

THE
METHODIST
WITNESS

*free to serve
free to welcome
free to give*

*Free to
Love*

FREE TO LOVE



Dear Friends,

This July, the United States will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. We will give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy and remember the generations who have worked, sacrificed, and hoped for a nation shaped by liberty.

The Christian faith has its own powerful vision of freedom. Paul writes, “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become servants to one another” (Galatians 5:13).

We sometimes define freedom as the ability to do whatever we want—to make our own choices without anyone telling us what to do. There is something important about being free from coercion and oppression. But simply doing whatever we want is not the deepest kind of freedom. Our desires can be distorted by fear, resentment, greed, and selfishness. Doing whatever we want can leave us enslaved to the very things from which Christ came to set us free.

For Paul, freedom has a purpose. We are set free so that we can love. Christ frees us from fear so that we can live with courage. Christ frees us from resentment so that we can forgive. Christ

frees us from selfishness so that we can become generous. Christ frees us from the need always to protect ourselves so that we can open our lives to our neighbors. Real freedom is not the power to do whatever we want. Real freedom is the capacity to love. That is the kind of freedom our nation desperately needs: freedom that becomes compassion, hospitality, service, justice, and mercy. At First United Methodist Church, we practice this freedom whenever we welcome the curious, the uncertain, and those who have been hurt by the church. We practice it when we feed the hungry, teach children, care for the lonely, serve our community, and make room for someone new.

As our nation marks 250 years, may we give thanks for freedom—and may we use it well. May Christ make us free from fear, hatred, and the smallness of living only for ourselves. And may Christ make us **free to serve, free to welcome, free to give, and free to love.**

Practice Resurrection,

Geoffrey

Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Lentz
Senior Pastor

ADAM HAMILTON

Author of Creed, Wrestling with Doubt, and The Message of Jesus



THE

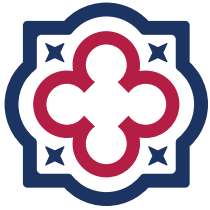
HOLY
SPIRIT

GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER
AT WORK IN US

Summer Sunday School Sessions

Through August 2 | 9:45-10:45am
The Wright Place, Great Hall

Pastor Emily will be leading Summer Sessions in the Wright Place Great Hall during Sunday School, 9:45 - 10:40am each Sunday through August 2 (with the exception of July 5 due to the holiday weekend). We will be studying Adam Hamilton's new study on **the Holy Spirit**. Participant books are available through cokesbury.com or [Amazon](http://Amazon.com). There are copies available for purchase for \$17 in the Church Office. All are welcome - come learn with us!



BEULAH CHAPEL OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

All of Us, Sent Again Beulah Chapel Founding Team

One of the greatest privileges of Founders' Year is that we have the opportunity to do something that has always been part of the Methodist movement: **plant a new congregation.**

This August, First United Methodist Church will begin a new worshipping community at **Beulah Chapel**. We are not simply opening another building. We are extending the ministry of First Church into a growing part of our community so that more people may come to know the love of Jesus Christ.

From the days of the circuit riders, Methodists have always believed the Church should go where people are. We have never been content simply to wait for people to come to us. We have always been a people who are sent.

That is why our Founders' Year theme, "**All of Us, Sent Again,**" fits this moment so perfectly.

Here's what that means.

Every member of First Church is part of the launch.

Whether you pray for this ministry, give to support it, invite a friend, volunteer, or simply celebrate what God is doing, you are helping launch Beulah Chapel. This is not another church. It is our church, carrying the mission of First Church into a new community.

At the same time, every new congregation needs a group of people willing to make a special commitment. Over the next several weeks, we will be inviting approximately **30 people** to become the **Founding Team** of Beulah Chapel.

The Founding Team will commit to worship there faithfully during the first nine months, welcome every guest with genuine hospitality, build relationships, serve in ministry, and help establish the culture and spirit of this new congregation. They will be the steady, joyful presence that allows a new church family to take root and flourish.

Think of the Founding Team as missionaries sent from First Church—not leaving their church behind, but extending its reach.

Could God be calling you to be one of those thirty?

If so, begin praying now. Ask where God might be sending you next. In the weeks ahead, we'll share more about this opportunity and what the commitment will involve. You can contact Pastor Brennan (BPeacock@FUMCPensacola.com) if you would like to get involved.

This is a remarkable moment in the life of First Church. Years from now, people will look back and say, "*I was there when Beulah Chapel began.*" Some will even be able to say, "*I was part of the Founding Team.*"

What a joy it is to know that God is still calling, still sending, and still planting new life.

All of us, sent again.



“Join us as we build an inclusive community that welcomes all and helps each person become a deeply committed Christian.”

REV. BRENNAN PEACOCK
ICON & Beulah Chapel Pastor



**BEGINNING
AUGUST 23**



**SUNDAYS
at 9:00AM**



**6200 WEST
NINE MILE RD**

get to know REV. LAUREN COWAN

Youth Pastor

Rev. Lauren Cowan is a Florida Panhandle native, being born in Panama City Beach, Florida and as a daughter of a United Methodist minister, considers herself a “cradle Methodist.”

Rev. Cowan spent the majority of her growing up in Montgomery, AL, graduating from Saint James School in 2016, and Huntingdon College in 2020. She considers First United Methodist Church of Montgomery, AL to be one of her “home churches” as she was confirmed, married, and studied as a college intern there. It is also the church where she became a certified candidate for ordained ministry. She studied seminary at Candler School of Theology at Emory University where she served as a Licensed Local Pastor of Bethel United Methodist Church in North Hall County, Georgia as a part of her Teaching Parish Contextual Education Program.

After graduating from Candler in 2023, she was appointed as the Associate Pastor of First United Methodist Church of Marianna where she has mostly focused on children, youth, and ministry to young families. At this year’s Annual Conference, Rev. Cowan was commissioned to be a Provisional Deacon of the Alabama West Florida Conference which was particularly special being hosted at FUMC Pensacola.

Rev. Cowan approaches ministry with a spirit of fun and excitement while also grounding herself in letting the Gospel bring redemption to the real lives of everyday people, particularly young people! Lauren is married to Cody Cowan and they have two children, John Parker (3) and Woods (2) who will be attending The Methodist Children’s Academy (MCA). They are thrilled to be joining the FUMC Pensacola family!



WELCOME RECEPTION

Sunday, July 12 | 9:30 - 10:45am

The Wright Place, Dining Room

Join us as we give a warm First Church welcome to our new Youth Pastor, Rev. Lauren Cowan and her family!

FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF PENSACOLA

TRUST THE PROCESS

FIRST CHURCH YOUTH LEARN TO TAKE EACH STEP WITH A PURPOSE



July 19 through 25, a group of thirty-seven youth and chaperones from First Church will participate in Wilderness Trail, an annual trip to the hills of Virginia for a week of hiking, friendship building, and growing closer to God. As part of Wilderness Trail, youth learn to step out of their comfort zones and into the beauty of God's creation. Groups of around eight people hike for multiple days on the Appalachian Trail and surrounding areas. Students spend their days walking together, making space for quiet times, washing one another's feet, playing in the rain, serving, celebrating secret friends, and sharing meals, all while learning to let go of the worries and thoughts of daily life and instead "trust the process."

During their hike, students are encouraged to notice "little foxes" and "holy grounds." Little foxes are negative things in our day that can steal our joy and cause us to lose focus on God. Holy grounds are moments where we notice God at work in our lives and in the lives of others. Each evening around the campfire, hikers are invited to share their little foxes and holy grounds during the nightly devotion. Through this process, the hikers learn to follow Galatians 6:2, which teaches us "to bear each other's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Many of the youth who participate in Wilderness Trail describe the trip as one of the most transformational events in their lives each year. For many, that impact continues long after the hike ends, and several former First Church youth have returned to Wilderness Trail to serve as Summer and Junior Staff and help create that same experience for others.

Wilderness Trail operates out of a small town called Troutdale, in the southwest corner of Virginia. Wilderness Trail is located near Mount Rogers, the highest point in Virginia, about twelve miles from Damascus, Virginia. Learn about the Wilderness Trail ministry at wtrail.com.

STUDENTS:

Jeffrey Ball
Edie Brown
Sophia Burke
Lainey Cornner
Gianna Deyell
Bailey Fitzgerald
Molly Fitzgerald
Cameron Fitzgerald
Roey Foreman
Peyton Gagnet
Amelia Hartgrave
Wheeler Henderson
Jones Hess
Owen Houghton
Nathan Hulstrand,
Alexandra Johnson
Lawson Killingsworth
Ruth Kincaid
Aiden Lamarche
Hylan Lamarche

Annabelle Layne
Eliza Lentz
Madeline Macgregor
Jack McAuley
Henry Minard
Collin Porto
Chloe Stump
Henry Weis
Malia White
Helen Lauderdale

CHAPERONES:

Sean Fitzgerald
Cam Johnson
Christy Stump
Heather Gagnet
Rainer Minard
Rick Branch
Denise Van Atta

WILDERNESS TRAIL DINNER

Wednesday, July 29 | 5:00 - 6:30pm | The Wright Place

[Click HERE](#) or scan QR code to Register



Join the Youth Ministry for dinner to hear stories about their adventures and be a witness to their spiritual formation that they experienced up in the mountains. Cost for dinner is \$10/Adult, \$4/Child, with a max family cost of \$27. A love offering will also be taken. Dinner is at 5:00pm in The Wright Place. Sharing time will follow around 5:30pm. Menu is burgers, chips, watermelon, and cookies!



**CHURCH-WIDE BLUE LAKE RETREAT
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!**

*October 16 - 18 | (Friday Night - Sunday Morning)
Blue Lake, Andalusia, AL*

The weekend will include break out sessions, pumpkin carving, canoeing, roasting marshmallows, playing games, and fellowshiping!

Visit FUMCPensacola.com/Retreat or scan the QR code to register!



SERVE TOGETHER SPOTLIGHT

Serve Together is how we live out our calling at First Church — by using our gifts to serve God, one another, and our community. Throughout the year, opportunities are available both inside our church and beyond our walls, and we regularly share an updated Immediate Needs (at FUMCPensacola.com/Serve) list highlighting where help is most needed right now. Our featured immediate need is:



SUMMER RESPITE MINISTRY VOLUNTEER

First Church Respite Ministry provides a safe, joyful, and engaging environment for individuals living with dementia while offering their caregivers meaningful time for rest and renewal.

Need: 5 Respite Volunteers (Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:00am – 2:00pm)

Why It Matters: These volunteers allow us to welcome individuals currently on our waitlist and allows us to continue ministry during the busy summer months.

Contact: Kirstin Gartner | KGartner@fumcpensacola.com

FIRST CHURCH CARES

Congregational Care Ministry of FUMC Pensacola

If you would like to add an announcement or purchase flowers please contact: Ginger Raines at GRaines@FUMCPensacola.com

LOVE & REMEMBRANCE

Loved ones who have died:

We offer our christian love and sympathy to:

The Tindall family on the loss of their two daughters, **Iris** (8) and **Juniper** (5) on June 8, 2026.

BAPTISMS

Adeline Loyes Wilder was baptized on Sunday, June 14, 2026. Adeline is the daughter of Eden & Zach Wilder.

WORDS OF GRATITUDE

The Espersen family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to their church family and friends for all the thoughts and prayers after Bob Espersen's passing.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

You may place flowers in the Sanctuary in honor, celebration or memory of someone. The arrangements are \$65.00 each.

June 7: **In loving memory of Jim Moulton** by his family.

June 14: **In celebration of Adeline Wilder's baptism** by her family.

June 21: **In honor of Liz Lentz, Brian Kincaid, and Heidi Branch** for their service to our church.

June 28: **In loving memory of Marilyn Jones** by her family, Murray Jones, Derek and Julie, Preston, Meryl, Cameron, and Harrison Jones.

THE LIVING TRUST JUNE 4 - 30, 2026

The Living Trust is a special fund set up to receive gifts for memorials that you may wish to give in memory of or in honor of an individual. This is given to meet extra needs of the church above those of the annual budget. **If you would like to give towards The Living Trust, contact the finance department (accounting@FUMCPensacola.com).**

IN MEMORY OF:

Marilyn Jones

By Charlene VanBurkleo
By Russ Willis
By Joann Saffko
By Courtney Callihan
By Griff and Julie Vickery

Dale Johnson

By Diane and Gary Folse

Pat Brinson

For the Brinson Laney Music Scholarship
By Ruth Sneed

WHAT'S HAPPENING at FIRST CHURCH for

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is our mission here at First Church. John Wesley believed that to be formed as a disciple, as a follower of Jesus, you need the large community (the church). But where the real Christian formation happened was in the small groups of the class meetings and then even smaller groups of about 5 people.

Rev. Emily Kincaid

Associate Pastor

EKincaid@FUMCPensacola.com

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

Sunday, August 30 | 12:00pm

The Wright Place, Great Hall

[Click HERE to Register](#)

United Women in Faith (UWFaith, formerly United Methodist Women)

invites all women of the church to a complimentary luncheon at 12:00 pm on Saturday, August 30, in the Wright Place, Great Hall. This special gathering is an opportunity to learn more about the ministries and activities of UWFaith and connect with other women in our church family. We hope you'll join us—we look forward to seeing you there!



MAHJONG - LET'S LEARN TO PLAY TOGETHER!

Thursday, July 30 | 5:30 - 8:00pm

The Consulate Cafe' | No Cost

Spaces are Limited!

[Click HERE to Register by July 28](#)

Join us for a fun filled evening of fellowship with friends and learn how to play Mahjong! . Light refreshments will be provided.



FIRST KIDS

First Kids is our children's ministry at First Church. All children 3 years old (as of Sept. 1, 2024) through the 5th grade are invited to be a part of this ministry. We have a great time connecting with each other while singing, playing, learning about God, and learning about ourselves.

Lisa Bond

Director of Children's Ministry

LBond@fumcpensacola.com

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sundays | 9:45 - 10:45am

Education Building

Children are invited to join us each week for engaging lessons, activities, and fellowship designed to help them grow in faith while having fun!

CAMP SMALLEDWIN

Wednesday, July 15 | 5:00 -

9:00pm | Education Building | \$5

[Click HERE to Register](#)

Designed for children who have completed Kindergarten - 2nd grade, Camp Smalledwin brings the excitement of camp into one fun evening. Kids will enjoy games, crafts, and a cozy campfire-style experience.



BLUE LAKE CAMP BLAST

Monday, July 20 - Friday, July 24

Check-In: Monday at 2:00pm;

Check-Out: Friday at 9:15am

Blue Lake Camp, Andalusia, AL

[Click HERE to Register](#)

Students who have completed 3rd-5th grades are invited to experience a week of summer camp filled with archery, crafts, field games, campfires, and more. Blue Lake Camp offers a memorable week of faith, friendship, and adventure.



GRANDPARENTS' GOOFY GOLF

Friday, July 31 | 5:00 - 7:00pm

Meet in The Wright Place | \$8

[Click HERE to Register](#)

Children and their grandparents are invited for an evening of mini golf, fellowship, and fun! We will meet in the Wright Place - Dining Hall for a Pizza Dinner and then head over on the church buses to the Historic Pensacola Goofy Golf. If you choose to pass on pizza, then please meet us at Goofy Golf (3924 W Navy Blvd, Pensacola, FL 32507) at 6:00pm. Registration required.



END OF SUMMER SPLASH

Wednesday, August 5

5:00 - 7:00pm | Front Lawn

Celebrate the end of summer with a giant waterslide, hot dogs, and plenty of family fun. This annual event is a great way to connect with friends before the school year begins.

FIRST STUDENTS

First Students is our youth ministry at First Church for students in the 6th-12th grades. We have many combined activities and occasionally separate into mid-high and senior-high activities.

Denise Van Atta

Interim Student Ministries Director

DVanAtta@fumcpensacola.com

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sundays | 9:45 - 10:45am

Students are still meeting for Sunday School over the summer. We look forward to seeing your student with us on Sunday mornings!

Continued on Next Page....

FIRST STUDENTS CONT.

ALABAMA RURAL MINISTRY MISSION TRIP

July 5-11

Please pray for our team as they travel to Tuskegee. They will be providing VBS to a group of inner city students. Bella Trivison, Annabelle Layne, Molly Fitzgerald, Layla Scott, Eliza Jane Lentz, Lisa Bond and Denise Van Atta

WILDERNESS TRAIL

July 19-25

Wilderness Trail 2026 is kicking off on July 19! We will be spending three full days hiking through the Virginia Wilderness, among some of God's amazing landscapes. Please pray for the students and chaperones as they travel to Virginia and home. See Page 5 for more info.

MID-WEEK DINNER & WILDERNESS TRAIL SHARING TIME

Wednesday, July 29 | 5:00 - 6:30pm

The Wright Place

[Click HERE to Register](#)



Join the Youth Ministry for dinner to hear stories about their adventures and be a witness to their spiritual formation that they experienced up in the mountains. Cost for dinner is \$10/Adult, \$4/Child, with a max family cost of \$27. A love offering will also be taken. Dinner is at 5:00pm in The Wright Place. Sharing time will follow around 5:30pm. Menu is burgers, chips, watermelon, and cookies!

REV. LAUREN COWAN WELCOME RECEPTION

Sunday, July 12 | 9:30 - 10:45am

The Wright Place, Dining Room

Join us as we give a warm First Church welcome to our new Youth Pastor, Rev. Lauren Cowan, her husband Cody, and their two boys JP

(3) and Woods (2). We will enjoy cake and coffee.

REV. LAUREN COWAN YOUTH MEET & GREET

Sunday, July 12 | 4:30 - 6:30pm

Youth Building

This upcoming meet-and-greet is a special time exclusively for our youth to connect with our new youth pastor! Join us for food, games, and a great chance to get to know one another. Parents are asked to attend the welcome reception on Sunday morning.

SENIOR ADULTS

The Senior Adult ministry at First Church is for adults over the age of 50 (but all ages are welcome to participate). It provides opportunities for adults to be in community with one another and share in the gifts and graces of the more experienced members in our congregation.

Jennifer Piver

Director of Senior Adult Ministries
JPiver@FUMCPensacola.com

LUNCH OUT - CHEDDAR'S

Thursday, July 9 | 11:30am

[Click HERE to Register by July 7](#)



Join us for a fun-filled afternoon of fellowship and lunch at Cheddar's Scratch Kitchen. Their secret ingredient is cooking from scratch, and it makes for great tasting food at an even better value. That means Santa Fe Spinach Dip or Cheddar's Cheese Fries with your 50 Forward friends. It's warm, made-in-house Honey Butter Croissants and hand-breaded Chicken Tenders piled high that are perfect for sharing. Join us and feel free to bring a friend!

POPCORN & MOVIE - GIDGET (1959)

Tuesday, July 14 | 2:00pm - 4:00pm

The Wright Place | No Cost

[Click HERE to Register by July 21](#)



Lights, Camera, Popcorn!

Join us for an afternoon of fellowship! We will watch Gidget (1959), who follows Francie Lawrence, a spirited teen whose summer takes an unexpected turn when she discovers the thrill of surfing and gets drawn into California's vibrant beach culture. Balancing new friendships, personal growth, and a budding romance, she navigates identity and independence with charm. With Sandra Dee's engaging performance and its status as a beach-party genre pioneer, it's a lighthearted, feel-good classic worth watching for its cultural impact. Snacks will be served. Feel free to bring your family and friends!

XYZ TRIP - PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE'S 2026 S.H.O.W.

BYE BYE BIRDIE

Sunday, July 26 | 1000 College

Boulevard - Building 8 | Meet at PSC

@ 2:00pm | Show begins @ 2:30pm

\$19/ticket (Purchase at Church

Office by July 12 - seats sell out fast)

[Click HERE to Register](#)

[by July 12.](#)



Join us for a fun filled afternoon of fellowship as we gather at the Pensacola State College and watch their 2026 Summer High School Onstage Workshop production, Bye Bye Birdie. This is a musical comedy set in the 1950s, following teen heartthrob Conrad Birdie, who chooses All-American girl Kim MacAfee for a very public farewell kiss after being drafted. It's a loving send-up of small-town America, teenagers, and rock & roll, featuring well-known songs like Put On a Happy Face, The Telephone Hour, and A Lot of Livin' to Do.

Continued on Next Page....

SENIOR ADULTS CONT.

MAHJONG - LET'S LEARN TO PLAY TOGETHER!

Thursday, July 30 | 5:30 - 8:00pm
The Consulate Cafe' | No Cost
Spaces are Limited!

[Click HERE to Register by July 28](#)



Join us for a fun filled evening of fellowship with friends and learn how to play Mahjong! Do you enjoy playing games or want to learn how to play a new game? We are excited to begin a class for those interested in learning how to play Mahjong. Light refreshments will be provided.

GRANDPARENTS' GOOFY GOLF

Friday, July 31 | 5:00 - 7:00pm
Meet in The Wright Place | \$8

[Click HERE to Register](#)



Children and their grandparents are invited for an evening of mini golf, fellowship, and fun! We will meet in the Wright Place - Dining Hall for a Pizza Dinner and then head over on the church buses to the Historic Pensacola Goofy Golf. If you choose to pass on pizza, then please meet us at Goofy Golf (3924 W Navy Blvd, Pensacola, FL 32507) at 6:00pm. Registration required.

COFFEE WITH FRIENDS

Tuesdays | 9:30 - 10:30am
Church Library

We have a small, friendly group that meets each week for coffee and fellowship in the Church Library. We have no agenda other than to get out of the house and enjoy time with friends... new and old. Anyone is invited to join us. Coffee and pastries are provided.

GRAND MONDAY NIGHTS

Mondays | 7:00 - 8:00pm

Grand Monday Nights is a free weekly webinar to help you grow as a Christian grandparent. In these webinars, you'll get practical ideas and information on grandparenting, learn how to nurture your grandchildren's faith and overcome obstacles, and find encouragement. This is a ministry provided by the Legacy Coalition. Register at legacycoalition.com/grand-monday-nights.

QIGONG/TAI CHI WITH JEAN PARKER

Wednesdays & Fridays | \$5 per class
9:45 - 10:45am | Franklin Building

QIGONG, the "meditative martial art", has its roots in Chinese Medicine, and is a close cousin to the better-known tai chi. The slow, graceful motions are simple and repetitive, making the practice of qigong accessible to just about anyone. Join us and bring a friend! Dress comfortably. You can sit for class, or hold on to the back of a chair. Even lie down. For more information contact Jean (jeanp347@gmail.com).

SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES

IN-PERSON & ONLINE

8:30 & 11:00am in the Main Sanctuary
& ICON AT 11:00am in Wesley Abbey

stay connected   [fumcpensacola](http://fumcpensacola.com)



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

6 E. Wright St. • Pensacola, FL 32501 • 850.432.1434 • fumcpensacola.com
For pastoral emergencies, contact the Church Office or Ginger Raines at 850.259.3177