



# THE SALEM VISIONARY

## "STAYING CONNECTED"

December  
2020

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

I can still remember the cold crispness of a childhood December as I awakened on Christmas Day. The frosty air in the unheated bedroom of the old farmhouse made the assortment of blankets and quilts into which I had tunneled the night before seem far too comfortable to leave. Yet, outside my bedroom door, I heard the sounds of Christmas. I smelled the aroma of breakfast cooking on the stove, and I heard laughter as someone put more wood on the fire. Slowly and gradually, the invitation to rise and join the rest of the family became more intense than the temptation to burrow deeper into my bed. It took me very little time to move from my bed to the door. As I opened the door, the warmth of the room greeted me, and the laughter which had seemed so far away surrounded me in an instant like the gentle caress of an old friend. In that moment it seemed that everything was complete. It was as if my entering the room was the finishing touch on a perfect canvas. I was in the midst of people whom I loved and who loved me.

As I think back on that Christmas, and countless others like it, I don't really remember any of the gifts I received that day. It really is funny in a way because the anticipation with which I approached Christmas as a child was always directed toward what I wanted. In the reality of Christmases past, however, it isn't the gifts or the big things of the day which made their mark. What has lasted throughout the years is the way in which I was made to feel that I belonged.

To me, this is the message of Christmas for all people. It is the story of a Savior who opened the door so that all may be greeted by His warmth. In His Love no one is an outcast regardless of how isolated he may feel. Christmas is an invitation for all to leave their cocoons, whether real or perceived, and venture out to a life which is incomplete without them. This is true if you are a wise man in the east, a shepherd out in the fields, or just a regular sinner in need of grace. The family is not complete without you.

That is why our theme for Advent this year is Turning for home. All of us long for the kind of place we belong, especially in a year such as we have been enduring for the past several months. Even though our usual Christmas Eve service is not advised, we still long to be together as a family of faith. So, we are providing a Virtual Christmas Eve service. Following our drive-through communion service which will be at 5pm at the church, you are invited to actively participate in our Christmas Eve Service which will be on-line at 7pm. This year we are encouraging you to make an advent wreath in your home to share in the service as we worship together. You will want to get a white candle to serve as the Christ Candle which we will be lighting during the service. If you would like to, you may pick up a votive candle at the church while they last which we have ordered for that purpose.

Have a Merry Christmas,  
Francis



December 24th 7:00 PM - Facebook, YouTube and Salemfncc.org

# Children and Youth Ministries

During the month of November, we packed shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse: Operation Christmas Child. With the help of the church's donations we were able to pack and send 10 boxes overseas to children in need. With the overwhelming support from the church, we were also able to donate 8 boxes worth of toys, hygiene items, and candy in order to fill more boxes. Thank you so much to all of you who donated! I would like to send a special note to Tessa and her mom, Jennifer Lewinski and my mom, Teresa Craven for packing each box with love and praying over the boxes with me.



Caitlin Craven  
SUMC Children's Director



We have had a lot of fun in November. To begin November, we started with a pizza-making competition and we finished the night by taking pumpkins and writing our problems, struggles, and anything we felt like we couldn't handle alone onto those pumpkins. On November 15th we had a bonfire for youth. It was so much fun roasting marshmallows and hotdogs. After we spent some time around the fire we sat down and talked about what it meant to belong and how we are all unique parts of the body of Christ. It's been a great month, and we are looking forward to finishing out this year strong and having a great 2021. Don't forget about our Christmas Party on December 13th from 5-7 pm!



# Upcoming Events

## Youth Christmas Party



## United Methodist Men Breakfast

The Salem Men's Breakfast will be held on Sunday December 20th, 2020 at 8 AM. Please join us for country chicken and sausage biscuits, some Krispy Kreme doughnuts and some excellent camaraderie!!!

Thank you!

## Lesson Series

We are looking forward to the lesson series leading up to and during advent season!



Heather and I would like to express appreciation to our church family. Your cards, calls, and messages of support meant the world to us during my cancer journey. Your financial gifts helped offset the cost of transportation, hotel, and expenses during my lengthy hospital stays. The genuine love and most importantly, the prayers, of our Salem family helped us during this difficult journey.

Blessed and Grateful,  
Conrad and Heather Kurtz

We want to thank everyone for the many kind gestures of love and support during Jimmy's recent illness and hospitalization. We are so grateful for our Salem family and for the many prayers lifted for healing.

Jimmy and Bonnie Crabtree

# Mission and Outreach

## Food Pantry

Extra Mile Giving **TURKEY TIME !!** Juanita Warren UMWomen Group, Circle of Faith Class & God Seekers Class provided appx. 15 pound frozen turkeys and all the trimmings to 15 families who regularly depend upon Salem to assist them with food. A box of canned collards, corn & green beans were gifted along with corn muffin mix, cake mix (& oil and eggs) and mashed potatoes. Stuffing mix completed this excellent assortment of Thanksgiving favorites. Many "THANK YOU'S" were given to the Salem family on Thursday Nov 19. Please know that your support of this local mission helps families in our community. A Christmas Gift Away is also in the works. Please contact Estelle McPhail or Debbie Moody to help .



## Family Promise

"Salem's Mission to Homeless Families in Cumberland County"  
Fall Service to Homeless Families

Christmas decorations were delivered to Family Promise just prior to Thanksgiving. Twelve 4-foot lighted trees (in a nice storage box), tree toppers, tree skirts & ornaments galore !! Elves shop for 75+% off in Jan & store until Nov.! DEC 6-12 is Salem's Winter Week of Service to the families enrolled in Family Promise. We provide for a maximum of 14 people: funds for 3 meals a day (they cook), utilities funds for the week & provisions such as soap, diapers, baby formula, & cleaning supplies.

Mark extra mile donations: FAMILY PROMISE. Call Debbie Moody for information.



A person is shown to be righteous through faithful actions and not through faith alone. James 2:24 (CEB)

# Preschool Ministry

The Preschool would like to thank everyone that willingly donated to our "Christmas Wish List". The staff was very delighted, and there were smiling faces upon the children. We are very thankful, grateful, and blessed for what the Salem Church family has done.

- Santa is coming to Salem on Friday, December 18th, at 9:00 am. This will be a fun event for all ages to enjoy!

Preschool Closings

Christmas Eve: Thursday, December 24th

Christmas: Friday, December 25th



# SMASH Ministry

SMASH continues with virtual learning which is going very well. We would like to thank Mikayla Naumann from Sunlit Rose Photography for taking school pictures in November. Our parents were really excited that we were able to do this as most parents like to order school pictures each year. We are taking lots of pictures and hope to put a memento Virtual Yearbook together for all students. It has been a challenge trying to make things as normal as possible during these unsettling times, but our SMASH Staff continues to be up for the challenge. We are looking forward to school taking a Virtual break during the Christmas Holidays and are planning small group activities to include taking Santa pictures, Grinch Pictures, decorating sugar cookies and a few other projects still in the planning stages. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.



Blessings,  
Denise Kirkwood  
SMASH Director



Budget Needed Monthly  
\$ 47,500.00

Total November Offering & Tithes  
\$ 27,382.45

November Building Fund Deposits  
\$ 750.00

November Memorial Donations  
\$ 900.00

Year to date November 2020

Budget needed to date  
\$ 522,500.00

Tithes & Offerings  
\$ 414,646.53

Total Monies Received  
\$ 417,146.53

## The Chancel Flowers

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### December

**\*\*The chancel flowers are given to the honor and glory of God and in loving memory of Johnny Patterson, Jonathan Patterson, V.F and Eloise Talley, Victor Talley, and Dan Raynor by their families\*\***

### November 29, 2020

**\*\*The chancel flowers are given to the honor and glory of God and in loving memory of Elizabeth Sykes by her family.**

## Memorials

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### Janice Washington

Jimmy and Bonnie Crabtree

### Joe McLamb

Jimmy and Bonnie Crabtree

### Bruce Boughman

Jimmy and Bonnie Crabtree

### Elizabeth Sykes

Kenneth and Claire Lynn  
Sykes

# Prayer Requests

Prayer Line:  
(910) 446-3415

Call and leave a voicemail or text your prayer request.

## Church Members

Darvin Edwards  
Lorraine Kirkwood  
Lisa Johnson  
Derotha Fink  
Sandra Williams  
Jennifer Partney  
Carolyn Hardin  
Larry McPhail

Conrad Kurtz  
Helen Smith  
Sue Black  
Jean Lugar  
Gilda Horne  
Bill Roberts  
Jimmy Crabtree  
Della Patterson

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., The Ash Family, Ginny Podorski, Clayton House, Mel Edwards and Tony Malinski

## 2020 Staff Christmas Love Offering

The love offering will be taken up thru December 14th. You may place your contribution in the contactless offering boxes on Sunday morning (designated as love offering), mail it in, or drop it by the Church Office. Thank you for caring and providing a means to show your appreciation for all that they do.

—Staff Parish Relations Committee

