

# Adult Formation Quarterly Newsletter



## Making 2025 the Year of Storytelling

Hello Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking the time to look through this newsletter. All Adult Sunday School classes will continue to receive weekly announcements in their folders and through Church Center, while quarterly newsletters will more thoroughly update classes on information pertinent to Adult Discipleship and Spiritual Formation.

This year, I am excited to offer studies, resources, and opportunities that compliment our sermon series focus for 2025: **God's Big Story**. It is my prayer that by end of 2025, you will have:

- gained a better understanding of the stories in scripture
- renewed your interest in our United Methodist story
- developed a greater appreciation for the importance and the art of storytelling
- become enthusiastic about sharing your own story
- learned to invite others to share their stories

I invite you to begin by considering which method of storytelling you most connect with. Do you connect with stories shared through language and literature? History and memoirs? Film and television? Investigative journalism? Interviews and podcasts? Music and songwriting? Art and photography? Videogames?

As a staff, we are looking for ways of incorporating all of these different mediums into our ministry programming throughout the year, so be on the lookout for opportunities to engage stories that speak to you.

It is our firm belief that everyone has a story, and that every story matters. I look forward to learning more about yours!

Grace and Peace,

*Rev. Madison Bobbitt*

**In this newsletter you can expect:**

Seasonal Reflections from Pastor Madison

Utilizing Church Center for Adult Formation

Descriptions of Upcoming Studies

Recommended Curriculum and Resources

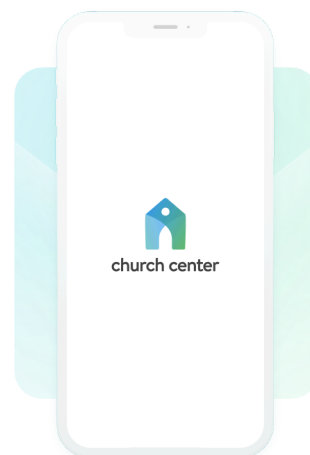
Updated Lists of Guest Teachers and Staff Availability

Special Sundays and Connectional Opportunities

# Utilizing Church Center for Adult Formation

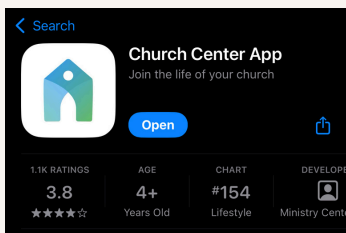
## Overview and Setup:

We encourage everyone in our community to get comfortable using “Church Center,” which you can access as an app on your smartphone, or through an internet browser. Follow the steps below to get set up (if you haven’t already) and then learn how the “Groups” feature will allow you to stay connected with your Sunday School class and any other adult studies.



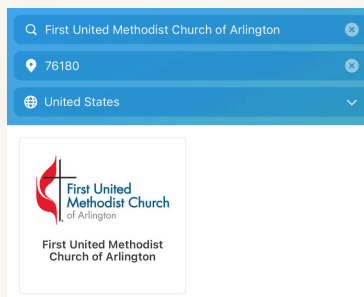
### 1. Open

Find in app store to access on smart phone or visit [firstumcarlington.churchcenter.com](http://firstumcarlington.churchcenter.com) to access on internet browser.



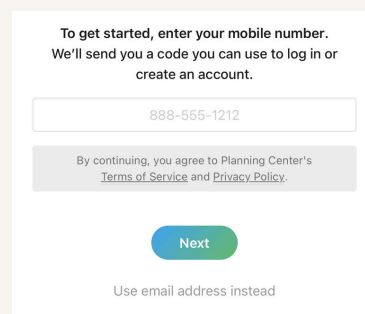
### 2. Find Our Church

Find our church by sharing location or typing in “First United Methodist Church of Arlington.”



### 3. Login

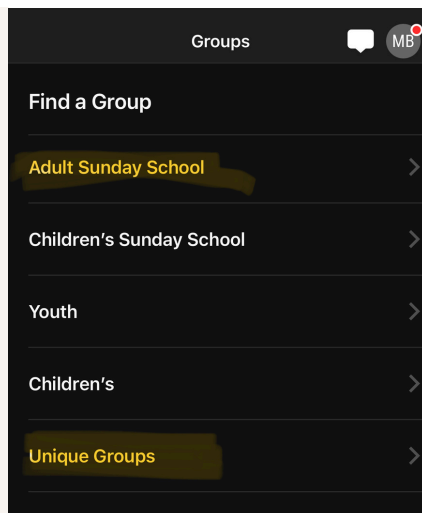
Follow the steps to login or create an account.



### 4. Find Groups

Find and click on the tab marked “Groups.”

For our purposes, direct your attention to “Adult Sunday School” and “Unique Groups.”

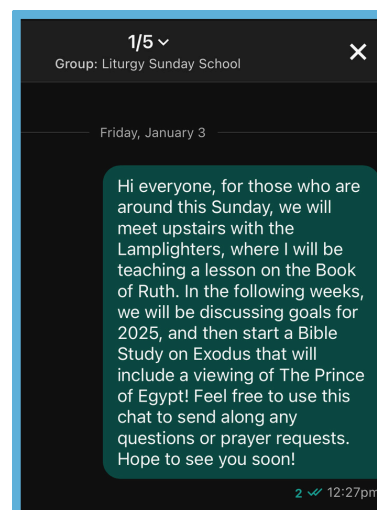
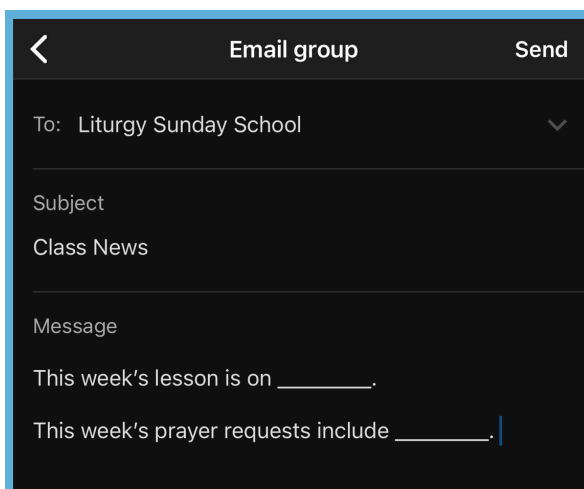


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# Utilizing Church Center for Adult Formation

## Using for Sunday School:

- **Join a Class.** When you click “Adult Sunday School,” you will be able to browse our 18 adult classes that meet at 10 am every Sunday morning. You may find that you have already been added to your class. If not, simply click “Request to Join.” If you are new, or not yet connected to a class, contact Pastor Madison at [mboboltz@arlingtonmethodist.org](mailto:mboboltz@arlingtonmethodist.org) for advice on where to get started.
- **Add Leaders.** Each class can select multiple leaders who will be granted the administrative privileges listed below.
- **Track Attendance.** Every Sunday morning, class leaders are sent reminders to take attendance for their class. A roster will automatically appear with members names, and you simply check who is present. Tracking attendance allows us to take note of trends, and helps draw our attention to certain needs (changes in room assignments, checking up on those who have been regularly absent, etc.)
- **Check Announcements.** Every week, Pastor Madison will post announcements under the “Resources” tab. These will be available to every member of the group, and you will receive a printed copy in your class folder. Please make it a priority to take a few moments at the start or end of each class to read these off.
- **Utilize Calendar.** If your group plans any events outside of the Sunday School hour, you can add them to your own group calendar, which will send members notifications and reminders! You can also collect RSVPs. Examples of group events might include lunch plans after worship, holiday parties or birthday celebrations, service projects, etc.
- **Contact Members.** Group leaders can easily send emails and messages to members without having to leave the app!



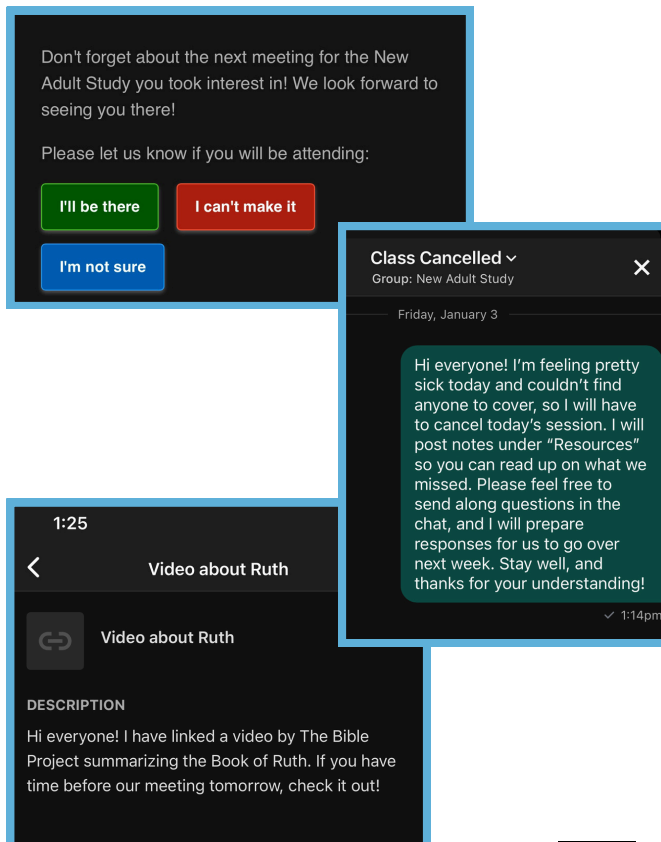
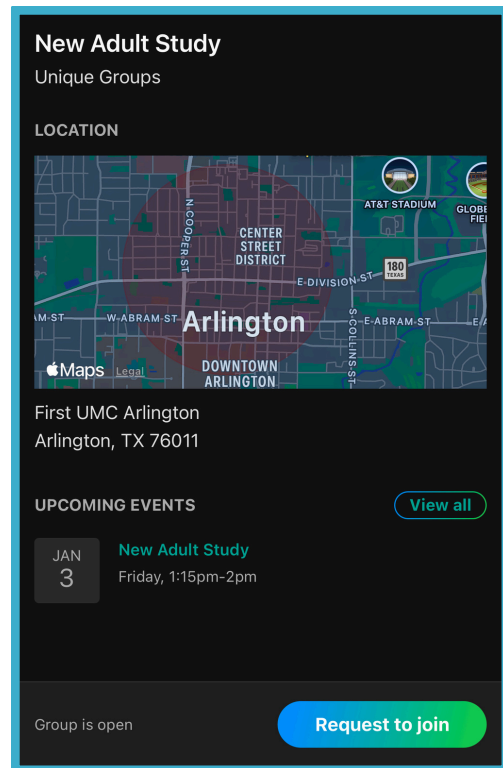
# Utilizing Church Center for Adult Formation

## Using for Adult Studies:

Anytime we announce a new Adult Study, you will be able to find it on Church Center under “Unique Groups” and Request to Join.

This will make it easier for Group Leaders to:

- get a sense of who plans to show up
- send along door codes for building entry
- track attendance
- share notes and resources
- send reminders about readings or suggested prep work
- inform participants if group session needs to be cancelled or moved online for any reason



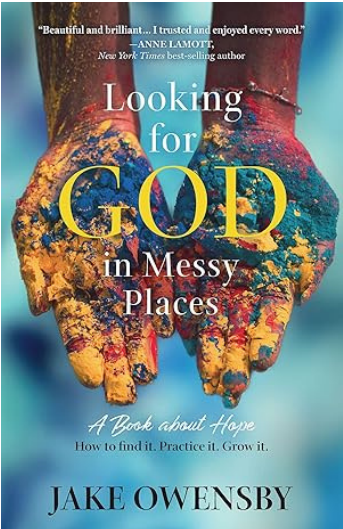
This will also allow members easy access to:

- the meeting schedule, including time and location
- names and contact information of group leaders
- the chat feature, which enables members to ask questions or share their thoughts about the study without having to wait until the next meeting

On the next few pages, you will find descriptions of upcoming studies. Go ahead and request to join the groups to receive reminders and notifications!

# Upcoming Studies

If viewing digitally, [click the title of the study to join the group on Church Center](#) or find name of study under “Unique Groups” on Church Center app/website.

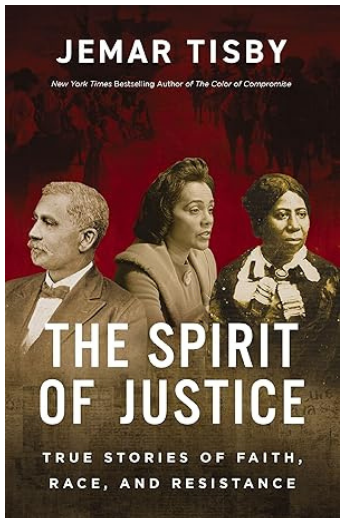


## Tuesday Study with Pastor Kay

**Every Tuesday from 2:00pm to 3:00pm in Room 154 beginning 01/21/2025 ending on 02/18/2025**

The birth of Christ we celebrate at Advent and Christmas offers us hope, but that hope can often get lost in the messiness of life — our busyness, worry, and discouragement.

This is a 5-week study based on Bishop Jake Owensby's book, *Looking for God in Messy Places: A Book About Hope: How to Find It, Practice It, Grow It*. The book is available online for about \$13 and please read the first chapter before the first meeting on January 21 for discussion at that time. All are welcome—both congregation members and guests.



## Wednesday Study with Loni Fancher

**Every Wednesday from 1:00pm to 2:00pm & 6:00pm to 7:00pm in Room 100 beginning 01/22/2025 ending on 02/26/2025**

MLK Jr. Day and Black History Month invite us to remember those in our nation's history who “broke the bonds of oppression and crafted a legacy of liberation.” We are also challenged to consider how we as the church are called to respond to ongoing issues of racial inequality with “the spirit of justice.” This study on Jemar Tisby's book will allow us to do just that! Expect thought-provoking conversations that may challenge, convict, and inspire. The book is available for about \$18 on Amazon, or you can just show up as Loni will break the material down. Join us as we learn, grow, and respond to God's call for justice in today's world.

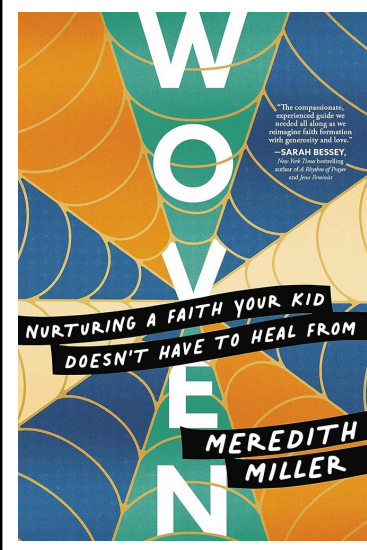


## Sunday Study with Pastor Madison

**Every Sunday from 5:00pm to 6:00pm in Room 100 beginning 03/02/2025 ending on 03/30/2025**

Join Pastor Madison as she leads an original adult study on the power of children's stories, particularly those intended for audiences around 8 - 12 years old. Participants are not expected to read all of the books (unless they want to), though they are encouraged to read the final book, *Genesis Begins Again*, to discuss as a group the last week. Otherwise, folks are simply invited to show up with an imaginative and inquisitive spirit to revisit some classics, learn about the new frontiers of this genre, and consider what role these stories might play in our own faith formation.

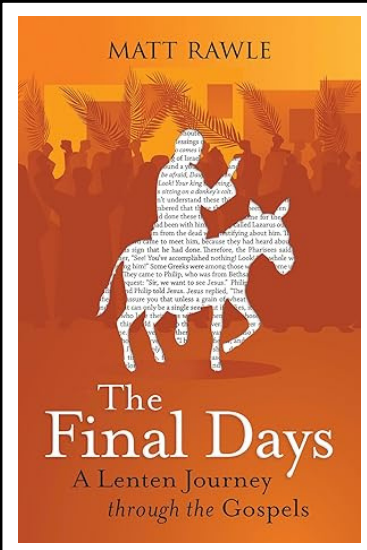
# Upcoming Studies cont.



## Sunday Study with Pastor Molly

**Every Sunday from 4:00pm to 5:00pm in Room 154 beginning 03/23/2025 ending on 04/13/2025**

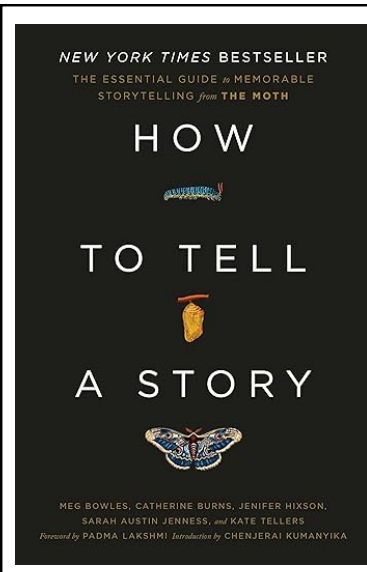
Offered during children's choir and intended for those with little ones in their life! So many adults long to pass along their faith to the next generation, but know that God is so much bigger than the list of do's and don'ts they were taught about as children. They want to pass along a faith that children doesn't have to heal from. *Woven* is the guidebook parents and parent figures have been looking for. With a deep reverence for scripture and suggested activities to help your family grow in faith together, *Woven* is for adults who want to go beyond a list of do's and don'ts and pass along a resilient faith based on genuine love for and trust in God.



## Lenten Study with Pastor Kay

**Every Tuesday from 2:00pm to 3:00pm in Room 154 beginning 03/11/2025 ending on 04/15/2025**

This Lent, ponder the themes of justice, poverty, freedom, and love. Each Gospel offers a different lens through which we understand Jesus' Passion. One portrait reveals Jesus to be in control, while another emphasizes his suffering. In one story Jesus offers hope to the thief on the cross, and in another Jesus only receives derision. These different perspectives aren't a reason to dismiss the Gospels; rather they reveal an abundant, diverse, and complementary picture of God's work in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.



## Lenten Study with Loni Fancher

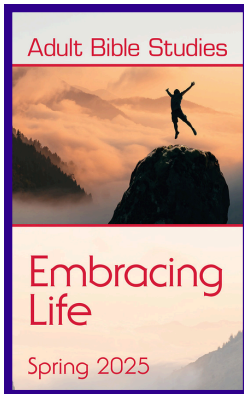
**Every Wednesday from 1:00pm to 2:00pm and 6:00pm to 7:00pm in The Underground beginning 03/12/2025 ending on 04/16/2025**

As we walk through the weeks of Lent, we will explore the power of sharing our faith stories: reflecting on how God has worked in our lives and how those stories can encourage, inspire, and connect us with others. *How to Tell a Story: The Essential Guide to Memorable Storytelling from The Moth* is a practical guide on how to craft, share, and engage others with meaningful and authentic stories. This Lenten book study will focus on how to tell your own personal faith story—learning how to speak about your experiences of God's presence in your life with authenticity and impact.

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# Recommended Curriculum and Resources

**Pastor Madison here!** In the following couple of pages, I will list out some resources which may be utilized collectively or individually. Below are a few recommendations from Amplify Media, and instructions for setting up an account if you have not already done so. On the next page, you will find a few fun book lists that might interest you, and information about a study I will be leading during Sunday School in Lent.

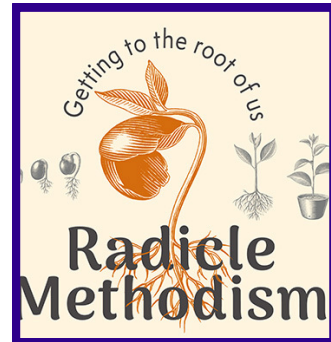


## **Adult Bible Studies Spring 2025: Embracing Life**

Does your class love the Adult Bible Studies Curriculum? This Spring, the Bible lessons follow the theme “Exclusion and Embrace.” They offer a series of lessons in two units during Lent and the weeks following that encourage us to consider what we need to let go of and what we need to take on as followers of Jesus.

## **Radicle Methodism: Back to Our Roots**

This is a wonderful four-part history course with video lessons and free downloads. Learn about the beginnings and the growth of the Methodist movement. This study was selected by Discipleship Ministries for a program running from January 15 to February 28, 2025. [Learn more and join in here!](#)



Visit the link below:

<https://my.amplifymedia.com/amplify/login>

Then, Click on the “head” icon in the top right corner.

Then Click on “Access Code”

Our access code is **XYMBZP**.

Set up Log In with Name, email, and a password that is easy for you to remember (maybe write it down in a safe place).

Click “Free Membership”

That should get you connected to the videos and downloadable materials.

# Recommended Curriculum and Resources

## Pastor Madison's Favorites of 2024:



## What Pastor Madison is Excited to Read Next:



## Spend Sunday School in Lent with Me!

All are welcome to join me for Sunday School during Lent! I will be in the Great Hall teaching a series of lessons called **The Body and the Blood** on how we as United Methodists narrate the story of the cross. See below for a list of the topics I will be covering, and look forward to being joined on April 6 by Rev. Dr. Natalya Cherry from Brite Divinity School!

**Session One: What Did the Cross Accomplish? - An Overview of Atonement Theologies and John Wesley's Interpretation**

**Session Two: Did Jesus Really Have to Die? - Notions of Sin, Salvation, and the Necessity of Violence**

**Session Three: What Does The Cross Symbolize? - Notions of Terror, Trauma, and the Glorification of Suffering**

**Session Four: What is My Cross to Bear? - Notions of Guilt, Shame, Love, and Self-Sacrifice**

**Session Five: Were You There? - A New Way of Experiencing Holy Week and Seeing Yourself in the Story**



# Guest Sunday School Teachers

The following is an Adult Sunday School Class Teacher Pool. I am working off of a previous list and selected those who shared descriptions of what kind of lessons they are willing to teach/facilitate, though it is by no means exhaustive. **Updating this list will be one of my main focuses for next quarter's newsletter. If you would like to be added to the teacher pool, please send me an email with your name, contact information, and a brief description of the kind of lessons you are interested in teaching/facilitating. If you would like to be removed from the teacher pool, just let me know.** Hopefully, next quarter's list will include more options, including representatives from outside organizations and UMC extension ministries.

If your class decides to schedule a lesson with a teacher, a representative may contact them personally to check their availability and discuss materials for presentation.

<p><b>John Thielman</b> johnthielman@aol.com</p>	<p>John is a member of Covenant with the Cross and is willing to share about his involvement with our mission initiatives and his work with the nonprofit Sharefest Texas.</p>
<p><b>Linton Davis</b> lhornedfrogdavis@outlook.com</p>	<p>Linton is a member of the Rainbow class and especially enjoys teaching extended studies ranging from 2-10 weeks.</p>
<p><b>Melanie Hamberlin</b> hamberlin@sbcglobal.net</p>	<p>Melanie is part of our Historical Team and is willing to present on Historical highlights of our congregation.</p>
<p><b>Gail Prager</b> gprager49@gmail.com</p>	<p>Gail is a member of Covenant With the Cross and is willing to teach a Bible Study or pull from a number of published studies.</p>
<p><b>B.B. Stumbaugh</b> bbstumbaugh@sbcglobal.net</p>	<p>B.B. is willing to visit your class to provide an overview of Kairos and Emmaus Ministries.</p>
<p><b>Lisa McCulloch</b> lisa_mcculloch53@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Lisa is a member of Koinonia and has a number of lessons prepared over quilting, Christian Clichés, Emmaus, Paradoxical Commandments, After Life Decisions, Hospitality, and others.</p>


## Staff Teaching Availability Jan-March

<p><b>Pastor Chris Hayes</b> Senior Pastor chayes@arlingtonmethodist.org</p>	<p>As his schedule allows, Pastor Chris is willing to visit your class to teach a singular lesson or to provide updates on our church's ministries. Email him to set a date.</p>
<p><b>Pastor Kay Lancaster</b> Associate Pastor of Congregational Care klancaster@arlingtonmethodist.org</p>	<p>Pastor Kay is already booked for January - March! Check in with her about April - June!</p>
<p><b>Pastor Madison Boboltz</b> Associate Pastor of Adult Formation mboboltz@arlingtonmethodist.org</p>	<p>Pastor Madison will be spending her Sundays with the Young Adult Class, but she will be leading a study during the Sundays in Lent that all classes are welcome to join.</p>
<p><b>Pastor Molly Hayes</b> Associate Pastor of Community Connections mhayes@arlingtonmethodist.org</p>	<p>As her schedule allows, Molly is willing to visit your class to provide updates in her ministry area. In future months, she may be willing and available to facilitate a multi-week study. Email her if interested!</p>
<p><b>Loni Fancher</b> Director of Youth Formation lfancher@arlingtonmethodist.org</p>	<p>Loni spends Sunday School teaching youth in The Underground. But make sure to check out her weekday/weeknight book studies!</p>
<p><b>Betsy Spencer</b> Director of Family Formation bspencer@arlingtonmethodist.org</p>	<p>As her schedule allows, Betsy is willing to visit your class to provide updates in her ministry area. Email her to set a date!</p>
<p><b>Macy Craft</b> Director of Children's Formation mcraft@arlingtonmethodist.org</p>	<p>As her schedule allows, Macy is willing to visit your class to teach a singular lesson or provide updates in her ministry area. Email her to set a date!</p>

# Special Sundays

These are weeks during which we have additional opportunities available during the Sunday School hour. Your and/or class may adjust your usual schedule in order to participate.

**PROFESSOR  
POP-UP**




**Rev. Emily Nelms Chastain**  
Instructor in the History of  
Christianity at Perkins  
School of Theology

Join us for this fascinating lesson!

**"Break[ing] the System: How the  
Methodist Student Movement  
Motivated a Generation Into  
Challenging Their Denominational  
Polity of Segregation."**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2  
10 AM IN THE GREAT HALL**

Youth and young adults are welcome to join our speaker for lunch at Tic-Taco around 12:15 pm. Contact Pastor Madison if you will need a ride!



Soul-Warming Fundraiser  
February 9 in the Parlor! Proceeds  
help fund the cost of camp for our  
students!



## Connectional Opportunities

There are several meaningful opportunities for fellowship and faith formation beyond those that we offer at First UMC Arlington.

Make sure you keep up with the [Calendar of Events for the Horizon Texas Conference](#). Here are some upcoming events to consider registering for!

[Laity Covenant Day on January 25](#) (online)

[Women's Retreat - March 7-9](#) (Lake Texoma)

Opportunities are also available through Discipleship Ministries. Check out this upcoming webinar!

[Belong Webinar Series](#) January 23, January 30, and February 6



**ALTOGETHER  
WORTHY**

*Women's Retreat*

*featuring*  
*Rev. Dr. Jaime Clark-Soles*

March 7-9, 2025  
Prothro Center

