

# THE SALEM VISIONARY

# January 2024

But be Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only. James 1:22

Finishing Well - Starting Strong

#### **Living Into The Movement**

We are coming out of a season of birthing a new movement of God. 2023 was an exciting year for Salem. We celebrated 175 years as a church. We were reinvigorated in launching a new denomination. Reclaiming our roots, we were a part of birthing a movement of God that is transcending all areas of the Globe. We are more today of who we always thought we were and visioning more of what God has called us to be. The challenge for the beginning of this new year is to finish well 2023 and to start strong 2024.

It is necessary to understand the truth if we are to now live into this movement we have been birthing. Finishing well requires evaluation. Take a time to look back over the last year. What is still left undone? Tidy up the little things that may seem insignificant. Finishing well means that even the small things need our attention. Next if we are to finish well we need to forgive. First, forgive yourself. You are not perfect. Forgive others. As long as you hold onto the past, you will live in it. Finishing well requires a healthy round of forgiveness. Jesus led the way. Jesus forgave us. We then have the ability to forgive.

"Without me you can do nothing,"
Jesus said to the Disciples. (John 15:5)

Starting strong is a realization that a movement is birthed and now calls us to live into that movement. It is what God is doing. Living is a movement is an activity that continues in a way it was begun – prayer focused. Set your foundation in prayer as we begin this new year. The second way to start strong is with intentional planning that looks to a "living" witness of what God is doing. It is too easy to do what we have always done. Discovery is our way of living into what God is doing. It is actively seeking God out, listening for His voice. God's way is living.

We live in this moment, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and restored in relationship with God whose Kingdom forever reigns. As witnesses of God's Kingdom restored in us, we, also, witness to the ultimate coming of Christ's Kingdom when all his enemies shall be His footstool.

(Psalm 110:1; Romans 8:34)

Seeking out where the movement is and how to agree with the movement by being a part of the movement, is akin to the Jesus Revolution in California in 1970. People were discovering God again. Discovery requires seeking. A desire to seek comes from a desire to know who you are and for what purpose you exist. Fulfilling life is part of the movement. The movement is a moment in the expanse of time. Each and every moment is as important as another.

"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter." Proverbs 25: 2

The movement is lived out particularly unique to each individual and is yet still a connected part of the whole. Living out the movement flows from Christ in you the hope of glory and then connected into a body of believers that presents a supernatural expression of the Kingdom of God in this moment. It is LIVING from **moment** to **moment** that makes it a **MOVEMENT**.

Our lives are a constant, consistent seeking out the things of God. When we celebrate the discovery of what we uniquely have been given as a unique creation of God, we are expressing the divine. Discovery never stops. God is a God of increase and more. The MOVEMENT is always growing and living into the movement in the moment. When the moment becomes a monument, it is no longer a movement.

"Movements that become monuments are a failure of disciples instilling relationships back with the initiator of the movement."

Pastor Gil Wise

We are in the midst of God's timeline. God has birthed a movement in a last day's outpouring of His Spirit. Birthing is just the beginning. Living in the movement is a culture and lifestyle of the Christian. We have encountered the Almighty God. We will never be the same. God is always creating new and in a relationship with God we are living the movement. Make 2024 be an extension of the birthing of the movement by living into the movement with a prayer-focused life of actively making disciples for Jesus Christ.

Winning Them to Jesus, Pastor Gil Wise

#### Salem Choir

Salem Chancel Choir finished the year 2023 with the presentation of the gospel cantata "Joy". We enjoyed rehearsing and improving various aspects of singing in a choir. I believe the choir has improved in overall sound and balance. New singers joined the choir; Conrad Kurtz, Beverly Landrum, and Noel Reeves.

We look forward to a new year with exciting musical selections to uplift and glorify God with our expressions of joy, love and musicality.



## Nursery

Happy New Year! Looking for a place to serve at Salem? We would love to have you join in rotation with our other wonderful volunteers! You must be 18 years of age to join us. If you would like to join this ministry, please let me know or the office.

Betty Ann Crawford



2023 has been an amazing year for Salem Kids! We have painted pottery, went bowling, searched for gold on St. Patty's Day, hunted Easter eggs, played games at the arcade, traveled to outer space for VBS, dressed our best for Fall Festival, and celebrated Christmas by packing Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes and building gingerbread houses and eating yummy treats and so much more!!

Our A to Z in the Bible curriculum was so great and the Salem Kids learned so much! Getting back to the basics by introducing important people in the Bible allowed the students to better understand the Bible and the stories that it holds.

My life changed in 2023 as well because I married Caleb Peterson on November 11, 2023! I am excited to have him join me and help with Salem Kids. Thank you to my church family for the love, support, and prayers that you have blessed us with.

I am looking forward to the wonderful things they will do in 2024! To start the new year off, Salem Kids Night will be January 10 and 24th!

For February, Salem Kids will be the 7th and 21st in the Lower Fellowship Hall from 6 pm until 7 pm. Our Valentine's Celebration will be February 11th during Children's Church. During Salem's Valentine's Dinner on February 10, I will be providing childcare and throwing another Valentine's Celebration where we will be having dinner, exchanging Valentine's cards and so much more!

Stay caught up with all of our activities on Facebook and Instagram!









Happy New Year!!!

December was a fun filled month of crafts, parties and Christmas theme weeks. On Wednesday, December 6th we had an unannounced State inspection and we are happy to report we passed with zero violations.

On Friday December 8th we had our first ever "Not So Silent Night". We had over 250 family and friends in attendance. The children sang songs, had cookies and visited with Santa. A great time was had by all.

We are continuing to grow in numbers and currently have 97 children enrolled. We have a few slots open in our 3 year old room. SMASH kids had a great Christmas break with crafts, movies and pajama day.

We look forward to the new year and special events planned. Thank you for your continued support in our childcare programs.

Blessings,

Denise Kirkwood



#### Home Church Kids

We hope everyone had a WONDERFUL Christmas celebrating with your families and friends! The Home Church kids did a lot of Christmas crafts in December, as we learned about the story of Jesus' birth. In the month of January we will talk about Romans 12:6! Ms. Rachel joined us last month, and we are blessed to have her help as we grow! Spread the word, we want more children to join us for Home Church!

Lauren Wise



The youth had a great time in December, though we met less than we would have liked between holiday traditions and massive storms.

We are most thankful for the Davis, Beard, and Notto families for hosting our Christmas party, filled with Christmas bingo, the cup game filled with prizes, the saran wrap ball, cookie decorating, and lots more fun to be had.

We had a lot of fun helping Salem Kids with their Christmas play, and spreading the "GOOD NEWS" as the angels (even if you could only hear Maverick and Shelton).

2023 was an amazing year full of growth and camaraderie, and we look forward to 2024 as we seek to plant deeper roots so we can grow further upward towards where God wants us to be.

Thank you Salem family for a fantastic year, I cannot wait to see what the future holds!

Shelton Burkart







## Prayer Ministry

As I was looking for a verse from the Word for this article, I read Hebrew 4:16: Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

I got to thinking, not only should I come boldly to the throne of grace but I should do so with bold prayers. So my bold prayer at the beginning of this new year is that all of us pray for one another, that we usher in the New Year with a prayer revival at Salem, that we pray that those in the North, South, East and West come to know our Lord and Savior and that He shows us how we can bring His love to them.

#### Prayer Ministry Opportunities

- Pray for Gil in the Prayer Room during his sermons on Sunday mornings. So far, I only someone for Jan 14th.
- Beginning the week of Jan 8th, the Prayer Room will not be open Monday mornings. I will, however, open it Wednesdays at 10:00 before our morning Bible studies which resume Wednesday, Jan 16th at 11:00. It will continue to be open on Thursday mornings from 7 AM until 9 AM and on Sunday mornings before Sunday School.

#### <u>Joint Opportunities with Mt. Zion</u> Cafe Zion January 9th and 23rd.

- Those that wish to help make the hot chocolate and load supplies, please be at Salem abound 1:00, in the kitchen. Those that wish only to volunteer in the car line, we assemble in the Mt. Zion parking lot at 1:45. We are usually finished around 3:00.
- Prayer and a Biscuit at Armstrong. The next date for this should be Jan 9th. We meet in the library at 7 AM and are usually finished around 8 AM.

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Welcome 2024! And let's all pray bold prayers for we have a bold God who wants to hear from us!

Let us continue support one another in prayer! Pat Lyons

## Barbeque 2024

Put it on your calendars!!!

March 22, 2024!!

This is the day for our Annual BBQ
fundraiser. Let me know if you would like
to volunteer! This is always a great day of
fellowship and community outreach!

Betty Ann Crawford

# Salem Methodist Church



FRIDAY • 11AM - 6:30PM

**MARCH 22, 2024** 

BBQ Pork or Chicken Breast
Slaw • Baked Beans • Hush Puppies
Desserts Available for Sale

Eat In or Take Out

Tickets \$10

Delivery Available
On 10 Plates or More

910-483-8959 info@salemfnc.org 2165 Middle Rd • Eastover, NC First Principles: Scripture as Primary Source

## Salem Methodist is Home to a Theology School

In 2008, while at Solid Rock UMC, Pastors Gil and Mike formed Solid Rock School of Theology. The School is a 501c3 Non-Profit Corporation listed with North Carolina's Department of The Secretary of State. It is authorized by the State of North Carolina (via the University of North Carolina's Board of Governors) to grant degrees for the purpose of religious vocation. Pastor Gil is the Chancellor, and Pastor Mike is the Dean of The School.

The initial purpose of its existence for Pastors Gil and Mike was to combat the spirit of antiintellectualism in the marginalized of society. The average person in this cross-section of humanity cannot afford to go to college, and for many, the object of life is simple survival, not striving for a college degree. The School offers quality degree programs for a very affordable price. Education is key in improving the quality of life. Recently, another realization has been recognized concerning the purpose for the school; namely, that many seminaries and schools of study are not offering programs based on biblical principles of God's worldview, but social agendas and political points of view. Solid Rock School of Theology is grounded in the Methodist notions of Scriptural and Social Holiness, and all programs are geared in that light. It is a tool in the hand of God to help inform one's sense of calling. The School's mission statement is, simple: Faith with Reason. The "home and classrooms for The School have moved around with Pastor Mike, depending on where he was appointed, over the years. With Salem's gracious installment of Pastor Mike as Associate of Biblical Studies, The School of Theology, also, calls Salem "home." From here, The School can more effectively offer Associate, Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral degrees in Theology to any and all seeking a deeper and richer relationship with Theology Proper (i.e., God, and God; 's rescuing act within humanity in the person of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit).

The School of Theology is undergoing a relaunch of classes in a new catalog of courses. Look for more information in the upcoming months. The Bible Study on Ezekiel beginning January 16 will give you a good introduction to the level of courses that you can expect from the School of Theology.

Rev. Dr. Mike Bass, Pastor of Biblical Studies

### Family Promise

Salem's Mission to Homeless Families

Salem's Winter week of service was Dec 24-30. We provided for four families; 13 total folks. In this group the majority of the children are teenagers (5). One is preschool and two are elementary school aged. Five parents rounded out this group. Salem provides funds for food (they cook) and utilities & insurance and essentials for the week. Each family has their own room and share a kitchen at this facility. Funds are requested to support this four week a year project; one week a season.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in various forms.

1 Peter 4:10

### Food Pantry

THANKS to Black's Chapel Methodist Church & M Williams Middle School-BETA Club for their donations during December.

We were able to ABUNDANTLY BLESS approx. 10 families per week. Turkeys & trimmings "were trotting" out of Salem Dec 14 & 21. Folks send a BIG THANK YOU to Salem congregation for this much-needed food.

I have been impressed with the urgency of doing.
Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is
not enough; we must do.
Leonardo da Vinci







#### Juanita Warren Group

#### **SCHOOLS SUPPLIES NEEDED**

The Juanita Warren Group will be collecting school supplies for Armstrong Elementary School students throughout the month of January 2024. We did not do a supply drive at the beginning of the year because we felt there would be a greater need during the second half of the year. (At the beginning of the year there were many school supplies giveaways throughout the area, and supplies were drastically reduced at most retail stores, giving the students more opportunities to obtain things they needed for school.)

We appreciate your generosity and participation in this worthwhile effort. You can leave supplies in the office or you can make a monetary donation by designating your donation for "School Supplies."

Thank you so much for your help! Bonnie Crabtree

# CLEANING CREW CHRISTMAS TREAT TRAYS



THANKS to: Amy B., Bonnie C., Catherine G., Charleen W., Daphne H., Debbie M., & Denise S.

(hey – all first names start with A, B, C, or D) for providing treats and/or bakery items for our Cleaning Crew!



The Longest Night Service was led by the Salem Stephen Ministers on Thursday, December 21st, the winter solstice. The winter solstice is historically important because people were dependent on monitoring the progress of the seasons for survival. This was a healing service for the holidays that led from darkness to light

This day is the shortest day and the longest night of the year, reminding us how much darkness must exist before dawn can break through once more into lightness at daybreak. It was a service to acknowledge that pain is a part of life. The Advent Wreath Candles of Hope, Faith, Joy/Peace, and Love were extinguished and lamentations from scripture were read. Then there was a minute of darkness during which participants were encouraged to rest, be still, and experience the presence of God.

Afterward, the Christ Candle and the advent wreath were rekindled, reclaiming our Hope, Faith, Joy/Peace, and Love. Next, those in attendance came to kneel at the altar and/or light their candle. Once Gil gave the benediction, there was a time of passing the peace.

The Salem Stephen Ministers would like to thank all who attended the service. Also, a special thanks to Bryson Dexter for managing the sound and music.

The January meeting will be a celebration of the new year. Other Stephen Ministers from the area will be invited to Salem to celebrate the ministry and set goals for 2024.

If you would like to know more about Stephen Ministry, contact Carol Hudson or Pastor Gil.

"We are the caregivers, God is the curegiver"



#### A People of Faith

#### Natural Reactions - Supernatural Responses

Our Earthly Situation is noted in Romans 3:23. All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. God knows that we are a people in need of redemption. The only way we can respond is from our hurt. God knows that we tend to react with a natural position of fear and so the angel said, "fear not if I bring you good tidings." Our lives are a continual natural reaction from our depravity. Being wrong we have a natural propensity to guilt. Guilt does not come by itself. It is a reaction to being wrong. When you are accused, you react in a way that comes from the only way you know how to react. We are in a Cosmic Clash. John 1:14 introduces us to God's response to our situation and it brings a cosmic occurrence that impacts all of creation. And the WORD became flesh is what God does to meet what is required to bring our redemption.

We bring judgment and condemnation on ourselves. Living a life inclined to sin brings destruction and death. We live in a life of "reaction." It is a cause-and-effect world for us. We are constantly being controlled by forces that inflect defeat upon our lives. We do not war against flesh and blood. This is a supernatural matter. God brings all of who He is to bear on our behalf in this cosmic battle. God speaks. And the WORD became flesh follows how God creates. The WORD is spoken and the WORD is a response not a reaction. God leads and brings love to bear on our behalf. God brings a WORD that enables us to respond The Birth of the Christ Child sets in motion an intentional plan of action to enable us to respond. Reaction no longer has to be our mode of operation. God brings forth a WORD that gives us the ability to respond supernaturally to our natural estate.

"God responds with empowering faith that answers with a supernatural response by placing in us the supernatural – Christ Jesus the WORD become flesh." Pastor Gil Wise

We respond with faith because we stand not in our strength. We stand not in what we can do, but we stand in what God has done is doing and we do in us. God has done in Jesus, the Christ what was necessary to redeem us. So, in this day we need to be reminded that we are **not** a people of fear. We are **not** a people of natural circumstances. **We are a people of faith**. We are a people who have been redeemed already by the goodness of God. We know God is a God of love! We know God is a God of healing. We know God is a God of redemption.

God is not the wrathful, vengeful God the world wants to give witness of God. That is the only way that they can and have experienced God because they cling to that which is against God. They cling to that which is hateful because that is all they know. They cling to that which is broken. They cling to that which is not God. Without Christ they can only be that which they detest. God is love and is the only source of love. We are in that in between time. We have known and been known as those dead in trespasses and sins, but now we are those who have been redeemed are being redeemed and are looking for return of the Redeemer. Live into these "in between times" with a supernatural hope of heart, mouth of faith and a LOVE that is more powerful than anything the world has ever known. God meets our natural reaction with a supernatural response. You are that supernatural response.

### Operation In As Much

Several coats, hats, and scarves were delivered to OIAM. Thanks to Cindy Whetzel. I am sure they will be appreciated in these cold days.



# SAVE THE DATE OIAM BREAD'N BOWLS

Thursday Feb. 22, 2024
Snyder Baptist Church
Bread Bowl-\$15
Bread Bowl & Salad \$25
Pottery Bowl & Salad -\$30
This year we will also be
having a 50/50 Raffle
\$25 - 1 ticket
\$100 - 5 tickets
Tickets are on sale now.
Please see Betty Smith for
any questions.

#### Peace is not the absence of War

#### Peace is the Presence of God

Can Peace and Power be used in the same sentence? Do these two words have a symbiotic relationship? Peace when it is the presence of God is powerful. Peace has a way of subverting the effects of any circumstance. It places God in power in our lives. God reigning brings peace that goes beyond understanding. For the world it made no sense how on a battlefield in the midst of a World War that two opposing sides could stop for a day and sit together as brothers.



The Christmas Truce of 1914

The Christmas Truce was a series of widespread unofficial ceasefires in the World War I around Christmas 1914. In the week leading up to 25 December, French, German and British soldiers crossed trenches to exchange seasonal greetings and talk. In some areas, men from both sides ventured to mingle and exchange food and souvenirs. There were joint burial ceremonies while several meetings ended in caroling. No man can create this kind of occurrence. It is the power of God in Christ Jesus that brings LOVE into man's chaos. Jesus said to His Disciples the miracle of what gives to us all. "Peace, I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

John 14:27

Peace is not the absence of War. Peace is the Presence of God. In the presence of God indescribable peace erupts with a joy that is overflowing. It is this joy that works a miracle in our lives and in our days. "The Joy of the Lord is my Strength." Nehemiah 8: 10

Entering God's Kingdom brings courage, unwavering faith, determination, and endurance. The peace of God is a strength that increases our lives and our witness of who God is, our Savior. The Peace of God is truly something that we can understand. It is something you experience, and it is that experience that renews and reminds you of God.

With all that transpires in our world today in Israel and Gaze, in Ukraine and Russia along with the countless places big and small around the world where anger erupts and evil flourishes there is a truth that

transcends it all. God is moving in our time to bring forth His Kingdom of order, truth, and morality. When all seems lost, when it seems to be the darkest of times, remember who God is and recall Isaiah 59:19. God is greater than all our defeats. God is greater than the darkest of moments. God's standard stands against all that the enemy brings.

"When the enemy rises up like a flood, the standard of the Lord shall come against him." Isaiah 59:19

The move of God is first personal. It is because God impacts you personally in your life and in your family that a revival gains ground. Impacting your world is first and foremost and impact that comes home. When Home has been impacted, it is then that global changes are made. God works in a revival that begins locally from a revival that changes lives personally. Personally changed lives change the lives of others. God has a call upon each of us to make a difference in our world. The work of the Lord will come from the most unlikely of places. Revivals spread out of personally changed individuals who then gather in a praise to God. Hiding in the cleft of the Rock is when we put on Christ because we are hidden in him. As the world rages, we are shielded by God's peace. God's peace brings us strength. We are not hidden for the purpose of escape. We are hidden to be strengthened to be sent. We are sent out be God as a witness into this world not for the purpose of defeating others. We are sent as a violent expression that awakens the world to the truth of who God is and who we all have been created to be as a part of His creation.

"No longer I live but it is Christ who lives in me." Galatians 2: 20

Whatever it takes to turn your space into a war room of prayer, do it. Take the authority of Christ to tear down the powers and principalities of this world and declare God's Kingdom. The world rightly seeks justice and peace. What they don't know is that justice and peace without God is neither of the two. It is only God who can bring that true Justice and the true Peace.

# **Prayer Requests**

**Pray for:** Our Pastor, Our Military, Our Shut-Ins, Our Schools, Our Church, Our Country, Ukraine

# **Church Members**

Peggy Allen, Thelma Bullard, John Butler, J.M. Butler, Rosine Dexter, Darvin & Edna Edwards, Derotha Fink, Wilma Gamble, Gilda Horne, Darlene Hovis, Weldon & Jeannette Hudson, Paula Johnson, Bruce & Lorraine Kirkwood, Mickey Kimbel, Lynn Kennedy, Jean Lugar, Sandy McDaniel, Jerry McLaurin, Mary Patterson, Trillma Pribbenow, Bill Roberts, Eula Snow, Norma Stackley, Ila Ruth Wise, Daniel and Nancy West.Darvin Edwards (Duke Hosp), Pastor Gil, Linda Wise, Cindy Sherriff, Beverly Landrum, Janice Humphries, Cindy Gilliam White, Jean Lugar, Rosine Dexter, Gilda Horne, Linwood House, Denise Rhodes (is home with new liver), Pat Lawrence, Del Peluso, Holden Hall, Dave Black, Brenda Johnson, Tre Turpin, Judah Turpin.

# Family and Friends

Candace, Hazel and Casey Johnson, Mary Ann Bissett, Jennifer, Stelly, Louise Crawford (Duke Regional), Alice Jones, Mary Potter, Leslie Monroe (Cancer), Jill Caruth, Sue Baker, Vivan Rhone, Kim Gordner, Larnhart Family, Bobby Denham, David Edwards, Moe Licardo, Adolfo Medellin, Melisa Brock, Michael Hair, Conner Prince, Sandra & James Cooper, Charles Godwin, Barbara Oberdorf, Oswaldo Romas, Kaitlin Godwin, Ryan Godwin, Lawrence Deal, Curtis Matthew, Ponce McDonald, Mike Butler, Johnny Butler, Kim Gordner, Keith Cain, Sam Holt, Cecil Palmer, Sammy West, Delanoy Eva Hill, Ron Hardy, Herbert Bowden, Sarah Williamson, Clyde Salmon, Larry Johnson, Todd Reaves, Moises Soto, Larry Davis, Jake Cole, Kristen Thomas, Erika Brigman, Phyllis Culbreth Steadman, Mac Howell, Berrae & Donna Meixsell, Wendy Caldwell, Kim Burrell, Patricia McLemore, Jorge Alvarez, Luz Aguilar, Bobby Coley, Sue Grissom, Karolyn Palush, Garland Slate, Laurie Barnes, Emily Dickson, Rebecca Hardin, Susan Jernigan, Kelly Stephens, Tim Lease, Jackson Woodcock, Kyle Powers, Charles Bullard, Frank Harris, Charlie Marpol, Nick and Jamie Smith, Deanna Tallon, Everna Worthen. Bruce Raynor, Larry Smith, Jonathan Lenore, Maria Gonzales, Janet Campbell, Margaret Ann Heine, Margaret Saccareccia, Jennifer Partney, Aaron Griffith, Brian Moxey, Chloe Creech, Helen Scoggins, Kelly, Anderson Stewart, Russell Varner, Clifton Faircloth, Jean Brown, Carrie Jones, Carolyn Ortero, Cale Johnson, Nick Wilson, Anthony Bethea, Sheila Minschew, Eddie Bowen, John Sange, Leslie Horne, Jason & Brittany Ray, Lin Wheeler, Angela Renfrow, Nelly Johnson, Vanessa Cuestas (cancer), Tabetha Priest, Marilyn Parkin, Rev. Jan (Poland Methodist Pastor), Matthew Johnson, Jr., Del Gray, **Vickie Knoch, Sandra Jones, and Daniel Knox (cancer)** 

#### Memorials

#### Sue Melvin

**Betty Maxey** 

#### Rhonda Smith

Peggy Allen

#### Rachel Dawson

Michael Somer

# Connie and Olloween Culbreth

Cheryl and Chris Hudson

#### Honorariums

#### Gil and Linda Wise

Jimmy and Bonnie Crabtree

#### Art and Georganna Simpson

Norman George Girdwood

#### Financial Health

YTD Budget Needed \$ 530,000.00

Year to Date Offering & Tithes \$ 608,097.12

Year to Date Building Fund Deposits \$ 16,780.00

#### Methodist Men

The Methodist Men's breakfast will be held on Sunday, January 21st at 8:00 am in the Dining Hall. All are welcome!

