

INFORMED & inspired

CONNECTED AT FAYETTEVILLE FIRST UMC

Keeping us safe AND Connected Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

Last night, the Bishop and cabinet of the North Georgia Annual Conference, in consultation with a number of top medical experts, and through hours of prayerful conversation, sent out guidance and recommendations for churches as it relates to gathering in the future. I hope that you will take the time to read the detailed information and pray about the future together.

I'll admit I'm a web of emotions reading this. On one hand, I am sad because it pushes back the date of when we can gather compared to what I had in mind. On the other hand, I am grateful for such detailed guidance in the midst of uncertainty. In a way it offers hope. Knowing the guidelines gives us freedom to move forward with clarity. It gives us mobility to move within boundaries instead of wandering through the wilderness alone. Moreover, it reminds us that as all of our United Methodist brothers and sisters are making adjustments with us and we are not alone.

So it's ok to feel the complexities of emotions over this news. In the way my parents said it to me as a kid and I didn't believe them, in the way that I say it to my kids and they don't believe me, I think it's true: "We are given rules not to punish us, but to keep us safe." The Leadership Team of the church (made up of all the committee chairs and staff) will be meeting tonight (Tuesday) and will discuss what this means for the short and long term for our congregation.

I'd ask a couple of things of you: take time to pray and to read this over; then take some time to think of what we can do. We have a lot of "public space" that could be used in creative ways to keep people connected. We have a very talented congregation with gifts to share. We have each other. We have God's love. We have shown over the last few weeks that we are a church beyond brick and stone. Now, more than ever, with God's help we will move forward together. We may have stopped gathering, but we will never stop being the church.



Sharing hope at The Drive-Thru

Come by the church office parking lot on weekdays 11 a.m. to noon

- Let a minister know of any concerns you have (or just share a smile... We all need those!)
- Pick up a May/June copy of The Upper Room
- Drop off food for Fayette Samaritans
- Complete a Mother's Day recognition for the May 10 bulletin and donate to missions



Would you like an Upper Room for May/June?

If you would like to have an Upper Room Devotional book for your home, here's how to get one right away:

- [Complete this online form](#) and one will be delivered directly to you at your home.
- Stop by The Drive-Thru at Fayetteville First weekdays 11 a.m. to noon for a copy.
- Find [Upper Room daily devotionals online](#).

Please note, we do have a limited number of books. We will do our best to get a copy to everyone who requests one.

inspired . . .

Please share your stories and pictures with Thomas at tmartin@fayettevillefirst.com. Your acts of kindness and care may inspire others.



A way to pray using prayer beads

Many of us were inspired a few years ago to use prayer beads through a workshop led by Kim Reindl. Len Blalock and others have continued to use this tool as a guide for focus and concentration while practicing the prayer discipline. During this time of isolation, Len has been making prayer beads for others, with some help and encouragement from her cat Tigger. "I've used my beads often since I made my first set and have shared them with many others. Using, making, and giving them — it's all inspirational for me."

Click here to [learn more about using prayer beads](#) or [follow these guidelines to make your own](#). For more info, contact Len Blalock at lenblalock@bellsouth.net.



We appreciate all you are doing!

All of us need encouragement, especially those on the front lines. Some young folks in our congregation are spreading some sunshine and cheer to say, "Thank you for your sacrifice."

Mei Mei Baileys made a sign and placed it at her subdivision entrance with a little help from her dog, Zeke. Thea Hansen recently showed her care to hospital workers.

