



March 31, 2023

The Weekender

Church family,

This has been a difficult week for many in our country due to another major school shooting. This one seems closer to home for some reason. I have written this prayer for myself this week and I humbly share it with you. You may choose to pray this prayer, or not. That is your choice. You may not be able to pray this prayer now or feel like praying this prayer now, and that is ok. There are lots of prayers in the Bible, especially in the Psalms, that I feel uncomfortable praying. That is ok. They are still there because they reflect something in each of us. This is one of those prayers.

Dear God,

I am not an expert in much. I may not even be an expert in anything. My understanding is too shallow for your depths. My own words, too empty for your love. My own emotions, just a hollow shell in the vacuum of what others experience—and even pale in comparison to what Jesus' emotions must have been when he was living on this earth. God, you know that this has been a week of emotions. It has also been a week of experts who think they can fathom such evil as it exists in the world, trying to explain it to us. God save us from the experts.

Save us from the experts who have cornered the market on human suffering and evil. Save us from the experts who ascribe blame and know exactly why a person would enter into a school armed with weapons built to seek, kill, and destroy. Save us from the experts who would seek to justify the behavior and actions rather than change the behavior and actions. Save us from weak resignation.

God, I am not praying to be made an expert.

I don't want to be an expert in weapons or arms or the history of the second amendment. I don't want to be an expert in suffering or the darkness of the human heart. Seeking that knowledge is futile. It would only serve to build up my ego. I cannot fathom the arrogance of someone who is an expert in school shootings. Why would I seek to understand this world when I can barely fathom your love? I don't want to be filled with knowledge; that is too great a thing for me. I pray that I will be filled with love. Love that comes from you, our loving Savior.

We need your help, those of us who are foolish enough to call ourselves and identify as Christians. We need your help to refrain from being experts in pain and sorrow. Children die because of gun violence far too often. Even typing that as a reality does nothing to anesthetize the sting, but this is different for me. When the children dead are my children's age now, I pause and hold on a little tighter to the innocence that they possess. And I pray that you would spare them—and any more children—from reaching the status of being experts in trauma or pain or loss through violence in schools.

So God, I take it back, the part about being an expert. I pray to be made an expert in your love. I pray to be made an expert in your mercy. I pray to be an expert in your justice—and not the worlds' idea of justice for they are not the same thing. I may not know much, but that much I know.

In the midst of heartache, blame, violence, questions, suffering, and experts who claim to know everything, I beg that you would make me and all of us experts in the things that we have received through you: love, grace, and mercy. This I pray, humbly, boldly, and even with sadness and anger in my heart.

Amen.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin



PALM SUNDAY

APRIL 2, 2023

8:45 and 11:00 AM

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

Matthew 21:1-11

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

[Children's Palm Processional at 11 AM service](#)

[Palm Sunday Festivities and Egg Hunt follow service](#)

CURRENT NEWS



Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday — April 2

Worship in Sanctuary 8:45 & 11:00 AM

Churchwide Egg Hunt

Festivities following 11:00 AM worship; BBQ Food Truck with meals for sale

Egg Hunt at 1:00 PM

Maundy Thursday — April 6

Lenten Lunch 12:00 PM Service of Word & Table 7:00 PM

Easter Sunday — April 9

Sunrise Service

The Field 6:45 AM Bring your own chair

Worship in Sanctuary

8:45 AM, 11:00 AM

Decorate the Easter Cross: You are invited to bring flowers to decorate the courtyard cross on Easter Sunday. Be sure to bring your camera, too!



Jasmine Habersham sings in worship on Palm Sunday

Be inspired in worship this Sunday as Jasmine Habersham participates in Palm Sunday worship. Ms. Habersham is a soprano who studied at Shorter College during the same period as our Director of Music and Organist Justin Maxey, who was her accompanist, and then earned her Master of Music and Artist Diploma from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Featured as a soloist in numerous concert productions, Ms. Habersham performs in operas and musical theatre around the country. Learn more about her at jasminehabersham.com. This Sunday, she will sing "The Holy City" and "Ride On, King Jesus" at the 11 AM worship service.



Order now for Easter Lilies: DUE MONDAY, APRIL 3

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.



Have you EGGed your neighbor?

Did you use your kit to share some fun and EGG Your Neighbor? Share photos of your adventures with Joan Aycock at jaycock@fayettevillefirst.com.



Reminder: Lenten Offering for Rise Against Hunger

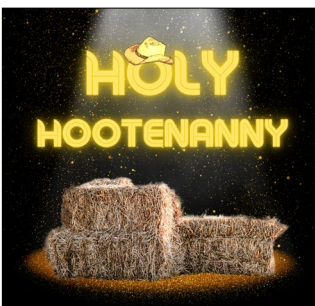
We are invited to punch holes in the darkness of hunger with our Lenten offering. You may use your Lenten Offering Bag to collect an offering to place on the chancel rail Easter morning. More bags are located in the narthex. Donations may also be made online or by check and should specify "Lenten Offering" 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.



No Wednesday Night Supper April 5

Because of Spring Break next week, we will not have Wednesday Night Supper. *Next Wednesday Night Supper is April 15. See you then!*



Holy Hootenanny on April 16 from 5 to 7 PM

Get ready for a kick-up-your-heels good time at our church-wide potluck and celebration on Sunday, April 16, from 5 to 7 PM. Starts in the Fellowship Hall.

Bring a potluck side dish or dessert to share (meat provided)

Live music with Thomas Martin and friends and line dances!

Games! Corn Hole! Horse Shoes! Pickleball!



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. Contact Bob Dunn at 281-299-8217 to get going!



Green Team: We each can do something

The FFUMC Green Team works to help up develop GREEN practices and habits to help take care of the earth and to encourage local entities to make the efforts easier across our community. The team is planning Earth Day participation coordinated Southern Conservation Trust on April 22 in City Park in Fayetteville. Looks for more detailed info soon.



What are things we can do right now?

Recycle aluminum cans in the trailer behind the church office (benefits Scouts)

Place paper, cans, and plastics in marked containers located throughout the church (and in our community, wherever you find them!)



Without you, the directory won't be complete.

**Schedule
NOW!**

Schedule your NEW directory photo session now!

Photography sessions NOW OPEN for May 4-7

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

Sessions for May 8 and 9 may be added after May 4-7 slots are filled.

Why YOU should get a NEW photo:

- Support the entire directory effort.
- Keep our directory fresh and updated.
- Get a FREE 8 x 10 photograph.
- Get a FREE printed directory.
- Get access to an online directory prepared by The Portrait Cafe.

If you do NOT get a NEW photo taken:

- You may submit a photo for the "submitted" section due by May 15. *These will be printed as a separate section from the photos prepared by The Portrait Cafe.*
- You may pre-order a printed directory at \$15 each. *Contact the church office to place your order and pay \$15 per directory by May 15 marking "2023 Directory Copy" on your payment.*

[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, 770-461-4313 or admin@fayettevillefirst.com.



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>.



*Fayette Samaritans
Donations*

New: April Needs List 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 April Most Needed List: Canned Beef Stew, Hamburger Helper, Canned Chicken, Jiffy Cornbread Mix, Bottled Fruit Juice, Canned Mixed Vegetables, Pancake Mix, Jelly, Laundry Detergent, 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.



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.





That we all may be

one

John 17:11

Doing the Work Together: Learn. Share. Heal.

Begins Sunday, April 2 at 3 PM

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.

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 flyer](#) to read and share.



Worship at 8:45 resumes in Chapel after Easter

We appreciate all the work the Trustees and others did to make our chapel ready to be used again. Early worship services will resume in the chapel at 8:45 AM beginning April 16.



Looking for the mailboxes? They've moved temporarily

As our workroom space continues its transformation into a very useable resource room for the entire church, we've moved the Sunday School, UMW, UMM, and other group mailboxes to the inside room beside the copier (across from the preschool director office). Just walk into the room and you'll find them!

FFUMC KiDS NEWS



CELEBRATE with palms on Palm Sunday, April 2

Let's celebrate on Palm Sunday, April 2, in the palm processional. 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 and games. The FFUMC Egg Hunt will begin at 1 PM.

Bring some money if you'd like to purchase lunch from The Lady and the Beastt BBQ Food Truck. The youth will offer popcorn and cotton candy for donations to summer mission trips.

**SPRING
BREAK**

No regular programs on Wednesday, April 5: Spring Break

Children and youth programs will not hold regular meetings on Wednesday night, April 5. Regular meetings resume on April 12.

FFUMC Youth NEWS



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



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.**



"Bond Certificates" 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."

Notes of Gratitude



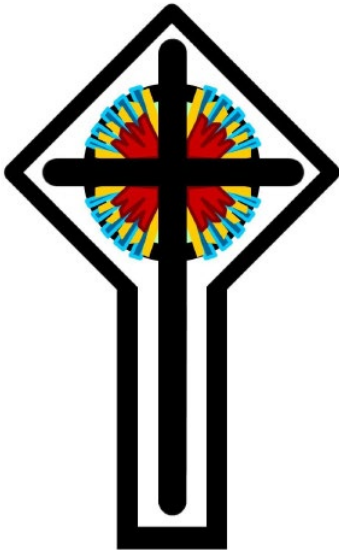
Church Family:

Please accept my thanks for the many cards, beautiful flowers, visits, phone calls, and prayers during my recent illness. I have felt your love and concern throughout this time. — Larry Brannon

Flower Ministry:

Thank you so much for the beautiful floral arrangement that you brought me to acknowledge my speaking at one of the Lenten Lunches. It was an honor for me to be a part of this great tradition. May God continue to bless your ministry! — Rev. Charles Robinson

March 29, 2023 Financials



Operating Budget

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Year to Date receipts | \$301,047.51 |
| Year to Date expenses | \$286,072.66 |
| Difference | \$14,974.85 |

Benevolence

Benevolence funds received this week: \$340.00

36 benevolence clients assisted year to date for a total of \$10,055.47

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 ...

Seniors get together!

Our adults aged 55+ LOVE to get together! You are invited to join in! Outings and meals are regularly held September through May. See details for Titus II on April 4 and May's potential St. Simon's retreat listed earlier in this newsletter.

Titus II: This monthly lunch gathering offers a program and good times over a good meal together, usually held at noon on the first Tuesday of each month.

SAGE Trips: Senior Adults Going Everywhere! Our seniors head to local events, restaurants, and places of interest. During the 2022-23 season, excursions have included Hills & Dales Estate, Fresh-Air BBQ, Mercier Apple Orchard and more. Ready for a big trip? Let's go to the "Living Life to the Fullest" retreat at St. Simon's on May 15 to 18.

For information, contact [Rev. Joe Watson](#).

