

ATLANTA FIRST
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
worship. serve. grow. engage.



THE

MESSENGER

Fall 2026



OCTOBER WORSHIP

atlantafirstumc.org

MOMENTUM

, the theme of the Leadership Institute conference that I recently attended at United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, is a perfect theme for Atlanta First this fall! According to the Cambridge Dictionary, Momentum is a term from physics that describes "the quality that keeps an event developing or making progress after it has started."



We have gained momentum in several of our ministries:

- Online *worship* attendance is consistent and growing.
- Music and *worship* Ministry: Choir is back for the fall, and the Summer *worship* Series received life-transforming reviews.
- *serve* Ministry: Just yesterday, we *served* almost 65 people at Friends at the Front Door with food, toiletries, conversation, prayer, and life-nourishing community.
- *grow* Ministry: Our *grow* groups are off to a "growing" start! Each GROW small group has welcomed new people this season, and the Wednesday *grow* group will be back soon.

We must strive for better momentum in other ministries:

- In-Person *worship* attendance
- Volunteers in *engage* events and ministries - including volunteer upkeep of our property
- Church Office volunteers
- Children's and Youth Ministries
- Consistent generosity through giving of our tithes and offerings

In a word, we're at a crossroads - we can gain momentum, or we can lose momentum this Autumn. It's up to us! Will we show up for our community and each other or will we depend on someone else to show up for us? Will we make a significant investment in our children, or will we keep relying on others to do it for us? Will we honor God's generosity toward us or will we depend on the generosity of others to keep our church running? It's up to us. It's up to you.

This Messenger contains so many opportunities to connect and build momentum. We need your hands, we need your feet, we need you.

At MOMENTUM, Adam Hamilton, Pastor of the United Methodist Church of Resurrection (yes, the one running for U.S. Senate in Kansas), shared about the salt mines in Hutchinson, Kansas. He prays every day to be salt and light in the world. He ended up debating the current sitting Senator in Hutchinson, literally, on top of the salt mines. He brought chunks of salt from the mines for each of us to keep in our pockets to remember to be salt and light in this world. The world, our community, the people in our church NEED us to continue to build salty momentum. Will it be you?

I'm praying with and for you!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Jasmine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Jasmine R. Smothers
Lead Pastor, Atlanta First UMC
pastor@atlantafirstumc.org

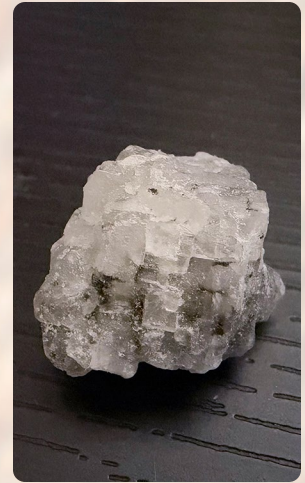
Photos from the MOMENTUM Conference



Rev. Jasmine R. Smothers
with Rev. Adam Hamilton at
the MOMENTUM conference.



Rev. Adam Hamilton on
the MOMENTUM stage.



Pastor Hamilton's gift: a
reminder to be the salt
and light in this world.

pray Together

Prayer is a critical part of a Christian's life. It is how we talk to God and one of the ways we grow our relationship with Him. It can be very private, whispered so only He can hear it, and it can be shared for all to hear. Praying is incredibly easy to do; just open your heart to God and share with Him. Whether it's to thank Him for the many blessings He has given, to confess and ask forgiveness for your mistakes, or to ask Him to help you or a loved one that is ill or suffering, prayer DOES make a difference. Prayer is integral to our worship services, group studies, and even when we get together for coffee or fellowship. If you have a concern that you would like for us to pray about with you, please send a note to prayer@atlantafirstumc.org.

Outside of our time of **worship** on Sundays we have two weekly opportunities for intentional, corporate prayer: Mondays at noon and Tuesdays at 6 p.m. (both Eastern time). Scan the QR codes or type the links below them to connect directly to the ZOOM meetings.

- Monday Noon Prayer -

Spend 15-20 minutes of your lunch hour in this participant-led time of devotional prayer.



tinyurl.com/AFUMC-Monday-Prayer

- Online Intentional Prayer -

Tuesdays evenings at 6 p.m. you are invited to a half hour of intentional group prayer.



tinyurl.com/AFUMC-Prayer



This October, we will explore God's vision of oneness—a unity that does not erase our differences but draws us together in grace. Using the image of the earth as a puzzle, *We Are One* will celebrate the distinct people, stories, and gifts God joins into one beloved community. Each Sunday, another piece of the puzzle will move into place:

October 4 – One Table: World Communion Sunday

October 11 – One Body, Many Colors: Atlanta Pride Sunday

October 18 – One Ministry, Many Gifts: Laity Sunday

October 25 – One Love, Ever Reforming: Reformation Sunday

Together, we will gather at Christ's table, affirm the sacred worth of all people, celebrate the ministry of all God's people, and open ourselves to the Spirit's continuing work of reformation.

In a world that so often pulls people apart, come discover the grace that holds us together.

Many pieces. One body. One world. One love. We are one.

 facebook.com/AtlantaFirstUMC

 youtube.com/AtlantaFirstUMC



Join the Media Team!

We are in need of volunteers to help out with our media ministry! We are in need of: photographers, worship screen operators, sound board operators, video camera and streaming operators, and interactive online worship hosts. Contact Steven Colly if you are interested: steven@atlantafirstumc.org

Fall & Winter Worship Sneak Peak!

November worship - The Giving Life

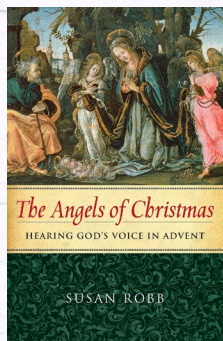
Join us November 1st thru 22nd for *The Giving Life*, a four-week *worship* series exploring generosity and faithful stewardship. Before we become givers, we are receivers. Our lives, resources, relationships, faith, and world have been placed in our care by a generous God. In conversation with Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* and stories from scripture, we will consider what we have received, what it means to have enough, how generosity can help an entire community flourish, and what we are called to preserve for those who come after us.

We begin on All Saints' Day by remembering the people whose faithfulness helped shape our lives. In the following weeks, we will examine our relationship with possessions, discover generosity rooted in grace rather than guilt, and consider how we tend the many gifts God has entrusted to us.

Come as we learn together to receive with gratitude, share with joy, and tend God's gifts with care.



Advent worship - The Angels of Christmas



Join us during the season of Advent for a new series based on *The Angels of Christmas: Hearing God's Voice in Advent* by Susan Robb. Over the four weeks of Advent we will explore the angelic visits surrounding the birth of Jesus with Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds.

We will decorate the sanctuary for Advent during our traditional *Hanging of the Greens* event on Saturday, November 28, beginning at 10 a.m.

Advent begins on Sunday, November 29, when we will have the *Clark Atlanta University Choir* as our guests during worship. And on Sunday, December 20, the Atlanta First UMC Choir will lead *worship* with a special *Christmas Cantata, "Glory to the Newborn King!"* You don't want to miss it!

Upcoming worship Schedule

Sunday, September 20 - Wellroot Amazing Grace Offering

Sunday, October 4 - World Communion Sunday

Sunday, October 11 - Pride Sunday

Sunday, October 18 - Laity Sunday
Special Guest Speaker: Tina Stevenson, Lay Leader for the Southwest District, NGUMC

Sunday, October 25 - Reformation Sunday
and Aldersgate Homes Offering

Sunday, November 1 - All Saints' Sunday

Sunday, November 22 - Christ the King Sunday

Saturday, November 28 - Hanging of the Greens: Preparing the Sanctuary for Advent

Sunday, November 29 - Advent Begins
& Clark Atlanta University Choir in Worship

Sunday, December 20 - Atlanta First UMC Choir Christmas Cantata: "Glory to the Newborn King!"

Thursday, December 24 - Christmas Eve - Worship 6:30 p.m.

serve Together



We are called upon by Jesus to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. There is no greater expression of this love than to freely *serve* those neighbors who are in need. This strengthens our own connections with God, for as Jesus taught, when we have *served* 'the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.'

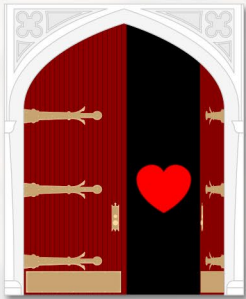
At Atlanta First, we understand that God desires for us to be in ministry beyond the walls of the church. We acknowledge that God has a plan to mend the brokenness in creation and we anticipate that He will use us as part of that plan. What is your role in His plan?

Thank You for the School Supply Donations!

Thanks to your generous donations, we were able to send **41 backpacks full of supplies** to Centennial Academy! In addition to going to their own students, Centennial Academy serves children at the Salvation Army Homeless Shelter and the My Sister's House Homeless Shelter. Your donations will make a big impact in the lives of many young children!



Friends at the Front Door



Friends at the Front Door is a ministry to *serve* our homeless and hungry friends who live in the vicinity of Atlanta First. We provide a bag lunch, clothing, toiletry supplies, and share a time of fellowship and prayer with those we *serve*.

We *serve* on the front steps of the church on the first Tuesday of each month, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Participating is easy: all you have to do is show up! Just by being present, handing out food and water, and sharing in a time of fellowship with our Friends, you are being the hands and feet of Christ. You can also support the ministry remotely by making monetary donations to help purchase supplies and food. Please visit our online giving page at atlantafirstumc.org/give to make a monetary donation, or our purchase from our Amazon mission wishlist: a.co/9dcGDEp



Midtown Assistance Center, 613 Spring Street NW, is a mission that *serves* the working poor of Atlanta who are experiencing financial shortfalls, by providing emergency rental assistance, no-cost groceries, clothing for job interviews, and MARTA cards. Every Monday thru Thursday, MAC has need for volunteers to help pack grocery deliveries from their food pantry, perform administrative tasks and assist their clients. You are also invited to make donations of non-perishable food and hygiene items to MAC's food pantry; please see the flyer on the next page for details.

Please visit MAC's website to for signup details:
midtownassistancecenter.org

- Toiletry Drive -

You are invited to donate travel-size toiletry products that can fit in a quart size zip bag. We will then share these with our homeless friends in need who come to the doors of the church.



give Together



CashApp

Your Giving Matters and Makes a Difference!

As you plan your charitable giving, please consider giving a special gift to Atlanta First. To put it simply, your gifts change lives in our community. We cannot do God's work without your support. Whether it is giving your time or a financial gift, your generosity will go towards helping those in need in the city.



Give Online

There are several ways you can give back to God a portion of what he has generously given to you through Atlanta First UMC. You are invited to place your gift in the offering plate during Sunday morning worship. You may also give securely online at atlantafirstumc.org/give, give via CashApp, Text-to-Give by texting "1" to 833.675.0154, donate stock by emailing finance@atlantafirstumc.org or calling the church office at 404.524.6614, or mail a check to: Atlanta First UMC, 360 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30308.



Amazing Grace Offering 2026



You are invited to make a gift to the *Amazing Grace Offering* of Wellroot Family Services. Wellroot helps people reach their God-given potential through the encouragement and love of a healthy home and family, and your donations through the *Amazing Grace Offering* are what make it possible. Wellroot programs include a multi-faceted family preservation continuum, foster care, family housing, and transitional and independent living programs. These programs equip parents, children, teens, and their families to make positive changes that last a lifetime.

You may make a donation to Wellroot through our online giving page or in the offering plate on Sundays.



You may bring donations to the church office, and we'll deliver them to MAC on your behalf.

Help support MAC's mission to *serve* the working poor of Atlanta by making a donation to their Food Pantry today! The Food Pantry provides groceries, free of charge, to families experiencing times of crisis and financial shortfalls.

– Food Items –

Canned Tuna
Canned Salmon
Chili
Vienna Sausages
Beef Stew
Hamburger Helper
Rice
Canned Spinach

Baked Beans
Cooking Oil
Pancake Mix & Syrup
Peanut Butter & Jelly
Canned Fruit
Fruit Juice
Coffee & Tea

– Hygiene Items –

Laundry Detergent
Baby Wipes
Shampoo & Conditioner
Textured Hair Care
Toothbrushes & Toothpaste
Feminine Hygiene Items
Adult Diapers
Paper Towels
Dish Soap

Walmart



amazon
wishlist



DONATE



Be the hands and feet of Christ for those in need through a gift to the **United Methodist Committee on Relief, UMCOR**. UMCOR provides critical emergency relief for victims of natural and man-made disasters around the world. 100% of your gift to UMCOR goes directly to *serve* those in need, so please give today.

Donate directly to UMCOR at:
umcmision.org/give

Or give through Atlanta First at:
atlantafirstumc.org/give



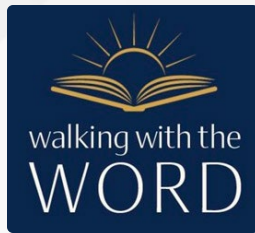
grow Together



SMALL GROUP STUDIES FOR FALL

God's grace is a continual presence in our lives. Through studying the scriptures, prayer, and serving others, this grace will grow our love and understanding of God. We invite you to join our small group studies and Sunday school class to help you *grow* in your own relationship with God.

Send an e-mail grow@atlantafirstumc.org to get connected and receive information on how to join a small group or attend Sunday School classes, the ZOOM links, and other learning opportunities. Visit this link for a handy guide on how to choose a study bible: tinyurl.com/AFUMC-Bible



Beginning the First Sunday in Advent, November 29, 2026, the United Methodists, Evangelical Lutherans, and Episcopalians in Georgia will read through the entire Bible together in one year. Throughout the year, online and in-person events and resources will further draw Christians together in a common plan for reading and engaging with Scripture. A reading plan will be provided, with four Scripture passages per day: one each from the Old Testament, New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs. There will be an official kickoff event at the start of Advent 2026. Stay tuned for more details!



This September, join us for *The Eye of Golden: Seeing What God Sees*, a four week grow and worship series inspired by Allen Levi's novel *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi. We will explore what happens when we learn to see beyond appearances, leading us to ask together: Whom have we overlooked? What does God see in them—and what might change if we saw it too?

The *Sunday grow Group* meets in-person at the church and online via ZOOM at 9 a.m. Eastern, and is taught by a rotating group of laity teachers.

Register at: tinyurl.com/AFUMC-Grow-Sunday



SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9 A.M. • IN-PERSON & ONLINE

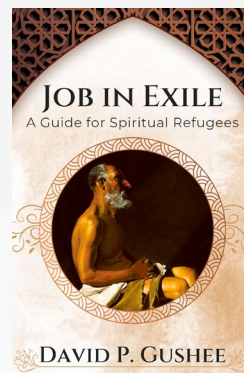


Join the *Tuesday grow Group* this fall as we undertake a brand new study based on *Job in Exile: A Guide for Spiritual Refugees* by David P. Gushee.

The book of Job is one of the most unsettling texts in the Bible. It confronts readers and faith communities with questions about faithfulness, suffering, and justice. Internationally known Christian ethicist David P. Gushee offers a new interpretation that brings clarity and relevance to this ancient book. Gushee argues that Job's story is not only about suffering; it is also about spiritual exile. *Job in Exile* invites readers to engage scripture with unflinching honesty and courage. It offers guidance and hope for anyone seeking faith, integrity, and community.

Lead Pastor Rev. Jasmine R. Smothers is the class facilitator.

Register at: tinyurl.com/AFUMC-Grow-Tuesday



TUESDAY EVENINGS AT 7 P.M. • ONLINE

grow Together



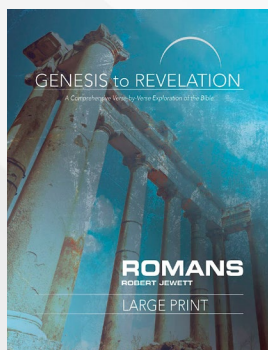
The **Wednesday grow Group** is spinning and rocking in a series called *Sacred Playlist*! Join in the fun as we discuss the Christian themes of favorite songs selected by group members. We listen to the songs together and discuss virtually on ZOOM every Wednesday night. Grab your Bible, a snack, and your ZOOM device, and let's have fun growing together!

The Wednesday grow group meets via ZOOM at 7 p.m. Eastern. The group is co-facilitated by Min. Maya Su and Lynsey Mitchell.

Register at: tinyurl.com/AFUMC-Grow-Wednesday



WEDNESDAY EVENINGS AT 7 P.M. • ONLINE



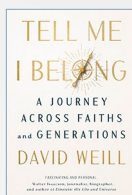
Thursday Morning grow Group: This fall, we are undertaking a new study based on *Genesis to Revelation – Romans*. This is a comprehensive, verse-by-verse, thirteen week in-depth study of the Book of Romans. It begins with an introduction to the Apostle Paul and following through his life and his call. Some of the major idea explored are: his purpose and situation, righteousness and wrath, being set free from sin, new life in the Spirit, and a tolerant ethic. We will incorporate videos from the Bible Project.

The Thursday grow Group meets in-person at the church and online via ZOOM, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Eastern time. The class is led by Rev. Dr. Jacqui Rose-Tucker.

Register at: tinyurl.com/AFUMC-Grow-Thursday



THURSDAY MORNINGS AT 11 A.M. • IN-PERSON & ONLINE



Love to read? Join our **Book Club** on the last Monday of every month to discuss some of the hottest reads in the last several years through the lens of faith. The group meets online via ZOOM.

During the month of October we are reading *Tell Me I Belong: A Journey Across Faiths and Generations* by David Weill. We next meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 26. Register at: tinyurl.com/AFUMC-Book

FINAL MONDAY EACH MONTH AT 7 P.M. • ONLINE



ROOTED IN GRACE, GROWING IN COMMUNITY



A CAMPUS BEAUTIFICATION INITIATIVE

Together, we are cultivating a campus that reflects God's love—welcoming all, **enhancing and securing our physical plant**, and growing together in faith and service.



BEAUTIFY

Enhancing our grounds to create a welcoming, beautiful, and vibrant space.



CONNECT

Bringing our church family and neighbors together through meaningful relationships.



SERVE

Using our time and talents to care for the space we share.



SECURE

Protecting and strengthening our campus to ensure a safe, sustainable, and well-maintained environment for all.



GROW

Nurturing our faith, our community, and our impact in the city.

The Atlanta Pride Parade

On Sunday, October 11, following *worship* at noon, the annual Atlanta Pride Parade will march right past Atlanta First! Join us in welcoming and *engaging* with the parade-goers in this celebration of the many ways God's children love each other. We are in need of folks who can help staff the church during the parade – to distribute snacks and water and to extend hospitality to guests who visit the church sanctuary and our rest rooms. We're also looking for donations of fruit snacks and granola-type energy bars, chips, sodas and bottled water to share with parade-goers and guests. We also will need donated or loaned coolers to keep the drinks chilled.

Church Calendar

Weekly Opportunities to worship, serve, grow, and engage:

Sundays at 9 a.m. - Sunday *grow* Group (page 8)
Sundays at 10 a.m. - *worship* In-Person and Online (page 5)
Mondays at 12 p.m. - Monday Noon *prayer* (page 3)
Tuesdays at 6 p.m. - Intentional *prayer* (page 3)
Tuesdays at 7 p.m. - Tuesday *grow* Group (page 8)
Wednesdays at 7 p.m. - Wednesday *grow* Group (page 8)
Thursdays at 11 a.m. - Thursday *grow* Group (page 9)

Monthly Opportunities to worship, serve, grow, and engage:

First Tuesday Each Month at 11 a.m. - Friends at the Front Door (page 6)
Final Monday Each Month at 7 p.m. - Book Club (page 9)

Upcoming Events:

Sunday, October 11 - Pride Sunday - Worship & Pride Parade
Sunday, October 18 - Laity Sunday
Sunday, October 25 - Reformation Sunday & Aldersgate Homes Offering
Sunday, October 25 - Lunch, Town Hall (1 p.m.), Charge Conference (2 p.m.)
Sunday, November 1 - All Saints' Sunday
Saturday, November 28 - Hanging of the Greens Preparation for Advent
Sunday, November 29 - Advent Begins & Clark Atlanta University Choir
Sunday, December 20 - Christmas Cantata: "Glory to the Newborn King!"
Thursday, December 24 - Christmas Eve
Staff Meetings: First and Third Wednesdays at 11 a.m.
Leadership Team Meeting: Monthly on Third Wednesdays at 5:15 p.m.
Choir Rehearsals: 3rd and 4th Sundays each month, after *worship*

Atlanta First Today!

We've made it easier to keep up to date with the latest happenings and opportunities to *worship, serve, grow* and *engage* with your Atlanta First UMC family. Pay a visit to the Atlanta First UMC Today page, to see this week's *worship* topic and scripture lesson, upcoming events, current *grow* group studies and more! Link and QR code to the right or visit: atlantafirstumc.org/today



Contact Information and Office Hours

Rev. Jasmine R. Smothers , Lead Pastor	Text Message: 404.525.2385pastor@atlantafirstumc.org	Ext. 108
Rowena Dennard , Director of Worship & Music	dennard@atlantafirstumc.org	Ext. 106
Steven Colly , Communications & Media	steven@atlantafirstumc.org	Ext. 105
Min. Maya Su , Student Minister	maya@atlantafirstumc.org	
Finance Office	finance@atlantafirstumc.org	

Atlanta First UMC Office: [404.524.6614](tel:404.524.6614) • **24/7 Pastoral Care Line:** [404.446.3777](tel:404.446.3777)

Church Office Hours: Sunday: 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. • Tuesday - Wednesday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. • Thursday: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Thanks You for the School Supply Donations!



Thanks to your generosity, 41 backpacks filled with school supplies were donated to students at Centennial Academy! Next year let's aim for 100!



The United Methodist Church
forms disciples of Jesus Christ who,
empowered by the Holy Spirit, Love
Boldly, Serve Joyfully, and Lead
Courageously in local communities
and worldwide connections.

Rev. Jasmine R. Smothers, Lead Pastor - pastor@atlantafirstumc.org - Text Message: 404.525.2385

Bishop Robin Dease, Resident Bishop • Dr. Julie Boone, District Superintendent

Atlanta First United Methodist Church, 360 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Package Address: 2020 Howell Mill Road NW, Suite D-339, Atlanta, GA 30318-1732

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Atlanta First UMC Office: 404.524.6614

24/7 Pastoral Care Line: 404.446.3777

Join Our Online Campus:
atlantafirstumc.org/onlinecampus
Worship Service Live-Streams:
atlantafirstumc.org/live



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atlantafirstumc.org

