenary in 2025 by scanning the QR code or visiting [firstcentenary.com/the-centenary](http://firstcentenary.com/the-centenary).



**KIDS NIGHT OUT 2026!**

Kids deserve a fun night out too! Drop kids off on **February 6th at 5:30 p.m. in the Student Center**, enjoy your evening, and know they're having a blast! This special event isn't just a great time for the kids—it's also a fundraiser for youth missions. **Suggested donation of \$25 per child with \$50 cap per family. Register now by filling out a form on our website's announcements page!**



**THE POWER OF SACRED SPACES**

What makes a space sacred? How do architecture and symbolism shape the way we worship and gather? Join us for a presentation on exploring *The Enduring Power of Sacred Spaces*, led by Todd Morgan, on **January 25th at 4:00 p.m. at Second Presbyterian Church**. This program will examine the elements that give sacred architecture its meaning, how these spaces have been used and adapted over time, and the modern challenges they face. **The presentation is free to attend and there will be a reception to follow.**

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Rev. Jason Gattis  
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Join other UMC churches from around the area for a special Movie Night on **February 6th at 6:00 p.m. in The Vine** featuring the "1946" documentary. The film explores the history of when the term "homosexual" was added to the Bible. This evening is an opportunity for learning and thoughtful conversation. Food will be available in Room 101/102, with the film screening in The Vine. A Q&A discussion will follow the screening to process and discuss the film together. **Free to attend, please visit our website to RSVP.** There will also be an optional donation opportunity to help cover the cost of the screening license.

**Sponsored by:** Holston LGBTQIA+ Ministries  
**In partnership with:** Wesley Center Chattanooga, St Mark's UMC, St Luke's UMC, St Elmo UMC, and First-Centenary UMC  
**Childcare will be available, please register for Kids Night Out.**

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

January 25th, 2026

**Sanctuary Services:**  
**8:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.**  
"Disciples' Blessings"  
Matthew 5:1-12  
Rev. Jason Gattis

**The Vine Service:**  
**10:45 a.m.**  
"The Vision of Ephesians, pt 1"  
Ephesians 2:1-10  
Rev. Dr. Will Lauderback

**Mustard Tree Service:**  
**5:00 p.m.**  
**The Vine**  
Rev. Barry Kidwell

**Lectionary Readings:**  
Isaiah 9:1-4  
Psalm 27:1, 4-9  
1 Corinthians 1:10-18  
Matthew 4:12-23

**WDEF-TV Televised Sermons:**  
**11:30 a.m. Sundays & 12:35 a.m. Mondays**  
"The Vision of Ephesians, pt 1"  
Rev. Dr. Will Lauderback