

Ecclesia

JANUARY 2023



IN THIS ISSUE



THE HIGHLIGHTS

On the Covers

Front: Christmas on Church Street - it was wonderful to work with many other Salisbury churches again this year, especially our partner church Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church!

Back: Children & youth helped lead worship on Dec. 11

Page 4

Church calendar meeting on January 7

Pages 9

Decorating Ethan's Tree

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Rev. Dr. Mark Conforti, *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*
jen@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 Program*
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
on Anchor; Apple Podcasts;
Google Podcasts;
Pocket Casts;
RadioPublic; and Spotify



Facebook
@fumcsalisbury
Instagram
@fumcsalisbury



704.636.3121 | 217 South Church Street Salisbury, NC 28144

REMARKS

The month of January always brings at least two things: we close out a year, and we begin a new year. We finish and we begin, all at the same time. So let's have a benediction for 2022, and a word of hope for 2023.

A Benediction

May the God who brought us through this past year bless us and keep us:
that our compromised efforts would still bring about goodness,
that our perseverance would overshadow the moments we gave up,
that other people's goodwill makes us forget our reluctance to believe in them,
that our failures would be minimized,
and our successes would be magnified, all for the glory of God's Kingdom. Amen!

A Word of Hope

People of God, lift up your eyes to see what is ahead:
to live freely for God,
to embark on new adventures (even from the comfort of a reclining chair),
to trust in God's eternal promises,
to find better rhythms for living (even when destination is not known;
the goals, undefined),
to live courageously by faith, not fear. Amen!

As we continue into January 2023, I remain hopeful and upbeat about our church! Yes, I am well aware of our challenges, which are also facing other downtown Salisbury churches and Christian churches across the country. Theologians Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile recently wrote a foundational book on missiology, the study of the church's mission. They claim: "... the underlying assumptions and basic organizing framework that gave birth to the development of the American church now appear to be unraveling. This is happening in the midst of what in our time appears to be the continued unraveling of many of the assumptions and critical expressions of late modernity." Or as your old uncle says, "things ain't the way they used to be." Before it was anecdotal; now it's documented, studied, and widely noted. In the year 2023 and beyond, the question will keep coming back to us: how will we adapt?

Again, I am hopeful and upbeat about our church. Why? Because the essential truth about God's saving love in Jesus Christ is still true. Divisiveness in culture cannot corrupt this, and neither can COVID-19, a soured economy, or your grumpy neighbor. From my humble perspective, with so much "unraveling" we have an exciting time to experience true faith – actually trusting our lives into God's care.

With a benediction and a word of hope, I look forward to seeing you soon!

Mark Conforti

Christmas & New year's day

ONE SERVICE
10:00AM
DECEMBER 25
&
JANUARY 1



JOIN US FOR THE NEXT COMMUNITY MEAL

NEXT FREE COMMUNITY MEAL

Wednesday,
January 4, 6:00pm
All are welcome!

MENU

*Various soups, grilled
cheese sandwiches,
crackers & dessert*

Program

Resolutions

FEBRUARY community meal - February 1

The community meal has been generously funded by donations. If you would like to make a contribution, and help this ministry of the church continue, please indicate 'community meals' on a check or online gift directed to the church office.

CALENDAR MEETING FIRST SATURDAY IN JANUARY

**2023 CHURCH
CALENDAR MEETING
SATURDAY, JANUARY 7
10:00AM**



**COMMITTEE CHAIRS, PROGRAM LEADERS, ANYONE WHO PUTS
THINGS ON THE CHURCH CALENDAR; PLAN TO ATTEND!**

PLEASE BRING ANY DATES YOU ALREADY HAVE IN MIND FOR THINGS HAPPENING IN YOUR MINISTRY AREA. THIS MEETING IS AN INFORMATION SHARING EVENT, AND A GREAT TIME FOR CHURCH LEADERS TO COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER.

CHURCH HISTORY

"looking back... moving forward"

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, regarded the Bible as the foundation of his faith. The Methodist Articles of Religion state that the Bible contains everything we need to know for our salvation. Wesley believed in the Bible but not in Biblical inerrancy. He felt the Bible needed to be interpreted by reason, church tradition, and by our experience of God's presence. Methodists still hold to that understanding.

We usually think of John Wesley as a powerful preacher. He was he also an Oxford University don or lecturer. A good teacher like Wesley challenges students to think. Thanks to him, Methodists do not fear the truth. We can freely ask searching theological questions as we explore God's word.

Early in the last century, Methodists felt the need for a social creed that applied the ancient Christian faith to our modern lives. Several versions emerged in the four denominations that in 1968 became The United Methodist Church. At that unifying General Conference, delegates decided the new church needed its own statement of social principles.

Methodists often disagree. It is one of our distinctive characteristics. We don't see eye to eye on abortion, capital punishment, military service, climate change, or universal medical care. We respect that diversity. That is why the social principles are not considered church law. They are: "a prayerful and thoughtful effort on the part of the General Conference to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation (BOD Part V Preface)."

In good Methodist tradition, the 1968 General Conference appointed a committee to write a new social creed. This committee brought to the 1972 General Conference a draft document. Much of the new statement reflected earlier creeds. But, the 1972 social principles advocated including for the first time a statement about homosexuality. Prior to 1972, Methodists publicly argued about contraceptives, sex education, and divorce, but not sexuality.

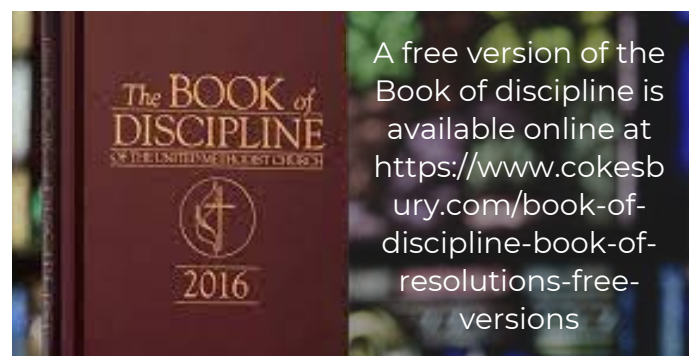
The draft creed was progressive. It recognized gay individuals as persons of sacred worth who need the ministry and guidance of the church. That statement received approval. However, the delegates were deeply divided over parts of the proposal. Final adoption came only after inserting an amendment late in the process that read: "The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teachings (§161.G)." The Rev. Dr. Jim Gilland, a retired clergyman in our congregation, was a delegate to that General Conference.

That incompatibility sentence was controversial. It still is. A proposal to delete it has come before every General Conference since then with the vote margin inching ever closer to deletion. However, those deletion attempts have always failed, and the "incompatible sentence" remains in our current Book of Discipline.

Continuing debate over sexuality now threatens to divide The United Methodist Church. Some church members have even elevated this social principle to the status of a core church doctrine. I will say more about that disagreement in a future Ecclesia article.

The Bible has not changed. Its message of loving God and neighbor will never change. Yet, using Wesley's interpretative tools of reason, tradition, and spiritual experience, individual Methodists have reached very different conclusions about homosexuality. It remains to be seen if the church can lovingly work within that diversity and remain The United Methodist Church.

Fred Jordan, *Church Historian*



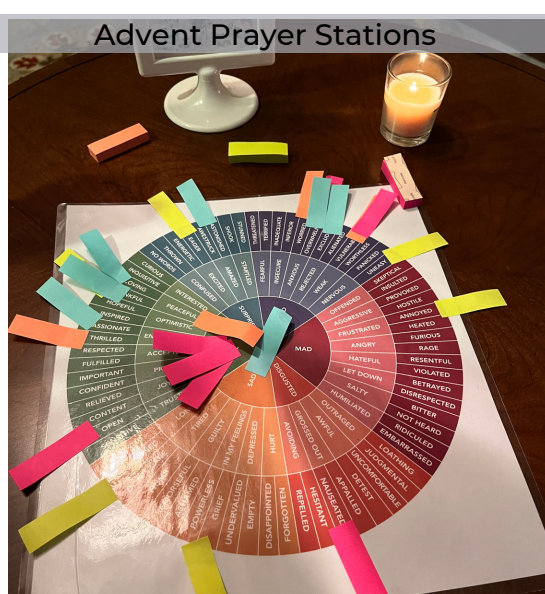
EXPERIENCES IN *Advent*



St. Nicholas Day Cookie Baking



Advent Prayer Stations





EXPERIENCES IN *Advent*



Gingerbread House Decorating



(above left) Methodist Connection (below) Staff Retreat





EXPERIENCES IN *Advent*



(left) Youth Group Christmas Party "Flannel & Flapjacks", (right) Christmas on Church Street



(below left) Youth serving in worship, (below center/right) delivering gifts to Isenberg

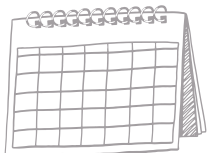


YOUTH MINISTRY

Salisbury Youth

6-12 GRADE MINISTRY

Newsletter



YOUTH GROUP CALENDAR SPRING 2022

JANUARY

1 - no youth group

(New Year's Day)

8 - YOUTH GROUP

14-16 - WINTER
RETREAT (BOONE)

22 - YOUTH GROUP

29 - YOUTH GROUP

FEBRUARY

5 - YOUTH GROUP

12- no youth group

(Superbowl)

18-19 - LOCK IN

19 - no youth group

(lock in night before)

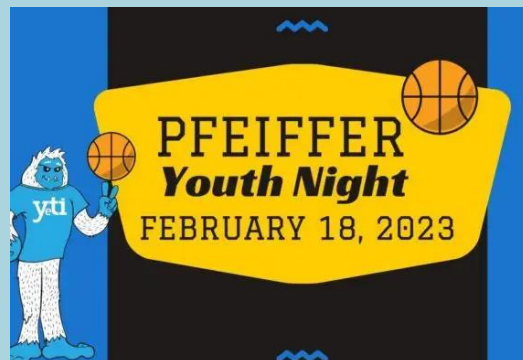
26 - YOUTH GROUP

ETHAN'S TREE

A Christmas tree with blue lights and covered in Mountain Dew bottles stands at Granite Lake Park this season in memory of Ethan Mastro. Ethan's untimely passing in August was a heartbreaking moment for our church, and shortly after his death many caring church members wondered, how can we show our support for Ethan's family?

The town of Granite Quarry has an annual tradition of decorating and lighting Christmas trees at Granite Lake Park. This sparked the idea of decorating a tree which would be "dedicated in honor of our love for the Mastro family and in memory of Ethan Mastro by First United Methodist Church of Salisbury & Friends of the Mastro Family."

Family and friends of Ethan's came to decorate the tree on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, and the tree will remain up until the first week of January. It's become a place where we can go to remember our time with Ethan, and his one of a kind heart & sense of humor. Many of Ethan's friends came to the official tree lighting in early December, and Ethan's mom, Alisha, shared with me that several of Ethan's friends have sent her pictures of their visits to Ethan's tree.



YOUTH GROUP LOCK IN!

February 18

all youth, 6-12 grade

Tailgating & watching the Pfeiffer Men's Basketball game and spending the night at church! Details will be sent out in the Youth Group newsletter

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Kids Connection begins again January 8

We meet in the Nest (Room B101) from 10:30 - 10:50!

Note: Childcare will not be available in the nursery on Christmas or New Year's Day.
We encourage families to worship together at 10:00am both days!



AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE

Thank you for all of your support with our program! We are so excited to be an active part of your ministry at FUMC. It was a pleasure to be a part of the new van dedication service on December 11.

Please join us in welcoming Ms. Angela Yanez to our staff in the ASCC. She has been working with children for several years and looks forward to working with our students. She plans to continue her education in the area of education while working with us.

During the holidays, our students have been hard at work. During the day, we have time that they work on homework as well as with other academic skills. Would you like to be a part of the program? If you would like to volunteer, we would love to have you assist one of our students. Please let me know if you have an interest and I will reach out to you to get more information.

Thank you again for all of your support!



Scotty Adcock,
Director of After School Child Care & Summer Day Camp



NEW BUS DEDICATION



New bus making ministry happen

After worship on December 11 we dedicated the new bus that arrived in November! This bus has already been put to use for the ministry of First United Methodist church.

So far, the bus has been used to...

- Transport children to the church from school for our After School Child Care program
- Picked up 90+ cardboard boxes from Rowan Helping Ministries so that the youth could sort the food donated for the Harvest Procession, and transport it back to Rowan Helping Ministries
- Drive the youth to a shopping center where they chose Christmas gifts to help an Isenberg Elementary family celebrate the holidays!





DISCIPLE-MAKING PEOPLE OF GOD

#BeUMC

UMC.org/BeUMC

Core Value: Disciple-Making

Jesus came near and spoke to them, "I've received all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age."

Matthew 28:18-20

Following his resurrection, Jesus prepares the disciples for his ascension. Matthew closes his gospel with Jesus's final words to his disciples, which we sometimes refer to as the Great Commission. The mission statement of The United Methodist Church echoes the Great Commission. Our role as United Methodists is to continue the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We share God's love and nurture growing faith.

Mission Statement of the United Methodist Church

The mission of the
Church is to make
disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation
of the world.

Mission Statement of our Local Church

The mission of First
United Methodist Church
is to make and nurture
Christian disciples
through the presence
and power of God.

WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The #BeUMC campaign reminds us of who we are at our best. As people of God called The United Methodist Church, we're faithful followers of Jesus seeking to make the world a better place.

#BeUMC

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

1 Robert Anderson, III
Tom Paffrath
Andy Storey

2 Bailee Weisensel

3

4 Chad Cross

5 Jenny Nussman

6 Britni Branson
Daniel Potts
Spencer Storey

7

8 Lainey Cook
Caroline Johnson

9

10 Shirley Disseler
Wendy Douglas

11 Levi Durham
Hazel Kirk
Alisha Mastro
Lois Poteat

12 Christie Chea
Skye Mowery
Nancy Sherriff
Jean West

13 Kim Grenoble
Rikki Spencer
Katelyn Storey Lee

14 Joel Goodwin, II
Scott Johnson

15

16 Coleman Bready
Evan Koontz

17 Kahlil Cross

18 Betsy Crowell
Jim Molitor

19 Susan Linn
Avery Potts
Dan Sullivan

20 Norman Clark, Jr.
Rob Watts

21

22

23

24 Jim Martin

25 Tim Bivens
Rhoda Calloway

26 Fred Bachl
Gracie Lineberry
Joshua Starnes

27 Roland Fowler
Wesley Ludwig

28 Wayne Cline

29 Corey Basinger

30 Susan Maxwell

31 Mike Fansler

January

GUEST PREACHERS JANUARY 1 & 8



Rev. Josh Britton

We are so excited to welcome Rev. Josh Britton, executive director of Mt. Shepherd Camp & Retreat Center as our guest preacher on January 1, and Rev. Laura Auten, our District Superintendent as our guest preacher on January 8!



Rev. Laura Auten



SCOUTING FOR FOOD

SCOUT SUNDAY COMING UP ON FEBRUARY 5

SCOUTING FOR FOOD DRIVE FEBRUARY 5

Our Scouts annual food drive, Scouting for Food, will happen during the first week of February. Any non-perishable food items are great! Particular needs from Rowan Helping Ministries are listed below.

Three ways to donate:

- Drop off food under the Portico on Fisher Street Saturday February 4, 8am-noon
- Bring your food donations to worship with you on Sunday, February 5
- Call Scout Leader BK (704-433-8151) to come pick up the food you want to donate if you're unable to leave your house to donate!



Food Pantry Requests from Rowan Helping Ministries:

Low-Sodium canned goods, pasta/tomato sauce, peanut butter, jelly, grits, cereal, canned vegetables, soups

COMING UP...

Church Office Closed

JANUARY 2 & 16

The church office will be closed Jan. 2 for New Years & Jan. 16 for MLK Weekend

Lent begins

FEBRUARY 22

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday in late February, Easter is Apr 9

Mission (Road) Trip

JUNE 5 - 10

Intergenerational trip to Washington DC, contact Jenni@fumcsalisbury.org

Do you have an article for the Ecclesia?

Send them to Jenni@fumcsalisbury.org with "(Month to be printed) Ecclesia" in the subject line.

Articles can be submitted by the first Friday of the month prior to when you would like it printed.

Access the Church Calendar Any Time

Access the church calendar any time! Just go to fumcsalisbury.org and look under the Connect tab. There you can also find a digital version of the Ecclesia.



FUMC FAMILY & EXTENDED FAMILY TRANSITIONS

IN REMEMBRANCE

Please keep these families in your prayers.

DEBORAH YOUNG CARTER

Wife of Summie Carter

March 26, 1951 - December 5, 2022

CAROL SCHRICKER BYRD

Mother of Allison Robinson

May 6, 1943 - December 8, 2022

DONNA MARIE PELTZ

Mother of Kevin Peltz

March 1, 1947 - December 10, 2022

BETTY JEAN MOON COONE

Mother of Debbie Kolkebeck

January 16, 1931 - December 20, 2022

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

THANK YOU!

Staff Love Offering

Dear Church,

The church staff would like to thank you for your kind and generous donations to the love offering collected before Christmas. We are grateful for your love and support at the holidays and throughout the year!



DIRECTORY UPDATES



Access the online directory anytime by going to fumcsalisbury.ctrn.co, following the link on our website (under 'Connect'), or downloading the Online Member Directory app on your smartphone or tablet. Enter the access code **fumcsalisbury** and your unique username and password.

You can update your information at any time, if you would like assistance in updating your information please contact the church office.



Youth Group Gingerbread Decorating Contest - houses on display in the column room through Jan 1.

ECCLÉSIA

NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



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

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