



NOVEMBER 2021 | VOL. 58 | NO. 11

THE FLAME

The First United Methodist Church of LaGrange

from your senior minister...

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE

There is nothing quite like the feeling ... driving through a new landscape for the first time, looking at a piece of art, reading a book that changes your perspective, listening to a song whose melody strikes a chord in your heart. It is simply viewing something through a new lens—something that is so exciting it elicits an emotional response, filling you with thoughts and ideas that open a door of possibilities. Being inspired is one of the greatest human experiences.

I was inspired on Sunday morning when our **Modern Worship** service launched at LaGrange First Methodist at the end of October. Thank you for your prayers, your presence, your financial gifts, your service, and your witness! What an exciting time for us to offer a new way for those seeking God to be inspired to join us on their spiritual journey! The photos to the right give you a glimpse of the new service, but I invite you to come experience it yourself at 9:00 am in Wesley Hall on Sundays. I assure you that you will feel the experience of God's presence there!

As we near the end of our 193rd year as a congregation and yet another one impacted by COVID-19, I am filled with gratitude. John Henry Jowett, a British preacher at the turn of the twentieth century, said this about gratitude: "Gratitude is a vaccine, an antitoxin, and an antiseptic." What did he mean? He meant that gratitude, like a vaccine, can prevent the invasion of a disgruntled, discouraged spirit. Like an antitoxin, gratitude can prevent the effects of the poisons of cynicism, criticalness, and grumbling. Like an antiseptic, a spirit of gratitude can soothe and heal the most troubled spirit.

May the spirit of gratitude permeate throughout our great church as we celebrate Thanksgiving together. I hope you will join me on **Wednesday, November 10**, from 5:00 – 6:00 pm for our annual **Thanksgiving Feast** in Wesley Hall. Our team of servant volunteers, under the direction of **Rick Free**, will serve a traditional meal with all of the trimmings. There is no per person charge, though donations will be gratefully received. Reservations are required. You may call the Church Office or use the QR code below to register online.

Mayor Jim Thornton will be the featured speaker for the 10th annual **"Evening to Give Thanks"** service on **Wednesday, November 17**, at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary. Our Evangelism Team developed this program in 2012, under the direction of **Jake Behr**, as an opportunity for those from our traditional and modern services and the community-at-large to gather together to sing, pray, and give thanks for all the blessings God has bestowed upon us as individuals and as a church.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer insists that gratitude is the secret of life. In his book, "Reverence for Life," he notes "our inner happiness depends not on what we experience, but on the degree of our gratitude to God." Thanks to you, we continue to Make and Grow Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World!

Remember how much I love you ...
It's an honor to be your Senior Minister this Thanksgiving!

John +

Dr. John Beyers



ANGEL TREE PROGRAM

Make a child's Christmas brighter

Our church is once again making a difference in the life of our community by partnering with The Salvation Army's to help 60 local children experience Christmas through the Angel Tree program. From **Sunday, November 21**, through **Sunday, December 5**, you can visit the Christmas trees in the Narthex or Wesley Hall to pick out an Angel gift tag (with a child's first name, age, gender and small wish list) along with a red bag to begin shopping for a child in our community!



After shopping for the gifts on your child's wish list, affix the tag to the bag (or place inside it), and label any gifts too large to fit in the bag. Bring your child's unwrapped gifts to the Broad Street entrance of the Children's Building (press the door buzzer and then leave them just inside the door next to the stairwell) between Monday, November 29, and Tuesday, December 7. The Salvation Army will pick up all the gifts at the church on Wednesday morning, December 8.

Natalie, we will miss you!

After serving for two years as First Methodist's Director of Communications, **Natalie Shelton** has announced she is resigning from her role effective Friday, November 5.



Natalie says the decision has not been an easy one, but ultimately, it is best for her and her family.

Her aging parents live over three hours away in Elberton, and her father has experienced some significant health issues in the past year. She needs to be more available to them for practical caregiving and household reasons. The entire family also needs a chance to be more of a presence in each other's lives, which is difficult with a job that is rewarding but is weekend-centric, she said.

Her husband, Wayne, and their daughters, Emma Kate and Caroline, are very supportive of her decision, she said. After graduating last year from the University of Georgia, Emma Kate serves UGA's Wesley Foundation as an intern on the digital media team, and Caroline is a freshman at Georgia College & State University.

Natalie will be spending part of her time in Elberton and part in LaGrange, and she also looks forward to more trips to Athens and Milledgeville. She and Wayne will celebrate their 25th anniversary on November 30, so they also hope to slip in a short celebratory vacation soon!

Natalie plans to keep in touch and has offered to help the church with the transition as it searches for someone to fill her role. Thank you, Natalie, for serving us these past two years with a caring heart!

SHOP AMAZON TO BENEFIT OUR CHURCH: As you begin your seasonal shopping, keep in mind your purchases on Amazon can benefit our church! Visit smile.amazon.com and choose "First United Methodist Church, LaGrange" as your donation recipient. (You can use your existing Amazon account on AmazonSmile.) Amazon will then donate 0.5 percent of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to our church.

'SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS' GRIEF SHARE PROGRAM: For those grieving the death of a loved one, First Baptist Church on the Square will offer the free seminar, **"Surviving the Holidays,"** from 10:00 am to 2:30 pm on **Saturday, November 13**. To attend, please RSVP by calling or texting **Elaine McCook** at 706-302-5085 by Wednesday, November 10. (Elaine is helping FBC organizers spread the word and also is coordinating our church's RSVPs so FBC may plan for lunch.)

NIGHT OF LIGHTS: Mark your calendars for the Night of Lights on **Sunday, December 12**, at 6:00 pm. Like last year, we'll have a Live Nativity with animals (including a camel)! If you would like to be a part of the cast of characters, please contact **Jeanne Jones** at jeanne@lagrangefumc.org.

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS: The Church Office will be closed on **Thursday and Friday, November 25-26**, for Thanksgiving.

TLC

Thursday Lunch Club

DECEMBER 2

12:00 | WESLEY HALL

TLC is returning just in time for the Christmas season!

Kathy and Steve Murphy will usher in the holidays with a musical presentation.

Please call the Church Office to make your lunch reservation (\$6) by November 30.



Baby Reid is here!

Pastor Ben Wills and his wife, Sammi, welcomed little Thomas Reid Wills into the world on Monday, October 25. Reid weighed 7 lbs., 1 oz., and was 19.5 inches long. He may only be a week old, but he already has been able to join his mom, dad, in watching the Braves win 2021 World Series! We know Ben and Sammi will be the best parents ever and are thrilled that the three of them are all doing well! Thank you for your continued prayers for this sweet family.

A season of Thanksgiving

A Thanksgiving Feast

Wednesday, November 10 | 5:00 - 6:00 pm | Wesley Hall

Please join us for a free Thanksgiving meal to celebrate this season of gratitude! The meal serves as a small token of how grateful we are for our church family. The dinner includes turkey and dressing, sweet potato soufflé, a vegetable, and dessert prepared by Rick Free and his hospitality team. Please make reservations at lagrangefumc.org or by calling the Church Office. There is no cost for the meal, though we will have a love offering if you would like to help cover expenses. **All regular children's and youth Wednesday programming will be held on this evening, as well as the final installment of Dr. John Beyer's 12-part series for adults, "The Absolute Basics of the Wesleyan Way," from 5:45 to 6:30 pm.**

An Evening to Give Thanks

Wednesday, November 17 | 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Sanctuary

Jim Thornton, Mayor of the City of LaGrange and a lifelong member of our church, will deliver the message, "It Is the Best Choice," at our annual mid-week Thanksgiving worship service. His message will be based on Thessalonians 5:16-18. Please join us for this service of gratefulness and thanksgiving! **We will not have regular children and youth programming so they may enjoy the service with their families.**

Donation Drop-off

Blessings in a Book Bag & Interfaith Food Closet

6:00 - 6:30 pm, 7:30 - 8:00 pm

(BEFORE/AFTER 'AN EVENING TO GIVE THANKS')

For our November Mission of the Month, we are collecting much-needed donations for LaGrange Personal Aid's **Interfaith Food Closet** as well as our Youth Ministry's **Blessings in a Book Bag**. We will be accepting donations in the front of the Children's Building on the Broad Street side.

Our goal is to provide Thanksgiving meals to 50 families. The Food Closet's coordinators have requested the items listed in the box to the right (or similar items). Please bring the Food Closet items together **IN A BOX**. We are suggesting you consider giving \$25 to cover the cost of a family turkey along with 12 or so food items. Please make checks payable to the church with "food closet" in the memo line.

Through the Blessings in a Book Bag program, each week our Youth Ministry provides about 30 to 35 children at Ethel Kight Elementary School with food to sustain them through the weekend. As the youth group's food inventory for this ministry is currently low, donations of individually packaged food and monetary donations are extremely appreciated. Please make checks payable to the church with "book bag" in the memo line.

Thank you so much for supporting these two ministries as they continue to show God's love to our community!

Interfaith Food Closet

\$25 for a family turkey
canned gravy
box of dressing
box of brownie mix
pie crust
canned sweet potatoes
canned cranberry sauce
box of macaroni
can of creamed corn
can of green beans
can of sweetened condensed milk
can of French's crispy fried onions
can of cream of mushroom soup

Blessings In A Book Bag

(individually wrapped items)

protein bars	Easy Mac
Pop Tarts	(microwavable bowls)
granola bars	Little Debbie cakes
fruit cups	Mini water bottles
fruit snacks	Popcorn
candy	(microwave packs)
Oreos	applesauce
goldfish crackers	(cups or pouches)
Cheez-its	instant oatmeal
cheese crackers	pouches
ramen noodles	Jif peanut butter cups
(packs, not cups)	peanut butter crackers
juice boxes	tuna (pop-top cans
Vienna sausages	or pouches)

YOUTH MINISTRY

Will Locke, Youth Minister | will@lagrangefumc.org

Prayer Breakfasts

We enjoyed a Prayer Breakfast on November 2 and will meet again Tuesday, November 16, from 7:15 - 7:45 am at 505 Eats. This is a great time of fellowship, delicious food, and Jesus before school. We have a brief devotion to help students focus on God before they begin their school day. We have exciting news: we are now providing rides to school from Prayer Breakfast! Parents, this means all you have to do is drop your student off at 505 Eats, and then we will take care of getting them to school. While this provides you with more time and flexibility in the morning, this also allows us to have more time to build relationships with your student.

TGIWednesday

Wednesday Night Youth grappled with a "Questions Found in the New Testament" series in October. We held Small Group Night on on November 3. Be watching our Remind 101 texts, Instagram and Facebook for what fun activity your student's group has planned to foster deeper relationships.

On November 10, we will examine what it means to abide in Jesus during our last Wednesday Night Youth for the month. We will not meet on Wednesday, November 17 because that is the night of Evening to Give Thanks. We encourage you to bring your entire family and join us for this meaningful time of worship together. (More info is on page 3.) We won't meet Wednesday, November 24, the week of Thanksgiving. Break. We look forward to worshipping together again on Wednesday, December 1!

Rise Against Hunger: This Sunday!

Our Monthly Service Opportunity is participating in Rise Against Hunger this Sunday, November 7, from 12:00 - 2:00 pm. in Wesley

Tweens (Fourth- and Fifth-Graders)

We had a fantastic time at our Tweens October outing. We ventured to Fall Daze at Oakhurst Farms, where we fed goats, cows, rabbit, and chickens. We also rode on a hay ride, got lost in a corn maze, and enjoyed each other's company! We love spending time with our fourth- and fifth-graders.

This month, we're inviting our tweens to join the church for a service project: Rise Against Hunger! We'll see you in Wesley Hall on Sunday, November 7, immediately following the 11:00 am Traditional Worship Service. After a quick lunch, we will work together to pack meals!

Hall. Following the Traditional Service, the entire church will have a light lunch followed by the pack. The church has set the ambitious goal of packing over 20,000 meals for Rise Against Hunger! We need everyone, including your family. This will be a fantastic time of fellowship with our larger church family as we come together to support this important organization.

Mission Trip to Pensacola

Registration for our mission trip to Pensacola, Florida, is open from **Wednesday, November 10, through Wednesday, December 8**. The mission trip is **Sunday to Friday, July 10-15, 2022**. We will serve the Pensacola community by doing some home repairs and hurricane relief work. Students currently in grades six to 12 may register; the trip costs \$400 per student and can be paid in installments. To register, each student needs to pay a \$100 deposit and have a current Medical and Media Release Form on file with the Youth Ministry. We are partnering with an organization called TEAeffort (teameffort.org) to plan and execute our mission trip. If you have any questions about the registration process, payments, or the trip itself, please reach out to Will (will@lagrangefumc.org).

Memorial Gifts

Janet Wyche
Jean Edwards

Frances Shelnutt
(mother of Yvonne Wolfe)
Pat Gilbert

Loretta Beall
Susan Lee
David Hays
Jean Edwards
Barbara Waldrop
Sylvia Davis

Beth Godwin
Ann & David Blackwell
Naomi Brunner
Belle & Emmett Davis
Betty & Charles Johnson
Cathy & Lewis Goode
Laura & Blair Harlin
Susan Lee
David Hays
Claire & Dallas Miller
Cindy Giles
Hogansville Elementary School
Gayle & Richard Smallwood
Clancy & John Goodwin
Dianne & Hamp Griffin

Benji & Grushell Link
Jean Edwards
Brenda Springfield
Peggy Wiles
Kay & Ron Cole

Elizabeth Sims
Sarah Funderburk
United Methodist Women
Anne Allen
Shirra & Hoyt Rogers
Sharon & Alan Jones
Carlene & Dusty Mills
Carolyn Alise
Jane Willey
Pat Gilbert
Enid Tate
Patricia Vaughn
Lisa & Ken Boatwright
Marilyn & Allen Smith
Joan Johnston

Cindy Brown
Carolyn Alise
Pat Gilbert
Carlene & Dusty Mills
Ann & John Stewart
Rhonda Baxter
Anne Allen

Sylvia Davis
Jane Willey
Shirra & Hoyt Rogers
Molly & Bobby Carmichael
Laura & Blair Harlin
Enid Tate
Lisa & Ken Boatwright
Judy Glass
Marsha Holliday
Marilyn & Allen Smith
Delores & Bill Kee
Ann & Perry Wilder
Lea & J.M. Rawlinson
Kay & Ron Cole

Sharon Richardson
Carlene & Dusty Mills
Carolyn Alise
Jane Willey
Mary Ann & H.R. Shepherd
Peggy Lukken
Nancy Cammon
Marsha Holliday
Page Estes
Marilyn & Allen Smith
Carole & Kelly Linch
Anne Allen
Judy Baldwin

Memorials listed include those received through October 22, 2021.



IN MEMORIAM

**Sharon
Richardson**

October 6, 2021



IN MEMORIAM

**David
Funk**

October 6, 2021

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Jeanne Jones, Children's Minister | jeanne@lagrangefumc.org

New Sunday Morning Schedule

This is an exciting time in the life of our church! On October 31, we launched our new modern worship service! With the addition of this service, we now offer children's programming from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. We look forward to welcoming new families and seek to make their experience at First Methodist one of excellence in all areas.

To this end, we will offer Children's Church the first and third hour with Sunday School during the middle hour. For a new family, we have 10 minutes to make that first impression, from the parking lot to check-in at the Children's Building. Parents worry about their child's safety, and having their child walk out in the middle of the service with a stranger to an unknown location could be worrisome.

For this reason, all children will be checked in by their parent or guardian at the Vernon Street entrance to the Children's building where they will be greeted by someone who can assist them. Children will then either participate in Children's Church or Sunday School activities. Children will stay in the Children's Building until the parent comes to check them out.

We recognize the importance of families worshipping together. Therefore, on the first Sunday of each month, children will worship together with their families at the Modern Worship or Traditional service. Sunday School for children will be from 10:00 - 10:45 am. Our nursery for young children will be available each Sunday of the month from 8:45 am - 12:15 pm..

Wednesday Night Kids

We have been learning about the fruit of the Spirit and putting it into action. This month we have continued working in our thankfulness journals on a daily basis, completed a kindness bingo challenge and served others at our Reverse Trick-or-Treat. On October 27 we dressed in costume and handed out candy to students at LaGrange College.

Night of Lights

Looking ahead, be sure to mark December 12 on your calendar for your Night of Lights. If you would like to be part of the cast of characters this year please contact Jeanne Jones.

Fall Festival

Our Annual Fall Festival was a huge success again! It is always great to welcome so many families from our community to the First Methodist campus. As with any large endeavor this could not have happened without the support and help of so many of you. Thank you for donating candy, volunteering with setup, cleanup, greeting our visitors, decorating a trunk and giving out candy and prizes, helping with our inflatables, cakewalk, costume contest, popcorn table, and so much more. Dr. John often says "we are better together" and we certainly are. Without everyone working together we couldn't offer this event to the families in our community.



Christmas Poinsettias

If you would like to purchase* a poinsettia for \$12 in honor of or in memory of someone, please complete the form and return it to the church on or before **Sunday, November 28**. A list of all those recognized will appear in the December issue of The Flame. You also can give online at bit.ly/fumc_giving and specify "Poinsettias." If you are purchasing more than one, simply include all pertinent information below on a separate sheet of paper and include with this form. Questions? Contact the Church Office at 706.884.4635.

☐ In Honor

☐ In Memory

Of: _____

By: _____

☐ Check Enclosed

☐ Cash Enclosed

☐ Credit Card

Credit Card Number (if applicable): _____

Expiration: _____ CVV: _____ Billing Address Zip Code: _____

**Poinsettia purchases are not considered tax-deductible gifts.*



THE FLAME

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The First United Methodist Church of LaGrange

401 Broad Street | LaGrange, Georgia 30240

706.884.4635 | churchoffice@lagrangefumc.org | LaGrangeFUMC.org

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The Flame

401 Broad Street

LaGrange, Georgia 30240

Dr. John Beyers	Senior Minister
Jeradean Collins	Nursery Worker
Page Estes	Director of Development/Stewardship
Rick Free	Director of Food Services/Hospitality
Mary Elizabeth Gerick	Minister of Modern Worship
Eddie Giddens	Custodian
Scott Hill	Facilities Maintenance Coordinator
Jeanne Jones	Children's Minister
Elissa Lamoree	Assistant Family Minister
Will Locke	Youth Minister
Kathy Murphy	Interim Minister of Music
Maxine Ogletree	Nursery Worker
Don Papenbrock	Organist
Andy Rainey	Executive Minister
Natalie Shelton	Director of Communications
The Rev. Ben Wills	Senior Associate Minister

Our Church Office is open 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Monday to Friday.

We have a secure mail slot to the right of the Trinity Street office-door entrance. You also may drop off correspondence in our locked black mailbox under the portico on Vernon Street outside the Children's Building.

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2022

HIGH ALTAR FLOWERS

Flowers on the High Altar can fittingly commemorate a birth, baptism, birthday, marriage, anniversary, or death. They also may be given as an expression of joy, friendship, love, or gratitude. Please contact the Church Office at 706.884.4635 or giving@lagrangefumc.org or you are interested in providing flowers for one of the available 2022 dates below (or to double-check that your date has been reserved).



January 2, 9, 16, 30

February 6, 13, 27

March 2, 20, 27

April 3, 10, 14, 17

May 1, 8, 15, 22

June 5, 12, 26

July 3

August 7, 14, 21, 28

September 4, 25

October 9, 23, 30

November 6, 13, 16, 20

December 4, 11, 18

ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY AND HOLY COMMUNION

Sunday, November 7, is All Saints' Sunday, when we celebrate the saints who have gone to be with the Lord over the past year. These faithful men and women lived faithfully, shared their faith, and pointed us to the way of Christ through the witness of their lives. We will remember each person listed below during our 9:00 am and 11:00 am worship services.

Louise French

Billie McAlexander

Dot Darden

Kathy Kaap

Frank McCook

Luke Hill

Tom Mahaffey

Jim Hester

Fred Jones

Lonnie Ritchie

Kay Rogers

Janet Wyche

Joseph Colley

Loretta Beall

Beth Godwin

Cindy Brown

Elizabeth Sims

Rick Sponholz

Sharon Richardson

David Funk