

Friendly Messenger

Beloved Sardis,

July 2025
2025

As you well know we are in the season of Pentecost—a time in the church year when we remember how the Holy Spirit came with fire, wind, power, and with LOVE . Pentecost is not just a moment in the past; it's the season, our everyday, we live now. The Spirit is still moving, still stirring, still sending us out into the world. A world in desperate need of the fire of hope and community.

And as July is now upon us, we feel the HEAT of summer. The days grow longer, the sun stronger, and we are reminded of another kind of fire—the physical heat that affects us all, especially those most vulnerable in our communities. For some, summer means vacations and cookouts. But for many, especially our unhoused neighbors and those without consistent shelter or resources, the heat can be dangerous. It can be life-threatening.

This is where the fire of the Holy Spirit and the fire of summer meet. The Spirit does not call us to comfort, but to compassion. Just as the Spirit lit a fire in the hearts of the apostles to go out and serve, we too are being called now. Called to offer a cold drink. Called to provide a place of shade or cooling shelter. Called to check in on neighbors who might be alone or without air conditioning. Called to be the hands and feet of Christ in a world that is burning in more ways than one.

I want to take a moment to express my deep gratitude and thanks for the support and encouragement you've given me to serve communities in need this summer, representing the heart of our church.

From our Mission Trip to Western North Carolina, to serving as the MESH (Mental, Emotional, Social Health) officer at Camp Bud Schiele Scout Camp, and later this August as a Spiritual Director with Hand-in-Hand TEC. But above all, I am most thankful for your spirit of compassion and loving devotion to those in need.

It fills my heart with joy to serve and to share the love of Christ, representing Sardis Lutheran. Thank you, I am truly grateful!

So, may we continue to allow the Spirit's fire to kindle in us a passion for justice, for kindness, for mercy. Let us not turn from those in need. Instead, let us be a church on fire—with love, with generosity, and with the boldness to serve all God's beloved children.

Stay cool. Stay kind. And may the fire of the Spirit burn brightly within you.

God loves you and so do I,
Pastor Oscar Shepherd

The **Fred T. Foard Senior Citizens** group meet on the first Wednesday of each month for lunch and a program. The seniors will meet in July on the 2nd at Sardis. All are invited to join us for fun, food, and fellowship.



Congregations to Alexis Wood: daughter of Leevada Wood. She graduated from Jacob Fork Middle School and will be entering Fred T. Foard High School in the Fall.

School is out for the summer!!!! Time to plan for 2025-2026

The Sardis Social Committee will be collecting school supplies/backpacks for Banoak and Blackburn during July. We know there are families in our communities who cannot afford the necessary items. Schools will need stocked supply closets to furnish needy students' supplies like crayons, paper, and scissors. Below is a list of needed supplies.

* Composition Notebook-100 sheets (marble design) * Colored pencils-12 pack
* # 2 yellow pencils * Crayola Washable Markers 8 pack * Large glue sticks * Pack of pencils topper erasers or large pink block erasers * Loose leaf notebook paper (wide ruled 100 sheets) * Primary Notebooks (wide ruled) * Pencil Boxes * Fiskars Scissors
* Inexpensive earphones * Book Bags (Back packs) The following items are also welcome for classroom use. o Band aids o Facial tissues o Ziploc bags o Copy paper (white)
o Liquid soap o Hand Sanitizer Please bring any items you can donate to the church and place in the church narthex during June and July. . The items will be shared between the two schools.

Blessings Box

Please remember first Sunday is the time designated to bring non-perishable food for the Blessings Box.

Information for NL's and Bulletins

Committee meetings or events by the congregation should be communicated to Jane directly. This needs to be done in time for newsletters (Wednesday before the last Sunday in the month), or the bulletin (by Wednesday evening each week.)

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

This years theme was “God is Calling.” The scripture for the theme was Romans 8:24-28. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for the good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Bishop Tim Smith was named bishop emeritus and he was thanked and celebrated for his past 10 years of service leading the NC Synod

We honored Vice President Diana Haywood for her 18 years of dedicated service and leadership. She says multiple times every gathering that the North Carolina Synod is the place to be. And truly it is.

Vice president election: Cameron McCall
Secretary: Jill Nelson

During the process of elections we knew that on Saturday morning entering the last 2 ballots for the bishop that the North Carolina Synod was on the verge of creating history. We were down to 3 very qualified female candidates.

Bishop Elect: Rev Emily Hartner who grew up in Catawba County and attended Beth Eden.

I am humbled to be able to be a part of this journey of attending the synod assembly and watching how the Holy Spirit works in and around the members of the assembly. It is always a pleasure to connect with other Lutherans from across the state. I do believe it was a toss up as to who knew more people going in Pastor Oscar or myself. He said he kept hearing my name everywhere but I kept seeing him networking with new and old friends.

During the assembly we learned that just a few days ago the Rev Christy Lohr Sapp who has been serving the parish at St Andrew’s in Hickory has accepted a call to her next congregation in Jerusalem. Please keep her and her family in your thoughts and prayers as she makes this transition that God has called her to do.

Robin Stuart

Congregation Hymn Selections for June 29 and July

June 29 Sending Hymn: Here I Am, Lord",[1] also known as "I, the Lord of Sea and Sky" after its opening line, is a Christian hymn written by the American composer of Catholic liturgical music Dan Schutte in 1979 and published in 1981.[2] Its words are based on Isaiah 6:8 and 1 Samuel 3:4. Schutte wrote the song at age 31 when he was studying theology at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley. He was requested to compose, on short notice, a piece for the ordination Mass of a deacon, incorporating in the lyrics God's word, of Jesus as the light, and the bread and wine of the Eucharist.[2] Schutte's hymn is also sung in many Protestant worship services and is found in multiple hymnals. From Wikipedia

Requested by Al & Sylvia King

June 29 Communion Hymn: "How Great Thou Art" Hymn Story

Carl Boberg was a young Swedish lay preacher, poet, and a member of parliament in the late 1800s. He lived in a coastal town called Mönsterås. One day in 1886, he went for a walk that would change his life and touch millions of others. Boberg was walking home from church on a sunny afternoon. The weather was pleasant, and birds were singing. No one knew that the calm day was about to change dramatically.

Suddenly, dark clouds rolled in, and a thunderstorm broke out. Lightning flashed across the sky, and thunder boomed loudly. Rain poured down, soaking the earth. This wasn't a gentle shower—it was a full-force storm. The storm's power amazed Boberg. It changed the peaceful day into a display of nature's might. The sound of thunder echoed through the hills. Boberg wasn't frightened—he was filled with wonder at God's power.

But the storm wasn't the end of God's show. As quickly as it came, the storm passed. The sun broke through the clouds, and a rainbow appeared. Later, as Boberg reached home, he heard something that moved him deeply. In the fresh, rain-cleaned air, church bells began to ring in the distance. Their clear tones mixed with the songs of birds that had returned after the storm. This beautiful moment stirred Boberg's heart.

That evening, inspired by the day's events, Boberg wrote a poem. He titled it "O Store Gud," which means 'O Great God' in Swedish. This poem would later become the hymn 'How Great Thou Art. www.faithpot.com

Requested by Rita Lutz

July 6 Offering Hymn: Written in 1979, “LORD, YOU HAVE COME TO THE LAKESHORE,” by Cesáreo Gabaráin (1936-1991), a priest in Spain. When the Second Vatican Council issued reforms encouraging the creation of new hymns composed in a variety of styles, Father Gabaráin took up the call and wrote over 500 liturgical songs. They are simple and unpretentious, written for and about everyday people living modest lives.

This hymn is based on the story of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry, calling his first disciples (Luke 5: 1-11). He approached Simon Peter, James, and John who were discouraged by empty fishing nets. Following the stranger’s direction to try again, their nets were suddenly filled to overflowing with a huge catch. In awe, the three linked their lives to Jesus on the spot.

Singing this hymn, we feel ourselves to be right there with the rough and humble fishermen by the Sea of Galilee. With no weapons or other trappings of the rich and powerful, we know ourselves to be workers, one with the poor of the earth. Jesus smiles, calls each of us by name. The flowing melody, also composed by Gabaráin, reflects the theology of tenderness, usually sung in the rhythm of gently lapping waves (except when hard rockin’ Padre Jony sings it in the YouTube clip below).

By the end of the hymn, we have pledged our own hands to do the work of caring and comfort. It’s no wonder this gentle song became popular around the globe, translated into dozens of languages, a favorite of Pope John Paul II.

Requested by Marilyn Teague www.askherabouthymn.com

July 6 Sending Hymn: Many people are surprised to learn that "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was first written as a poem. Created by James Weldon Johnson, it was performed for the first time by 500 school children in celebration of President Lincoln's Birthday on February 12, 1900 in Jacksonville, FL. The poem was set to music by Johnson's brother, John Rosamond Johnson, and soon adopted by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as its official song. Today “Lift Every Voice and Sing” is one of the most cherished songs of the African American Civil Rights Movement and is often referred to as the Black National Anthem. pbs.org/articles/lift-every-voice

Requested by Jennifer Whitener and Jon Gladden

July 13 Gathering Hymn: This popular gospel hymn is also known as "What a Fellowship." Elisha A. Hoffman (1839-1929) wrote the stanza, and Anthony J. Showalter (1858-1924) wrote the refrain. Showalter also contributed the music.

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" is the result of an epiphany based on the text of Deuteronomy 33:27, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (KJV). Showalter was a musician who conducted singing schools. He studied music in England, France, and Germany and served as an elder of First Presbyterian Church in Dalton, Georgia. Showalter was inspired by this Scripture after hearing the news that the wives of two of his former pupils had died and were buried the same day. In a letter of sympathy, he created the refrain out of a verse from Deuteronomy and asked Hoffman to write the stanzas. www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/historyofhymns

Requested by Dot Lutz

July 13 Offering Hymn: Many hymns are conceived in the throes of tragedy. "Precious Lord" was written in Chicago in 1932 following the death of Thomas Dorsey's wife Nettie and infant son during childbirth.

Dorsey (1899-1993) was born in Georgia. His father was a Baptist preacher, and his mother a piano teacher. Known as the "Father of Black Gospel Music," Dorsey combined African American church hymns such as those by Methodist minister, Charles A. Tindley (1851-1933), with blues and jazz. This "worldly" combination was not without controversy at first, but set the tone for gospel music for decades to come.

The three stanzas capture the grief not only of Dorsey, but also of any who have suffered significant loss. .. By the time we reach the third stanza, the terrain has changed from a stormy sea (stanza one), a long road (stanza two), to a river of hope (stanza three). Upon singing, "at the river I stand," the singer reaches at last the final destination, the symbolic Jordan River. Each stanza concludes effectively with the refrain, "Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home," perhaps an image of the Good Shepherd in the Gospel of John. Requested by Susan Jones www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/historyofhymns

July 20 Offering Hymn: Tune composer Phoebe Palmer Knapp (1839-1908) played a melody to Fanny Crosby and asked, "What does the melody say to you?" Crosby replied that the tune said, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!" and proceeded to recite the entire first stanza of the now-famous hymn. Knapp was one of several tune writers that worked with Fanny Crosby. It was not unusual for one of her texts to be inspired by a preexisting tune. Knapp was the composer of more than five hundred gospel hymns and tunes.

Fanny Crosby (1820-1915), blind at the age of six weeks, was a lifelong Methodist who began composing hymns at age six. She became a student at the New York Institute of the Blind at age 15 and joined the faculty of the Institute at 22, teaching rhetoric and history. In 1885, Crosby married Alexander Van Alstyne, also a student at the Institute and later a member of the faculty. He was a fine musician and, like Fanny, a lover of literature.

An author of more than 8,000 gospel hymn texts, she drew her inspiration from her own faith. Crosby published hymns under several pen names including "Ella Dale," "Mrs. Kate Gringley," and "Miss Viola V. A." Her hymn texts were staples for the music of the most prominent gospel song writers of her day.

This hymn appeals to the senses in a rich way. Not only do we have a "foretaste of glory," we experience "visions of rapture [that] burst on my sight," and we hear "echoes of mercy, whispers of love" [stanza 2]. The refrain calls us to "prais[e]. . . my Savior all the day long," echoing I Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing." Requested by Susan Jones www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/historyofhymns

July 27 Offering Hymn: The hymn 'What A Friend We Have In Jesus' holds a special place in Christian worship for its comforting lyrics during times of sorrow. Yet, the story of its author, Joseph Medlicott Scriven, is less well-known.

Joseph Scriven was born into a wealthy, devout family in Northern Seapatricks, Ireland, in 1819. He completed his education at Trinity College, Dublin. Scriven's life took a tragic turn in 1844, just before his marriage. His fiancée was thrown from her horse and drowned in the River Bann, the day before their wedding. Overwhelmed by grief, Scriven left Ireland for Canada in 1845, settling in Port Hope, Ontario.

In Canada, Scriven committed his life to God and service. At 25, he vowed poverty, sold his belongings, and helped those in need. He preached and read the Bible in community gatherings, taught school, and even cut wood for those who couldn't pay. His commitment to service was noted by hymnologist Albert Bailey, who called him "the man who saws wood for poor widows and sick people who are unable to pay."

A decade after his first fiancée's death, Scriven fell in love with Eliza Roach, niece of naval officer Robert Lamport Pengelly. However, tragedy struck again when Eliza died from pneumonia in 1860. Despite these losses, Scriven's faith remained unwavering.

In 1855, Scriven penned a poem titled 'What is this Friendship for Which We Long?' to comfort his ailing mother in Ireland, never intending it for public eyes. However, after its publication with the music of Charles Converse in 1865 as 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus,' it became one of the most beloved hymns worldwide.

Joseph Scriven drowned near a friend's home in 1886, under mysterious circumstances. His life, marked by service and sorrow, earned him the nickname "The Good Samaritan of Port Hope." Despite the uncertainties surrounding his death, Scriven's hymn continues to inspire millions with its message of divine friendship and support in times of distress. Requested by Dot Lutz www.faithpot.com/what-a-friend-hymn-story

Council Minutes
Sardis Lutheran Church
May 18, 2025

Members present: Darrell Jarrett, Dwayne Whitener, Gene Biggerstaff, Jane Moretz, Joe Biggerstaff, Jon Gladden, Rick Johnson, Terry Bledsoe, Zachary Stuart, Mike Midgett, Pastor Oscar Shephard

- Joe called the meeting to order at 7pm with 10 council members and the Pastor present.
- Gene had devotions and provided a reading from John about salvation and a new beginning with God.
- The April minutes were reviewed with Dwayne making a motion to accept the minutes as written with a second from Jane. The motion carried.
- Dwayne provided an overview of the financial reports ending April 30th stating that general fund offerings have been less than needed to meet the budget and that \$8k was taken from the Parsonage fund to supplement the costs of property insurance and other expenses. With no further discussion, Rick made a motion to accept the financial reports as presented and this was seconded by Mike. The motion carried.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor Oscar provided a detailed ministry overview of his activities in April which highlighted:

- The strong participation from Sardis members during the Lenten services.
- Pastoral care and visitation with shut-in members.
- Attending and supporting committee meetings.
- Youth activities (hiking) and intergenerational participation in youth activities.
- Synod assembly – preparations are underway for participation by Sardis members.
- Upcoming mission trip to Western North Carolina in June for hurricane relief.
- June will mark one year of service as pastor at Sardis.
- Grateful for the congregation's support while serving as Scout leader and Chaplain, and as spiritual director with Teens Encounter Christ.

Old Business:

- Land Use committee - Mike updated the council on the following items:
 - o Fire pit/worship space update: Currently waiting on project approval from the Eagle Scout board.
 - o Funds are available from the misc. Memorial fund accounts to cover all costs (Approx. \$2500.00)
 - o Approval is not required from the individual families to use the funds from the misc. Memorial fund accounts.
- Jane informed the group that the updated Hazardous Weather Policy/procedures has been posted in the current Sardis newsletter.

New Business:

- Spring Concert discussion:
 - o Joe informed the council that the spring concert will be held on June 14th with the Sigmon Stringers performing at a cost of \$300.00.

Hamburgers and hotdogs will be served and paid for with funds from the Evangelism committee budget. Donations will also be accepted at the event and designated to go to the Synod Disaster Relief Fund.

- Mission trip to Western NC for hurricane relief:

- o Pastor Oscar updated the council on the Mission trip which will take place on June 8th - 12th. Currently there are 7 individuals scheduled to take part in the trip at a cost of \$125.00 per person. Love offerings to help support the trip will be collected at services on May 25th and June 1st.

- Blessings Box:

- o Gene provided an overview that the blessings box has been in service for approx. 2 years and there are currently 4 groups that take turns supporting (filling) the box.

- o The council discussed setting up a schedule for the council members to support this during their designated week. Jane will send out reminder texts to the council group each month with assignments.

- Finances:

- o Dwayne gave an update on current issues and concerns with the church's finances stating that offerings have been down approx. 10% ytd while expenses for many items have continued to increase. Property insurance, electricity and propane expenses have seen the largest increases.

- o Dwayne brought forward a motion from the Finance Committee that funds from the Building fund be used to pay for water, Sexton (cleaning), pest control and power for the remainder of 2025. This total is estimated to be approx. \$1200.00 per month. This was approved unanimously by the council.

- o Dwayne also noted that if funds from the Parsonage fund continue to be used to supplement the monthly budget, they will be exhausted in approx. 5 years.

The June Church Council meeting will be held on Monday, June 16th at 7pm due to Father's Day falling on the 8th of June.

With no other items to discuss, Jon made a motion that the meeting be adjourned, and Dwayne seconded the motion.

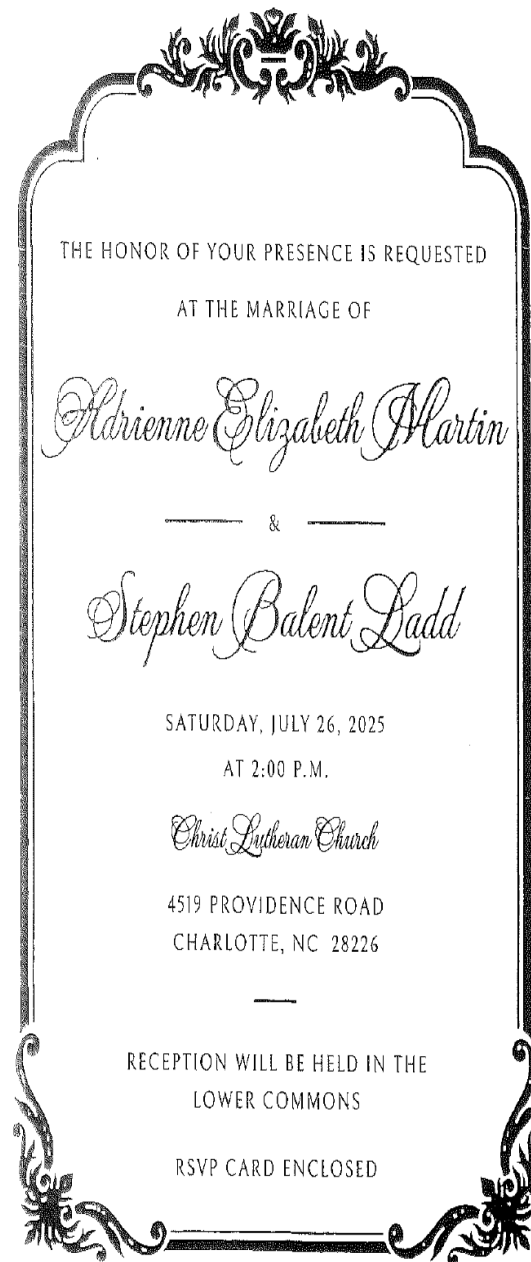
The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Midgett, Church Council Secretary



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
OUR WEBSITE AT

theknot.com/stephenfoundadrienne



*There are three seats remaining on the bus
\$5.00 each*



July 4th!



AMERICA
ANNIVERSARY
ANTHEM
BACKYARD
BARBECUE
BASEBALL
BLUE
BOOM
BUNTING
BURGERS
CELEBRATE
COMMEMORATE
COMMUNITY
CONCERT
COOKOUT
CROWDS
DECLARATION
DECORATIONS
DEMOCRACY
EAGLE
ENDURE
EQUALITY
FAMILY
FIREWORKS
FLAG
FREE
FUN
GATHERING
GRATEFUL
GRILL
HOLIDAY
HOME
HOT
HOT DOGS
INDEPENDENCE
JULY
LEMONADE
LIBERTY
MUSIC
NATIONAL
OUTSIDE
PARADE
PARTY
PATRIOT
PICNIC
PRIDE
PYROTECHNICS

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RED
REUNIONS
SALUTE
SPARKLERS
SPIRIT
STARS
STAR-SPANGLED
STATES
STREAMERS

STRIPES
SUMMER
TRADITION
UNFURL
UNITED
VALUES
VETERAN
WATERMELON
WHITE



© Puzzle Cheer

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1	2 12:00 FTF Seniors at Sardis	3	4 Pastor's Sabbath	5
6 Bring Food for Blessings Box 9:00 Confirmation Class 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live	7 7:00 Prayer Group via ZOOM	8	9	10	11 Pastor's Sabbath	12
13 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live 7:00 Church Council	14	15	16	17	18 Pastor's Sabbath	19
20 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live	21 7:00 Prayer Group via ZOOM	22	23 5:00 Articles due for August NL	24	25 Pastor's Sabbath	26
27 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live 3:00 Trinity Ridge 6:30 LMM	28	29	30	31		

BIRTHDAYS

COUNCIL CONTACT

ASSISTING MINISTER

7/2 Kristin Teague

Joe Biggerstaff

Ray Whitener

7/3 Frank Griffin

7/6 Alex Midgett

USHERS

Al K., Kathy W.

7/10 Allison W. Short, Catherine D. Hood

7/16 Becky Gladden

7/19 Dorothy Lutz

**COMMUNION PREPARATION /
CLEAN – UP**

7/21 Rick Lutz, Zayde Yousef

7/23 Carol Mayer

Sharon Sigman/Sherrie Midgett

7/26 Wanda Stallings, Maleah G. Duncan

Offering Counter: Dwayne W.

7/28 Paisley A. Hood, Keaton Farnsworth

7/29 Susan Jones

Greg & Kerby Smyre 7-23

7/31 Al King, Monte Speagle

Ben & Jennifer Whitener 7-30

<i>VOLUNTEER July</i>	6th	13th	20th	27th
ALTAR FLOWERS	Dorothea W.	David & Mildred	Benny & Edna	Randy & Joyce
ACOLYTE/ CRUCIFER	Graysen/Hayden	Marshall/Cayden	Gabriel/Keaton	Tryston/Graysen
COMM. ASSISTANT	Zachary S.	Jon G.	Bruce S.	Gene B.
GREETERS	Annette R./Evelyn F.	Paisley H./Shuford W.	Rita L./Jill B.	Kristin T./Kathy W.
LAY READER	Gabriel S.	Gene B.	Zachary S.	Hayden J.
CHILDREN'S CHURCH	Heather C.	No Children's Church	Susan J.	No Children's Church
TECHNOLOGY	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel
SECURITY	Zachary S.	Bruce S.	Darrell J.	Ben W.
SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADER	Pre-K Jennifer EL Sherrie/Mike MH Nena	Pre-K Jennifer EL Donna MH April	Pre-K Jennifer EL Donna MH Dawn	Pre-K Nena EL Sherrie/Mike MH Rick
FRONT YARD SIGN	Gabriel/Ian S.	Robin/Cynthia S.	Tim W.	Nena B.
MEAL DEL.	12th Carolyn H.	19th no meal	26th Donna B.	2nd no meal
BLESSINGS BOX	LMM	Jon's Class	Disciples of Christ	Church Council

OUR MISSION

Sardis Evangelical Lutheran Church serves together as disciples of Christ, teaches the word to invite people into a life of knowing Jesus, encourages each other in faith and personal mission through reaching out to the needs of the community and individuals.

REMEMBER: you can find this NL, the weekly calendar and Sunday Sermons on the website: <https://sardislutheran.com/> mark it as a favorite and check it out often.

SARDIS LUTHERAN CHURCH
6103 W NC 10 HWY
HICKORY NC 28602



SARDIS LEADERS CONTACTS

Pastor: Rev. Matthew Oscar Shepherd (C) [828-228-3078](tel:828-228-3078) pastor@sardislutheran.com

Organist/Director of Music: Nena Babb, (C) 828-238-5700 nhbabb@gmail.com

Council Chair: Joe Biggerstaff (C) 828-323-5809 biggerstaffjoe@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer: Jane Moretz, (C) 828-302-8458 secretary@sardislutheran.com