



April 1, 2022

The Weekender

Please, don't you dare take it back

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

In his book *Stories*, Bishop Will Willimon tells about his days as a pastor:

He owned a hardware store. . . . Someone had warned me about him when I moved there. "He's usually quiet," they said, "but be careful." People still recalled the Sunday in 1970 when, in the middle of the sermon (the previous preacher's weekly diatribe against Nixon and the Vietnam War), he had stood up from where he was sitting, shook his head, and walked right out. So, I always preached with one eye on my notes and the other on him. He hadn't walked out on a sermon in more than ten years. Still, a preacher can never be too safe.

You can imagine my fear when one Sunday, having waited until everyone had shaken my hand and left the narthex, he approached me, gritting his teeth and muttering, "I just don't see things your way, preacher."

I moved into my best mode of non-defensive defensiveness, assuring him that my sermon was just one way of looking at things, and that perhaps he had misinterpreted what I said, and even if he had not, I could very well be wrong and er, uh . . .

"Don't you back off with me," he snapped. "I just said that your sermon shook me up. I didn't ask you to take it back. Stick by your guns—if you're a real preacher."

Then he said to me, with an almost desperate tone, "Preacher, I run a hardware store. Since you've never had a real job, let me explain it to you. Now, you can learn to run a hardware store in about six months. I've been there fifteen years. That means that all week, nobody talks to me like I know anything. I'm not like you, don't get to sit around and read books and talk about important things. It's just me and that hardware store. Sunday morning and your sermons are all I've got. Please, don't you dare take it back."



A group of about 45 members of our church have begun the work of dialogue and discussion around the issue of race. These members reached out to Rev. Brian Tillman and invited him to come teach during the Sunday School hour last week. They reached out to him because of an incident where one of our members witnessed someone yelling a racial slur at a friend in the parking lot of Kroger here in Fayetteville, GA, in broad daylight. Lord, have mercy. They said, "It doesn't have to be this way."

Upon letting me know he was coming to teach their class, I reached out to my colleague and invited him to preach. It was at my invitation, but the instigation was from members of this congregation in response to the prayer that it doesn't have to be this way. I'll admit, Rev. Tillman's sermon shook me up. But I'm glad he didn't take it back.

The prophets of the Old Testament challenge us. Paul in his writings challenges us to stay together. Jesus, with his words about loving your enemy, challenges us. Just because something shakes us up, doesn't mean that it should be taken back nor does it mean that we should go in reverse. Rather, following the words of Paul from this week's lectionary reading, "[We] press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly calling in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:14). When we hear something that shakes us up, rather than walking out or walking away, may we have the courage God gives us to face the challenge before us and live with the grace Christ gives us.



Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 3, 2022

8:45 a.m., 11 a.m.

[Online link will be active at 11 a.m. and after](#)

Isaiah 43:16-21; John 12:1-8

Lent in Real Life: The Poor

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

CURRENT NEWS



Say "You are LOVED" with an Easter Lily

Express your love with the gift of an Easter Lily in honor or in memory of someone. Recognitions will be included in the April 17 Easter Sunday Order of Worship. Lilies will enhance worship on Easter and will be available for pickup following the 11 a.m. service. [Just follow this link and order by April 11 to be included in recognitions.](#) Cost: \$15 each. Printed order forms will be available in the church office and narthex as well. Proceeds support the FFUMC Flower Ministry.



Egg Hunt, April 10, on The Field, Noon

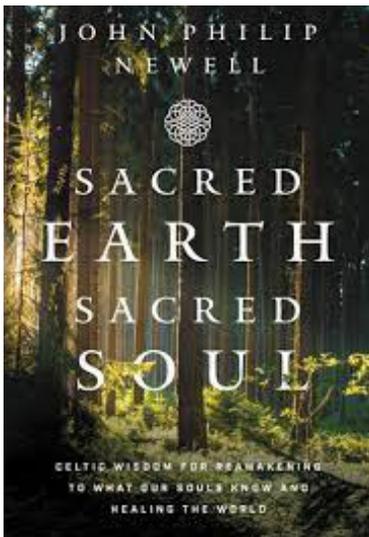
A church-wide Easter Egg Hunt will be offered on The Field after the 11 a.m. Palm Sunday Worship Service. Bring your Easter basket and your running shoes. Fun family games and refreshments will start our day immediately after the service. Four different egg hunts begin at 12:30 p.m.: Under 4s, PreK 4 and Kindergartners, first and second graders, and third through fifth graders. Join us for an EGG-stra good time!

Cookie donations for our hunters are appreciated. Place any contributions in the marked box in the gym kitchen by Friday, April 8, at noon. Questions? [Contact Rev. Allyson Lawrence.](#)



Engaging in Peace, Advocacy & Reconciliation

Would you like to become more active in reaching our community in peace, love, and connection? [Next Steps: Click here to learn about upcoming opportunities to engage with others on this journey and complete a quick interest survey.](#)



Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul Study begins this Sunday

The Study Class (aka The Book Club) will explore John Philip Newell's book "Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul." This class will meet in-person and virtually in Room C270 on Sundays beginning April 3. All are invited as we explore the long, hidden tradition of Celtic Christianity, explaining how this earth-based spirituality can help us rediscover the natural rhythms of life and deepen our spiritual connection with God, with each other, and with the earth. Newell introduces some of Celtic Christianity's leading practitioners, both saints and pioneers of faith, whose timeless wisdom is more necessary than ever. "Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul" offers a new spiritual foundation for our lives, one centered on encouragement, guidance, and hope for creating a better world. For more information, contact Tim Aycock at timaycock@gmail.com.



Support Ukraine through UMCOR

As we continue to lift the people of Ukraine in our prayers, you are also invited to give through the United Methodist Committee on Relief. 100% of donations given to UMCOR through the gifts you give go directly to those in need in the war-torn areas. You are invited to give through the church (mark your donation "Ukraine") or through the website: <https://umcmission.org/umcor/ukraine/>.



Lay Servant Training Offered

We can increase our skills and readiness for ministry with classes through the Lay Servant Ministry program. The Southwest District of the North Georgia Conference offers a course of study to better equip us for service in our church and community. [Find out more about Spring 2022 courses here.](#) [Rev. Allyson Lawrence](#) will be happy to answer your questions too!



Holy Week & Easter Schedule

Holy Week

Palm Sunday — April 10

Worship in Chapel 8:45 AM

Worship in Sanctuary 11:00 AM

Churchwide Egg Hunt 12:00 PM

Maundy Thursday — April 14

Service of Word & Table 7:00 PM

Easter Sunday — April 17

Sunrise Service

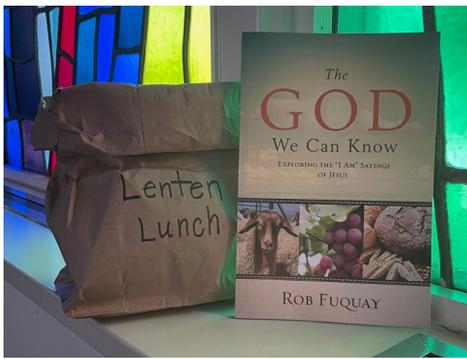
The Field 6:45 AM

Sunrise Breakfast

Gym 7:30 AM

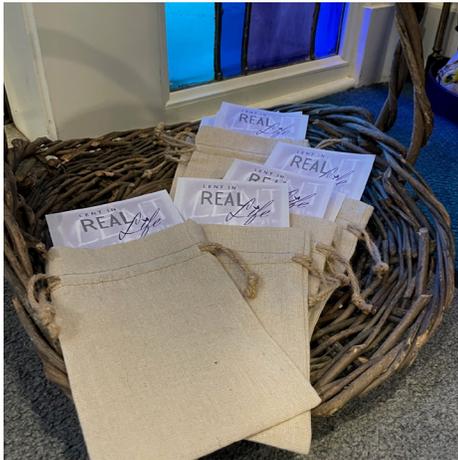
Worship in Sanctuary

8:45 AM, 11:00 AM



Lenten Meditation Theme: "I AM" Sayings of Jesus

Our Lenten Journey continues next Thursday, April 7, as Danny Beck explores another chapter on the "I AM" Sayings of Jesus based on Rob Fuquay's book *The God We Can Know*. The Ethel Taylor Circle will provide a light lunch (\$5) at noon in the Fellowship Hall with the meditation to follow.



Lenten Offering for Rise Against Hunger

During Lent our thoughts turn to God and to others. You are invited to use your Lenten Offering Bag to collect an offering over these weeks to place on the chancel rail Easter morning.

The money we raise will support our Rise Against Hunger meal packing event later this year. During the event, highly nutritious, dehydrated meals are prepared for use in crisis areas around the world.

[Click here for a schedule of Lent and Holy Week opportunities.](#)



New requests from Fayette Samaritans

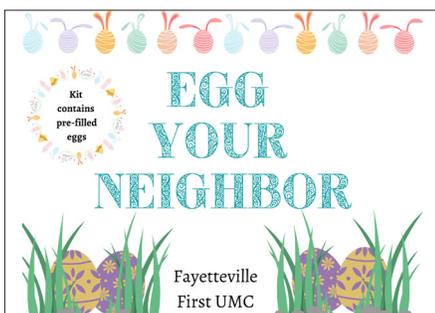
Every little bit helps! Donations for Fayette Samaritans, our community food pantry and clothes closet, may be placed in the hallway cart behind the sanctuary or dropped by the church office.

Most Needed in April (but all donations are welcome and appreciated): Laundry Detergent, Dried Pasta (no spaghetti needed), Canned Fruit, Chicken Broth, Tea Bags, Mustard, Ketchup, Bar Soap, Shampoo, Feminine Products



High School Beach Retreat: Sign up by April 15

FFUMC Youth is headed back to the beach June 3-6 for the annual high school beach retreat! Youth will engage in community building activities, devotional time, and more. This retreat is for youth who will have recently completed 9th-12th grade as of June 2022. Deadline to sign up is April 15. [Be sure to secure your spot soon, as there are limited spots available.](#) Use these codes as you need them: GRACE 50% off, LOVE 100% off.



"EGG"ed anyone yet?

As you share some love and fun with your neighbors and community using your Egg Your Neighbor kit, snap a few photos of you hiding eggs, of someone finding them ... any part of the adventure! Send them to Joan Aycock, jaycock@fayettevillefirst.com, or text 770-861-4499.



FFUMC KiDs: Check out all April has to offer

You're going to love April if you're a kid at FFUMC. Egg hunts, outdoor play parties, Earth Day celebrations, video game club ... so much to do, learn and celebrate. Check it out right here in your own newsletter!

[FFUMC Kids Newsletter: April 2022](#)



Needs from Summer Lunch families

REQUESTS: Refrigerator - yes, one more

Thank you for the Queen size mattress and box springs!

Families who are in the Summer Lunch Program have some specific needs. Can you help? If you have what is listed or other items to donate, just snap a photo of the item and email it to Cindy Hall at harvecin@charter.net or text the photo to 678-656-4117.



Save the date for Sunshine VBS

Monday: July 18 — 5:30 to 8 PM

Wednesday: July 20 — 5:30 to 8 PM

Friday: July 22 — 6 to 8 PM

Save the date to help out at Sunshine VBS: three fun evenings set aside for our special adults to have their own unique VBS experience. For more information, contact [Susie Arrington, skeaton66@aol.com](mailto:skeaton66@aol.com), 404-580-8494.



Come play at City Center Park this Sunday

Let's celebrate spring together this Sunday at City Center Park! All families are invited to meet Rev. Allyson Lawrence and all the FFUMC KiDs at 4 p.m. for playtime and chat time. Come enjoy family fun and let us treat you to a sweet treat from Scoops!



Graduation time is approaching

We want to honor all our high school, college and graduate school graduates and celebrate! Our annual graduation publication is being prepared, so we need to hear from you and your loved ones. Send the following information to Joan Aycock, jaycock@fayettevillefirst.com, by **April 30**.

- Name of Graduate to be printed
- School Name and Degree Name
- Plans after graduation if known
- Photo

inspired ...

A good life inspiring others

Connections and roots extend long and deep for James Watkins. He is faithful, consistent, and dedicated wherever he is, and since 1982, that has been right here at Fayetteville First UMC.

James was born in Copper Hill, Tennessee, on December 8, 1919, but he grew up in Blue Ridge, Georgia, where he moved at 5 years old. His connection with the Methodist tradition goes back to his great grandfather who was an army surgeon and a Methodist minister. James joined the Methodist Episcopal Church at 9 years old, following his twin brother, Jennings, down the aisle along with his sister Eloise. He grew up in an area and era where community activity centered around the church.

James remembers Sunday school teachers and the things he learned stayed with him past high school and into his time in the military. After serving 30 months in foreign lands (and saving all but about \$10 a month of his pay), James rented a room in a boarding house, but practically lived with Jennings and his wife Dot. He and Jennings started Atlanta Motor Lines and he began his business career. They worked hard together for more than 43 years.

James met his wife, Theresa Sibley, on a blind date and they married in 1949. He was a member at Blue Ridge United Methodist until 1950, and after moving to Atlanta, he and Sib joined Decatur UMC and Avondale Patilla UMC. He served at church in various positions including finance, trustee, and stewardship. He taught Sunday school to 5th graders for more than ten years.

After building a house on farmland he owned just south of downtown Fayetteville, James and Sib moved from Atlanta's Avondale Estates and made this area home. Gary Parrish was the preacher at Fayetteville First UMC then, and James got put right to work recommending the building of our current sanctuary and fellowship hall. He continued serving on just about every possible committee until only a few years ago when Rev. David Campbell let him roll off his church "jobs" at 95 or 96 years old.



Who could help but love James? He's welcoming, positive, and warm, and he's always ready for a conversation. His employees called him tough but fair, and he tried to live out the principles of his faith in the workplace. Many employees have called him through the years to express gratitude for their work life with him.

At 102 years old, James says his good health has been aided by eating right and having an exercise program. He





wishes he hadn't stopped his 25 pushups a day at age 100, but he still exercises each day after dinner. He worked in his roses for years, and he highly recommends having a hobby.

James appreciates the amazing inventions he has seen, in particular the jet airplane and incredible technology. His first computer took nearly an entire room to do what his mobile phone now offers. James still does his own investing and manages his financial affairs. He loved his married life with Sib for 65 years, and he has enjoyed his children, eight grandkids and seven great-grandchildren.

When asked what advice he would give to young people, James quickly said, "Love. I love everybody, even if I don't like what you do, I still love you. Other words of wisdom? Stay away from alcohol and tobacco, think positively and have a good outlook on life."

Even if a person would do things at church differently at times, James says he or she shouldn't let that take them away from church. He would love for others to experience Christ and church like he has and to practice their faith. "Christ has impacted me and I've been influenced by the Christians I have associated with. I have deep feelings for Christianity. Keep church in your life. Everybody needs to have Christ in their life," he says.

You'll see James every week at Fayetteville First where he regularly participates in worship, Sunday school, Titus II and just about all fellowship opportunities. "Every time they say 'eat, I go!' he quips with a smile.

"I realize I have lived a charmed life," James continues. "A hit-and-run driver ran over me at nine years old and left me with a broken leg and wrist. That same year a hay rake fell on me. I had cancer at 92, but I recovered. I've had a good life and I know it."

We are inspired by James Watkins and continue to be blessed by his presence among us.

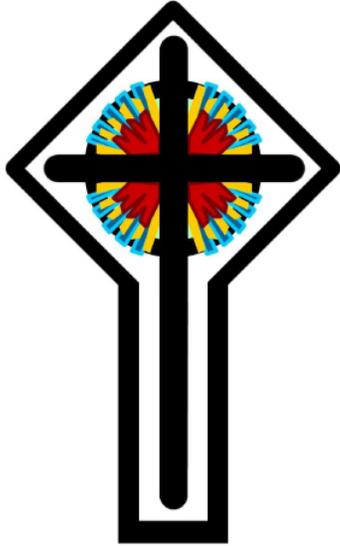
Notes of Gratitude



Just want to say thanks to all the wonderful people at FUMC. Your prayers, cards and thoughts are very much appreciated while I recover. Hope to be back soon. — Gary Sampson

The family of Larry Croft wishes to express our appreciation for the cards, flowers, phone calls, food, and prayers we received. The love and support we felt from our church meant so much to us. — The family of Lawrence "Larry" Eugene Croft

Thank so much for the beautiful shawl. I do feel the love you put into the shawl that you made for me. It gives me comfort to know that you are praying through this shawl for my peace and well being at this difficult time in my life. — Linda Croft



March 30, 2022 Financials

Operating Budget

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Year to Date receipts | \$326,987.82 |
| Year to Date expenses | \$281,880.42 |
| Difference | \$45,107.40 |

Benevolence

Received this week \$211.00

33 families assisted in 2022 for a total of \$10,805.05

You can continue your financial support in many ways:

[Online giving: Click here.](#)

Mail check to church or place it in the drop box at the church office.

Use electronic funds transfer with your bank.

Regular Church Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed 12-1 p.m. lunch)

Closed Fridays

Fayetteville First UMC 175 East Lanier Avenue Fayetteville, GA 30214
770-461-4313 FayettevilleFirst.com

AA Meetings: Sundays 3 PM; Mondays 7 PM;

Wednesdays through Saturdays 7 PM

NA Meeting: Thursdays and Saturdays 7 PM