



August 1, 2025

The Weekender

An Ode to the Humble Backpack Rev. Kaylen Short

This Sunday, we're offering our annual Blessing of the Backpacks, and I've been thinking about that beat-up old companion we all once knew well: the backpack.

I loved my backpack when I was a kid. I usually had one that was too big and wore it too low so it bounced around every time I walked. But I didn't care. That oversized thing was basically my whole world crammed into one bag. Notebooks, pencils, papers and folders with absolutely zero discernable organizational structure. It contained whatever book I was obsessed with at that time, and maybe even my lunch.

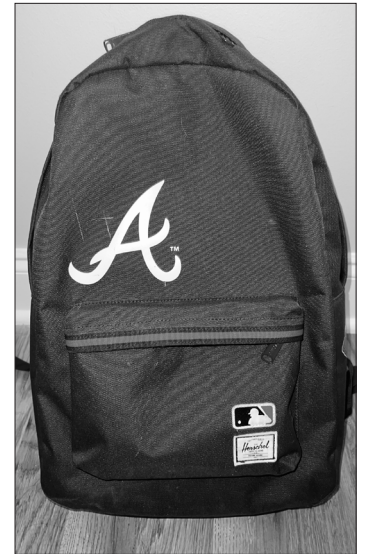
Looking back, that backpack was so much more than just something to haul my stuff around. It was like this symbol of all the big things happening in my little world. Adventure, growing up, learning to be responsible for my own things.

Funny thing is, I still use a backpack. It doesn't have the same bright colors my old ones did, and it's definitely cleaner than it used to be, but it does the same job. Carries what I need, goes where I go, never lets me down. There's something really comforting about throwing it on and knowing everything I need is right there with me.

That's what makes this whole Blessing of the Backpacks thing special. We're not just blessing some fabric and zippers. We're blessing these kids who are about to walk into classrooms trying to figure stuff out. We're blessing all the teachers and parents who are going to help fill those bags with encouragement and love. And honestly? We're blessing all that invisible stuff kids, teachers, and parents carry too. The worries, the big questions, the dreams they may not even be sure how to talk about yet.

So this Sunday, let's celebrate the backpack. Doesn't matter if it's shiny and new or if it's been through three school years already and looks like it. Bring it as a reminder that God's right there with us. On the bus when someone's being mean. In math class when nothing makes sense. With us in the evening as we are grading papers. Beside us as our little one, now nearly grown, hops in a car of their own. Everywhere.

Let's celebrate these simple, beat-up, amazing backpacks. They're going to carry a lot more than homework this year. They're going to carry our love and a reminder of God's presence everywhere we go.



8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - AUGUST 3, 2025

8:45 AM - (IN SANCTUARY THIS WEEK)

11:00 AM (Sanctuary & Online)

Online link active at 11 AM and after

Luke 12:13-21

"More, More, More"

The Rev. Kaylen Short



**Chapel
Parking Lot B**

Chapel and Parking Lot B CLOSED STARTING TODAY

Upgrades are starting EARLY! Both the chapel and Parking Lot B will be closed from August 1–8 due to the HVAC unit replacement in the chapel. A crane and construction materials will be staged in Parking Lot B, so it won't be accessible during that time.

The project is scheduled to take one week. However, if it runs over, we will communicate alternate plans for the August 10 early service and parking. Just look for directional signs in the parking lot and outside the chapel.



**August 3
Blessing
of Backpacks**

Blessing of the Backpacks - Sunday August 3

As a new school year begins, we want to surround our students, teachers, and administrators with prayer and encouragement!

8:45 AM Service

Following communion, we will offer a time of consecration and blessing for all students, teachers, and administrators. Bag tags will also be distributed during this time.

11:00 AM Service

Students, teachers, and administrators are invited to bring their backpacks or bags to worship. During the service, we will pray over the upcoming academic year, and each person will receive a special bag tag as a reminder that God goes with them into every classroom and hallway.

Come and help us lift our school community as we begin this new chapter together!



Bible Presentation – Sunday, August 10

On Sunday, August 10, our church will present Children's Bibles to all 3rd and 4th grade students. This special moment marks an important milestone in their faith journey as they begin to explore the Bible more deeply on their own.

If your child is entering 3rd or 4th grade this fall, we'd love for them to be part of this celebration. Please join us as we bless and encourage these young disciples in their walk with God! Be sure to contact Rev. Drew West if you want to make sure your child is going to receive a Bible.



Walking with others through grief

GriefShare is a program where caring individuals walk with others through the journey of grief. Facilitated by Carol and Bill Webb, a new session of classes will meet Mondays August 11 through November 10 from 10 AM to 12 PM in Room B-350. All are welcome. For more information on the program or to sign up, contact Carol or Bill Webb or visit [GriefShare.org](https://www.GriefShare.org).



YOUTH:

**Get ready for
a GREAT year!**

Want to learn more about our youth program?

Who: Youth (Rising 6-12 Grades), Parents/Guardians, Youth Volunteers

What: Dinner and Conversations

When: Wednesday, August 13th (Dinner: 6 pm, Conversations: 6:30 pm)

Where: The Foundry — Room C280

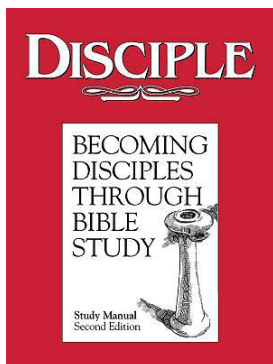
Why: We want to get to know you!

[Please let us know you are coming and share your contact information using this link.](#)

Join us for food, a brief devotion, conversations, fellowship, and fun.

We have big plans for the upcoming school year, and we can't wait to share this with you!

[Hope to see you on August 13!](#)



Get ready: Disciple I starts August 13 at 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. Please indicate in the memo on registration which class time you desire. There is no charge for the class or materials; donations are accepted. For more information about the program, contact Barb Combs or Jeff Hansen.

[Registration link for Disciple I Bible Study 2025-2026](#)



Wednesday Night Suppers resume August 20

Let's eat together! Time: **5 PM** Fellowship Hall

Regular Wednesday programs for all ages resume August 20.

Sign ups for meals will be available soon!

For now, save the date!



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 up to 35,000 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.)

Dress in very casual, comfortable clothes for worship August 17. One outfit for the whole day! We can head straight to lunch for nourishment and fellowship and on to the packing event.



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



*New season
begins August 20*

Fayette Choirs for children and youth begin August 20

Get ready for a new year of music! Each Wednesday evening from 5:30 to 6:30 PM three distinct choirs will be lifting voices in expression of faith, encouragement, and beauty in our world. With each group offering age-specific learning, skill development, and musical repertoire, all children and young youth singers will have access to quality instruction and musical development. Plan to join in ... and invite friends and neighbors!

Fayette Young Singers - Nick Bowden 4th grade through voice change

Fayette Junior Choir - Joan Aycock 1st - 3rd grade

Fayette Cherub Choir - Joan Aycock 4 years - Kindergarten

Please email Joan Aycock, jaycock@fayettevillefirst.com, Children's Music Coordinator for all age groups, or call the church office and let us know you're coming!



SAGE heads for fun every month

Take a trip with our Senior Adults Going Everywhere (SAGE)!

August 21 - Old Courthouse and Lunch

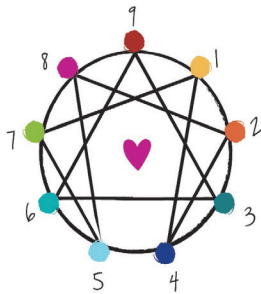
Meet at the Church Office at 9:45 AM. From there we will visit the Old Courthouse next door at 10:00 AM. Afterward we will meet at the Village Café across from Piedmont Fayette Hospital for lunch together in the reserved back room at 11:30 AM.

We will drive our own cars or carpool from the Church Office. No charge except for lunch.

Upcoming:

September 5 - Monastery of the Holy Spirit tour in Conyers and lunch

October 9 - Tour of Trilith Studios



Sign up for A Path to God: The Enneagram as Spiritual Practice by August 17

The Enneagram is growing in popularity as a personality typing tool, but it is so much more! In fact, the Enneagram is a wonderful tool for spiritual formation. Learning our Enneagram type can help us identify specific ways in which we are invited to share God with the world, the patterns that get in the way of our doing that, and the spiritual practices that return our focus to God and our true calling. Join us as we explore this fascinating tool.

Saturday, August 23 10 AM to 4 PM FFUMC Fellowship Hall

FREE — Reservations required

This course will be taught by Kristen Vincent. [Learn more and register here.](#)

Want to know more about the Enneagram before the workshop? Our workshop leader recommends these books (not required reading, but highly recommended!): "The Road Back to You" by Cron/Stabile and "The Enneagram Guide to Waking Up" by Beatrice Chestnut.

Questions? Contact Joan Aycock, jaycock@fayettevillefirst.com.



Medicine bottle collection through August

Have you emptied some medicine or vitamin bottles? They can be reused! Here's how:

- Clean bottles, remove labels, keep lids on.
- Mark bottles as "Pill Bottle Collection" and leave them inside the Welcome Center cabinet or in the marked collection bin at the gym stairwell.

Contact Faye Livingston if you have questions.



January 31-February 7

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 Rev. Kaylen Short.



New! August 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, Hamburger Helper, Pasta Sauce, Oatmeal – single serving, Raisins – single serving, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Bar Soap, Feminine Products*

Clothes Pantry Needs: *Women's Socks and Underwear (all sizes), Men's Boxer Shorts (all sizes)*



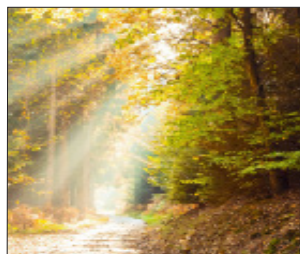
Prayer List Guidelines

Bulletin Prayer List

In an effort to keep the prayer list provided on each Sunday's Order of Worship a current and useful tool in the prayer life of our church, **we will be completely refreshing the prayer list on the first Sunday of each month.** Here are some guidelines:

- If you or your family member desire to be included on the prayer list at any time, please request directly to the church office at 770-461-4313 or admin@fayettevillefirst.com
- At the end of each month, if you want to continue to be included on the bulletin prayer list, let us know that by Monday at noon before the first Sunday of each month. (For example, **to continue to be included on the list in September, contact us by Monday, September 1**).
- Requests will be accepted directly from an individual or a family member only to ensure privacy as desired by our church family.
- A request will remain for the month unless you ask to have it removed.

Questions? Contact the church office.



G3: Good Grief Gals

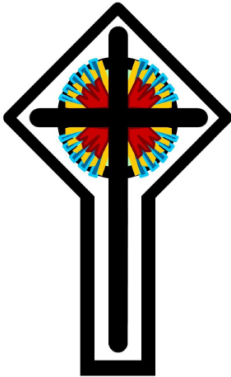
Each month a group of women who have each experienced a significant loss in their lives meet at a local restaurant or the church to offer friendship and encouragement to each other. To learn more and get in on the next gathering, contact Janet Baileys or call the church office for more information.



Shawl Ministry

I want to thank you for the lovely shawl you gave me. I love the colors and the design. I was in the hospital and then rehab for two weeks and I'm finally home. Your ministry is such a wonderful part of the outreach we have. I appreciate all you (all) have done for missions. Thank you again for all you do! — Suzie Lusk

Thank you for the absolutely beautiful shawl you all made in honor of my grandmother. Her passing has left a tremendous empty space in our hearts, but the shawl will serve as a way to hug her in her absence. Thank you. — Meghan Schultz and family



July 28, 2025 Financials

Operating Budget 2025

Year-to-Date Receipts	\$630,361.26
Year-to-Date Expenses	\$676,761.07
Difference	-\$46,399.81

Benevolence

Benevolence funds received this week: \$540.00

104 Families Assisted Year-To-Date: Total distributed \$25,258.66

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

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770-461-4313 FayettevilleFirst.com

inspired ...

Back-to-School Bash Brings Cool Summer Fun

A hot summer day gave us the perfect excuse to play last Saturday! From Kona Ice treats to a giant inflatable slide and bounce house, there was no shortage of excitement. Kids (and adults!) enjoyed colorful balloon animals, creative crafts, and beautiful face painting. Our amazing youth stepped up to host a cotton candy stand, adding even more sweetness to the day.

It was a joy to welcome new families and reconnect with our Messy Church regulars. [We also shared our Messy Church schedule for the rest of the year](#)—so everyone can stay in the loop for more fun and faith-filled events ahead. Thank you to all the volunteers and participants of every age who made the day such a success. We're ready for more Messy Church days each month!

