



November 27, 2024

## The Weekender

### Pressure

Rev. Kaylen Short, Senior Minister

As we draw near to December, I know that I am beginning to put added pressure on myself. Personally, it's Abby's first holiday season and I feel the pressure to make everything just a little bigger and better as a result. The tree needs to be taller, the lights brighter, and the presents better so that it can all lead to the perfect Christmas morning video. Professionally, it's my first Advent season and Christmas at FFUMC and of course I feel some added pressure. Not from you all, but from me. The mere fact that this is the first time I have been here for this holy season makes it memorable for me, but selfishly I want it to be that memorable for all of you. The sermons should be more thoughtful, the worship more intentional, and the gatherings more festive. More pressure.



As I look around, I realize I am far from the only one feeling this way. It's not lost to me that this article debuts close to Black Friday, a day when every year grown adults fight over toys and electronics because of the pressure associated with finding the perfect gift. As we get further and further into December we will feel the pressure of creating the perfect Christmas decorations, finding the perfect ugly Christmas sweater, and of preparing the perfect Christmas meal. More and more pressure.

It doesn't need to be this way. If I'm being honest, I don't really remember when in my childhood the tree was the tallest, the lights were the brightest, or the gifts were the best. I'm sure most of you don't remember too many specific year's sermons, music, or church gatherings. And that's quite okay. Even if we don't remember all the details of one particular year, what we probably do remember is all those years of being together with those we love. Being present.

As we get closer and closer to Christmas and things begin to feel as if they move faster and faster, let's try to focus less on buying presents and more on being present. Hopefully, that will help us all feel a little less pressure and a little more peace, hope, joy, and love.

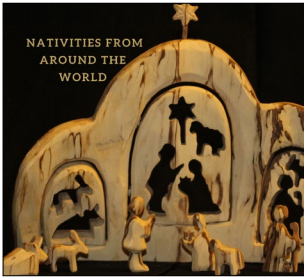


**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: DECEMBER 1, 2024**  
**8:45 AM (Chapel) 11:00 AM (Sanctuary & Online)**

[Online link active at 11 AM and after](#)

Luke 2:8-15

"Inside the Manger: The Shepherds" Rev. Kaylen Short



## **Nativities from Around the World opens next week**

**December 5-6 from noon to 7 PM; December 7 from 10 AM to 3 PM**

During this Advent season, FFUMC will again host a collection of hundreds of unique nativities, curated by Wendy Haymans and her late mother Sharon Bowen as a ministry of focus about the meaning of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection. Wendy is the daughter-in-law of our own Gerry and Jim Haymans and is generously making the exhibit available to our community at no charge.



The exhibit will be open to the public on Thursday and Friday, December 5-6, from noon to 7 PM and on Saturday, December 7, from 10 AM – 3 PM. Wednesday, December 4, will be reserved for senior groups and others needing extra time to go through the exhibit.

Please volunteer to help. Two years ago, hundreds came to see the collection and we expect more this year. Hosting the exhibit is a lot of fun, and it also is labor-intensive. The jobs include serving as greeters and monitors and helping with set-up and tear-down.

[You can sign up to volunteer at this Sign-Up Genius link](#) or call the church office.



## **Donate towels for the Exhibit**

Also – we need lots of towels for leveling the exhibit surfaces. Please donate old, raggedy (but clean) towels you have on hand. Any size will do. If you want your towels back, please put your name on them. You can bring them to the church office or put them in a bin in Welcome Center.

Afterward, we will donate unclaimed towels to a local animal shelter.



## **Sunday Morning Coffee & Conversation**

Have you ever had a Sunday where you showed up too late for your Sunday school class? Have you ever arrived extra early for the 11 AM service and you don't know what to do while you wait? Beginning this Sunday, we will offer coffee and conversation in our Fellowship Hall from 9:45-10:45 AM. Each week you can drop in and grab a coffee or something light to eat before you head off to your next thing.



## **Season of the Nativity begins this Sunday, December 1**

What is God up to here? You're invited to explore that question as we journey through the Season of the Nativity together beginning this Sunday, December 1. You can get a printed packet with an Intentional Daily Journal, schedule of events, and family activity at FFUMC this Sunday. Also, we look forward to sharing conversations on Facebook as we wait and seek Divine Presence each day.

[Get the full Season of the Nativity Schedule here.](#)



## No Wednesday Night Supper on November 27

## Wednesday Night Suppers Resume December 4

Time: **5 PM** Fellowship Hall

Advantages: **Friendship!** Be with people you really like.

**Hassle Free!** Enjoy meals from local restaurants.

**Affordable!** Adults \$10, Children under 13: \$7 (pay at door)

Sign up each week by 4 PM on Mondays. Contact the church office, 770-461-4313, [admin@fayettevillefirst.com](mailto:admin@fayettevillefirst.com), or fill out a pew card.

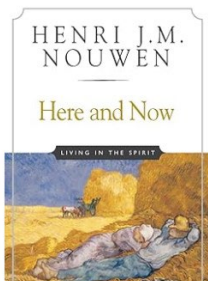
**December 4 Menu: Piccadilly, Chicken**



## Poinsettia orders due Monday, December 16

Your purchase of poinsettias has at least 3 benefits this year:

1. Poinsettias enhance our worship space through the season.
2. You may give plants in memory or honor of family or friends. They'll be listed in the Christmas Eve Order of Worship. Ordered poinsettias are available to take from the sanctuary following the Christmas Eve service.
3. Proceeds from poinsettia orders benefit the FFUMC Flower Ministry. This group makes flower arrangements to encourage others throughout the year. Complete a form available in the narthex on Sunday or anytime in the church office or [place an order with this form and pay online following instructions](#). (Cost: \$15 each) DUE DECEMBER 16.



## Here and Now: Living in the Spirit - study begins December 1

Are you longing for ways to experience life to its fullest? Right here, right now? Join the Book Club Class for a walk through *Here and Now*, one of Henri Nouwen's much loved books exploring encountering Spirit in our everyday lives. Get the book from your favorite bookseller and come to Room C-260 on Sundays at 9:45 AM beginning December 1. Questions? Contact Margaret Whitaker.

## Titus II is December 3



Begin December with kids and music! Hear the Inman Elementary Chorus present Christmas music at the Titus II Lunch and Learn program for our seniors. Call Martha Turner or the church office to make reservations by Wednesday, November 27.

*Tuesday, December 3 at Noon, Gym*

*Lunch: \$8 per person, meal from a local restaurant*



## Angel Tree gifts due December 8: Only a few angels remain

Our annual Angel Tree will be in the Welcome Center on Sundays, offering a chance to provide Christmas for Bloom foster children. The gifts will be given by Santa at the Bloom holiday party. If you miss the signup sheet or the attendant on Sunday, contact Suzie Lusk directly.

How does it work? Choose an "angel" for whom to shop (be sure to indicate which angel you took and communicate with the attendant at the tree; one angel per family), purchase the gifts on the wish list, and return unwrapped gifts to the church office by December 8. [You'll need to follow these specific, easy instructions. It's that simple to show some cheer and love to children this Christmas season.](#)



## UWF Christmas Banquet

Please join United Women in Faith at our Christmas Banquet in the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, December 10, at 6 PM. We will enjoy a catered dinner of pork chops, mashed potatoes, broccoli casserole and dessert, followed by the musical talents of our very own Nick Bowden and friends!

Cost: \$10 payable on December 10. Make your reservations by Friday, December 6, through your circle chair or contact Susan Burch. Please indicate number of children for nursery.

We'll be accepting hat and glove donations to support Bloom's foster children at the banquet for both boys and girls from sizes infant to age 18.

**UWF Banquet  
December 10**



## Tell the story! Christmas Pageant Comes December 11

We act out the story of Christmas with our children each year. Just show up for the annual Christmas Pageant. We'll have costumes and a script. No rehearsal needed. After Wednesday night dinner on December 11, we'll get the play together and begin at 6 PM. Following the pageant, gather in The Field for s'mores and carols around a bonfire. Questions? Contact Rev. Drew West.

## Messy Church on December 14 - and on parade!

We're getting ready for our next Messy Church, December 14, from 11 AM to 1 PM. And then that afternoon, Messy Church will be in the Fayetteville Miracle on Main Street Christmas Parade! The parade starts at 3 PM. We will have more information soon - but be sure to save the whole day for Messy Church fun!



## Christmas Caroling is Wednesday, December 18

It's time to spread Christmas cheer for all to hear with carols! You're invited to enjoy supper at 5 PM in the Fellowship Hall for regular Wednesday Night Dinner; then we'll load vehicles and start caroling at 5:30 PM. We hope to have three groups this year, so we'd love to know who might be coming in advance. [Just let us know here.](#)



## SAGE Trip is December 19

Take a SAGE trip to Chick-Fil-A headquarters on Thursday, **December 19**. We will gather at the church office at 8:30 AM and depart at 8:45 AM; Backstage Tour (which includes the Test Kitchen) will be from 9:30 - 11 AM. We will stop for lunch at a Chick-Fil-A on the way home. Tickets are \$11 and transportation cost is \$2.

Contact the church office to reserve your place. For more information, see [Rev. Charles Robinson](#).





## December List: Pantry needs from Fayette Samaritans

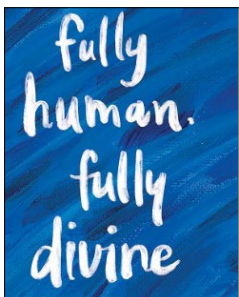
Donations are one way to help those with food insecurity and other needs. Food and clothing donations may be placed in the hallway cart near the gym or dropped by the church office. Volunteers are also needed in the food pantry, clothes closet, receptionist area, and as interviewers with a 3 hour commitment each week.

**Most Needed List:** Canned Corn, Canned Mixed Vegetables, Canned Green Beans, Pasta Sauce, Dry Spaghetti, Jiffy Mix, Pancake Mix, Jelly, Coffee, Hot Chocolate Mix, Feminine Products (Pads)



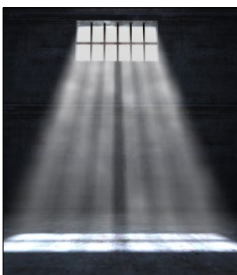
## Holiday Commemorative Brick Project

Place a commemorative brick in the church courtyard this holiday season! You may personalize a brick for yourself or your family, honor a loved one, or make a memoriam. Commemorate a new baby, baptism, graduation, friendship, ministry, church membership, or new home. The cost is \$100 per brick. Each 8"x4" brick can be engraved with three lines of text with up to 15 characters per line. If desired, you may pick up a card in the church office confirming the purchase which you can place in a Christmas card or letter to loved ones. [Simply complete this form and return it with payment by December 31, 2024.](#) Copies will be available in the Narthex or church office as well.



## Advent Study Continues December 3, 10, and 17

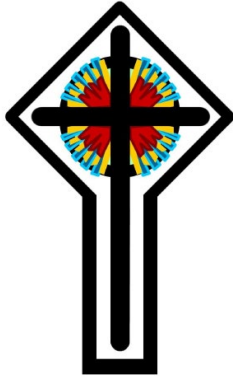
Join Rev. Allyson Lawrence for a study using the book *Fully Human, Fully Divine: an Advent Devotional for the Whole Self* by Whitney R. Simpson. The study, which highlights daily contemplation practices during Advent, began this week and will continue at 1:30 PM on Tuesdays December 3, 10, and 17 in Room B-350. You can purchase the book at any of your favorite bookstores. It's not too late to join in!



## Jail Ministry Training comes to FFUMC December 5

Each week a team from FFUMC visits at the Fayette County Jail bringing words of encouragement. Our church has designated times to go. More volunteers are invited and welcomed. In order to go with our team, you must complete a yearly application and attend a training session. One will be offered by the Fayette County Sheriff's Office Chaplain John Govaerts in our Fellowship Hall on Thursday, December 5, at 6 PM. [Please complete the required forms and deliver them to the jail's front desk.](#) Questions? Contact Jo Springer.

Dec. 5



## November 25, 2024 Financials

### Operating Budget 2024

Year-to-Date Receipts	\$1,029,817.27
Year-to-Date Expenses	\$1,022,701.15
Difference	\$7,116.12

### Benevolence

Benevolence funds received this week \$553.

158 Families Assisted Year-To-Date: Total distributed \$39,455.61

### 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.

### Regular Church Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed 12-1 p.m. lunch)  
Closed Fridays

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

**NA Meetings:** Thursdays 7 PM

Fayetteville First UMC 175 East Lanier Avenue Fayetteville, GA 30214  
770-461-4313 [FayettevilleFirst.com](http://FayettevilleFirst.com)



*A bountiful display presented in the sanctuary this past Sunday, prepared by Sam Burch.*

# *inspired ...*

**Thankful for every one of you!**

We celebrated the opening of our newly renovated kitchen recently as one of the final few pieces of our capital campaign. Without your dedication and gifts to the project, this would not have happened. A proper ribbon cutting and reception marked the opening of this beautiful space. Thank you!



*Thank you for all your work and donations to make this beautiful space a reality!*