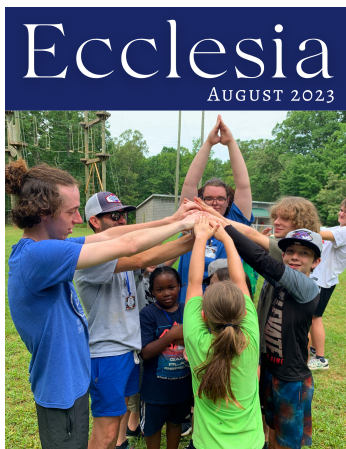


Ecclesia

AUGUST 2023



In this Issue



THE HIGHLIGHTS

On the Covers

Front: Playing games at Camp Discovery

Back: Working together at Simply Summer

Page 4: Join us for dinner! There are three ways we can gather around the table this fall.

Page 6: Grace Fest - a Lighthouse Congregations event will be an event for the whole church!

Pages 8-10: Celebrating summer ministry in pictures

Contact Information

The Rev. Dr. Mark Conforti, *Senior Pastor*
mark@fumcsalisbury.org | x.103

Becca Blackmon, *Administrator*
becca@fumcsalisbury.org | x.102

Aaron Cameron, *A/V Production*
aaron@fumcsalisbury.org | x.101

Mike Fansler, *Building Superintendent*
mike@fumcsalisbury.org | x.119

Jen Fogt, *Youth Ministry*
jenni@fumcsalisbury.org | x.107

Joshua Starnes, *Music Ministry*
josh@fumcsalisbury.org | x.106

Bailee Weisensel, *Children's Ministry*
bailee@fumcsalisbury.org | x.108

Scotty Adcock, *Afterschool Childcare & Summer Day Camp Programs*
afterschool@fumcsalisbury.org | x.116

Kelly Austin, *Preschool*
kellyhaustin@gmail.com | x.115

Courtney Bost, *Child Development Center*
cdc@fumcsalisbury.org | x.110

The Rev. Garry Cook, MDiv, LCSW, *Pastoral Counselor*
FUMC Counseling Center (Sanctuary Counseling Group)
gdcook@triad.rr.com | 980.296.0991



Website
www.fumcsalisbury.org



YouTube Channel
FUMC Salisbury



Sermon Podcast
Salisbury Sermons

Listen on Apple Podcasts
or Spotify



Social Media
Facebook & Instagram

@fumcsalisbury



704.636.3121 | 217 South Church Street Salisbury, NC 28144

Re:Marks

From the desk of Pastor Mark

During the hot days of summer, we fill our glasses with water to enjoy a drink. Out in the garden, we fill our watering cans so the flowers can grow. We fill, only to empty. This connects to an important theme in Christian theology, as found in one of the Apostle Paul's letters – that *Jesus emptied himself*. "...but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness" (Philippians 2:7).

The key theological word is *kenosis*. Christianity holds that almighty God, the omnipotent and omniscient Creator, emptied God's self of all power & glory, taking on humble human flesh as Jesus of Nazareth. We know of no other time in human history when this happened. As Jesus walked around Galilee, talking to fishermen and tax collectors, and even as he healed the sick and performed miracles, Jesus emptied himself in order to be present. He neither presumed a dominant status, nor did he impose his authority for the sake of keeping others down. Jesus did not let anything get in the way of being present with people.

What if Harrison Ford quietly sat in the back of the movie theater?

Or if Taylor Swift showed up at a restaurant to listen to karaoke night?

Or if the President, Governor, or Mayor unassumingly picked up rubbish along the streets?

And what if the church emptied itself? I believe this is the pathway to continued revitalization, when we discover the joy of *kenosis*.

I suppose we could try another path. Instead of self-emptying, we could show off, flex our muscles, and "put on airs." That pseudo-invitation sounds like, "Come see how great we are!" Whenever the church leads with haughty self-entitlement, we routinely find ourselves frustrated. And it's no wonder – because that's not that way of Christ!

Yes, the pathway to continued revitalization compels us, as the church, to empty ourselves over and over again. This makes space for the Holy Spirit to be present and active within us. When we're not so intent to prove ourselves, we become more eager to serve. In this way, we take part in God's work of healing love.

You and I have seen this through the ministry of First United Methodist Church. I'm thinking about business executives volunteering behind the scenes; medical professionals on mission trips; and even retired clergy pitching in wherever there is need! I could name names, but that seems to contradict the essence of *kenosis*. After all, the only name we're really interested in is Jesus.

How are you called to empty yourself, so that you can offer water for someone who is thirsty?

May God continue to bless you and keep you,



Pastor Mark

Around the Table

one Goal: nurturing people in body & spirit
one Time: all meals are at 6:00pm

Community Meals

Purpose: to connect with the community & welcome new people

Details: Monthly Mar-Nov
led by Steve Sherriff;
donations welcome

Location: Porte Cochere

Fellowship Meals

Purpose: to foster fellowship among church members

Details: Monthly Sep-Nov
& Jan-Apr
led by Danny Hunt;
\$8 per adult

Location: Fellowship Hall

Covered Dish Meals

Purpose: to participate in the ministry of feeding people in body & spirit

Details: Monthly Dec-Feb
led by YOU!
Bring a dish to share

Location: Fellowship Hall

Community Meals

1st Wednesdays, Spring-Fall

Next: August 2

September 6

October 4

Fellowship Meals

3rd Wednesdays

Next: September 20

October 18

November 15

Covered Dish Meals

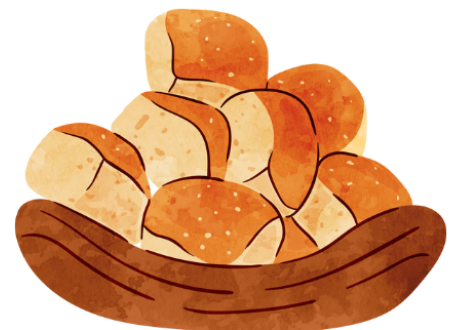
1st Wednesdays, Winter

Next: December 6

January 3

February 7

August: Community Meal
August 2, 6:00pm



Church History

Looking back, moving forward...

Salisbury proudly claims two major African-American educational institutions: Livingstone College and Hood Theological Seminary. Some may not know that both schools are Methodist - their theological roots go back to John & Charles Wesley.



Throughout the 18th century, John Wesley was a staunch abolitionist. He and his brother Charles abhorred the human slave trade. They worked tirelessly to end it. When the first Methodist society members moved to the American colony, former slaves served as lay preachers. When Methodist preachers met in 1784 to form the Methodist Episcopal Church, the conference included two preachers of color, Richard Allen and Harry Hosier. That first conference supported the British Methodist anti-slave trade position. It banned Methodists church members from owning slaves. It also approved lay ethnic preachers to serve African American congregations.

Unfortunately, racism soon prevailed. The ban on slave ownership was rescinded. Then African American preachers were denied sacramental authority. They had to serve under the supervision of an ordained white preacher. In multi-racial congregations, black members were segregated to separate balcony seats. They were often denied access to the altar rail.

On one occasion, a black mother presented her infant son for baptism. When the white preacher asked, "What name is given this child?" she replied, "George Washington." "George Washington!" the preacher shouted in astonishment. "He will not have the name of our great president. I baptize him Caesar. Your name is Caesar."

After years of overt discrimination, some African Americans began their own denomination. Richard Allen established the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in Philadelphia in 1816. A separate African Methodist movement in New York led by James Varick did the same thing in 1820-21. Wanting to distinguish themselves from the AME Philadelphia church, they added the name of their first meeting house "Mother Zion". We know them as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church or AME Zion.

For all practical purposes the AME and AME Zion church theology and structure copied the white Methodist Episcopal Church they vacated. They had bishops and presiding elders (district superintendents). Both had strong outreach ministries and an educated clergy. A public commitment to the abolitionist movement earned AME Zion the name "The Freedom Church." Their love of learning led to the AME Zion founding of Livingstone College and Hood Theological Seminary.

The Zion Methodists in New York began with only six churches. After the Civil War they sent missionaries south with excellent results. Those workers proclaimed the Gospel and soon had 164,000 members. Most of Salisbury's black Methodists left the Methodist Episcopal Church and became part of this movement, establishing Soldier's Memorial AME Zion church.

Hood Theological Seminary remained a department of Livingstone College until Albert Aymer became its president. Aymer was a United Methodist with a distinguished administrative background at Drew University. On moving to Salisbury, he joined the Western NC Conference as a full clergy member and affiliated with our local congregation. Under his leadership, Hood became an accredited free standing theological seminary. The Rev. Doctors Jim Gilland and Don Haynes played important roles in securing The United Methodist Church's approval for Hood to educate UMC clergy candidates. Both our pastor, Mark Conforti, and this writer occasionally teach at Hood as adjunct faculty members. We are also united with the AME and AME Zion churches as equal members of the Pan-Methodist Commission.

Fred Jordan, *Church Historian*

Save the Date for Grace Fest



A LIGHTHOUSE CONGREGATIONS EVENT

GRACE FEST

**SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 17
4PM - 8PM**

**BELLTOWER GREEN
DOWNTOWN
SALISBURY**

What is Grace Fest?

Grace Fest is an exciting upcoming event aimed toward bringing United Methodists from across Rowan County together. We want to offer a warm welcome in the name of Christ to the community, and send a positive message about the vitality and future of The United Methodist Church!

Mark your calendars, and invite a friend to this evening of fellowship & fun.

Grace Fest is a connectional event being put on by the Lighthouse Congregations in Rowan County - Milford Hills UMC and FUMC. We'll also feature musical talent from more RoCo Methodist churches and beyond!

Back to School: Supply Drive



**BACK 2 SCHOOL
SCHOOL
SUPPLY
DRIVE**

To assist our CDC, Preschool and Afterschool ministry programs, we are gathering a variety of supplies.

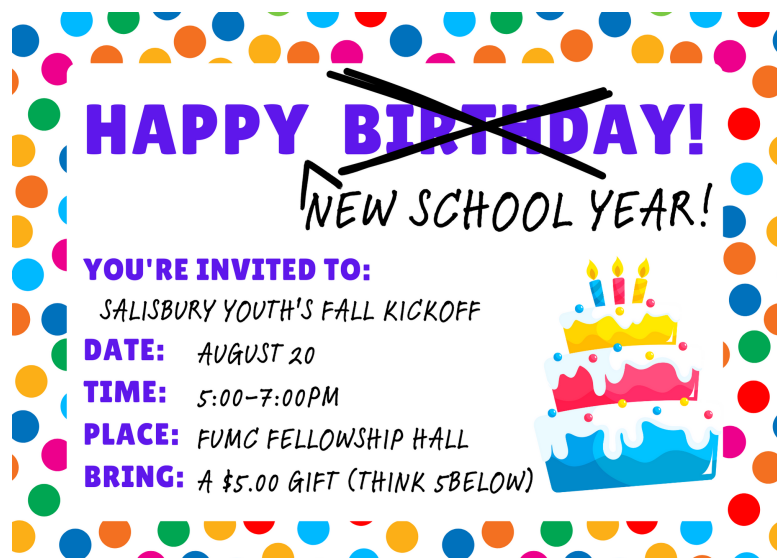
AUGUST 1 - AUGUST 20

DROP OFF
Volunteer Desk, upstairs in Bailee's Office OR have it shipped directly to the church

Check out the program Amazon wish list!

You're also welcome to shop for school supplies from other stores & drop off donated items in the Fisher Street Lobby

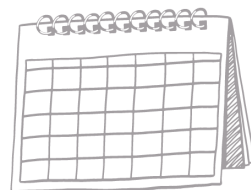
Youth Ministry



Salisbury Youth Group's Fall Kickoff will be August 20, all 6-12 graders are invited! Confirmation classes will begin this fall - we are partnering with Milford Hills UMC to hold a combined Confirmation Class this year!

Salisbury Youth 6-12 GRADE MINISTRY

Newsletter



YOUTH GROUP CALENDAR

FALL 2023

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

6 - no youth group

13 - no youth group

20 - FALL KICKOFF

27 - YOUTH GROUP

3 - no youth group

(Labor Day wknd)

10 - YOUTH GROUP

17 - YOUTH GROUP

24 - YOUTH GROUP

Children's Ministry

AUGUST

6- Blessing of the Backpacks

@ 8:30 and 11AM

19- Back2School Bash for all
Children's Ministry Families @
11AM - 1PM (Front
Lawn/Playground)



SEPTEMBER

16- Preschool Playdate @
11AM

17 - Kids Connection
@ 5PM - 6:30PM
(The Fellowship Hall)



KIDS FIRST IN CHRIST

ALL CHILDREN'S MINISTRY FAMILIES,
BIRTH - 5TH GRADE ARE WELCOME!

BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

August 19
11AM - 1PM

WATER
BALLOON
FUN

FUMC FRONT LAWN



BOUNCE
HOUSE

Bring your Backpack to Worship,
August 6

Blessing of the Backpacks
at 8:30 & 11:00

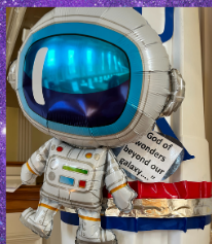




this summer was OUT OF THIS WORLD!



Camp Discovery



Simply Summer

Child Care Ministry Updates

After School Child Care

We are excited to have our Summer Day Camp Program running again. There have been several students with our staff each week as we have weekly themes and take weekly trips to the library, movies and the pool each week. Our weekly themes have had daily devotionals as well and our children have learned about several Biblical characters and stories. We will start back with After School Child Care in August. Our schedule is full for Summer Camp, but we have a few openings for the After School Child Care. Please let us know if you are in search of care!



Preschool

We are looking forward to the start of another great year of FUMC preschool! Teachers have been busy getting their rooms ready, and can hardly wait for them to be filled with students again!

Thank you to our preschool board for taking on the tough task of selecting us two new teachers from a pool of very good candidates! We are excited to have Jennifer Crabtree joining Ashley Overcash in the 2's classes, and Lindsay Helms-Shermer joining Magan Dillinger in the 3's class. Ashley Illiano and Kelly Austin are returning to their class in the 4's.

We have limited spaces available. If you have any questions about our preschool, or would like to schedule a tour, please call Kelly Austin at 336-722-9260.

Abbey's Testimony

Abbey shares about her experiences with FUMC over the summer



On July 23, Abbey Walker (10 years old) shared her testimony during worship. Abbey was a camper at Camp Discovery this year, attends our After School and Summer Day Camp programs, and participated in Simply Summer.

She shared a beautiful analogy of how making slime from glue and an activator at Simply Summer reminded her of how God's love transforms our lives.

In her own words she shared, "Not too long ago I opened up my heart to God and decided to get baptized and now I'm here talking to y'all... I've been surrounded by so many good friends and mentors that have helped me learn about God. Some of those people are, my mom, Mr. Scotty, Mrs. Brenda, my camp mentor – Abby, Mrs. Bailee and my afterschool program friends!"

Scouting Update



It has been a busy summer for Troop and Pack 442. For Memorial Day we joined with other scouts to place flags on several thousand veteran's graves at the two national cemeteries in Salisbury. The Troop spent 5 days paddling 53 miles on the New River for the BSA 50 Miler Award. In June the Troop attended summer camp at Camp John J Barnhardt. While there, the Troop climbed the tower, paddled canoes, and earned merit badges. The Troop also competed in several lumberjack events, and everyone returned with all their fingers and toes attached!.



Ramp Installation

Making Homes Accessible & Safe

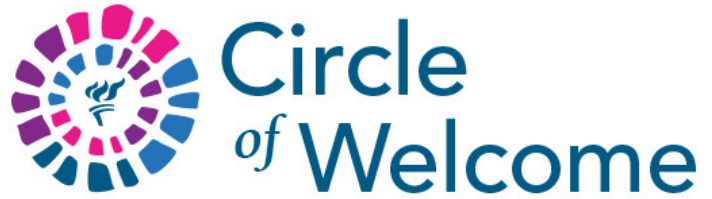
A team from FUMC installed a ramp for church member Chris Sherrill in late July. Workers included Bobby Jones (project leader), Steve Sherriff, Rikki Spencer, Nate Shaffer, and Fred Jordan. It took us a day and a half to finish the project beginning both days at 7:00 am to beat the heat.



Circle of Welcome

Extending welcome and support to New Americans

Our church is partnering with Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC), who has opened an office here in Salisbury, to provide a Circle of Welcome for LSC sponsored refugees that will be relocating to the Salisbury area this year. LCS provides assistance with housing, employment, and introduction into American culture.



What is a Circle of Welcome?

A Circle of Welcome is a team of at least 6-10 people who have committed to walk alongside a matched refugee family for 6 months to one year. Responsibilities for the Circle members includes things like providing a Welcome Kit, transportation from the airport to their initial dwelling place, and a culturally appropriate welcome meal. As the relationship grows Circle members may be involved in helping the newly relocated refugees with weekly tasks like grocery shopping, visits for healthcare clinics, teaching about public transportation, how to use a debit card, and other everyday tasks as they may have a need.

Our church is currently collecting specific items for inclusion in our Welcome Kit that will be presented to our refugee family after their arrival. All of the initial Welcome Kit items have now been donated, but as we learn more about the family who will be arriving, there will be more specific items needed.



Circles of Welcome are designed to provide newly relocated refugees with local people who are committed to engaging together to grow a relationship where the refugees are introduced to American culture while providing an environment where their own culture and traditions can be respected and better understood. The goal at the end of the first year is to have a refugee group being able to navigate the daily tasks of living in the US without a lot of ongoing support from outside entities.

The family we have been matched with is scheduled to arrive in Salisbury on August 3! We welcome church members being engaged and supportive; but, for the privacy of the family, we may not be able to answer every question. Thank you for your understanding as the Circle of Welcome team balances sharing needs and information while also protecting the family's personal details.

How can I support this mission?

Thanks to the church's generous outpouring of support to the request for household items, we have all the items on the initial Welcome Kit list! Now the Circle of Welcome team is inviting the congregation to give monetary gifts as you feel led. Money donated to the church for the New Americans program will help the team stock the pantry for our family when they arrive, and may be used to provide other household or clothing items to meet the family's specific needs.

Learn more about the New Americans program by visiting lsc Carolinas.net or following the QR code on this page. Monetary gifts can be directed to the church office with "Circle of Welcome" in the memo.



Human Rights Day

Church Women United - Agreed to differ. Resolved to love. United to serve.



Human Rights Day 2023 is a Church Women United event. All women are welcome to attend!

Speaker: Rev. Barrie Kirby, retired Presbyterian minister

Date: August 4

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Sills Creek AME Zion Church

3165 Bradshaw Rd. Mooresville, NC 28155

(It's a Mooresville address, but the church isn't that far away. If you pass Lazy 5 Ranch you've gone too far).

School supplies can be brought as donations.

Church Women United will be collecting supplies to support "Communities In Schools"

For Such A Time As This

A Women's Ministry Event

All ladies are invited to a wonderful program led by Rev. Sherri Barnes on Saturday, September 16 for 11:00 am to 1:00 pm with a catered lunch being served. The title of the program will be "For Such A Time As This" based on Esther. We will be looking at the future, our gifts and asking the question "Why Not Me?"

Please RSVP to Brenda Loflin by September 4 so that we have an accurate count for lunch and program materials Phone 704-798-6730 or loflinb@bellsouth.net.



About Our Speaker

Rev. Sherri Barnes is the senior pastor at St. Andrew's UMC in Charlotte. Prior to St. Andrews, she served as the associate chaplain for student ministries at Pfeiffer University; and director of Pfeiffer's Youth Theological Institute (YeTI), a ministry exploration program for high school students and young adults.

Rev. Barnes has served churches throughout the Piedmont of North Carolina including serving here at FUMC of Salisbury as associate pastor in the early 2000s! She has also worked as a Christian educator in Western NC, Virginia and Texas.

She is the proud mother of Patrick, currently serving as a Staff Sergeant in the NC National Guard; and grandmother to the beautiful, smart and sassy Caroline.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

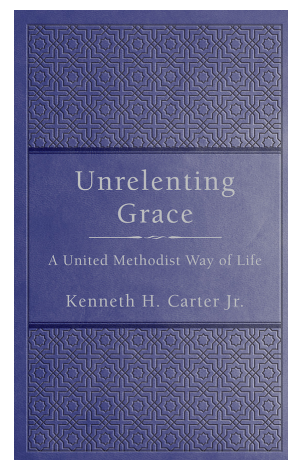
1		12	Brink Brinkley Sara Hill Virginia Krotchko Betty Mickle Jackson Price Nancy Schoch	23	Emily Busby George Hill Jennifer Seifert Lucas Webb
2	Catherine Warren	13	Tyler Conforti Katie Durham	24	Ginny Champion Richard Paschall
3	Joy Braun-Bernhardt Mary Allen Conforti Mike Hensley	14	Hailey Huffman Ronnie Rinehart	25	
4	Shakira Basinger	15	Gloria Matthews	26	Grace Marlatt Wayne Saleeby
5	Sue Lewis Raleigh Shaffer	16	Lanie Humble	27	Karen Floyd Betty Jordan Glenn Langford
6	Sarah Busby	17		28	John Holshouser
7	Sarah Chandler Mary Heather Steinman	18	Julie Gainer Martha Smith Ian Walser	29	Heather Carmichael Larry Fain Genevieve Martin Austin Massaquoi Debbie Vaughn
8	Gwen Webb	19		30	Dave McCoy Tracy Walser
9	Bobby Jones	20	Sue Bivens Thomas Langford Ethan McGee	31	
10		21	Betsy Rich		
11	Steven Huffman	22	Betsy Fazia Josh Gainer Dixie Scott		

hello
August

Hybrid Sunday School Available to All

If you are homebound, on vacation, or unable to gather in-person for other reasons, Salisbury's FUMC offers a weekly online Sunday school class for adults. Called the Seekers Class, it is taught by Fred Jordan, Richard Paschall, and Tony & Cindy Yon.

This hybrid class meets in person in room B112 and on the Zoom platform. It begins most Sunday mornings at 9:45. Choir members are excused at 10:30. The class ends by 10:45. During August, the class will study Bishop Kenneth Carter's new book **UNRELENTING GRACE**. Contact Fred Jordan (nfredjordan@bellsouth.net or 336-467-0752) for an access link. Everyone is welcome.



Coming Soon

Make a note of these opportunities coming up at FUMC!

Mum Sale Early September United Women in Faith will again be selling mums to support local missions. Pick up for mums will be Sep. 23	Fall Festival October 25 Children's Ministry Fall Festival will be held in late October. We will be collecting candy and inviting people to volunteer!
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Sustainability Work

Planning for the future of FUMC



The June/July Ecclesia included a long list of recommendations from the Sustainability Task Force and updates on progress. Expect to see another update in the September Ecclesia.

In the meantime, you may see "Please unplug when not in use" labels on electronic devices. The Trustees would like to encourage everyone to unplug these electronics and turn off lights to conserve energy wherever possible.

Office Hours

NEW CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

**Open
Monday
to Friday**

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

to provide the church office staff with focused time to complete administrative tasks

Call or stop by between these hours.
We would love to see you!

SPRC has changed the office hours of the church to Monday - Friday, 9:00am to 3:00pm. Our church staff hours have not been reduced, but shorter "open" hours gives the staff uninterrupted time to complete tasks. Thank you for taking care of church business during these hours!

Family Transitions

In Remembrance

Please keep the families and loved ones of these persons in your prayers

The Rev. Dr. Richard “Dick” Thomas Disseler, Sr.

January 01, 1930 – June 11, 2023

Father of Tom Disseler

Larry Walter Peltz

October 06, 1940 – June 22, 2023

Father of Kevin Peltz

Lynda A. Myers

October 30, 1942 – June 23, 2023

Mother of Mary Jo Gouge

The Rev. Dr. Jimmy “Jim” Conrad Gilland

March 22, 1933 – July 01, 2023

Husband of Glenner Gilland

“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted...” ~ Psalm 34:18

Thank You!

Dear FUMC Church Family,
Angie and I would like to give a BIG thanks to you for your prayers, concerns and support during my surgery & recovery. It's truly a blessing for me to be part of the mission of this church!

Blessings,
Mike & Angie Fansler

The family of Michael David Buchanan appreciates so very much the kind remembrances from the church.

Deborah, Sophia, Sydney, Victoria, and Natalie join me in a loving Thank You!

-Rachel L. Buchanan

Grace and Peace to you all. I asked Pastor Mark to write a "thank you" for your hospitality during our "pulpit swap." This was a thrill for me. I had never done a pulpit swap, and had never filled in for another preacher before. For that experience, I thank my friend Mark. Thank you for encouraging me, and please forgive me for my mistakes, and know that I took great pride and humility in preaching at First Church.

Blessings,
Rev. John Yeager



Dear friends,

Thank you for your many kindnesses to Jim during his long illness, and especially during the last four months. Your visits, calls, cards and your prayers were much appreciated and helped us through the difficult days.

Thank you to Mark for his visits and sharing of scripture and prayer. He was pastor to all of us, and especially to Jim.

And to all who helped us with the service, we say thank you. Thanks to the ladies who helped us find our way to the Stanback room, and stayed with us until it was time for the service to begin. And those who prepared a lovely reception. Thank you to those who printed the bulletin, and the person who did the video, the ushers, and the person(s) who cleaned before and after. A sincere thank you to all who helped us with the service to celebrate Jim's life.

-Glenner Gilland and family

Corrections Corner

On page 7 of the June/July Ecclesia the Church History article referenced the island nation of Malta as being between "Sicily and Tanzania." The article should read that Malta, "sits between Sicily and Tunisia at the narrowest part of the Mediterranean Sea."

ECCLÉSIA

NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



*making and nurturing
Christian disciples
through the presence
and power of God*

LIGHTHOUSE
Congregation



217 SOUTH CHURCH STREET SALISBURY, NC 28144 | FUMCSALISBURY.ORG | 704.636.3121