

THE LINK

FAIRHOPE UMC'S MONTHLY JOURNAL

JANUARY 2026



AUTHENTIC INTELLIGENCE

JANUARY 4-FEBRUARY 8, 2026

Our world is changing faster than ever, and the questions we ask about technology are no longer just practical—they're deeply personal and spiritual. How do we live faithfully in a world where information is abundant, change is constant, and clarity can feel hard to find?

In this series, we'll look to Scripture as a source of enduring wisdom. The Bible doesn't just give answers—it forms us into people of character who can discern what is good and live faithfully amid complexity and change.

Rather than responding with fear, this series offers a hopeful and empowering vision for navigating our technological age with steadiness and grace. Together, we'll explore the ancient cardinal virtues and conclude by celebrating the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love—gifts that ground us in God's unchanging truth.

KEY JANUARY EVENTS

BIBLICAL
STORYTELLING W/
RITA SWEATT

JAN 7

VISITOR & NEW MEMBER
WELCOME DINNER

JAN 15

RISE AGAINST HUNGER
SERVE SUNDAY

JAN 18

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FROM PASTOR MICHAEL

Sometimes we can't talk about the Good News without talking about "the news," and no topic is more prevalent in our news than the ever-changing technologies of algorithms, artificial intelligence, and the computers we carry and wear every day.

Our culture's conversation about technology has moved beyond lifehacks and how-to tips. The most pressing questions we now ask about technology are existential—and even spiritual—in nature. Will technology take our jobs? How do we raise children in a world that seems to change faster than we can understand it? What does truth mean when information is endless but trust feels scarce?

These questions reveal something important: we cannot navigate this moment simply by memorizing rules or mastering the latest apps. Technology evolves far faster than any set of guidelines we could write. What we need instead is something older, deeper, and more durable. We need wisdom.

Wisdom is not about having all the answers. It is about learning how to do the right thing in unprecedented conditions. Wisdom forms our character, shapes our habits, and trains us to discern what is good when the path forward is unclear. That is good news for the church, because cultivating wisdom has always been at the heart of who we are.

The Bible itself is, at its core, a wisdom book. Scripture does more than give us information; it forms us. Through stories, commandments, poetry, and parables, God shapes us into people who can live faithfully amid complexity and change. In our upcoming worship series, Authentic Intelligence, we will explore how Scripture mentors us in acquiring wisdom for a technological age, forming our character so we can discern what is truly good and how to pursue it together.

Importantly, this series is not rooted in fear. We are not here to scaremonger or reject the modern world. Instead, our hope is to offer a faithful and empowering vision for navigating change with constancy, courage, and virtue. Over the first four weeks, we will focus on the ancient "cardinal virtues," habits of life that help us respond wisely in uncertain times. In the final sermon, we will celebrate the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love—gifts that will remain essential to our lives when everything else has become obsolete.

In many ways, this is a conversation Fairhope United Methodist Church is already putting into practice. We nurture wisdom every time we gather for worship and open ourselves to God's transforming Word. We practice wisdom in Sunday school classes, small groups, and Bible studies where questions are welcomed and faith is deepened in community. We encounter wisdom through intergenerational relationships, where experience and curiosity meet, and through acts of service that help us love our neighbors thoughtfully and well. Wisdom is not something we add on; it is something God is already cultivating among us.

This season also invites us to deepen that work through Discovery on January 23-25 as our older youth pass on their wisdom to our junior high students, and the entire church. Discovery is a perfect example of what it means to seek wisdom by choosing formation over reaction in our spiritual growth.

We are especially grateful that this season of wisdom-seeking will be marked by a unique opportunity in worship. On February 1, we will welcome Bishop Jonathan Holston to Fairhope UMC. His presence reminds us that we are part of something larger than ourselves, a connectional church seeking God's wisdom together across communities and generations.

In a world overflowing with information, wisdom remains God's gracious gift to guide us. We invite you to lean into this season with curiosity, hope, and trust, confident that the Spirit who has guided the church for centuries is still at work, forming us for faithful living today.

Michael

COMING SOON...

Weekly

Sundays

8:30am Traditional Worship
9:45am Sunday School
11am Traditional Worship
11am The Gathering Worship

Mondays

9:15am Walk & Talk with Jesus
10am Knit or Crochet
3pm Grief Support Group
5pm UPWARD BBall Practice

Tuesdays

9:30am Fruit of the Spirit Study
5pm UPWARD BBall Practice
6pm Handbell Choir

Wednesdays

9am TJ's Food Ministry
1:30pm Dr. Ann's Bible Study
4:15pm Lighthouse Kids' Choir
5pm Wednesday Night Supper
6pm PIER Kids & SWIFT
6pm Salt Students
6pm Adult Choir
6pm Deep Dive Drop-In Study

THURSDAYS

9am TJ's Food Ministry
5pm UPWARD BBall Practice

FRIDAYS

9:30am Reservation Nursery
11am - 1pm Community Cafe

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR
LOCATIONS, DETAILS,
AND SIGNUPS



January

JAN 1-2

Church Office & CLC Closed

JAN 4

KidsMin Poptarts & Pajamas

JAN 5

6pm Stephen Ministry

JAN 6

9:30am Caregiver's Support Group
9:30am Fruit of the Spirit Begins

JAN 7

5:45pm Biblical Storytelling:
Rita Sweatt

JAN 11

Deadline for College Scholarships
9:45am Coffee with the Pastors
2pm District Conference/ Leadership

JAN 12

9:30am MOMCO
6:30pm Survivors of Suicide

JAN 13

12:30pm Tough Dogs Support
1:30pm Chemo Care Bag

JAN 14

Wednesday Night Suppers Resume

JAN 15

6pm Visitor & New Member Dinner

JAN 18

9am Serve Day @ Rotary Youth
4:30pm 39th Annual Baldwin County
MLK Clergy & Spouses Dinner

JAN 19

6pm Stephen Ministry

JAN 20

9:30am Caregiver's Support Group
6pm Anchored in Hope

JAN 23-25

Discovery Weekend

JAN 26

6:30pm Survivors of Suicide

JAN 27

12:30pm Tough Dogs Support

JAN 30-Feb 1

Kids' Winter Retreat @ Blue Lake

Looking Ahead

FEB 1

Guest Preacher:
Bishop Jonathan Holston

FEB 2

9:30am Quarterly Birthday
Celebration
6pm Stephen Ministry

FEB 3

9:30am Caregiver's Support Group

FEB 8

9:45 am Coffee with the Pastors
6pm Vesper Service

FEB 9

6:30pm Survivors of Suicide

FEB 10

12:30pm Tough Dogs Support
1:30pm Chemo Care Bag

FEB 15

8:30am & 11am Jazz Sunday (S)
9:45am Jazz & Pancake Brunch (FH)

FEB 16

6pm Stephen Ministry

FEB 17

9:30am Caregiver's Support Group

FEB 18

Ash Wednesday

FEB 23

6:30pm Survivors of Suicide

FEB 24

12:30pm Tough Dogs Support

FEB 27-28

Created By God: Wonderfully Made

S= Sanctuary
TG= The Gathering
FH= Fellowship Hall



DISCIPLESHIP

ADULT MINISTRIES

Dr. Kristen Curtis Wright, Associate Pastor

☎ 251-928-1148 , ext. 261

✉ kristen.wright@fairhopeumc.org

In John 1:39, Jesus extends one of the simplest invitations in Scripture: "Come and See."

Jesus says this to two disciples who had first been following John the Baptist. They've just heard John point to Jesus and call him the Lamb of God, and their curiosity is stirred. They begin trailing behind Jesus, not with confidence, but with tentative steps, unsure of what they're getting into and still trying to figure out who Jesus really is. When Jesus turns and sees them, he doesn't question their motives or test their readiness. He doesn't give them a lecture or a list of expectations about discipleship. He doesn't ask them to prove anything. He simply invites them to come closer. Come and see. Come spend time. Come as you are.

It is an invitation that creates space. Space to ask questions. Space to belong before everything makes sense.

Christian hospitality begins the same way. It's not about polished presentations or perfect plans; it's about helping people feel seen, known, and loved. It's the ministry of saying, "There's room for you here." When we practice that kind of hospitality, we reflect the heart of Jesus: the One who invites people to come and see what a life of faith is all about.

In that same spirit, we want to create a space where people can come and see who we are, meet one another, and feel at home. On January 15, we will host a Welcome Dinner for new members and for visitors who have been worshipping with us and would like to learn more about our community before taking the next step. Member Cheri Forte shares her experience below:

"The dinner is designed to enlighten new members on ways to become involved in the life of the church while socializing with other new members and getting to know our staff. If you are contemplating joining this dinner is a great next step."

I can testify that this dinner had a direct impact on my impression of the tremendous job FUMC is doing providing ministries for all age groups and to the community as a whole. Getting to hear each staff member speak on all that is going on in Music Ministry, Adult, Children, & Student Ministries, Missions, Outreach, Recreation, and Caring Ministries, I knew I wanted to use my time and talent by becoming an active member of FUMC. After the presentation you can pick up brochures on all the ministries and sign up to volunteer. I found my interest was in Evangelism and serve by writing visitor notes, welcoming new members, taking new member & baptism photos and by helping out at Welcome Dinners."

Hope you attend the dinner and experience the joy I feel by becoming an active member."
-Cheri Forte, Evangelism and Hospitality

Come and see!

Kristen

STUDENT MINISTRIES

Miles Barnhardt, *Director of Student Ministries*

☎ 251-928-1148 , ext. 243

✉ students@fairhopeumc.org

WEEKLY

ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY
9:45am-10:45am | Sunday School

TUESDAY
6:45am-7:35am | Breakfast Club

WEDNESDAY
6:00pm-7:45pm | WN Youth

4TH SUNDAY
6:00pm-8:00pm | 4th Sunday Night

DISCOVERY

As the new year begins the Youth Department is moving full speed ahead toward one of our most anticipated events of the year: Discovery! This weekend serves as a vital cornerstone for our church community as it brings students together to experience the power of collective worship and shared faith. It is a unique time where our students have the opportunity to lead and be led by one another and our church as a whole. There's no better way to kick off 2026 than being a part of Discovery!

Check out what two of our Students had to say:

"To me, Discovery means opening the door for Jesus. All my life, I knew that Jesus loved me, but at Discovery, I feel like I learned how to love him with my whole heart. Jesus is knocking at the door to our lives, and at Discovery, I let him in. My relationship with God would not be the same today without Discovery Weekend!" - Lucy Martin

"Discovery allowed so many of my friendships to flourish. People in my C-Groups went from familiar faces to best friends in and outside of church. The weekend acted as a catalyst that grew into so much more! I've made so many connections and invaluable memories that I will hold with me forever."
- Colin Richardson

Discovery takes place **January 23rd-25th**. Make sure your student is signed up!



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Jenna Hood, *Director of Children's Ministries*

☎ 251-928-1148 , ext. 227

✉ jenna.hood@fairhopeumc.org

BEGIN AGAIN: A NEW YEAR WITH JESUS

Bible Words

"God's love never ends... **His mercies are new every morning.**" (Lamentations 3:22-23)

"**Teach us to number our days** so we become wise." (Psalm 90:12)

"**Forgetting what is behind**, I press on toward Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14)

A new year is like opening a fresh box of crayons ... so many colors and chances to try again! God doesn't ask us to be perfect. He promises new mercy every morning. That means when we mess up, we can tell the truth, ask for help, and begin again with Him.

Psalm 90 says to "number our days." That means our time matters. God can use normal moments like breakfast, car rides, or even bedtime, to grow our hearts. We don't need big, fancy plans. We need small, loving habits we do again and again.

Here are simple family rhythms for January:

- **Blessing at the Door:** Put a hand on a shoulder and say, "*God loves you and goes with you today.*" Kids can bless parents too!
- **Verse of the Week:** Write one short verse on a card. Read it at the table. Ask, "*What word do you notice?*"
- **Sorry & Start Over:** When voices get loud, try: "*I'm sorry for my words. Let's start again.*" Then take a deep breath together.
- **One Small Help:** Choose one quiet gift of love: hold the door, sit by a new kid, return the cart, feed the pet without being asked.
- **Sabbath Snack:** Pick a tiny time to rest each week. It could be tea and a story, a device-free walk, or singing one song to Jesus. Rest says, "*God is in charge; we can breathe.*"

Families, here's good news: Jesus isn't waiting at the finish line. He walks with you right now - on the playground, at practice, in your room, at church. When you feel proud, thank Him. When you feel worried, tell Him. When you make a mistake, remember His mercy is new this morning and the next one too.

Parents and grandparents, your steady presence is powerful. Your calm tone, quick forgiveness, and gentle prayers teach the gospel louder than any speech. Keep it simple. Keep it kind. Keep it going.

Family Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for new mercies and a new year. Teach our family to use our days wisely. Help us bless, read Your Word, say sorry, help others, and rest with You. When we mess up, remind us we can begin again because You love us. Lead us this year, one small step at a time. Amen.

THANK YOU

Children's Ministries would like to extend a huge "THANK YOU" to all of our volunteers that helped make our Breakfast at the Manger a success! Special thanks to Pastor Michael, Greg Tapscott, FM3, and our team of cooks; Michelle Graham, Emily Garner, Myra Hand, and Mary Corbitt for help setting up and decorating; all of our adult, youth, and SWIFT volunteers who led our games and stations! Last but not least, a big THANK YOU to our favorite, Santa!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Pier Kids & SWIFT Are Back!

K-6th Grades | Jan. 7 | 6:00-7:30pm

Wednesday night programming begins. WNS will resume January 14.

Elementary Winter Retreat

3rd-6th Grades | Jan. 30 – Feb 1st | Blue Lake Camp

Cost: \$140/camper | \$60 transportation fee

Registration closes Jan 5th. Chaperones needed.

VBS Volunteer Registration Opens

Youth & Adults | February 1

Come be a part of our biggest outreach event of the year, VBS! This year's theme is "Emerald Crossing," an Ireland-themed adventure through the 23rd Psalm. For questions or for help finding the right role to serve, contact Jenna, jenna.hood@fairhopeumc.org

Created by God: Wonderfully Made Body Education Workshop

5th-6th Graders | Feb 22, 28-29

Find out all details at www.fairhopeumc.org/createdbygod



CARING MINISTRIES

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

384 SERVING IN CARING MINISTRY

Thank you for your service, leadership and witness as you share your love of Christ.

CARE & NUTURE 1317

Grief Ministry

Journeying Through Grief is a set of four books sent to the families of members who have died this year. **54** books have been sent.

Prayer Ministry

Over **440** prayer chain, cards and prayer room prayers were offered. **Nine** Be Still & Know Prayer Service

Note Ministry

- **Assisted Living/Homebound**
517 notes were mailed to those living in facilities and are homebound.
- **Cancer Care**
22 notes were sent to new cancer patients connected to FUMC.
- **Military**
134 notes were sent to families of those serving in the military.
- **Hospital & Prayer Concerns**
116 notes mailed to those discharged from the hospital.
- **New Member Card Ministry**
34 notes sent to new member families.

CONNECTIONAL

CARE

3698

Bible Study

One Year Bible study was presented for 48 weeks this year. Over **29** individuals took advantage of this class. A short term study on Ruth was held in September with **30** individuals attending.

Birthday & Anniversary

Over **1892** birthday calls & **390** anniversary calls were made conveying good wishes & congratulations.

Flower Ministry

Altar flowers created **52** bouquets shared with our church family.

Home Visits

82 home visits were made this year.

Hospital Visits

436 hospital visits to those in Baldwin & Mobile Counties.

In-Home Communion

90 individuals received communion at home this year.

Member Outreach

Throughout the year Caring Ministries has mailed cards and made home deliveries to remain connected to our **697** church families.

Dr. Ann Pearson, Director of Caring Ministries

251-928-1148 , ext. 230 | ann.pearson@fairhopeumc.org

6534 FOOD MINISTRIES

Bread of Life

243 soups & casseroles were made and given to those experiencing crisis situations.

Funeral Food

Luncheons/Reception were prepared and served for 20 members families.

Lord's Pantry

Over 135 individuals received food from the Lord's Pantry.

TJ's Food Ministry

In cooperation with AUC: 5236

Summer distribution: June 150, July 250

Thanksgiving turkeys: 500



COMMUNITY OUTREACH 911

Country Living Devotional

A devotional is given each Tuesday at Country Place Senior Living with 15 residents attending weekly.

Durable Medical Loan Closet

Over 225 pieces of equipment have been loaned out this year. They have also supplied adult diapers, nutrition drinks as well as other items to home health organizations.

Knit/Crochet for a Purpose

Supports ministries within the church and community. The team has created 308 items including blankets, shawls, lap robes, chemo hats, pillows, scarves, crosses.

Tough Dogs/Tough Pups Cancer Care

This group has provided support and comfort to adults and children with cancer and sickle cell anemia at Baldwin and Mobile cancer centers.



365 Adult & Child Comfort Bags

were assembled and given out in 2025.

10 gas cards were distributed to USA Hope Center cancer patients. 2 grants were awarded to individuals going through cancer treatments.

1752 COMMUNITY OFFERINGS

Caregivers Support Group - 480 attendees

Seeking Peace Grief Group - 720 attendees

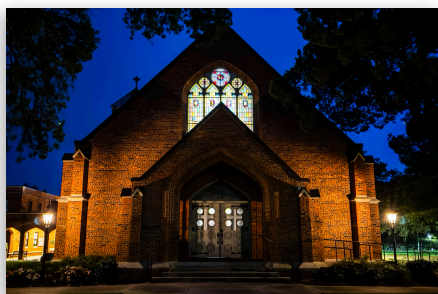
Survivors of Suicide - 360 attendees

Tough Dogs Cancer Support Group - 192 attendees



NEW STAIN GLASS WINDOW LIGHTING

In 2025, The church was blessed to receive lighting of the sanctuary from those who donated to Caring Ministries through honorariums and memorials.



SERVING MINISTRIES 639

Counseling Services

Weekly spiritual and encouraging support was made available for our members and community. 123 church and community members took advantage of this offering.

Stephen Ministries

Stephen Ministers provided weekly confidential meetings with their care receivers and bi-monthly Stephen Minister supervision classes. 516 care receiver meetings and Stephen Minister supervisions took place this year.

WORSHIP MINISTRIES

Tom Hood, Director of Worship & Music Ministries

☎ 251-928-1148, ext. 228

✉ tom.hood@fairhopeumc.org

Listening for God's Voice Between the Notes

Music has a unique way of inviting us into worship beyond words. Through melody, harmony, and rhythm, our hearts are opened to prayer and reflection in ways that spoken language alone often cannot accomplish. In worship, music creates space for attentiveness, reminding us that praise is not a one-way offering, but a holy conversation in which God speaks and we respond.

Scripture reminds us that God's voice is often heard in unexpected places. When Elijah encountered the Lord, it was not in the wind, earthquake, or fire, but in the sound of sheer silence. Music ministry teaches us a similar lesson. The rests between phrases, the quiet after a final chord, and even the freedom found in jazz improvisation can become sacred moments of listening. As we prepare for a special jazz service in the coming weeks, we are invited to experience how God's presence can be revealed through many musical expressions and styles.

Many opportunities exist in the coming year to be part of this shared ministry of listening and praise. Whether through Chancel Choir, Children's Choir, Praise Team, Handbells, or Youth Ensemble, each group offers a way to serve God and the church using the gifts we have been given. No matter the ensemble or style, every offering helps shape worship and encourages the congregation to listen more deeply for God's voice. As we gather week by week, may we bring both our voices and our hearts, trusting that God continues to meet us—often most clearly—between the notes.



RECREATION MINISTRIES

Jamie Waldhour, *Director of Recreation Ministries*

☎ 251-928-1148, ext. 249 ✉ jamie.waldhour@fairhopeumc.org



PLAY WITH PURPOSE



Fairhope UMC Upward Basketball 2025-26 Season

The 2025-26 Upward Basketball season at Fairhope United Methodist Church has been an exciting and meaningful journey for our church and community. With more than 200 players on the court and 30+ volunteer coaches investing their time and hearts, our gym is full of energy, encouragement, and purpose. Over the course of a game day or game week, more than 400 family members step onto our campus, turning each week into a vibrant gathering point for connection and community.

Upward Basketball at Fairhope UMC is about far more than learning the fundamentals of the game. Yes, our players are developing skills, teamwork, and confidence—but they are also learning about God’s enormous love for each of them. Every practice and game is an opportunity to grow both athletically and spiritually.

This season’s team devotionals have centered around the theme “Winning and Losing.” It’s a topic every athlete can relate to, and one that reaches well beyond the basketball court. Through Upward’s devotionals, players are discovering what the Bible teaches about competition, character, and perspective. Scripture challenges us to rethink what it truly means to win, reminding us that success isn’t just measured by the scoreboard. At the same time, athletes are learning that losing isn’t always a bad thing—it can build perseverance, humility, and trust in God.

As whistles blow and basketballs bounce, lives are being shaped in powerful ways. The 2025-26 Upward Basketball season continues to be a place where faith, sports, and family come together, helping young athletes understand that whether they win or lose a game, they are deeply loved by God—and that is the greatest victory of all. 🏀✝️



MISSIONS MINISTRIES

Jennifer Myrick, *Director of Missions Ministries*

☎ 251-928-1148

✉ missions@fairhopeumc.org

I want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who supported our Christmas Outreach this year! Together, we were able to provide Christmas gifts to over **120** children and **20** elderly individuals in our community. Our “Angels” came from various locations, including Foley, Fairhope, Barnwell, and Baldwin Family Village. They ranged in age from 3 months old to over 70 years old. A special thank you goes to our youth and SWIFT programs for their efforts in shopping for several of our “Angels.”

In December, a small group of college students served in Costa Rica, December 14-18. We had the privilege of serving alongside the same ministry we serve in May. The Amor en la Calle ministry serves over **1700** “Angels” during the Christmas season. They organize Christmas parties in rural areas of Costa Rica and extend their reach into Nicaragua. Because of your generous support, we were also able to assist “Angels” in Costa Rica and on the Nicaraguan border by providing clothing to over **20** children. Additionally, the team prepared numerous bags of candy to be distributed.

To conclude our SNAP outreach, food boxes, along with turkeys and hams, were given to **28** families at Summerdale Elementary School. Furthermore, **45** \$50 gift cards were provided to families in need at Fairhope West Elementary.

The list goes on and on! I am reminded of Luke 12:48, which states, “To whom much was given, much will be required.” The Lord has given us so much and therefore, He has trusted us to do the same for others. This congregation continues to answer the call to meet the needs of others. We are incredibly grateful for the selfless hearts of this church family!

Much Love,

Jennifer



RISE AGAINST HUNGER MEAL PACKING EVENT

JANUARY 17TH & 18TH!

We are so excited to partner once again with **Rise Against Hunger** for our upcoming meal packing event! Together with Trinity Presbyterian and local Rotary Clubs we plan to package **50,000** meals! All ages are invited to participate! Fairhope UMC has participated in this event several times over the years. It is a wonderful event to serve alongside each other to help those with food insecurities around the world.

The cost of each meal is \$.40

Will you help us reach our goal? If each member here at Fairhope UMC gives **\$5-\$50**, we will far exceed our goal!

Here is what you need to know about the event:

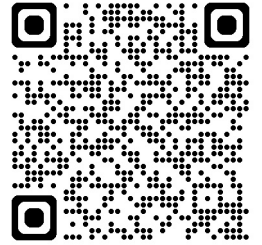
Who can help? All Ages- You can register to volunteer by scanning the QR CODE or click on the link: <https://riseagainsthunger.org/register/?id=701Pj00000nE4ynIAC>

When is the event? Saturday, January 17th & Sunday, January 18th, 9:00am-2:00pm
* We are asking Sunday School Classes to come serve together!

Where is the event? Fairhope Rotary Youth Club, 19128 Young St, Fairhope, AL

Does it cost anything to participate? No! BUT we would love for you to help cover the costs of the meals! Each meal is **\$.40**! Donations can be made to Fairhope UMC! You can write a check or make a contribution online. Please add Rise Against Hunger on the memo!

Need more info? Feel free to contact Jennifer Myrick or Jon Macklem missions@fairhopeumc.org





ADMINISTRATIVE

COMMITTEE REPORTS

TRUSTEES

Submitted by Jennifer Jones

If, during that rainy Sunday morning in early December, you felt a drop of water hit your head as you walked from the Breezeway, under the Bell Tower, and into the Sanctuary or took the back entrance into the Choir Loft, that's not because of a roof leak. The rain water is seeping through the brick of the Bell Tower and the adjacent walls. Thankfully, our Trustees already had a repair plan underway. At our November meeting, the Board of Trustees approved another phase of masonry repair and weatherization that will include the Bell Tower, the Conference Room/Offices, the east and west walls of the Sanctuary, and the walls on both sides of the Breezeway. This work is scheduled to begin in mid-February.

Also, the Trustees scheduled a church-wide work day for the afternoon of Sunday, March 1st. There will be tasks, big and small, all over our church buildings and grounds. As the date gets closer, please be on the lookout for sign-ups. Many hands make the work light!



FINANCE

Submitted by Allen Mitchell

The good news for December is that we received over \$300,000 from the IRS for our Employee Retention Credits that we filed for during COVID. Last year we received \$50,000, and we will probably receive an additional \$80,000 in 2026 to complete our request.

As reported last month, our financial position is good as of the end of October. Our income is a little ahead of last year, and we are on track to finish the year with a slight surplus. We are slightly ahead of projected receipts and well under projected spending.

If you have not submitted your 2026 pledge, please do so as soon as possible so that we can finalize our plans for next year. We have received more pledge dollars with a fewer number of pledges. We would welcome additional pledges to help meet our proposed increase in spending. The Board of Stewards approved the Finance Committee recommended 2026 Budget. That budget called for deficit spending in the amount of \$149,000 to make urgent repairs to our building. We previously had enough in reserves to cover the deficit, but now, with the ERC funds, we will have an even larger reserve going into 2026.

We look forward to our 2026 Capital Campaign to retire our debt in order to be able to fund needed repairs and replacements on our buildings over the next ten years.

As always the Finance Committee is appreciative of the faithful giving of our members.

SPR

Submitted by Noah Funderburg

Thanks to sustaining pledges and generous gifts, we were able to include salary increases for our staff—providing appropriate raises for the first time in several years. In addition, all staff received love offering bonuses, for which the Staff-Parish Relations Committee is deeply grateful. We are blessed with a hard-working, dedicated staff, and we give thanks for the generosity that makes this support possible.



CELEBRATIONS

NEW FACES, NEW FRIENDS...

We're thrilled to welcome the newest members of our Fairhope UMC family! Every new face is a reminder of God's grace and the joy of growing together in community. We can't wait to walk alongside them in worship, service, and fellowship.

Join us in celebrating and praying for these wonderful new members—may their journey here be marked by love, purpose, and deep joy!



Valerie Cowles
Joined on December 7, 2025



**Mae Elizabeth Case
Collins Bane Case, Jr.**
baptized on December 28, 2025
Parents are Lauren & Collins Case.
Big sister is Lillie.

HONORARIUMS & MEMORIALS

We are deeply grateful for the gifts given in honor or in memory of loved ones. Your generosity blesses our church family and helps build a lasting legacy of faith and love.

In Honor of:

Patti Hanafourde (Cancer Care Angels)

by Linda Richardson

Myra Warren (Caring Ministries)

by Mona Lester

In Memory of:

Bill Beard (Caring Ministries)

by Cecelia & Billy Howell

by Mary & Van Finger

Marsha Kimmitt (Caring Ministries)

by Mona Lester

01.07.26

RITA SWEATT SPEAKS

hosted by Caring Ministries



AN EVENING WITH RITA SWEATT
A MONOLOGUE & CONVERSATION ON RUTH
WEDNESDAY, JAN 7 | 5:45PM | FELLOWSHIP HALL

*Come hear Ruth's story—and discover
the hope God is still writing in yours.*

**SCAN QR CODE TO
REGISTER!**



Fairhope UMC | 155 S Section St | Fairhope, AL