

Friendly Messenger

February 2026

Beloved Sardis,

Here we are—Epiphany. The “ah-ha!” before Lent. At the threshold, of revelation and examination.

Who? Not who. What? No, not what. When? Not when. Where? No, not where. Why? Nope—not that one either. Those are too scary! Right?

You see, there is an answer. It’s right there, closer than the air you breathe. It’s the image you bear. And abides, dwells, and alive in you. It’s grace—justified by faith—given as a gift. It is fully-known and ever-inviting.

Who do you seek? What do you seek? When do you seek? Where do you seek? Why should we seek? Christ is, was, and will ever be calling.

Will we listen? Will we seek? Do we have what it takes to do this—for the remembrance of the One who made all things and is making all things new?

We are at the threshold, and we are invited. How will we move forward? How will we listen? How will we surrender, serve, and seek the Lord?

This Lent, Christ invites you/us into something new. What is it? What is the Holy Spirit revealing in you—inviting, calling, and asking you to seek?

Beloved, remember: we are all called, all invited, and all loved into being. May this Epiphany and Lent be full of revelation and seeking of the One who you are—and whose you truly are.

Let us walk, seek, and discover our love and voice in Christ more clearly and faithfully in the days to come.

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 February on the 4th at Laurel Hill. All are invited to join us for fun, food, and fellowship.



WELCA'S Annual Lenten Food Drive

As spring and the Lenten Season approach, the Sardis' WELCA is gearing up for the annual Lenten Food Drive. In 2026 there is a possible new twist- ***Shelf Stable Meals***. These are meals that contain only non-perishable items. Each Sunday, WELCA will share two different recipes that can be prepared with non-perishable items. Congregation members can buy the recipe items and bring them next Sunday.

For Instance,

TACO Soup (cost \$5.00)

- 1 can refried beans
- 1 can black bean
- 1 can other beans (kidney, great northern, chili, etc.)
- 1 can diced tomatoes with green chilies
- 1 can corn (optional)
- 1 packet taco seasoning

Directions:

Combine all canned ingredients (drain if you want a thicker soup) and taco seasoning in a large pot. Add 3-4 cups water and bring to a boil. Simmer at least 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Top with corn chips, cheese, sour cream, or spicy sauce.

Chicken and Dumplings (cost \$9.00)

Ingredients:

- 1 packet biscuit mix
- 2 small cans of chicken
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 can mixed vegetables (drained)
- 1 can diced potatoes (drained)
- 1-2 bouillon cubes

Directions:

Drain and shred chicken, saving the broth. Combine everything except the biscuit mix in a large pot with 2 cups water. Bring to a boil, season to taste. Mix biscuit dough per package and drop spoonfuls into soup. Cover and simmer 12 minutes, then gently stir and serve

Of course, members can always just donate various cans as in the past. All food items are welcome and needed. The items will be shared with Assure and the Blessing Box. Collections Sundays are February 22nd, March 1, 8, 15, and 22nd.



Bold Women Sunday



On Sunday, February 8th we will celebrate Bold Women Sunday. We are honored to have Bishop Emily Hartner join us on this day!

Bishop Hartner was elected last May to serve a six-year term as bishop of the North Carolina Synod. She served as pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Charlotte from 2017 until her election. Prior to that she served as a pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlotte, from 2010 to 2017.

Bold Women's Day celebrates all Lutheran women who have acted or are acting boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. Some women are bold in their unceasing prayers. Other women are bold in their service to those in need. Still other women are bold in their advocacy or through their hospitality. Whether we live out our bold story of faith in the workplace, family home or community, our faith compels us to make a difference in the lives of others. It's all about living out our baptismal call, about being a disciple of Christ. Are you bold?

Bishop Hartner will share with us her own Bold Woman story. Don't miss this special occasion!

WELCA President

Nena Babb

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.)

Sardis Lutheran Church
Council Meeting
December 14, 2025

In Attendance: Gene B., Darrell J. Dwayne W., Jon G., Zack S., Terry B., Ken P., Jane M., Joe B., Tim W., Rick J., Mike M., Jennifer W., Kristin T., Robin S., Amy J., Pastor Oscar

Joe brought the meeting to order at 7pm with all 12 council members plus the 4 newly elected members as well as Pastor Oscar.

Jon Gladden provided devotions from Luke 3, (vs. 1-3) which discussed Leaders and who we choose to lead us and how those leaders have influenced us.

Joe asked if there were any corrections or additions needed to the minutes from the November meeting. With nothing brought forward, Dwayne motioned to accept them as written, Jon provided a second and the motion carried.

Dwayne gave a brief financial report stating that the balance of the Building fund was lower due to paying some expenses from the fund but the General fund balance remained steady. Some expenses such as water, cleaning and garbage service will continue to be paid from the Building fund in 2026. With no other discussion, Jon made a motion that the financial documents be accepted as submitted. Rick provided a second and the motion carried.

The Pastor provided a written report noting:

It continues to be a delight to visit and take communion to our shut ins. He has revised his visitation schedule and has split them into two groups to visit from one month to the next.

The youth community lock-in was a huge success.

He thanked those who have “stepped-up” to help supply food for the blessings box

The outdoor worship space continues to progress toward completion.

The community Thanksgiving service was wonderful and well supported by Sardis members.

It has been a blessing to walk with Kristin in her lay ministry and to see her gift of sharing the Gospel.

OLD BUSINESS

Gene stated that they delivered meals to 10 individuals on 11/13 and encouraged everyone to visit our shut-ins. Also, Rick Lutz needs volunteers to transport him to and from his dialysis appointments each week.

Rick asked that the propane be turned off to the stove after each use. Hopefully, this will reduce the amount of propane being used and the expense of the propane.

There is currently not a carbon monoxide detector in the kitchen. Mike will purchase and install a carbon monoxide detector in the kitchen area.

NEW BUSINESS

The church council election of officers for 2026 was held.

Rick nominated Gene as vice chairman. Darrell moved that the nominations be closed and Kristin seconded. Gene was elected by unanimous vote.

Kristin nominated Mike for secretary. Gene moved that the nominations be closed and Kristen seconded. Mike was elected by unanimous vote.

Tim W suggested using a second source to provide food for the blessings box. There could possibly be a savings of more than 50% by purchasing the food from 2nd Harvest. Tim will contact 2nd Harvest and provide an update at the January meeting.

Tim Whitener will provide devotions at the January council meeting.

Pastor Oscar will add Ring camera access to his phone to help provide more visibility and an additional contact if needed.

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

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Next Council Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 11th at 7PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Midgett, Sardis Church Council Secretary



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1 Bring Food for Blessings Box 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live	2 7:00 Prayer Group via ZOOM	3	4 12:00 FTF Seniors meet at Laurel Hill 6:00 Youth Planning Meeting	5 7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal	6 Pastors Sabbath	7 10:00 Altar Committee clean brass WELCA One day retreat
8 BOLD WOMEN'S SUNDAY 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live 7:00 Church Council	9	10	11	12 7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal	13 Pastors Sabbath NO SCHOOL	14 
15 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live	16 PRESIDENT'S DAY NO SCHOOL 7:00 Prayer Group via ZOOM	17 6:00 Shrove Pancake Dinner	18 7:00 Ash Wednesday Service w/Holy Communion	19 7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal	20 Pastors Sabbath	21
22 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live After Worship; Youth Skyzone 3:00 Trinity Ridge 6:30 LMM	23 Inclement Weather decisions will be announced on our Phone Tree by Saturday evening or early Sunday morning. Please make sure your phone information is up to date with the Secretary. In the event of a Tornado during service please exit Sanctuary and proceed to the hallways, (1) back of Sanctuary to the left and (1) is the Fellowship Hall to the right of the Narthex. Remain in hallways, not in rooms.					28

BIRTHDAYS

COUNCIL CONTACT

ASSISTING MINISTER

2/1 Evie Jo Carroll
 2/6 Margaret Propst
 2/10 Ethan Carroll
 2/15 Amy S. Kilpatrick
 Mike Whitener
 2/16 Buster Bledsoe
 Hope Gladden
 2/21 Sylvia King
 Ashley Yow
 2/22 Kenan Chronister
 2/23 Alan Fulbright
 2/25 Carolyn Hoyle
 2/27 Jeff Wilson

Gene Biggerstaff

USHERS

WELCA

**COMMUNION PREPARATION /
 CLEAN – UP**

Marilyn T.

Sandra R.

Offering Counter: Dwayne W.

Faye Hoke, Room 248
 Abernathy Laurels Grace Court
 102 Leonard Avenue
 Newton, NC 28658

Anniversaries:

Dwayne & Barbara Whitener 2-11

<i>VOLUNTEER February</i>	1st	8th	15th	22nd
ALTAR FLOWERS	Dwayne & Barbara	Nena B.	Margaret P.	WELCA
ACOLYTE/ CRUCI-	Marshall/Nena	Gabriel/Joe B.	Tryston/Graysen	Ian/Caden
COMM. ASSISTANT	Jennifer W.	Roger T.	Marshall W.	Zachary
GREETERS	Al & Sylvia	Annette & Evelyn	Nena & Shuford	Rita & Jill
LAY READER	Kathy W.	Marilyn T.	Gene B.	Zachary S.
CHILDREN'S CHURCH	Kristin T.	NO Children's	Hayden J.	No Children's Church
TECHNOLOGY	Terry, Ben, Joe	Terry, Ben, Joe	Terry, Ben, Joe	Terry, Ben, Joe
SECURITY	Ben W.	Rick J.	Roger AT.	Ralph S.
SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADER	EL Sherrie/Mike MH Rick	EL Donna MH Kristin	EL Hayden MH Dawn	EL April MH Nena
BANOAK BACKPACK	5th Roger/Marilyn	12th Tim/Barbara	19th Mike/Sherrie	26th Dwayne/Barbara
FRONT YARD SIGN	Nena B.	Gabriel/Ian	Robin/Cynthia	Tim W.
MEAL DEL.	7th April	14th no meal	21st Dawn	28th no meal
BLESSINGS BOX	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. Matthew Oscar Shepherd (C) 828-228-3078 pastor@sardislutheran.com

Pastor Office Hours Wednesday, 11am – 3pm Remember, you can always call the Pastor anytime from 8am to 7am in case of emergency.

Organist/Director of Music: Kenan Chronister (C) 828-582-3489 kenanthemusician@gmail.com

Council Chair: Gene Biggerstaff (C) 828-381-0039 genebiggerstaff@gmail.com

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