
SALEM SPIRIT

The Newsletter of Salem United Methodist Church

Share the Bounty Food Pantry Celebrates 10 Years

Share the Bounty Food Pantry celebrated 10 years of service on May 2, 2026. Volunteers and special guests were invited to a luncheon to celebrate their service. In attendance were representatives from the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina as well as families from the first food distribution on May 7, 2016.

Approximately 70 volunteers and special guests were in attendance. Music was played during the event by the Greeson family from Salem United Methodist Church. Much laughter and conversation were heard throughout the room.

The ministry started with a planning meeting in 2015 that included Linda Marsal, Rebecca McLawhorn, Dawson Nethercutt, John Smith, and Pastor Steve Smith.

The idea for a food pantry blossomed and funding was secured, and a Food Ministry Committee was formed. The current committee members include Linda Marsal, Sandy Cohoon, Rebecca McLawhorn, April Reed, Randy Hardee, Marsha Tripp, Martha Allmon, and Pastor Jim McConnell. Previous pastors of Salem UMC that have served on the committee include Steve Smith, Jerry Jackson, Brad Williams and Kirk Oldham.

Pastor's Corner

By the Reverend Jim McConnell

The words of Proverbs 29:18 are probably best known to most of us as they are translated in the King James Version: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." I have heard these words over and over at church leadership seminars reinforcing the importance of helping the churches we serve create vision statements. The idea of perishing sounds dramatic and urgent and it motivates us to do something - anything - to avoid such an unfortunate end. But, if we revisit Proverbs 29:18 in a few other translations we find something more. The NRSV and NIV render these same words: "Where there is no prophecy (or revelation), the people cast off restraint" while the CEB chooses to translate them: "When there's no vision, the people get out of control." Looking at these translations we see that a lack of unifying vision brings chaos, and chaos can be its own sort of peril.

The truth is that for most churches, the end comes not with some dramatic crisis, but with all of our energies spent in unfruitful directions. The church fizzles not with a bang, but in a whimper of discord, fatigue, and frustration.

We are not the church we were twenty, ten, or even five years ago, and believe it or not this is good news. It means that although the church has changed over time, God's purpose for us has not. We are here, in this place as the Body of Christ doing the work of extending God's Kingdom. That looks different than it did a few decades ago but God isn't finished with us yet.

The most important thing our church can do right now has already begun. In April we began the process of churchwide conversations discerning where we believe God is calling us to invest our time, talents and resources so that we might begin seeing more fruitful ministry. In the coming months I hope this will lead us to a new unifying vision crafted to help us live faithfully into the future, but for now I am encouraged that the work has begun and God is pointing us in the right direction.

Fellowship and Faith Opportunities

Men's Group

The Men's Group meets on Wednesday mornings from 10 – 11 a.m. in the Dawson Nethercutt Classroom. Why would you want to join this group? Well, because of the fellowship and camaraderie it provides! The guys get together and talk about whatever interests them and solve each other's project problems if anyone needs help. Plus there is always talk of fishing, ball games, etc. Come join in, and you will enjoy.

Prayers & Squares

The Prayers and Squares quilting group meets on Tuesday afternoons at 1 p.m. at the Hut across the street from the church.

If you enjoy sewing and like pretty fabric and the fellowship of like-minded people you would enjoy this group.



A prayer quilt placed on the altar during Sunday worship service.

Since its inception in 2008, we have made, prayed over, and given away more than 1,200 quilts to those who are sick or recovering from an operation and are in need of prayer. We do our quilting at home but get to choose from lots of free fabric that has been donated to our mission. At our meetings we get quilts ready for the altar plus chat, share ideas and enjoy each other's company. Join in, we'd love to have you.

Fellowship and Faith Opportunities, cont.

United Women in Faith

We would like to invite all ladies to join us as we carry out the purpose and vision of this ministry.

Purpose: To know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative supportive fellowship and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

Vision: Turning faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

Upcoming Activities:

- July 23rd - Cooking meal for Community Crossroads (Homeless Shelter)
- August - Collection of school supplies for G.R. Whitfield School and serving breakfast for the staff
- December - Christmas Party

Meeting Dates, Time and Location

- August 2nd @ 11:30 (directly after church) Fellowship Hall
- October 4th @ 11:30 (directly after church) Fellowship Hall

Have something to share?

If you have an idea, story, or photo for the newsletter, please share it with Joyce Owens or Emily McConnell.

Join Us on Sunday Mornings!

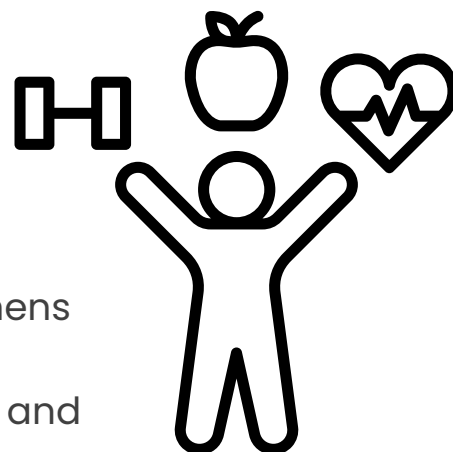
Sunday school begins at 9:15 a.m. The morning worship service begins at 10:30. We would love to see you there!

Health Highlights

Benefits of Increased Physical Activity

Why should I increase my physical activity?

- helps maintain/lose body weight and strengthens bones
- improves physical function, including balance and stability
- reduces risk of falling and improves muscle strength
- reduces risk of developing type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and cancer
- promotes better sleep, and reduces stress and anxiety



The chances of living a longer and healthier life begins today when you start to slowly increase physical activity. Begin by talking with your care coordinator (doctor, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, etc.) about the best way to put this plan into action. Your mind and body with thank you!

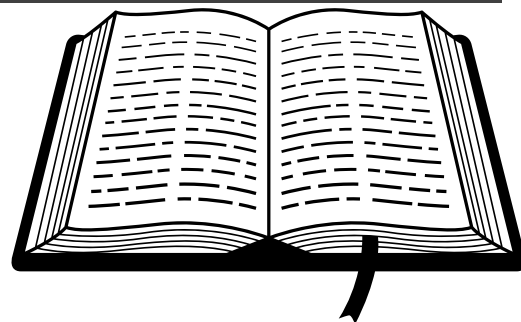
Positivity: A Spiritual Discipline for Tough Times

Begin by taking a deep intentional breath and settle into the moment. You are enough, safe and supported. Let the weight of past worries float out of you. The present is a place for a new beginning. You are worthy of love, light and inner peace. You are powerful. Sit with your feet on the ground breathing deeply; inhaling peace and exhaling any tension you may have. Say to yourself: "I am worthy, I am powerful; I am grateful for all I have." Feel yourself in the present: In this very breath you have everything you need to be content. Connect with goodness: You find yourself surrounded by grace and positive energy, allowing you to feel calm, connected and centered,

THIS IS THE MOMENT FOR A FRESH START. FEEL GOD'S PRESENCE!

Sunday School News

Lindy Edwards Sunday School Class



The Lindy Edwards Sunday School class began many, many years ago, named for its teacher at the time. Mr. Edwards passed away suddenly in 1977 of a heart condition at the age of 40. The main focus is on prayer, which includes a prayer board in the classroom and a card ministry. Dear to the hearts of class members is helping the needy, which includes volunteering at the food pantry, packing blessing bags, collecting food and diapers for the pantry, participating in the quilt ministry, etc. The class also supports Community Crossroads and an angel tree family at Christmas time.

The class always leaves time for reflection and fun by visiting Rebecca McLawhorn's cabin on the creek at New Bern, where fellowship and a good meal are enjoyed by all. There is time at Christmas for a gathering at Outback Steakhouse for fellowship and good time.

The class is open for anyone to join on Sunday mornings, meeting at 9:15 a.m. for an Adult Bible Study from Cokesbury. We are a fun group, caring for each other and will gladly welcome everyone.

Dawson Nethercutt Class

Our class studies various literature across the Biblical spectrum instead of the standard literature. We try not to limit ourselves to studying from just one author; instead, we choose authors whose works include such titles as "Women of the Bible," "The Gospels," and "The Prophets and the Parables." Please join us on Sunday morning at 9:15 a.m. when Marsha Tripp will be taking us on a journey through the Holy Land. Our co-leaders are Bobby and Cheryl Wells.

Church History Spotlight

Early days - 1875

Arnold Taft came from Oxford, Massachusetts in the late 1700s. He purchased land from the Tar River going straight inland, including the whole Chicod Township. Through the years his place was called Taft's Landing. He built a large store, cotton gin and sawmill. His home was built on Tucker Road, about middle way between Hwy #33 and McDonald Street (Black-Jack-Simpson Road) in Simpson. He decided his ten children and other children that wanted to attend school needed a place to meet. He built a one-room schoolhouse about a quarter of a mile beyond Winfield Tucker's old home. (Beyond railroad tracks on Black-Jack Simpson Road.) This was known as Taft's School House.

After Arnold Taft's death in 1844, all his holdings were inherited by his son, Holston Taft. He and his wife, Catherine and her two sisters, Annie Hoover and Mrs. W. H. Horne lived in the Taft homeplace. Since the three sisters had no place to worship, nearer than Greenville, they, with the help of W. H. Horne, decided to organize a Sunday school in the one room schoolhouse. Being the daughters of a Methodist minister, they were strong in their efforts to make this Sunday school a success.

In the Methodist Conference at this time was a noted Methodist preacher by the name of William Closs, who feared neither man nor devil to carry on his Master's work. He, being a personal friend of these sisters, was called on to help them out. Whenever he could get a Sunday or weekday or night off from his regular charge, he would come and hold services at Taft School House.

Reverend L. L. Nash, the Pastor of Jarvis Memorial Methodist Church, was invited to hold a revival at the school. The crowd was so large, a bush shelter was constructed across the road, suggested by William Wright Tucker. There was a great awakening and the group was in need of a church building.
