

# First UCC Focus February 2023



**Sundays at 11:00**  
**In-Person and Online Worship**

<https://www.facebook.com/First.UCC.Salisbury>

## FEBRUARY SCRIPTURES

### February 5

Isaiah 58:1-12  
Psalm 112:1-10  
1 Corinthians 2:1-16  
Matthew 5:13-20

### February 12

Deuteronomy 30:15-20  
Psalm 119:1-8  
1 Corinthians 3:1-9  
Matthew 5:21-37

### February 19

Exodus 24:12-18  
Psalm 2  
2 Peter 1:16-21  
Matthew 17:1-9

### February 22 (Ash Wednesday)

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17  
Psalm 51:1-17  
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10  
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

### February 26

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7  
Psalm 32  
Romans 5:12-19  
Matthew 4:1-11



[www.facebook.com/First.UCC.Salisbury/](https://www.facebook.com/First.UCC.Salisbury/)

Our facebook page contains news, announcements, events and weekly online worship services.

Visit Us  
ONLINE

[WWW.1STUCC.ORG](http://WWW.1STUCC.ORG)

Our Website contains links to Bulletins and Newsletters, a link to send your offering to the Church through PayPal and other useful information.

Although you may be worshipping with us online, your offering can be dropped off at the Church during the week or sent to the Church at:

First United Church of Christ  
207 W. Horah St.  
Salisbury, NC 28144

There is a link on our website to donate online to UCC or you may donate directly through PayPal.



You can scan this QR Code with your camera to donate to First UCC



**YOUR GIVING  
MATTERS!**



Please join us for online or in-person worship each Sunday at 11:00 a.m

If you are new to our services,  
WELCOME,

If you are returning, WELCOME BACK!  
We've missed you!



- 1 7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 4 10:00 a.m. Food Drive (until noon)
- 5 11:00 a.m. Online & In Person Worship with Communion  
3:00 p.m. ONA Town Hall Meeting
- 6 6:30 p.m. Circle 7 Meeting
- 7 6:30 p.m. Circle 6 Meeting
- 8 6:00 p.m. ONA Committee Meeting  
7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 9 11:30 a.m. Primetimers Lunch Meeting  
6:00 p.m. Finance Committee Meeting  
7:00 p.m. Mission Committee Meeting
- 12 11:00 a.m. Online & In-Person Worship  
4:00 p.m. Property Committee Meeting
- 13 5:00 p.m. Families First
- 14 10:30 a.m. Meals on Wheels Deliveries
- 15 5:30 p.m. EC Board Meeting  
7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 16 5:30 p.m. Church Women Board Mtg.
- 19 11:00 a.m. Online & In-Person Worship  
12:15 p.m. Church Council Meeting
- 20 5:00 p.m. Families First
- 21 1:00 p.m. Bless These Stitches
- 22 7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service
- 23 6:00 p.m. PFLAG Meeting
- 26 11:00 a.m. Online & In-Person Worship
- 28 10:30 a.m. Meals on Wheels Deliveries

## CAROL'S CORNER

Friends,

It seems that people don't know how to talk to each other anymore. Especially about difficult topics. Some people are afraid it will cause division. Some people are afraid that they won't be heard. Some people's minds are so made up they don't see the need to listen to a different opinion. Some people are afraid that they won't be able to say their point well. Some people are afraid of getting hurt. Some people react defensively.

This isn't new. There have been challenges and conflicts happening in societies and churches since the beginning of creation. It's something Paul dealt with in his letters. He spoke to churches that were divided over theology and doctrine. There were times he'd have liked to spit. But he engaged. He spoke his truth and his understanding of God's truth in love.

Colin Patterson suggests: "If we could ask Paul "How do you respond to conflict in churches?", he might well say, "I weep at the damage done by contentious people. I pray for them and urge them to live up to their calling, responding to God's grace by being themselves gracious. I once believed sternness was the only way to put people right. Now it is only my last resort." His response comes from receiving an outpouring of God's grace.

If we could ask James, "How do you respond to conflict in churches?", he might well reply, "I know only too well that anger, bitterness and envy work against the purposes of God. I urge people who find themselves caught up in such attitudes to pray for wisdom, mourn over the state of the church and learn to listen to God and to each other."

Colin is the Assistant Director of Bridge Builders, a mediation service that works with churches.

We live in a world where we tend to avoid conversations that might make us feel uncomfortable or might lead to conflict.

Yet we only need to read scripture to know that it's nothing new. And in our world today we need people to learn techniques to have uncomfortable conversations. To listen, really listen and to wonder when we feel uncomfortable and not react too quickly. The reality is that this a skill we all need to work on and learn.

The upcoming conversations around Open and Affirming may be uncomfortable, may make you want to spit, but it is a good opportunity for us to work on the skills that will help us, not just here, but in any difficult conversations we may have.

So how do we start? We start from holding up the belief that each person is coming to these conversations in good faith. We come remembering that we are all God's beloved children We come realizing that the topic isn't the person. We come speaking our own truth and not speaking for others. We come willing to listen. We don't always have to agree, but we can learn to disagree agreeably.

And if we can learn this skill just think how valuable it is in our world today with all the challenging discussions going on.

Peace,

Carol

## Mission Committee News

The Mission Committee met on January 19 in the Church Fellowship Hall. The Committee set goals for 2023 based on what was accomplished and sponsored in 2022, which we will continue. The Little Food Pantry has been put on hold until one is constructed and installed. The next Drive-By Food Drive for Rowan Helping Ministries Food Pantry will be Saturday, February 4 from 10-12 noon for regular food items. The food pantry was greatly depleted over the holidays. We will continue with Little Red Wagon items through May for the Food for Thought Backpack program with RHM. An RHM Shelter Meal is scheduled for Saturday, February 18 at 7 p.m. If you would like to volunteer to help with the meal, please contact Millie Campbell. Desserts and volunteers are needed.

The collection of scarves, hats, gloves and socks for RHM Shelter guests and Family Crisis Center was dedicated on January 15. Several boxes of these items were packed after our meeting and were delivered on January 23. A special "Thank You" to all who participated in this winter project.

Thank you also to all who contributed to the Annual Christmas Offering (\$1635) for the Veterans of the Cross for UCC retired clergy and their spouses who have special financial need.

Inquiry has been made to help a family of four whose home was destroyed by fire several weeks ago. They were first housed in a local motel with funds from American Red Cross. They have received a voucher for first month's rent beginning February 1 from RHM. Donation of clothing, furniture and household items are being coordinated by Kristen Valles of Salisbury Pediatrics Office Community Outreach. Clothing and a \$50 gift card have been donated and a \$100 gift card was donated for food items. Also, the committee designated \$100 gift card for items they can purchase from Habitat Restore. A queen size bed and mattress are yet to be donated.

The Lenten/Easter Offering will be designated for One Great Hour of Sharing and will be received on Easter, April 9.

The Committee discussed new projects. One was to assemble Church World Service Kits once the need is identified as to how we can respond. Another idea was to investigate how folks who have auto mechanical issues may be helped to restore transportation which is essential to get to work.

The next meeting will be Thursday, February 9, at 7 pm in Fellowship Hall.



## FIVE-ALIVE

### HELPING FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY

Our Five-Alive program contributes monthly to Rowan Helping Ministries.

**Below is a First Quarter Report of the 2022-2023 RHM fiscal year, many area donors like Our 5-Alive Fund have impacted local citizens in the following ways:**

- 728 individuals received \$ 156,624 in financial assistance for rent, utilities, medicine, and other critical needs;
- 296 different guest were provided a safe place to spend the night in our Shelter;
- 16,212 meals were served to the hungry in Jeannie's Kitchen;
- 1,511 households visited our Food Pantry, receiving 235,077 pounds of groceries;
- 1,043 individuals received new or gently used clothing from our Clothing Center;
- 5,596 Food for Thought food bags are given to Rowan County children each week so they would have enough food to eat on weekends.

Kyna S. Grubb, Executive Director wants to Thank You for your gifts and all that it makes possible for our most fragile citizens.

**Your contributions to our Five Alive Fund is always appreciated, and 100% is used to help citizens of Salisbury/Rowan area and our church family with unforeseen short term emergencies.**



## Little Red Wagon Collection



The Mission Committee's focus continues with collection of items for Rowan Helping Ministries' Food for Thought Backpack Program. The Program helps school aged children receive easy to prepare meals for weekends. Food for Thought item suggestions are:

Mac & Cheese Cups	Canned Ravioli
Cereal Cups (individual serving size)	Franks & Beans
Oatmeal	Pudding or Fruit Cups
Granola Bars	

Food collected during the month of January was 46 pounds. Thank you for your generous donations.

You may drop off donations at the Church anytime during office hours or on any Sunday morning.

## Bless These Stitches

The Bless These Stitches Group will meet on Tuesday, February 21 at 1:00 p.m. at the Church.

Please join us if you can for crafting and fellowship. If you don't know how to knit or crochet and would like to learn, or just need to polish your skills, the group is willing to offer you guidance.

If you are in need of a handmade gift for someone, there are many crafts for sale at the Church or something specific might also be arranged.



## Drive-Thru Food Dropoff

1<sup>st</sup> UCC 207 W Horah  
**Saturday Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>**  
 10AM-12PM



RHM shelves are bare!  
 Help us shower our neighbors with love!

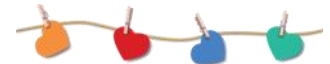


## In Our Thoughts and Prayers



Brenda Bernhardt, Tyler Bernhardt, Steve Bowles and family, Rev. Warren Casiday, Gerri D. Crummett (Donna Odrosky's sister), Betty Diehl, Stacy Erb, Nancy Hipp, Anne Kennedy, Jasmine Kirby and son Noah (Don Whitfield's niece and great-nephew), Rick Lockhart (Radeil Lockhart's uncle), Jim Lyerly, John Marion, Shirley McNeil, Eddie Meeker, Megan Meredith, Pat Norris, Patsy Paxton, Glenda Shrewsbury, Mark Shuping, Romas & Sarah Shuping, Claire Skinner, Clyde Taylor (Linda Hauze's uncle), Bobbie Troutman, family of David Waller, Waylon Ward, the people of Ukraine, the people of Peru.

**If you know of anyone who should be added or removed from our prayer list, let the office know. If you have prayer concerns, please text, call or email Pastor Carol.**



## February Birthdays

From Calendar Sponsored by  
Circle 2

February 1	Beth Lemly
February 2	Kathryn Wear
February 3	Dakota Brewer John Wagoner
February 6	Darrell Lemly
February 7	Gabe Webster Kim Pittman Heather Shrewsbury
February 10	Anne Kennedy
February 11	Kristen Trexler
February 12	Anna Peck Cade Bernhardt
February 14	Flo Peck
February 17	Gunnar Shrewsbury
February 18	Janette Yost
February 21	Jim Lyerly Cortland Hunter
February 22	Gretchen Gensemer Clark Alcorn
February 24	Lucy Bennett
February 27	Kevin Leichman II



### Family Fun Afternoon

On January 22 we gathered in the afternoon to learn more about Epiphany and the baptism of Christ. There were stories, crafts, and fun!



Join the Choir!  
Rehearsals are held  
**Wednesday evenings at 7:30.**  
Your voice is welcome!

### ONA Committee Notes

In response to a question from one of our members regarding what ONA actually is and means I hope this helps. ONA stands for Open and affirming and is an official designation of congregations and other settings in the United Church of Christ affirming the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and non-binary persons (LGBTQ) persons in the church's life and ministry. Over a year ago some members of our church brought this to the council and that is what has led to the first town hall which will be held February 5<sup>th</sup> at 3PM in the fellowship hall. There will be cookies and beverages. An invitation was extended to Rev. Elizabeth Horton and she and some members of her church will be here to share their journey through the process of becoming ONA. This is an opportunity for all here to come and ask questions about the ONA. The ONA Committee hopes that you will all come and ask questions and listen with an open heart. If you have any questions that you would like to ask you are invited to write them down, place them in the box at the back of the sanctuary or ask them that day. The ONA Committee will report back with questions that were asked and answers. The ONA Committee consists of Leslie Dent and Donna Odrosky, co-chairs. Members include Ann Teague, Mark Schiemann, Bobbie Troutman, and Don Whitfield.

A reminder that just because we are having these conversations does not mean that we will automatically become Open and Affirming or even vote on becoming open and affirming. All it means currently is that we are having conversations and are open to the possibility. All members are encouraged and invited to come with an open spirit and an open heart to listen, bring questions and concerns.

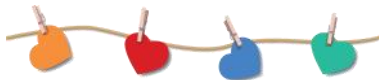


This year during Lent we will be encountering many beloved stories about Jesus and the people who come to him. He will meet Nicodemus at night, we will find a Samaritan woman at a well, he will heal a man who was born without sight. In each case these people are seeking something. It might be a new beginning, a deeper faith, a different life, or maybe they aren't even sure what it is that they seek. Jesus questions and conversation lead the people in surprising new ways which can and often does lead to new questions.

This series is based on the series that A Sanctified Art put together. There will be a devotional booklet and prayer cards from them and of course our theme. Each week we will be asking different questions. Along the way we won't always find the answer, but the hope is that they can help us to see differently, perhaps gain a new perspective. Hopefully they help us to find a wider grace and a deeper faith.

Indeed, as the folks from A Sanctified Art who developed this series say, and I echo, I hope that throughout this series you will ask yourself, "what am I seeking? What is God seeking."

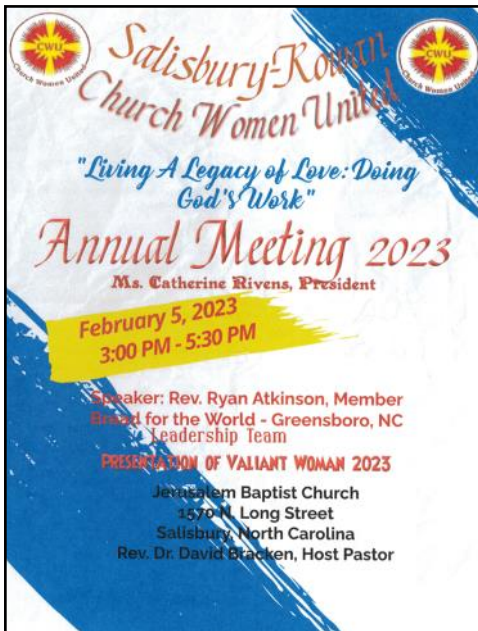
This is an invitation to be open to the spiritual practice of seeking. As this is an opportunity to look at our assumptions, soften our hearts, widen our vision, and go deeper.



## Primetimers

**Thursday, February 9, 11:30 a.m.**

Primetimers will meet on Thursday, February 9 at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall with a Valentine Theme for our friendship and fellowship in Christ Jesus. Please invite a friend to share in this time of fellowship together as we celebrate friendship (your treat for your guest). The meal will be catered from Mykonos: grilled chicken and salad plate with iced tea for \$12/plate. Please call the church office by Tuesday, February 7 to reserve your meal. To celebrate February as Heart Month, a program on heart health and senior health will be presented by a local health educator. As an offering for the day, participants are invited to bring canned foods for the Rowan Helping Ministry Food Drive, sponsored by the Mission Committee.



It's time to share.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

The Lenten/Easter Offering will be designated for One Great Hour of Sharing and will be received on Easter, April 9.

### General Synod

General Synod meets this summer from June 30-July 4 at the Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, IN. Each Conference sends delegates and will be debating resolutions that have been brought by the various conferences. There will be worship and speakers and opportunities for mission. It will be an opportunity to get to know UCC folks, members and clergy from all over the country. If you are looking for a short vacation, Indiana might be your spot. Registration is now open. For more information:

<https://www.ucc.org/general-synod-2023-online-registration-opens-jan-23/>

### Ways you can help within our Church ...

...If you have not yet chosen to join in-person church services, you can still watch online and continue with your prayers.

...If you can sing, join the choir! We always need new voices!

...More people are confined to their homes these days. We all need person-to-person contact. Give someone a call, write a note, send an email.

...Five Alive still needs your donations many in our church and community need a little help.

...The Little Red Wagon project needs your support for Rowan Helping Ministries backpack food collection. (Please drop items by the Church!)

...Church offering can be made by mail (207 W. Horah Street, Salisbury 28144), your online banking system or paypal. There is a "donation link" on our website at [www.1stucc.org](http://www.1stucc.org).