



THE SALEM VISIONARY

"STAYING CONNECTED"

January
2020

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

A Note from Francis . . .

As I sit and write this article, it isn't even Christmas. However, to meet the necessary deadline for having the Newsletter ready as we start a new month, I must write this article a few weeks early. In this case, it is not only a new month but it is a new year. For more than forty years I've been writing articles similar to this. However, there is one thing that makes this year different. As we embark upon this New Year, we do so in the knowledge that we also embark upon a six-month period in which we prepare ourselves to receive the next pastoral leader for this congregation. I mention all of this because the New Year is not only a time to reflect upon the past but to also contemplate the future and what we are going to do with it. Perhaps this is more the case at this time than any other time in the life of this church as we see 2020 draw to a close. Did I hear someone say, "Good riddance?"

I once heard someone describe a New Year as an empty canvass on a painter's easel. Nothing has been painted on it and no image has been sketched. What goes on that canvass is strictly up to the painter himself/herself. So, as you look into the future, what do you see?

In the book, *The Last Arrow*, Erwin McManus tells the story of his mom when she lived in a difficult circumstance in El Salvador in 1958. She had an alcoholic for a husband and bore upon her shoulders all of the responsibility of caring for her two sons. I'll not go into great detail here because you can read it in his own words in the book. Suffice it to say that his mom had the opportunity to come to America and take on a job as a flight attendant with Pan Am. In order to do so however, she had to shift her focus from her past to her future even though she faced resistance from her father. In his book McManus writes, "The important point not to miss here is that no one can tell you your future. You have to decide what future you want, what future you will pursue, what future you must create."^[1]

As you look into the possibilities of a New Year, what is the future that God is calling you to create? Many of us become so preoccupied with the past that we don't see the future at all. We have been through some difficult and unusual circumstances in the last twelve months. If the truth were known, those experiences could fashion our thought processes until we find ourselves locked into the past, never experiencing what God has in store for us.

This is true of us as individuals as well as a congregation. We can become so absorbed in what we once were that we fail to see the new creation that God is making as new mission fields open before us.

Over the course of the next six months we will be preparing ourselves to receive the next pastoral leader that God has chosen for us. True, the Bishop and Cabinet make the appointment, but I can tell you from personal experience, there is probably nothing that we do in the church that is bathed in more prayer than this. Even though the Bishop and the Cabinet make the appointment, I believe in my heart that God is at the very center of it and it is God who calls forth our next pastor. However, let's not leave all the praying up to the Cabinet. I ask you to pray for your pastoral leader and the future that God has already prepared for this church here in the Eastover community and beyond.

In closing I give you one more quote from McManus. "Many of us are not choosing between life and death; we are choosing between existence and death. We actually never choose to live. We are so afraid of death and all its relatives, such as failure and disappointment and injury, that we actually never choose to live. For all of us, death comes too soon. It comes long before we've taken our final breaths. It's only when we realize we are terminal that we start treating time with the respect it deserves."^[2]

So, the canvass is waiting. What future will you paint?

Still in One Peace,
Francis

^[1] *The Last Arrow*, Erwin McManus, Crown Publishing Group, 2017, pg.36-37.

^[2] *Ibid*, 96.

Children and Youth Ministries

2020 has been like no other year. Even during a pandemic, our children's program has endured. A review of the year we have had in the children's ministry here at Salem starts with January, when we kicked off the New Year with a trip to Defy Gravity. February, we threw a Valentine's Day party. In March everything came to a halt; however, the children had a virtual paint party and a St. Patty's Day Party. In April, I hand-delivered Easter Baskets to all of our children here at Salem. Then May brought flowers and DIY flower pots for the kids to make for their moms for Mother's Day. June came and we celebrated all of our dads for Father's Day. July was a big month because of VBS 2020!!! VBS was a jam-packed week full of learning about the One True God! While it was entirely virtual, the kids still went home with goodies and raised over \$1,100 for our Salem Food Pantry! School started back in August, but it looked a little different. September came and went leading us to October when we hosted our first Fall Festival Scavenger Hunt. In the spirit of fall, each of the kids had a pumpkin delivered to them to decorate and/or carve with their families. In November, we collected items and donations to pack Operation Christmas Child boxes. Salem was able to send 10 boxes and had items to fill 8 more boxes to children across the globe. During the month of December, I was able to share the message of Christmas with the preschoolers and SMASH program students.

I know 2020 was not the ideal year we all pictured, but God has a plan for each and every one of us. I am so blessed to be a part of this church and spread God's love. From my family to yours, have a Happy New Year! Here's to 2021!!



Caitlin Craven
SUMC Children's Director



A special thank you to those who helped in the month of December with Youth. Thank you to Debbie Moody who helped provide food, as well as Shelton and Caitlin who helped with Youth.

We had a successful Cool Nights at Cool Beans in December and hope to do more in the future!



Upcoming Events

Wednesday Night Virtual Bible Study

I am excited to announce that I will begin a virtual Bible Study on Wednesday, January 13, 2021. We will be using my book, *The New Normal, Growing as a Christian in Changing Times*, a devotional guide through the pastoral epistles of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. These books will be available in the office beginning January 5 at no charge. However, I would suggest that you come and get your copy early so that we will be sure that we have the necessary copies. This Study will be held each Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m. using Zoom until circumstances change so that meeting in person becomes an option. I look forward to our time together and hope that you will consider being a part of this study with some of our fellow Salemites.

Blessings,
Francis

NC Conference Events

Conference-Wide Leadership Training - Center for Leadership Excellence - NC Conference (nccumc.org) Please sign up using this link to participate in NC Conference leadership training! Sunday January 10th, 2021 between 3:30-5:00 PM. You get to select from a wide range of topics, and then have a virtual meeting with the District Superintendent!

Angel Tree 2020

Covid made our Angel Tree a little more complicated this year, but through the congregation's generosity we were able to provide clothes and toys for two families from Armstrong Elementary School. Six children, ranging in age from 3-11, received socks, underwear, shoes, coats, shirts, pants, and toys. One of the families also received detergent and body wash. Both families received Walmart gift cards and a donation of a Christmas meal from the church food pantry. Thank you to all who donated to make Christmas a little merrier for these families!

United Methodist Men Breakfast

Please join the Salem United Methodist Men for country biscuits and Krispy Kreme doughnuts on Sunday January 17th, 2021 at 8 AM!!!

Thank you!

A special thank you to the Juanita Warren group for the new nativity scene that is now in the front of the church. We would also like to thank Jimmy Crabtree for taking the time to put it up and make sure that it was secure!



Mission and Outreach

Food Pantry

THANK YOU EASTOVER CENTRAL ELEMENTARY

Families of Eastover Central Elementary drove to Salem and donated food to the Food Pantry before the holidays. Several buggies of food were donated, and the families we support are grateful. Several staff of EC helped on the collection days as well.

Circle of Faith Class Living by Faith Class Juanita Warren Group UM Women

Thanksgiving and Christmas donations enabled us to provide large frozen turkeys and trimmings to forty-four families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Super shopper Estelle McPhail motivated us to buy turkeys @ .29 a pound, averaging appx. \$ 4.00 for a large turkey !! Estelle worked lots to provide an excellent assortment of side foods. Thanks to families who donated funds & food to our ongoing community mission.

PEANUT BUTTER , JELLY & CANNED MEATS are the REQUESTED items for JANUARY & FEBRUARY.

Family Promise

“Salem’s Mission to Homeless Families in Cumberland County”

Salem has served hundreds of homeless families since the late 1990's. Thanks Salem for the four decades of service to Homeless Families of Cumberland County.

We especially appreciate the toilet paper, cleaning solutions, and hand soap donated to our ministry numerous times during 2020.

We wish the entire congregation a safe and wonderful 2021. We enjoy serving our community's homeless families with your wonderful members.

Custodian Appreciation Gifts

A group of Salem’s “super bakers” gifted our three custodians bakery trays of appreciation. Prince, Tiffany & Beverly were thankful to receive this bountiful tray of goodies! Thanks to: Angie, Bonnie, Charleen, Debbie M., Denise S., & Gwen for their generosity.



Preschool Ministry

Salem Preschool is looking forward to the start of a New Year. We hope that this year brings us exciting and new things to learn and explore; and adventure throughout our student's milestones. We pray that everyone will start off with a blessed and Happy New Year and many more to come.

Center Closings:

January 1st: New Year's Day

January 18th: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

SMASH Ministry

We have made it through the first semester of school at SMASH. The kids are doing very well with virtual learning, but we were all excited for Christmas break, so the kids and staff could have a “brain break” and we could do some fun things that didn't require a screen. SMASH has been approved for a grant, and we are using the money for materials dealing with virtual school. A special thank you to the Children's Director, Caitlin Craven, for providing a Bible Lesson and craft with the kids! We have had fiber installed in the building to help with the internet connection for virtual learning. Last week we had a lot of fun taking Santa and Grinch pictures for the kids and staff.





Budget Needed Monthly
\$ 47, 500.00

Total December Offering & Tithes
\$ 130,609.83

December Building Fund Deposits
\$ 325.00

Year to date December 2020

Budget needed to date
\$ 570,000.00

Tithes & Offerings
\$ 548,528.36

Total Monies Received
\$ 574,953.18

Thank You

Thank you Linwood and Marcia
House for donating a Ficus Tree to
add to the Parlor



Denise Kirkwood and her family would
like to thank everyone for the flowers,
calls, texts, cards and support with the
passing of her mother.

Memorials

Honor

Dan Raynor

Mary Barbara Raynor

The Crawford Family

Ruby and Ed Bullard

Prayer Requests

Prayer Line:
(910) 446-3415

Call and leave a voicemail or text your prayer request.

Church Members

Darvin Edwards	Conrad Kurtz
Lorraine Kirkwood	Sue Black
Lisa Johnson	Jean Lugar
Derotha Fink	Gilda Horne
Sandra Williams	Bill Roberts
Jennifer Partney	Jimmy Crabtree
Carolyn Hardin	Della Patterson
Larry McPhail	Joan Lovick

Jerry McLaurin-Highland House
Sallie Darden-Heritage Place
Paula Johnson-Haymount Rehab
Lynn Baker-Fayetteville Manor
Shirley McLaurin- Bethesda
Dorothy Melvin-Bethesda

****If you know of someone that needs to be removed from the prayer list please let the office know. Thank you!**

Family and Friends

Evelyn Moore, Jennifer Billings, Janice Belden, Victor Hottel, Leon Horne, Bobby House, Barry Lane, Patsy Jackson, James Chambers, Raul Santiago, Nevis Ruffin, Mary Stevens, Diane Fuller, Linda Carter, Josh Powell, Stacey Faircloth, Jim Blanton, Kenneth Adams, Laura Leach, Martha Enzor, Vernata Cherry-Britt, Nicole McGuinness, Kay Edwards, Bob Jones, Marilyn House Parkins, J. M. Butler, Jr., Erica Sutton, Eddy Clark, Brian Ramage, Ada Milagroski, Jeffrey Phillips, Denise Rhodes, Brian Wallum, Betty Parks, Betty Thompson, Camrin Hales, Cora & Sam Presley, Angie Baker, J'mair Bronson, Cici Shaw, Sammy Williams, Darla Clark, Mika Martin, Thomas Hoffler, Holly Midgette, Shenee Ruffin, Priscilla Sellers, Sandra Jones, Sharon Dunn, Jonah Nelson, Tommy Sexton, Tiffany Mullins, Giridhar Sadhu, Julia Sessoms, Wayne O'Neil, Carol LeToile, Drew Smith, Gary and Brenda Wilson, Vickie Knoch, Leslie Jackson, Bobbie Gray, Kathy Smith, LB Faircloth, Nathan Gainey, Larry Hall, Charlie Williams, Tim Kinlaw, Dana Kelly, Lauren Albright, Ted Heine, Doug Maars, Sandy King, Melvin Arthur Haire Jr, Gary Ivey and Family, Lisa Bullard Edwards, Ruth Heidinger, Pamela Webb Kallam, Andy Nichols and Family, Linda Disbrow, The Family of Janice Washington, The Family of Bruce Boughman, Gloria Schultz, The Family of Kenneth L. Fulcher Jr., Ginny Podorski, Clayton House, Tony Malinski, John Owens and Family, and The Family of Tripp Easton

2020 Staff Christmas Love Offering Thank you

The staff of Salem UMC would like to extend its sincere appreciation for the generous love offering the congregation of Salem presented to each of them for Christmas.

We love being a part of Salem's Church Family!

Thank you... 