



To the church of God as found at Marion Salem Church, called to be saints together with those in every place who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ: You are miracles of God's grace and mercy!

One of my favorite holiday tunes is “Christmas in Killarney,” the Bing Crosby version of course. One of the verses goes, “The door is always open / The neighbors pay a call / And Father John, before he’s gone / Will bless the house and all.” It was not unusual in a bygone day for pastors to drop by unannounced (especially in Father John’s case, when parties were an opportunity for the parish pastor to make rounds and see the maximum number of people, whether or not he was actually invited!). Of course, the world has changed much in the intervening decades. I’ve actually been chased off of someone’s property while trying to visit them unannounced (not Salem). More times than not though, there have been those awkward conversations where I’ll call ahead and it’s obvious that now or soon is not really a good time for a visit, yet the person I am speaking with has wanted a visit. They feel caught. You can simply tell when that tension is there—it’s not good. Of course, just as bad is not visiting either.

I’ve been thinking a lot about visitations and how to increase them, both in the number of people I go to see and how often I go to see them. I was considering this when I was reminded of a teacher’s advice, “Clear boundaries and expectations are not rude, they are kind.” So with that in mind, I offer the following to help communicate with the congregation so we can improve the visitation ministry at Marion Salem Church:

1. I am busy— I am **NOT** too busy to visit. Like anyone, I have things that have a certain priority or steal my attention. However, if you want me to visit, I will make that a priority. I have plenty of time to work 1 or 2 visits with separate households in a week if needed.
2. Please call the church office or my cellphone. I may not be able to drop everything and come right away, however I also cannot read minds. If your need is a desire for the pastor to come see you, let me know. We’ll get it worked out within a week and likely sooner.
3. I find it rude to invite myself over to visit someone, even when that visit is the right thing to do. As I said above, there are times that I call and I know the visit is wanted, but even the timing of my call is bad to schedule it. It is far easier for you to invite me than for me to invite myself. Put me on the spot, instead of me putting you on the spot. Our culture’s expectations have changed radically in the past several decades. One of those changes has been when it is beneficial for the pastor to make a visit and when it is not.
4. Emily enjoys coming along for visits, yet her schedule is more limited than mine. When you communicate with me that you’d like Emily (or even the kids) to come along, we will make it happen - it just might require more calendar work.

During 2026, my hope is to make it around to many members’ homes, if only to join with your family in a short time of prayer consecrating your home and household to the Lord. I will leave with each family a small keepsake of the service as a reminder of your covenant with the Lord and His with you.

Blessings 🙌,

January Messages:

4th: Epiphany Sunday, Communion, Children’s Sunday

“Kwll the Journey” Psalm 55:22

11th: Baptism of the Lord, Baptismal Reaffirmation

“Saved Through Chaos” 1 Peter 3:18-22

18th: Communion

“Hang Close Enough or Close Enough to Hang” Numbers 16

Dear God '26

Our 24-hour prayer marathon to start the New Year starts at Midnight New Year's Eve. There is a sign-up in the sanctuary and instructions will be sent via email or hand delivered. Join in this tradition of seeking Christ first for our congregation as we start 2026!



Increasing Frequency of Communion

As a part of our ongoing dependence on the means of grace, we're going to experiment with more frequently attending the Lord's Table. In December we naturally do that with the first of the month and Christmas Eve. In January, we'll continue with the first of the month and then on the 3rd Sunday we'll utilize a different method of partaking with prepackaged elements. We are also working on extending the Table with the prepackaged elements to our shut-ins every time we communion. — Pastor Jason

Updating Directory

It's time for a new directory update. Please be on the look out with a letter that will help update your entry and return it to the church office as soon as you can. We'd like to get new copies printed by February.



Kuwl the Journey

Along with starting the year in a prayer marathon, Pastor Jason invites the congregation to seek God daily in prayer and Scripture reading starting with the month of January. On Sunday, Jan. 4th a formation journal will be available for everyone in attendance. Use the journal to see God's work!





“Love Sent a Child”
December 14th
Thank you, choir, children and
Emily for blessing us!



Families can donate to Rhema in two different ways:

1. Direct tax deductible donation by check or by giving online to:

<https://rhemaacademyk12.education/>

2. Through Ohio Christian Education Network (OCEN) at:

https://app.ocen.org/users/sign_in

This is an OHIO STATE TAX CREDIT & thus will reduce your state tax liability up to \$750 per person.

See Brian Sparling with any questions.



Rhema is recruiting for the 2026 school year. Open houses in January & February. Come and see what Rhema Academy is all about!

Rhema Chapels on Wed. 9am

Rhema Academy invites the Salem Church Family to join them for worship on Wednesdays, please enter by the office door and check in at office before 8:50am.



**Basic Christian Faith
Wednesdays 7pm**

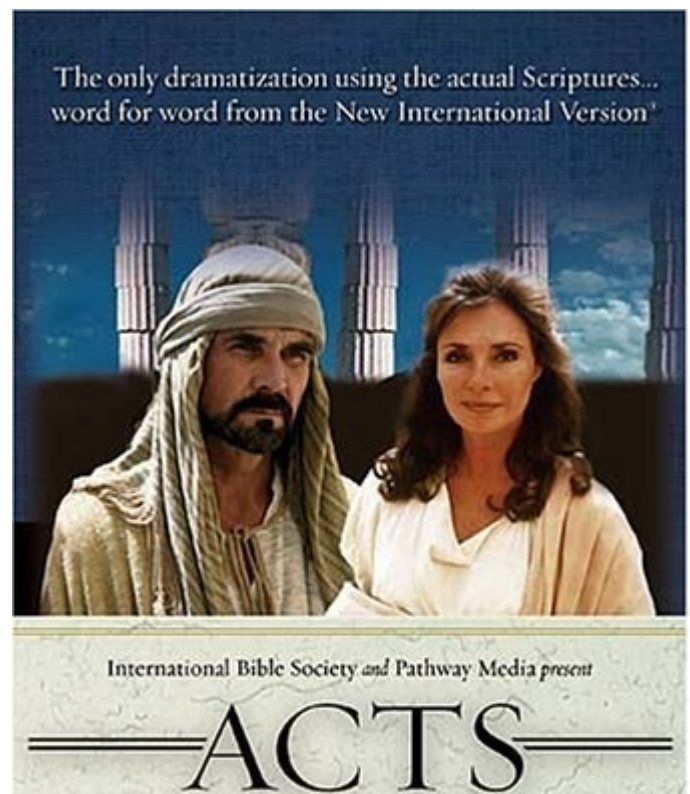
Join Pastor Jason for an engaging time of discussion as we explore basic teachings of Christian Faith. This is a paced study and you can drop in anytime.

January Studies:

- 7th: Study continues
- 14th: Study continues
- 21st: Study continues
- 28th: Study continues

Monday Bible Study—Hiatus

We are going to pause the Monday Bible Study as the days get darker sooner. The Study will resume in February picking up in Acts 9:32.



"He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; he gently leads those that have young." Isaiah 40:11

The Strivers Sheepdog Spot



ASSISTING THE GOOD SHEPHERD IN TENDING THE FLOCK, ESPECIALLY THE LAMBS AND THOSE THAT HAVE YOUNG



WINTER JAM 2026

SATURDAY • JANUARY 24

Columbus, OH

NO TICKETS
REQUIRED



DONATION
AT THE DOOR

VENUE INFORMATION:

Schottenstein Center • 555 Berror Dr, Columbus, OH 43210

Strivers Youth Schedule

- Jan 4: NO YOUTH GROUP
- Jan 11, 6pm: Youth Group
- Jan 18, 6pm: Youth Group
- Jan 24 (Sat): Winter Jam!
- Jan 25: NO YOUTH GROUP

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14



The entire church family is invited to join the youth group as we attend Winter Jam 2026 on Saturday, January 24. Students between 12-18 who are attending without a parent/guardian must have a signed permission/medical form from Pastor Heather. The cost is \$15 per person plus additional money for food and drinks at the concert if desired. Join us for an evening of worship and fun with some of the hottest names in Christian music! THERE WILL BE NO YOUTH GROUP ON JANUARY 25 FOLLOWING THIS EVENT!



We are looking for Adult Volunteers to help with Youth!

Are you passionate about helping teens grow in their faith? Our church's youth group is looking for dedicated volunteers to help lead and mentor our youth. We have several roles available, including:

- **Small Group Mentors:** Provide a consistent presence and spiritual guidance to a small group of teens.
- **Event Support:** Help with logistics for special events, retreats, and fundraisers.
- **Transportation:** Provide rides to and from events or regular

Rev. Heather McLeod, Family Life Pastor • pastor.heather.gmc@gmail.com • 412-527-4531

Beyond Youth Group

Forming a Family Ministries Council

Are you an active volunteer in our children or youth ministries? Are you a parent of children of any age who would like to be involved in planning events for your child's age group? Are you a young adult who is full of ideas? Or are you an adult of any age who just wants to see children, youth, and families of this congregation and the greater Marion community be reached and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ? Pastor Heather is forming a Family Ministries Council to help plan events and programs and support the family ministries of the church. For more information, contact Pastor Heather.



All Church Birthday Party!

Sunday Jan. 18th

following worship

Come join a fun fellowship dinner themed around your birthday! Tables will be setup for seating by month of birth so you get to know other birthday buddies.

Bring a dish to share. Drinks and cake will be provided.

AMENDED SNOW CANCELLATION POLICY

If Marion County or Crawford County issues a level 2 or level 3 snow advisory all youth and family events will be cancelled for the day unless both counties are reduced to a level 1 at least 1 hour before the event.



Haven't gone to see it yet? What are you waiting for? Support quality Christian movies and see the life of King David like you have never seen him before!

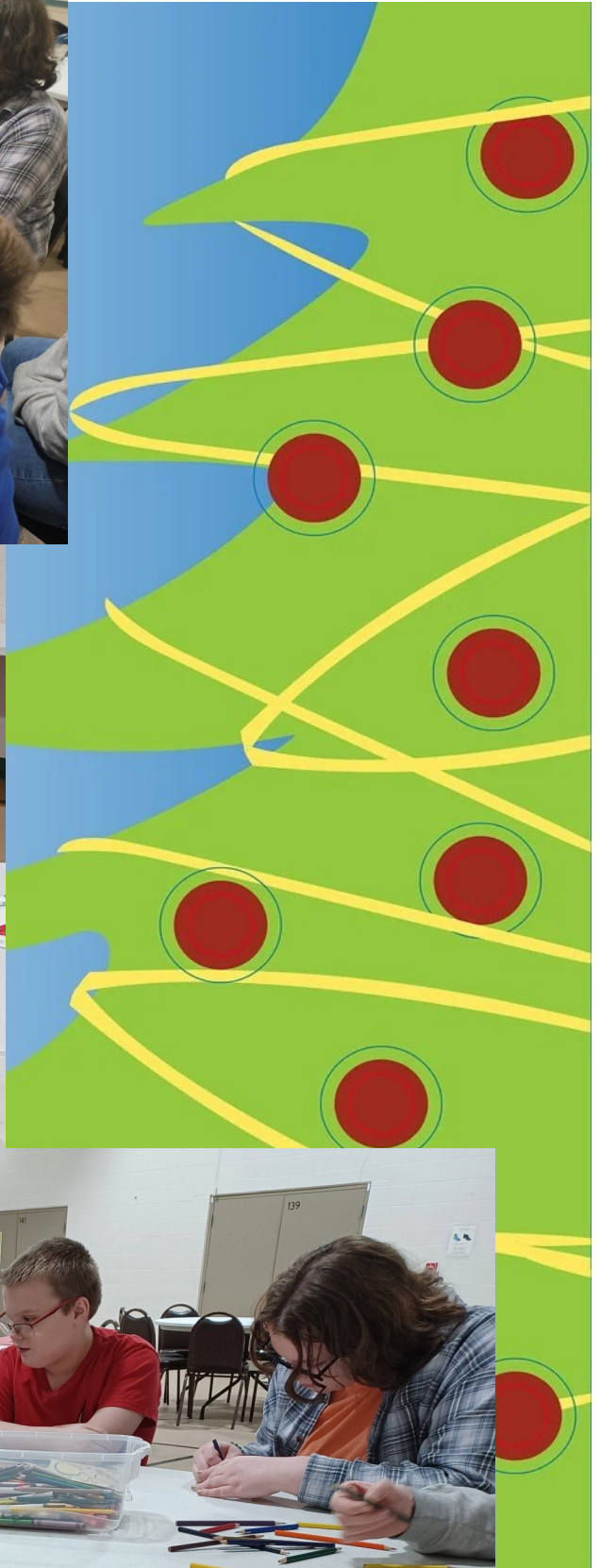


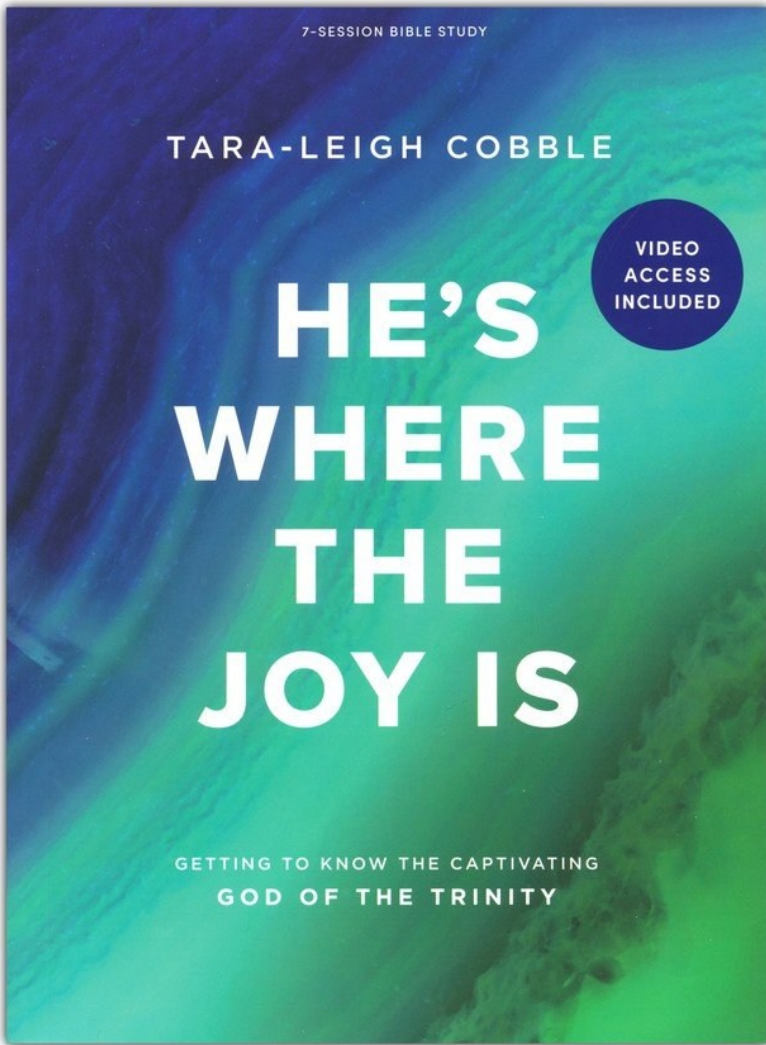
Rhema Academy
1st Christmas Concert
December 11th
at Marion Salem Church
What a blessing!



Christmas Craft Party!

from the tallest to the smallest
December 16th





Please join us!

Starting in January (tbd)

7 week study

Everyone welcome!

If interested, please see Amy McGuire

or call/text 740-341-9613

It's hard to know a God we don't understand, and it's hard to love a God we don't know. But our God wants to be known and loved, and He's told us a lot about Himself in the pages of His Word.

Join Tara-Leigh Cobble in this 7-session study as she breaks down the intimidating doctrine of the Trinity. You'll discover a beautiful, foundational view of our Triune God that will transform how you relate to Him. Understanding God's three-in-oneness and each of the Persons of God individually—Father, Son, and Spirit—will lead you to deeper intimacy with God and greater joy in knowing Him!



Food Pantry

Hours: Monday 10-noon



Wed. Jan. 28th—Noon

Menu: Soup

**Please bring a side or
dessert to share**

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Happy New Year!!	2	3
4 Communion No youth group	5	6	7 Knitting/Craft 1pm Choir 6:15 Bible study 7 pm	8 Rhema 5pm	9	10 Family Center Reserved
11	12 Rhema 5 pm	13	14 Knitting/Craft 1pm Choir 6:15 Bible study 7 pm	15 AHG 6 pm	16	17
18	19 MLK Day	20 Rhema 5 pm	21 Knitting/Craft 1pm Choir 6:15 Bible study 7 pm	22	23	24 Winter Jam
25 No youth group	26	27	28 Knitting/Craft 1pm Choir 6:15 Bible study 7 pm	29 AHG 6 pm	30	31



1st Sunday every month in the Family Center at 8:30 AM.

Jan—Genesis Class

Feb—Joy/Ren Class



GREETERS

- 1/4 Steve & Joan Crock
- 1/11 Becky Oliver & Jack Sharp
- 1/18 Bruce & Conni McChesney
- 1/25 Rob & Tracy Weisbrodt

Children's Church

- 1/4 No Children's Church
- 1/11 Jennifer Croskey & Jesseca Wagner
- 1/18 Becky Oliver & Megan Pollock
- 1/25 Mary Galloway & Emily Sharp

Birthdays

- 1/1 Karla Sharp
- 1/7 Dave Slack
- 1/8 Ellen Messenger
- 1/9 Lynne Baer
- 1/12 Phil Shroyer
- 1/16 Tony Smith
- 1/16 Flora Mae Ulsh
Marissa Loyer
- 1/18 Lilly Wagner
- 1/22 Reanna Roth
- 1/25 Jack Sharp
- 1/28 Amy Springer
- 1/29 Karen Marquis

Nursery Schedule

- 1/4 Conni McChesney & Susan Rockwell
- 1/11 Kathy Fisher & Tracy Weisbrodt
- 1/18 Jennifer & Piper Croskey
- 1/25 Jennifer & Piper Croskey



Pray for

- Ron VonAlmen
- Janet Schelb
- Jude Stitzel
- Sheryl Campbell
- Donna McKinnis
- Vicki Adams
- Israel
- Judi Myers
- Rick Hicks
- Haiti
- Mike Dilsaver
- Steve Crock
- Paul Messenger
- Shawn Wilcox
- Jamie Marquis
- Inda Lama
- Janie Wooten
- Doug Burkhart
- Nathan Cedric
- Mary Linn
- Joni McCray
- Mary Linn
- Family of Callen Klingler
- Mark Dendinger
- Steve Shamhart
- Max Strome
- Ed Crawford