



AUGUST 2026

# RICHMOND FIRST TODAY

*Growing Disciples who make a Difference*

News from Your First United Methodist Church Family



## Gather for the Church Picnic at Catalpo Park

Come join the food and fellowship with your church family on **Sunday, Aug. 9**. Festivities, games and activities will begin by 3 p.m., including Disc Golf and accessible Walking Trails. Dinner starts at 5 p.m. Bring your favorite side dish or dessert, and a friend. Invite your neighbors, co-workers, and classmates to show them what love and community are all about. Main dish and tableware will be provided. There will be fun for everyone.



## Build your Operation Christmas Child boxes

Start putting together boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Bring them to church beginning **Aug. 9 through Sept. 6**.

Organizers report the greatest need is boxes for older children, particularly boys. Learn more at [SamaritansPurse.org](http://SamaritansPurse.org).

### Celebrating August Birthdays

|                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Dale Emmons: 1st         | Emily Upchurch: 17th          |
| Bert Cartwright: 1st     | Lauren Upchurch: 17th         |
| Jonathan Kleppinger: 1st | Laura Barker: 18th            |
| Alison Emmons: 2nd       | Pat Miller: 19th              |
| Kaitlyn Cain: 2nd        | Tine Grijalba: 21st           |
| Gene Strange: 4th        | Alex Fassas: 21st             |
| Betty Jo Thompson: 6th   | Mikayla (Ballard) Ayala: 24th |
| Sue Mahanna-Boden: 15th  | Beth Roane: 28th              |
| Daniel Rice: 16th        | Audrey Tracy: 30th            |

### BACK TO SCHOOL Backpack Blessing

Bring your school bookbag to church for **Sunday, Aug. 9** services and the **Blessing of the Backpacks**. Back to School bookmarks also are available to inspire 13 Days of Prayer leading up to **start of school on August 13**. Join for community prayer in the MMC chapel that day at 9 a.m.

## Building the Community Prayer Ministry Together

Our Prayer Team wants to help the congregation work towards a deeper heart connection with God, with others in our church, and with those in our communities. You will see periodically a seasonal prayer focus, such as Thanksgiving and Advent.

**Gather in the MMC Chapel at 9 a.m. on Aug. 13 to pray for our children on the first day of school.** Back to School bookmarks will guide you in praying for students in the 13 days leading up to the start of classes. Please pick them up at the church office or contact one of the Prayer Team members: Rindy Russell, Marsha Maupin, Bel Riley, Robbie Riley, and Maribeth Upchurch.

Please also join others in prayer on Mondays at 5:15 in the MMC Chapel. You are always welcome to pray in silence, share prayer aloud, or just come to experience the Spirit flowing from hearts connected with God and with each other. Prayer requests also may be emailed confidentially to [prayer@richmondfumc.org](mailto:prayer@richmondfumc.org) and the church website at <https://richmondfumc.org/connect/>.



Come & Worship

Come Holy Spirit

### *Unity in Prayer*

“For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am among them.” Matthew 18:20 (NLT)

Father God, as we join in worship and pray together, we are grateful you are in our midst. May you give us strength in encouraging each other as we step forward in serving our church family and our community. Amen.

**Join us for “One Hour of Prayer”  
at 5:15 p.m.  
each Monday in the MMC Chapel.**

### **Join your family at:**

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

### **Sundays:**

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

**Wednesday Night Live meals and classes will resume in September! Have a great summer!**

## Church finances better in first half of 2026

The Finance Committee reports that the church had a positive cash flow during the first half of the year, and The Growing Place enrollment is up and serving 15 more children since new director Kristen McDowell came on board this spring.

Those two budgets are separate, but both the church and the day care reported good finances.

Reserve funds had to be drawn from the Endowment Fund, injecting \$12,000 to make church staff payroll in May. However, even before those funds were added, church finances were in better shape than this time last year. And, thanks to additional giving and delayed pledges, we were able to end July with sufficient funds to cover expenses.

Finance Chair Stacy Russell thanks the church staff for holding expenses tightly in the first half of the year and to all the Growing Place staff who have worked so hard caring for children.

"Let's keep it going in the second half of 2026," he said.



## Beth Roane takes on church library duties

Meet Beth Roane, Richmond FUMC's Librarian. Beth is a retired school librarian with a degree in Library Sciences. She and her team have worked tirelessly to organize and update the church library. Please stop by and see what great work she and her team have done. In order to keep our library relevant, donations to the library should be coordinated with Beth. Please call her before bringing donations to the church. She can be reached at 859-227-2723.



## Check out what's coming ahead this fall

### Dream Session: Imaging who we can be



Let's take time to reflect on our first year of ministry with Pastor Eric Espada and build on the Onboarding conversations from last summer.

We will gather in the MMC on **Wednesday, Sept. 16**, beginning with dinner at 5:15 p.m. and discussions at 6 p.m. This gives us opportunity to celebrate God's work among us and discern God's vision for the future of Richmond First United Methodist Church. The Dream Session invites honest conversation and faith reflection as we embrace a shared vision and mission plan.

We hope to further strengthen the partnership amongst the pastor, staff, and congregation, and inspire our ministry in the years ahead.

We will consider a series of questions on Looking Back, Looking Ahead, Discipleship & Spiritual Growth, Mission & Outreach, Leadership & Partnership, and Dreaming Together. Our goal is to embrace congregational input and develop a 3-to-5 year shared vision plan that will provide direction for our congregation and our ministries.

## Wednesday Night Live begins in September



Wednesday Night Live classes will start back up on Sept. 23. We are still working on adding a class or two, but the following are confirmed class offerings.

If you would like to lead / teach a class, please call the church office and talk with either Pastor Eric or Jane Yerace.

**Wednesday Friends** – ONE in THIRTY. A highly participative scripture study on some of the most familiar and glossed over scriptures that we know in the Bible. We will explore one verse every 30 minutes, totaling two verses per session.

Come hear how others interpret and receive these "Well Known" Bible verses. You may find yourself with new revelation! Room 202 in the MMC. Led by Pam Rye.

**Devotional Quilting** – Learn how to sew/quilt or build your existing skills. Participate in a weekly devotional and spend time building friendships as you create something beautiful! Room 114 in the MMC. Led by Jane Yerace.

**Be Still Meditation Group** – This is a time to quiet our busy minds. We will enjoy a short devotion and a period of silence. Come and be still with us as we find community in the practice of Christian meditation. The Group meets in the MMC Room 204. Led by Sarah Beth Speciale.

**Books of the Bible / Going Deeper** – This class will be multi-faceted. We will explore the current sermon series as well as jump into scripture. Room 213 in the MMC. Led by Pastor Eric Espada.

## Message from our pastor

### Preparing for a new season

Hello beautiful church!  
August brings a new season of worship, fellowship, and spiritual growth at Richmond First United Methodist Church.



Our new sermon series *Questions Jesus Asked* will explore the powerful questions Jesus used to awaken faith, reveal truth, and transform lives.

These questions still speak to us today, inviting us to examine our hearts and follow Christ more faithfully.

We also celebrate our youth, young adults, and Wesley Foundation students who participated in summer camp at Aldersgate. Their involvement reminds us that God is working through the next generation. As we continue experiencing a season of breakthrough and growing as a community of faith, we invite everyone to join our church-wide picnic on August 9 for food, fellowship, and celebration.

A new semester of discipleship is starting in September and we want to make sure you know early so you can be a part of it. Did you know that our church offers 12 opportunities for spiritual growth through Sunday school, Zoom gatherings, weekly studies, and Wednesday night classes? The question is: Are you part of one? There is a place for everyone to learn, connect, and grow.

Let us begin this new season together—  
Devoted, Empowered, and Committed—as  
disciples who make a difference!

Your pastor, Eric

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Eric'.

## Food pantry to open

Let's restart our church food pantry. The office receives many phone calls during the week from hungry people seeking food. Our pantry would be small and we would give out only one small bag to those asking. But, something is better than nothing. You can contribute to this effort by bringing non-perishable food to the church office or donating by check or PushPay (and we will do the shopping).



Pushpay for  
Food Pantry

Help those with food insecurities in our community. Call the church office with questions.

## Shop and Share



Help United Methodist Men make a difference in our community. If you have a Kroger Plus Shopper's Card, go to Kroger's webpage:  
<https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow#!>

Register your card number, then please LINK your Kroger Plus Shopper's Card to First United Methodist Church Men's Ministry (#11679).

If you do not yet have a Kroger Plus Card, you can obtain one from the Customer Service desk at any Kroger or from a member of Men's Ministry.