


# ECCLÉSIA

*January 2022*

  
**FIRST  
UNITED  
METHODIST  
CHURCH**  
SALISBURY, NC  
EST. 1783





### On the Cover: Youth & Club 45 Christmas Day Trip

In December we took a group of Club 45 kids & youth to Greensboro and visited the Greensboro Science Center. We had a great time seeing all the holiday light displays! More pictures on page 11.

### Pages 6-9: Advent at FUMC

You'll find pictures of many of the church's events and worship services during advent, including pictures from Christmas on Church Street - our collaborative event with several other downtown churches!

### Page 12: Preschool Article in the Post

Salisbury Post published a wonderful article about our preschoolers and their contribution to the annual Christmas Happiness Fund.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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**The Reverend Doctor Mark Conforti**, *Pastor*  
**Mrs. Becca Blackmon**, *Business Administrator*  
**Mr. Aaron Cameron**, *Production Director*  
**Mr. Mike Fansler**, *Building Superintendent*  
**Ms. Jen Fogt**, *Director of Youth Ministry*  
**Mr. Joshua Starnes**, *Director of Music Ministry*  
**Mrs. Bailee Weisensel**, *Director of Children's Ministry*

Mark@fumcsalisbury.org  
Becca@fumcsalisbury.org  
Aaron@fumcsalisbury.org  
Mike@fumcsalisbury.org  
Jenni@fumcsalisbury.org  
Josh@fumcsalisbury.org  
Bailee@fumcsalisbury.org

**Ms. Molly Alexander**  
*Lead Teacher of Summer Day Camp*  
**Mrs. Kelly Austin**,  
*Director of Preschool*  
**Mrs. Courtney Bost**  
*Lead Teacher/Director of Child Development Center*  
**Rev. Garry Cook M.Div. LCSW**,  
*Pastoral Counseling, Sanctuary Counseling Group*  
**Mrs. Donna Frederick**,  
*Lead Teacher of After-School Child Care Program*

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



**Website** [www.fumcsalisbury.org](http://www.fumcsalisbury.org)



**YouTube Channel** FUMC Salisbury



**Sermon Podcast**  
Salisbury Sermons on  
Apple Podcasts and Spotify  
**Sermon by Phone**  
Call 1(704)378-8581



**Facebook** @fumcsalisbury  
**Instagram** @fumcsalisbury



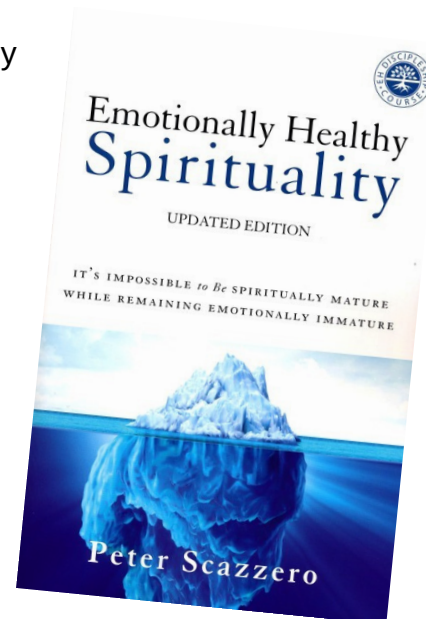


**Let's get healthy in 2022! I'm not just thinking physical exercise and eating better.**

**What about improved spiritual health?**

In January, our church is launching an emphasis on “emotionally healthy spirituality.” Ponder these three words strung together, and begin to imagine what your life can be with a healthy spiritual life. Picture how it's connected to your emotions. And now, wonder with me about the outpouring of blessing upon your life, your family, and our community when we set out to improve our spiritual health.

Pete Scazzero first introduced me to the concept of “emotionally healthy spirituality.” It happened nearly ten years ago during a continuing education event. Scazzero was presenting on the theme, which he developed based upon his experience as a pastor. He recognized that many church people claimed to be Christian, but had not experienced a profound change deep within their lives. As he explored this more, Scazzero started noticing patterns. As Scazzero puts it: “It's impossible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.” With some more research and development, he began inviting church members to make new connections: who they are and who God is calling them to become.



Now Scazzero, his wife Geri, and their team lead an entire “Emotionally Healthy” ministry, with print materials and website resources. In the coming months, you will have opportunities to join me and other church members to go about this spiritual formation paradigm.

What will we do? First, I will introduce related themes through some sermons, writings, and videos in January. Second, those who are interested in are invited to read & ponder the book Emotionally Healthy Spirituality. The church office has several copies available, or you can buy a copy from your favorite bookseller. Third, I will host info sessions; see schedule below. The purpose of these info sessions is to gauge your interest in digging deeper either one-on-one or in groups.

During the year 2021, we read “The Story” found in the Bible. To kick off 2022, we will now consider our own personal stories in light of God's story. I believe that this will bring healing to us, and even to our families and our beloved congregation. Make no mistake: it's entirely is the work of the Holy Spirit. For this healing work to be activated, we must participate. After all, your story is not yet finished!

Blessings,

*Pastor Mark*

**Info Sessions on  
“Emotionally Healthy Spirituality”**

**Wednesday, January 26, 2:00 pm Sanctuary**

**Wednesday, January 26, 7:00 pm Zoom**

**Sunday, January 30, 12:15 pm Sanctuary**



## CALENDAR MEETING

# Annual Calendar Meeting

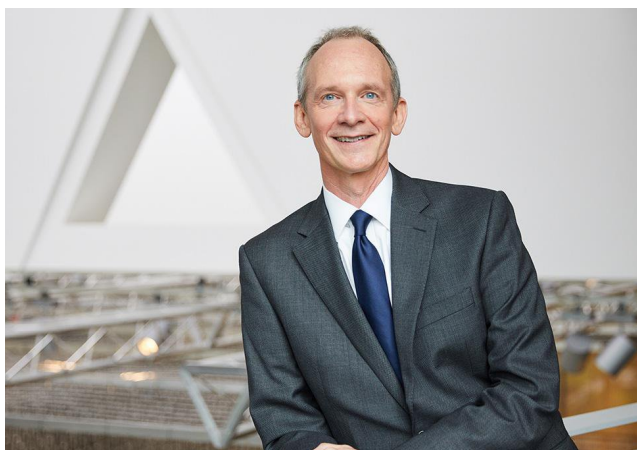
January 8

9:00am - 12:00pm

Committee chairs and ministry team leaders, mark this date on your calendar!



## 5TH SUNDAY SEMINARY



### 5th Sunday Seminary

January 30, 9:45 am, The Chapel

Dr. David Nelson

President, Catawba College

Did you know? Prior to becoming an academic administrator, David Nelson taught at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC (where he received his Ph.D. in Theology). He and his wife are now faithful Episcopalians.

## CARING FOR CAREGIVERS

### “Caring for Caregivers”

Sunday, February 20

2:00 – 4:00 pm

Led by Elizabeth Shuman

*Author of Finding Sanctuary in the Midst of Alzheimer's (Morgan James Publishing, 2021), Endorsed by retired United Methodist Bishop Kenneth Carder and recently listed as a #1 New Release on Amazon*

Dr. Shuman will deliver valuable tools for supporting caregivers while also providing an opportunity for fellow church members to “walk in their shoes” and learn ways to most effectively support caregivers.





# CHURCH HISTORY

*"Looking back, moving forward"*

## Our next chapter as The Church

During the Christmas holidays, I saw a catalogue advertisement for an unusual sweatshirt. Like so many other popular items, the front carried a thought provoking observation. It said, "Don't look back. You aren't going in that direction."

A part of me really likes that quote. You may find that odd coming from a historian, but it is the truth. Life does not have a reverse button. We only move forward.

Even so, I frequently hear pandemic weary people say, "I can't wait for things to get back to normal." Covid-19 has upset everyone's life. Churches have been particularly hard hit. It is difficult not to be nostalgic about how things used to be.

Yet here is a spoiler alert. We can never recapture the past. We are living into a new normal. Individuals and churches must move forward not backward.

Recently Pastor Mark's sermon included a timely quote from Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard said, "Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forward." I think that is the key to studying history. It is why I call this column "Looking Back, Moving Forward." The past helps us understand the present, but the future will always be more than a resurrected past.

This is the perfect time to look both backwards and forwards. January was named for Janus a two faced Roman deity. One face looks forward and the other backward. January invites us to look in both directions. Rather than focusing on a specific historical event, I want to digress and ask, "Why do we study history?" We are not going in that direction. But I believe our future will be defined by how well we understand the past. Here are a few examples.

Corporate worship has long formed the core of congregational life. Our predecessors built a large sanctuary and balcony at First United Methodist Church designed to seat 660 people. They envisioned a future growing population with an ever increasing church attendance. Sadly, it will be a long time, if ever, before some people gather without fear in crowds. How can our future corporate worship meet this challenge?

Food and fellowship have been the heart of Christianity since Jesus ate with his disciples. During the earliest days of the Christian church, communal meals united Christians in a Holy Communion. Could church meals in private homes and other small group settings fulfill that same function today?

Methodism originally thrived in small groups called classes and bands. They met in neighborhoods and included only 10-12 participants. In more recent times, the Sunday school became the primary Christian entry point for new believers. Today, many of our Sunday school rooms are empty on Sunday mornings. Are there new ways for the church to support faith formation in a scattered post-pandemic world?

Think about touching and other acts of physical contact. Jesus healed with a touch, and we still need to touch each other. How can we do that in a contagious world?

Over the next twelve months, I will address some of these issues as we look backwards and move forward. Beware of any preacher or politician who promises to recreate our past. It is gone forever. We can't go back. Most of the saints I knew growing up at First United Methodist Church rest eternally from their labors. Our task in 2022 is to learn from what they did and with God's guidance build a better future.

Fred Jordan, Church Historian



**Janus, Roman deity**  
January is named after him



# CHRISTMAS ON CHURCH STREET



## First Ever Christmas on Church Street Event

First United Church of Christ, First United Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, St. John's Lutheran Church, and St. Luke's Episcopal Church collaborated to create the Christmas on Church Street event this year during advent. All five churches created displays which depicted part of the Christmas Story - from the angel's annunciation to Mary to the arrival of baby Jesus. There were angels, shepherds, and wise men all dressed up; and a massed church choir comprised of members from all five churches sang beloved carols from the bandstand at the park.



Our church's part of the story was telling the story of the angel's visit to Joseph. Lindsey Conrad (angel) and Rohan Joseph (Joseph) did a wonderful job acting out the angel's visit. We also helped create an audio guide where pastors from each of the churches read the passage of scripture that describes the part of the story their church portrayed. We estimate having 800+ people in attendance that evening!





# CELEBRATING ADVENT & CHRISTMAS



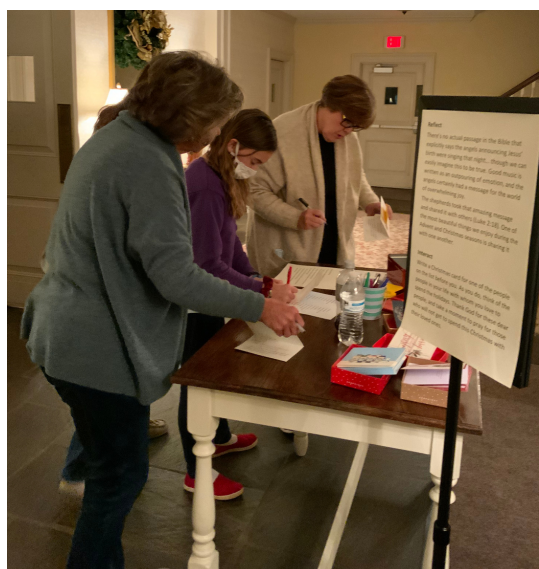
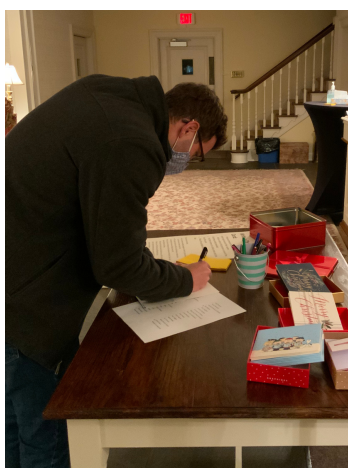
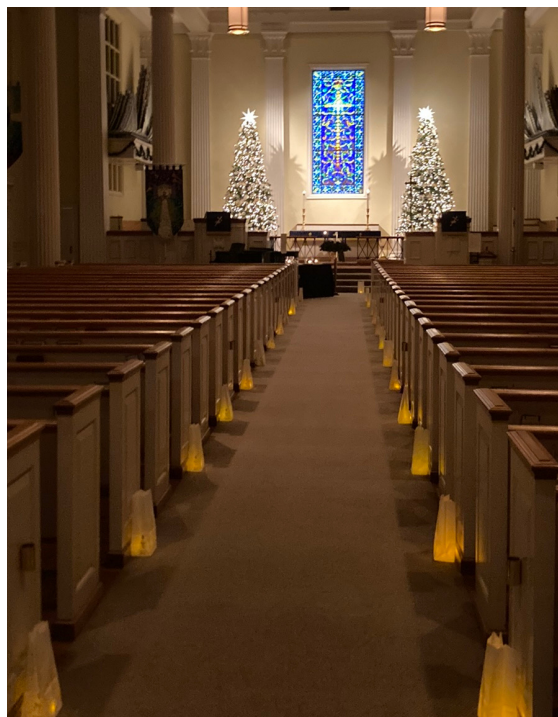


# WORSHIP DURING ADVENT



## Advent Prayer Stations

During advent we have focused on the theme of light and darkness. At the beginning of Advent we had an opportunity to explore this theme through visiting prayer stations. We painted the night sky in watercolors and wrote Christmas cards that were sent to many of our older congregation members.





# WORSHIP DURING ADVENT



**Special Worship  
Services in Advent**  
A Festival of Nine  
Lessons & Carols  
and our Longest  
Night Service





## GENEROUS GIFT FROM MARY ANNE LANINGHAM

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### Laningham Estate Gift

Mary Anne Laningham was both a gift and a giver. The recent bequest of \$998,701 from her estate to the First United Methodist Church endowment fund is but the latest evidence of her generosity. Proceeds from this gift will help provide for the maintenance of the church physical plant and properties, thus meeting a significant need. The church was also named as a beneficiary of a \$71,000 life insurance policy which Mary Anne left to be divided between our church and her home church in Virginia.



Prior to her death, Mary Anne had given the Stanback Music Department of the church a Steinway piano. That piano is now used in the sanctuary during our worship services. A plaque acknowledging this gift is located in the music suite.

This gift was a testimony to the value Mary Ann placed on the inspiring music provided by the church.

Her obituary described Mary Ann as “a tireless woman” and an “active member of several community organizations in Salisbury. She held leadership roles at First United Methodist Church . . . and Church Women United.” Her other interests demonstrated her “tirelessness” and her zest for life. For example, she was a “member of the American Volkssport Association in which she completed 10Km walks in all 50 states and several other countries” on six continents; and she delighted in sharing the stories of these adventures with friends.

Mary Ann had an infectious smile, and she was an engaging conversationalist. She truly gave generously of her material wealth to our church and the Salisbury community, but through her personality and her expressions of her faith, she was a gift herself to all who knew her. We give thanks for her life and her gifts.

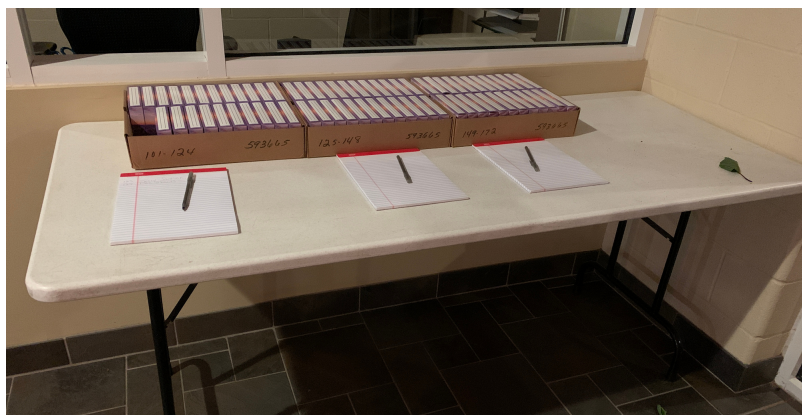
## OFFERING ENVELOPES

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### Offering Envelopes Available

Members wishing to use offering envelopes for your tithes and gifts can find them in the Carter Lobby throughout the month of January. Please write your name and the number of the box you are taking on the sheet at the table.

*As a reminder, the budget for 2022 has been passed by Church Council, and copies of the budget are always available to church members. Please see Becca in the church office.*





# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

## Holiday Fun Day

Club45 & Youth held our annual joint Christmas party on Sunday, December 12th. We enjoyed fellowship with friends, siblings and parents! The beautiful holiday sights and sounds at The Greensboro Science Center and a drive through Sunset Hill Neighborhood put us all in the holiday spirit!



## SUNDAY MORNINGS

0-4 YRS

Nursery

Crossover Hall rooms B-106 & B-108

K-5TH

Sunday School

Sundays 10:00-10:45am

## MONTHLY



PRE-K

K-3RD



4TH-5TH



# YOUTH MINISTRY

## Salisbury Youth 6-12 GRADE MINISTRY

SUNDAY SCHOOL  
SUNDAYS 10:00-10:45AM

YOUTH GROUP  
SUNDAYS 4:00-5:30PM

Newsletter



## Youth and the Broader Life of the Church

During the month of December, our youth have been involved in the life of the church in a myriad of ways. They've served as acolytes and lectors, sang with the choir and played handbells, made gingerbread houses, and gone on a fun day-trip to see Christmas lights. Will Koontz, who has served as our Church Council Youth Representative this year, served both as an acolyte and as a lector during this year's Lessons & Carols service!

# WINTER RETREAT

6th-12th grade

Boone, NC  
**FEBRUARY 18-20**

Youth Group gatherings will resume on January 9



# PRESCHOOL

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## FUMC preschoolers raise \$285.47 for Christmas Happiness Fund from loose change

Published 12:06 am Sunday, December 19, 2021

By Josh Bergeron

"Some things are certain about the holidays in Salisbury. Crews lift a star over the middle of the Square, crowds line the street to watch the city's annual Christmas parade, a cadre of singers serenade attendees of First Baptist Church's living Christmas tree, Salisbury Police partner with Gerry Wood Auto Group to give bikes to children and preschoolers at First United Methodist Church make the short trip to the Salisbury Post to deliver their Christmas Happiness Fund donation.

This year, the youngsters raised a total of \$285.47 for the Christmas Happiness Fund, which the local Salvation Army uses to ensure children receive gifts. The preschoolers on Friday formed an orderly line in the Post's lobby and carefully dropped the donation into a golden Christmas Happiness Fund box.

Kelly Austin, the preschool director, said the children brought in change this month and last. Sometimes, the donation is boosted by an adult donation, but this year's sum was almost entirely comprised of loose change, Austin said.

Austin says fundraising is accompanied by a lesson that starts before Thanksgiving about being thankful and about needs versus wants. Throughout November and December, change is collected in plastic cheeseball containers decorated with fall leaves, she said.

It's routine by now for adults at First United Methodist Church's preschool, but Austin said it's still exciting for the children. They enjoy watching the total grow larger every day, Austin said."

<https://www.salisburypost.com/2021/12/19/fumc-preschoolers-raise-285-47-for-christmas-happiness-fund-from-loose-change/>

## AFTER-SCHOOL CHILD CARE

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### Celebrating Christmas Break!

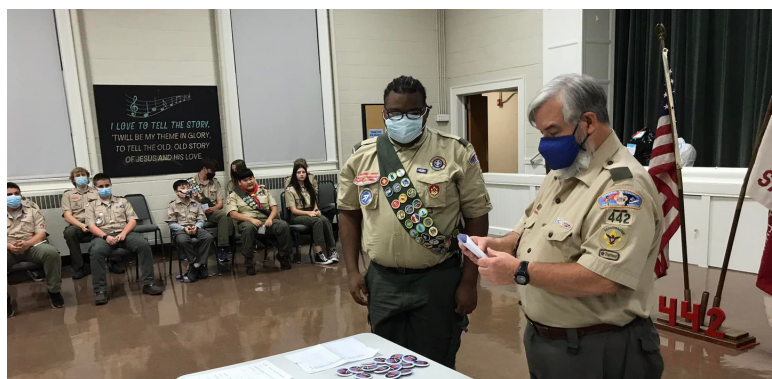
It's almost a new year! We hope you have all had a safe, fun holiday season. We have been very busy...some things we have done recently include making ornaments, decorating/sending cards to Veterans, playing the Sneaky Santa gift exchange game and enjoying a fun Christmas party.

We are enjoying a nice long break and are ready to begin a new year of playing, working and growing together. We wish you all a great year!

*"To be in your children's memories tomorrow,  
you have to be in their lives today."*



# SCOUTS AT FUMC



**Court of Honor**  
Scouts were awarded merit badges and rank advancements they have earned in recent months.

**Scout Troop 442 (6-12)**  
**Mondays at 7:00pm**

Contact Bruce Kolkebeck (BK)  
(704)433-8151 bkolback@gmail.com

**Cub Pack 442 (k-5)**  
**Mondays at 6:00pm**

Contact Bill Shaffer  
(678)641-3513 shaffb31@yahoo.com



*On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.*

- Scout Oath

## COMING UP...

### Office Closed

**JANUARY 3**

The church office will be closed January 3 for New Years. *(The office will be open Dec 29-31).*

### Women's Prayer Group

**STARTING JANUARY 6**

The first and third Thursday of each month. Will meet at 8:30AM at Hendrix BBQ, 1624 W Innes St.

### Community Meal

**MARCH 2**

Community meals are on hiatus during January and February, we look forward to sharing a meal with our neighbors on the first Wednesday of March.

### Do you have an article for the Ecclesia?

Send them to Jenni@fumcsalisbury.org with "(Month to be printed) Ecclesia" in the subject line.

Articles can be submitted by the first Friday of the month prior to when you would like it printed.

### Access the Church Calendar Any Time

Access the church calendar any time! Just go to [fumcsalisbury.org](http://fumcsalisbury.org) and look under the Connect tab. There you can also find a digital version of the Ecclesia.





# JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

**1** Robert Anderson, III  
Tom Paffrath  
Andy Storey

**2** Bailee Weisensel

**3**

**4** Chad Cross

**5** Jenny Nussman

**6** Britni Branson  
Maude Lee DeGrotte  
Spencer Storey

**7**

**8** Lainey Cook  
Caroline Johnson

**9**

**10** Shirley Disseler  
Wendy Douglas

**11** Levi Durham  
Hazel Kirk  
Alisha Mastro  
Lois Poteat

**12** Christie Chea  
Skye Mowery  
Nancy Sherriff  
Jean West

**13** Kim Grenoble  
Rikki Spencer  
Katelyn Storey Lee

**14** Joel Goodwin, II  
Scott Johnson

**15**

**16** Coleman Bready  
Evan Koontz

**17** Kahlil Cross

**18** Betsy Crowell  
Jim Molitor

**19** Susan Linn  
Dan Sullivan

**20** Norman Clark, Jr.  
Eli Robinson  
Rob Watts

**21**

**22**

**23**

**24** Jim Martin

**25** Tim Bivens

**26** Fred Bachl  
Gracie Lineberry  
Joshua Starnes

**27** Roland Fowler  
Wesley Ludwig

**28** Wayne Cline

**29** Corey Basinger

**30** Susan Maxwell

**31** Mike Fansler





# FUMC FAMILY AND EXTENDED FAMILY TRANSITIONS

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## *In Remembrance*

*Please keep these families in your prayers*

**DR. ERMA TOOMES SCARLETTE**

*February 13, 1922 - November 21, 2021*

**REV. WILLIAM ROBBINS RAGSDALE**

Husband of Annie Joe Ragsdale

*March 26, 1940 - November 22, 2021*

**HON. ROBERT JOSEPH DOLE**

Husband of Elizabeth Dole

*July 22, 1923 - December 5, 2021*

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

## THANK YOU!

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Special thanks to Pastor Mark, Nancy Schoch, Ginny Champion and Anne Wilson for helping me celebrate my 100th birthday on Friday, December 3rd.

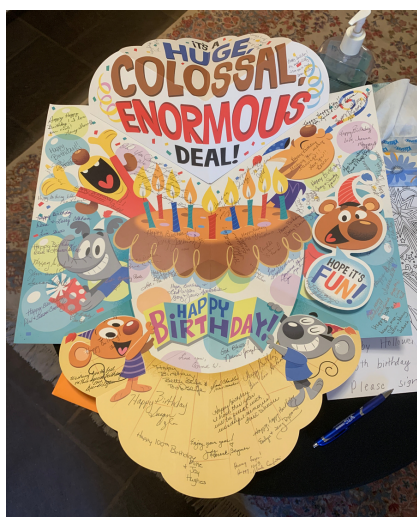
Nancy had purchased a large birthday card and asked church members to sign and leave a greeting (this was very special)! My yard was also decorated the yard with large "Happy Birthday" signs and lots of balloons. Ginny knitted me a beautiful lavender prayer shawl to keep me warm, and Anne made a delicious cake.

We had a special time together as church members drove by the house, stopping to talk and share very sweet birthday greetings. God also gave us a beautiful day and warm temperatures.

Nancy, Ginny & Anne did a super job in every way for my birthday. I still cannot believe I am 100, but my body sure can tell me.

Love & Best Wishes  
God bless each of you,  
Libby Hollowell

To our Staff Parish Relations Committee,  
The staff of FUMC would like to extend a warm thank you to our Staff Parrish Committee members for the delicious Christmas luncheon they provided for our childcare programs staff and church staff members. The food, company and atmosphere were so wonderful. It is so nice to have a time to sit down with committee members and the staff of the church, take a breath and enjoy a meal together! It is a time we look forward to each holiday season! Thank you again for the meal and for all you do to support the staff at FUMC.



**Libby's Birthday Card**



Dear Church Members,  
The United Methodist Women thank everyone who donated toddler clothes and diapers for First Families. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated and our small neighbors will love their new outfits.

- Evelyn Dymond  
and Ginny Champion

Dear Church,  
Your staff wishes to extend an extra big "THANK YOU" to all who donated to the Christmas love offering! You are always so generous and it means so much to each of us and our families. We are so blessed to work for such a loving and giving congregation. You all are so very special and we give God thanks for each of you!

## DIRECTORY UPDATES

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Access the online directory anytime by going to [fumcsalisbury.ctrn.co](http://fumcsalisbury.ctrn.co), following the link on our website (under 'Connect'), or downloading the CTRN app on your smartphone or tablet. Enter the access code **fumcsalisbury** and your unique username and password.

You can update your information at any time, if you would like assistance in updating your information please contact the church office.



# ECCLESIA

NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



MAKING AND NURTURING CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES  
THROUGH THE PRESENCE AND POWER OF GOD

217 SOUTH CHURCH STREET SALISBURY, NC 28144 | [FUMCSALISBURY.ORG](http://FUMCSALISBURY.ORG)