



December 22, 2023

The Weekender

A time to love

Dr. Thomas Martin, Senior Minister

This past Sunday was a whirlwind of emotions for us as a family. First, we started the day with the beautiful Lessons and Carols service at both services. The Christmas story told through scripture and song was a beautiful tribute to the talents and gifts of this congregation. The readers led us through the Scriptures and the musicians ushered us into God's presence.

There are many things that stood out from that day, but I have been humming the chorus from the song our Seasoned Singers sang in worship: "Christmas is a time to love."

One of the mantras I have adopted over the past few years, with your help, is "I would rather be thought of as loving than thought of as always being right." Christmas is indeed a time to love.

But it's not just Christmas and the music and the carols. It was also the reminders of your love for so many people. On the way home after the beautiful reception and reflecting on the generosity of this congregation, our kids all agreed that no matter where we go, we will know that we have been loved here. Thank you for loving us. Thank you for loving others. Thank you for making this Christmas "a time to love."

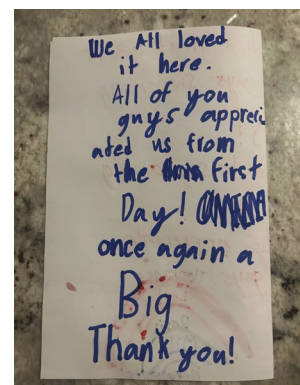
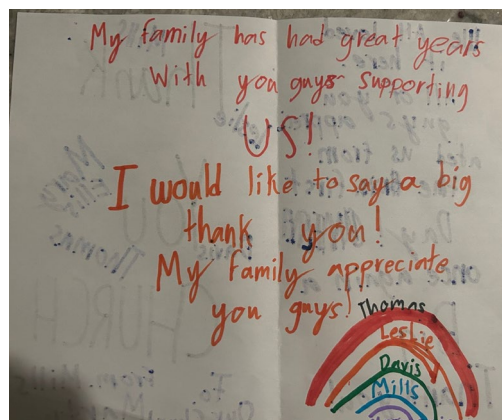
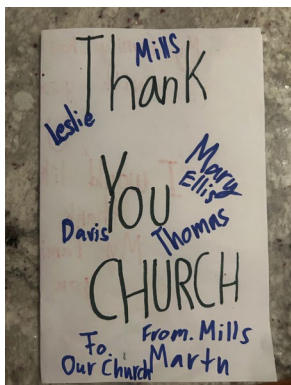
May the peace of Christ go with you, wherever he may send you.

May he guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm.

May he bring you home rejoicing at the wonders he has shown you.

May he bring you home rejoicing once again into our arms.

*And may the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you now and forevermore.*



Photos: Note from Mills Martin and family shared in recent Children's Moment.



CHRISTMAS EVE TRADITIONAL CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

11 AM | 6 PM | 11 PM

Online link active at 11 AM and after

"Jesus Is With Us"

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

CURRENT NEWS

2023
SEASON
OF THE NATIVITY



Epiphany Breakfast: Season of the Nativity

Reception to welcome Rev. Kaylen Short and Rev. Drew West

January 7, 2024 10:00 AM

You are invited to welcome our new senior pastor, the Rev. Kaylen Short and his wife Alli, and new Interim Children and Families Assistant, the Rev. Drew West, his wife Amanda and their children, at a church-wide Epiphany breakfast. It will be held January 7 in the gym starting at 10 AM.

This will be a potluck breakfast, and volunteers are needed to bring any of the following:

- Egg/sausage or other breakfast casserole
- Muffins/sweet rolls
- Fruit bowls
- Juice - orange or apple

For planning purposes, volunteers please contact Lea Agnew, leaagnew@bellsouth.net, 404-697-1938, or Carol Webb, carolbass@bellsouth.net, 404-234-1056, to let us know what you would like to bring.

Christmas Eve Services

11 AM, 6 PM, 11 PM

Our traditional Candlelight Worship on Christmas Eve will be offered in the sanctuary at 11 AM and 6 PM and in the chapel at 11 PM. The 11 AM & 6 PM services will be livestreamed. All services will offer beautiful music, communion and candlelight singing. An orchestra will present music at the 6 PM service. Nursery will be provided at the 11 AM and 6 PM services and Christmas Activity bags will be available for children at all services.

Online links will be available on the worship page at FayettevilleFirst.com.



SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Rev. Kaylen Short will serve as our new senior minister beginning January 1, 2024. Rev. Short, most recently serving at Pine Mountain UMC, is a graduate of Candler School of Theology and is an elder in full connection with the United Methodist Church. He is moving to the area with his wife, Alli (Allison), and their two dogs.

Rev. Drew West will serve Fayetteville First part-time January through June 2024. He comes to us from Bethany UMC, a church which voted to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church. Drew will also serve part-time at New Hope UMC in Palmetto in the first half of 2024. At Fayetteville First, Drew will work with our youth and confirmands, support Messy Church, and have other responsibilities. He is finishing his degree at the Candler School of Theology in the spring. Drew and his wife Amanda have two young children.

On Sunday, January 7, we will celebrate the Epiphany with a Churchwide Potluck Breakfast at 10 AM to welcome Rev. Short and Rev. West to Fayetteville First. Please make plans to attend.

Realm ACS, the church management software provider, is rolling out a suite of accounting services and Fayetteville First is working with them on a beta test of their offering. Realm ACS services span fund accounting and giving integration, transactions, disbursements, account and vendor management, budgeting, reporting, W-2 filings, and audit services among other things. Our current arrangement with Realm ACS is month to month as they scale the service to provide it to other organizations. With Julie Harp stepping away to care for her family, this arrangement could not have come at a better time for FFUMC.

DECEMBER

31

Worship
First Sunday after Christmas
11 AM

Worship on the First Sunday After Christmas: 11 AM only

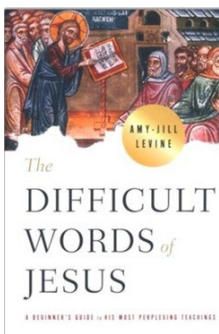
We will worship at one service on the First Sunday After Christmas, December 31, at 11 AM in the sanctuary and online. This special service led by Rev. Charles Robinson will include "Wesley's Covenant Service." A nursery will be provided.

End-of-year giving



End-of-year giving

Ready to wrap up your giving for 2023? These notes will help. Offering items for 2023 may be **dropped in the church office drop box through December 31**. If mailed, all 2023 donations with a post mark of December 31 or earlier will be credited to the 2023 budget year and receive tax credit in the 2023 year. The church business office is ready to assist you with any questions regarding your end-of-year giving.



Bible study starting Wednesday, January 10 with Rev. Allyson Lawrence, 11 AM, Room C-200

Study the difficult words of Jesus beginning January 10 with Rev. Lawrence. We will use the book and video series by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine titled *The Difficult Words of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to His Most Perplexing Teachings*. Find a book at your favorite store and join the conversation as we learn more together. Contact Rev. Lawrence at alawrence@fayettevillefirst.com with any questions.



The Practice of Letting Go

Sunday nights at 6 PM starting January 21

Do you desire more freedom and peace in 2024? Let's learn more about a few spiritual practices to help us release unnecessary and unhelpful things and patterns that may stand in our way. Each session will introduce a discipline, prayer, or practice and offer a time of unpressured exploration. Join Joan Aycock on Sunday nights from 6 to 7 PM in the chapel on January 21, January 28 and February 4. [Sign up here.](#) Also, please let us know if you are interested but need a different meeting time.



Sign up for Blood Drive Sunday, January 14

8 AM to 1 PM, Fayetteville First UMC gym

Our next Red Cross Blood Drive will be on January 14, 2024. The FFUMC Blood Drive team would like to thank you for your willingness to donate at our church or at any collection site! In 2023 we collected 141 units, which is 20 more than 2022.

Please sign up for the next drive using the Red Cross website at redcrossblood.org and choose our site or contact any of the team: Wayne Harris, Larry Brannon, Mike Clark or Randy Riddell with questions or assistance with signing up or email ffumcblooddrive@gmail.com.

Let's see if we can donate 20 more units in 2024 than in 2023!

Gratitude



Thank you, Shawl Ministry:

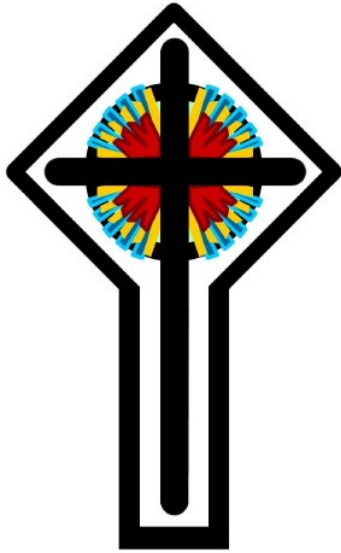
I am so touched by the gift of the beautiful handmade shawl and blessing that Charlotte McAdams brought me. I feel warmed, honored, and "hugged" indeed by the friendship and support that went into each stitch. The sentiment of the shawl prayer has been very comforting as I continue to deal with health challenges, especially the uncertainties. Thank you for your thoughtful gift and prayers.

— Doralyn Kirkland

Thoughtfulness is a blessing. It's the time of year to be grateful for the people who bless our lives...people like you. — FFUMC Family Class (with donation to Shawl Ministry)

Thank you, Church Family:

Jerry and I cannot thank all of you enough for the prayers, cards, messages, calls of concern, flowers, and love that we have received from you all. The Christmas Carolers were a warm comfort to our hearts. My surgery was a success, and now, with Jerry's care, I am recovering from the operation. We have missed all of you and look forward to returning to worshipping and sharing in church soon. — Margaret and Jerry Whitaker



December 20, 2023 Financials

Operating Budget

Year to Date receipts	\$1,201,345.54
Year to Date expenses	\$1,141,355.33
Difference	\$59,990.21

Benevolence

Benevolence funds received this week \$447.00

170 benevolence clients assisted year to date for a total of \$49,482.03

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 until further notice

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

Holiday schedule adjustments:

December 27 and January 3 — No Wednesday night Programs

December 24: Christmas Eve — Traditional Candlelight Services at 11 AM, 6 PM, 11 PM

December 25 & 26: Christmas Holiday — Church office closed

December 31: First Sunday After Christmas — Worship at 11 AM only

January 1: New Year's Day — Church office closed

January 2 — Church office hours resume as normal

January 10 — Wednesday night supper and regular programs resume for all ages

inspired ...

Jesus is ... Love through us

Do you see the love all around through this Season of the Nativity? You better watch out! Who knows when you'll be caught in action spreading love like confetti! Watch for next week's recap as well.

Photos: Fayetteville First Christmas Pageant, Martin Family, Christmas caroling, United Women in Faith events, Fayetteville First Preschool Christmas program, Messiah concert



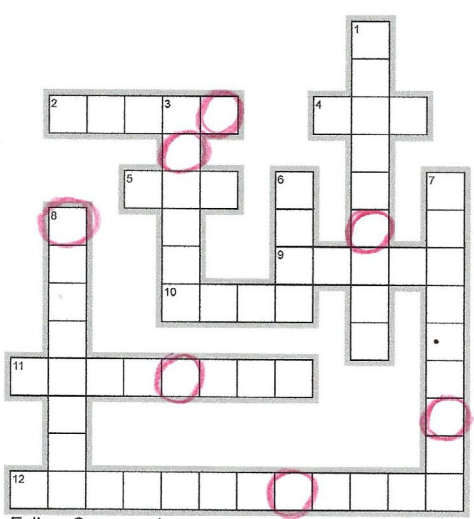


2023
SEASON
OF THE NATIVITY

The Season of the Nativity continues with the Fourth Sunday of Advent on December 24 as we move to the theme Jesus is LOVE. This week's music selected by Nick Bowden is [Love Divine, All Love's Excelling](#).

Have you collected all the letters from the weekly crosswords? Add these letters circled in red to collect all 23 letters and unscramble this Christmas message:

Week 4



EclipseCrossword.com

Across

2. A favorite holiday cake
4. ___ to the World!
5. Food for cows and other barn animals
9. Came to worship the Christ child
10. The first candle lit on the Advent wreath
11. Another name for Jesus
12. Incense of gum resin from Arabian trees

Down

1. These were hung by the chimney with care
3. Prophet who foretold the coming of the Messiah
6. The gospel that tells the Christmas story
7. You kiss under this
8. Christmas month