

# INFORMED & inspired

CONNECTED AT FAYETTEVILLE FIRST UMC

## Sowing and Reaping Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

This is a week of gratitude. While there are things which we can all complain about (and I am prone to complaining quite a bit these days), there is much for which we can give thanks. Sometimes, gratitude can be very surprising.

Many of you who read this know that we have a benevolence program here at the church that takes the above and beyond giving of the congregation and works together with other local agencies to assist those in our community who find themselves in need. We do this without pressure or threat. We do it generously. We do it responsibly. We do it because it's what the people of God do. We do it together. It's a way of showing thanks.

For the past two weeks, a person who we helped earlier this year has come into the office with cash in hand because they wanted to sow where they reaped. They wanted to pay it forward. This person wanted to give back. The total amount back to the church is almost equal to the amount that was gifted, no questions asked. We have prayed together. We have shared stories of family and holidays. That is gratitude. That is thankfulness. It is not coerced. It is not forced. This person is living a life of gratitude for what a group of people have done in a life.

I wonder if we might have that same spirit of sowing where we reaped? I wonder if those like me who are prone to complain are as quick to give thanks? I wonder how much better the world would be if we could adjust "have to" to "get to"? What a difference it would be if a simple thing, like, "I have to do laundry" shifted into "I get to do laundry because it means I have more than one pair of clothes. It means I have the means, sometimes in my own house, to do laundry." Laundry is a silly, simple example. I hope not just this week, but every day we may be people who say, "We get to share life together because of the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit."

May our lives be filled with gratitude that sows from where we reap.



## The Season of the Nativity guides through Advent

You'll want to have your Season of the Nativity gift bag before November 29, the first Sunday of Advent. This gift, prepared to lead our church family through the season, is ready for pickup at The Drive Thru, in the church office, or at in-person services. To have your gift delivered, please contact Lea Agnew, 404-697-1938 or [leaagnew@bellsouth.net](mailto:leaagnew@bellsouth.net).

Your gift contains an Advent Wreath Kit. Shown are examples of how two church members have prepared their wreaths. Please snap a photo of yours and send it to [jaycock@fayettevillefirst.com](mailto:jaycock@fayettevillefirst.com).



## Schedule these for the season ...

<b>Advent Study</b>	November 30 to December 21	Four-week study "The Redemption of Scrooge" led by Rev. Allyson Lawrence, Mondays, 12 to 1 p.m. Online/In-Person. <a href="#">Register here.</a>
<b>Advent Reading Group</b>	December 3 - 17	Three weekly meetings discussing chapters from Barbara Brown Taylor's "Home by Another Way" led by Suzanne Carter, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Online/In-Person. <a href="#">Register here.</a>
<b>Service of Lessons &amp; Carols</b>	December 13	Sunday worship combining scripture and music. Live-streamed at 11 a.m. and offered in-person at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. in the sanctuary.
<b>Storytime with Santa &amp; Bonfire</b>	December 16	Churchwide invitation to hear the Christmas story told by Santa. Safe photo opportunity. Bonfire. On The Field at 6 p.m.
<b>Blue Christmas</b>	December 21	Online service with a message of hope and encouragement for this "longest night."
<b>Christmas Eve Services</b>	December 24	Christmas Candlelight Services — Outdoor at The Field: 4 p.m. In Sanctuary: 6, 11 p.m.

### Take Note ...

A **Church Conference** is scheduled: Monday, November 30, 7 p.m. If you would like to attend, contact Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin for the ZOOM link at [tmartin@fayettevillefirst.com](mailto:tmartin@fayettevillefirst.com) by Monday at noon.

Reservations for the December 10 **UMW Christmas Meeting** at 6 p.m. are due by November 30. Contact Connie Hyder, 770-310-6115.

The **church office** closes at noon on Wednesday, November 25, and will reopen at 9 a.m. on Monday, November 30. **Happy Thanksgiving!**



**Please return commitment cards to the church office as soon as possible to help us plan for the upcoming year.**

# inspired ...

## Gratitude for your benevolence

Your gifts to our Benevolence Fund responsibly help those who need assistance in our community. Our team works with St. Vincent de Paul and Fayette Samaritans to vet requests and coordinate responses. We just received this thank you card from a recent recipient:

*Your support, help, and compassion during this most difficult time of COVID has meant the world! If I'm ever needed, please contact me. If there's something I can do to help your church, please don't hesitate to call on me!*

*With love.*

*Your Brother in Christ,*

*E. J.*



Volunteers from St. Vincent de Paul, Fayetteville First UMC and Fayette Samaritans met at FFUMC in 2019 to discuss the best way to coordinate faith-based assistance within our community.

So far this year, FFUMC has provided \$24,102.65 to 90 local families in need.

To contribute, donate to FFUMC and choose "Benevolence" in your online donation or write "Benevolence Fund" in the memo line of a check.