

## **Wesley in Pulaski**

**Rev. Laura K. McMasters, Minister of Campus & Community Engagement First UMC Pulaski, TN**

Wesley in Pulaski is the young adult ministry through First United Methodist Church of Pulaski, TN. As a registered student organization at The University of Tennessee Southern, students engaged with Wesley have developed the following mission statement: *The mission of Wesley at the University of Tennessee Southern is to walk alongside college students by building relationships with God and community while promoting inclusivity.*

Through Wesley in Pulaski, young people are engaging with the campus, the community, and with a variety of United Methodist-related ministries. Students and the campus minister engage in weekly conversations, a spring retreat, Sunday morning worship, community service, and activities at The Table, including monthly game nights and casual worship. Two students have experienced communion for the first time during Sunday morning worship. Two different students are employed through part-time opportunities at the church. Each month, students are serving with a local organization to pack food boxes for hungry neighbors, and students are serving alongside young adults with developmental disabilities. Plus, students and church members are building authentic relationships.

The current demographic of Wesley participants includes students whose permanent address is campus, residential students without personal transportation, commuting students, students with part-time jobs, a few international student athletes, students with very limited financial resources. None of the students currently active in Wesley were previously familiar with the UMC. Here are few quotes from those engaged with Wesley:

“It is a great experience being part of Wesley. I love the feeling of helping, make happy, and bring joy to others. Wesley helped me to understand that there are people eager to help and that God loves me. It helps me to connect more with God and know beautiful people that now are part of my life.”

- International Student Athlete, first-time church attendee

“As a transfer student seeking out a loving community I have found my place with Wesley. I immediately felt loved and cared for. My faith has increased in God due to the people in Wesley who constantly share his love.”

- Student whose permanent address is on campus.

In the coming year, Wesley in Pulaski will prioritize continuing to build relationships with young people at UT Southern, TCAT-Pulaski, and in the community, as well as engaging in financial planning to help sustain the ministry.

To learn more about Wesley in Pulaski be sure to follow [@wesleyutsouthern](https://www.instagram.com/wesleyutsouthern) on Instagram.