



June 27, 2025

The Weekender

Following Jesus Together: Reflections from Annual Conference 2025

Rev. Kaylen Short

A couple of weeks ago, nearly 1,800 United Methodists from across North Georgia gathered in Athens for the 2025 Annual Conference. You were well represented by 3 clergy delegates, 3 lay delegates, retired clergy at FFUMC, and a number of members of Fayetteville First serving as district at-large delegates. The theme of our conference was “Come, Follow Me,” and the spirit of worship, connection, and shared calling filled every moment.

Annual Conference by (some of) the numbers:

- Professions of Faith across the conference are up more than 8% year over year.
- Unfortunately, attendance across the conference has declined in the last year.
- We had 70 youth delegates at Annual Conference this year.
- We reduced our Annual Conference budget by 5% compared to last year.
- In celebration of Camp Glisson’s 100th year, we collected more than \$20,000 for Camp scholarships.
- Apportionment giving by percentage is at its highest levels in many years.

I asked some of your delegates what stood out to them, and here’s what I heard:

- The awarding of \$5,000,000 in BEAT grants to churches over the last 5 years.
- The ongoing discussion of a potential merger of the North and South GA annual conferences. Exploration continues but no final decision has been made.
- Lauren reported this as her favorite moment: *“My favorite part of Annual Conference this year was when so many of the Youth Delegates came forward at the end of the Service of Ordination at the call from the Bishop. I was especially touched when Davis Martin came up to answer the call and was met by his father, Thomas, and they stood together hugging. What a moment!”*
- Charles was particularly touched by the Service of Remembrance and the names of clergy and clergy spouses read, *“They were some of the folks who have walked this path with me for nearly 5 decades. This was my 49th Annual Conference. I look forward to the next one!”* We’ll have to find a way to celebrate, Charles!
- Sue Berg was inspired by *“The Worship Service in which the Bishop delivered her message which provides a preview of the priorities and goals of the Conference for the next year.”*
- Several of your representatives reported finding research I delivered from the floor of conference to be among their highlights. (I am quite certain they’re mostly just currying favor because no one really likes listening to numbers read aloud.) The data I shared addressed gender and racial inequity in our clergy retirement plans. That information was further bolstered by a report from the Committee on the Status and Role of Women and by the end of conference we voted to establish a task force to examine those very issues.

Ultimately, what stood out most wasn’t any single vote or report—it was the spirit of the gathering. Frankly, it was the polar opposite of what I have experienced at many previous Annual Conferences that were far more contentious. There was a sense of hopefulness, purpose, and unity as we worshiped, learned, and made decisions together. It reminded me that following Jesus isn’t something we do alone. We do it in community, grounded in grace and moving forward in faith.



3RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST JUNE 29, 2025
8:45 AM (Chapel) 11:00 AM (Sanctuary & Online)
[Online link active at 11 AM and after](#)
Psalm 77:11-20; 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14
"Pass It On"
The Rev. Kaylen Short

CURRENT NEWS



Messy Church for June and July

Water Day Messy Church: June 28 11 am -1 pm

Be sure to wear clothes you can get wet and bring a towel. Get ready for a day of adventure outside.



Fayetteville, GA

Back to School Block Party: July 26 3-5 pm

Join us as we celebrate the end of summer and prepare for a new school year. Outdoor fun, games, and music!



Upcoming Blood Drive: July 13

8 AM to 1 PM, Fayetteville First UMC gym

The next Red Cross Blood Drive at FFUMC is Sunday, July 13, in the gym from 8 AM to 1 PM. [Signing up is easy: just click here. This takes you directly to the American Red Cross site.](#) **Please sign up to donate in advance if at all possible.** Contact Randy Riddell for questions or assistance or to volunteer to assist at this drive.



Rise Against Hunger: Let us know you're coming!

You're invited to help fight hunger by preparing highly nutritious, dehydrated meals for use in crisis areas or school feeding programs around the world at the Rise Against Hunger Packing Event in the FFUMC gym.

August 17, 2025 1 - 3 PM Pack 25,000 meals in 2 hours

Invite friends, groups, neighbors ... all hands appreciated and needed! Fill up a table with people you know or want to get to know better as you do a fun activity that helps others.

[Rise Against Hunger requires a waiver/registration for the packing event. Please take care of this as soon as possible through this link.](#)

This year, lunch will be provided after worship and before the packing event. (No reservation needed. No charge. Donations accepted.)



Let's get some peaches!

SAGE gets peachy this month! Make plans now to enjoy lunch with friends and then go to Concord for a peach adventure.

Thursday, July 10 Gather at church office at 10:45; Depart at 11:00 AM

Lunch at Bistro Hilary in Senoia at 11:30 AM

Visit Gregg's Farm in Concord for peaches, ice cream, fritters, vegetables, jams, and more. Return around 2:30 PM.

\$2 transportation; All other expenses on your own. Please note that Gregg's Farm is a CASH ONLY business and does not accept credit cards for purchases. [Check them out here.](#)

Sign up for the trip in church office or contact admin@fayettevillefirst.com.



Event: August 9

Reservations due July 26

Let's Do Lunch: Saturday, August 9

It's time to make reservations for our 4th Annual Let's Do Lunch! And remember to bring friends, neighbors and family with you. Don't wait! You have until July 26 to reserve your seat.

This year, we are delighted to have Diana Cowan as our special guest to share her incredible story about "The Lost Sheep", which has motivated women all over the country. Come prepared to be entertained, encouraged and inspired.

Guests will enjoy a tri-salad plate for lunch, as well as the chance to browse all the uniquely decorated dining tables in the Fellowship Hall.

There is no cost to attend this event, but reservations are required. There are 3 easy ways to make your reservation:

Online: [Click this reservation link](#), fill in the form & hit Submit.

Email: Send an email to Lauren Davis or admin@fayettevillefirst.com with your name, email address, phone number, and the names of any guests coming with you.

Phone: Call the church office at 770-461-4313.

You may make reservations for you and your friends at the same time. If you made a reservation but can no longer attend, please be sure to contact Lauren to cancel.



Last few days of school supply collection

The **VBS Mission Focus** was to help one of our local Fayette county elementary schools. And you are invited to join in the effort! Purchase some or all of the following and bring your donations to the church office or Narthex for the month of June.

Items needed:

Composition notebook

Pencils

Glue sticks

Wide-rule notebook paper

Spiral notebook

Erasers

16-count Crayola crayons



Photographs are in Welcome Center one more week

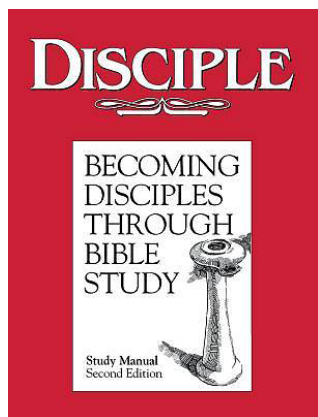
Did you have a photography session for the new church directory? Please pick up your prints in the Welcome Center this Sunday. **Please mark the pickup sheet** by the photo box to let us know you got yours! On Monday, the remaining photos will be moved to the church office for pickup.



NEW! July pantry needs at Fayette Samaritans

Donations are one way to help those in our community 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. **Volunteers** are also needed in the food pantry, clothes closet, receptionist area, and as interviewers with a 3 hour commitment each week.

Most Needed List: Canned Chicken, Canned Beef Stew, Tuna, Canned Corn, Dried Pasta (not spaghetti), Pasta Sauce, Hamburger Helper, Tea, Jelly, Jello



Get ready: Disciple I is coming to FFUMC

Disciple I is a 34-week Bible study program that provides an overview of the entire Bible, emphasizing the Old and New Testaments equally. It aims to develop strong Christian leaders through disciplined Bible study and encourages participants to become disciples through Bible study. The study involves daily Bible reading and weekly group meetings where participants discuss their readings and insights. FFUMC will be offering the course beginning August 13 under the leadership of two teachers: Barb Combs and Jeff Hansen.

Why take Disciple I at Fayetteville First? According to leader Barb Combs:

- You will never read the Bible in the same way again.
- You'll be learning from other people as they share what they know and have learned and you share what you know and have learned.
- You'll learn how the Old and the New Testament work together.

The program will be offered on Wednesdays from 3 to 5 PM with another offering of the same class from 6 to 8 PM. A single Kickoff Meeting (Week 0) on Wednesday, August 13, at 5:30 PM will introduce the program. Weeks 1-34 will begin the following week with the two separate class times. Registration for the program will begin next week.

For more information about the program, contact Barb Combs or Jeff Hansen.



New Rev. Allyson and Kevin Lawrence Mission Fund

Last Sunday, we shared the exciting news about the naming of the Rev. Allyson and Kevin Lawrence Mission Fund. Since then, several of you have asked how you can get involved. While we kept the initial invitations small to preserve the surprise, anyone is welcome to give to any Legacy Fund at any time. Every gift adds to the fund's principal, and over time, the interest it earns helps support Legacy grants for years to come. The more we grow these funds together, the more good we can do for generations ahead! For more information, contact Legacy Giving chair Lauren Davis.



Summer Lunch needs and thank yous

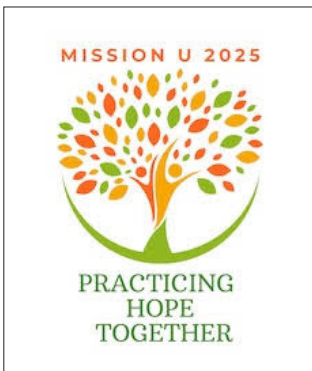
Thank you to all the volunteer packers and drivers who participate each Tuesday in the Summer Lunch Program. You can pitch in too! We appreciate your donations of any kind of cookies or boxes of individually wrapped bags of chips. Just leave them in the Fellowship Hall kitchen clearly marked "Summer Lunch."



Save the Date: Great Day of Service September 20

Get ready for another Great Day of Service, a work time set aside for us to go be the hands and feet of Christ in our community. What to do right now? SAVE THE DATE! Registration will open in August.

Great Day of Service coming September 20



Mission u 2025 welcomes YOU!

Want to deepen your faith in community? Gain experience interpreting Scripture? Work toward healing for yourself, your community, and all of creation? Mission u is for you!

Offered through United Women in Faith

July 18-19 — In-Person option

July 22, 24, 29, 31 — Virtual option

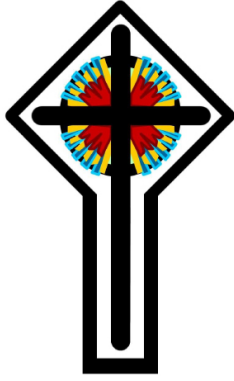
[Click here for more information or to register.](#)



El Salvador plans are underway

Join Pastor Kaylen, Maggie Clarke, and friends from sister UMC churches for an unforgettable mission trip to El Salvador January 31–February 7, 2026. Together we will share God's love through service and connection. The cost is \$1,600 plus airfare, and all are welcome to be part of the journey—whether by going or by giving. Donations will help offset expenses for FFUMC participants, making this meaningful experience more accessible for all. For details on the trip, contact Maggie Clarke.

January 31-February 7



June 23, 2025 Financials

Operating Budget 2025

Year-to-Date Receipts	\$536,536.56
Year-to-Date Expenses	\$573,697.66
Difference	-\$37,161.10

Benevolence

Benevolence funds received this week: \$250.00

89 Families Assisted Year-To-Date: Total distributed \$21,1982.21

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

AA Meetings: Sundays 3 PM; Mondays, Wednesdays,
Fridays, Saturdays 7 PM; Thursdays 7:30 AM

NA Meetings: Thursdays 7:30 PM

Fayetteville First UMC 175 East Lanier Avenue Fayetteville, GA 30214
770-461-4313 FayettevilleFirst.com



Looking ahead:

**The church office will be closed July 3 - 4
for the Independence holiday.**

inspired ...

ASP: Helping where we make a difference

After months of preparation and fundraising, our youth headed to Harlan, Kentucky, June 8-15 to do all the good they could with the Appalachian Service Project. Partnering with Inman United Methodist, the group learned to use miter saws, drills and other power tools and practice basic repair skills in advance of their work week. Then they put their important life skills to work in an underprivileged area. Youth Assistant Jordan Hart says, "It's great to see the teams learn to work together and embrace each other for who they are with all their personalities. A flip often switches during the week as they realize its okay to let go and just be themselves." The teams saw how groups giving a little can make a huge difference in a community.

We are grateful for adults Austin, Jordan, Nick, Anna, Chris, and Rhonda who accompanied Ethan, Glenda, Patrick, James, David, Xander, Sophia, and Jack for one of the most exhausting and most rewarding weeks possible.

