



fairmont focus



Fairmont United Methodist Church

November/December 2025

A Word from the Pastor

As we approach the holiday season, some of our most cherished traditions return in the church—like lighting the Advent Wreath, experiencing the Christmas Cantata, Christmas music by the Fairmont Gospel Revue, Cocoa and Caroling in the Neighborhood, the Impromptu Children’s Christmas Pageant, and Christmas Eve Worship and Dinner together. These traditions go back a long time, and they give meaning and beauty to our lives in this special season of the year.

Which causes me to wonder, who else in our circle of friends and neighbors might also be blessed by these special events? Who else might be touched by the beauty and the relationships that form from participating in these things together? I hope we will pray about this, and allow God to lead us to invite someone else to experience these things with us this year.

As I mentioned in a sermon on November 9th, we have seen more than 50 visitors come to Fairmont since the beginning of the school year. And while the first 2 Sundays of the school year had the most visitors, we have had a steady stream since. (We’ve even had more visitors if you include the new folks from Healing Transitions.) And so, people of all ages and stages are seeking something spiritual in our community. People are looking for a church home. People are desiring meaning and belonging. And normally, even more people are open to visiting a church in the holiday season.

I’ll also share this: recently, I invited some new neighbors of ours to Fairmont. They have kids similar in age to us. And we’ve been getting along great. They were also asking questions about the church. And so I thought, “Why not invite them?” And they appreciated the invitation. But, they have a lot of baggage with the church, so they declined. But when my wife invited a new friend of our daughter’s, his family ready accepted. You just never know. We’re just called to invite.

Advent and Christmas are such special seasons in the church year. Let’s not just enjoy ourselves; let’s be faithful and invite others to come. God will take care of the rest.

In Christ,
Scott



Children and Youth

Fairmont United Methodist Church

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A Word about Children's Church

Church School, Children's Church, Faith Formation Hour, or Sunday School, are the more common titles for the gatherings for children on Sundays. Ever since humans began, we have known the importance of sharing knowledge, beliefs, experiences and skills with those growing up. As God shares his way of love, we share this love with our children. We teach our children, not only to inform them, but to help them discover purpose and direction. At Fairmont, we are building a stronger learning experience for our children. As a community, we are stronger when we all get involved in the teaching and sharing of talents, skills, knowledge and love. I invite you to become part of this sharing.

In our Sunday School time, we discuss scripture, thoughts, feelings and experiences with our topic each week. And there is a "helper" who comes up with us, and every volunteer is different with their participation level. I encourage you to visit some Sunday and see what good trouble we are getting into. We currently have about 6 folks on our roster for helpers; we could use more. Please reach out if you would like to visit and consider serving our community by becoming a helper. I'm happy to share more information. What's stopping you from serving and sharing what you know?

Peace Be With You, *Regan*.

Youth News

This fall several area churches have combined Youth Groups to meet twice a month on 1st and 3rd Sundays from 5 PM - 6:30 PM.

Open Table, Avent Ferry, and Fairmont UMCs have taken turns hosting and several of our youth attended Pilgrimage, the Conference Youth Event.



College. Music. More

Fairmont United Methodist Church

September/October 2025

Raleigh Wesley Foundation News

November is a busy time for our students, but it's a great time to be part of the Raleigh Wesley Foundation Family of alumni, students, parents, Board Members, and friends!

Alumni Gathering: The Raleigh Wesley Foundation Alumni Association will be hosting a reunion event on Saturday November, 22nd, 2-4 pm at Fairmont UMC. Alumni get a chance to catch up with fellow alumni, find out more about what is happening with the Raleigh Wesley Foundation and maybe go to do dinner afterwards. Snacks and beverages will be provided.

The Tar Heel Wolfpack Rumble is a fundraiser/friendly competition for Raleigh Wesley and UNC Wesley leading up to the annual rivalry game between UNC and NC State on November 29, 2025. The school that raises the most money for their Wesley by the end of the game gets ultimate bragging rights! And, their campus minister has to wear the other school's gear! Visit <https://www.tarheelwolfpackrumble.org/> to make a donation and learn more about either/both Wesley Foundations (and to see who is ahead! FYI - UNC is way ahead!)



*Sounds
of the
Season*

Music Notes from Randy:

Hello Fairmont Family!

Christmas is coming! Everybody is getting ready! The Chancel Choir will sing selections from the Christmas Cantata "Glorious Christmas" at 11:00 AM on December 21st. We invite any interested persons to come sing with us. Cantata rehearsals are on Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30 PM.

The Women of Faith will present their Christmas program on Sunday night, December 7th. The Men's Recovery Choir will present their program on December 14th and the Fairmont Gospel Revue on December 21st.

Come and celebrate the birth of Christ with us!

Randy Shepard

Social Justice and Missions

Angel Tree/Toy Drive at Olds Elementary

Angel Tree/Toy Drive for Neediest Students at Olds Elementary -- Out of a desire to meet a local need this Christmas, the Mission and Justice Team is organizing an Angel Tree or a Toy Drive for the neediest children at Olds Elementary, right in our neighborhood. And so right after Thanksgiving, the school's social worker will provide us a list for children who are looking for some help this Christmas, and we will have the opportunity to meet that need. The gifts will have to be purchased and returned by mid-December. So keep this in mind as you prepare for the holiday season!

Activities and Events

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Love Thy Neighbor Day - November 15

Join us on Saturday, November 15th at 9:00 AM as we love our neighbors who live right around us. We will rake their yards for free and bless them with God's love. We will meet in the parking lot by the Hut at 9:00 AM, pray, and then go out to begin raking yards. Please bring rakes, gloves, and yard bags.

Hanging of the Greens (Decorating the Sanctuary)

On Saturday, November 29th from 10 AM to Noon, we will be hanging and putting up all the greenery and decorating the Sanctuary. This is a wonderful event to come to with your family and friends to get into the Christmas Spirit! We hope to see you there. Contact Helen Kraus for more information at helentkraus@gmail.com.

Poinsettias for the Sanctuary

Online and in-person ordering begins soon! Red & white 6.5" for \$11. Purchase a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one. Poinsettias will be placed in the Sanctuary by December 14. You can take yours home after the Christmas Eve service.

Calendar

Love Thy Neighbor Day

Saturday, November 15 - Meet at 9:00 AM; bring rakes, gloves, and yard bags

Decorating Sanctuary

Saturday, November 29 from 10:00 AM-Noon

Join a group of folks preparing the church for Advent and Christmas; set up and decorate the Christmas Tree, place the wreaths and ribbons—a fun time of fellowship before the rush of the season!

First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, November 30 - the First Sunday of the new Church Year

Impromptu Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 14 at 11:00 AM Morning Worship

An impromptu Christmas Pageant retelling the Christmas story with children, costumes, and props.



Cocoa & Caroling

Thursday, December 18

meet under the oaks at 6:00 PM for neighborhood caroling, followed by cocoa and cookies

Calendar

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Special Christmas Music

The Women of Faith - Sunday, December 7 at 7:00 PM

Men's Recovery Choir - Sunday, December 14 at 7:00 PM

Chancel Choir Christmas Cantata Sunday, December 21 at the 11:00 AM Morning Worship

Fairmont Gospel Revue - Sunday, December 21 at 7:00 PM

Christmas Eve Services

Wednesday, December 24

Children's Service - 3:30 PM

Traditional Service - 5:00 PM

Communion, Brass, Candlelight, and more; Dinner follows the service.

Recent Pictures



Food Truck Rodeo



Trunk or Treat



2025 Congregational Testimonies

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Grow Together Community Garden

This garden, more than maybe any other, has been built on love. When I retired, I had experienced a very emotionally painful and tiring time at work. I needed joy in my life. I also needed some things to do. So I approached the trustees about building a community garden and they embraced it whole-heartedly. Peggy Davis and BJ Satterwhite helped me gather information and brainstorm ideas.

Sandra Cox helped get the lumber donated. Greg Kraus and Ross Leavens built the beds, tilled the soil and hauled compost. Ruth Kraus, Maggie Lewis, and Bebe Barnes assembled the irrigation. A Wesley student designed the logo for the sign. The city of Raleigh and the UMC Creation Care group awarded grants to support the costs. L'Arche NC donated the raised bed planters. The congregation, and many others not mentioned, have supported and helped along the way. The love has flowed.

I knew the garden would be good for me. I hoped it would be good for others. It has! Gardeners from the congregation and the community have gotten to know, and learned from, each other. If you spend time in the area, you will notice people taking pictures of flowers, stopping to smell them, and watch the butterflies. They rest on the benches. They chat and ask questions. They enjoy the fresh produce we have grown and put in the cooler below the Little Food Pantry. They bring life to the space. Personally, I have enjoyed the opportunity to get to know people that I never would have had the opportunity to speak with. One such example are the various recover meeting members. As these children of God come to their meeting, with their pains, trials, and tribulations, they stop and thank me for the garden. They think it is my labor that has resulted in fresh vegetables being shared with them. But really – it is God's love. His love for me, through all of you, and for them, through me.

Pastor Scott asked me to write about how I have seen Heaven on Earth in the Grow Together Community Garden. For me, and many others, this small garden is a slice of heaven on Earth. A place where all are welcome, nurtured, and loved. A place to be, to be together, and to rest – a place where money, power, and color have no meaning. All that matters is love, support, and acceptance of the challenges we all face, and, with God's love and God's children, we overcome.

Helen Kraus

Camp #livedifferently

Fairmont is truly a special place. Bob and I have lived in several states, and there is nothing quite like Fairmont. This congregation is truly a glimpse of heaven on earth.

There are many stories, but Camp #livedifferently is the most recent event where I saw many interactions that reflect a glimpse of heaven.

We hosted 19 campers this year. Each morning, it was so nice to meet the parents and watch them interact with each other as part of the camp community. At pick-up time, we also saw parents planning afternoon activities and their children joining other families for the rest of the day!

The campers had lots of fun as well. This year, we split them into two age groups. The children that I taught in Children's church were part of the older group. And WOW, did they certainly bring their energy and excitement! I am not sure I have words to describe the first day, but love is the word to describe the others. These boys love each other! They have so much fun joking, playing, and laughing. Many of them have been to the camp previously and they know the projects and who it benefits. It was so rewarding to see how they really connect and how their families are connected through friendships too.

The younger class was very open to sharing. Mrs. Lynne brought the best vibe as they learned new concepts about food insecurity, lack of running water, and being very sick. The mission projects that week showed the children how they can make a difference for people around them that do not have enough to eat or making items for children in the hospital and expressing their creativity.

If you want to see a glimpse of heaven, I encourage you to come and visit or volunteer for Camp Live Differently next year. It's a beautiful week of ministry and special moments.

Tamara Ladich

2025 Congregational Testimonies

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College Ministry

God is incredibly present in the Raleigh Wesley

Foundation and that presence is multiplied by the students. They show up week after week seeking God and community in ways that can be so hard to find. It is often said that God moves in mysterious ways. God is there in the quiet, small moments that make up our days. But, God also moves in very obvious and loud ways. That's the category that Raleigh Wesley falls into.

Campus ministry may be a likely and predictable place to find God moving and changing lives, but that does not make it any less special. I came to Raleigh Wesley with very few expectations, but a lot of hope. Wesley has exceeded any expectations I could have had. I have worked in many different forms of ministry and I can confidently say that Raleigh Wesley is an incredibly unique place. Talking to students about God for a few hours every week has become such a blessing in my life. Divinity school teaches us that if you can't explain theology to another person then you have not truly learned it. The Wesley students ask questions that are so big that they stretch my understanding and force me to reflect on everything I have learned. I see God moving in their lives everyday in new and exciting ways. It is an incredibly special time and I am honored to be part of it.

Avery Edwards

Duke Intern, Raleigh Wesley Foundation

Children's Ministry

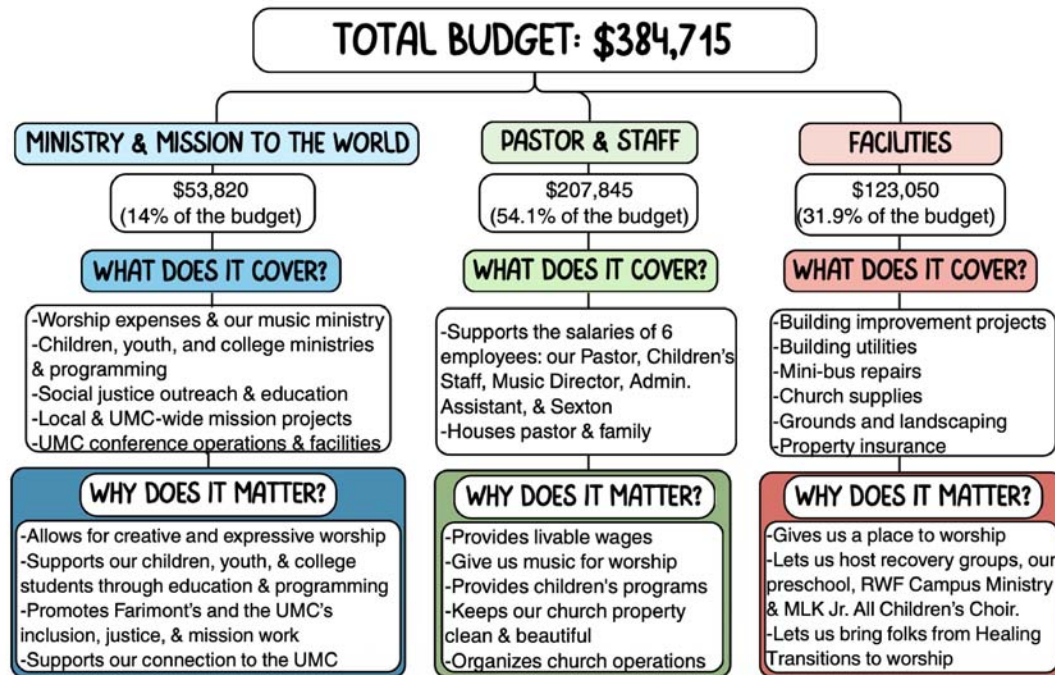
In the late 60s as the US grappled with unrest and protest around issues such as the Vietnam war, racial injustice, women's rights, and environmental protection, Bob Thiele and George David Weiss wrote the lyrics to the song "What a Wonderful World" specifically for Louis Armstrong. They thought he was uniquely gifted with his raspy and comforting voice to share the message that "the world really is great" and "full of love" at a particularly tense time for the US. In the last verse, Armstrong sings,

"I hear babies cry,
I watch them grow.
They'll learn much more,
Than I'll ever know.
And I think to myself,
What a wonderful world"

Children's joy, wonder, and love of the world around them offer us, as adults, a glimpse of heaven here on earth. I see examples here at Fairmont when I am helping with the nursery or Children's church. There is the joy of preschoolers singing and dancing to their favorite songs (currently "Three Little Birds" and "Pink Pony Club" are topping the charts) or giggling at an unexpected word like "quandary." Our elementary and middle school-aged children have created flower arrangements on Mother's Day and decorated candy canisters on Father's Day to express their love and gratitude to adults in their lives who care for them. They've written thank you cards to church members, decorated banners of encouragement for firefighters and first responders, and composed letters to our legislators. During discussions, they actively wonder about the world around them, asking questions about difficult or complex issues, such as a news story they overheard about the Palestinian people. It is a wonderful world to be in a space where children feel comfortable bringing and expressing their authentic selves as they grow and build their understanding of faith.

Teresa Leavens

FAIRMONT UMC'S FINANCES: WHERE DOES IT ALL GO?



PLEDGING LEVELS



YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPORT FAIRMONT UMC IN LOVING GOD, WORSHIPPING JOYFULLY, ADVOCATING FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, EMBRACING DIVERSITY, AND SERVING WITH A CHRIST-LIKE COMPASSION. WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

THERE ARE 3 WAYS TO SUBMIT YOUR 2026 ESTIMATE OF GIVING

1. Scan this QR code
2. Visit fairmontumc.org and go to "giving"
3. Turn in the estimate of the giving card during the offering



Our Mission
 to love God, worship joyfully,
 advocate for peace and justice, embrace diversity
 and serve with Christ-like compassion.