Monthly Newsletter of Salem UMC, Morganton, NC

Salem Scoop

Bearing Fruit: The Life of the Church in 2026

As we continue reading through *The Bible Year*, we have arrived at one of my favorite books of the Bible: Acts. This book tells the story of the formation of Christ's Church and the journeys, challenges, and discipleship of the first Christians. I love Acts because it connects the life and ministry of Jesus with the life of the Church. Through its stories, we discover practical lessons about living out our faith, along with the reassurance that Christ continues to be present with us as we grow in faith and live in community with one another.

Growing up, we often said, "I am going to church" or "I'll be at church." Even today, we use these familiar expressions when we talk about attending worship. Yet a couple of Sundays ago, Rev. Kim Clardy reminded us in her message of an important truth: **the church is not a building; the church is the people.** She invited us to sing a few lines from the familiar hymn *We Are the Church*, which reminds us that the church is made up of people of all ages, backgrounds, colors, and places, united by our faith in Jesus Christ.

The hymn also reminds us that the church is always learning, serving, praying, singing, laughing, and crying together. The church is not simply a place we go; it is a community we belong to and a calling we live out.

Perhaps, then, we should say not only, "I am going to church," but also, "I am being the church" or "I am gathering with the church." It may seem like a matter of semantics, but the distinction is important. **We are the Church!** Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ works in and through us for the glory of God. Our faith is not meant to remain within the walls of a building. It is meant to take root in our hearts, shape our relationships, and bear fruit in the world around us.

As I reflect on Salem's life and ministry in 2026, I can truly say that you have been the church. I have witnessed the Holy Spirit bringing new life to this congregation and inspiring you to love one another through meaningful acts of kindness, generosity, service, and compassion. I am thankful and blessed to serve alongside you, and I find myself telling others about the wonderful things God is doing in and through this congregation.

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You may be wondering, "What have we done?" That is a wonderful question, because the fruits of a congregation's life are not measured only by what happens on Sunday mornings or within the walls of the church. They are also seen in the ways we care for one another, serve our neighbors, welcome others, respond to needs, and share the love of Christ with our community.

As we look back on 2026, let us celebrate these fruits of faith—not simply as a list of accomplishments, but as signs of God's presence among us. Each act of service, each expression of generosity, each new connection, and each moment of care tells a part of the story of who we are becoming together: the Church of Jesus Christ, alive and at work through the Holy Spirit.

Growing in our Worship and Welcome

One of the joys of this year has been seeing more people gather for worship and finding new ways to involve the congregation in the life of our services.

- **Growing attendance:** Our average worship attendance increased from 45 in 2025 to 55 in 2026—an encouraging sign of growth in our worshiping community.
- **Welcoming newcomers:** We have welcomed 37 people so far in 2026, with seven remaining active in the congregation. This represents a retention rate of approximately 19%.
- **Sharing in worship:** We have expanded opportunities for lay members to participate by reading Scripture, ushering, and serving as Communion stewards.
- **Extending hospitality:** We have strengthened our hospitality and care before and after worship, helping people feel welcomed and connected.

These changes remind us that worship is not something one person leads while everyone else observes. Worship is something we share as the body of Christ; each bringing our gifts to glorify God and serve one another.

Caring for our Church Home

A church building is more than bricks, mortar, and doors. It is a place where people gather to worship, learn, find community, and encounter the love of Christ. Throughout 2026, our Trustees have worked diligently to care for Salem's buildings and grounds, improve safety and accessibility, and prepare our facilities for future ministry.

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Their work has included:

- **Renewing our buildings:** Repairing and painting the steeple, refurbishing the sanctuary entrance doors, installing new glass doors at Fellowship Hall, updating light fixtures, painting hallways and classrooms, and replacing damaged guttering and fascia boards.
- **Improving safety and accessibility:** Upgrading exterior lighting, installing smoke detectors, widening the parking lot entrance for accessible drop-off, removing the choir loft platform to improve safety and mobility, updating nursery fixtures and toys, and establishing a safety team to develop an updated safety plan and standard operating procedures.
- **Preparing for future use:** Cleaning out the educational building for rental, completing repairs to the parsonage and beginning its rental in April, removing and donating unused items, consolidating church supplies, and organizing historical records for safekeeping.
- **Maintaining our campus:** Pressure-washing sidewalks, removing overgrown trees, painting exterior doors and pathway columns, updating campus signage, and completing needed interior repairs.
- **Strengthening our resources:** Upgrading internet access, computers, microphones, and cameras; organizing Trustee files; reviewing contracts; and improving the management of church supplies.

There is still work to be done, but each improvement helps us care for the resources God has entrusted to us and prepares Salem to welcome and serve others. Our Trustees are also developing a long-range plan that includes a new church sign, repaving the parking lot, and purchasing a stove for the kitchen.

I am grateful for the time, skill, and dedication that make this work possible. These improvements may not always be visible in our worship or outreach ministries, but they help create a safe, welcoming, and functional home for the ministry God calls us to do.

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Nurturing the Next Generation

Faith grows when we create opportunities for people to encounter God, ask questions, and discover how they can live out their faith. This year, Salem introduced **Kids Creative Worship**, a new worship experience for children supported by an average of five leaders and four students. This ministry gives children opportunities to engage with faith in creative and meaningful ways while adults share their gifts and help nurture the next generation of disciples.

Practicing Faithful Stewardship

Faithful ministry also requires thoughtful stewardship of the resources God provides. This year, Salem strengthened its financial reserves by placing $15,000 in the United Methodist Foundation Development Fund and $15,000 in a certificate of deposit (CD), while maintaining $8,000 in the general fund. These steps help us care for the church's financial resources and plan responsibly for both present needs and future ministry.

Reaching Beyond Our Walls

- One of the clearest signs of a living church is its willingness to carry the love of Christ beyond its own walls. Salem has continued to build relationships, respond to needs, and create opportunities for people in our community to experience connection, care, and belonging.
- **Supporting children, students, and educators**
- We continued our partnerships with Salem Elementary School and North Liberty School, feeding faculty and staff at both schools three times during the year and providing teacher gifts twice at each school. We also provided a meal for the Patton High School Band. In addition, six dedicated volunteers formed a new Backpack Team to pack and distribute backpacks for students at Salem Elementary and North Liberty School.
- **Creating opportunities for community and connection**
- Our Fall Festival welcomed 675 students and adults, providing an opportunity for families to gather and enjoy fellowship. Through Creation Station, our open art studio for families, we have created another space for creativity and connection, averaging 20 participants each Monday.
- We also participated in the Morganton Pride Festival, where we engaged with families and members of the wider community. This outreach has helped build new relationships and welcomed several new worshippers to Salem.

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- **Meeting needs and partnering in mission**
- During the Thanksgiving season, Salem provided food for 92 people to enjoy a Thanksgiving meal. We also partnered with Bell United Methodist Church in Leicester, North Carolina, to assist with mission projects in that community, extending our service beyond our immediate neighborhood.
- Each of these ministries is an opportunity to live out our faith in tangible ways. Whether we are feeding someone, supporting a teacher, providing a backpack for a student, welcoming a family, or partnering with another congregation, we are sharing the love of Christ through our actions.

As I look back on this year, I am grateful for the many ways the fruits of the Spirit have been made visible through Salem's ministry. We have grown in worship, cared for our church home, nurtured faith, strengthened our financial resources, and reached beyond our walls to serve our neighbors. Each accomplishment tells a story of people responding faithfully to God's call.

Yet our work is not finished. The fruit we celebrate today is also the seed for what God may grow tomorrow. I believe God is continuing to move at Salem, inviting us to dream, grow, serve, and share the love of Christ in new ways.

So, what comes next? In the December newsletter, I look forward to sharing our vision and goals for 2027. Until then, may we continue to be the church—not only when we gather for worship, but wherever God calls us to love, serve, and bear fruit.

Thank you for the many ways you have shared your gifts, your time, and your faith this year. It is a blessing to serve alongside you and to witness what God is doing in and through this congregation.

Peace of Christ,

Pastor Monica

PASTOR MONICA CHILDERS
pastor@sumcm.org

Administrative Assistant	Zachary Cagle	salemumc@sumcm.org
Pianist	Sue Bunch	s_bunch@att.net
Audio Visual	Kevin Fite	worship@sumcm.org
	Bob Harbour	rwharbour@gmail.com

Salem United Methodist Church

1206 Salem Road

Morganton, NC 28655

828-433-6600

email: **salemumc@sumcm.org**

website: **www.sumcm.org**

Office Hours: *Tuesday & Thursday*

12:30 – 6:00 pm

Our Financial Stewardship

Offerings Received to Date: **$179,411.51**

Ministry Expenses to Date: **$187,916.42**

(Bolded totals reflected in Offerings received)

Other Ministry Gifts Received to date:

Offerings	**$ 160,066.65**
Backpack	**$ 4,117.50**
Building Fund	$ 3,690.00
Cemetery	$ 2,075.00
Souper Bowl	**$ 181.49**
Missions Memorial	**$ 377.50**
To HELP A FAMILY	$ 2,000.00
Missions/ Ice Cream Social	**$ 263.00**
WNCC Pastor Salary	**$ 9,190.00**
Choir Director	**$ 1,100.00**
Building Parsonage Rent	$ 11,340.00
PR Paid Out	**$ 3,097.00**
Hearing Device	**$ 1,000.00**
Fall Festival	**$ 100.00**

Church Council Meeting

Please note there will be a Church Council Meeting on Sunday

November 15th, at 12:00 Noon.

(Lunch will be provided)

If you or a member of your team will be unable to attend, please ensure you provide a status report to Charles Autrey prior to the meeting.





THANKSGIVING MEALS

Once again this year we will be providing complete Thanksgiving dinners for 10-12 families in need. Families will be identified through local school counselors. Grocery bags will be provided with instructions for filling, to those who wish to participate in this community outreach. Please see Kevin or Vicki with questions or if you know of a neighbor or friend who could benefit from this ministry.



BURKE UNITED
CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

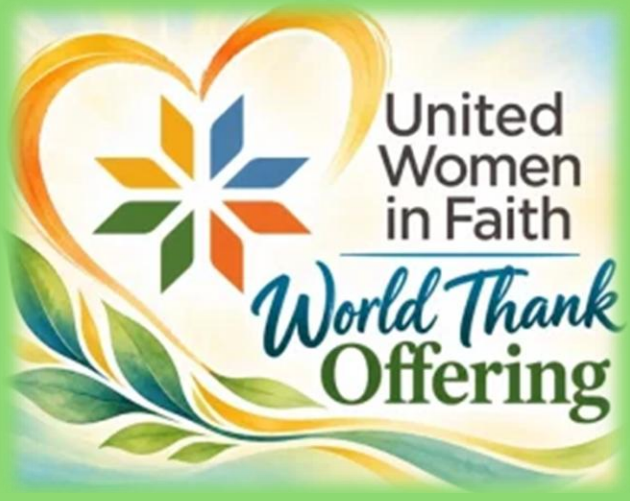


We would like to offer our sincere appreciation and thanks to all who participated in our Fall Festival Trunk or Treat. This was an enormous outreach for our church which touched the lives of roughly 675 children and adults. Its success would not have been possible without your prayers, time, energy and donations!

Thank You!

United Women in Faith

The UWF will meet Saturday November 14th at 12:00 noon. and will observe "World Thank Offering!"



Hanging of the Greens and Tree of Hope Lighting

Join us in kicking off Advent



Celebrate with us!
www.sumcm.org

Sunday November 29 2026, 10:30 AM
Salem United Methodist

828-433-6600
1206 Salem Road, Morganton NC 28655



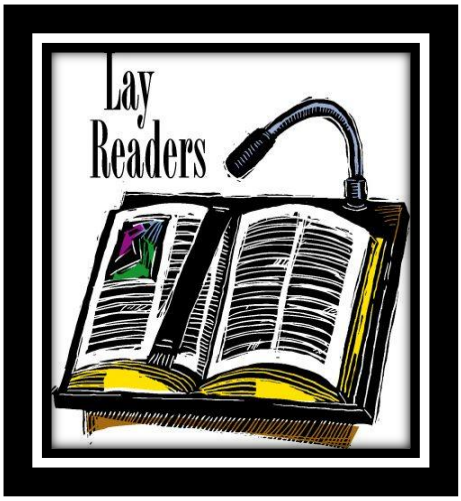
NOVEMBER

1st	-	Hadley Fite
8th	-	Finley Fite & Kay Pollard
15th	-	Hadley Fite
22nd	-	Daniel Reinke & _____
29th	-	Finley Fite



NOVEMBER

1st	-	Dave Childers & Jerry Ramsey
8th	-	Daniel & Stephen Reinke
15th	-	Trey & Colt Crowe
22nd	-	Sue Cronk & Kim Clardy
29th	-	Tim & Brady Keller



NOVEMBER

1st	-	Kale Wright
8th	-	Stephen Reinke
15th	-	Trey Crowe
22nd	-	Monica Childers
29th	-	Kim Clardy

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10



NOVEMBER

4TH	-	6:00 pm	Trustees
5th	-	5:30 pm	Cultivate Team
8th	-	12:00 pm	Safe Sanctuary
15th	-	12:00 pm	Church Council

NOTARY SERVICES

For all documents that may require notarization, Zachary Cagle is available Tuesday and Thursday during office hours.





- REMINDER –

Please remember to bring non-perishable food items for our community Blessing Box on the third Sunday of each month! Please contact Clarice (828-413-4862) with any questions or assistance with pickup.

Thank you for your support with this outreach!

We now have a new way to give online that simplifies the giving process and allows the church to receive your gifts faster. The giving link can be found on our website at sumcm.org/give or by scanning the QR code below with your smartphone camera. You will be asked to create a login with your phone number and email address. Once logged in you can add your credit card or banking information. There is a transaction fee associated with the online gifts and that ranges from 1% for ACH (bank account) transactions to 2.5%-3.5% + $0.30 for credit card transactions. You can choose to cover the fee as part of your gift and the fee will be added to your gift. If you choose not to cover the fee, then it will be deducted from the amount you give after the transaction processes. All transactions take place via a payment service with enterprise grade security that is compliant with the latest standards, so your payment data will be protected.





In Honor and In Memory of…

Ernest Stroup	*by Lisa & Mary Ann Propst*	*by Edith Dale*
	by Bruce & Kay Pollard	*by Margaret Shell*
	by Jerry & Clarice Shuping	*by Lynda & Joe Woody*
Gilbert Kincaid	*by Linda & Joe Woody*	*by Kay Duckworth*

Thank You from…

American Red Cross

On behalf of the American Red Cross, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to you for your partnership. By hosting the Thursday October 15th blood drive, you've made a difference in the lives of moms with complicated childbirths, people fighting cancer, accident or trauma victims and more!

Here is breakdown of your blood drive:

26 Scheduled Donors 29 Presenting Donors

29 Units collected on a goal of 25!! ***CONGRATULATIONS!!***

19 Whole Blood Units	10 Units from Power Red	0 Deferrals
1 First Time Donor	1 Quantify not sufficient	0 Hispanic/African American

Your blood drive will potentially save up to 87 lives! Your role as a Blood Program Leader reflects a commitment to helping others and a deep sense of community. You are leaving a legacy that directly contributes to the health and well-being of individuals in need. Your next blood drive is scheduled for March 25, 2027.

Exclusive For Sunday, November 1st

BREAKING NEWS

All Saints, Charge Conference & Laity Service Luncheon

A Day to Celebrate and Remember

on November 1st, We will be observing All Saints' Day, Charge Conference and Laity Service Luncheon. These three recognitions and celebrations on the same day are held together by the love and community at Salem.

First we will remember our Christian brothers and sisters of the church who have died in the past year.

For Christians, as for anyone, death is an occasion of sorrow, but in the words of Paul to the Thessalonians, we do not grieve as others who have no hope. Indeed, All Saints Day is a day of celebration as we give thanks for the faithfulness of the saints and the heritage they have left to us, and as we look forward in hope to God's promise of eternal life.

During worship, we will light a candle in memory of each member who has passed since November of 2025. An additional candle will be on the altar for each person to remember someone they may have lost in the past year.

Charge Conference

Charge Conference is the annual meeting of the governing body of each United Methodist Church when we, as the body of Christ celebrate the ministries of the church, direct the work of the church, set salaries for the pastor and staff, elect new leaders, and recommend candidates for ministry. On Nov. 1st Charge Conference will take place at the close of worship.

Laity Service Award & Luncheon

The Administrative Council set forth a process to honor a lay person by extending a Laity Service award to a person who has provided exemplary service to their church and model Christ's love by example. This years Laity Award Recepient will be announced on Nov. 1st. Following the Charge Conference, we will gather for a Celebratory lunch in the fellowship hall.

Members can nominate a person to recieve this award by filling out and submitting a nomination form to Pastor Monica by October 18th



2nd - Vicki Reinke
4th – Sarah Horton
5th – Thomas Ayers
6th – Michael Dale
8th – Janice Sorrells
9th – Billie Ross
Brady Keller
11th – Emma McLaughlin
12th – Sherry Senter
13th – Kay Duckworth
15th – Katie Gordon
20th – Rebecca Dale
21st – Joyanne Benfield
24th – Troy Patton
26th – Lance Riddick
Chris Garrison
27th – Ben Johnson

Happy Anniversary!

27th – Wes & Sue Bunch

BURKE UNITED CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

VOLUNTEER INTEREST MEETING

Be a part of something meaningful!

See what BUCM has to offer! Learn how to get involved as a volunteer! Open to everyone!

Monthly on second Tuesday. 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm
576 E. Fleming Drive
For more info, call 828-433-8075 or volunteer@bucm.net



Praises
Sonny Andrews born 9/27/2026 –
Virginia Robinson's great grandson

This Week's Prayers
Dorothy Holland- Doris Garrison's Friend
Bobby Sigmon- Alan Byrd's Friend
Norris Key- Fite Family Friend
Lloyd Fite- Kevin Fite's grandfather
Greg Getty's friend of Jack & Janice
Tim & Robin Arney
Anthony Magri
Edith Dale
Beulah Duckworth
Troy Patton
Aaron Clardy- Kim Clardy's husband
Wes Bunch
Keith & Candace Brown
Dalton Morales
Doris Ingram
Gean Vance
Robert Pruett
Susan & David Stroup

Prayers for Family and Friends
Abigail and Bentley- Trace Riley's grandchildren
Joel Thompson-Friend of the church
Marley Byrd- Alan Byrd's sister-in-law
Patsy Bridges- Doris Ingram's sister
Jeanette Stamey-Sue Bunch's sister
Anna-Grace Rawls family- Lara Autrey's friend
Tanya Speagle- Brandy Crow's mom
Tyler Schmitt- Denise Magri's family
Paula Hemphill- Friend of Clarice
Bonnie - Fur Baby Kim Clardy

Hospital
Sharon Minton – Jeff Miller's friend

Homebound
Brenda Autrey
Larry & Janet Koon
Billie & Garland Ross
Leota Garrison

Deaths
Geneva York – Grandmother Amber Halliburton's Mom – 10/14
Ernie Stroup – 10/15
John Holley family – Lisa Propst friend – 10/26
JoAnn Patton – 10/28

Ongoing Prayers
Kevin Patton
Steve Stroup
Zach & Lucy Cagle
Gary & Wanda Byrd
Lisa & Mary Ann Propst
Kathryn Duckworth
Roger Hicks- Sue Bunch's brother



The Church Office will be open every Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 – 6:00 pm

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 All Saints Sunday 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 – Worship 11:30 – Covered Dish Lunch	**2**	**3**	**4** 10:00 – Prayer Shawl 6:00 – Trustees Mtg.	**5** 5:30 – Cultivate Team meeting	**6**	**7** **9- 12:00 Bake Sale & Yard Sale**
8 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 - Worship 10:45 – Kid's Worship	**9** 6:30 – Girl .....Scouts	**10**	**11** 10:00 – Prayer Shawl 7 pm - Choir	**12**	**13**	**14**
15 9:30 – Sunday School 10:30 – Worship 12:00 – Church Council ***Blessing Box***	**16**	**17**	**18** 10:00 – Prayer Shawl 7 pm - Choir	**19** 6-9 pm BUCM Community Stew and Brew	**20**	**21**
22 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 – Worship 10:45 – Kid's Worship	**23** Girl Scouts OCC Shoeboxes or Angel Tree	**24**	**25** 10:00 – Prayer Shawl 7 pm - Choir	**26**	**27**	**28**
29 9:30 – Sunday School 10:30 – Worship **Hanging of the Greens**	**30**					

Nov. 2 – November 6 Drop off for Yard Sale Items.

Salem United Methodist Church
Love In Action

Explore Faith…Embody Christ…Embrace Others