



February 3, 2023

The Weekender

Fasting: Being good or loving God?

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

I have been reading a lot about fasting lately. Fasting is not something that I have practiced for a while. When younger, I fasted on college visits. I fasted during Lent. I have heard of people taking social media fasts. I once even had a friend fast by giving up talking for Lent. He lasted two hours (I promise I wasn't that "friend").

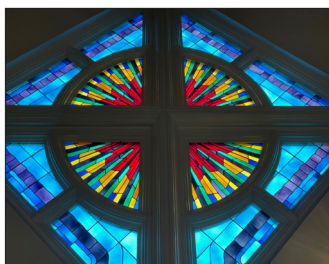
But there is consideration as to why we fast. Sometimes, it is to seek clarity. Sometimes, we do it because we think it makes us more holy. Sometimes we fast because we think it will earn our way into God's favor. What does the Bible offer us when we talk about fasting?

In Isaiah, the 58:6-9 God speaks through the prophet:

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

It seems that there is not a right way to fast or a wrong way to fast. Rather, it is the attitude one takes during a fast. It makes me wonder, for all of the things that we are supposed to do as Christians—praying, worshiping, sharing, giving, serving—do I really do it with the intention of loving and pleasing God? Do I do the things I do because I would rather be right or righteous? To ask it another way, is fasting about being good or loving God?

Being good will only get you so far. But loving God leads us in the paths of God's righteousness in the ways that lead to life eternal. Lent is coming up in a few weeks. As you begin to consider what your spiritual practice may be, I pray that whatever you do, it will be done so that "your light shall break forth like the dawn" so that the world may see God's glory. Let your light shine!



FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

February 5, 2023

8:45 and 11:00 AM

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

Micah 6:1-8; Matthew 5:1-12

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

CURRENT NEWS



Valentine Potluck February 11

Are you ready to share some FRIENDSHIP, FOOD, and FUN? Come enjoy a Valentine Potluck sponsored by the United Methodist Men.

WHO Everybody - plus invite a new friend or two

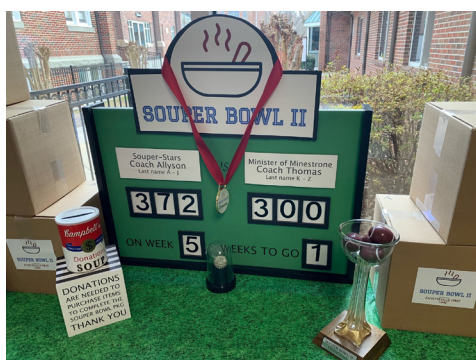
WHEN Saturday, February 11, Noon to 2 PM

WHERE FFUMC Fellowship Hall

WHAT TO BRING Appetizer, Side Dish or Dessert to go with ham and chicken provided by UMM

WHAT TO EXPECT Games! Musical Entertainment!

WHAT TO DO NOW? Save the date and let Bill Webb know you plan to come so he can make sure we have plenty of main courses and places prepared. Just contact Bill (call or text 770-833-6740 or email at williamlwebb@bellsouth.net) by **Monday, February 6**.



SOUPER BOWL II week 5 update: Team Allyson leads

We are in week 5 of the Souper Bowl II challenge. Team Allyson is maintaining the lead. Only one week remains for Team Thomas to catch up! Bring any variety of 16.3 - 18.8 ounce ready-to-eat soup, not condensed, to the Welcome Center area as a donation for our community, and let the competition continue!

Here's how to credit your team:

Mark the bottom of each can with the first letter of YOUR last name. A Sharpie is available at the donation site. Those with A-J will be credited to TEAM ALLYSON and K-Z will go to TEAM THOMAS.

Any cans that are received without letters will be divided between the two teams. Donations are also accepted to complete the soup donation packages. Who will win? We will find out on Super Bowl Sunday, February 12, when either Allyson or Thomas will be presented the Souper Bowl II championship trophy.



School Supplies for El Salvador: **UPDATED NEEDS**

It's back to school time ... in El Salvador. We can help children start their new school year with much needed supplies as a mission team from FFUMC, McDonough First UMC, and Cornerstone UMC delivers them on their trip there in February.

These specific supplies are requested. **Starred RED items are needed the most**, but all donations are appreciated.

#2 pencils

small pencil sharpeners

***Colored pencils**

24-pack Crayola crayons

Glue sticks

***Bic pens, blue or black**

***6" or 12" rulers**

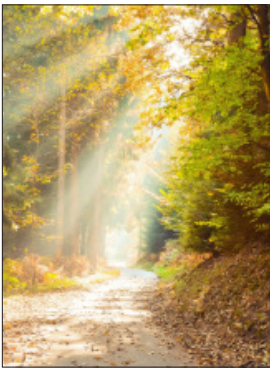
"Pearl Pink" or similar erasers

Kids' safety scissors

Dry-erase markers (for teachers)

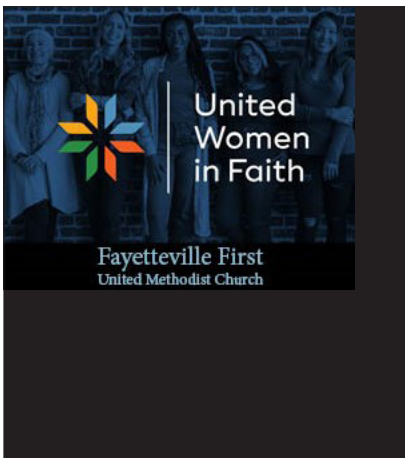
Donations may be left in the church office or Welcome Portal through February 12. Questions? Contact Maggie Clarke,

mwclarke195@gmail.com.



G3: Good Grief Gals meet February 9 at 5:30 PM

Encouragement along the path is available for you. Women moving through life after the death of their spouses meet each month to support and uplift each other. If you are also walking through this season of life and would like to be a part of this support network, please plan to join us each month on the SECOND THURSDAY. Our next gathering will be held on Thursday, **February 9, at 5:30 PM** at Partner's Pizza in Fayetteville. Everyone will be responsible for their own dinner and beverage. Questions? Contact Janet Baileys at jkbaileys11@gmail.com.



United Women in Faith Unit Meeting: February 16

Gather with the United Women in Faith/United Methodist Women for encouragement, inspiration and friendship at their next unit meeting.

Date: February 16, 11:30 AM, FFUMC Fellowship Hall

Program: Benevolence Fund

Special Video: UMW video from 1992 taken by Florence Prine

Meal: Catered by Chick-fil-A \$10

All are welcome! If you are not yet a member of a circle, please contact Lauren Davis, lauren-davis@comcast.net, to reserve your place. If you are a circle member, please sign up and pay through your circle chair by Sunday, February 12.



Donation tips: Did you know...

You can deliver **Fayette Samaritan donations** to the church office or to the donation box near the gym.

"Souper Bowl" donations are collected in the Welcome Portal behind the sanctuary until February 12.

School supplies for El Salvador may be placed in the Welcome Portal donation bin beside the Souper Bowl display through February 12.

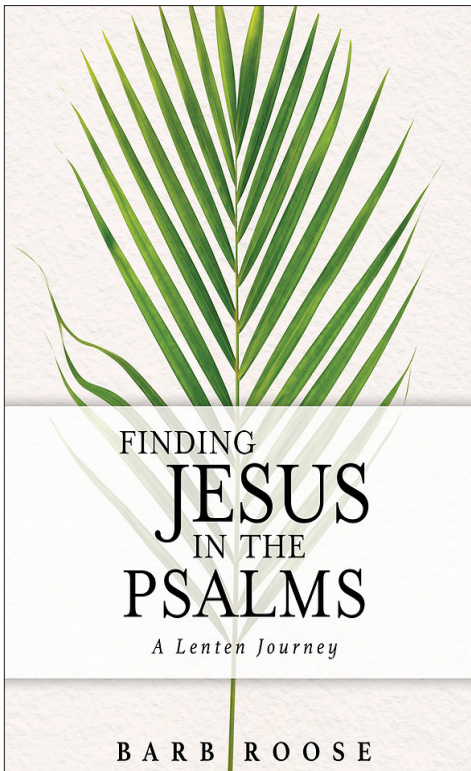
Recent collection drive for **pill bottles** and **winter items for SafeHouse Outreach** have concluded. Please save them at home for our next drive or donate elsewhere.

ALL donations should only be placed in designated bins or delivered to the church office to keep our campus tidy and ensure donations are given to the intended recipients. Call the church office if you have questions. And thanks for all you share!



Walking with others through grief

GriefShare is a program where caring individuals walk with others through the journey of grief. Facilitated by Carol and Bill Webb, classes meet Mondays February 13 through May 8 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Room B350. All are welcome. For more information on the program or to sign up, contact the Webbs at 404-234-1056 or visit GriefShare.org.



Our Lenten Season Approaches

In just a few weeks, we will move into the Lenten Season in our church calendar. Here's a look at what is to come:

Ash Wednesday Service: February 22

Sanctuary, 6 PM, Rev. Charles Robinson

Lenten Lunches, Thursdays, Noon, Fellowship Hall, \$5

Dates, Sponsoring Group, Speaker List:

Ash Wednesday, February 22: UWF Board - Thomas Martin

1st Thursday, March 2: UMM - Charles Robinson

2nd Thursday, March 9: Bethany - Allyson Lawrence

3rd Thursday, March 16: Marie Lamb - Connie Hyder

4th Thursday, March 23: Friendship - Dave Lee

5th Thursday, March 30: Ethel Taylor - Danny Beck

6th Thursday, April 6: Mary Martha Hope/Tabitha - Kathie Hansen

This year's book for Lenten Lunch, *Finding Jesus in the Psalms* by Barb Roose, may be purchased at your favorite bookseller including [Cokesbury](#) and [Amazon](#).



February Requests from Fayette Samaritans

We can help others through Fayette Samaritans, our local food pantry and clothes closet. Donations may be placed in the hallway cart near the gym or dropped by the church office.

All donations are greatly appreciated.

Canned Chicken, Chicken Broth, Boxed Mashed Potatoes, Canned Peas, Boxed Macaroni and Cheese, Cookies, Coffee, Laundry Detergent, Pull-ups Size 5, Feminine Products



United Methodist Men Meet Tuesday, February 7

All men are invited to the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, February 7, at 6:15 PM as the United Methodist Men gather for a covered dish and fellowship meeting and to plan the upcoming Valentine Potluck. Bring a dish and come fellowship and enjoy our time together.



New: Olive Garden for Wednesday Night Supper: February 8

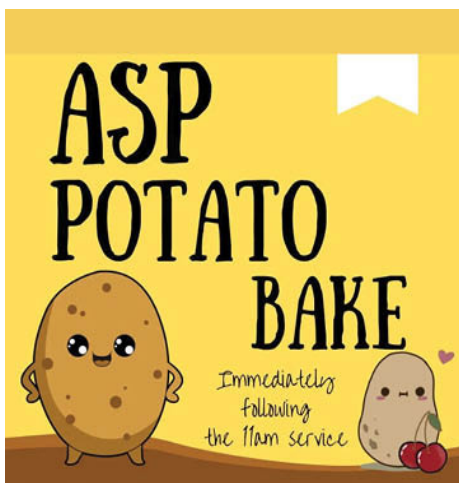
Gather with friends for a good meal and fellowship on Wednesday evenings, from 5:15 to 6 PM, with a meal from a local restaurant.

February 8: Olive Garden Lasagna, Salad, Bread Sticks, Dessert

[Make your reservation online](#) or contact the church office at 770-461-4313 or admin@fayettevillefirst.com by Mondays at 10 AM.

February 15: New from Tim's Country Kitchen — Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes with Gravy, Black-eyed Peas, Rolls, Banana Pudding

FFUMC Youth NEWS



ASP Potato Bake Youth Fundraiser

Sunday, February 12

Immediately Following the 11am service in gym

Join FFUMC Youth and Inman UMC Youth for a potato bake fundraiser, hosted by us, Fayetteville First UMC! Come enjoy a hot, fresh baked potato and salad bar as we fellowship in community with congregation members from Inman UMC. We'll also be sharing stories from last year's Appalachia Service Project (ASP) trip, as well as answering any questions you may have about the ASP program and mission work. Donations are greatly appreciated but not required. All proceeds will go towards directly funding the trip costs of FFUMC and Inman UMC youth trip costs.

FFUMC Kids NEWS



Ways to serve and engage in Children's Ministries

As we continue to grow and expand our ministries we need your help. Here are multiple ways you can get involved and learn more about our amazing Kids Ministries.

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

We are looking for classroom assistants in our Video Game Club and Art Club and also on Sunday mornings during Sunday School. [Here is a link to get more information on what a Sunday/Wednesday classroom assistant does and for days to volunteer.](#)

WONDERS OF WORSHIP LEADERS

Wonders of Worship Leaders greet the children after the 11 children's moment and guide them through a short lesson. Lesson plans are provided with helpful details and all the materials needed. [Check out this link to volunteer for Wonders of Worship.](#)



VBS VOLUNTEER

VBS is June 26-30 — The VBS theme this year is "Hero Hotline: Called Together to Serve God." What a great message for our kids to hear! Make sure to save the date for this year's VBS and get ready to answer the call to serve God this summer! We need superheroes of all ages and abilities to help train and lead our future heroes to greatness. We can't do it without the support of you, the congregation of Fayetteville First. Contact Rev. [Allyson Lawrence](#) or [Allie Hansen](#) today to find out how your abilities and gifts can best serve at VBS this summer.

VBS workshop— Want a more in-depth look at Cokesbury VBS? Join us for a training workshop and lunch on March 4 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

In this workshop you'll learn about:

- the 5 different sessions of Hero Hotline VBS
- the Bible story backgrounds for each session
- the music
- the science experiments
- the crafts, snacks, and recreation



Messy Church

Saturday, February 11, 2023 at 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM

Join Pastor Allyson and others for a workshop that will help us think about new ways of being church. We will learn ways to engage families in worship together as we consider next steps for intergenerational gathering to connect new people in new places. Lunch is included but you must register. Contact Pastor Allyson or go to <https://www.ngumc.org/eventdetail/messy-church-before-and-beyond-17105429> for more information.

Notes of Gratitude



Shawl Ministry: We would like to thank the Shawl Ministry for the gift of a lovely blanket given in memory and comfort on the passing of Bill's mother.
— Bill and Cheryl Castings

Church Family: Wayne and I would like to thank you for all the kindnesses you have shown to us during my health issues and Wayne's knee surgery. We appreciate all the cards, calls, texts, flowers, and visits so much. It's nice to know our church family is keeping us in their prayers as we continue to recover. God bless!
— Wayne and Marilyn Harris

Church Family: Thank you for your prayers, cards, food and your kind words of love and sympathy on the loss of our precious daughter, Stephanie. Thank you for thinking of our family during this difficult time.
— Steve & Dian Nelson, Payton and Cayman Gill and Stacie Huber and Megan Castaneda

Celebrations of Life



Eleanor McDuffie

The McDuffie Family invites you to a celebration of the life of Eleanor McDuffie on February 4. All are welcome.

Saturday, February 4

1:30 - 3:30 PM

Fayetteville First UMC Fellowship Hall

Stephanie Gill

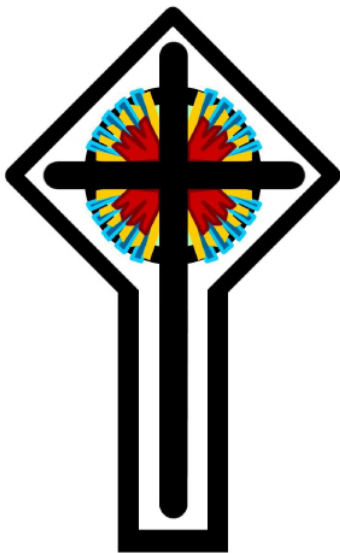
The Nelson Family invites you to a celebration of the life of Stephanie Gill on February 11. All are welcome.

Saturday, February 11

1:00 to 3:00 PM

Senoia United Methodist Church

January 2023 Financials



Operating Budget

Year to Date receipts	\$107,118.39
Year to Date expenses	\$97,188.10
Difference	\$9,930.29

Benevolence

11 benevolence clients were assisted in January for a total of \$3,441.20
Total benevolence funds received for the month of January \$5,010.10

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)

Fridays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

inspired ...

Spreading love to our friends at Azalea Estates

Residents at Azalea Estates got a reminder this week that they loved. Our church holds a worship service at this assisted living residence several times each year. On January 29, the FFUMC Children's Choir met early for doughnuts and then headed on their first field trip with trusty FFUMC bus driver Jamie McKinley to Azalea Estates. After singing "All Things Bright and Beautiful" and "All Night, All Day" with accompaniment by Pastor Thomas, they ended the service with "Go Now in Peace" providing their own handbell introduction. After, the choir gave an original art piece to each person created by our Wednesday Art and Video Club group for 3rd through 5th graders. We had a great day of sharing and receiving love.



Singing at Azalea Estates was a treat for the children! They met Mildred Fitzgerald and Judy Cash (shown above), two residents and long-time members of Fayetteville First UMC. Being together on the bus was fun with leaders Joan Aycock and Phyllis Williamson, parents Allie Hansen and Anna Mayhew, and grandmother Flo Martin. Thank you for making this a bright and beautiful experience for us all!