

# ECCLESIA

*July 2020*



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FIRST  
UNITED  
METHODIST  
CHURCH  
SALISBURY, NC  
EST. 1783

## IN THIS ISSUE

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### **On the cover: Our Church Lawn and Steeple**

Church life has changed significantly in the last few months. When we experience such a change it can be an opportunity to revisit questions like, "What is the essence of worship? Who is God calling us to be in the future? How can we use our resources in effective ways?" Pastor Mark's 'Remarks' and Pastor Stacey's 'Devotional for the Times' encourage us to ask ourselves these questions.

### **Page 6: A Devotional from Bob Harkrader**

Beloved member Bob Harkrader has been missed by the church since his passing last year. Recently a friend of Bob's shared a devotional message that he dictated to her back in August of 2019. The church staff were touched by his words and wanted to share them with everyone. It was written as a message for the Men's Prayer Breakfast.

### **Page 7: Recognizing our College Graduates**

First United Methodist Church is blessed to know so many brilliant graduates, from our high school graduates who were recognized in the June Ecclesia, to our college grads recognized by name in this edition of the newsletter. We congratulate the college class of 2019-2020 and celebrate with them!

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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The Reverend Doctor Mark Conforti, *Senior Pastor*  
The Reverend Stacey Lundy, *Associate Pastor*  
Mrs. Becca Blackmon, *Business Administrator*  
Mrs. Christine Maloney, *Administrative Assistant*  
Ms. Jen Fogt, *Director of Youth Ministries*  
Mr. Mike Fansler, *Building Superintendent*  
Mrs. Bailee Weisensel, *Director of Children's Ministries*

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*Pastoral Counseling, Sanctuary Counseling Group*  
Mrs. Donna Fredrick,  
*Lead Teacher of After-School Child Care Program*  
Mrs. Kelly Austin,  
*Director of Preschool*  
Ms. Beth Yelvington,  
*Lead Teacher of Summer Day Camp*

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Kellyhaustin@gmail.com  
Summercamp@fumcsalisbury.org

Contact the Child Development Center

CDC@fumcsalisbury.org

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Facebook: First United Methodist Church Salisbury  
Instagram: fumcsalisbury

# REMARKS

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The worship of God is central to the Church's identity and activity. Not being able to worship in the customary ways has been quite an experience for the Church universal, including First United Methodist Church of Salisbury, during these recent months. As you well know, leaders in our church have been praying, meeting, and discussing the best ways to go about re-entering the Sanctuary for worship. When we do, we will not "start from scratch," although we are pressing a "RESET" button.

As we do, what are some key components to remember?

## **Worship is About God**

The Christian faith professes faith in God, the holy Trinity. God acts, and humanity responds. The word "faith" points to a trusting response to the God of all creation. So when it comes to worship, what is spoken, heard, read, or sung ought to be in response to God's glorious love. The worship experience can offer people a clearer look at God's very character. In an ideal situation, a person leaves a worship experience with a better understanding of God; in turn, this propels the worshiper into the week ahead with inspiration, strength, and hope to live a faithful life in right relationship with God.

## **Worship is Not About Us**

By God's grace, all people are invited into a life of faith that brings true joy. So it's no surprise that people have strong emotions tied to worship. But let's be clear: the worship experience is not intended to make you happy like a theater performance does. We can see where the confusion comes. In both a sanctuary and a theater, we sit in seats along with other people; we face the front; we stay quiet and pay attention; also there's a start, a story arc, and a finish. At the end of the theater performance, we tell others our judgment. "That was good," or "I liked that," can be heard. Others say, "that was terrible," causing them to show up the next time with their arms folded and waiting to be impressed. So let's remember – worship is not about us. Worship is about God.

## **Worship is Engaging**

During a worship experience, people are invited to participate. Yes, it's possible to disengage, to make a grocery list, to start Googling whatever pops into your mind or whatever. When this happens, a person is not present, even though he or she is seated in the sanctuary. Being engaged in worship is totally different than being entertained. If worship were about us, then you would passively watch the show. Nonetheless, we seek to engage our minds, our hearts, our hands, and indeed our entire lives. With the COVID-19 precautions, we will not be able to engage in the ways we deeply appreciate, such as singing. Thus when we re-enter the sanctuary for in-person worship services, we will purposefully create worship elements to connect you to God and one another.

## **Worship is Communal**

Being together blesses us. God seems to have designed humanity in this way, and it's become increasingly evident during the pandemic. Worship ties us together as we are drawing closer to God. Together we are comforted. Together we are challenged. And this energizes us to be dispersed into the world to love and serve in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.



May you worship God in Spirit and truth,

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*Pastor Mark*

# A DEVOTIONAL FOR THE TIMES FROM PASTOR STACEY

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## FIRST WEEK OF JULY

Find a candle and light it.

READ: Genesis 1:1-4

*"In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness."*



God's Spirit hovers over chaotic, confused waters to create, to establish.

Take a moment and write down all the places where you are feeling chaos in your heart, or seeing chaos in our world, knowing God honors your prayerful reflection.

God's work ends up separating the light from the darkness. Anne Frank wrote, "Look how a single candle can both defy and define the darkness."

Keep on the lookout for the ways that the light of God continues to shine into places of chaos that you've named for something to be revealed.

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## SECOND WEEK OF JULY

READ: Matthew 7:24-27

*"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!"*

*My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ the solid rock I stand,  
all other ground is sinking sand.*



My Hope is Built | United Methodist Hymnal 368

Hindsight is 20/20 as they say. 2020 is turning out to be a year we will turn over and over in our hearts and minds. This week, take some time to process what you can see as you look backwards.

- What are you grieving? We have lost people, time, events, and plans.
  - Is your spiritual house built on the rock? Are there areas you are finding were built on sand?
  - Are there fears or worries you were holding that now seem dim, irrelevant, or small?
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## THIRD WEEK OF JULY

READ: John 14:5-6

*"Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?'  
Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"*

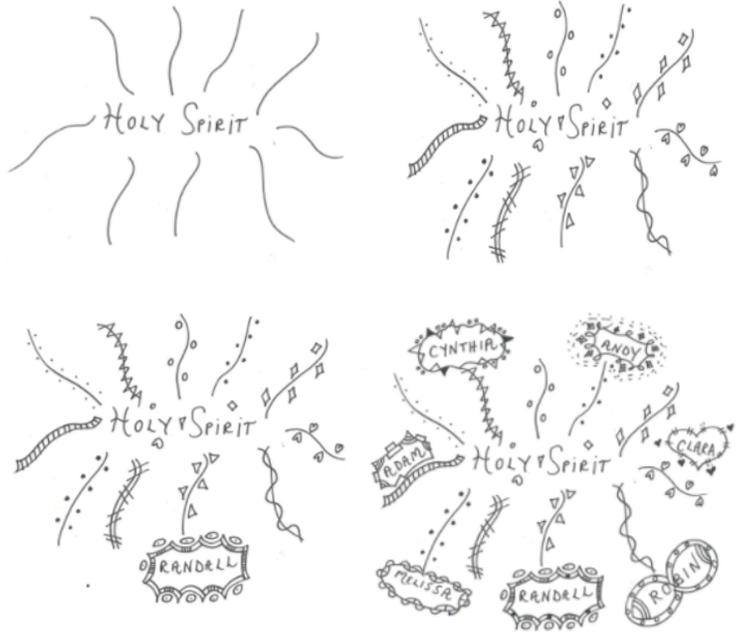
In chaos, we must let God do the work of carrying the weight of the world (a task we were ill-suited for to begin with). We may not know how to pray, or what to hope for. But God knows. Chaos is the time to listen to God for Insight.

# DEVOTIONAL CONTINUED

## PRAYER PRACTICE: Praying with color

- 1) On a piece of paper, write your name for God. Draw a shape around it or just start to doodle. The drawing becomes a prayer space.
- 2) Continue to add marks and shapes. Focus on the name you chose. If words come, pray them; if not, enjoy the silence.
- 3) To pray for a person, write their name on the page. Draw around it. Add color if you'd like. Keep drawing as you release the person into God's care.
- 4) Add other people or situations to your drawing. Think of each stroke of your pen as a prayer for them.

Take a breath or say "Amen" between each person.



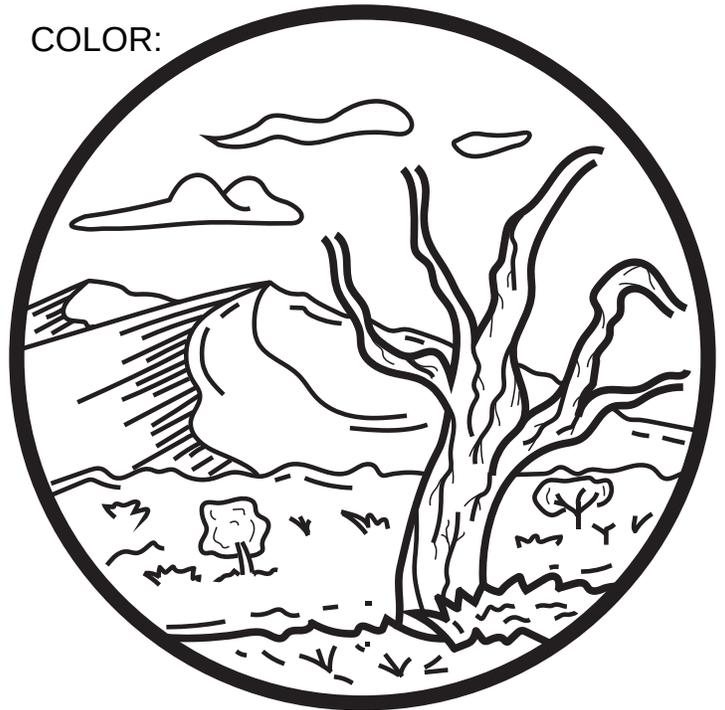
## FOURTH WEEK OF JULY

READ: Psalm 43

*"O send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.... Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God."*

The Psalmist cries out to God here in times of trouble, and requests God's light and truth to draw them to God. In the midst of chaos and uncertainty, God's story grounds us. We can look for hindsight, insight, and foresight. We know God's end goal: redemption of all creation.

COLOR:



- How do you think God is at work now for the sake of this future to come?
- Where do you think God is calling you?
- How do you think God is calling First United Methodist Church?

We want to know:

- What things should remain the same (because God has revealed them as essential)?
- What things should change?
- What needs to be birthed in this new era?

Pray for foresight.

# THE RE-ENTRY TEAM



## The Team, The Preparation, The Plan

During this time apart, the church has never closed... but oh how we have missed meeting together inside the building. As we prepare to resume in-person worship (date is to be determined) a team has been put together to help prepare us for the transition.

Plans have been put in place to take all the precautions we can as our community continues to see new cases of COVID-19.

The re-entry task force has been working on a video that will be published and distributed on the church website and YouTube pages to help everyone prepare to come back to worship!

Look for the CPR (Congregation Preparation for Re-Entry) video for all the details!



# A DEVOTIONAL FROM MR. BOB HARKRADER

*This devotional was dictated on Tuesday, August 27, 2019 after Bob moved to Trinity Oaks. This is Bob's only devotional not given at his beloved Men's Prayer Breakfast. At Trinity Oaks, Bob's preferred spot was near the window in the dining room.*

"There was not much to see: one side of Building D with a sidewalk and a few shrubs. But in the far corner of Building D, there ran a rainpipe, and low and behold, about four feet from the ground where the pipe runs down, a little plant had started to grow in the tiny crack, and is growing today. The plant is about two feet high, one small stem and about every two inches, leaves branch out. I sit and marvel at this tiny plant's perseverance to grow. There is no soil. The sun shines on it maybe an hour or two in the late evening.



So we begin to catch a glimmer of that great power that encompasses the whole world. And if it can do this much for a tiny almost inconceivable seed, just think of what it can do for us. What it has done for us throughout our lives.

I am almost ninety-eight years old. Sitting watching this plant grow for such a short time, against all odds, has added new meaning to my life, for it has given me new inspiration. We are never too old to learn new things. And we are never too old for God's wonderful grace to touch. This is only one instance of God's grace; a small one because He has touched so many lives in so many ways.

So I would say, if I were giving this devotion to the Men's Prayer Breakfast, for each one of you to take a moment to think about the miracles that can happen in any person's life. We are all fortunate that this wonderful Spirit of God can touch us at any moment of our lives.

I thank God for all my blessings, for all those persons who have been part of my life and have touched it in so many ways. And so, saying these words, may each one of us rest in peace, love, and wisdom and realize that God is with us in all we think, say, and do. Amen."

*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. - John 21:18, KJV*

# CELEBRATING OUR COLLEGE GRADUATES

## *Congratulations* TO OUR COLLEGE GRADUATES IN THE CLASS OF 2020

### WESLEY FAZIA

GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
WITH A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN SPORTS MANAGEMENT  
AND A MINOR IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

### KELLY FISHER

GRADUATE OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY  
WITH HIGHEST DISTINCTION,  
MASTER OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOL COUNSELING

### AMY FOOTE

GRADUATE OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY  
WITH HIGHEST DISTINCTION,  
MASTER OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOL COUNSELING

### MATTHEW LANGFORD

GRADUATE OF APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
SUMMA CUM LAUDE WITH A BACHELOR OF MUSIC  
IN MUSIC EDUCATION

### CASSIDY NOONER

GRADUATE OF APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
WITH A BACHELOR OF MUSIC IN MUSIC THERAPY  
AND MINOR IN PSYCHOLOGY

### AMELIA STEINMAN

GRADUATE OF NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY  
WITH A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN FASHION TEXTILE MANAGEMENT AND  
CONCENTRATION IN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

### WILL STEINMAN

GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
WITH A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION WITH A CONCENTRATION IN FINANCE  
AND MINOR IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

### SPENCER STOREY

GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
WITH A BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ECONOMICS

*If you have graduated with an Associates, Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degree in the last year, and we missed recognizing you in this edition of the Ecclesia, please contact Jen ([jenni@fumcsalisbury.org](mailto:jenni@fumcsalisbury.org)) to let us know!*

# CHURCH HISTORY

*"Looking back, moving forward"*

The first Methodist settlers arrived in New York and Maryland in the mid-1750s. Within a hundred years Methodism had grown into our country's largest Protestant denomination. Scholars give different reasons for that rapid and remarkable transformation. They point to John Wesley's theology that combined personal holiness with a strong missional imperative. Church administrators note Wesley's organizational genius that effectively deployed and supervised itinerate preachers. Yet most importantly Methodist expansion can be traced to its effective use of small groups or societies.



'The Holy Club' at Oxford

Methodists in a limited geographic area would covenant together in a society to watch over one another in love. Anyone who wanted to "flee from the wrath to come" could join. These societies were private gatherings with fluid memberships. A person remained a member as long as they attended the meetings and obeyed the society's strict spiritual discipline.

What originally began as a gathering of "a few young gentlemen" at Oxford University quickly grew into lay led societies across England. Members attended the Anglican Church service on Sunday mornings and a Methodist worship service conducted by itinerate lay preachers on Sunday afternoon. As these societies grew, Wesley divided them into smaller groups called classes. Each class consisted of twelve members along with a class leader. Every society member belonged to a class. Each class included both men and women.

Some class members also belonged to even smaller groups of four to six people called bands. Membership in a band was segregated by gender and marital status. Only those who had experienced remission of their sins could join. While class membership was required, membership in a band was optional.

America's first Methodists quickly organized themselves into lay led societies and classes. The First Methodist preachers assigned by Wesley did not arrive until 1769. Methodism in Salisbury traces its birth to a class formed in 1783. In December of the following year, American Methodists officially reorganized as a church and the societies became churches. The new churches, however, retained much of the small group character of the earlier societies. The Methodist Episcopal Church flourished as a small group lay led ministry with a circuit riding pastor providing occasional preaching.

Small group ministries are the heart and soul of Methodism. Today our church has Sunday school classes for all ages as well as Kids Connection for K-3 graders, Club 45 for 4th & 5th graders, Salisbury Youth for grades 6-12, co-ed Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA, plus Girl Scouts, and a Methodist Connection senior citizens group. We have an active United Methodist Women's organization, craft group, and men's prayer breakfast. Our church sponsors short term study groups, mission teams, social concerns groups, and a Sunday Lunch Bunch. Our Covenant Groups, in particular, bear the marks of early class and band meetings. They meet regularly in groups of 5-8 to ask "How is it with your soul?" We have had several meet over the past few years- if you'd like to join one, contact Pastor Stacey or visit <http://www.fumcsalisbury.org/covenant-groups.html>.

As the coronavirus pandemic limits large gatherings, lay initiated small groups are emerging within our church family. That is a good thing. These small groups have the potential to ignite a season of growth that will match or surpass our founding century.

Fred Jordan, Church Historian

# PRESCHOOL

We have wrapped up another wonderful year of preschool (although not the way we thought we would)! Instead of class parties and end of year programs we had to celebrate in socially distant ways. Our four year old class received their certificates and Pastor Mark presented them with their Bibles in a drive through graduation ceremony.

Our two and four year olds also had a chance to stop by the preschool to say goodbye to their teachers too. It was so good to get to see everyone!

We would like to thank Patsy Langlais for her service as our director for the past two years. Patsy has decided to focus on her passion, which is teaching. We are blessed to have her in our four year old class! We are still taking applications for our older and our younger two year old classes.

If you have any preschool questions, please call director Kelly Austin (336) 722-9260.



# INTER-GENERATIONAL MINISTRY

## Yoga on the Lawn

Taking care of our bodies helps us take care of our minds and our spiritual selves as well. One Saturday in June an inter-generational group of women gathered on the church lawn to practice yoga.

We left feeling refreshed and more relaxed - something all of us could use during this time! We plan to schedule more yoga classes in the future and all are welcome!

*(Circles were created with trustees approval using marking paint to encourage participants to distance responsibly)*



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 1** Susan Cooley  
Kathryn Welborn  
Samantha Zerger
- 2** KC Culler  
Grace Douglas  
Bess Johnson
- 3** Ralph Baker  
Robert Slife  
Jason Walser
- 4** Reid Acree  
Lisa Clark  
Lindsey Conrad
- 5** Jeanne Wilber
- 6** Tim Nussman
- 7** Lori Burke  
Joel Goodwin  
Kathryn Johnson  
Peggy Lutz
- 8** Luke Grenoble
- 9** Linda Barnes  
Benton Kribbs  
Peggy McDaniel
- 10** Wayne Koontz  
Will Webb, IV
- 11** Charlotte Cherry
- 12** Mary Katherine Clark  
Kim Etters  
John McCoy  
Beth Stout
- 13** Kenneth Kolkebeck
- 14** Robert Anderson, Jr.  
William Shaffer  
Betty-Bonner Steele
- 15** Alan Burke  
Katie Crider  
Jacob Grenoble  
Patricia Stewart
- 16** Andrea Cordts-Bassinger  
Giles Goodman  
Larry Gouge  
Cindy Noell
- 17** Carol Bachl  
Parker Cox  
Dempsey Rowland  
Margaret Tucker
- 18**
- 19** Grady Rogers  
Sarah Seifert
- 20** Declan Fisher  
Anne Goodman
- 21** Richard Hodgkin  
Tina Smith
- 22** Nancy Holshouser
- 23** Doug Sokolowski
- 24** John Hudson  
Steve Schoch
- 25** Lauren Cook  
Haley Watts
- 26** Chelsea Franzese  
James Howe  
Melanie Miller
- 27** Jaudon Cline  
Susan Eldridge  
Tonya Huffman  
Sean Malone  
Joyce Miner  
Carmen Shepler
- 28** Caroline Johnsen  
Brenda Loflin  
Marilyn Whittington
- 29** Elizabeth Dole  
Laura Johnson  
T.H. Langford  
Connor Price  
Daryce Rimmer
- 30**
- 31** Daniel Allen  
Amy Foote  
Kim Howard  
Jean Maynard  
John Murphy  
Adam Spencer



# FUMC FAMILY AND EXTENDED FAMILY TRANSITIONS

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## *In Celebration*

*We rejoice alongside the families experiencing the blessing of new life*

**COSBY KATHERINE SPENCER**

*Parents: Adam & Colin Spencer*

Born May 4, 2020

**ISABELLE ALEXANDRIA MCMILLAN**

*Parents: Amanda & Corey McMillan*

Born June 18, 2020

**SAM RICHARD ELDRIDGE**

*Parents: Thomas & Mallory Eldridge*

Born June 22, 2020

## A NOTE FROM BECCA, OUR BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

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Thank you for your faithfulness and commitment to your church!

This congregation never ceases to amaze me! Just to give you a brief overview:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Tithes &amp; Offerings</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
April	\$127,314	\$37,870
May	\$50,561	\$22,510
June	\$47,840	\$40,840

The PPP loan our church received in April is greatly responsible for our low expenses. The PPP loan will pay staff salaries and taxes in the month of July, and that will officially be the end of these benefits. If it were not for the PPP Loan than our expenses would have been increased by \$91,478.43 to date. This figure is a little concerning considering that we have not yet paid our Apportionment. Throughout the years, the pattern shows the summer months to be difficult on the church finances, due to lower totals for offerings with continued expenses. We have always managed in the past, but this is a different kind of time we find ourselves experiencing. Many new challenges face us each day and I am asking that all who are able continue supporting the church during the summer months. We remain open and available to all people in the congregation and community who need the church's help.

## DIRECTORY UPDATES

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*Please note the following changes in your directory:*

**John and Terri Carnes**

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**Barbara Safley**

(704)603-9233

**Anne Wilson**

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**Mr. & Mrs. James Duke**

729 Mocksville Ave.  
Salisbury, NC 28144

# ECCLESIA

NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

