



>> connections

“Merry Advent!” by Rev. John Barnes

“Merry Christmas!” O wait, am I supposed to say that? Am I allowed to say that? Not, of course, because it might offend someone or is not politically correct, but because it’s not Christmas yet! Christmastide in the Christian year starts on December 25 and finishes on Epiphany, January 6, when we celebrate the wise men worshipping the Christ child. This year Advent starts on Sunday, December 2, and ends on Christmas Eve.

Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas. Advent and the scriptures used in the lectionary during Advent remind us of three things: 1) that Jesus came long ago that first Christmas day; 2) that one day in the future Jesus will come again to judge and reign; and 3) Jesus is among us now through the Holy Spirit.

During Advent we remember that

Jesus came; that’s why we have crèches and decorate the church with greenery. But you may not realize that we also talk about Jesus’ return during Advent. In one of the lectionary Gospel readings Jesus tells the disciples:

But about that day or hour [when I return] no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Watch, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come (Mark 13:32-33).

Jesus is coming back so be ready for when he comes—even though we don’t know when. Jesus says “be ready” and Advent is about being ready. Maybe we ought to start saying, right after Thanksgiving, “Merry Advent” as a way to help people be ready, be watching. Watching, not for Christmas and gift giving, but for Jesus’ return. “Merry Advent!”

December 2018

December 2

Churchwide Breakfast

December 9

Lessons & Carols
FFUMC Pageant

December 16

Candlelight Concert

December 19

Churchwide Bonfire

December 24

Christmas Eve Services



175 East Lanier Avenue
Fayetteville, GA 30214
770-461-4313
fayettevillefirst.com

Our Church Family

Caring for each other and our community



growing in
nurture
B Peter 3:18



growing in
outreach
Matthew 5:16



growing in
worship
Psalm 100:2

In Memoriam: Carolyn Cary November 5 Eugene Ellison November 12 Duncan Williamson November 26

Our Christian prayers and sympathy are with

Daria Giebler and family upon the death of Daria's mother, Betty Drukenmiller, on October 20.
Rick and Jeannine Massengale and family upon the death of Jeannine's father, Robert William, on October 27.
Thomas and Evelyn Starling upon the death of Thomas' brother, James Lyne Starling, on November 3.
The family of Carolyn Cary upon her death on November 5, 2018.
Tim and Vauna Bellury upon the death of Vauna's brother, Franklin Jackson Whittle, on November 9.
Ellen Ellison and Holly Ellison Copeland and family upon the death of Ellen's husband and Holly's father, Eugene Ellison, on November 12.
Frank and Deb Cole and family upon on death of Deb's mother, Jane Varner, on November 19.
Phyllis Williamson and family upon the death of Duncan Williamson on November 26.
Eleanor Albea and Heath and Sonya Millians and family upon the death Eleanor's brother and Sonya's father, Woody Shelnutt, on November 25.

In Our Prayers:

Billy Arnold	Rebecca Greenberg	Lurlene Perry	Dorothy Swanson
Rhett Blythe	Martha Hale	Margaret Pettis	Jack Wheeler
Carolyn Broady	Carole Hyder	Mary Pierson	Brad Wilkinson
Kassandra Dzenis	Joe Hyder	Joyce Ramsey	
Margaret Grainger	Margaret Panter	Kermit Smith	

Notes of Thanks

Many thanks to all the people of FFUMC who showed us Christian love in so many ways—cards, flowers, food, calls and visits. We appreciate it from the bottom of our hearts. We are grateful for all your kindness and concern. — Margaret Grainger, Sharon Grainger and family

Jane and I would like to thank the Shawl Ministry for the beautiful afghan and shawl given to us during my orthopedic surgery recovery. I am also grateful for the afghan sent to my dad several years ago. Now every time I see my afghan, I'm lovingly reminded of him. Thanks again to the thoughtful artisans who provided these knitted treasures. — Randy Riddell

New Members: WELCOME!

Ryan & Kristine Allgood (Emma, Sophia)
160 Kari Glen Drive, Fayetteville GA 30215
Kathleen Blankenship "Katie"
160 Bryson Lane, Fayetteville GA 30215
Suzanne Carter
104 Lake Forest Drive, Peachtree City GA 30269
Wilmoth Thomas "Willie"
1449 Bethaven Road, Riverdale GA 30296
Jason & Alisha Thompson (Baine, Aida Lynn, Alexander)
275 Compton Drive, Fayetteville GA 30215

Church Membership: 1784

Giving (as of November 26)

Year to Date receipts:
\$1,263,151.70

Year to Date expenses:
\$1,383,258.93

Shortfall:
\$120,107.23



Transformation NOW: Our 2019 Commitment

To date, we have received 222 pledges for a total of \$979,217.80. Pledges to the 2019 operating budget are still accepted and appreciated.

Advent

The Prophets Prepare the Way

Hope

December 2

First Sunday of Advent
A Righteous Branch: Jeremiah 33:14-16
Churchwide Breakfast: 9:25 - 10:45 AM

December 5

Advent Devotional: 6:15 PM

December 8

Christmas Camp: 10 AM - 2 PM
Southern Crescent Symphony: 7 PM

Peace

December 9

Second Sunday of Advent
Service of Lessons and Carols: 8:30, 11 AM
FFUMC Christmas Pageant: 9:45 AM

December 12

Advent Devotional: 6:15 PM

Joy

December 16

Third Sunday of Advent
Sing, Shout, Rejoice!: Zephaniah 3:14-20
Candlelight Concert: 6 PM

December 17

Christmas Caroling: 5 PM

December 18

Preschool Christmas Program: 5 PM

December 19

Dec-Ember Churchwide Bonfire: 6 PM
Advent Devotional: 6:15 PM

Love

December 23

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Planning Ahead: Micah 5:2-5a

December 23

Student Christmas Breakfast: 10 AM

December 24

Christmas Eve Services: 4, 6, 11 PM

Candlelight Concert

December 16 6 PM

Christmas Eve Services

December 24 4, 6 & 11 PM

Get details at FayettevilleFirst.com



End-of-Year Financial Notes:

All contributions that are to be credited to 2018 MUST be physically received in the church office before January 1, 2019. Checks sent via mail must be dated AND postmarked in December 2018. The church finance office will be open December 31 from 9 a.m. to noon to assist you.

Contributions can be made online and through electronic funds transfer. Click "Donate Now" on the church website and follow the instructions.

New offering envelopes for 2019 will be available in the Welcome Center on Sunday, December 16. If you do not currently have offering envelopes but would like them, please contact the church office at 770-461-4313. Please do not use the new envelopes until 2019.

HOPE, PEACE, JOY AND LOVE!

Children and Family Ministry | Rev. Carson Thaxton & Allie Hansen

Hope. Peace. Joy. Love. These are four tangible realities that somehow emerge out of the invisible. I love Christmas! We get to tell the story of Mary and Joseph and their baby who completely changed the world by ushering in real hope, real peace, real joy, and real love for all humankind. Not bad.

We have so many Advent activities planned; and I must tell you this has the possibility of getting out of hand! We want to keep Jesus front and center through this whole season or else it can be very easy for these Advent activities to be just more activity. We don't want more activity; we want our activities to point to Jesus and this story of hope, peace, joy and love for all of us. Sometimes the best way for your family to have these four things is to not attend everything the church is doing, quite frankly. Find what is best for you and your family this season and know that we completely understand and simply want God to refresh us as only God can. God was at work in Bethlehem, and God is still at work today. That's *OUR* God. Merry Christmas! — *Rev. Carson Thaxton*



CHURCH-WIDE BREAKFAST

Sunday, December 2: 9:25 - 10:45 AM

Isn't it good to just get together and eat breakfast as a whole church family? There will be no KiDS Sunday School this day as we will all be eating breakfast together. Let's start Advent off right! Sign up to bring food at FayettevilleFirst.com.



CHRISTMAS CAMP

Saturday, December 8 from 10 AM - 2 PM

Drop off the kiddos for some Christmas fun, crafts, games, snacks, and more while the parents get a day out for some Christmas errands. Free childcare if registered by December 3 (\$15/child after). Volunteers are welcome. Pick your time or role at FayettevilleFirst.com.



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Sunday, December 9 at 9:45 AM

Tell the Christmas story! Everyone plays a part in this unique pageant experience. Sing some of the Christmas classics with Bill Webb and Danny Beck. Everyone is invited! Free donuts/coffee AND the story of Jesus?!? Yes, please!



WE LOVE BABIES!

Did you know the FFUMC nursery is available every Sunday and Wednesday? It's also open for the Candlelight Concert and Christmas Eve services. We love babies, preschoolers, kids, and youth! (Parents and adults too!) Your whole family is always invited.

DECEMBER WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNERS

Let's eat at church on Wednesdays! Sign up each week or get on the permanent reservation list at FayettevilleFirst.com. Adults: \$7, Children 10 and under: \$4, Family Max: \$22

December 5: Chicken Alfredo, Fettuccini Noodles, Salad, Bread, Dessert

December 12: Fried Chicken, Creamed Potatoes, Vegetable, Bread, Dessert

December 19: Christmas Dinner - Choose one: Chicken or Roast Beef,
Roasted Potatoes, Vegetable, Bread, Dessert (no salads)

Other options most weeks:

Chicken Tenders/French Fries or Grilled Cheese Sandwich
or Grilled Chicken Salad

ANGEL TREE 2018

You can make Christmas special for a foster child this year. Wish lists for Christmas gifts and instructions are in the Welcome Center at the Angel Tree. Contact Linda Ladd, 770-460-7142, with questions.



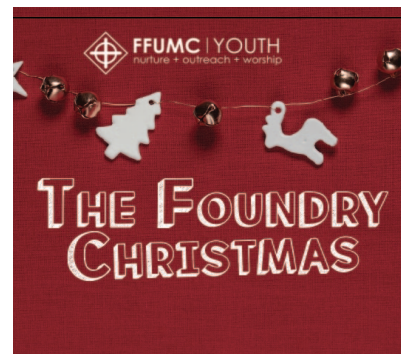
THE FOUNDRY WORSHIP

Youth Ministry | Kena Newkirk

Advent is full of tinsel-covered events and a Wednesday teaching series guaranteed to make the holiday merry and bright! Discover opportunities to serve, celebrate, and socialize this Christmas season.

On Wednesdays, we will study the ancestors of Jesus in our series "King of Hearts" and look at Jesus' fulfillment of the messianic promise of a new king to ancient Jewish people, and his heritage as a "son of David."

We are making plans for RENOVATUS 2019 coming January 18-20 as we return to Camp Glisson! This is the can't miss event of 2019, so be sure to register at FayettevilleFirst.com. Space is limited.



December 8, 10 AM - 2 PM Christmas Camp with FFUMC Kids: We'll see you in the gym at 9:30 AM to help spread Christmas cheer and earn volunteer hours.

December 14, 5 - 8 PM Griffin Christmas Party and Cookout: Meet at the church office at 5 PM to journey to the Griffin community center to host games, crafts, and a pizza party.

December 19, 6 - 7:30 PM Church Bonfire and Movie Night: After 8th Period and dinner, the whole church will roast marshmallows and drink hot cocoa as part of an FFUMC tradition.

December 20, 6:30 - 9 PM White Elephant & Tacky Sweater Party: This will be THE tackiest event of the year! Dress in your craziest Christmas costume, invite a friend, and bring a wrapped White Elephant gift priced between \$5-\$10. Dinner provided.

December 23, 10 - 11 AM Student Christmas Breakfast: Join us in C-280 for a delicious breakfast with our former youth and college students who are home for the holidays.



Candlelight Concert

December 16 6pm

Rick Massengale & Sonia Squires

Candlelight Orchestra with Dr. Richard Bell



*Featuring
Alison Kirkland
Bill Killmeier*



WE WORSHIP AND GROW TOGETHER

Looking toward the new year | Rev. Allyson Lawrence

Six for Supper

Six for Supper is a great way to form new friendships, get to know others better, meet new people in our church, and deepen relationships with one another. New groups will be forming soon for the months of January, February, and March. How does it work? Three couples (or two couples and two singles or any similar variation) are grouped together for a three-month period. Over the course of the three months, the participants will gather at each other's homes or at a restaurant to share a meal together, perhaps supper, or even breakfast or lunch! Once you sign up, a coordinator will assign the groups and will notify you by email with contact information for other members of your group. Then groups will coordinate details among each other. Sign up at FayettevilleFirst.com or contact the church office at Admin@FayettevilleFirst.com by December 15.



January Table Groups

More fully experience God and see your day-to-day life through the lens of faith within a small group connection called Table Groups. As you wind down 2018 and make plans for the New Year, consider intentionally making time for continued spiritual transformation. Enjoy real, honest, and deep conversations about where and how God is active in our world and in our lives. Table Groups are made of 5-12 people who meet at the church or off-site for an hour a week to engage in the Christian journey together. Find a time that suits you best and join a table group by emailing Rev. Allyson Lawrence, ALawrence@FayettevilleFirst.com, or for more information. Sign up by January 2, 2019.



Table Group offerings:

Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. in Room C-200

Wednesdays, 6 p.m. at Gremlin Growlers

Thursdays, 10 a.m. in Room C-200

Fridays, 10 a.m. at Gremlin Growlers

Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times

Join the conversation as we learn to untangle the knots we feel about disappointing others, failure, financial insecurity, loneliness, insignificance, and aging. Develop sustaining spiritual practices and embrace Jesus's recurring counsel "*Do not be afraid*" in this ten-week study. Order your book through Cokesbury.com and register at FayettevilleFirst.com. The class will be held Wednesdays, January 9 – March 27, at 10:30 a.m.

"The Class Meeting": Wednesdays, January 9 - February 13

Join Rev. Michael Phillips in January to understand more about Table Groups on Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m.

THE HOLIDAYS AT PRESCHOOL

We've transitioned from fall to Christmas at preschool! The halls are being adorned with artwork, the classroom Christmas trees are decorated, and the students are beside themselves with excitement. Join us for our Christmas program on December 18 at 5 p.m. in our sanctuary and then in the Fellowship Hall for our annual "Happy Birthday Baby Jesus" celebration with balloons, cake and hot chocolate. During school the next day, our Parent Group will run Santa's Secret Shop so the children can "shop" for their family members. They will pick out and wrap gifts to go under their home Christmas trees. Christmas parties and gift exchanges will wrap up the year on December 20.

— Drew Greenberg, Preschool Director



What's Happening @ Fayetteville First UMC

Get specific information on happenings and times at fayettevillefirst.com or 770-461-4313.

Regular Sunday Schedule

Choir Practice: 8 a.m.
Worship in Sanctuary: 8:30 a.m.
Sunday Small Groups: 9:45 a.m.
Worship in Chapel: 9:45 a.m.
Choir Practice: 10:30 a.m.
Worship in Sanctuary: 11 a.m.
Kids Wonders of Worship: 11:30 a.m.
AA: 3 p.m.

Regular Monday Schedule

Move 4 Life: 10:30 a.m.
AA: 7 p.m.

Regular Tuesday Schedule

Creative Sharing Group: 9:30 a.m.
Seasoned Singers: 1:30 p.m.
Narcotics Anon.: 7:30 p.m.

Regular Wednesday Schedule

Table Group: 9:30 a.m.
Move 4 Life: 10:30 a.m.
Overeaters Anonymous: 12 p.m.
Intercessory Prayer: 12:30 p.m.
Youth 8th Period: 3:30 p.m.
Wednesday Night Supper: 5 p.m.
Children's Groups: 6 p.m.
Youth Groups: 6 p.m.
Table Group: 6 p.m.
Advent Devotional: 6:15 p.m.
American Sign Language: 6:15 p.m.
Creative Encouragement: 6:15 p.m.
Table Group: 7:30 p.m.
Music Rehearsals: 7:30 p.m.
AA: 8 p.m.

Regular Thursday Schedule

Yoga: 10 a.m.
Yoga: 5:45 p.m.
Narcotics Anon.: 7:30 p.m.

Regular Friday Schedule

Creative Faith: 10 a.m.
AA: 7 p.m.

Regular Saturday Schedule

Narcotics Anon.: 7 p.m.
AA: 8 p.m.

NOTE: Please check schedules with leaders during this holiday season.

Christmas Schedule

No regular programs December 26 or January 2.
Church office closed December 24-26 and December 31 (finance open til noon) and January 1.
Wednesday programs resume January 9.

Meetings

Finance: 12/4, 6 p.m.
Church Council: 12/11, 6:30 p.m.
Trustees: 12/17, 6 p.m.

Other Happenings

Churchwide Breakfast: 12/2 9:25 a.m.
UMM Potluck: 12/4, 6:15 p.m.
UMW Christmas Banquet: 12/6, 6 p.m.
Christmas Camp: 12/8, 10 a.m.
Southern Crescent Symphony: 12/8, 7 p.m.
Lessons & Carols: 12/9, 8:30, 11 a.m.
Christmas Pageant: 12/9, 9:45 a.m.
Candlelight Concert: 12/16, 6 p.m.
Christmas Caroling: 12/17, 5 p.m.
Preschool Christmas Program: 12/18, 5 p.m.
Dec-Ember Churchwide Bonfire: 12/19, 6 p.m.
Candlelight Services: 12/24, 4, 6 & 11 p.m.

SENIOR HAPPENINGS

Titus II - December 4, Inman Elementary Chorus, Noon, gym
SAGE Trip - December 13, Hanna Brothers Studio Lunch, 10 a.m.

STAYING CONNECTED

In addition to the Connections newsletter, these resources can keep you connected at Fayetteville First UMC all the time. Check it out!

Weekender — our weekly e-letter for details on upcoming events (sign up at FayettevilleFirst.com)

FayettevilleFirst.com — our website. Search by theme or ages and know what is happening NOW.

Facebook — Like us!

FOR Fayetteville - Post and follow on Instagram at #ForFayettevilleGA

NOW IS THE TIME TO INVEST IN THE FUTURE

Our Making a Difference NOW strategic capital funds campaign is off to a strong start. We have the opportunity to create a dedicated youth space, to enhance the fellowship hall and courtyard/garden, and to replenish our maintenance reserve. At the end of November, our progress toward the \$350,000 goal stood at about \$171,000 pledged and \$65,698 given. To contribute, simply indicate "Capital Campaign" on your donation. Rev. John Barnes or Mark Martin, Finance Committee Chairperson, will be happy to answer any questions as the campaign continues through December 16. Together, we can make a difference in a big and lasting way.

Making a
Difference
NOW



God's Kingdom NOW at FFUMC

Your church on the square

Pastoral & Program Staff

Senior Minister

Rev. John Barnes
JBarnes@fayettevillefirst.com

Associate Ministers

Rev. Allyson Lawrence
ALawrence@fayettevillefirst.com
Rev. Michael Phillips
MPhillips@fayettevillefirst.com

Director of Youth Ministry

Kena Newkirk
KNewkirk@fayettevillefirst.com

Youth Ministry Coordinator

Jordan Hart
JHart@fayettevillefirst.com

Director of Children & Family Ministry

Rev. Carson Thaxton
CThaxton@fayettevillefirst.com

Assistant Director of Children & Family Ministry

Allie Hansen
AHansen@fayettevillefirst.com

Music Director / Organist

Rick Massengale
Rick.Massengale@gmail.com

Nursery Coordinator

Connie Little

Pianist

Sonia Squires

Pre-School/ MMO

Drew Greenberg
DGreenberg@fayettevillefirst.com

Administrative & Support Staff

Administrator

Joyce Mucha
JMucha@fayettevillefirst.com

Administrative Assistants

Janet Gazaway
Dian Nelson
admin@fayettevillefirst.com

Church Hostess

Jane Davis

Communications

Joan Aycock
JAycock@fayettevillefirst.com

Facilities Manager

Gary Sampson

FFUMC

175 E. Lanier Ave
Fayetteville, GA 30214

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