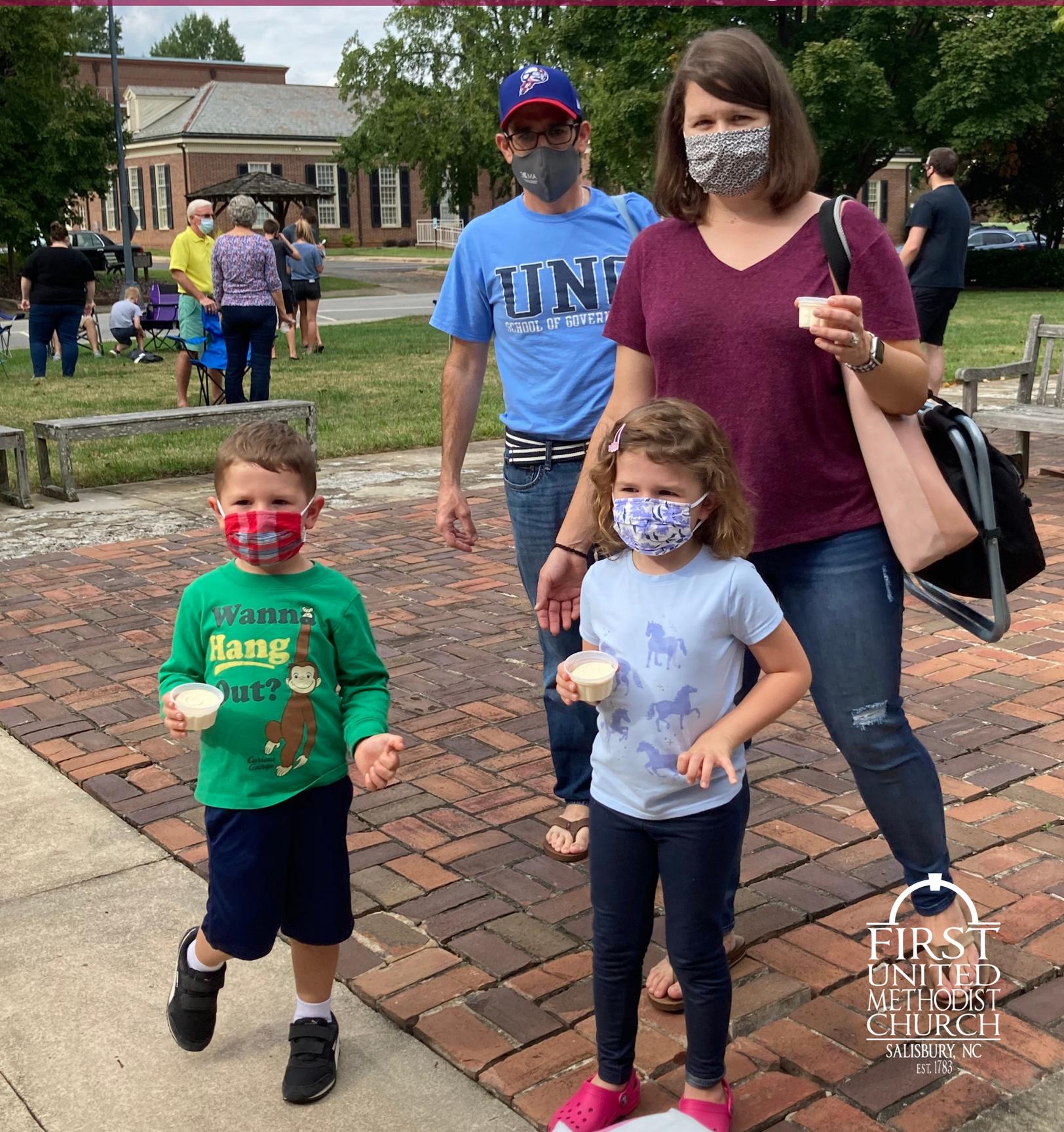


ECCLESIA

October 2020



FIRST
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH
SALISBURY, NC
EST. 1783

IN THIS ISSUE



On the cover: Ice Cream Social

We had a wonderful time on the lawn enjoying one another's company and of course - ice cream! Look for more pictures on page 7. The Franzese family is featured on the cover.

Page 5: Stewardship Campaign

Our annual stewardship campaign is an opportunity to prayerfully support our church. A note from the Stewardship chairperson can be found on page 5. Letters and pledge cards will be mailed in early October. Please remember to return your pledge card to the church by Monday October 19.

Pages 8-9: Family Camp Out and Fall Festival

The Family Camp Out and Fall Festival are both happening in October! These inter-generational events are exciting opportunities to have some fun outdoors with the church. Both events will require you to sign up in advance so that we can be mindful of numbers and social distancing.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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Rev. Garry Cook M.Div. LCSW,
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
Mrs. Courtney Bost
Lead Teacher/Director of Child Development Center

Gdcook@triad.rr.com
Afterschool@fumcsalisbury.org
Kellyhaustin@gmail.com
Summercamp@fumcsalisbury.org
CDC@fumcsalisbury.org

www.fumcsalisbury.org | 704.636.3121 | 217 South Church Street
Facebook: First United Methodist Church Salisbury
Instagram: fumcsalisbury

REMARKS

We can all use a laugh these days. Try this one...
Why do golfers wear two pairs of pants?
Before I tell you the punchline, let's be real about life.

Life's challenges always have a way of hardening us, and that is especially true in recent months. Making our way through the pandemic has caused us to be weary. Watching unreal news stories has caused us to be deeply saddened. Listening to the national debate over civil rights, the economy, healthcare, and education has caused us bewilderment, even wondering where we belong. Mix in some violent action along with violent rhetoric. What's the result? A need to laugh!

Did you know that laughing is good for your physical health? According to the Mayo Clinic, laughter has many benefits (www.mayoclinic.org). For starters, laughter can help a person experience relief from stress, because the stressor is temporarily not the focus of attention. The experience cools down the stress response, which benefits one's heart rate and blood pressure. Have you ever noticed that when you laugh, not only is your mental load lightened, but also it helps bring positive physical changes, too? Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, which stimulates many organs. Also, there is real medical evidence showing how laughter improves your immune system, relieves pain, and improves your mood. We have all experienced this. We know it to be true. Then why do we get so dour when it comes to religion?

I suspect that it comes from our sense of reverence. We inherited it. For those of us who grew up in the church, it started when we were made to sit still and be quiet. A stern look from mother – or even worse, grandmother! – was all we needed to straighten up. Sometimes a candy bribe operated here. I am curious about what motivated the adults who kept this rolling. Was it a sincere desire to bring about devout holiness within the children? Or a fear that their family would get a reputation? Maybe, if we're being honest, a mix of the two? Whatever the motivation, a definition of reverence developed that insisted upon a stiff facial expression, leaving little room for laughter.

What would faith look like if you laughed more, especially if you laughed with fellow Christians? No, we will not replace liturgy with a Saturday Night Live sketch. And yes, we need to take seriously the real problems we are all facing, for the sake of bringing God's healing love to our community. I think we can lighten up a little bit, though. It just might help the message connect! After all, as Elton Trueblood (who spoke at our church in the early 1970s) wrote in his book, The Humor of Christ, our Lord Jesus Christ used irony and exaggeration in his teaching. For example, remember Jesus' teaching on hypocrisy, talking about a beam in a person's eye (Matthew 7:5). "The humor of Christ is employed," wrote Trueblood, "only because it is a means of calling attention to what would, without it, remain hidden or unappreciated. Truth, and truth alone, is the end (page 52)."

I believe that we can be real about life's challenges, and face the future unafraid by the power of Holy Spirit. By God's grace, you can know the truth, and the truth shall set you free – free to laugh! May our desire for truth not make us dull, but lead us to enjoy life abundantly (John 10:10).

Grace and peace,
Pastor Mark

P.S. Why do golfers wear two pairs of pants?
In case they get a hole-in-one.



OUTREACH AND CARING

Care Package Project Update

We were able to pack and deliver 34 Fall Care Packages! Thank you to all who provided items of care and comfort. Those receiving packages consistently expressed joy that the church cares for and is thinking of them. We've heard lots of comments like, "Thank you for the gift. I can use everything in it!" and "I am blessed to have such caring people in my church."



Rowan Helping Ministries Food Packing

FUMC continues to send a team of people to pack food weekly at Rowan Helping Ministries. Back in March RHM experienced a significant (and understandable) decrease in volunteers. Our church has been able to stand in the gap, helping to pack boxes and bags of food for our neighbors.



STEWARDSHIP 2021

From Our Stewardship Committee Chair

Greeting from your Stewardship Committee.

I don't know about you my fellow church members, but I personally will be very happy when 2020 comes to a close. This year has been very challenging for me and I suspect you as well. The Covid 19 Pandemic has changed our lives forever. We have found ourselves isolated from our friends which has given all of us time to think about what's most important in our lives. I believe that out of all that is bad there always comes good. God will always be here for us no matter what.

I feel the church will be stronger than it's ever been once this pandemic is over. The church will adjust to the new world we now live in. We now have live church services that we can watch from our homes each Sunday, which is something that we more than likely would not have otherwise made available to our congregation. This time in history will always be remembered and most historians will say it was a bad time for the world. I believe we Christians have been given a reality check and have been drawn closer to God during this time.

We all love our church and each other. We have great leadership from our pastors, our new music director and from our entire staff.

The 2021 Stewardship Campaign will be unlike any our church has ever experienced. This year you will receive a letter asking for your prayerful support of all the churches ministries. I'm confident that 2021 will be a great year for our church. Please pray for the church we love and ask God to give us cheerful heart.

May God Bless Us and Our Church
Larry Cordts, Stewardship Chair



**PLEASE RETURN YOUR PLEDGE CARD TO BECCA BLACKMON,
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR, BY MONDAY OCTOBER 19.**

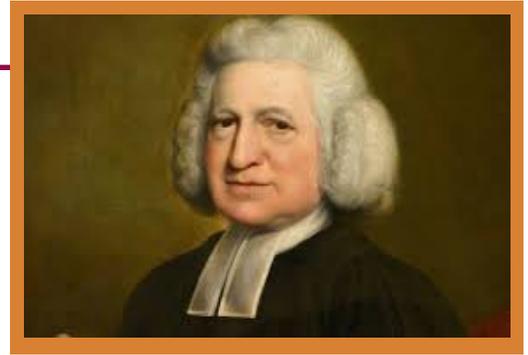


*Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.*
-UMC Hymnal 557

CHURCH HISTORY

"Looking back, moving forward"

Methodists talk a great deal about John Westley. We should. He organized the Methodist movement into a vital spiritual force that transformed eighteenth century England and America. He published sermons and notes on the New Testament that laid a sound theological foundation for our denomination's future.



However, his younger brother, Charles, also played an important role in Methodism that we often overlook. For example, Charles Wesley was actually the first Methodist. Charles invited a few young gentlemen at Oxford University to enter into a disciplined life covenant with him. Other ridiculing students nicknamed them the "Methodists." When his brother John later returned to Oxford as a teacher, he assumed leadership of their little Holy Club.

Charles Wesley avoided the limelight and lived in his big brother's shadow. After graduating from Oxford and taking holy orders, he served as General George Oglethorpe's personal secretary. Americans remember Oglethorpe as the founder of Georgia. Charles convinced his brother John in 1735 to go with him to Georgia as a missionary. At that time Georgia was settled primarily by prisoners released from jail as forgiveness for debts and other minor crimes. It was a difficult experience for Charles living in primitive conditions on Saint Simons Island among disreputable neighbors. He quickly returned home to proper English society. One writer summarized his character saying Charles, "was modest, yet strong-willed; frail, yet a fighter; hot tempered, yet gentle and forbearing; a strict Churchman, yet an ardent Methodist."

In early May of 1738 Charles Wesley had a spiritually transformational experience. A few days later he took his reluctant brother to an Aldersgate prayer meeting in London. There John had his own life-changing, heart-warming experience. The Methodist revival followed and quickly spread through outdoor preaching. Modesty made Charles reluctant to face large crowds. Even so, he developed a remarkable preaching ability. On one occasion he addressed as many as 10,000 listeners.

Charles Wesley's greatest gift to Methodism is his hymns. Our current United Methodist Hymnal contains fifty of his compositions including "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing," and "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today." We will look more closely at his hymns in future Ecclesia articles.

Charles Wesley's hymns put his brother's theology into verse. To this day Methodists sing our theology. During months of Covid-19 confinement, we have missed those hymns. Even if you do not have a good singing voice, making a joyful noise unto the Lord lifts your heart to God. As John Wesley admonished in his directions for singing, "If [singing] is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing."

First United Methodist Church is fortunate to welcome our new director of music Joshua Starnes. He arrives well qualified for this key leadership role. Joshua of Old Testament fame blew his horn and the walls of Jericho fell (Joshua 6:20). In the tradition of Charles Wesley we believe our Joshua will use both piano and organ to fill the walls of our church with praise and glory. It is our Methodist heritage.

Fred Jordan, Church Historian

ICE CREAM SOCIAL



FAMILY CAMPOUT



Family Camping

What says 'fall' more than a campfire and s'mores? We're excited to offer this camping opportunity to families of all ages across the church. The inter-generational camp out will be a chance for families to have fun and sleep under the stars.

Camping is \$30 per family, plus \$15 per person for anyone who wants to use the climbing wall and zipline.

Sign up for the Family Camp Out on the church website under Connect > Fellowship.

CANDY DONATIONS



Collecting Candy Donations

Our Fall Festival is right around the corner. We are in need of peanut free candy donations. Please place all donations in the bin outside of the Volunteer's Office before Wednesday October 28! Thank You!

FALL FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS

Can You Volunteer?

Volunteers needed for Fall Festival on October 28. This church-wide community event to serve families and children all around the area!

Together we will provide a safe and fun alternative for families to celebrate Halloween on our lawn and along Church Street. This is our opportunity to open our church doors, invite the community to connect with us and let them know they are welcome here!

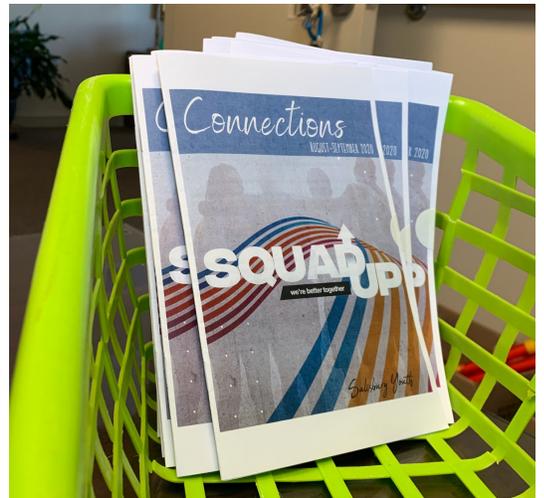


FALL FESTIVAL OCTOBER 28



YOUTH ON THE LAWN

Salisbury Youth is back to meeting in person! At our first in-person meeting since March we were so excited to see one another. We're able to have our 'Chapel time' outside for now, break into small groups for discussion, and play games together. We've also published a devotion booklet for students. Inside are weekly devotions related to our current teaching series as well as Scripture reading challenges and a daily reading guide!



DEVOTIONS FROM PASTOR STACEY

In a time of disrupted rhythms & routines, we must be intentional about forging a rhythm of Sabbath. We encourage you to keep joining in worship on Sunday at 11 via livestream as an intentional, central Sabbath practice. We must be intentional to create Sabbath space, rest, and practice to anchor our day, our week, and our life in God.



Week 1: Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

Colossians 3:14-15

The highest ideal of Christian life is love. Jesus affirmed that the goal of God's law was to point us to twofold love- of God and neighbor. This takes time and effort on our part, but this growth in grace comes only by basking in the love that God shines down upon us. We receive love, and we learn to reflect that love back to God and to neighbor (and even to our self!). This is the idea of Christian Perfection- that over time we may love more perfectly, more truly, more divinely. Learning to love is hard and messy and requires community- but love binds us together while we live together. Blessed be the tie that binds!

- Where do you feel friction between the appeal in Colossians and your daily life? Ask Christ to help 'clothe' those places with the gifts of love and peace.

Week 2: Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.

Hebrews 4:1-16

Have you ever felt the prayers of others lifted for you? Knowing people are calling upon God for you at the time of an important test or procedure, giving thanks for you on your birthday, or upholding you in a time of need is a divine experience. During intercessory prayer in worship, we say, "Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer." One prayer. We are individuals with different things upon our hearts, but yet in prayer we are unified. We pray one prayer together, through Christ Jesus the one High Priest who forever intercedes for us with the Father through the power of the Spirit. It is especially comforting when we are not able to gather as we would like.

- Ask the Spirit who you might pray for this week. Who are you called to be connected to through prayer, even across space?

LORD IN YOUR MERCY
hear our prayer

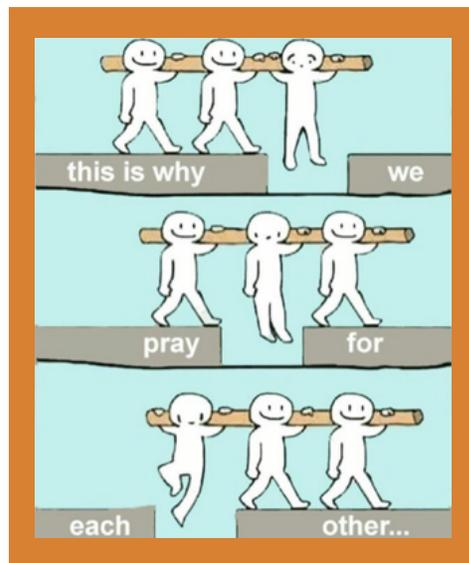
DEVOTIONS FROM PASTOR STACEY

Week 3: We share each other's woes, our mutual burdens bear, and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.

Galatians 6:2

Some may think that showing your "polish" and pedigree is what will earn you respect and connection with others. Those who have studied connection point instead to vulnerability: being open to share your authentic self, your pain, and your joy. Not only does vulnerability allow you to share your self, but allows you to be open to the experiences of others.

The cross that Christ commands us to pick up and follow is heavy. But we do not do this alone, either. Sharing our burdens with one another makes the whole load lighter, not unlike the old 'barn raisings' where the whole community together is able to pick up a load together for the sake of building.



- Are you struggling? Call a friend this week to first listen to their struggle and to share your own. Praying out loud is scary for many people- but perhaps you can even be so bold to pray together about your struggles.

Week 4: When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain but we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

Revelation 21:3-4

One meaning of "binding" is the edging sewn on fabric to lend strength. Think of how a button hole is formed: many loops of thread surround and bind the edges of what would otherwise be a cut in the fabric (prone to tearing further). The tie that binds us- the love of Christ- also binds the edges of our lives such as pain, loss, and grief. Instead of these tearing us completely, the grace of God binds them up for the sake of our salvation.



Salvation is not limited to the certain hope of resurrection and reunification with those we miss on this side of eternity. That hope gives us the freedom to live into the salvation offered to us here and now- the transformation of our affections (including the way that we love) and our actions.

- When we join the local church, we pledge our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. These are signs that Christ's love binds us together, and signs of the work of God in our lives. Stewardship is about all of these aspects of our life. Ask God to show you how to make the next faithful step in prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

SCOUTS

Meeting under the Porte-Cochère

Our Scouts BSA Troop 442 has been carrying on as they have found ways to meet over Zoom, and have now begun meeting in person under the porte-cochère. Scouts were also able to spend a weekend at Camp Barnhardt in September. They look forward to more socially distant hiking, canoeing, and camping this fall.



PRESCHOOL



Back to School

We are excited about our 2020-2021 school year! The children are thrilled to be back at school with their friends!

We have had a couple of staff changes for the upcoming year. In August, after teaching in our 4's class for 14 years, Patsy Langlais has retired. Sarah Masterson has left our 3's preschool class for full time employment. We wish them both well! Though they will be missed, we are pleased to announce the hiring of two qualified teachers. Dena Oldham will be joining our 4's class and Beckie Bane will be with us in the 3's class. Both have been educators in the public schools, we are blessed to have them join our team!



CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Going for a Walk

The children in our child development center recently went for a walk downtown. They enjoyed watching the progress being made as the new park is being built!



AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE

Happy to be Back

Our year is getting off to a good start! We are working with all the challenges 2020 brings and trying to keep everyone as safe as possible.

We have several of the students we had last year and are welcoming four new ones. If you would like to see what we do daily, please let us know. We may be contacted at (704) 433-6679 or afterschool@fumcsalisbury.org We will be glad to show you! We have openings in our program and are open Monday/Tuesday and Thursday/Friday each week. Children can attend on the two days they go to school each week, as in years past with transportation provided, or they can attend all four days we are open. On the days they do not attend school, they may be dropped off at 3:00 when other children arrive.

We are looking forward to a great year! Happy Fall!

"A child's life is like a piece of paper on which every person leaves a mark." ~ Chinese Proverb



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

1 James Duke
Joshua Grenoble

2 Linda Smith

3 Lori Goodnight
J. C. Ludwig
Jim Poteat

4 Mitch Poteat
Trevor Watson

5 Gary Ingram
Ann Ludwig

6 Chris Lanier

7 Patricia Paschall

8 Sally Roberts
Todd Steinman
Dwight Wilhelm, Jr.

9 Robert Gresham

10 Helen Malone
Larry Oldham
Fred Stanback, Jr.

11

12 Tammy Livengood
Dewey Park
Neil Pierce

13 Richard Dissler, Jr.
Rush Rollins
Nate Shaffer

14 Scott Hunt
Carol Ann Duke Young

15 McKinley Rollins

16 Patty Langford

17 Judy Fowler

18 Ed Rusher

19

20 Margaret Rusher

21 Kelly Austin
Rosemary Sokolowski

22

23 Marcia Carter
Megan Leonard
John Whittington

24 Susan Ogle
Autumn Walser

25 John Kribbs
Charles Steinman

26 Ellen Robertson
Tony Nussman

27 Austin Lyle
Millie Weisensel

28 Scott Maphis
Patricia Smith

29 James Calloway
Laura Collins
Steve Hatley
Julia Murphy

30 Lauren Allen
Frances Miller
Peggy Price
Lynda Oldham
Ned Storey

31 Lynne Johnson
Teresa Johnson
William Schoch



FUMC FAMILY AND EXTENDED FAMILY TRANSITIONS

In Remembrance

Please keep these families in your prayers,

MARION HOPPER

Mother of Tonya Huffman

December 13, 1938 - September 1, 2020

CAROL SEBASTIAN WHITE

Wife of Denny White

November 2, 1939 - September 1, 2020

DARRELL ALBERT LEWIS

Father of Christian Lewis

October 13, 1945 - September 14, 2020

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." - Psalm 46:1

THANK YOU NOTES TO THE CHURCH

The United Methodist Women thank all who participated in our Mums for Mission project. All proceeds will be distributed to our UMW local mission projects. This year was our best year on record, selling 345 plants!

Ginny Champion, UMW President



Dear Church, You are so kind! Your 'Happy Fall' box is filled with things to do, things to use, and things to enjoy - everything so usable. Thank you for this gift you put together... it truly is a way of keeping us in touch with our church, and surely a loving outreach. Thank you again!

Sincerely, Betsy Rich

Dear First Methodist, The fall themed gift bag of candies, snacks, devotionals, etc., is still being enjoyed, as all items are on display except the candy; most of it has been consumed; I delight in decorating my outside door and plan to hang the festive "Give thanks" plaque November 1. I appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who proposed this and those who purchased, packed, and delivered.

In His love and mine, Frankie Ritch

A NOTE FROM THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR



At the end of August FUMC received \$40,167.65 for the month. Our expenses totaled \$85,018.47, leaving a month end deficit of (\$44,850.47). The year to date income for the church is \$556,391.45 as of the end of August, and the year to date expenses are \$339,737.47. This has left the church with \$176,540.41 in the bank; however, please keep in mind that included in our year to date income is the money received from the PPP Loan of \$178,000. If you have any questions about church finances you are always welcome to call Becca in the church office!

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please note the following changes in your directory:

K Courtney R Drake

728 Klumac Road

Apt 329C

Salisbury, NC 28144-5750

201-207-2060 - Cellphone

704-897-8891 - Landline (*preferred*)

Betty Slife

slifebetty1@gmail.com

ECCLESIA

NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

