

# **Fayetteville, Georgia: A Demographic Analysis for Strategic Ministry Planning (2015-2035)**

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## **1. Introduction**

This report provides a comprehensive demographic analysis of the municipality of Fayetteville, Georgia, designed to inform strategic decision-making for church leadership. It examines population dynamics, racial and ethnic shifts, age structure, socioeconomic conditions, lifestyle patterns, educational landscape, and religious affiliation over the past decade (approximately 2015-2025), incorporating projections through 2035 where available. The analysis draws upon data primarily from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates <sup>1</sup>, population estimates <sup>5</sup>, county-level projections from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) <sup>7</sup>, religious adherence data from the 2020 U.S. Religion Census via THEARDA.com <sup>9</sup>, and school rating information from sources like Niche.com and GreatSchools.<sup>11</sup> The primary objective is to evaluate these demographic trends and characteristics to identify strategic implications for church outreach, ministry focus, community engagement, and potential approaches to establishing new congregations aimed at reaching religiously unaffiliated populations within Fayetteville.

## **2. Population Dynamics & Diversity**

Fayetteville has experienced significant demographic shifts over the past decade, characterized by steady growth and rapidly increasing diversity, alongside a notable aging trend. Understanding these core population dynamics is fundamental for aligning ministry efforts with the community's evolving composition.

### **2.1 Population Growth Trends**

Fayetteville's population has grown consistently, reflecting broader trends in Fayette County and the Atlanta metropolitan region. The city's population increased substantially from 15,945 in the 2010 Census to 18,957 in the 2020 Census, an 18.9% rise.<sup>17</sup> This followed decades of even more rapid growth, transforming Fayetteville from a small town of roughly 2,700 residents in 1980.<sup>17</sup> More recent estimates suggest continued growth, with the population reaching 19,364 according to 2023 ACS 5-year data <sup>18</sup> and an estimated 20,083 as of July 1, 2023.<sup>6</sup> World Population Review projects a 2025 population of 20,793, indicating ongoing annual growth.<sup>20</sup>

This growth mirrors Fayette County's trajectory, which saw its population increase by 14.1% between 2010 (106,938) and 2022 (122,030), outpacing both state (12.4%) and

national (7.7%) growth rates during that period.<sup>21</sup> Short-term county estimates from ARC show steady increases year-over-year from 119,194 in 2020 to 125,384 in 2024.<sup>7</sup> This consistent influx of new residents underscores the need for churches to have robust welcoming, outreach and evangelism, and integration strategies.

## **2.2 Racial and Ethnic Composition**

Perhaps the most striking demographic trend in Fayetteville is its rapid diversification. While Fayette County was predominantly White (non-Hispanic) in 2010 (67.7%), by 2022 this share had dropped to 57.4%.<sup>21</sup> The city of Fayetteville reflects an even more pronounced shift. As of the 2020 Census, the city was approximately 44.1% Black or African American (non-Hispanic) and 38.5% White (non-Hispanic).<sup>17</sup> More recent 2023 estimates (ACS 2019-2023) show White alone at 40.7% (39.6% non-Hispanic) and Black or African American alone at 40.7%.<sup>6</sup> Other sources using slightly different methodologies place the Black or African American population at 39-40.7% and the White population at 40.6-40.7%.<sup>18</sup>

Other significant groups include Asian residents (4.3%<sup>6</sup> to 4.27%<sup>20</sup>), those identifying as Two or More Races (7.6%<sup>6</sup> to 7.57%<sup>20</sup>), and Hispanic or Latino residents (of any race), comprising 5.9%<sup>6</sup> to 7.06%<sup>17</sup> of the population. The growth in the Black (non-Hispanic) population has been particularly significant in Fayette County, increasing by over 11,000 people between 2010 and 2022.<sup>21</sup>

This dramatic shift towards a multi-ethnic community, where no single group holds a majority, has profound implications. Effective ministry requires moving beyond acknowledging diversity to actively cultivating multicultural competency, representation, and inclusion within the church's leadership, worship, and programs. Outreach strategies must be tailored to resonate with various cultural backgrounds present in the community.

## **2.3 Age Distribution**

Fayetteville exhibits an aging population trend, consistent with county and regional patterns. As of 2023 estimates, persons 65 years and over constitute 22.9% of the city's population, a significantly higher proportion than those under 18 years (20.7%) or under 5 years (5.0%).<sup>6</sup> The median age in Fayetteville is around 43.8 years<sup>20</sup>, notably higher than the Atlanta metro area (37) and Georgia overall (37.4).<sup>18</sup>

County-level data further illustrates this aging trend. Between 2010 and 2022, the 65+ age group in Fayette County grew by a remarkable 77.8%, while the 35-49 age group declined by 8.5%.<sup>21</sup> The share of the county population aged 65 and older increased

from 12.9% in 2010 to 20.1% in 2022.<sup>21</sup> This demographic shift necessitates a strategic focus on ministries serving older adults, addressing needs such as healthcare support, social connection, transportation, and pastoral care for those who may be less mobile. Simultaneously, engaging younger families remains crucial, but the growing senior cohort represents a major and expanding ministry field.

## **2.4 Foreign-Born Population**

Approximately 8.6% of Fayetteville's population is foreign-born, according to 2019-2023 ACS data.<sup>6</sup> This is lower than the rate for the Atlanta metro area (14.8%) but slightly below the state average (10.8%).<sup>18</sup> The origins of the foreign-born population are diverse, with significant shares from Latin America (51%), Asia (38%), Africa (5%), and Europe (5%).<sup>18</sup> This diversity within the foreign-born segment suggests that outreach efforts targeting immigrant communities may need to be nuanced, potentially involving multiple languages and cultural approaches. Understanding the specific needs and backgrounds of these residents can inform targeted support services and culturally relevant ministry initiatives.

## **3. Socioeconomic & Lifestyle Profile**

Fayetteville presents a profile of relative affluence and high educational attainment, coupled with a strong family orientation reflected in its highly-rated school system. However, beneath the surface, there are indicators of economic pressure, significant commuting burdens, and diverse household structures that shape the daily lives and needs of residents.

### **3.1 Income and Poverty**

Fayetteville generally exhibits higher income levels and lower poverty rates compared to state and regional averages. The median household income (2019-2023) was \$82,144<sup>6</sup>, exceeding the Georgia median (\$74,664) but slightly below the Atlanta metro area median (\$86,338).<sup>18</sup> Per capita income was \$42,080.<sup>6</sup> Income distribution shows a substantial middle-to-upper-middle class presence: 30% of households earn between \$50K-\$100K, 33% between \$100K-\$200K, and 10% over \$200K annually.<sup>18</sup> Married-couple families report a significantly higher median income (\$127,390).<sup>20</sup>

The poverty rate in Fayetteville is relatively low at 7.1%<sup>6</sup> or 7.07%.<sup>20</sup> This is considerably lower than the Atlanta metro area (11%) and roughly half the state rate (13.5%).<sup>18</sup> While indicating general economic health, this overall low rate can mask pockets of need. Ministries should remain attuned to supporting households experiencing financial hardship, potentially through benevolence funds, financial literacy programs, or partnerships with local aid organizations. The relative affluence also suggests a

capacity for generosity and resource mobilization within the community.

### **3.2 Educational Attainment**

The population of Fayetteville is highly educated. An impressive 95.8% of adults aged 25 and older hold a high school diploma or higher, and 37.7% possess a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>6</sup> This college attainment rate is above the Georgia average (34.2%) but slightly below the Atlanta metro area (41.5%).<sup>18</sup> The breakdown shows 25% with a high school diploma as their highest level, 33% with some college or an associate's degree, 23% with a bachelor's degree, and 14% with a post-graduate degree.<sup>18</sup>

This high level of education suggests a population that may value intellectual engagement and reasoned discourse. Discipleship programs could cater to this by offering in-depth theological studies, apologetics resources, and forums for discussing complex faith and life issues. Outreach efforts might benefit from approaches that engage thoughtfully with contemporary questions and worldviews.

### **3.3 Household Composition and Housing**

Fayetteville maintains a strong family orientation, though household structures are varied. The average household size is 2.47 persons.<sup>6</sup> In 2020, there were 6,833 households, with 4,833 classified as families (two or more related people living together).<sup>17</sup> Marital status data (ACS 2023 5-yr) shows 47% of the population is married, but significant portions have never married (34% M, 29% F), are divorced (11% M, 17% F), or widowed (3% M, 11% F).<sup>18</sup> The higher rates of divorce and widowhood among females are notable. Ministries need to cater to this diversity, offering support and community for singles, single parents, blended families, and widows/widowers.

Housing tenure is predominantly owner-occupied, with a homeownership rate of 68.0% (2019-2023)<sup>6</sup>, close to the national average. The median value of owner-occupied homes was \$331,700 in 2023, reflecting a 10.8% increase from the previous year.<sup>6</sup> Median monthly owner costs were \$1,974 with a mortgage and \$533 without.<sup>6</sup> The median gross rent was \$1,592.<sup>6</sup> While homeownership is high, the significant 32% renter population and rising property values point towards potential housing affordability challenges for some segments of the community. Churches can play a role by providing resources for renters, supporting affordable housing initiatives, or offering financial counseling. The high homeownership rate also suggests a degree of residential stability, potentially fostering longer-term community connections. A significant portion of residents have lived in their homes for many

years, though recent mobility is also evident (37% moved in since 2018).<sup>18</sup>

### 3.4 School System Quality

The Fayette County Public Schools system, serving Fayetteville, is highly rated and serves as a major draw for families moving to the area. Niche.com consistently ranks the district among the best in Georgia, placing it #4 out of 177 districts statewide in its most recent rankings.<sup>11</sup> The district receives an overall 'A' grade from Niche, with high marks for academics, teachers, and potentially diversity and safety.<sup>11</sup> The student-teacher ratio is favorable at 16:1.<sup>11</sup> State test scores indicate solid academic performance, with 59% of students proficient in math and 62% in reading.<sup>11</sup> The district itself highlights its high rankings<sup>23</sup> and has received state recognition from the Georgia Department of Education for achieving one of the highest graduation rates (91.5%) for students with disabilities in the metro Atlanta area and compared to similar-sized districts statewide.<sup>24</sup>

Individual school ratings within or serving Fayetteville show strong performance, though some variation exists. GreatSchools ratings and Niche grades provide specific benchmarks (see Table 3.1). Parent feedback is generally positive, praising teachers and academic standards.<sup>12</sup> However, reviews also surface nuances, including concerns about the consistency of support for students with learning disabilities<sup>12</sup> – an interesting counterpoint to the state's recognition of high graduation rates for this group.<sup>24</sup> Other feedback mentions desires for more resources in arts and band programs<sup>15</sup> or concerns about fostering a strong sense of diversity and community within certain schools.<sup>11</sup>

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**Table 3.1: Fayette County Public Schools Serving Fayetteville - Overview & Ratings**

School Name	Grades Served	Overall Rating (Niche/GS)	Key Strengths/Concerns (from sources)
<b>Elementary Schools</b>			
Spring Hill Elementary	PK-5	A (Niche) / 8/10 (GS)	Positive parent review 14

Fayetteville Elementary	PK-5	B (Niche) / 6/10 (GS)	12
Cleveland Elementary	PK-5	A- (Niche) / 5/10 (GS)	Positive parent review 12
Sara Harp Minter Elementary	PK-5	A (Niche) / 8/10 (GS)	12
Inman Elementary	PK-5	A (Niche) / 7/10 (GS)	Positive parent review 12
<b>Middle Schools</b>			
Whitewater Middle School	6-8	A (Niche) / 8/10 (GS)	Generally positive reviews, strong academics/teachers; some concerns re: special needs support, bullying <sup>12</sup>
Bennett's Mill Middle School	6-8	A- (Niche) / 8/10 (GS)	14
Flat Rock Middle School	6-8	A (Niche)	14
<b>High Schools</b>			
Fayette County High School	9-12	B+ (Niche) / 6/10 (GS)	Positive reviews on admin/counselors; desire for more student respect <sup>12</sup>
Whitewater High School	9-12	A (Niche) / 7/10 (GS)	Overall great school; desire for more arts/band resources, specific college prep classes <sup>12</sup>
Sandy Creek High	9-12	B+ (Niche)	Decent CTE

School			programs; needs more resources <sup>14</sup>
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*Note: Ratings sourced from Niche.com<sup>11</sup> and GreatSchools via Movoto/Zillow/Rocket.<sup>12</sup> Ratings can change; this reflects data available in snippets. Nearby higher-rated high schools like Starrs Mill (8/10 GS) and McIntosh (9/10 GS) are in Peachtree City but relevant for county context.<sup>12</sup> Private schools also operate in the area.<sup>12</sup>*

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The strong school system is undeniably a major asset attracting families to Fayetteville. However, it is not monolithic. Understanding the nuances of specific school feeder patterns, recognizing potential disparities, and being aware of specific needs voiced by parents (like special education advocacy or resource gaps) can inform targeted family outreach. Churches can position themselves as partners, offering support through tutoring, mentoring, supply drives, or teacher appreciation, thereby engaging with a central institution in the community's life.

### **3.5 Economic Base and Commuting**

Fayetteville residents participate actively in the labor force, with 56.2% of the population aged 16+ in the civilian labor force (49.6% for females) according to 2019-2023 ACS data.<sup>6</sup> Local employment saw slight growth between 2022 and 2023.<sup>19</sup> While specific city-level industry data is limited in the provided materials, broader county and regional data suggest key employment sectors likely include Professional & Business Services, Healthcare, Retail, Education, and Government.<sup>6</sup> Fayetteville itself shows significant economic activity in retail, healthcare, and accommodation/food services based on sales data.<sup>6</sup>

Commuting patterns reveal significant reliance on private vehicles and long travel times. A vast majority (81.8%) drive alone to work, with only 6.6% carpooling.<sup>19</sup> Public transit use is negligible.<sup>18</sup> However, a notable 10.3% work from home<sup>19</sup>, reflecting broader post-pandemic shifts. The mean travel time to work is 33.5 minutes<sup>6</sup>, considerably longer than the U.S. average (26.6 minutes)<sup>19</sup>, suggesting many residents commute outside the city or county for employment. Nearly 3% face "super commutes" exceeding 90 minutes.<sup>19</sup>

These commuting realities impose significant time pressures on working individuals and families, potentially limiting availability for weekday evening activities. Ministries may need to offer flexible scheduling, weekend options, or leverage online platforms to connect with busy commuters. The growing segment of remote workers presents a different dynamic – potentially more available during the day but perhaps facing

challenges of social isolation or work-life integration, representing a distinct group for connection and outreach efforts.

## **4. Religious Landscape & Worldview Outlook (Fayette County Focus)**

Understanding the religious composition of the community is vital for effective ministry strategy. Detailed religious affiliation data is most reliably available at the county level. This section utilizes data for Fayette County from the 2020 U.S. Religion Census, compiled by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies and accessible via THEARDA.com <sup>9</sup>, serving as a strong proxy for the City of Fayetteville.

### **4.1 Data Source and Scope**

The primary source for this section is the 2020 U.S. Religion Census data for Fayette County (FIPS code 13113).<sup>9</sup> This census attempts to count congregations and adherents for hundreds of participating religious bodies across the United States.<sup>10</sup> Adherent figures typically represent members, their children, and potentially other regular participants, though definitions can vary by group. It's important to note that not all religious groups participate, and counts for some (like Muslim estimates) are based on specific methodologies.<sup>10</sup>

### **4.2 Overall Adherence**

Fayette County demonstrates a high level of religious affiliation compared to many areas. In 2020, the total number of adherents claimed by participating religious bodies was 87,984.<sup>9</sup> Based on the county's 2020 population of 119,194, this represents an adherence rate of 73.8%.<sup>9</sup> This suggests that nearly three-quarters of the population have some connection, even if nominal, to a local religious congregation. This adherence rate is notably higher than some nearby counties, such as Douglas County (55.2%).<sup>29</sup>

### **4.3 Dominant Traditions**

The religious landscape of Fayette County is predominantly Christian but internally diverse, with strong representations from multiple major traditions:

- **Evangelical Protestant:** This is the largest religious tradition by a significant margin. Key groups include:
  - Southern Baptist Convention: 25,589 adherents (214.68 per 1,000 population)
  - Non-denominational Christian Churches: 13,650 adherents (114.52 per 1,000)

- Christian Churches and Churches of Christ: 3,283 adherents
- Churches of Christ: 1,131 adherents
- Presbyterian Church in America (PCA): 992 adherents
- Other Evangelical groups (Church of God - Cleveland TN, Seventh-day Adventist, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Assemblies of God, etc.) contribute thousands more adherents.<sup>9</sup>
- **Catholic:** The Catholic Church represents the single largest denomination, with 21,720 adherents (182.22 per 1,000 population) reported across 3 congregations.<sup>9</sup> This indicates a very substantial Catholic presence.
- **Mainline Protestant:** This tradition also has a significant footprint, led by:
  - United Methodist Church: 10,638 adherents (89.25 per 1,000 population)
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA): 861 adherents
  - Presbyterian Church (USA): 566 adherents
  - Episcopal Church: 328 adherents.<sup>9</sup>
- **Black Protestant:** Several historically Black denominations are present:
  - African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church: 554 adherents
  - National Missionary Baptist Convention: 300 adherents
  - Church of God in Christ (COGIC): 100 adherents.<sup>9</sup> (It is important to note that many Black residents may also attend congregations affiliated with SBC, Non-denominational, or other groups).
- **Other Groups:** Other significant religious communities include:
  - Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2,820 adherents
  - Jehovah's Witnesses: 2,024 adherents
  - Muslim Estimate: 1,398 adherents
  - Judaism (Reform): 170 adherents
  - Orthodox Christian (Greek, Coptic): ~170 adherents combined
  - Baha'i Faith: 54 adherents.<sup>9</sup> The presence of Hindu and Buddhist communities is noted in nearby counties<sup>29</sup> and data collection efforts include these groups<sup>10</sup>, suggesting they may also be present, albeit in smaller numbers, within Fayette County.

**Table 4.1: Religious Adherence in Fayette County (2020)**

Religious Tradition/Family	Major Denominations /Groups Included	Estimated Adherents	Adherence Rate (per 1,000 pop)	Approx. % of County Population
Evangelical Protestant	SBC, Non-denominational, Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, PCA, CoG (Cleveland), SDA, LCMS, AoG	~47,000+	~394+	~39.4%+
Catholic	Catholic Church	21,720	182.22	18.2%
Mainline Protestant	UMC, ELCA, PC(USA), Episcopal, Disciples of Christ	~12,400+	~104+	~10.4%+
Other Groups (LDS, JW)	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses	4,844	40.64	4.1%
Black Protestant	AME, National Missionary Baptist, COGIC	~950+	~8+	~0.8%+
Other Faiths	Muslim Estimate, Judaism, Orthodox Christian, Baha'i	~1,700+	~14+	~1.4%+
<b>Total Adherents</b>	<b>All Reporting Groups</b>	<b>87,984</b>	<b>738.1</b>	<b>73.8%</b>

Unaffiliated Estimate	Population not claimed by reporting groups	~31,210	~261.9	~26.2%
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Source: THEARDA.com, 2020 U.S. Religion Census data for Fayette County.<sup>9</sup> Adherent counts are estimates based on data reported by religious bodies. "+" indicates summation of listed groups within the category; actual totals for the tradition may be slightly higher if smaller groups are included. Unaffiliated estimate is calculated by subtracting total adherents from the 2020 county population (119,194).

#### 4.4 The Religiously Unaffiliated ("Unreached")

Despite the high overall adherence rate, a substantial portion of the population remains unaffiliated with the reporting religious bodies. Based on the 73.8% adherence figure <sup>9</sup>, approximately 26.2% of Fayette County residents were religiously unaffiliated in 2020. This translates to an estimated 31,200 individuals within the county – the primary population segment identified in the user query for targeted outreach.

This unaffiliated group is likely not monolithic. It encompasses individuals who identify as atheist or agnostic, those who consider themselves spiritual but not religious, people who have drifted from previous affiliation ("dones"), and those who simply have no background or interest in organized religion ("nones"). Given Fayetteville's demographic profile, this group likely includes individuals across all age ranges, racial/ethnic backgrounds, income levels, and educational strata. Reaching this diverse segment requires varied approaches that address different questions, needs, and barriers to engagement.

#### 4.5 Interpreting the Religious Mix and Worldview

Several key observations emerge from Fayette County's religious landscape:

- **Predominantly Christian, Internally Diverse:** While Christianity is the dominant faith expression, the significant presence of Evangelical, Catholic, Mainline, and Black Protestant traditions means there is no single, uniform Christian worldview or culture. These traditions have distinct theologies, worship practices, social stances, and organizational structures.
- **Strong Evangelical Influence:** The sheer number of adherents connected to Southern Baptist and Non-denominational churches suggests a considerable

Evangelical influence on the local culture and social fabric.<sup>9</sup> This often correlates with conservative social values and an emphasis on personal conversion and biblical authority.

- **Substantial Catholic Presence:** The large and concentrated Catholic population represents another major theological and cultural force within the community.<sup>9</sup> Understanding Catholic perspectives and structures is crucial for effective community engagement.
- **Rise of Non-Denominationalism:** The prominence of Non-denominational churches likely reflects national trends towards less hierarchical, contemporary worship styles, possibly attracting individuals from various backgrounds or those disaffected with traditional denominations.<sup>9</sup>
- **Significance of the Unaffiliated:** The large estimated number of unaffiliated residents (~26%, >31,000 people)<sup>9</sup> presents both a challenge and a significant opportunity for churches focused on outreach and evangelism. This group cannot be ignored or assumed to be hostile; many may simply be disconnected or seeking answers outside traditional religious institutions.
- **Growing Interfaith Context:** While smaller in number, the established presence of Muslim, Jewish, Latter-day Saint, and potentially Hindu and Buddhist communities<sup>9</sup> contributes to the overall worldview diversity. This necessitates interfaith awareness, respectful dialogue, and the ability to articulate Christian faith in a pluralistic environment.

This complex religious tapestry means that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to ministry or outreach is unlikely to succeed. Understanding the nuances between different Christian traditions can foster collaboration on shared community concerns, while recognizing the distinct beliefs and practices of non-Christian faiths is essential for respectful engagement. Strategies targeting the unaffiliated must be multifaceted, addressing the diverse reasons for non-affiliation within this large segment of the population.

## 5. Future Projections: Fayetteville/Fayette County Towards 2035

Projecting future demographic trends provides a crucial lens for long-range planning. This section utilizes county-level forecasts from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)<sup>7</sup>, the primary regional planning agency, as the best available indicator for Fayetteville's likely trajectory towards 2035. Older projections<sup>31</sup> offer historical context but may reflect different assumptions. It is important to remember that forecasts

inherently involve uncertainty.

### **5.1 Population Growth Projections**

ARC forecasts continued, albeit potentially moderating, growth for Fayette County. The official 2050 forecast projects a county population of 143,785, an increase of 24,591 residents (or 20.6%) from the 2020 population of 119,194.<sup>8</sup> This suggests an average annual growth rate slightly below 0.7% over the 30-year period.

Extrapolating this trend suggests that by 2035 (roughly halfway through the forecast period), Fayette County's population could reach approximately 131,500, representing an increase of about 12,300 people (or 10.3%) from 2020. While still representing steady growth, this pace is slower than the rapid expansion experienced in previous decades.<sup>17</sup> Short-term ARC estimates confirm ongoing annual increases.<sup>7</sup> This continued growth reinforces the need for churches to plan for serving a larger community and integrating newcomers.

### **5.2 Age Structure Shifts**

The most dramatic projected shift is the continued aging of the population. Regional ARC forecasts for the 21-county Atlanta area predict the population aged 75 and over will more than triple between 2020 and 2050, growing from 5% to 12% of the total population.<sup>8</sup> The 55-74 age group is also projected to see substantial growth.<sup>8</sup> Applying this powerful regional trend to Fayette County, which already has a high proportion of seniors<sup>6</sup>, indicates that the 65+ population share will increase significantly by 2035. While the absolute number of younger residents (0-22) may also grow regionally, their proportional share of the total population could decrease due to the faster growth among older age cohorts.<sup>8</sup> Strategic planning must prioritize resources and ministries tailored to the expanding needs and opportunities presented by a much larger senior population.

### **5.3 Increasing Diversity Projections**

The trend towards greater racial and ethnic diversity observed over the past decade is projected to continue. ARC forecasts that the 21-county Atlanta region will become majority-minority (nearly 62% non-White) by 2050.<sup>8</sup> Given that Fayetteville and Fayette County have already diversified rapidly<sup>6</sup>, it is highly probable that this trend will persist locally. By 2035, Fayetteville is likely to see further increases in its Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Multiracial populations, solidifying its status as a community with no single racial or ethnic majority group. Churches must prepare for a future where multicultural ministry is not just an initiative but integral to their identity and

operations.

#### 5.4 Socioeconomic and Lifestyle Evolution (Inferred)

While specific long-range forecasts for socioeconomic factors are less common, several trends can be reasonably inferred:

- Continued population growth will likely maintain pressure on housing costs and infrastructure.
- The aging population will drive increased demand for healthcare services, senior living options, and related support systems.
- Workforce dynamics may continue to evolve, with remote work likely remaining a significant factor for a portion of the population, influencing commuting patterns and daily schedules.
- The high value placed on education suggests attainment levels will likely remain high or potentially increase further.

Collectively, these projections paint a picture of Fayetteville in 2035 as a larger, significantly older, and even more racially and ethnically diverse community than it is today. Planning undertaken now must anticipate these shifts to ensure future relevance and effectiveness.

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**Table 5.1: Fayette County Population Projections Summary (2020-2035 Estimate)**

Year	Total Population (County Estimate/Projection)	Estimated Population 65+ (Number)	Estimated Population 65+ (Percent)	Estimated Non-White Population (Percent)
2020 (Actual)	119,194 <sup>8</sup>	~22,170	~18.6%	~37.8%
2025 (Estimate)	~126,500	~26,800	~21.2%	~40.5%
2030 (Estimate)	~129,000	~29,800	~23.1%	~43.0%
2035 (Estimate)	~131,500	~33,000	~25.1%	~45.5%

Notes: 2020 Actual Population from ARC.<sup>8</sup> 2020 Population 65+ estimated based on

2022 ACS data for county (20.1% <sup>21</sup>) applied to 2020 pop. 2020 Non-White % estimated based on 2022 county data (White Non-Hispanic 57.4% <sup>21</sup>, implying ~42.6% Non-White, adjusted slightly for 2020). Projections for 2025-2035 are linear interpolations based on ARC's 2020-2050 county population forecast <sup>8</sup> and applying accelerated aging and diversification trends consistent with regional forecasts <sup>8</sup> and recent local trends.<sup>6</sup> These are illustrative estimates subject to uncertainty.

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## 6. Strategic Implications & Recommendations for Church Leadership

The demographic analysis reveals a dynamic and evolving Fayetteville, presenting both challenges and significant opportunities for church ministry and outreach. The following strategic implications and recommendations are offered for consideration by leadership:

### 6.1 Targeted Outreach Opportunities

The data points to several key population segments requiring focused outreach strategies:

- **The Religiously Unaffiliated:** This large group (estimated at over 26% or 31,000+ in the county in 2020 <sup>9</sup>) should be a primary focus. Given the community's general affluence and high education levels <sup>6</sup>, effective outreach may involve:
  - **Community Service:** Demonstrating faith through tangible acts of service that meet community needs.
  - **Felt Needs Ministries:** Addressing practical life challenges such as parenting support, financial stress, loneliness, or navigating life transitions.
  - **Low-Barrier Entry Points:** Creating welcoming, non-intimidating environments like social events, interest-based groups, or accessible online content before introducing explicitly religious programming.
  - **Intellectual Engagement:** Offering forums for thoughtful discussion, apologetics, and exploring worldview questions relevant to an educated populace.<sup>6</sup>
- **Growing Ethnic Communities:** Intentional effort is needed to connect with the large and established Black/African American community <sup>6</sup> and the growing Hispanic/Latino <sup>6</sup> and Asian populations.<sup>6</sup> This requires:
  - **Cultural Competency:** Training for staff and leaders to understand and navigate cultural differences respectfully.
  - **Relationship Building:** Investing time in building trust and partnerships with

- leaders and organizations within these communities.
- **Contextualized Ministry:** Considering multi-lingual services, culturally relevant worship elements, or small groups tailored to specific cultural backgrounds (recognizing diversity within broader categories, e.g., various Latin American or Asian origins <sup>18</sup>).
- **Seniors (65+):** The rapid growth of this cohort <sup>6</sup> demands expanded ministry focus:
  - **Targeted Programming:** Daytime activities, Bible studies, and social events catering to retirees.
  - **Support Services:** Transportation assistance, pastoral care for homebound individuals or those in care facilities, support groups for caregivers.
  - **Intergenerational Connection:** Creating opportunities for meaningful interaction between seniors and younger generations.
- **Newcomers:** Significant in-migration <sup>18</sup> necessitates intentional welcome strategies:
  - **Systematic Integration:** Clear pathways for newcomers to connect, join small groups, find service opportunities, and feel part of the community.
  - **Welcome Events:** Regularly scheduled events specifically designed to welcome and orient new residents.
- **Renters and Housing-Stressed:** The sizable rental population (32% <sup>6</sup>) and rising housing costs <sup>19</sup> highlight potential vulnerability:
  - **Resource Connection:** Partnering with or providing information about local housing assistance programs.
  - **Practical Support:** Offering financial counseling or benevolence assistance where appropriate.

## 6.2 Ministry Alignment

Existing ministries should be evaluated and potentially adapted to better reflect the community's demographic realities:

- **Worship Services:** Assess whether current styles, music, and service times effectively engage the diverse population, including those with long commutes <sup>6</sup> or working from home.<sup>18</sup> Consider incorporating variety, multi-lingual elements where feasible, or exploring alternative service formats or times.
- **Discipleship:** Offer a wide range of small groups and learning opportunities catering to different life stages (seniors, singles <sup>18</sup>, young families, divorced individuals <sup>18</sup>), cultural backgrounds, and intellectual interests. The high education level <sup>6</sup> suggests an appetite for substantive teaching and discussion.
- **Family Ministry:** While supporting traditional families remains important given

the draw of the school system <sup>11</sup>, ensure programs are inclusive and supportive of diverse family structures (single-parent households, blended families, widowed individuals <sup>18</sup>). Address contemporary pressures like time scarcity due to commutes.<sup>6</sup>

- **Community Care:** Focus benevolence and service efforts on identified community needs, such as supporting lower-income households <sup>18</sup>, the growing senior population <sup>6</sup>, potentially immigrant communities <sup>6</sup>, or families navigating the school system's special needs resources.<sup>12</sup>

### 6.3 Community Engagement Pathways

Building bridges with the broader community is essential for visibility and impact:

- **Schools:** Leverage the positive reputation of Fayette County Public Schools <sup>11</sup> by partnering with specific schools. Focus efforts on schools serving diverse populations or those identified as having greater needs. Opportunities include volunteer tutoring/mentoring, teacher appreciation events, supply drives, or potentially facility use agreements. Remain sensitive to parent concerns regarding specific issues like special needs support.<sup>12</sup>
- **Local Government & Services:** Engage with city and county initiatives, particularly those related to senior services, diversity and inclusion efforts, or affordable housing advocacy.
- **Interfaith Dialogue:** Proactively build relationships with leaders from other significant faith communities (Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, Latter-day Saint, etc. <sup>9</sup>) to foster mutual understanding and explore potential collaboration on shared community concerns like poverty or social justice.
- **Civic Organizations:** Partner with established local non-profits that are already serving specific demographic groups or addressing key needs identified in this report (e.g., senior centers, immigrant support services, food banks).

### 6.4 New Congregation Considerations

The analysis suggests potential for starting new congregations to reach the unaffiliated and serve the growing, diverse population:

- **Need & Opportunity:** The large unaffiliated population (~26%+ <sup>9</sup>) combined with projected population growth <sup>8</sup> indicates a significant mission field and potential need for new faith communities.
- **Type and Focus:** A single, traditional church plant model may struggle to connect with the full spectrum of Fayetteville's diverse and segmented population. Consider a multi-pronged strategy involving various models:
  - *Micro-churches or House Churches:* Smaller, relational settings that may

appeal to those seeking authentic community or who are wary of larger institutions.

- *Culturally Specific Congregations*: Planting churches intentionally focused on reaching specific growing ethnic groups (e.g., Hispanic, various Asian communities, second-generation immigrants) in culturally resonant ways, potentially including native language services.
- *Service-Oriented/Need-Based Plants*: Churches formed around a core mission of addressing a specific community need (e.g., addiction recovery, foster care support, ministry among low-income residents).
- *Networked Model*: Establishing multiple smaller, contextually relevant congregations (perhaps geographically or demographically focused) that share resources, leadership development, and a common vision under a larger umbrella structure.
- **Location Strategy:** Analyze sub-city or neighborhood-level data (beyond the scope of provided snippets, if possible) to identify areas with high concentrations of target populations: unaffiliated residents, specific ethnic groups, renters<sup>6</sup>, or areas undergoing new residential development.

The increasing diversity and potential segmentation of Fayetteville's population suggest that a flexible and varied approach to church planting may be more fruitful than attempting a single, large-scale launch designed to appeal to everyone. Tailoring the model and focus to specific segments of the unreached population allows for more authentic connection and potentially greater long-term impact.

## 7. Conclusion

Fayetteville, Georgia, is a community undergoing significant transformation. While maintaining aspects of its suburban appeal, such as a highly-rated school system and relative affluence, it is rapidly becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, with no single majority group. The population is also steadily growing and aging considerably. The religious landscape reflects this complexity, showing high overall adherence dominated by diverse Christian traditions (Evangelical, Catholic, Mainline, Black Protestant) but also revealing a large and important segment of the population – over one-quarter – who are unaffiliated with any religious body.

For church leadership, this dynamic environment presents a clear call to strategic adaptation. Effectively engaging Fayetteville today and preparing for 2035 requires embracing multicultural ministry as a core value, expanding outreach to the growing senior population, developing nuanced strategies to connect with the large unaffiliated segment, and partnering actively with key community institutions like

schools. The opportunities for impact are substantial, particularly in reaching those disconnected from faith communities. A willingness to innovate, potentially through diverse models of church planting and community engagement tailored to specific demographic realities, will be crucial for fostering vibrant faith communities that reflect and serve the evolving tapestry of Fayetteville. Utilizing these demographic insights can empower leadership to make informed decisions, allocate resources effectively, and faithfully pursue their mission within this changing context.

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