



December 20, 2024

## The Weekender

### A Simple Act

Rev. Kaylen Short, Senior Minister

I've always believed Christmas is all about the simple things. Sure, sometimes we go out of our way to make a grand gesture, but that's usually not what becomes the fondest of Christmas memories. Christmas is more about the small heartfelt gift than it is the giant car with a bow on it that people get in the commercials.

Christmas is probably about the simple things because it always has been. The first Christmas was the epitome of simple. Two parents and a newborn baby huddled together in the night visited by some scraggly shepherds. We think of the angels as providing the pomp and circumstance for the first Christmas manger scene, but scripturally the angels appear to the shepherds on Christmas and there's no indication they appear again to the holy family that night. Just a simple holy night.

That also means that in terms of serving others at Christmas, the simple things are often the best ones. A number of years ago, Alli and I received an unexpected package on Christmas Eve. Christmas Eve for a clergy family is a highly stressful time, so I was elated to discover a care package set on our doorstep. Better yet, it was a small white cooler with a familiar logo emblazoned on the top. I began to salivate as I read "Omaha Steaks." Yet, when I picked it up I realized there was a problem. The address was ours, but the names weren't. Knowing that the clock was ticking with a perishable food gift I tried to do the right thing and look for any indication of how to contact the actual owner. Even though we were short on time because of Christmas Eve responsibilities, Alli called the Omaha Steaks customer service line, but of course they couldn't divulge the information of the sender for security reasons. I nearly resigned myself to the fact that we would just have to keep and eat those delicious steaks that had my stomach rumbling all afternoon.

(Harken back to my sermon a couple weeks ago) It probably would have been socially acceptable because we had genuinely tried, but it didn't feel right. I persisted with one last Hail Mary instead and searched social media for the correct owner. I found one person who kind of seemed right and sent her a message. A little time later I got a response and sure enough she was the intended owner. We exchanged a couple of more messages to cover details for her to come get the gift, but it was the last message she sent that I've never forgotten. She sent, "You know those were a gift from my grandma. It's been a really tough year for her since my grandpa passed, and she's had all kinds of health problems. She was really torn up when she realized the mistake she had made sending our gift to the wrong house. What you've just done, it'll make her Christmas."

Christmas is about the simple things. So let us show the abundant love of Christ to loved ones and strangers in simple ways.





**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: DECEMBER 22, 2024**  
**8:45 AM (Chapel) 11:00 AM (Sanctuary & Online)**

Online link active at 11 AM and after

Psalm 80:1-7; Luke 1:46-55

"Inside the Manger" The Rev. Kaylen Short

---

**CHRISTMAS ON THE SQUARE CONCERT | DECEMBER 22 | 7 PM**

Experience Christmas with the Bach Magnificat and other seasonal favorites provided by The Chancel Choir and orchestra. Free. First-come seating in the FFUMC Sanctuary with overflow in Fellowship Hall.

**CHRISTMAS EVE | DECEMBER 24 | 4 PM, 6 PM, 11 PM**

Celebrate the Christ Child with traditional Candlelight Service and Communion. Services at 4 & 6 PM in the Sanctuary and at 11 PM in the Chapel.

**FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS | DECEMBER 29 | 8:45 AM & 11 AM**

We gather for worship and praise.

**EPIPHANY SUNDAY | JANUARY 5 | 8:45, 11 AM SERVICES; 10 AM BREAKFAST**

Celebrate joy as we move into the new year and the season of Epiphany with worship at 8:45 & 11 AM and a church-wide potluck breakfast at 10 AM.

ONLINE LINKS FOR CONCERT AND SANCTUARY WORSHIP SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE AT [FAYETTEVILLEFIRST.COM/WORSHIP-ONLINE](https://fayettevillefirst.com/worship-online)

---

**Christmas on the Square**

**December 22**

**7 PM FFUMC Sanctuary**

"Christmas on the Square" is our re-branded annual Christmas concert.

This must-see event features The Chancel Choir with full orchestra and guest soloists.

Music from Bach to Irving Berlin!

Seating is first-come with overflow in the Fellowship Hall. Nursery provided.

Free Admission  
Offering Taken

Invite neighbors, family,  
and friends.  
Everyone is welcome!

**CHRISTMAS ON THE SQUARE**

The Chancel Choir with orchestra  
Amy Little Soprano  
Luanne Harms Mezzo-Soprano  
Maria McDaniel Alto  
Johnathon Pilkington Peyton Booth Tenors  
Michael O'Hearn Bass

**ALSO FEATURING**  
Carolyn Hancock Solo Violin  
Valerie Morgan, Sam Burch Conductors  
Jabe Martin Piano  
Charles Higgs Organ  
Nicholas Bowden Conductor and Host

Music for chorus and full orchestra with organ.  
Program to feature Bach's Magnificat as well as seasonal favorites.  
**FREE ADMISSION. OFFERING TAKEN.**

**SUNDAY DECEMBER 22, 2024 | 7:00 PM**

FAYETTEVILLE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
175 East Lanier Ave. | Fayetteville, GA 30214 | 770.461.4313 | Fayettevillefirst.com

# CHRISTMAS GIFTS THAT KEEP GIVING

---



## 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 memorial. 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.

## Christmas gifts to change lives in El Salvador

There is a Christmas gift that can change a child's life forever. That gift is education. Tuition for a child to attend the Methodist School in El Salvador is just \$40 per month or \$480 per year. Two South West District mission teams are heading to El Salvador February 8-15, 2025, and February 15-22, 2025. The teams comprise 19 individuals from five different churches and are collecting money to help deserving children whose families cannot afford even this small amount. The school offers grades 1-10, the only grades that schools there have. The school helps keep the kids out of gangs, drugs, and the risk of human trafficking. The kids learn the usual subjects that we have here, including music. Their marching band has won national competitions. Many of the students are also learning English, which will open many more opportunities for good jobs. The school offers hope to the community.

[You can make a tax-deductible donation by check or online to Fayetteville First United Methodist Church.](#) Write "El Salvador Tuition" on the memo. Your gifts will be hand-delivered to Bishop Juan de Dios Peña in February 2025. Questions? Contact Maggie Clarke.



# CURRENT NEWS

---



**All blood types are needed.**

Schedule your blood donation appointment today.



## Give Blood January 12

**8 AM to 1 PM, Fayetteville First UMC gym**

The next Red Cross Blood Drive at FFUMC is Sunday, January 12, in the gym from 8 AM to 1 PM. Signing up is easy!

Go directly to the American Red Cross site at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) and choose our drive on January 12 ... and encourage others to donate here at FFUMC. **Please sign up to donate in advance if at all possible.** Email [ffumcblooddrive@gmail.com](mailto:ffumcblooddrive@gmail.com) for questions or assistance.



## **NEW! January List: Pantry needs from Fayette Samaritans**

Donations are one way to help those in our community 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:*** Pasta Sauce, Pancake Mix, Syrup, Coffee, Tea, Hot Chocolate Mix, Jelly, Feminine Products (Pads)



## **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.



## **Epiphany Breakfast: January 5**

Bring your gifts of breakfast casseroles, sticky buns, fruits ... all your favorites as we celebrate Epiphany with a church-wide breakfast on Sunday, January 5, in the Fellowship Hall.



## **Holiday Office and Program Schedule**

### **The church office will be closed:**

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

New Year's Day

### **Wednesday night programs will resume January 8**

Wednesday Night Supper: 5 PM

Children, Youth, Adult Programs: 5:30 PM

## **Save the Date: January 25**

### **SouthWest District Inaugural Meeting United Women in Faith**

#### **"Gather, Prepare, Grow"**

Saturday, January 25

Fayetteville First UMC

Continental Breakfast in Fellowship Hall 9:30 - 10:45 AM

Meeting and Worship in Sanctuary 11 AM



United  
Women  
in Faith

# ADULT STUDIES

---

## **New Adult Study Opportunities for 2025**

Thinking about your New Year's Resolution and how you can include your spiritual life in your plans for 2025? Consider a new small group study. Beginning the second week of January we have two new opportunities for you to dig deeper in your faith and your understanding of how God moves and acts in the world. For each study, purchase the suggested book from your favorite book seller and sign up to let us know you are coming. Signing up means we are able to let you know door codes, room locations, and what you need to know to get started.

### **This We Believe: The Core of Wesleyan Faith and Practice by William H. Willimon**

Beginning January 8, 5:30 – 6:30 PM

Led by Jeff Hansen

This 8-week study takes participants through core tenants of faith and offers fresh ways to hear God's voice, share in God's grace, and become more like Jesus. Free books are available for the first 15 participants who register in advance.

[Sign up for This We Believe](#)

### **Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life by Richard Rohr**

Four Sessions — Sundays: January 12 & 26, February 2 & 9 6 - 7 PM

Led by Tim and Joan Aycock

In this book, Rohr teaches us that we can't understand the meaning of "up" until we have fallen "down." More importantly, Rohr describes what "up" can look like in the second half of life. This new edition focuses on practical guidance you can use to live a life of love and meaning in a world of suffering and challenge. Falling Upward is an invitation to living the gospel and a call to ongoing transformation. Either the new 10th anniversary edition or the older version can be used for this class.

[Sign up for Falling Upward](#)

## **Ongoing Adult Study Opportunities**

### **Parents Bible Study Group on Wednesday Evenings**

While the kids enjoy Children's Choir on Wednesday evenings, parents are invited to join Rev. Drew West in Room C-260 from 5:30 to 6:30 PM for a discussion-based Bible study. Together, we'll explore how our roles as parents reflect Christ's patient and persistent love, and how we can embrace that calling with faith and joy while supporting one another. Whether you're navigating toddler tantrums, teenage milestones, or somewhere in between, this group is for parents of all stages.

### **Sunday Morning Small Groups**

Many small groups meet weekly on Sunday mornings from 9:45 – 10:45 AM. Explore the options and visit different groups to find the one that fits you best. Contact Rev. Allyson Lawrence at [alawrence@fayettevillefirst.com](mailto:alawrence@fayettevillefirst.com) with questions.

**Book Club Class** — Participants read a book chosen by the class and then join together in discussion for six to twelve week sessions. Contact Rev. Allyson Lawrence for session schedule.

Format: Discussion

Location: C-260

**Circle of Friends** — Older and senior adults who learn, live and share the Biblical lessons provided in the International Bible Series.

Format: Lecture, some discussion

Location: Room C-230

**Cornerstone Class** — Diverse and multi-generational group who study Biblical themes and topics from various books and authors.

Format: Discussion with volunteers leading the sessions

Location: B-350

**Family Class** — A mix of singles and married ranging in age from the 50s to the 80s, this group concentrates on nourishing the mind and strengthening relationships through study of the Bible.

Format: Lecture with some discussion

Location: C-210

**Fellowship/Discipleship Class** — This group is a close and caring group of senior citizens who use the International Bible Series and contribute to the missions of Fayette Samaritans, The UM Children's Home, Meals on Wheels, and are in service to one another.

Format: Hymns and time of prayer followed by lecture

Location: Fellowship Hall

**Genesis to Revelation** — Not defined by age or life situation this group seeks a stronger spiritual relationship with God and connection with one another.

Format: Teacher led with discussion

Location: C-250

**Murphy-Lighthouse Class** — This class of seniors studies the International Bible Series and supports church members through regular visitations and prayer.

Format: Lecture with some discussion

Location: Brides Room

**Wellspring Class** — This is a fun-loving group of people made up of singles, married couples, and a mixture of parents with children preschool-aged to high school.

Format: Teacher facilitated discussion



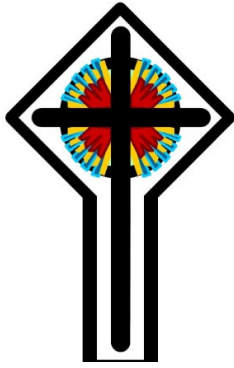
### **Flower Ministry**

Thank you for the beautiful flower arrangement I found at the front door Sunday! They were especially beautiful in church Sunday and really brightened our day yesterday. Thank you for your kindness!

— Nick Bowden

Your flowers in honor of our grandson were so appreciated and beautiful. Every time we have received flowers has been such a blessing! Thank you so much for all the time and trouble you all give.

— Jane and Randy Riddell



## December 16, 2024 Financials

### Operating Budget 2024

Year-to-Date Receipts	\$1,136,449.01
Year-to-Date Expenses	\$1,133,329.33
Difference	- \$3,119.68

### Benevolence

Benevolence funds received this week \$606.00

166 Families Assisted Year-To-Date: Total distributed \$41,014.47

### 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)



The Longest Night, December 21, provides an invitation to remember that which used to be but which is now lost to us. And in the darkness to be embraced by the Light that cannot be overcome. Join with others in the historic chapel on December 21 at 7:00 PM as we gather together for comfort, hope and peace.

# inspired ...

## The Greatest Story

Our church family shared the greatest story ever told at our churchwide Christmas Pageant last week. Based on the Terry Kay book "To Whom the Angel Spoke" as adapted by Danny and Julie Beck and Bill and Carol Webb, the non-rehearsed and a bit chaotic telling led us as we followed directions from seasoned narrator, Sam Beck. One starring role even offered a debut performance by Abigail Short and her parents, and Santa stopped to share in the experience.

