



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 25, 2022

Contact: Jay Burns-Horton

Director of Community Engagement
jay@atlantafirstumc.org
404.524.6614 ext.104

Atlanta's Oldest Protestant Church Celebrating 175 Years

ATLANTA — Atlanta First United Methodist Church is celebrating 175 years of ministry this Fall, as the oldest protestant church in the city of Atlanta! A kickoff celebration is planned for August 28, 2022 with worship at 10 a.m. and a community partners fair to follow from 12-2 p.m. including food, field games, and more.

The theme for the anniversary festivities is “Forward in Faith,” based on the scripture, Hebrews 11:1-3. The goal is to honor the church’s long history of nurturing the spiritual lives of many of Atlanta’s notables, including Robert Foster Maddox, Henry W. Grady, Asa Candler, Frank Rice, and Lillian Deakins, recognizing that the church stands on their shoulders but also now looks *Forward in Faith*. Atlanta First looks forward to worship that offers renewed hope and vision for the future, forward to Christian education that fosters radical spiritual formation, and forward to one-of-kind justice ministries that transform lives in our great city and beyond.

Each week during the celebration the church will host guest preachers and honor different points in the church’s history. Speakers include Dr. Gregory C. Ellison II, associate professor of pastoral care and counseling at Emory University, Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church, President Gregory Fenves of Emory University, Judge Jane Barwick of the Fulton County Superior Court, Rev. Robert W. Lee, pastor, public theologian, and collateral descendent of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, and Dr. Helen Kim, a church Leadership Team member and assistant professor of American religious history at Emory University.

— MORE —

The festivities will conclude on October 30, 2022, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., with worship and a ceremonial groundbreaking on the church's newest building project—a two-tower mix-use complex that includes approximately 320 units of housing, 85 percent of which will be affordable. The property will include one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and the first three-bedroom apartments on Peachtree Street. Several city officials are expected to be present for this event.

Other celebratory events in September and October 2022 include a group outing to the Atlanta Braves on September 16, 2022, an organ recital by retired Atlanta Public School educator and Director of Worship at Atlanta First, Rowena Dennard on October 14, 2022, and a Historic Sanctuary and Stained Glass Tour on October 29, 2022. The church will also be releasing self-guided audio tours on their app of both Oakland Cemetery and the church and will have a presence at Sunday in the Park featuring Tunes from the Tombs on September 25, 2022 at Oakland Cemetery. A complete list of activities is available at atlantafirstumc.org/afumc175.

###

Founded in 1847, Atlanta First United Methodist Church is a justice-driven faith community in the heart of downtown Atlanta with a long history of generosity, sacrifice, and servant leadership in the city. Today, Atlanta First UMC exists to WORSHIP God, SERVE people, GROW together, and ENGAGE the City of Atlanta and beyond. As a part of the United Methodist Church, the congregation puts its faith into action through its mission “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (Matthew 28:19-20). Everyone, absolutely everyone, is welcome at Atlanta First! Learn more at atlantafirstumc.org.