NOTES FROM NORM

Since I was a teenager, one of the highlights for me each year at Annual Conference has always been the Service of Ordination Saturday night. It used to be perhaps the most attended session at Annual Conference. Folks would arrive 30-60 minutes early just to make sure they had a seat. As a teenager, I wasn’t exactly sure what it was, but I knew that something holy was unfolding on those Saturdays. The preaching was inspiring, the music made the hair on the back of your neck rise, and something about the laying on of hands always captivated me. Some folks say you can feel God in a place. Well, you could feel God in those Saturday night services.

Each year now at the Ordination Service, I’m somehow reminded of my own ordination and recall elements of bishops pressing their hands into me as a host of family and friends prayed and looked on. I remember the breeze that humid night as it rolled in off the lake through those large windows and grabbed hold of our black robes, as if the Spirit were granting affirmation. This year was particularly meaningful again as I watched my first Duke Divinity Intern ordained as an Elder. Sarah now serves Davidson UMC, but I was her first church placement and mentor several summers ago. Amazing! Despite having me as a first ministry setting, she somehow made it. Now those hands and prayers were laid and conveyed upon her.

Not only was it a joy to be present for Sarah’s ordination, but I was also moved by a simple thought from Bishop Gwinn’s sermon that night. Speaking to the ordinands at one point, he said: “Now I know you have all prayed the Wesley Covenant prayer before many times. But on this night, I beg for you to pray it like you have never prayed it before. Give absolutely your whole self away when we lay hands on you. Hold absolutely nothing back. Pray that prayer in your mind and in your spirit with all of the fervor of your being.” That night, several weeks ago, I prayed it with a renewed determination, like I never prayed it before.

Many of you know that prayer well. “I am no longer mine, but thine, put me where thou will, put me to doing, put me to suffering, let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. Now, oh glorious and blessed God, thou art mine and I am thine. So be it.” But imagine if you and I began this August by praying this prayer like we’ve never prayed it before. Imagine if you and I, God’s beautiful church at Salem, approached the coming season determined to hold nothing back and inspired to give our absolute whole self away for the sake of Jesus Christ. Imagine if we adjusted our perspective just for a month, or even a week. If we decided to pursue Jesus with as much determination as He pursues us. Just imagine! Would your life look any different? How might the dynamic of our congregational life together change?

I know we sort-of have a system in place and a stability to our life, work, or family right now, and it works. It’s comfortable. Maybe not perfect, but for us, it works. So I’m not asking you to upend all that for good. But just try it for a month. One week at time, for all of August, I invite you to start praying that prayer every day like you’ve never prayed it before. “I am no longer mine, but thine, put me to where thou wilt, rank me whom thou wilt, put me to doing, put me to suffering, let me be employed by thee or laid aside by thee, exalted or brought low for thee.” Hold absolutely nothing back for 31 days. Step into your neighborhood and give your whole self away. That’s the challenge. That’s my prayer. Just imagine. Will you pray with me? Just for a month? And just see where we are after that. You know, it’s possible we might have to start having ordination services of our own.

So be it,
Pastor Norm
Weekly/Monthly Happenings at Salem

Prayer Shawls are tangible reminders of God's love, comfort, and peace. The group meets Monday from 10 - 11:30am. All are welcome. If you know who needs a shawl contact Barbara Harbour or Margaret Carswell.

Mom's Coffee time will meet August 31, 9-10:30am (Yth Rm.) Any parents of little ones are invited for fellowship and sharing.

Our Financial Stewardship:
Thru July 31 2018
Budgeted Need: $137,250.00
Total Received for Budget: $115,214.00
Ministry Expenses to Date: $111,871.57

Other Ministry Gifts Received to Date:
Backpack Ministry: $1,195.00
Building Fund: $6,160.00
Cemetery: $485.00
Youth Fund: $1,665.00

Gifts given in Memory (July)
Joe Carver by Barbara Goines
Joe Carver by Allen and JoAnn Byrd
Joe Carver by Charles & Leota Garrison
Joe Carver by Jerry & Clarice Shuping
Joe Roper by Joe & Lynda Woody
Joe Roper by Margaret Carswell
Joe Roper by Mary & John Anderson
Joe Roper by David & Janette Dale
Joe Harbour by Doris Ingram
Mary Ellen Nelson by Kay & Gerald Duckworth
Mary Ellen Nelson by Alan & Barbara Schneider
Mary Ellen Nelson by Allen & JoAnn Byrd
Jack (L.O.) & Leila Garrison by Beverly G. Williams

To help you make sure no one gets left behind, we've created some powerful tools that will allow you to resource everyone.

Salem UMC now has a custom invite code. That means anyone you provide with this link can activate their Right Now Media account with your church instantly.

Your code is: https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Account/Invite/SalemUMCMorganton
If you have a smart phone you can use the QRcode in the corner to sign up. Just scan it.
Salem KIDS
Summer FUN

Aug 8—South Mountains Hike and Picnic Lunch. Meet at the church at 9am.

A BIG heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in VBS last month. Many hands went in to turn our church into a deserted island, and over 50 children experienced the love of God and heard the word of God through meals, stories, songs, prayers, and fun! It is beautiful to see our whole church work together in ministry to be a light in the darkness in our community!

Thank you,
Kathryn Jones

Youth Schedule for August & September

August 12 - Enola Trail Family Fun Night 6pm @ Patton HS

August 19 - Yth & Parent Pot-luck Fall Planning. Bring your calendars and ideas for themes or topics as we map out a schedule thru X-mas Break. Messy Games will follow so bring a change of clothes. Rising 6th graders welcome.

August 26 - Salem Youth, location TBA, 5pm

September 2 — No Youth

Save these dates:

September 28-30 Illumination East Albemarle

October 19-21 Possible mission weekend

November 9-11 Confirmation weekend at LJA

If you have children 12 or younger, be sure to pick up a copy each month for your family to use at home daily.

POCKETS is a family devotional magazine for you and your children to use and enjoy together! It includes short stories, a family scripture reading plan, weekly ideas to make a difference, family activities, a different country spotlight each month, recipes, puzzles, games and ways to incorporate faith and service daily. This is a tremendous resource to help equip families to spend intentional time together and grow in Christ.

Enola Trail Family Fun NIGHT

August 12th @ 6 pm (@ Patton HS)
Join us for an official soft-opening of the Enola Trail. The trail has a long way to go but….The storybook trail has been installed, refreshments will be provided, and we’ll enjoy some outdoor games together. Bring a rock to decorate for the Color Burke project and we’ll hide some along the trail. This evening is for all (not just kids/youth).

BACK 2 SCHOOL BREAKFAST:
A drive-thru welcome event for teachers, parents, and kids returning to school on August 27. We will set up a tent in our parking lot inviting families to stop in between 7-8:30am (before or after drop off) and enjoy a biscuit or coffee. If you are available and excited to serve folks that morning, please contact Pastor Norm (rev.norm@alumni.duke.edu)

This will be a great opportunity to let children and families know we care and we’re here.

illumiNATION (Sept 28-30)
An opportunity for Middle and High School youth for a weekend of mission, worship, and fun. Overnight accommodations will be at Camp Joshua in Albemarle, NC. Work projects will be coordinated for various locations throughout Anson & Stanly County.

Registration fee is $40 and includes accommodations, meals, t-shirt, and project materials.

Deadline for registration/money Sept 2!
Call church office or (salemumchurch@ymail.com).
VBS 2018 welcomed 53 children, included skits, songs, crafts to share, bible stories and games! On the last night, we celebrated with hotdogs, ice cream, and water games! Jesus rescues!
July Congregation-wide Meeting Recap

Thank you so much for investing your time to be present July 17. I imagine, in some way, that it was hard for all of us as we heard about the current study of the UMC on human sexuality. It was a blessing to have such a large turnout. I was so proud to know we have so many folks who deeply care for God's church and for each other. Thanks be to God!

Several shared how they wished they could be present but were unable to do so. While it’s impossible to fully convey the experience of sharing in community, I can provide the links to some of things we tried to cover. Many of the questions raised were almost impossible to answer, but I tried my best. As I shared with all present, if you have questions, comments, or ideas you'd really like to talk about on any of these things facing the UMC, I'd love to hear from you and would welcome meeting with anyone for coffee, a walk, or a sit-down.

Below are links to the handout, the slides about a history of the discipline language on sexuality and the scope of the study commission, and the 35 minute report shared at WNC Annual Conference by Bishop Ken Carter. The handout provided the purpose and scope which the 32 members adopted for their work of discernment. The back of the handout offered a resource list for exploring these issues further (including a link to the webpage for updates about the commission and a link where anyone could go to share your comments directly).

https://www.wnccumc.org/bishopcarterremarks

At least half present indicated an interest to have some further conversation around human sexuality... possibly with a small group study or bible study in July. I also expressed the desire to share in a book study of The Anatomy of Peace perhaps during September. (This book is not about human sexuality but everything about how organizations can thrive in relationship and community together). Included below are the details for the next offerings around the Way Forward Commission and human sexuality.

Thank you all again! My apologies our time went longer than hoped. I intended for us to close with these words. But I will share them again with you now.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:1-6)

Shalom, Pastor Norm

*Opportunities for Further Dialogue & Study:*

August 15, 22, & 29, @ 6pm – Healthy Conversations on Human Sexuality.

You’re invited to participate in a series of Wednesday evening conversations this month in response to the current UM study on human sexuality and LGBTQ inclusion. These conversations will take place in the Fellowship Hall in the round with a goal of gaining a deeper appreciation for listening and understanding our diverse perspectives. It is an opportunity to learn from each other, from scripture, and grow. While you are not required to attend all 3, I strongly encourage you to make that priority. We will not turn away anyone who can’t attend the first gathering August 15. However, it’s difficult when someone enters into a conversation mid-stream without experiencing previous opportunities to build trust and respect. All participants will be expected to follow a few agreed upon guidelines to ensure we honor and respect one another in our conversation and beliefs. Our goal is simply to learn to be in dialogue about difficult issues without doing harm. These are not debates, nor are they attempts to change or sway anyone. Our goal is to listen deeply. We will honor our time by limiting sessions to a max of 90 minutes. We ask that everyone who participates to have at least watched the 35 minute video of Bishop Ken Carter from Annual Conference so there is some base understanding as to the current reflection taking place within our denomination. Below is a projected focus for each session which may vary given our progress.

Aug 15 – Framing the Conversation. Building trust by sharing and understanding our stories and perspectives.
Aug 22 – What Scripture offers. Highlight, review, and ponder key Biblical texts that inform our discussion.
Aug 29 – God’s hopes and our hopes. Reflect on what it means for Salem and for UM’s to fulfill our calling.

**Coming in September!**

Watch for a chance to share in a book study using The Anatomy of Peace.

(This resource has been enlightening to those of the Commission on the Way Forward, but it is not a text about human sexuality. Some of the best leaders and minds today have used it to enhance the health and vitality of their organizations).

“I love this book. Having read it, the circumstances I encounter every day seem different to me—whether in sports, business, or family life, the ideas apply to every facet of life.”

DANNY AINGE, GM, THE BOSTON CELTICS

“A book that could change the face of humanity:”

MARION BLUMENTHAL LAZAN, holocaust survivor & bestselling author
SALEM ELEMENTARY OFFERING (Grant's Fund)

Students will return to school soon, and in the tradition of community outreach to our local school, you are invited to donate money to what we call Grant's Fund. The fund was established in honor of Grant Causby and provides Salem Elementary with money to assist students in need at the discretion of the principal or guidance counselor.

Please place donations in an offering envelope and mark it “Grant's Fund” or put “Grant's fund” in the memo line of your check made out to Salem UMC. Donations will be received through Sunday August 26.
The Reading Buddy program is getting ready to kick off its 5th year of working with Salem Elementary. The importance of this program and time spent with 1st and 2nd graders can be seen in the progress children make over the course of each year. The time spent serving is flexible and can be a time and duration that meets your schedule. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Barb Schneider at 438-4074. A background check/application is required to serve and orientation is offered.

If reading isn’t your cup of tea but you’d still like to serve, there are plenty of other ways you can be in ministry at SES too. Let’s continue expanding this wonderful outreach ministry!

Lord, bless those at all levels of in the ministry of teaching future generations. As they embark on a new school year, grant them energy, passion, discipline, and endurance for their daily tasks. Infuse their classrooms with an atmosphere of care and mutual respect, that all interactions there will be bathed in patience and understanding. Help their lessons to grow pupils in both knowledge and character, and help us all to support the work these persons do building up our community and our future. Help us also to look upon every child in our community as one of our own, helping them to grow in wisdom and character. In the name of the great teacher who called us all his children, Jesus the Christ, Amen.

Dear Friends
Thank you for your prayers, cards, and visits. We are blessed with such a great church family.
- James & Mary Carswell.

To The Christ’s Bread group
We can not thank you enough for your generous love offering for our family. You all are a true reflection of God’s love.
With thanks, The Ayers Family

Salem United Methodist Church
We are so very thankful for your gift. The loss of our son Truman has been very difficult. Every dollar counts towards his funeral. We are blessed because of your church’s love and compassion. - Crystal Riles

Baseball & Church?
Did you know you could enjoy a baseball game on Sunday and the Crawdads will donate funds to your church for attending?

On Church Bulletin Sundays (Aug 12, 26, Sept 2) bring your church bulletin to the Crawdad ticket office for a discounted $6 ticket. The Crawdads will then make a $4 donation from each ticket to that respective church (Salem UMC).
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<td>6pm Praise Team</td>
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<td>7:15 pm Choir</td>
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<td>7 pm Prayer (Parlor)</td>
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<td>FH Reserved</td>
<td>3:30pm BUCM meal</td>
<td>12:30pm Staff Meeting</td>
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<td>6pm Healthy conversations (FH)</td>
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<td>10 am Prayer Shawl (Ed Bldg)</td>
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<td>10:30am Lois Velna FH</td>
<td>10:30 am Bible Study (Yth Rm)</td>
<td>9-3pm Card Class (FH)</td>
<td>5pm - Youth &amp; Parent Pot-Luck &amp; Planning</td>
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<td>6pm Praise Team</td>
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<td>6-4 pm Salem ES Open House</td>
<td>10 am Prayer Shawl (Ed Bldg)</td>
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- FH Reserved 12-3pm
- 2 pm FH Reserved
- 4pm Church Council (Parlor)
- 6 pm Enola Trail Fun night
- 5pm - Youth & Parent Pot-Luck & Planning
- 7:30am Back 2 School Biscuits
- 10 am Prayer Shawl (Ed Bldg)
- 6pm Praise Team
- 10:30 am Bible Study (Yth Rm)
- 6pm Healthy conversations (FH)
- 7 pm Prayer (Parlor)
- 7:15 pm Choir
- 9am Kids South Mtn Hike
- 10:30am Bible Study (Yth Rm)
- 6 pm Bible Study (Parlor)
- 7 π pm Prayer (Parlor)
- 7:15 pm Choir
- 9am -UMW Dist Mtg. Valdese
- 12-4pm FH Reserved
- 3-6pm Sanct. Reserved