



September 15, 2023

The Weekender

Forgiveness economy

Dr. Thomas Martin, Senior Minister

Forgiveness is not quick and easy. Not for us humans. Not if we're honest. Forgiveness is a process — a messy, non-linear, and often barbed process that can leave us feeling whole and liberated one minute and bleeding out of every vein the next. In my experience, no one who glibly says the words "I forgive you" gets a pass from this messy process, and no one who struggles extra hard to forgive for reasons of temperament, circumstance, history, or trauma should feel that they're less spiritual than those who don't.



Of course, yes, there are times when forgiveness happens dramatically and instantly. But most of the time, there is no cathartic, "altar call" moment when the hurts of the past simply slip off our backs and roll away. There is only the daily business of forgiveness as a slow, sustained way of life. A practice enacted one layered, complicated, and unsentimental moment at a time.

If forgiveness is not denial, or a shortcut, or a reconciliation, or an easy process, then what is it? What exactly is Jesus asking of us when he tells us to forgive each other again and again and again and again?

I wonder if we're often squeamish about forgiveness because we misunderstand the nature of unconditional love. Foregrounding God's all-embracing love doesn't for one second require us to relativize evil. If it did, God's love would be cruel and weak, not compassionate and strong. But where we humans make love and judgment mutually exclusive — where we cry out for revenge, retribution, and punishment — God holds out for restorative justice. A kind of justice we can barely imagine. A kind of justice that has the power to heal both the oppressed and the oppressor.

I think forgiveness is a transformed way of seeing. A way of seeing that is forward-focused. Future-focused. Heavenly-focused. I don't believe that abuse and oppression are ever God's will or plan for anyone. But I do believe that God is always and everywhere in the business of taking the worst things that happen to us, and going to work on them for the purposes of multiplying wholeness and blessing. Because God is in the story, we can rest assured that our wounds will not end in loss, trauma, brokenness, and defeat. There will be another turn, another chapter, another path, another grace. Because God loves us, we don't have to forgive out of scarcity. We can forgive out of God's abundance. That is the economy of Mercy.

I hope you will join us Sunday as we think through Jesus' economics, bad math that forgives not seven times, but seventy times seven.



16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

8:45 and 11:00 AM

Online link active at 11 AM and after

Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

CURRENT NEWS



*Celebrate
FFUMC's
175th anniversary
by helping others*

Last few days for Bloom kit collection: Due September 18 Celebrating 175th Anniversary of FFUMC

In honor of FFUMC's 175th anniversary, please help Bethany Circle collect 175 of each of the items below for Bloom's older foster children. Donations may be dropped off by September 18 in the church office or on the Bloom table located behind the sanctuary in the Welcome Portal. We have collected all needed toiletry bags, but **all items remaining on our list are needed in quantity to reach our goal of 175 each.**

Items still needed:

Shampoo, 3 oz.

Conditioner, 3 oz.

Adult toothbrush, individually packaged

Toothpaste, 2.5 to 3.5 oz.

Full-size men and women's deodorant

Bar soap or 3 oz. body wash

Questions? Contact Karen Neuner, neunernotes@gmail.com.



Ready to volunteer for Messy Church on September 23?

We held our first Messy Church in August, and it was a resounding success! Thank you to all of you who volunteered and prayed.

Our next Messy Church is September 23 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. To be successful Messy Church needs people to continue to pray for all involved. Then the day of the event, we need people to help others register, prepare, and serve a simple Pizza Hot Pocket meal, set up and play games with others, participate in worship, and welcome folks in the parking lot and all the way throughout the event.

[Sign up to help with Messy Church by clicking HERE.](#)

Join us and find out how many lives we can touch, how many new people we can meet, and where God is moving through this new ministry and new way of being church. Our theme for this month is "God cares for the little things." Our scripture focus is Matthew 6:26 and Luke's story of Zacchaeus. [If you want a sneak peak, you can click HERE](#) to see September's working document that lays out our agenda and tasks for the day.

And mark your calendar for October's Trunk or Treat Messy Church on October 28. More details coming soon!



Amazing Grace Offering September 17 for Wellroot

This Sunday, September 17, is a designated collection Sunday for Wellroot Family Services, an entity of the United Methodist Church. For 150 years, Wellroot's programs have helped keep families together when possible, provided short-term foster families, and nurtured and educated teens and adults to break the cycle of trauma. Give online at wellroot.org/AmazingGrace or text "AG2023" to 41444.



United Women in Faith share their ministry this Sunday

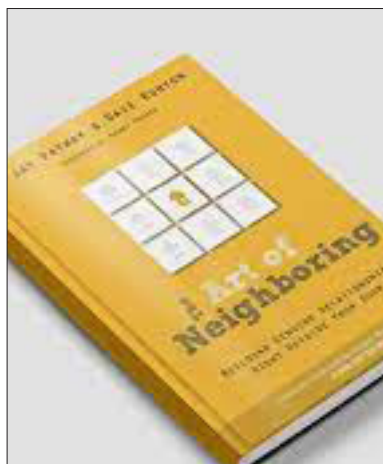
Get to know the United Women in Faith this Sunday. Most will be dressed in red and will be ready to tell you about how they have developed long-term friendships as they have grown in faith and in service together through their small groups. They'll help you find the group that's right for you!

Reminder for United Women in Faith: Wear red this Sunday!



Registration open now for Fall 2023 Contemplative Retreat Calvin Center, Sunday, October 22, 2:30—5:30 PM

Is an approaching new season calling out to you for refreshment and renewal? Are you interested in exploring meditation and contemplative practices? You are invited get away for a Contemplative Retreat sponsored by FFUMC's Study Class at the Calvin Center on Sunday, October 22, from 2:30 to 5:30 PM. Experience nourishing readings and an introduction to practices from guest leader Kimberly Broerman from Deep Waters Prayer and Exploration along with space and supplies to engage. Cost: \$25 (includes meal and all materials). Questions? Contact Joan Aycock, jaycock@fayettevillefirst.com, 770-861-4499. Registration is limited. [Register today at this link.](#)



The Art of Neighboring: Begins September 17

Jesus said, "Love your neighbor." What if we took his invitation literally? Join a three-session discussion and study of the book, "The Art of Neighboring." It isn't rocket science but it is an eye opening journey through the way we build genuine relationships right outside our doors. After our time together you will have an action plan of how you can be more than acquaintances with the people who live on your street and how you can truly love your neighbor. We will meet September 17, October 1, and October 15 from 3 – 5 pm in room C-200. There is no cost for this group but you will want to buy the book *The Art of Neighboring* by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon, before our first meeting.



Make plans now for South West District Trip

April 6-13, 2024 El Salvador

You can share Christ and ministry in El Salvador by joining with our South West District mission trip April 6-13, 2024. Be part of construction work (no skills needed), food distribution, meeting folks, and putting on a VBS (translators on-site). Must be 16 years old. Contact veteran leader and trip participant Maggie Clarke, 404-395-8161 or mwclarke195@gmail.com, for more information as preparations begin soon.



Let's eat together on Wednesday Nights

Enjoy meals on Wednesday nights together at 5:15 PM.

What's the draw?

Friendship! Be with people you really like.

Hassle Free! Enjoy meals from local restaurants.

Affordable! Adults \$10, Children under 13: \$7 (pay at door)

Sign up by noon each Monday. Contact the church office, 770-461-4313, admin@fayettevillefirst.com, or fill out a Fellowship Dinner pew card.

Sept. 20 menu:

Speedi Pig: BBQ Pork Sandwiches, Coleslaw, Baked Beans, Peach Cobbler



SAGE goes south to shop and eat

Go with friends to Antique Mall and The Sock Shoppe in Griffin with lunch at Southern Pit BBQ!

September 28 Meet at 8:45, Depart at 9 AM

Save your spot! Reserve at the church office, 770-461-4313

For questions or to suggest future trips, contact Rev. Charles Robinson, crobinson@fayettevillefirst.com, 770-855-6433.



Church Directory Online now available

Get access to our new church directory wherever you go, 24/7. It's online and available through The Portrait Cafe. Go to the link below on any device. Our church code is 1511. Check it out!

<https://theportraitcafe.com/churchdirectories>



"Lean Into God's Love" Retreat is Saturday, September 16

Join Kim Reindl at **Faith, Fun and Everyone: Leaning into God's Love**, a one-day retreat offered by the United Women in Faith South West District on Saturday, September 16, from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM at The Bradbury House. It's not too late to register! Contact Kathie Hansen, 678-592-5177.



That we may be
one

South West District supports racial healing and reconciliation

Join with others to learn and grow together in racial healing and reconciliation through five interactive workshops led by Elaine Beattie. Hear experts and engage in projects and group experiences on topics such as healthcare, education, criminal justice, economics, and church. For more information, contact Denise Wilson, 770-227-1074, southwest@ngumc.net, or [register using this link](#). All remaining sessions will be held at Senoia UMC from 3 to 5 PM on Sundays September 17, 24, and October 8 and 29.



September needs list for Fayette Samaritans

Donations are one way to help those with food insecurity and other needs. Food and clothing donations may be placed in the hallway cart near the gym or dropped by the church office.

Most Needed List: Canned Chicken, Canned Green Beans, Canned Corn, Canned Mixed Vegetables, Canned Fruit, Canned Pasta, Boxed Cereal, Pancake Mix, Syrup, Jelly **Clothing needs:** Men's boxer-style underwear all sizes, boys underwear all sizes, socks for men, women, boys and girls



See and Seek: Small Group Opportunities

Are you ready to make new friends and explore scripture and questions like: where did you see God at work in your life this past week? And, how are you inspired to find hope and act in the coming days?

Morning and evening See & Seek groups are now gathering on Wednesdays. Other groups meet throughout the week. Contact [Rev. Allyson Lawrence](#) to find a group that fits you and your schedule.

Children's Ministry



FFUMC KiDS 555 is ready for you

Join the fun on Wednesday nights at FFUMC KiDs with two clubs.

Explorers Club offers rotating activities like game night, Bible study, art time and more.

Grades 3 - 5 meet 5:55 to 6:30 PM; Grades K-2 meet 6:30 to 7 PM

Music Club takes students through a host of adventures including singing, music theory, games and instrument playing as we make all kinds of joyful noises.

Grades K-2 meet 5:55 to 6:30 PM; Grades 3-5 meet 6:30 to 7 PM

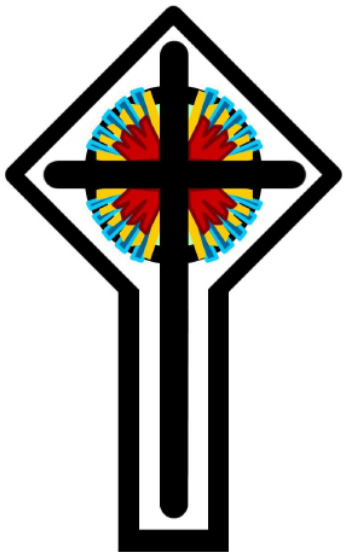
We're excited to see you! Questions? Contact [Rev. Allyson Lawrence](#) or [Joan Aycock](#).

Gratitude



*Dear Church Family,
Thank you so much for your thoughts and prayers during Allen's recent illness. Those prayers and the guidance of our great and merciful God helped us to make good therapeutic decisions, and through the kind and skilled care of the healthcare team Allen is experiencing an amazing recovery despite an ominous condition with a potentially catastrophic outcome. We will be forever grateful that you rode the storm with us and that you were there to lift us up. — Lynette McCullough*

*Dear Flower Ministry,
Thank you so much for the flower's beautiful reminder of our dad. They helped brighten our week. — The Saunders family*



September 13, 2023 Financials

Operating Budget

Year to Date receipts	\$824,782.66
Year to Date expenses	\$881,056.70
Difference	-\$56,274.04

Benevolence

Benevolence funds received this month: \$1,704.00

121 benevolence clients assisted year to date for a total of \$38,105.16

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 7 PM;
Fridays 7 PM; Saturdays 7 PM

NA Meeting: Thursdays and Saturdays 7 PM

inspired ...

Beauty and encouragement through flowers

The flower arrangements that enhance our sanctuary worship space each week are a gift that keeps giving ... over and over. The arrangements are regularly made and delivered by Riverdale Florist often in themes to highlight the season or day and always presented with artistry and care. After the services, our dedicated Flower Ministry Team gives them another life by making arrangements from the donated flowers to spread love and encouragement to our church family or community. "Made my day," "What a beautiful way to know I'm thought about," and "God bless you for blessing me" are regular sentiments shared from the recipients in appreciation for this work. *(Photos: James Watkins with Karen Davis delivering flowers; Dave Lee with wife Cheryl following an auto accident.)*



Want to be part of this ministry? Here's how:

- **Honor** or **remember** a loved one, **recognize** someone in our church for a job or activity well done, or **celebrate** a special occasion with an arrangement! Just call the church office to donate and reserve a date. After the service, you can take all the flowers or donate some or all of them to the Flower Ministry.
- **Participate** in our Easter Lily and Poinsettia donations at the holidays. All proceeds go to the Flower Ministry.
- **Share vases and ribbon.** Periodically, the team requests medium-sized vases and wired ribbon. Watch The Weekender for announcements of a need. If you received flowers and want to return the vase to be used again, just drop it by the church office or leave it in the Flower Ministry area in the Fellowship Hall kitchen.
- **Join the Flower Ministry Team.** You can either help arrange or deliver flowers. You'll share the joy of creating smiles and spreading encouragement. Contact Marilyn Harris, 770-313-4646, for details.



Notes like these below come to the church office nearly every week. You'll see more in our "Gratitude" section. Thank you for participating in this ministry that blesses so many.

Dear Flower Ministry:

Thank you for sharing the beautiful flower arrangement you brought to the house after Allen's hospitalization. It has brightened our home for several days and we appreciate your kind thoughtfulness. God bless you all! — Lynette McCullough

Dear Fayetteville First Flower Ministry:

Thank you very much for the beautiful flowers you sent me while in the hospital and after I returned home. The flowers made me realize how fortunate I am to belong to Fayetteville First. Your love and prayers sustain me. The beauty of the flowers show you care. Love to all. — James Watkins