

INFORMED & inspired

CONNECTED AT FAYETTEVILLE FIRST UMC

“Do you want to be made well?”

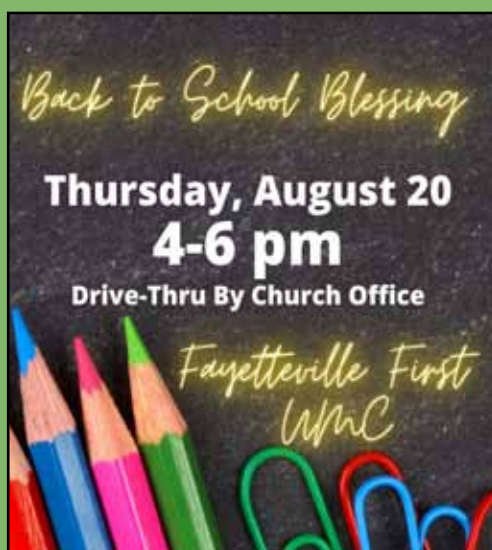
Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin

At the Pool of Bethesda, Jesus encounters a beggar—someone who is sick and unclean—who is in need of a healing touch. There in that passage, Jesus asks, “*Do you want to be made well?*” (John 5:6). I have often wondered about that passage. Where did Jesus put the emphasis. Say that phrase in your head or out loud and emphasize different words. For example, “*Do you want to be made well?*” sounds much different than, “*Do you want to be made well?*” You could even interpret that sarcastically (although sarcasm is not a Fruit of the Spirit and I doubt Jesus would be sarcastic because it is demeaning to others).

However you interpret it, it is a question that needs to be answered. Presumably, for this man, the answer is yes. However, if you look at the scripture, he never answers the question with yes or no. It is as if he wants to, but he knows that he needs help.

Now picture Jesus asking that question for us, whether we are sick in body or spirit. “*Do you want to be made well?*” We have to answer one way or another, but we also have to know that something is up to us as we move forward. We have to take some kind of initiative on our part. Maybe the first thing we have to do is acknowledge that we need help.

That is what the man by the waters did. He admitted that he needed help. We need help to get through these days. We need God’s help. We need each others’ help. What we don’t need is judgment. What we don’t need is to question each others’ willingness to help. We need each other and we need God’s grace. My prayer is that when we ask ourselves if we want to be made well, we hear Jesus’ invitation to join with him, to follow him, and to be more like Christ.



Students & Educators: Back to School Drive-Thru 8/20

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30 NRSV).

Come, all of you, students, parents, family members, teachers, administrators, anyone doing anything related to education, and be reminded of the words of Jesus.

Come, be reminded of the Holy Spirit actively working in and through you with spiritual fruit.

Come, take a deep breath and be reminded of the Breath of Life which is alive in you.

Come, receive a blessing that reminds us all that God is actually the one who does the blessing, who gifts the blessing, who is the blessing. This school year, may you learn directly from Jesus. May you be taught by the greatest teacher anyone could desire. May you love as you are loved.

Rev. Carson Thaxton, cthaxton@fayettevillefirst.com



REASONS TO DONATE OR SIGN UP TODAY

Rise Against Hunger Event August 23

We can do this together to fund and pack 30,000 meals to feed the hungry.

1. Who is coming? We need to know!

To pack 30,000 meals in two shifts, we need 50 volunteers at each shift.
Can we count on you?

2. The global pandemic will continue to affect children and adults worldwide and we can help.

Rise Against Hunger is one answer to "How can I make a difference?"

3. You can safely make a contribution: hands on or remotely!

The August 23 packing event will follow strict COVID guidelines provided by RAH. [Click here to check out the plan](#) to see if you feel comfortable to put your hands to work (while capped, gloved, masked (*new!*), and six feet apart (*new!*)).

Aren't ready to come out and pack? [Click here to donate online](#) or mark RAH on a check to the church to help us reach our \$10,000 commitment. Can you donate for 10 meals (\$3.40)? 50 meals (\$17)? 100 meals (\$34)? Can you ask friends or a small group to pool resources to purchase 300 meals (\$102)?



It's simple to reserve your spot. Just complete this two-step reservation.

1. Register at FFUMC: Reservations required (\$5 per volunteer, \$20 max/family)

[Click here for 1-3 p.m. shift](#) [Click here for 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. shift](#)

2. Register at RAH

[Click here to complete the Rise Against Hunger registration and volunteer waiver.](#)

Questions? Call the church office at 770-461-4313 or contact Randy Riddell at randyhr8@gmail.com.

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FFUMC Preschool opens next week

With careful planning and guidance from the Preschool Advisory Board, the FFUMC Preschool opens next Monday, August 17. Here's what the children and parents can expect:

- Small classes which allow for COVID precautions and extra cleaning
- Socialization and learning with others
- Increased outside time and learning activities
- NEW! STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math

We'll keep you informed on how you as a congregation can continue to support and encourage our youngest learners!

For information, contact Director Kerry Bleil, kbleil@fayettevillefirst.com, shown on the right with Meredith Martin of the advisory board.