



APRIL 2026

# RICHMOND FIRST TODAY

*Growing Disciples who make a Difference*

**News from Your First United Methodist Church Family**

## He is Risen: Celebrate the Full Story in Holy Week

Holy Week Services will be held each day at noon from March 30 through April 3 at First Presbyterian Church, 330 W. Main Street. The event coordinated by the Richmond Area Ministerial Association (RAMA) will include our own Pastor Eric Espada preaching on Tuesday and our beloved Rev. Mary Lou Stephens preaching on Thursday. A luncheon will be served on Friday.



**Still no  
Canceled**



Join this interactive, intergenerational experience on **Wednesday, April 1**, in the MMC. We'll eat at 5:30 p.m. then learn together through the **Stations of the Cross** with activities for adults and children. A special **Glow in the Dark Easter Egg Hunt** will begin afterwards at 7:15 p.m.

Make reservations for the **Passover Seder Dinner and Service on Maundy Thursday, April 2**. Cost is \$15 per person and \$45 per family. Scholarships are available. There is no cost for children under age 5. Purchase tickets by calling the church office or on Pushpay.



**Good Friday Service** will be held at 6:30 p.m., April 3, in the Sanctuary.

## Easter Sunday: Hallelujah

**7 a.m.** Sunrise Service on church front steps weather permitting, or in the MMC Chapel

**9:30 a.m.** Service in the Sanctuary

**11 a.m.** Thrive Service in the MMC Gym

### April Birthdays

Deborah Whitehouse: 2nd  
Roger Whitehouse: 2nd  
Janet Alexander: 3rd  
Paul Kleppinger: 3rd  
Dana Rose Kleppinger: 3rd  
Bradley Barker: 4th  
Lauren Wills: 5th  
Belinda Cook: 6th  
Jeff Babbitt: 7th  
Laura Bauer: 8th  
Robbie Riley: 9th  
Linda Higgs: 10th  
Elizabeth Morrow: 12th  
Robert Rogow: 13th  
Kathryn Phelps: 13th  
Alyssa Cartwright: 13th  
Chris Nettleton: 15th  
Jaime Stewart: 17th  
Joe Bentley: 21st  
Caroline Shearer: 22nd  
John Stegner: 26th  
Nate Kleppinger: 28th  
Tyger Williams: 30th



*Celebrate birthdays after 9:30 service on Sunday, April 10*



**Wednesday Night Live  
Family Dinner**

5:30 to 6:15 p.m.

**April 1:** Grilled Cheese  
Tomato Soup  
Vegetable Beef Soup  
Chips & Brownies

**April 8:** Hot Dogs  
Chili, Baked Beans  
Macaroni  
Cole Slaw  
Chips & Cookies

**April 15:** Meatloaf  
Mashed Potatoes & Gravy  
Green Beans  
Watergate Salad  
Strawberry Shortcake

**April 22:** Pork Fried Rice  
Broccoli  
Salad  
Cornbread  
Cake

**April 29:** Lasagna  
Tossed Salad  
Corn  
Garlic Bread  
Bread Pudding

## Volunteers, Supplies Needed

**Red Bird Mission** needs your help with some specific supplies for folks with special needs: liquid hand soap, strawberry flavored Ensure or Boost, personal cleaning wipes, size 2X adult diapers with tabs, size 3X adult underwear style Depends with no tabs, and 9 volt batteries.



You may give supplies to Jennifer Taylor or have them shipped directly to Red Bird: Tracy Nolan, Red Bird Mission, 70 Queendale Center, Beverly, KY 40913.

Take a day or week to help directly at Red Bird Mission and support our Appalachian neighbors the week of. **Jennifer Taylor will lead a group down April 26 - May 1**, but you may also drive on your own. Volunteer quarters are free, but registration is required. Plan to pay for meals cooked at the work camp or cafe or bring your own food to cook.

The team primarily will help unloading groceries and produce donations, building and loading food boxes, and sorting in the Christmas room. Sorting, straightening, and stocking The Community Store is an option, too. Contact Jennifer Taylor for more information at. 270-535-6304 or cacgr2@yahoo.com.

CINCINNATI  
**ZOO**  
AND BOTANICAL GARDEN

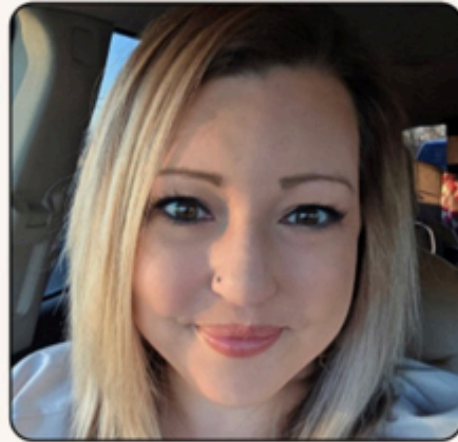
All Church Zoo Trip  
Saturday, April 11  
Check with Amanda Bonner  
for more information.



# Meet the New Director of The Growing Place

## HELLO, I'M

**KRISTEN  
MCPowell**



## ABOUT ME

I earned my degree in Elementary Education from ECU in 2008. Over the years, I have dedicated eight years to teaching, primarily in lower primary settings. Additionally, I spent eight years as a stay-at-home mom, and most recently,

I was the Life Enrichment Director at Dominion Senior Living. I'm excited to begin my next adventure as TGP Director!

## WHY TGP?

I have a rich history with The Growing Place. During my college years, I worked here for several years, even alongside Ms. Sylvia! My eldest son started preschool in the part-time program, and I currently have two children enrolled. I am personally invested in this center and want to see it thrive!

## MY FAMILY



## THINGS I LOVE

- My five kids: Levi (14), Ethan (11), Sadie (9), Marleigh Jo (6) & Bryson (1)
- My two dogs: Pearl & Remi
- My two cats: Trixie & Luna
- Fostering



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.



**Support our immigrant neighbors**  
Join our Kentucky Annual Conference and Embrace UMC in Lexington for a one day workshop from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 25 on the theological foundation and practical tools to support local immigrant communities. See Ginny Whitehouse for more information and car pooling.

## Keep your Stewardship Pledge with Pushpay



Spring and Summer travel may mean missing Sunday services. 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.

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## Message from our pastor

### Experiencing Resurrection Power Together

Dear Church Family,

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! As we journey through this beautiful Easter season, we are reminded that resurrection is not just an event we celebrate—it is a power we experience. **The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is alive and at work among us today, bringing new life, renewed hope, and transformed hearts.**



We celebrate with joy all that God is doing in our midst: lives are being touched and renewed, faith is growing deeper in our community as we welcome new members and friends, and new opportunities for connection and outreach are opening up.

We see it in our worship, in our small groups, in shared meals, and in simple acts of love. God is moving—not just in big moments, but in everyday faithfulness.

Resurrection power calls us forward:

- Devoted – rooted in prayer, Scripture, and community
- Empowered – led by the Holy Spirit to step out in faith
- Committed – choosing daily to follow Jesus and reflect His love

This is not just about personal growth—it is about being a people sent into the world to embody hope. As we look to the future, we do so with expectation. God is not finished with us yet. There are more people to reach. More tables to open. More barriers to break. More stories of transformation to be written. We believe God is calling us to expand our vision—to be a church that not only gathers, but goes; not only believes, but lives out the gospel in tangible ways.

You are part of this story. This Easter season, you are invited to:

- Step deeper into community
- Share life with someone new
- Serve with joy and intention
- Pray boldly for God to use you

Together, let us be a people who reflect the risen Christ—not only in word, but in action.

A Final Word: Resurrection is still happening. In you. In us. Through us. May we walk forward with courage, gratitude, and expectancy—trusting that the God who raised Jesus is continuing to bring life to our church and beyond. With hope and joy,

Rev. Eric Espada