

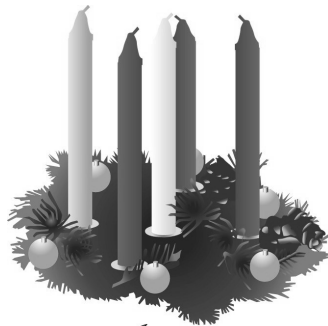
# Friendly Messenger

Beloved Sardis,

December 2024

Here we are at Advent and a New church year. Advent is a season of anticipation, a time when we prepare our hearts for the coming Christ. But waiting, as many of us know, can be difficult. It is not always comfortable or easy. The season can remind us of our longing, our impatience, and our need for God's presence and grace.

Advent reminds us that our waiting is not wasted. It is an invitation to draw near to God, to live fully in the present moments, and to allow the Holy Spirit to work in and through us. The waiting of Advent is not passive. It is an active, hope-filled waiting.



*Advent*

The Holy Spirit calls us to live our faith out loud even as we anticipate the joy of the coming Christ. It is in this waiting and everyday, that we are called to love in action. This Advent, I encourage each of us to see the waiting as an opportunity.

God often uses seasons of waiting to shape our hearts, to strengthen our faith, and to teach us what it means to love generously. When we respond to the Spirit's call to love in action, we discover new ways to serve, to give, and to bless others, and new discoveries even in ourselves. Yes, even in the waiting.

As we light the candles of the Advent wreath, let their glow be an invitation to ask, how the Holy Spirit might be nudged you to new growth. And may it remind us of the hope we have in Christ. Let them remind us that even in the waiting, God is present, and Christ's love is at work in and through us.

May this Advent season be one of renewed faith, love in action, and growth in generosity. Let us embrace the waiting with hearts full of hope and joy, knowing that the One we await is faithful and draws us together and makes us new!

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 December on the 4th at Sardis Lutheran Church. (bring drinks) All are invited to join us for fun, food, and fellowship.



**NC Women of the ELCA  
PENNIES PROJECT  
COLLECTION SUNDAY—  
DECEMBER 1**

”Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP), a non-profit dedicated to building beds for children in need, celebrates a major milestone: their 200,000th bed delivered.” From the website Home - Sleep in Heavenly Peace (shpbs.org) Each year the NC Women of the ELCA sponsor a project to help someone in need. This year the project is called “Sleep in Heavenly Peace”. Start saving your pennies so that we can make a difference in a child’s life. Collection Sunday is the first Sunday in Advent, December 1. Jesus had no choice but to sleep in a lowly manger. With our help, children will no longer need to sleep on the floor or with several siblings sharing a bed. **THANK YOU!!**



**NO KID SLEEPS  
ON THE FLOOR  
IN OUR TOWN!**

## HELPING CHILDREN SLEEP BETTER

### THE FRIENDLY MESSENGER

Effective with the January NL, copies will only be placed in the mailboxes of those without an email address. This is a recommendation of the Church Council in order to save on copier cost.

***We are setting up Text Messaging for our Phone Tree Service.  
To receive Text Messages from the church, send the word  
“Alert” to 22300.***

### 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.)

## Evangelism and Sardis Shepherds Christmas party

*It's A Party And You're Invited*

The Annual Evangelism/Shepherds Christmas Party

Monday, December 9th at 6:00 PM

Sardis Shepherds and Spouses and/or Guest and Evangelism Members and/or guest are invited.

The Party will be held at Parkway House Family Restaurant.

Drinks and Dessert will be provided.



Parkway House    **Located in Hickory, NC, 1640 10th Ave NE**

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NATIONAL LUTHERAN CHOIR

**Christmas Festival:**

*Healing: of the Nations*

*Watch On-line*

Saturday, December 14th 2:30pm EST

visit [NLCA.com](http://NLCA.com)

Dear Sardis Family,

I want to take one more chance to thank God and all of you for this amazing journey of ministry and service. We have traveled this path through good times and bad, and God has richly blessed me each step of the way with your gracious love and friendship. In my 40+ years on the bench, I served 7 congregations - Sardis stands out as the most genuinely welcoming, loving, and ministering.

I truly believe that God has a plan for each of us, and that God gifts us with the talents and abilities needed for our tasks in fulfilling that plan. Sometimes, just when we need it the most, God gifts us special family and friends to love us, fill our spirits, and help us heal. Sardis has been that to me. Even more special is looking back to see all that God allowed us to accomplish together in ministry.

Just as God brings our paths together, I also believe that God gently lets us know when our paths must part. I know in my heart that time has come. I don't know what the future holds, but I do know who holds the future for us all. Knowing that gives courage to leave what we know, and step into what God already knows.

Many of you have thanked me for my leadership. I thank God for the leadership that dwells in Sardis. That is a gift to those who spend a season with you in ministry! A special thanks to Pastor Oscar, Chancel & Handbell Choirs, Children & Parents for the many gifts you shared during our time together. You inspired me, supported me, lifted my spirits, encouraged me, and brought visions to life!

I thank you all for your sincere expressions of love as our paths part, knowing that our ultimate journey will reunite us one day. (And...God willing, I hope to visit on occasion). May God continue to bless Sardis in your ongoing ministry!

(And to regift a Pastor Oscar gift) – “God loves you, and so do I,”

Frank Griffin

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### **Retirement Celebration for Frank Griffin**

Please plan to stay after worship on Sunday, December 29th to celebrate with Frank on his final Sunday at Sardis. Thankfully, Frank graciously postponed his retirement in June and has served faithfully for six more months. We have been greatly blessed to have had Frank serve as organist and musical director since 2015. His training in sacred music at LRU shines through each Sunday as he leads us in worship. Frank works diligently on each Sunday's musical selections of hymns, anthems, and handbell pieces. Our worship is enhanced as he chooses music that reflects the liturgical readings. We appreciate his willingness to work with the children and their interest in singing. We are so sad for Frank to leave, but we rejoice with him as he retires and has time for many other activities. There will be a basket for cards of well wishes.



## RECIPIENTS OF ANGEL TREE TOYS, GAMES, BOOK, AND PUZZLES



Women of the ELCA at Sardis have chosen BeLoved Asheville to receive and distribute the Christmas toys for the Western North Carolina area. Abiding Savior Lutheran in Fairview, NC regularly collects toys each fall to donate to BeLoved Asheville, and Rev. David Eck highly endorsed this program.

**We are encouraged to purchase dolls and books that are representative of BIPOC families. That is, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Pastor Dave says that there is a large Latino population present in the Asheville community, along with indigenous, black, and biracial families. PLEASE DO NOT WRAP GIFTS. It will be easier for them to sort by age and gender.**

How does BeLoved Asheville serve Youth and Kids? From their website:

Whether it is sharing computers, internet, or other tools to help youth succeed in school, or giving equity tickets to families for enriching cultural events including plays, concerts, performances; providing in-home libraries and community libraries, or educational STEM toys; or providing scholarships to camp; connecting kids and families to the arts and cultural events in our community, we are increasing opportunities for kids to grow to their full potential. We share Wings for Kids bags during the summer which support summer enrichment and learning. They contain educational materials, books, small toys, and arts and crafts supplies.

We partner with local schools in their work to close the racial achievement and opportunity gaps through providing resources that kids need to thrive in school. We also host educational events like

Constitutional Rights to education for parents of students who are facing opportunity gaps. We host regular neighborhood and community Kids Days helping kids to make positive memories through games, music, cultural events and more. We share diapers, school supplies, school bus stop kits for winter, **and toys at the holidays**. We also provide educational opportunities through the schools teaching classes about important issues our community is facing and how kids and youth can be a part of the solution. And we provide a myriad of ways for kids and youth to engage in community service projects to use their gifts to make a difference.



## DECEMBER 1ST ~ LAST SUNDAY TO DONATE GENTLY USED COATS, HATS. GLOVES, AND SOCKS

From the Social Ministry Committee – Much thanks, admiration, and awe to all the congregation members who continue to donate to the Sardis community outreach. Whether it is canned goods, personal care items, items for Safe Harbor, can tabs, box tops, school supplies, or warm clothing for the unhoused – you always rise up. Each donation is a blessing to so many. God continues to bless us as we bless others.

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### Safe Harbor Gift Cards

Please continue to take any household items you want to donate to The Resource Warehouse (located in the old Catawba Mall next to U-Haul). In 2024 so far Sardis members have donated enough items to the Resource Warehouse of Safe Harbor to earn \$250.00 worth of gift cards. The cards can be used to purchase clothing, linens, home furnishings, kitchen items, shoes, or anything the Resource Warehouse has in stock. In October, the cards were given to a mother with two girls who had left an abusive situation and were starting over.

As you are unloading your items on the loading dock, just tell them you are from Sardis and your donation will be credited to our account.

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### ELECTION RESULTS

2025 Budget, Passed:

Church Council, Gene Biggerstaff, Darrell Jarrett, Mike Midgett, Tim Whitener; serving out vacant term of two years, Zachary Stuart:

Nominating Committee, Nena Babb, Roger Lutz, Sherrie Midgett, Robin Stuart, Kristin Teague, Ray Whitener:

Scholarship Committee, Phyllis Biggerstaff, Dawn Covington.



Council Minutes  
Sardis Lutheran Church  
October 23, 2024

Members present: Dwayne, Jane, Joe, Jon, Ken, Nena, Ray, Rick, Roger, Terry, Pastor Oscar

Terry called the meeting to order at 7 PM with 10 members and the Pastor present. Roger had devotions. The September minutes were discussed and a motion by Joe was to accept the minutes as presented, Rick seconded, and the motion carried.

Dwayne presented the financial report and brought up information about the monies given to Sardis from the Ronnie Weaver Estate. Jon motioned to accept as presented, Ken seconded, and the motion carried.

## **Pastor's Report.**

It has truly been a month full of life and ministry here at Sardis. Since we last met, we have had Parents night out, Rally Sunday, back to school bash, blessing of the backpacks, multiple committee meetings, and fed the Fred T. Foard football team. Helping the residents of Trinity Ridge get to worship.

We celebrated the life and fulfillment of Fern Baker's Baptismal promise in Christ. We started first communion classes. Had spooky season at the Weaver Farm, Senior Lunch with the youth serving, and a Pet Blessing Service.

And not to mention a hurricane.

I continue to be blessed with the opportunity to visit and share common with our shut-in. Hospital visits, and phone check-ins.

It is truly a blessing to grow in relationships with our people. I am encouraged by those who have invited me to visit with them who are not shut ins. And I encourage anyone who would like some time with the pastor to please give me a call, the church office, or send me a text message, or slip me a note after church.

I have been asked to be a spiritual director for the HIH-TEC 77 upcoming MLK weekend. TEC (Teens Encounter Christ) is the youth version of Via De Christo. A three-day faith retreat.

TEC is where I was baptized, met Olivia, and first felt God's call to ministry.

This is a retreat, that means a lot to me and my family. I believe in it, and am proof, it impacts and changes the life and faith of young people.

We continue to collect needed funds and donations for our WNC neighbors. The generosity, dedication, and support Sardis has shown fills me with joy and Hope. We are, truly blessed to be God's blessing to the world.

Faithfully Yours's  
Pr. Oscar Shepherd

Old Business

Dwayne shared and discussed the changes/amendments made to our Constitution/By Laws of Sardis Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Committee shall meet at least semi-annually or more frequently as deemed.

The Committee does not need a recording or financial secretary. The chairperson will maintain complete and accurate minutes, and present to the church secretary at the end of the year for the Annual Report.

Should there be no scholarship applicants for any given year; a contribution may be made for educational loans previously accrued by the currently serving Sardis Pastor or other person serving at Sardis. Every effort should be made to award this scholarship fund to an individual or individuals. Special circumstances could allow an application from a rostered person not currently serving at Sardis if no applications have been received by current students or the persons mentioned above.

Ken motioned to accept these changes, Joe seconded and the motion carried. Dwayne will present it to the Scholarship Committee.

New Business

Dwayne presented the proposed 2025 Spending Plan to council. The Finance Committee motioned to accept the 2025 Spending Plan, seconded by Jon, and the motion carried. It will be given to the Congregation on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and voted on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

Dwayne discussed with council, the Ronnie Weaver Estate monies left to Sardis. The Finance Committee motioned that \$25,000 go into the Parsonage Fund and \$544.95, the balance, be put into the Memorial Fund to honor Ronnie at a later date. Joe seconded and the motion carried.

The disaster monies collected is \$12,177.00. Jane motioned to send the monies to the NC Synod Disaster Relief Fund, Ken seconded and the motion carried. This fund allows the monies to be used to the NC Disaster Fund only. Other discussions were:

Physical help is needed

Personal Care Kits collected by Social Ministry and WELCA

Synod needs help with drivers to take supplies to WNC.

Rick announced the next Sardis Blood Drive will be December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2pm – 5pm.

The next Council Meeting is scheduled for November 10, at 7PM.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted

Jane Moretz, Secretary



November 3, 2024      Annual Congregational Meeting

Terry called the congregational meeting to order at 10:30am. A copy of the 2025 Spending Plan was given to each congregational member present.

Terry announced that Nena Babb, Roger Lutz, Kristin Teague and Ray Whitener was going off the council this year and wil automatically be put on the ballot for the 2025 Nominating Committee along with two other nominees. Terry opened the floor for nomination from the congregation, none was given so Jon made the motion to close nominations Dwayne seconded and the motion carried.

Terry presented the names that will be on the ballot for 2025 Church Council. Terry opened the floor for nomination from the congregation, none was given so Jon made the motion to close nominations Al seconded and the motion carried.

Terry presented the names that will be on the ballot for 2025 Scholarship Committee. Terry opened the floor for nomination from the congregation, none was given so Joe made the motion to close nominations Dwayne seconded and the motion carried.

Terry continued the meeting for November 17th.

Respectfully submitted  
Jane Moretz, Secretary

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Save the Date: 2025 Synod Assembly

The NC Synod will convene for a business assembly at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro from **May 29–31, 2025**. This gathering will address essential matters, including the election of a new synod bishop. Key details are already available on the synod's website to support congregations and rostered ministers in their planning, with information on dates, times, costs, and pre-assembly conference meetings. The assembly webpage will continue to be updated as more details are finalized.

Registration opens on **Tuesday, January 7**.

<https://nclutheran.org/event/synoassembly-2025/>



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> <b>Bring Food for Blessings Box Pennies Project</b> <b>9:00 Confirmation Class</b> 9:30 Practice Christmas Play 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live 5:00 WELCA 7:00 Church Council, new members attend	<b>2</b> <b>2—5 Blood Drive</b> 7:00 Prayer Group via ZOOM	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 12:00 FTF Seniors meet at Sardis, we are responsible for drinks	<b>5</b> 6:00 Handbells Rehearsal 7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>6</b> Pastor's Sabbath	<b>7</b> 8:30 Youth rake leaves
<b>8</b> 9:30 Practice Christmas Play 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live 5:00 Christmas Caroling	<b>9</b> 6:00 Evangelism and Shepherds Christmas dinner at Parkway House	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 1:00 Paint Ornaments (see Susan Jones)	<b>12</b> 6:00 Handbells Rehearsal 7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>13</b> Pastor's Sabbath	<b>14</b> 9:00 Hanging of the Greens
<b>15</b> 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live Practice Christmas Play 6:00 Children's Christmas Play; followed with refreshments in the Fellowship Hall	<b>16</b> 7:00 Prayer Group via ZOOM	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 7:00 Blue Christmas Service	<b>20</b> Pastor's Sabbath School out till Jan. 6th	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 10:30 Candlelight Service w/ Holy Communion	<b>25</b> <b>MERRY CHRISTMAS</b> 	<b>26</b> 6:00 Handbells Rehearsal 7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>27</b> Pastor's Sabbath	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live After Service, Farewell to Frank 3:00 Trinity Ridge, Youth assisting 6:30 LMM	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 	<p align="center"><b>**NOTE**</b></p> <p align="center"><i>If you have a birthday or anniversary and they are not listed please let the office know. Thank you.</i></p>			

## BIRTHDAYS

### December

#### COUNCIL CONTACT

#### ASSISTING MINISTER

12/9 Tracy Richard  
Samuel Clayton Biggerstaff

Ken Propst

Ben Whitener

12/12 Betty Jo Weaver  
Gene Biggerstaff

#### USHERS

Roger T., Al K., Nena B., Jill B.

12/16 Phyllis Hood  
12/20 Heather J. Carroll

#### **COMMUNION PREPARATION / CLEAN – UP**

12/27 Steven Yow  
12/29 Dawn Covington  
Barbara E. Whitener

Jane M.

Marilyn T.

#### **Offering Counters: Dwayne/Tryston**

12/31 Betty Sue Whitener  
**Anniversaries:**  
**Tim & Barbara Whitener 12-18**  
**Donald & Evelyn Fulbright 12-21**

#### **New Address:**

Abernethy Laurels

Joe Wyant RM 1034 Unity Court

102 Leonard Ave

Newton NC 28658

Zachary Stuart

1768 Lynn Mt. Road

Vale NC 28168

<i><b>VOLUNTEER December</b></i>	<b>1st</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>15th</b>	<b>22nd</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>29th</b>
<b>ALTAR FLOWERS</b>	Mike & Felica H.	Susan J.	Amy J.	Lutheran Men in Mission		Wayne & Elaine J.
<b>ACOLYTE/ CRUCIFER</b>	Hayden/Ray	Marshall/Cayden	Paisley/Tryston	Graysen/Hayden	Marshall/Rick	Ray/Keaton
<b>COMM. ASSISTANT</b>	Marilyn T.	Roger T.	Jennifer W.	Tim W.	Sandra R.	Nena B.
<b>GREETERS</b>	Jill/Donna	Nena/Darrell	Al/Sylvia	Kristin/Roger	Evelyn/Annette	Bruce/Sharon
<b>LAY READER</b>	Jane M.	Jon G.	Ray W.	Marilyn T.	Al K.	Jennifer W.
<b>CHILDREN'S CHURCH</b>	Heather C.	NO Children's Church	Nena B.	NO Children's Church		NO Children's Church
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel,	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel
<b>SECURITY</b>	Zachary S.	Roger T.	Rick.	Ralph.	Darrell J.	Bruce S.
<b>SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADER</b>	Practice Christmas Play	Practice Christmas Play	Pre-K Jennifer EL Sherrie/ Mike MH Nena	Pre-K Jennifer EL Donna MH April		Combined SS
<b>BACKPACK DELIVERY</b>	5th Roger, Marilyn, Jane	12th Tim & Barbara	19th Dwayne & Barbara	26th No School		2nd No School
<b>MEAL DEL.</b>	7th No Meal	14th April	21st No Meal	28th Rita		4th No Meal
<b>BLESSINGS BOX</b>	Jon's Class	Disciples of Christ	Church Council	LMM		Jon's Class

## 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. Oscar (C) 828-228-3078 [pastor@sardislutheran.com](mailto:pastor@sardislutheran.com)

Organist/Director of Music: Frank Griffin, [tfgriffin59@gmail.com](mailto:tfgriffin59@gmail.com)

Council Chair: Terry Bledsoe (C) 828-455-4103 [terrybledsoe@charter.net](mailto:terrybledsoe@charter.net)

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