

# INFORMED & inspired

CONNECTED AT FAYETTEVILLE FIRST UMC

## God's Favorite Thing

Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

There are many reasons we all have favorite things. Some of our favorite things remind us of our childhood. Some of our favorite things remind us of our loved ones who have passed on. Some of our favorite things remind us of high moments or low moments in life. We even have favorite Bible verses we hold onto that encourage us, strengthen us, comfort us, soothe us, center us, or remind us that we are not alone. There is nothing wrong with having favorite things. My favorite Bible verse is Romans 12:2, "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds."

I believe there is a danger when we let our favorite things take precedence over the greatest commandment, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39). It is okay to have favorites. However, if we are not growing, learning, and changing, we are forsaking the resurrection of Jesus Christ "who is making all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

I am grateful for those who have continued to study, grow, and know that God is calling them to be beyond where they are now. I am grateful for those who have continued to be the church and to see the church as a mystery to be lived into and not a problem to be solved. I am grateful for this congregation of imperfect people which realizes that we are not perfect and receives God's grace anyway. We need to be the church that continues to treat God's favorite thing as our favorite thing. God's favorite thing is people. Not the people who you want or chose, but the people God chooses to be with us. Is God's favorite thing your favorite thing?



### Meeting Hannah Vickery

*Our new Director of Youth Ministry, Hannah Vickery (center), met with students and parents on a quick visit to Fayetteville last weekend. She comes to us from Nashville, TN, and is excited about her first day with us on July 8. Stay tuned for more ways to welcome her into the life and ministry of FFUMC.*

### What Can I Do?

As we search for ways to be in ministry with one another across all our many differences, many of us are asking, "What can I do?" If you feel inept at talking about racism or have difficulty understanding our racial tension in 2020 America, I hope you will join me in an ongoing discussion.

I'm starting with a study of the book "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism" by Robin DiAngelo. Acquire the book and let me know you're interested in joining the conversation.

~Rev. Allyson Lawrence  
[alawrence@fayettevillefirst.com](mailto:alawrence@fayettevillefirst.com)

# Did you know...

- **Summer Lunch Program** began today. It's different this year with only pre-packaged meals delivered by veteran drivers. What is the same is the **love and care** arriving at each student's home.
- **Last day for "Beard for Benevolence" Fundraiser!** Donate to the FFUMC Benevolence Fund and place your vote for a little fund fun around Thomas' beard for taping of our July 7 worship service: **1) Shave it off** or **2) Keep it** or **3) Let Sam Burch do whatever he wants with it.** "Voting" ends today!



*Will you be a Food Samaritan? Help FFUMC KiDS collect food in your neighborhood or group and donate it at The Drive-Thru for Fayette Samaritans.*

# inspired...

*Please share your stories and pictures with Thomas at [tmartin@fayettevillefirst.com](mailto:tmartin@fayettevillefirst.com). Your acts of kindness and care may inspire others.*

## Celebrating Jesus in the Gospels Graduates

Jesus in the Gospels (JIG) was a 30-week in-depth Bible study that began in September 2019. While reading and comparing the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John, information about the gospels was not the main focus of the study; Jesus was! Each class member gained a stronger understanding of Jesus and what it means to be a follower of Christ.

The class met Wednesday nights at the church until that wasn't an option due to COVID-19. A few of the classes were held outside at Hansen Homestead. The pond, trees, sandy "beach," and large open space made it a viable option for this size of class. A few members were dealing with allergies so Zoom classes were also utilized. As praying for each other is a big part of JIG, praises and concerns were shared each time or way the class gathered.



The final meeting of JIG was held on May 13. John 21:10-12 says, "Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish you have just caught...and have breakfast.'" The Hansen Homestead pond gave the class members a feeling somewhat like the disciples may have had on that day. JIG members were served a meal of fish and bread which was cooked over a fire. Cups from Cana were used to sip grape juice as the members sat around the circle sharing their final thoughts on how their image, perception and relationship with Jesus had grown over the months. This was a special ending with a special group of people.

### Jesus in the Gospels Class Members:

Tim Bellury	Connie Hyder	Rita McElwaney	Marvin Mott	Randy Riddell
Jason Schartle	Julie Smith	Andrew Thompson	Mary Ann Cauthen	Karen Dunn
Bob Dunn	Jeff Hansen	Kathie Hansen		