

Friendly Messenger.

December 2025

Beloved Sardis,

As we step into the holy season of Advent, we enter once again into a time of anticipation—a waiting filled not with apathy, but instead, with purpose. Advent invites us to slow down, breathe deeply, and ask ourselves an honest question: How well do we wait? Not just for the everyday things or stuff we want, but for the deeper longings of our hearts—the things that require patience, trust, and faith.

Waiting is not easy. We live in a world that moves quickly, that rewards instant answers and immediate gratification. Yet God often forms us most deeply in the seasons where we must pause, watch, wait, and hope. Advent teaches us that waiting is not wasted time. It is sacred time.

So what does anticipation look like when it is fused with hope, joy, peace, and love?

Anticipation with hope means believing God is at work even when we cannot yet see the outcome. It's trust. Anticipation with joy means recognizing that the promise itself is a gift, and that God meets us in the journey, and not only at its end. It's a choice. Anticipation with peace means surrendering to God, not our business or schedules and choosing trust over anxiety. Anticipation with love is remembering that Christ's coming—past, present, and future—is rooted in God's relentless love for us and for All : All people and All creation.

This Advent, may you discover anticipation as a spiritual practice anew—an invitation to open your heart, quiet your spirit, and make room once again for the One who comes in the name of the Lord to be light in all darkness.

May this Advent be a new and blessed journey for you.
May you experience anticipation in new, transformative, hope-filled ways.
And may your waiting draw you ever closer to the heart of Christ and each other.

Remembering that 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 3rd at Sardis. All are invited to join us for fun, food, and fellowship. (REMEMBER to bring drinks)



SARDIS YOUTH NEWS

Youth Adopt a Family Angel Tree Shopping Trip- Dec 3rd at 630 pm. The youth will be shopping for 5 children that are a part of the Union Elementary Angel Tree. Please consider purchasing a poinsettia as WELCA will be donating sales to this service project. You can also contribute to the Shopping trip directly, contact April Fulbright or Jennifer Whitener for more information.



"Symbols of Christmas" Youth Christmas program Dec 21st at 6 pm. Youth will be practicing during Sunday School Dec 7 and 14 and dress rehearsal will be Sat Dec 20th at 9 AM.

Isla Keener update- Please continue to pray for Isla as she is anticipating being discharged home from Levine rehab on Dec 4th after 8 month. This will be a wonderful but challenging transition for her and her family. God is good.

Next youth planning meeting Dec 10th at 6 pm

April

ELECTION RESULTS

Congratulations to our 2026 elected Church Council, Amy Jones, Kristin Teague, Jennifer Whitener, Robin Stuart; Nominating Committee, Terry Bledsoe, Jane Moretz, Dwayne Whitener, Nena Babb, Sherrie Midgett, Dawn Covington; Scholarship Committee, Marilyn Teague, Susan Jones.

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.)

Thanks, from The Social Ministry Committee on behalf of the Unhoused of our area.

Thank you for all the wonderful freezing weather donations to the unhoused of our area. Coats, sweaters, hoodies, socks, and shoes were delivered to the Hickory Soup Kitchen and the Corner Table in Newton. Both locations, GIVES, not sells; these items to any person who needs them. A special thanks goes to Dot Lutz for knitting over 100 knit caps to help the unhoused through these cold months. Another congregation member who keeps those less fortunate in mind is Evan Lail. Evan's wife, Patricia, collected yarn and knit and crocheted before she passed. Upon her passing, Evan wanted the diverse collection of yarn to be put to beneficial use, so he gave it to Dot who has made amazing use of it over the years. Blessing to both as they help the members of our community.



In preparation for the starting of 2026, please make sure the information we have in our church directory is correct. The directory can be found in the back of the 2025 Annual Report...advise Jane of any changes. If you need a copy pick up one in the Narthex in the stand, on the wall, next to Jane's Office.
Thank you

HICKORY AREA

CHRISTMAS

VIA

CEREAL
BAR
GAMES
CHRISTMAS
PJ CONTEST

BOWLING
COOKIE
DECORATING
SERVICE

LOCK-IN
Dec 5-6, 2025

7p-8a

Bowling at Pin Station - Newton
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church - Hickory

GRADES 6-12

*Merry Christmas to my
Sardis Church Family!*

Dear Church Family,

I want to personally wish you all the joy, love, and laughter that the holiday season brings. May your Christmas be filled with warmth, happiness, and cherished moments with loved ones. I also wanted to use this letter as an opportunity to say **THANK YOU!** I have never felt so welcomed at any other church in my whole life. You all have immediately made me feel like family and feel extremely loved... and I cannot tell you how much I NEEDED that and how much it means to me.

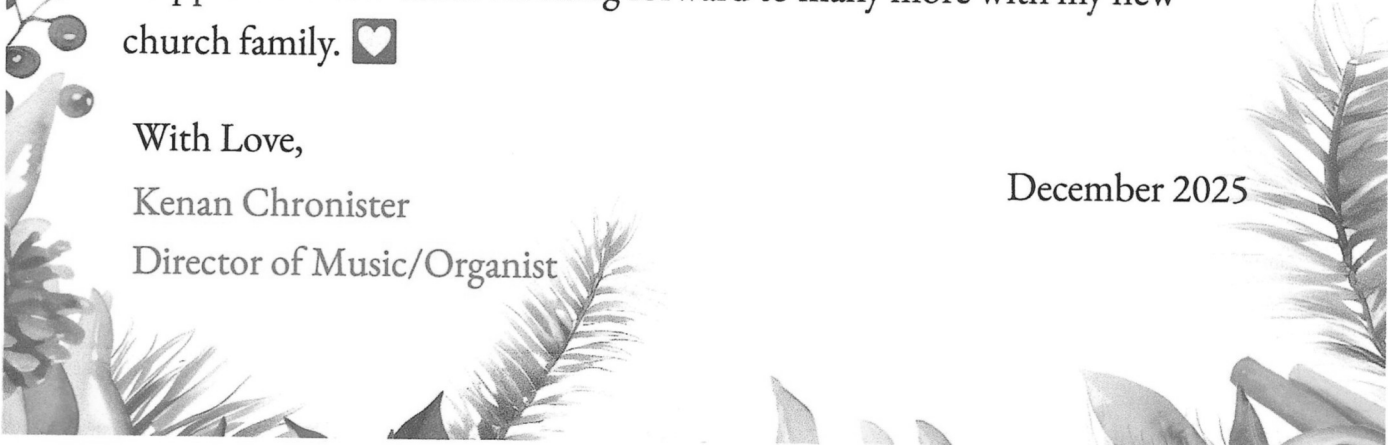


May the spirit of Christmas, the coming of our Savior, bring you peace and happiness! So from me, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years! Looking forward to many more with my new church family. ❤️

With Love,

Kenan Chronister

Director of Music/Organist



December 2025

Sardis Lutheran Church
Council Meeting
October 19, 2025

In Attendance: Joe B., Zack S., Terry B., Gene B., Jane M., Dwayne W., Tim W., Rick J., Jon G., Darrell J.,
Pastor Oscar, Visitor Becky Gladden

Joe opened the meeting at 7:00 PM
Jon Gladden Had devotions.

Becky Gladden, Chair of the Worship and Music Committee, presented a recommendation from the committee to hire Kenan Chronister as our new Choir/Music Director.

Kenan is from Lincolnton and plays the Organ and Piano well.

Not a Lutheran

Has an Associates of Arts in Music and composition in 2021.

24 years old

Currently taking Organ lessons to obtain Bachelor of Arts from the Suski School of the Arts. Learning the Lutheran service as he has played Baptist/Methodist.

Committee has been looking for this position since July 2024

With the Committee recommendation the Council voted and carried hiring Kenan.

Frank Griffin is going to tutor Kenan on the Lutheran Lectionary and how to use our CCL and One License rules

Frank will be compensated \$250.00 per month in travel expenses.

The minutes were discussed, and a change is to be made to let Tracy know by April if he will farm the land behind the church. Dwayne motioned to accept minutes as amended, Jon seconded and the motion carried.

Dwayne gave the financial report and advised the GF is growing by using the BF monies to pay four of the GF bills from. These monies are being reimbursed from the GF as available and starting January 2026 will be paid from the BF and not be reimbursed. Rick motioned to accept the Financial Report, Darrell seconded and the motion carried.

The Pastor gave copies of his report to council members. He advised he had visited all our shut ins this month and gave communion. He attended the Synod Convo at Lutheridge; made quite a few hospital visits; conducted TEC teams; encouraged our confirmands to commit to attending and participating in TEC. He is also instilling in our confirmands that their confirmation is not a graduation, but it is an advancement into the membership of Sardis as an adult. He announced that Gabriel and Ian are moving their membership to Sardis.

OLD BUSINESS

Property Committee; firepit construction has started. Pastor is asking for a timeline schedule. They are to put crusher run and seal. We need to establish rules for the firepit use and will consult the fire department for prevention rules.

NEW BUSINESS

Property Committee advised that a new outlet will be added to the organ area of the church.

Dwayne presented the 2026 Spending Plan and announced it will be presented to the congregation on November 2nd. This was recommended by the Finance Committed, council voted and the Spending Plan carried.

Jane gave the nominations for 2026 Council, Nominating Committee and Scholarship Committee as given by the current Nominating Committee.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Next Council Meeting will be November 9th at 7PM.

Submitted by: Jane Moretz for Mike Midgett Council Secretary

LEAF RAKING

7



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 12:00 FTF Seniors at Sardis...bring drinks	4 7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal	5 Pastor's Sabbath Lock in at Holy Trinity 7:00pm to 8:00am	6
7 Bring Food for Blessings Box 9:30 Christmas Play Practice 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live 5:00 WELCA	8 7:00 Prayer Group via ZOOM	9	10 6:00 Youth Meeting	11 7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal	12 Pastor's Sabbath	13 9:00 Hanging of the Greens
14 9:30 Christmas Play Practice 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live 7:00 Church Council including newly elected members.	15	16	17 7:00 Blue Christmas Service	18 7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal	19 Pastor's Sabbath	20 9:00 Christmas Play Dress Rehearsal, Lunch provided
21 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live 6:00 Children's Christmas Program Refreshments in the Fellowship Hall	22 7:00 Prayer Group via ZOOM	23	24 10:15 Christmas Eve Service w/Holy Communion 5:00 Articles due for January NL	25 No Rehearsals 	26 Pastor's Sabbath	27
28 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service/Holy Communion and FB Live 3:00 Trinity Ridge 6:30 LMM	29	30	31	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.		

BIRTHDAYS

COUNCIL CONTACT

ASSISTING MINISTER

12/9 Tracy Richard
Samuel Clayton Biggerstaff

Ken Propst

Hayden Johnson

12/12 Betty Jo Weaver
Gene Biggerstaff

USHERS

Marilyn T., Rick J., Marshall W., Dawn C.

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 Moretz

Marilyn Teague

12/31 Betty Sue Whitener

Offering Counter: Dwayne W.

Anniversaries:

Tim & Barbara Whitener 12-18

Donald & Evelyn Fulbright 12-21

<i>VOLUNTEER December</i>	7th	14th	21st	Christmas Eve	28th
ALTAR FLOWERS	Susan Jones	Amy Jones	LMM		Wayne & Elaine Jarrett
ACOLYTE/ CRUCIFER	Gabriel/Marshall	Tryston/Rick J.	Ian/Marshall	Shuford/Ray	Rick/Gabriel
COMM. ASSISTANT	Marilyn T.	Sandra R.	Nena B.	Ben W.	Tim W.
GREETERS	Felicia/Bruce	Sylvia/Al	Annette/Evelyn	Nena/Jill	Rita/Shuford
LAY READER	Tim W.	Hayden J.	Ray W.	Jill B.	Kristin T.
CHILDREN'S CHURCH	Susan J.	NO Children's Church	Jennifer W.	NO Children's Church	No Children's Church
TECHNOLOGY	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel	Terry, Ben, Joe, Samuel
SECURITY	Bruce S.	Darrell J.	Ben W.	Ralph S.	Roger T.
SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADER	Play Rehearsal	Play Rehearsal	Pre-K Jennifer EL April MH Kristin	Bible Bearer— Rick J. Torches-Marilyn T. Shuford W.	Pre-K Nena EL Donna MH Dawn
BANOAK BACKPACK	11th Roger & Marilyn	18th Tim & Barbara			
FRONT YARD SIGN	Tim W,	Nena B.	Gabriel & Ian	Robin & Cynthia	Tim W.
MEAL DEL.	13th Donna B.	20th No Meal	27th Dawn C.		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](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