



March 24, 2023

The Weekender

It's the last place that you look

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

I remember reading an article online several weeks ago talking about church attendance and statistics. The article shed light on worship since the pandemic began: who had stopped coming to church, who had resumed coming to church, and who was watching online.

I think I remembered something from that article, seeing a graph of some kind, pointing a downwards trend in attendance beginning not in 2020, but in 2015. A steep decline reached across all denominational lines in Christian churches. It accelerated in 2020. Facts and figures. More church statistics. Blah, blah, blah. Yada, yada, yada.

I looked long and hard for that piece again. Why did I feel compelled to spend so much time looking for that survey? Was it to ascribe blame? Was it to diagnose something that I had no control over? Was it to make sure that something like that never happened again? I don't know exactly. But I do know that I can question the motives of myself better than I can question others.

The honest answer is that we don't like to question our own motives. We would rather question the motives of others. We would rather talk about others than talk to others. Maybe that is why we cling to those facts, figures, and verses of the Bible that give us room to blame others or accuse others or prove how right we are. Maybe we would rather spend more time building up our own selves than taking the time to look for the good in others.

I never found that article online again (despite my best googling efforts). However, I did find that in this case, my reasons for wanting answers came more from my desire to be right than my desire to be loving. It took a while, but I think I found my answer. And it wasn't in the article that I was seeking for answers. It was in my own heart. It turned out to be the last place that I looked.



FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 26, 2023

8:45 and 11:00 AM

[Online link active at 11 AM and after](#)

Romans 8:6-11 and John 11:17-44

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin



Church Council meets Tuesday, March 28

The church council will meet on Tuesday, March 28, at 7 PM in the Fellowship Hall. All are invited.



High School Seniors: Apply for Ed Travis Scholarship by March 31

A \$2,500 scholarship is available to a graduating senior at FFUMC entering an accredited college, university or technical school for the upcoming school year. [Get instructions and an application at FayettevilleFirst.com.](#) **Completed applications are due March 31 in the church office.**



Serve at SafeHouse Outreach next Thursday, March 30

Want to help serve a meal at SafeHouse? Thursday, March 30, is our next service to the homeless in downtown Atlanta. Please contact Randy Riddell for details if you'd like to help serve at randyhr8@gmail.com.

The FFUMC bus will leave for SafeHouse on March 30 at 4:30 PM and should return by 8 PM. Let Randy Riddell know if you want to be on it!



Schedule your NEW directory photo session now!

Photography sessions NOW OPEN for May 4-7

We are ready! A new church directory will be produced by The Portrait Cafe this summer. What to do now? Schedule your photography session!

[Schedule your photo session now: follow this link.](#)

Session options are Thursday, May 4, through Sunday, May 7. (*Monday, May 8, and Tuesday, May 9, may be added by The Portrait Cafe for sessions if May 4-7 slots are filled.*)

Each family unit photographed by The Portrait Cafe will receive a free 8x10 photo and a free directory.

[Follow this link for complete information at FayettevilleFirst.com.](#) See what to wear and why we should avoid green, how to change an appointment and more. If you still have questions, contact Joan Aycock, jaycock@fayettevillefirst.com, or Karen Powell or Michelle Burch at the church office for assistance at 770-461-4313 or admin@fayettevillefirst.com.

Without you, the directory won't be complete.

**Schedule
NOW!**



Order now for Easter Lilies

Don't miss your chance to order your Easter lily! [Click here to complete the lily Order Form for honorariums and memorials and to pay on-line.](#) Paper copies are available in the narthex and church office.

3 good reasons to order Easter Lilies:

1. Lilies **enhance our worship** space as we celebrate Jesus' resurrection.
2. Plants may be given **in memory or honor** of family or friends and their names will be listed in the Easter Order of Worship. After Easter worship, your purchased lilies are available for you to take home or give to someone else.
3. Proceeds from lily orders **benefit the FFUMC Flower Ministry.** This group creates weekly flower arrangements to encourage others throughout the year.



EGG your neighbor! A Lenten community outreach

Give the gift of fun to families in your neighborhood. This Lenten and Easter season we're EGGing our neighbors (in a nice way) with our Egg Your Neighbor kit. **Kits are available** in the Welcome Portal behind the sanctuary. Contact Rev. Allyson Lawrence, alawrence@fayettevillefirst.com, or Allie Hansen, ahansen@fayettevillefirst.com, with questions. Share photos of your adventures with Joan Aycock at jaycock@fayettevillefirst.com.



Doing the Work Together: Learn. Share. Heal

Join with others in getting to know our neighbors and engage together in racial reconciliation. Through interactive workshops in 5 sessions, participants will explore topics such as healthcare, education, criminal justice, business, and church. Open to all in the community, this effort is led by the UMC Southwest District under the leadership of Elaine Beattie. Hear experts and engage in projects and group experiences designed for adults of all ages.

That we all may be

one

John 17:11

Five separate sessions

Held at Fayette Friendship Community Church, 847 New Hope Road, Sundays 3 PM to 5 PM: April 2, April 16, April 30, May 21, and June 11.

For more information, contact Denise Wilson at 770-227-1074, southwest@ngumc.net.

[Follow this link to register once for all five sessions.](#)

[Doing the Work Together brochure](#) to read and share.



Holy Hootenanny on April 16 starting at 5 PM

Hold the date for a church-wide picnic and celebration in the late afternoon on April 16. The fun starts at 5 PM.

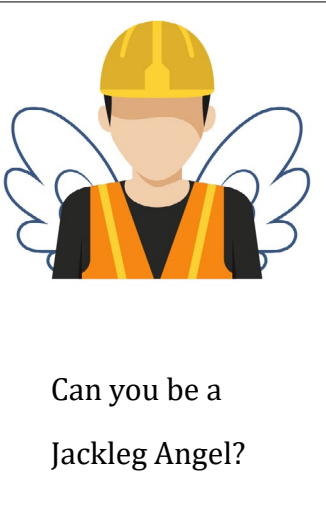
Corn Hole! Live music! Dancing! Pickleball!

Watch for details soon!



Can you help with our Summer Lunch Program?

Virginia Pope, last year's leader of our summer lunch program, would like to be an expert carrot bagger this year. Can you help make that happen for her? Virginia is asking someone to take over leadership of the summer lunch program which provides meals during June and July for those who receive free or reduced price lunch during the school year. Can you volunteer as a helper? Would you serve as leader or co-leader for the program? Contact Virginia Pope, 678-361-1722, with your questions or to let her know she can count on you!



Can you be a
Jackleg Angel?

Jackleg Angels? We need some!

A new group is forming to complete tasks around the church campus. Self-named "Jackleg Angels" are looking for volunteers handy with power tools, household tools, gardening skills, and general do-it-yourself experience. We know there are folks in the congregation who enjoy working with their hands, building calluses and once in a while busting knuckles. We have already completed some projects around the church, both indoor and outdoor, but we could use more helping hands. We meet as the tasks require, form 2- or 3-person teams, and "Get 'er Done." We believe we can save the church a significant amount by doing some jobs ourselves, rather than hiring contractors. Our maintenance supervisor is only one man, so we work with him to help carry some of the load. Contact Bob Dunn at 281-299-8217 to get going!



"5...6, Pick up sticks" at The Field this Sunday, March 26

Let's get The Field ready for spring (and for the FFUMC Easter Egg Hunt coming Palm Sunday) by picking up sticks between 5 and 6 PM this Sunday, March 26. The Field will be clear AND the sticks will be used to help fuel the Easter Sunrise Service bonfire ... a win-win! You don't have to sing "1...2, Buckle my shoe" but it may make the work go really quickly!

[Let Rev. Allyson Lawrence know you'll lend a hand.](#)

Wednesday Night Supper: March 29

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

[March 29 Wings & Things Menu: Boneless Chicken Wings, Tater Tots, Side Dish, Dessert](#)

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

Upcoming April 5: Tim's Country Kitchen





Fresh Expressions Vision Day, Saturday, April 15

Join in an interactive day of training as we learn to see the many unique ways the Holy Spirit might be inviting us to step deeper into mission and ministry in our community. The Vision Day will be held at The UMC Global Ministries building in Atlanta from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM. During the day we will learn how Fresh Expressions of churches are reaching new people and how we can explore and engage others right here in our own town. [Lunch](#)

[is provided so registration is required to reserve your spot and your meal. Let Rev. Lawrence know you want to go by Monday, April 10.](#) We will leave from the church office parking lot at 8:30 a.m. on April 15. If you're curious to know more about Fresh Expressions in our North Georgia Conference, explore and like our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/fxngumc>.



Reminder: Lenten Offering for Rise Against Hunger

We are invited to punch holes in the darkness of hunger with our Lenten offering. You may use your Lenten Offering Bag to collect an offering over these weeks to place on the chancel rail Easter morning. Donations may also be made online or by check and should specify "Lenten Offering" or "Rise Against Hunger Meal Packing Event" in the memo line.

Our Rise Against Hunger meal packing event will be held in August. During the event, highly nutritious, dehydrated meals are prepared for use in crisis areas around the world.



Fayette Samaritans

Donations for Fayette Samaritans

We can help others in our community through Fayette Samaritans. How?

Make a **regular tax-deductible financial donation**.

Give **food**. Donations may be placed in the hallway cart near the gym or dropped by the church office. **New March Most Needed List:** *Canned Beef Stew, Hamburger Helper, Canned Fruit, Jelly, Jello, Bar Soap, Deodorant for men and women, Feminine Products*

Donate **clothing**. **Critical needs:** *Little girl clothes, size 4 and larger (new or gently used); Ladies underwear (new only)*

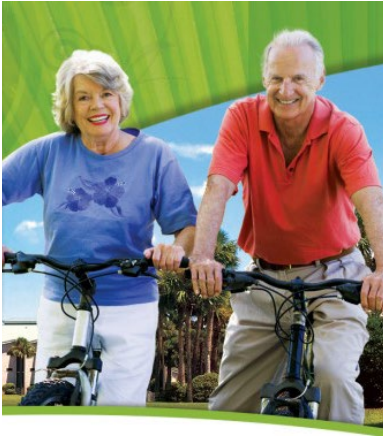
Volunteer. The average number of weekly volunteers is 41.

Find out more from the president of Fayette Samaritans, Linda Ladd, at 770-363-1909 or lladd941@comcast.net.



Close the doors, please

The temperatures are really fluctuating! You can help with climate control (and protect our organ) by keeping the doors closed to the sanctuary throughout the week. If you see the doors open that lead directly into the sanctuary when it is not in use, please just pull them shut. Thanks for your help!



SAGE Retreat planned at St. Simons Island

Want some time away on an adventure? Come with SAGE to "Adventurous Adult Retreat: Living Life to the Fullest" at Epworth By the Sea on beautiful St. Simons Island.

Date: May 15-18, 2023

Speaker: Rev. Keith Elder

Entertainment: Andy Offutt Irwin, storyteller

Workshops: Adults in Motion, Writing Your Legacy, Storytelling, more

Cost: \$390-\$460

[Retreat Information](#) [Retreat schedule](#)

Contact Rev. Joe Watson and let him know you're interested.

Reserve and pay online at epworthbythesea.org/events.



Titus II meets April 4: Begins in Fellowship Hall!

Come to Titus II on April 4 at noon **starting in the Fellowship Hall.**

The program "Fraud and Scams, How to Protect Yourself" by Mr. Harry Schaefer, volunteer with the Peachtree City Auxiliary Police, will be presented there. Then we'll move to the gym for lunch around 12:30 PM. Make your reservation by noon on Thursday, March 30, by calling Martha Turner at 770-461-2802.

Menu: Smothered Boneless Pork Chops, Broccoli Casserole, Biscuits, Chocolate Delight

FFUMC KIDS NEWS



CELEBRATE with palms on Palm Sunday, April 2

Let's celebrate on Palm Sunday, April 2, in the palm procession. All children are invited to gather at 10:45 (after Sunday school) in the courtyard to receive fronds and prepare to wave palms in the sanctuary at the beginning of the 11 a.m. worship service.



It's Coming ... Egg Hunt on Palm Sunday, April 2

April 2, Palm Sunday, is a big day! Worship at 11 AM and wave palms in the Palm Sunday Processional. Following the service, come to The Field for fun with a bounce house, food, and cotton candy. The FFUMC Egg Hunt will begin at 1 PM.

Did you know?



You can "Paws" to share some love

Do you have a special love for dogs? You are invited to join Steve Cartwright in dog rescue by volunteering with his group, Bullywag, at adoption events at PTC Petco every Saturday afternoon. For more information, contact Steve at 404-405-0341.

FFUMC Youth NEWS



Support youth missions

Want to support a youth (or several) individually on their summer trips to Appalachia? You can **purchase a "bond certificate" in \$25, \$50 or \$100 (or larger) amounts.** The certificates are available in the Welcome Portal behind the sanctuary or or you may print one from these links. Just complete the certificate and take it to the church office by May 1 with cash or check attached. Individuals or small groups are invited to participate. Could your Sunday school class, UWF group, or other small group pool resources to support one or several youth volunteers?



[\\$25 Bond Certificate](#)
[\\$50 Bond Certificate](#)
[\\$100 Bond Certificate](#)



Some youth may be able to help with your personal house projects to earn donations toward their trip costs (no guarantees on dates/availability, but requests can be made and we will try to work out the details). Questions? [Contact Hannah Vickery, youth director.](#)

You can **give online!** Just go to www.fayettevillefirst.com, scroll to the bottom of the page, click on the "Donate" button, and be sure when submitting your contribution to memo "Youth Summer Missions."



DNOW weekend is here

What does it mean to be SENT out into the world to spread the gospel? Our youth will find out at this year's DNOW as we join with churches from around Fayette County for a weekend together.

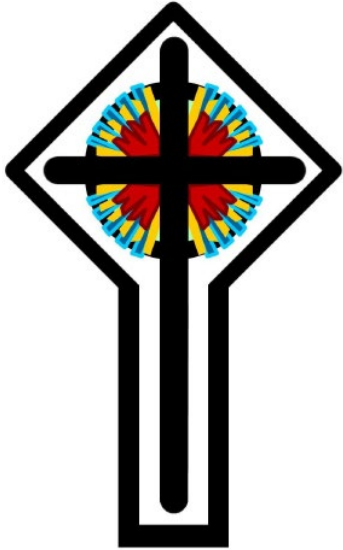
Let's pray for our youth and their leaders as they experience worship, fun, and friendship to support their faith journey and growth.



We go together these 40 days

[See the schedule of Lenten opportunities at FayettevilleFirst.com](#)
[or access a PDF here.](#)

Punch holes in the darkness!



March 22, 2023 Financials

Operating Budget

Year to Date receipts	\$279,159.78
Year to Date expenses	\$270,913.32
Difference	\$8,246.46

Benevolence

Benevolence funds received this week: \$5,655.93

34 benevolence clients assisted year to date for a total of \$8,686.83

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 ...

Your blood will save lives

The American Red Cross Blood Drive at FFUMC this past Sunday was good. Despite longish wait times which we anticipate the Red Cross to address in the future, most potential donors stayed the course and ended up giving. Here are the results:

42 units collected

(includes 7 double-reds donors for 14 usable units)

A great food table spread

Signups increased to 41 with 4 walk-ins (all FFUMC). Even with a few no-shows and 5 deferrals (4 for low iron), it was a successful day.

Save the date for the next drive on July 16.

