

SEPTEMBER 2025

The Messenger



"DO GOOD,
DO NO HARM, &
STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD"

A New Season of Faith and Fellowship

As we enter this vibrant new season together, I want to take a moment to celebrate the journey we have already begun and share with you the exciting path forward.

In these first few months at First UMC Alexandria, it has been a joy to lead our visioning series—laying a firm foundation for deepening our faith and living more fully into our shared mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. We have charted a clear course to get started, and now it is time to walk that path shoulder to shoulder.

This September, we will embark on a transformative new sermon series titled "Parables: Real World Wisdom." Jesus' parables offer timeless insight and practical guidance on how to live as His followers in today's world. Together, we will sit at the feet of our Savior, allowing His teachings to root us deeply as we seek to do life in Christ. This is a fresh beginning—a season of growth and outreach. I encourage each of us to be invitational this month, bringing new friends and neighbors along to discover the love and truths we cherish here. What better time than now to share the life-changing grace of Jesus with those around us?

September also marks the launch of The Gathering, a Wednesday evening experience starting at 5pm with a meal followed by a variety of enriching small groups at 6pm.

Join us for inspiring choir rehearsals with our gifted Music Director, Elizabeth Nix; engage with an innovative group exploring John Wesley's sermons powered by AI and led by Michael Polozola; or relax and connect in our Mahjong community group.

Families with children are warmly welcomed with a new Kid Zone for ages 4 and older and nursery care is provided complimentary for our littlest ones.

Preschool families, especially, we want you to feel at home and part of this exciting time. I am grateful to celebrate five new members who have joined us in this new chapter of ministry: Rachael, Caleb, and Olivia Rae Pickett, Carly Bratcher, and Paula Gates. Please extend a warm First UMC welcome to them as we grow our family in Christ. If you or someone you know is new to church or considering membership, please reach out to me at kennon@fumca.org. We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you more deeply into our community. New member and visitor luncheons will be scheduled quarterly to provide an opportunity to connect and grow together. The first will be Sunday October 19th at noon.

Finally, I ask all our members to join me in praying daily for our beloved preschool, which will hold its Open House on Labor Day. Let us lift our students, families, teachers, administrators, and directors for a year filled with health, learning, and faithful disciple-making. Our love for the FUMP families is at the heart of our ministry. As we move forward, I offer this word from the Apostle

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Sunday

Services

8:30 Grace Life

11:00 Traditional

Church Office

(318) 443-5696

Mon-Thur 9:00-3:00

Friday- 9:00-12:00

Paul's letter to the Colossians to guide us, "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." (Colossians 3:16, NIV).

May these words inspire us to live in harmony, encouraged and equipped by the wisdom of Christ, growing together in grace and truth. I bless each of you with peace, joy, and renewed strength for the journey ahead. Together, in faith and fellowship, we will continue to make First UMC of Alexandria a beacon of hope and love in our beloved Garden District and beyond

-With the Creator's Love,

Rev. Kennon

Youth and Children Programming

We've had a full summer, but FUMCA youth are already on to a new chapter! The new school year brings new opportunities: new friends, new teachers, new classes, new teammates, new games, new practices, new rehearsals, and sometimes new schools altogether. All that transition would challenge anyone, but our youth are taking it in stride. When I asked for prayer requests at a recent meeting, their prayer requests were selfless and outward-focused; they wanted to pray for others even in the midst of all the change in their own lives.

We had a fun school kickoff at the beginning of the month—Mudfest! A few of our neighbors from Pineville FUMC came over, and mud was most definitely involved (especially when it began to pour buckets of rain!) Shaving cream doodles, mud-covered kickball, and chill indoor games as we dried off from the rain tied us together as a group. We've announced our annual mission trip location: The Great Smokies! Our youth will be serving the communities of eastern Tennessee the first week of June, May 31—June 6, 2026. We'll be working hard (but we'll play hard, too). Join us, and bring a friend!

To support our mission the youth group will have fundraisers throughout the school year. So please be on the lookout for ways to support and enable our young Christians to be the hands and feet of Christ!

-Carly Bratcher

Program Director

Pre-school

First United Methodist Preschool is gearing up for another school year. Our official first day is September 2nd. FUMP has always begun our school year the day after Labor Day. It is a little confusing since we have babies enrolled here as young as 6 weeks old and their first day may have been this week. We have had a very busy summer, which we divide into 3 sessions. August 28th is the last day of our last session.

We have welcomed Pastor Kennon and the entire Pickett family with our handprints. The banner still hangs in the Fellowship Lounge.

We also said farewell to Pastor R.L. in June. The pastor's office windows border one side of the toddler playground. Leadership honored Pastor RL with a bench for the toddler playground. I only find this fitting since she would get much joy from having the children come up to the window while she was working and press their faces into the window. Their little hands would cup their eyes to allow for better vision inside RL would wave and talk with them through the glass. Now when she comes to visit or when Pastor Kennon needs a break, they can sit on a sturdy bench and speak to the children. Or maybe just listen to them

-Catherine Lytle

Pre-school Director



Music

Friends, I want to share with you one of my Spotify playlists for this fall season. What we listen to affects our health, immune system, attitude about life, and how we see ourselves and others. This playlist includes both songs that remind me to breathe and be present, as well as songs that fill me with energy and make me want to move more and smile. A few of the songs have aided me on my personal healing journey. I hope they inspire you, also. Some of these songs make me think of all of you at the church. We've sung them together on Sundays and were changed together; one step closer to Christ that we could all notice. I hope you enjoy listening.

-Elizabeth Nix
Director of Worship and Music
Ministries



Upcoming Sermon Series



This September at First UMC of Alexandria, we're going on a journey into the heart of Jesus' teaching through a series called "Parables: Real World Wisdom. These simple yet profound stories aren't just ancient tales—they are vibrant lessons for our everyday lives and faith from the Savior of the World.

Imagine a story where a stranger crosses every boundary to show unexpected kindness—what does that teach us about loving beyond limits? Or picture a shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to seek the one lost lamb—how deeply does that speak to God's relentless love for each of us?

We'll also explore how the tiniest seed can grow into a mighty tree, reminding us that faith often begins in small, surprising ways. And we will hear the challenge to build our lives on a foundation so strong that no storm can shake it.

Whether you're curious about faith or ready to deepen your discipleship, these parables invite us all to listen closely, reflect deeply, and live boldly. Come and discover the real-world wisdom Jesus offers for navigating life with hope, love, and strength. Bring a friend and see where these stories might lead you.



Solve the word search puzzle and drop by the office for a prize!

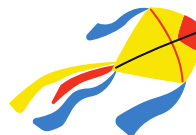
- | | | |
|-----------|------------------|--------|
| PRESCHOOL | UNITED METHODIST | CHURCH |
| PARABLES | ALEXANDRIA | SERMON |
| CHILDREN | FELLOWSHIP | YOUTH |
| WORSHIP | | MUSIC |

Upcoming Events

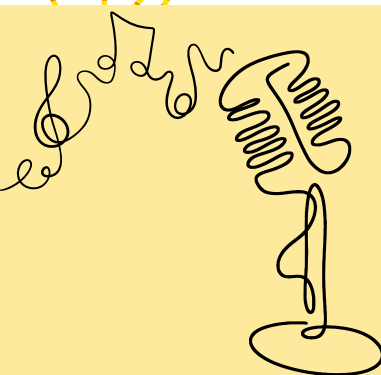


**KIDS
ZONE**
6 pm-7 pm

Childcare during
Wednesday night Programming
ages 2 and under: nursery
Pre-k and up:
Gym



Come sing your
heart out for the
Lord!



Contact Elizabeth
Nix at the Church
Office to hear about
the many ways you
can contribute!

**WEDNESDAY'S @
6:00 STARTING
SEPT. 3**

**NEW STUDY ABOUT
THE RETELLINGS OF
JOHN WESLEY'S
WORDS WITH
ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE. COME
EXPLORE WESLEY'S
WORK IN WITH AN AI
TAKE.**

WESLEY 2.0



Weekly Events

Monday

10:00 Staff Meeting

Tuesday

10:00 Centering

Prayer in Chapel

11:00 Art Class in Art
Studio

3:00 Farmers Market
in the parking lot
across the street

Wednesday

5:00 Gathering Meal
time

6:00 Small Groups

Thursday

5:30 Pickleball in
Johnson Center

Friday

1:00 Mahjong 50/50
room



Save the Date!

Serving the
SMOKIES

Youth Mission Trip 2026

May 31-June 6, 2026