



The Weekender

July 24, 2026

By Jami Maguire

When I was growing up, I rarely, if ever, saw individuals with special needs sitting in the pews of my church or walking the halls of my school. As far as I knew, people with disabilities were uncommon, and society seemed to suggest they should remain separated from everyone else, conveniently believing it was somehow for their own good.

While I was living in that blissful ignorance something remarkable was happening at Fayetteville First United Methodist Church.

Long before inclusive ministry became a priority for many churches, FFUMC began hosting a week of Vacation Bible School for adults with special needs. At a time when this kind of ministry was almost unheard of, our church became a pioneer in welcoming individuals with disabilities into the life of the church.

It's been nearly 50 years since that first VBS, and thanks to the love and commitment of Susie Arrington, her amazing family and a team of faithful volunteers Sunshine VBS continues.

Fayetteville First UMC is a church with a heart for the intellectually and physically disabled.

Walk through our hallways on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, and you'll hear laughter, conversation, music, and joyful activity from Adults in Action. For the past eight years, FFUMC has generously opened its doors to this day program, creating a place where adults with special needs can learn, grow, and build meaningful friendships.

On Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, children, teens and adults with special needs gather in our Sunshine Class, where lessons and activities are thoughtfully adapted so everyone can experience worship, Bible study, and Christian community in ways that meet their unique needs.

On many Friday mornings, the Sunshine classroom becomes a place of encouragement for parents and caregivers. There they find spiritual nourishment, understanding, and the support of others walking a similar journey.

One of my favorite places in our church is a painting of Jesus welcoming little children. Whenever my son, Andrew, who has disabilities, sees it, he smiles and says, "There's my Lord and Savior!"

His words are a beautiful reminder of what the Church is called to be.

What greater mission could there be than inviting people of every ability to experience the love, presence, and grace of God? FFUMC has been living out that mission for decades, and countless lives have been blessed because of it.

Please join us this Sunday as we celebrate Sunshine Sunday! Our friends with special needs will be taking part in music and other elements of the service.

It's our way of not only celebrating them, but thanking you for being a church with open doors, open hearts, and open arms.



9TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JULY 26, 2026

8:45 AM 11:00 AM (Sanctuary & Online)

Online link active at 11 AM and after

Matthew 13: 44-46

"Read It Again: Belovedness"

Rev. Kaylen Short

CURRENT NEWS

UMCOR Flood Bucket Project

Thanks to each of you who have participated in collecting supplies for people affected by natural disasters. All buckets and cleaning supplies need to be returned to the Church Office or Welcome Center by Sunday, July 26.



For questions, please contact Charlotte McAdams at charlotte.mc2344@gmail.com or 404-862-9791.

Messy Church Back to School Block Party

Saturday, July 25 | 3:00–5:00 PM

Join us as we celebrate the end of summer and get ready for an exciting new school year! Bring your family and friends for an afternoon filled with outdoor fun, games, music, and community celebration.

This event is FREE and open to all ages—everyone in the community is welcome!



School days are on the way and come with lots of little things to keep track of!



Mabel's Labels help make sure your child's belongings make it back home. Their personalized labels are waterproof, dishwasher safe, and laundry safe, making them perfect for busy preschool families.

Shop campaigns.mabelslabel.com anytime July 1 through August 30 and select Fayetteville First UMC Preschool to support our fundraiser.

Let's Try Something New

The Second Sunday Seminar Series is an opportunity to meet for an hour over a light lunch after the 11:00 am service and learn something new. We will bring in a subject matter expert each month to present a topic, take questions,



and provide immediate steps we can take to safeguard ourselves, improve wellness and mental health, fill knowledge gaps, or hack everyday challenges. The first three Second Sunday Seminars will be September 13, October 11, November 8. Here's where we need your help. If you have a burning topic that we can turn into a one-hour seminar series, please call the office at 770-461-4313 or [email admin@fayettevillefirst.com](mailto:admin@fayettevillefirst.com). We look forward to hearing from you!



Legacy Grant Requests Due August 1

The Legacy Committee is grateful for the opportunity to support the ministries and programs that help our church community grow and thrive. Our next round of Legacy Grant funding requests are due by the end of the day on August 1. To be considered, each request must be reviewed and signed by a staff member before submission.

If you have questions about the process or need assistance with your request, please reach out to Legacy Committee Chair Lauren Davis or the Church office. We look forward to hearing how your ideas and ministries continue to strengthen our church family!

Save the Date! The next mission trip to El Salvador is scheduled for April 3-10, 2027. Please mark your calendars and begin praying about how you can participate. You will hear more about ways to become involved in September. If you are interested in going, contact Maggie Clarke at 404-395-8161 or mwclarke195@gmail.com.



Mark your calendar for our annual Rise Against Hunger Packing Event



August 16, 2026, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM
in the Family Life Center.

Our goal is to pack 30,000 highly nutritious, dehydrated meals in just two hours to help fight hunger in crisis areas and school feeding programs around the world. It is a fun activity for all ages and a great way to help others.

Please note the following details:

- Registration: Rise Against Hunger requires a waiver/registration for the event.

Please complete this as soon as possible via this link

<https://act.riseagainsthunger.org/event/e800537>

- Lunch: Lunch will be provided after worship and before the packing event. There is no charge, though donations will be accepted, and reservations will be needed. You will be contacted after you register for the event, to confirm your lunch plans.

- Dress Code: We are encouraged to wear very casual, comfortable clothes for both worship and the packing event.

Let us all work together for this great cause.

For questions, please contact Charlotte McAdams at charlotte.mc2344@gmail.com or 404-862-9791



August 2 Blessing of the Backpacks

Blessing of the Backpacks - Sunday August 2

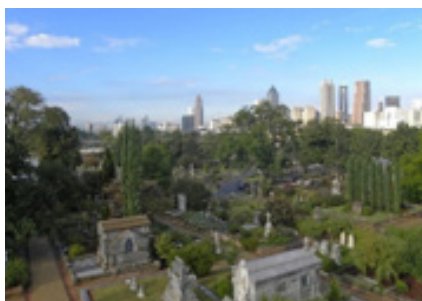
As a new school year begins, we want to surround our students, teachers, and administrators with prayer and encouragement!

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!

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 17 through November 16 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.



Save the Date – SAGE Trip!

Mark your calendars for our next SAGE outing on Thursday, September 17! We'll travel to Oakland Cemetery for a guided tour, followed by lunch together.

Cost: \$10 (includes the tour and transportation)

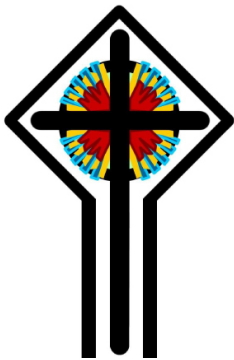
If you'd like to join us, please sign up by calling the church office or emailing admin@fayettevillefirst.com. We hope you'll come enjoy a day of history, fellowship, and fun!



Help Us Refresh Our Website!

We're updating our church website and would love your help! If you have photos from worship, Sunday School classes, small groups, mission projects, fellowship events, children's or youth activities, or any other church gatherings, please share them with us.

Send your photos to Kelly Anderson at admin@fayettevillefirst.com or Jennifer Hickman at officemanager@fayettevillefirst.com.



July 20, 2026 Financials

Operating Budget 2026

Annual Operating Budget Receipts	\$719,788.56
Annual Operating Budget Expenses	\$669,912.82
Difference	\$49,875.74
Benevolence	
Benevolence funds received this week:	\$50.00
99 Families Assisted Year-To-Date: Total distributed	\$26,426.74

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.

Publication Deadlines

Have information to share? Send your submissions for consideration to Jenn Hickman at officemanager@fayettevillefirst.com by noon on Mondays for inclusion in The Weekender weekly e-newsletter.

Regular Church Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday 9 AM to 4 PM (closed 12-1 PM lunch)

Closed Fridays

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

NA Meetings: Thursdays 7:30 PM

SUNSHINE VBS 2026!!!

