

# Ecclesia

January 2024



FIRST  
UNITED  
METHODIST  
CHURCH  
SALISBURY, NC  
EST. 1783



# In This Issue...



## THE HIGHLIGHTS

### On the Covers

*Front:* Camp Discovery Christmas Party,  
more pictures on page 9

*Back:* The Sanctuary set for Advent Prayer Stations

### Page 5

Children's Ministry meetings are planned for January as we make plans for summer ministry events!

### Page 13

Announcing Jen's new job title and officially expanding her leadership role to include adults, outreach & communications along with youth ministry

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http://

Website

www.fumcsalisbury.org



**YouTube Channel**  
FUMC Salisbury



**Sermon Podcast**  
*Salisbury Sermons*



**Facebook**  
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## Re:Marks

As we stand at the threshold of a new year, it is with great joy and anticipation that we embark on this journey together as a community of faith. In a world that often seems turbulent and uncertain, we, as followers of Jesus Christ, are called to bear witness to God's love.

The start of the year 2024 provides us with a another opportunity to reflect on the blessings of the past, learn from the challenges we faced, and set our hearts on the path ahead with hope and energy. Meanwhile, the new year not only gives us pause for reflection but also a time for renewal and recommitment. Just as the apostle Paul encourages us in Philippians 3:13-14 (NRSV), "Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." Let us leave behind any burdens or regrets of the past year and press forward with renewed energy, focusing on the call that God has placed on our lives.

Our challenges are many, yet our mission remains singular. Our church is called to "make disciples of Jesus Christ through the presence and power of God." How do we faithfully live this mission?

As we gather for worship, fellowship, and service in the coming weeks, let the spirit of unity and love guide us. Let us encourage one another, bearing each other's burdens and celebrating each other's victories. Together, we are a family in Christ, and our collective hope and energy can have a powerful impact on our community and beyond. Looking ahead, I am drawn to lead the church in three strategic ways:

### Pathways of Discipleship

Some of the pathways are familiar, such as worship, small group study, fellowship meals, and organized missional outreach locally. At the same time, we need to innovate, taking seriously our changing context. We realize fresh ways what people need: Jesus, the ministry of the church, and the unique ways our church offers Jesus. The core message remains true, yet the ways people experience that message must be renewed.

### Staff & Lay Leadership

We are blessed with extraordinary leaders at FUMC. Leaders respond out of love for God and loyalty to the church, ready to serve where needed. At the same time, our church has terrific paid staff members who are dedicated & hard-working. The way staff and lay leaders work together in partnership needs to be renewed.

### Leveraging the building.

During 2023, we began to understand how our church building is an asset for making disciples. Some may see the aging structure (and the associated costs) as a liability, yet we have moved in the direction of figuring out how to leverage the building for the sake of community partnerships and revenue streams. How we imagine this as a part of the church's ministry must also be renewed.

May the love of Christ renew us! We trust in the Holy Spirit to bind us together, filling our hearts with hope and energy to serve faithfully in the year ahead. Let us prayerfully seek God's guidance and direction, trusting in God's unfailing love in the new year.

Wishing you a blessed and hopeful New Year filled with the joy of the Lord,



Pastor Mark





# Around the Table

nurturing people  
in body & spirit



## POTLUCK

### *Covered Dish Dinner*

Wednesday, January 03, 2024  
at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Bring a dish to share!

**Covered Dish Meals**  
participate in feeding  
people in body & spirit

January 3  
(Next: February 7)

**Fellowship Meals**  
foster fellowship among  
church members

January 17  
(Next: February 21)

**Community Meals**  
connect with the  
community

*(returning in the spring)*

### **Fellowship Meal Reservations**

\$8 per adult, (children & youth eat free)  
reservation required by Thursday, Jan. 11

reservations and payment can be  
made online or reserve your spot by  
calling the church office volunteers,  
9am - 3pm (Mon-Fri).





## Children's Ministry





# Church History

Methodism began in 18th-century England as a religious society. Like-minded Christians bound together to live devout and holy lives. Membership standards were high and failure to abide by the society's rules could mean immediate dismissal.

The Fetter-Lane society organized in 1738 in cooperation with the Moravians became the first of these societies. All members agreed to meet weekly to "confess our faults one to another, and pray one for another, that we may be healed." The healing they sought was both spiritual and physical. During these meetings, everyone spoke openly and honestly about the "state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances, since the last time of meeting."

To facilitate this group sharing, the society sub-divided into bands of no fewer than five nor more than ten people. Everyone currently in the group had to agree for a newcomer to join a band. Each new member joined on a trial basis for two months. If their behavior proved acceptable, then the applicant became a full society member.

Since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, moral failures were inevitable. In such cases, the fallen member would be admonished twice to mend his or her ways. At the third violation of a rule, the offenders could "be no longer esteemed as members."

As harsh as this sounds, most twenty-first century growing churches also have high membership standards. That surprises many people. Most people expect the opposite to be true. Yet members need and want to feel valued and involved.

The United Methodist Church still has high membership expectations. Each new member takes a pledge to support The United Methodist Church in five specific ways. We agree to "*be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and faithfully participate in its ministries by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our witness, and our service.*" That commitment is easily made but often ignored.

Prayer support begins with gratitude. The simplest of all prayers is "Thank You." It expresses gratitude to God for the blessings of life. Members should repeat it throughout each day.

Presence means showing up. Regular attendance is more than once every month or two. It means weekly participation in worship, Sunday school, and other church activities.

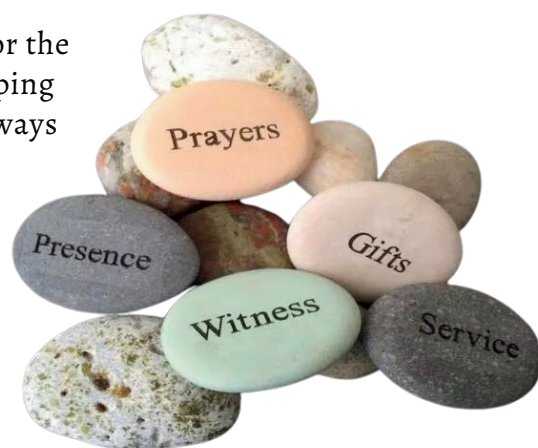
Gifts require our financial donations. A tithe (10%) is still the standard we strive to give. Giving of our time and talent is also important.

Witnessing is a recent addition to the pledge. It doesn't have to mean door to door evangelism, it could be as simple as inviting a friend to church.

Service advances the church's outreach mission. Members provide food for the hungry, Meals on Wheels for the homebound, volunteering at Rowan Helping Ministries, faith formation through our Scouting program, and all other ways our church serves the larger community.

Unlike those early Methodist societies, no one will mark your name off the church roll if you fail to do all five things regularly. However, you are unlikely to remain an active church member for very long if you don't. This New Year is an excellent time to renew your membership vows and to practice keeping them.

Fred Jordan, *Church Historian*

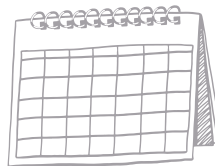




# Youth Ministry

## Salisbury Youth 6-12 GRADE MINISTRY

### Newsletter



YOUTH GROUP CALENDAR

## 2023-2024

### JANUARY

#### 7 - YOUTH GROUP

14 - no youth group  
(MLK wknd)

#### 22 - YOUTH GROUP

26-28 - WINTER  
RETREAT

### FEBRUARY

#### 4 - YOUTH GROUP

11- no youth group  
(Superbowl)

18 - no youth group  
(Pres Day wknd)

#### 25 - YOUTH GROUP



Youth 6-12 grade are invited to sign up for the 2024 Winter Retreat! We're going to Lake Junaluska over the last weekend of January. See the youth newsletter emails to sign up, or contact Jen - [jenni@fumcsalisbury.org](mailto:jenni@fumcsalisbury.org).



### Gift Wrapping for Camp Discovery

The youth group participated in preparations for the Camp Discovery Christmas party by wrapping many of the presents that campers and their siblings received! We look forward to supporting Camp this summer as mentors and as helpers during the week. Camp Discovery is a whole-church initiative!

## Confirmation

Confirmation Classes will be hosted at Milford Hills in December and FUMC in January.

### January 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	



## Advent @ FUMC This Year

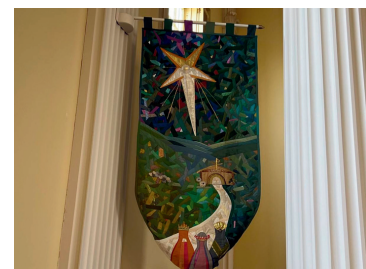


### 5th Sunday Hymn Sing

**Dec 31**

10:00am, Chapel

Led by  
Richard Paschall &  
Missy Brown

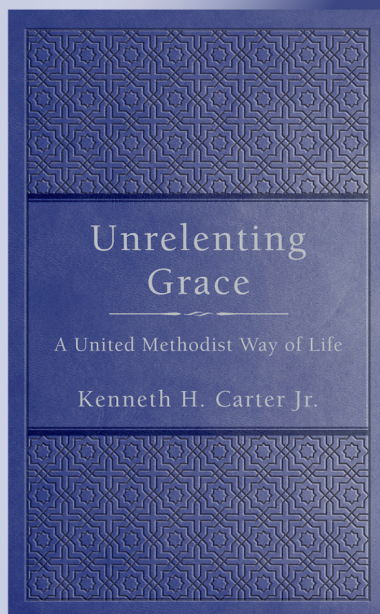






# January Sermon Series

SCAN BELOW TO  
ORDER YOUR  
BOOK





# Childcare Programs

## Preschool

Thanks to the generosity of our generous preschool families we were able to donate \$464.77 to the Salisbury Post's Christmas Happiness Fund!! Thank you to everyone that donated to our preschool's Penny Harvest to make such a generous donation possible!

Please help spread the word- it is almost time to register preschoolers for the 2024-2025 school year. Registration for current preschool families and members of the church will begin on January 23rd. Registration opens to families in the community on January 30th. Registration packets are available in the hallway outside the fellowship hall. If you would like more information about our preschool program, or to schedule a tour, please call Kelly Austin (336)722-9260.

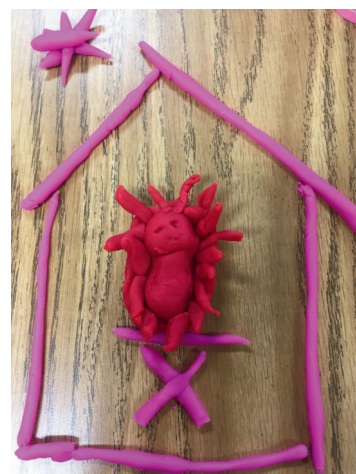
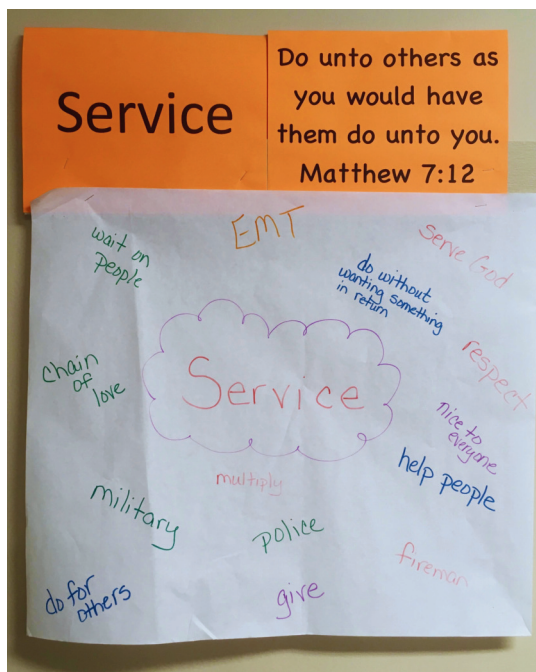
## After School Child Care

We are so excited to celebrate this joyous season with our children in the ASCC! We continue to grow academically and spiritually through our work together in the afternoons as well as during full day camps. This year, we have started to work on our devotions in a different way. In the past, we would provide a devotional study daily which may or may not be connected to the season or current events. This year, we are having monthly themes that have a daily study, memory verses that the students learn as well as projects that match the study. All of our information is on a central display for quick reference. Our students are currently working on the theme of Love and Joy and our reference is on Matthew 1 and Luke 2. They are making unbelievable growth on their knowledge.

## Child Development Center

The Child Development Center kids and teachers have had so much fun celebrating the holiday season! One Friday in December we watched the Polar Express movie and drank hot chocolate. We were also able to celebrate the season with teachers and children from the preschool by coming together for a delicious Christmas Breakfast!

We look forward to all the fun and learning ahead of us in 2024! To find out about enrolling your child in our Child Development Center, contact Brittney Lewis (704)636-3121 x110.





## Scouting at FUMC: Troop & Pack 442



Troop and Pack 442 have finished the year with a busy schedule. The Pack visited the Spencer Fire Department to learn about what they do and how to be safe. The Troop hiked 7 miles and camped overnight at Raven Rock State Park. This was an introductory backpacking trip for most of our new scouts. Next year the Troop and Pack have an exciting schedule to include spending the night on the Yorktown aircraft carrier, backpacking into the Mount Rogers Wilderness, paddling canoes on the Uwharrie River, zip lines at Camp Barnhardt and Rafting in West Virginia. Scouting at First UMC will turn 100 years old this year! On behalf of the 100+ Eagle Scouts as well as all of the other scouts who benefited through the program at First United Methodist Church Salisbury, we thank you for all your support!

## SCOUT SUNDAY COMING UP ON FEBRUARY 4

### SCOUTING FOR FOOD DRIVE FEBRUARY 3

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 3, 8am-noon
- Bring your food donations to worship with you on Sunday, February 4
- 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:*

*peanut butter, jelly, canned meat, rice, pasta, instant potatoes, canned fruit, granola/protein bars, tomato products (sauce, paste, diced), and salad dressing*

## On Elliot & Epiphany

*"For we have seen his star in the East  
And have come to worship him."  
Matthew 2:2*



Any high school or college student who has ever taken a contemporary American literature course knows that T.S. Eliot is one of the most complex of poets. And if most remember him at all it is for his poems of the dismal spiritual decay in the modern world. I suppose that's why a few years ago I was surprised to run across his poem, "Journey of the Magi." Of course, I had read Matthew 2:1-13 many times about the journey of the three wise men from the East who traveled bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and had sung each year the favorite "We Three Kings of Orient Are." But I never thought much about them as real people until I read Eliot's poem.

Biblical scholars tell us that their journey probably took place in January since in the Egyptian calendar the winter solstice was January 6. When January 6 was added as a festival in Western churches, it was used to commemorate the visit of the Magi, a manifestation to non-Jewish people. Eliot describes "the ways deep and the weather sharp...the camels galled, sore-footed...the night fires going out...cities hostile...villages dirty and charging high prices." Eliot doesn't describe what they found after they arrived. The poem concludes with "We returned to our places, these kingdoms, but no longer at ease here...with an alien people clutching their gods." The point is, having come to the manger once, life was never the same for these men as it is never the same for any of us.

The writer of Matthew doesn't mention these three after their visit. Eliot's poem helps us to see these as real men who had a significant conversion experience. Whether they actually lived or not is not important. Let's not get bogged down in trivia. Olov Hartman, a Swedish theologian, writes that his faith will not collapse if it cannot bring all of the Bible's chronological details into harmony. "One comes near to reality with the aid of a certain artistic license. The Holy Spirit is not a history professor, he is an artist."

In January, we continue the season of Christmas, taking us to Epiphany on January 6. May the starlight of Christ guide our journey today!

By Mitchell Hagler

## Rowan Helping Ministries This Month

### Serving Meals in Jeannie's Kitchen

January: Taffy & other volunteers

Dinner, January 11 & Breakfast, January 12

February: Discovery Class (February 8 & 9)

Interested in your group serving a meal? Contact Taffy Jordan!

### Food Packing

Fourth Wednesdays, during the school year

Next Packing Party:

**January 24, 2:00-3:00pm**

Interested in coming to a packing party? Contact Jen Fogt!



# New Title - Director of Discipleship Ministries



With the new year, our Youth Director Jen Fogt's job title will be updated to better reflect the work that Jen is doing. Jen has been on staff at First United Methodist Church since July of 2016. Over the years, she has formed connections with many of our youth and their families, as well as with many church members beyond the youth ministry. She has taken on projects like creating seasonal prayer stations for the whole church to experience, and recurring tasks like the *Ecclesia* newsletter. Jen has also extended her involvement beyond the walls of the church by serving on the Resource Development Committee at Rowan Helping Ministries.



Considering all the ways that Jen is involved in the ministries of our church, and in the community; SPRC is updating her title to Director of Discipleship Ministries. She will officially take on a leadership role within Communications, Outreach, and Adult Ministries while continuing to lead Youth Ministry. We look forward to the ways Jen will continue to help build up the church in 2024!

## Coming Soon

### Church Office Closed January 1 & January 15

The church office will be closed on Jan. 1 for New Years & Jan. 15 in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Note: The timing of the fellowship meal means reservations will need to be made by Thursday January 11 for the meal on the 17th.

### Scout Sunday February 4

Scout Troop & Cub Pack 442 will be collecting canned goods as part of the nationwide "Scouting for Food" campaign that weekend!

### Lent Begins: Ash Wednesday February 14

In 2024, the season of Lent will begin on Wednesday, February 14. Easter Day will be on March 31. During Lent we will be following a lenten sermon series on the seven deadly sins.

### Do you have an article for the *Ecclesia*?

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

Articles should 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](http://fumcsalisbury.org) and look under the "Connect" tab. There you can also find a digital version of the *Ecclesia*.





# 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** Hazel Kirk  
Alisha Mastro  
Lois Poteat

**12** Christie Chea  
Skye Mowery  
Nancy Sherriff  
Jean West

**13** Kim Grenoble  
Rikki Spencer

**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





## Thank You from SPRC

In December the Staff-Parish Relations Committee sent a church-wide email to communicate that December 18 was Becca Blackmon's last day on our church staff. Please join me in thanking God for Becca's many positive contributions to our church. We pray for her and our church in this transition.

*What does this mean for the church?*

*The SPRC will work closely with the Finance Committee, committee chairs, staff, and church volunteers to shore up administrative tasks. Also, we will soon conduct a search for a part-time Business Administrator.*



## 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!

## Congratulations!

Congratulations to Jerry Jackson for his acceptance into Belmont Abby College and scholarship award. Jerry begins classes in January, and remains deeply grateful to FUMC for everyone's prayers and support.



### Christmas Play At Trinity Oaks

In December several members of FUMC performed on stage in the cast of "Christmas at Mistletoe Ridge," at Trinity Oaks. Whitney and Jen were able to attend, and one of the highlights was Frankie Rich playing the Sasquatch believing, yodeling, best friend character!

## Directory Updates



Access the online directory anytime by going to [fumcsalisbury.ctrn.co](http://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.



# ECCLÉSIA

NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



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

