



RICHMOND FIRST TODAY

Growing Disciples who make a Difference

News from Your First United Methodist Church Family



Celebrate Epiphany: Follow the Star to Christ

Share your gifts, time, service with your church family in the New Year

Engage in holy imagination and discover new and creative ways to serve Christ and our community. Here are just a few opportunities to consider:

MMC Coordinating Committee: Let's expand our church's impact in Richmond and carry out the mission that built our Multi-Ministry Center (MMC). A committee to manage scheduling events/groups, creating fee structures, establishing policies, and improve outreach is being formed. Please let Jane Yerace or Kathy Combs know if you would like to be part of this effort.

Van Drivers & Helpers for Grocery Delivery Ministry:

New drivers are needed to qualify soon. Contact: Jane Yerace in the church office (859-623-3850); Dave Purvis, current regular driver (859-619-5246); or Jo Lynn Linville, loader/helper (817-271-3941).

Greeters, Sound Tech for First Service & Thrive:

Contact the Church Office to be directed to the right coordinator.

Make a Joyful Noise: Find your voice with the Sanctuary Choir. Rehearsals at 7:30 p.m. each Wednesday, *beginning Jan. 14*. See John Stegner to learn more.

Support the Methodist Mountain Mission: The mission truck will pick up donations on *Wednesday, Jan. 14*. Bring donations to the Hartman room, sanctuary building first floor. Most urgent needs: men's winter clothes; men's/women's winter coats; children's coats, shoes, and clothes; underwear, socks, belts, and men's shoes.

Wesleyan Covenant Service: Renew your commitment to your faith and community on *Sunday, Jan. 4* during worship. "Put me to do what thou wilt!"

January Birthdays



Matthew Bendure: 4th

Trudy Tait: 5th

Charles Perkins: 7th

Katie Upchurch: 7th

David Purvis: 9th

Jon Clevenger: 10th

Austin Higginbotham: 10th

Judy L. Adkins: 13th

Jeff Shearer: 13th

Adley Muncie: 13th

Maribeth Upchurch: 14th

Steve Miller: 15th

Suzanne Nayle: 17th

Peggy Brewer: 17th

Landen Higginbotham: 17th

Billy Way: 24th



Ministry Spotlight: Our church members' ministry to the community



Richmond FUMC has a rich history of supporting our community. Each ministry's work sustains both those who give and those who receive. Let's celebrate just some of the ways our congregation has reached out over the past year.

Kentucky Army National Guard: Men's Ministry distributed \$1,500 in gift cards to families of deployed service members.

Sharing Ministry: 306 families in need received a total \$14,360.

Madison Home: More than 1,300 lunches were made and delivered

Community Meals: Another 1,500 hot meals were served throughout the week.

Kentucky United Methodist Children's Home: Quilts were provided for incoming children, financial contributions exceeded \$1,500, and numerous gift cards were given to purchase both Christmas presents and necessities.

Aldersgate Camp: More than \$8,000 was given to help to rebuild the Lodge.

Flood Buckets: Cleaning supplies and over \$1,000 was given to aid those recovering from devastating floods in Eastern Kentucky.

Food Deliveries: Our team delivered weekly to more than 70 households with elderly and disabled people who were unable to pick up commodities from God's Outreach.

Wesley Foundation: Dedicated cooks provided Tuesday evening meals to Eastern Kentucky University students before worship services.

Financial Scholarships: Five ECU students received a total \$10,000 to support their education.

Methodist Mountain Mission: Truckloads of clothing and supplies were donated to support Eastern Kentuckians in need.

Operation Christmas Child: More than 75 shoeboxes will be shipped around the world.

Henderson Settlement: Our youth joined the District Youth Mission Week helping with clean-up efforts. United Women in Faith donated holiday supplies for low income families and led a retreat for women of the Central Appalachian Missionary District.

Vacation Bible School: Over 30 volunteers ministered to children from our church and the community.

Fall Festival: A large crowd of families including children and grandparents were welcomed in to celebrate the season.



Pastor's New Year Message



Beloved Church Family,

Happy New Year! As we turn the calendar page and look ahead, our hearts are fresh with anticipation for what God has in store for us. It's a time for resolutions, a time for new beginnings, and a time to re-anchor ourselves in the enduring mission Christ has given us. This year, our vision is clear: we are called to be a people who are "Making Disciples Who Make a Difference."



This vision is not just a catchy phrase; it is rooted deeply in the climax of Matthew's Gospel, what we call the Great Commission: "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18-20, ESV) Jesus has given us both the mission and the promise of His presence to ensure its success. The Magi were seekers: They journeyed from the East, following a star, seeking the newborn King. They had an *Epiphany*. They recognized Jesus not just as a local king, but as the Savior for all people—a revelation for the entire world. After worshiping Jesus and offering their gifts, they returned to their home country by a different road. Their encounter with Christ changed them and sent them back into the world as witnesses to the light they had seen.

This is our story, too. We have seen the light of Christ and had our own *Epiphanies*. Now, empowered by His authority and guided by His Spirit, we are called to GO. We are to be the modern-day Magi, carrying the light of Christ to a world often walking in darkness.

Our 2025 Theme "**We Are Part of It**" emphasizes that the Great Commission is for every believer, not just a select few. Each of us has a role in this grand mission. **Going:** We don't have to travel across the globe, though some of us will! Going means stepping out of our comfort zones—sharing the Gospel with someone at the grocery store, inviting a neighbor to church, or mentoring a new believer. **Baptizing & Teaching:** Discipleship is more than making converts; it's about making mature followers of Jesus. It means walking alongside others, teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded, and integrating them into the life of the church. **Making a Difference:** A true disciple of Jesus lives a life that reflects His character, making a tangible difference in their community and the world.

This year, let's move beyond being mere church members and embrace the fullness of being disciples. Let's commit to pouring into one another, building spiritual giants who, in turn, pour into others. My prayer for us is that by this time next year, we can look back and see a wave of ripple effects—new believers brought to faith, new leaders raised up, and our community transformed because we chose to be disciples who make a difference.

In His Service and for His Glory,
Rev. Eric Espada

Wednesday Night Live reopens Jan. 14

WNL will restart *at 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 14* with Chocolate Fest. Have a delicious Mexican dinner followed by a *showcase of classes to be offered in 2026.*

Bring your favorite chocolate dessert to share and you just might be a winner in a crazy chocolate contest. Categories could include: Young Bakers, Teen Champions, Lo-Sugar Scrumptious, Dark Demons, Winter White, and more. (Suggestions welcome.) What fest would be complete without a Hot Chocolate Bar! Come and enjoy the richness of fellowship.



Share love with the Blessing Trees



Our Blessing Trees brought so much joy over Christmas that we will continue them on into the new year. These trees are in the Sanctuary First Floor and MMC Lobby. Consider warm hats, gloves, and socks of all sizes, infant through adult, along with non-perishables such as canned meat, apple sauce cups, whole-grain crackers, and healthy cereal. Let's share the light of Christ throughout the year. **All coming through our church buildings are invited to share what they can and take what they need.**

Join your family at:

First United Methodist Church
401 West Main Street
Richmond, KY 40475
Phone: (859) 623-3580
office@richmondfumc.org

Sundays:

9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)
11 a.m. Thrive (MMC Gym)
12 p.m. Lunch

Wednesday Night Live:

5:30 p.m. Family Dinner (MMC Gym)
6:15 p.m. Class for Children, Youth, & Adults

Opportunities to Grow in the New Year

The New Year brings new opportunities to learn and grow in your faith. Be on lookout in January for new classes and even new ministries.

Interested in becoming a church member? Pastor Eric Espada will begin a new member class by the end of January so that you may make connections and find your place at Richmond First UMC. Contact the church office to learn more.



Keep your Stewardship Pledge with Pushpay



Winter weather sometimes keeps the hardiest of church members away from worship services. Offerings tend to drop on snowy and icy Sundays. You can still keep your promised pledge through Pushpay, even if you are unable to put your gift in the offering plate. Link through this QR code or visit the church website. You may want to consider using Pushpay to make scheduled donations or special gifts. Thank you for supporting your church family. You are a gift from God.



Come watch The Chosen Season 5 together *beginning Sunday, Jan. 11.* Meet at 2 p.m. each Sunday in the Parlor, located next to the sanctuary choir room. This season tells the stories of Holy Week through the Last Supper. This viewing group will follow a weekly rotation with an episode, aftershow discussions with staff and actors, and when available, Bible roundtables with writers and scholars from different faiths. All are welcome and it is easy to catch up if you have not seen the first 4 seasons yet. For more information contact Jo Lynn Linville at 817-271-3941 (text) or jolinville476@gmail.com.