

INFORMED & inspired

CONNECTED AT FAYETTEVILLE FIRST UMC

The Church That Is Never Closed Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

The last few weeks during our Drive-Thru Prayer and Share, I have found a refrain that I come back to time and time again in my prayers with people: "God, we thank you that we have always been a church that is bigger than brick and mortar, bigger than walls and stone." Fayetteville First has continued to be the church even when we cannot gather for worship. Yet plans are underway to re-open for worship and to do so safely. In the meantime, we have shared prayers and notes with one another. We have shared visits from safe distances and through technology. We have heard beautiful music from members of our choir and been fed spiritually through studies, scripture, and small groups.

The Trustees and Church Council are following guidelines to be used to reopen with a tentative return date of June 28 for in-person worship. We are also working on our ability to continue to record our services moving forward so that we can extend that resource. When the Trustees met, there was a deep desire to resume in-person gatherings, but to do so safely and with integrity. For instance, if people are not comfortable returning to in-person gatherings, they should not be made to feel less than or shamed into being with us. That is the desire of our church leadership and I am grateful.

Please know that we have always been and will always be the church beyond walls, a church bigger than a building. With God's help we will continue to make that possible. As we approach Pentecost Sunday, I am reminded of the words from the song the children's choir shared with us last time they sang in worship. They are most appropriate now: "The church is not a building; the church is not a steeple; the church is not a resting place; the church is the people." Thank you for being the church.



Yes, We're the Church TOGETHER

"I am the church.

You are the church.

We are the church together.

All who follow Jesus,

All around the world,

Yes, we're the church together."

Did you know...

- **Church Council meets tonight** on ZOOM. Check your email for connection links.
- **The “Beard for Benevolence” Fundraiser is on!** Donate to the FFUMC Benevolence Fund and place your vote for a little fund fun around Thomas’ beard for taping of our worship service for the first Sunday of June: **1) Shave it off** or **2) Keep it** or **3) Let Sam Burch do whatever he wants with it.** Hmmm... which will win? “Vote” by June 1.
- The UMW Unit Meeting “ZOOM-Potluck Style” is this Thursday, May 28, at 6 p.m. Look for link details from individual circle leaders this week.



Linda Ladd takes lots of Georgia peaches to Fayette Samaritans along with FFUMC food donations from The Drive-Thru, now located on the office side porch.

inspired . . .

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

Adults REMAIN in Action

Charades. Bingo. Delivered activity packets. The Adults in Action group is doing what they can to be together when they can't actually BE together. “We are really missing our time at Fayetteville First UMC, but we’re doing our best to stay connected,” explained Rene Chesnut, director of Adults in Action.

Several times each week, meetings are planned through ZOOM. Some stay connected for the entire meeting and others drift in and out, but they all are glad for the opportunity to check in and see that their friends are okay. “This group was begging for ways for them to get together. We are so grateful that technology is allowing us to do just that. We’re talking and engaging with each other in unique ways,” says Rene. Favorite activities are “Show and Tell” with a friendly time limit, dancing together on ZOOM, and commenting on Facebook posts.

Together Rene, Jami Maguire, assistant director, and other leaders are looking at ways to start back safely with this group, several of whom are medically fragile. “Every week I’m learning more things we can do to engage these special adults,” expressed Rene. “We will all be so happy when we are able to literally be in the same space, but we are blessed to have these ways right now.”



ZOOM connects Adults in Action for conversation, B-I-N-G-O and more. This group is always happy to check in on each other and make sure everybody is okay.