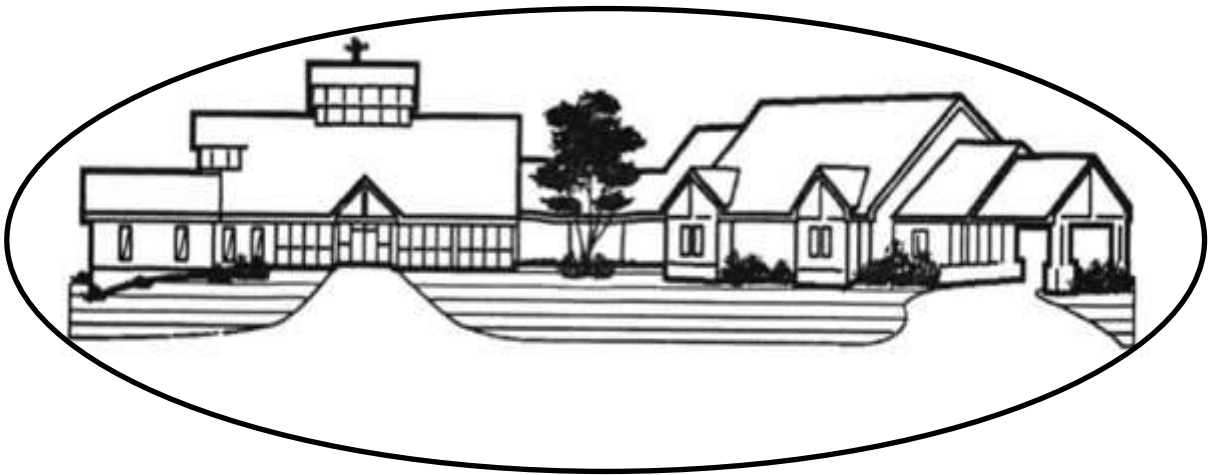

Agapegram

January 2023



ETERNAL SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

220 Carson Road

Seneca, South Carolina 29678

www.eternalshepherd.org

office@eternalshepherd.org

Office: 864-882-3209 or 864-882-5512

Little Lambs Preschool: 864-882-3202

To Boldly Go



No one knows what will be in the future... Eccl. 10:14 EHV

2023 has arrived and a new year waits before us. Yet, we may be a bit hesitant to rush into it. Understandably so. The last few years have brought more than we expected or wanted.

Covid-19, lockdowns, governmental overreach, riots, vaccine debates, job insecurities, questioned elections, market pains, cultural shifts in morality & sexuality, wars & rumors of wars, personal trials, a record number of Eternal Shepherd saints missing from our lives. We want to return to what was, but we hear near daily reports of the lies, deception, corruption, & societal manipulation among our elected officials, in our governmental organizations, and in big tech industries. It seems that even what was wasn't what we thought.

I don't know about you, but I don't really want to know what comes next. And I think that's okay. In fact, God just might prefer us not to rush ahead with our hopes and assumptions about what 2023 will bring. Jesus teaches us to turn our energies to where they can be most applied when He encourages, "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Mt.6:34). And while God certainly advises us to be prepared for future days ("Go to the ant... observe its ways and become wise... it stores its food... it gathers its provisions..." Prov.6:6-8) and to plan appropriately, we must do so with a tentative mindset that allows God to have the final say in directing our paths as James reminds us: "You do not know what tomorrow will bring. ... it is better for you to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live, and we will do this or that'" (4:14-15).

The unknowable-ness of the future isn't a problem. It is a gift. It keeps us from the worry that Jesus warns against. At the same time, it turns us back to God who does know. He knows our future from our creation: "In your book all of them were written. Days were determined, before any of them existed (Ps.139:16) even as He also knows where all things will go: "I am God, and there is no one like me. I am the one who announces the final outcome already in the beginning... I am the one who says, 'My plan will stand...'" (Isa.46:9-10).

As we pray regularly, God desires us to ask for, receive, and give thanks for His provision of daily bread. The same God who gives daily bread and who took care of your eternal salvation through the forgiving grace of Jesus Christ will also give you strength and courage to face whatever this year may bring. In Christ and by His power, we can confidently face the New Year with the anticipation captured in the opening credits of the Star Trek series: "To boldly go where no man has gone before."

God is able to make all grace overflow to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will overflow in every good work. 2 Cor. 9:8 EHV

Pastor David



Deaconess' Musings

Same God, Same Promises

“Baptism...now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” ~ 1 Peter 3:21

With the beginning of a new year, attempts to bring about change and improvements in and around our lives suddenly reappear, urging us to live life at a higher standard. We make all sorts of promises and resolutions to improve some aspect of our life, when more often than not those very intentions fall short of their fruition. We then resolve to try and better our lives again and again and again. It soon becomes a never ending cycle of “I’ll do better next time,” or “Why can’t I...?” Perhaps there will be some apparent change, but that can quickly turn into not enough improvement or change.

Mayhap it is a clear indication of the culture in which we live, but all this focusing on “being the absolute best I could be,” is not something that we can actually do. We actively confess against it. There is nothing that we can do, on our own, to once and for all make our lives perfect and spotless. If we truly believe in original sin, then there is not one of us that could be perfect in every way. We require someone outside of ourselves to save us and make us perfect. We require a Savior.

Christ came to save us from ourselves! He came to give us that new life! In our baptisms, God claims us as His own! Unlike the promises we seem to make every year that can wither and fade away, the baptismal promises proclaimed at the fount never die, never fade, and never lessen. Forever, we are His. We rejoice in this saving act, and gladly remember it daily. The forgiveness and assurance that flows from our baptismal waters daily enriches, comforts, and strengthens us. Remember your baptism, that moment in which God declared you to be His child and pronounced Christ’s righteousness over you!

*God’s own child, I gladly say it:
I am baptized into Christ!
He, because I could not pay it,
Gave my full redemption price.
Do I need earth’s treasures many?
I have one worth more than any
That brought me salvation free
Lasting to eternity!*
~ God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It
594, stanza 1



***A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR OUT GOING
COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ELDERS***

Congregational President *John Cochell*
Outreach Chair *Elaine Rich*
Stewardship Chair *Sue Hauser*
Elders—*Craig Bergson; Rick Cochell; Richard
Grotheer; Rich Hesemann, and Scott Toussaint*

*We thank you for your faithful and dedicated service to our Lord,
our church family, and the community.*

***WELCOME TO OUR NEW 2023 INCOMING
COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ELDERS***

Congregational President *Fred Bell*
Outreach Chair *Ann Miller*
Stewardship Chair *Sue Blount*
Elders—*Jim Bluhm; David Broderdorf;
Mark Kunkel; Vendo Toming, and Paul Wilson*

*Welcome! We look forward to our time of service
together. Thank you for answering the call.*

Epiphany

By Bob Massa, Head Elder

January 6th the day we celebrate the Magi arriving to honor our Lord Jesus and to present their gifts to our Savior. It is a wonderful Bible story. It has excitement, honor and glory for our Lord, and intrigue as the deceitful Herod attempts to find the infant Jesus. The focus is on the Magi but lost in the story is the fate of the Holy Innocents.

As an aging adult these are my thoughts of this day, but as a child and youth the date also had another meaning. You probably are thinking it's the day all Christmas decorations are taken down if they have not already been removed. Yes, that was an event in our house, but it was secondary to a much more important event.

See it was the day in 1946 when Peter B. Massa, married Enunciato Serafini, their anniversary. It is a special day of celebration.

January Council Update

Greetings and Happy New Year to all brothers and sisters of Eternal Shepherd. I hope all of you had a wonderful and joyous holiday with family celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Council took December off but I'd like to take this opportunity to express my humble gratitude for being given the honor of serving as your newly elected Council President. Following the outstanding four years of service provided by such a talented leader as John Cochell is somewhat intimidating to say the least. We all owe him a great debt of gratitude for his dedication and leadership during a period of unprecedented challenges due to the pandemic.

I'm also happy to report that we are truly blessed to have an outstanding Church Council with the experience, knowledge and commitment to provide all of the administrative support required for our growing church. I look forward to working with Pastor David and this devoted team.

In reflecting on the issues we have had over the past two years and our success in addressing those issues through Pastor David, Deaconess Holly and our Church Council, we recognize the daily blessings received from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we look forward to 2023, we can rest assured that we will continue to receive the love of Jesus and experience the warmth of His embrace if we keep our focus on Him through prayer and staying in His Word.

Romans 15:4 "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

In Christ,
Fred Bell

Welcome our Newest Members

WELCOME SUSAN & PAUL SHERMAN!

Coming to us out of the Wisconsin Synod, the Shermans are most thankful to find ES, a church to call home. They enjoy Pastor Hammer's Sermons & Bible Study. Susan also enjoys the Women's Bible Study. Both met at, worked for and retired from the US Postal Service. Having lived in MI, FL, and more recently McCormick SC, the decision was made to downscale & move near family. Susan & Paul have a son who passed away in 2019. They have a WA daughter (husband) who gave them a grandson, Taysom and they have another son (& wife) in Central SC who also gave them a grandson, Chase. Paul likes reading and golfing. Susan has volunteered at Habitat, Helping Hands, Books on Main & Prime Timers in her last location. Welcome to ES!

IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and How to Save BIG on Income Taxes

This article may be helpful to you if you have a Traditional* IRA and are over age 70½. You should check with your tax advisor to see if this would be right for you.

When you put money into your traditional IRA over past years, you deducted* those contributions from your taxable income, thus reducing your taxes in those past years. The downside is that your future withdrawals are taxable income, thus increasing your taxes as you take money out. *(Some people may have also made nondeductible IRA contributions in the past; these work differently and require additional considerations.)

In addition to withdrawals being taxable income, people who are age 72* and higher must make withdrawals each year to avoid penalties. This is called a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). (The RMD age is likely changing to age 73 starting in 2023.) Your RMD each year is calculated based on your age in a particular year. The RMD percentage for each age is from an IRS table that distributes your IRA funds over your expected future lifetime.

Instead of making your normal RMD withdrawal (and then using it to make charitable donations after you first pay taxes on it), a donation can be made as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) directly from the IRA. The QCD goes straight to the qualified charitable organization and the amount of the QCD is not included in your taxable income. So no taxes are paid on the QCDs that are withdrawn from the IRA.

Up to \$100,000 in QCDs can be made each year, as long as you are over age 70½ at the time of the donation. The QCD counts toward your RMD! For example, let's say a person would be required to withdraw \$10,000 RMD from their IRA and then pay income taxes on the withdrawal. By making a \$10,000 QCD and donating it to charity, your RMD requirement is satisfied, and no income tax applies on this withdrawal! This is a big savings compared to paying taxes on the \$10,000 RMD withdrawal, and then making donations out of the funds after it has been taxed.

To make a QCD, contact your IRA administrator. They will give you the procedure to follow. It will probably work like this: (1) You will specify the QCD amount and the IRA investment account it is to come from, (2) Name of the qualified charitable organization to which the check will be written, (3) the check will be mailed to you, then finally (4) you will send this check to the charity. When you file your income taxes, this QCD amount is not included in your taxable income. It is not included in your charitable deductions (since it is not counted as income in the first place), so it does not matter if you don't itemize deductions or are subject to maximum charitable deduction limits.

Round the Table Women's Bible Study Begins Thursday, January 12 3:00 - 4:30



Dear friends ...

The Winter / Spring Class is about to begin both in Fellowship Hall and on Zoom! We are looking forward to seeing you there! Join us for this class ... there is “no preparation” for it. Just come!

This study, **God of Freedom, by Jen Wilkin**, continues our study of Exodus. (Books are available for purchase thru Christian Book Distributor, Lifeway books, Amazon, or any Christian Book Store.)

We will walk through the stories of our faith with Moses and the Israelites and will again discover how God is working every thing together for His glory and for the good of His people (Exodus 19 – 40.).

Join us as we find their lives “in us” and “we in them.” The same loving and all-knowing God who led them through each day is now leading us as we enter a New Year together in studying His Word.

Join us as we sit at the feet of our God and continue to be amazed and thankful for His mercy and His grace.

How beautiful is it that the same God who created mountains and oceans and galaxies ...

carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to Himself. Exodus 19:4

He looked at you and thought ... that the world needed one of you, too!

In His Name,

Jan Walker, Margi McLain, Deaconess Holly Cox, Jeanne Arkfeld, and Tracy Cochell

(Questions ? ... Give any of us a call.)

From the Board of Hospitality

As we start this new year, we have so much to be thankful for in so many ways. Our Hospitality group has been so busy this year with this and that, and have done it with arms open wide and a happy heart. We have lost many in our congregation and yet as the Lord promises, when God calls us each home one by one, the chain will link again.

Our Hospitality group has lost several people, so with this, I ask for more people to be a part of it. It can be as much or as little as you would like; from helping with set-up of functions, helping during functions, helping with clean up or supplying bars or cookies or sandwiches when needed.

Also, we need people to sign up for “treats” for Sunday Bible study. So far, everyone has been so generous and we have not had to go one Sunday without “food”....LOL. It is good to remember that as our congregation grows, it is often too much for one family to provide and help with it all. Feel free to sign up with another family to help; thus making it easier on everyone involved. It is completely up to you. If you feel you are not sure how to do it, please contact me, Colleen Wakeman (864-784-0421) and I will be more than happy to help you. We want our Hospitality group to have fun with all of this and not make it a burden.

With that, I thank everyone for all that has been provided this past year. God bless you all and have a Happy New Year.

Honduras News: As this article is being written we are just 60 days away from our mission to Honduras. It is a mission that could not be done without the generous support of this congregation. It is no small financial endeavor to take a team of 18 missionaries to Honduras for a week coupled with the additional expenses of this post-pandemic time but the challenge has been met and surpassed by the wonderful members of Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church.

Your team has several more meetings and **we invite the congregation to join us on February 5, 2023 after the late service to help assemble the Salvation Bracelets that we will give to the children we see while ministering to the people.** Sharing the Gospel is of utmost importance during our week of serving and these bracelets visually tell the story for the 400 children we will see. Part of our ministry focus fee goes to purchase Bibles for us to give to the adults with the remainder going toward the medical side of the mission.

While each team member has a prayer partner at church praying for them your prayers are always appreciated especially from February 18 to 25, 2023 while the team is in Honduras. You can find a list of all team members on the bulletin board along with a copy of our weekly schedule. May God bless all who have supported and continue to support this ministry.

Blessings, Your 2023 Honduras Mission Team

Comfort Dog News

Thank you to all who supported our 5th Annual “Howl-Le-Lu-Ya” Dog Biscuit Sale this year! We raised close to \$1300, our best year yet. We will take a portion of this money and donate it to Project K9 Heroes. Project K-9 Hero houses, rehomes, and rehabilitates our nation’s retired Military Working Dogs and Police K-9s. Before this organization was formed Military Dogs or K9 Police dogs were often euthanized after serving our country if a home was unavailable for them. Project K-9 Hero takes these dogs, provides them with a home and a good quality of life in appreciation for their service to our nation. Donations help with medical costs, food, rehabilitation, adoption, and end of duty services for these working dogs.

We also want to thank Thrivent Financial for granting us a \$250 action team gift card which helped purchase the ingredients for the dog biscuits. The leftover funds will buy 5 large bags of dog food which will be donated to the Oconee Humane Society. The dog biscuit endeavor was made possible by faithful members of the Comfort Dog Team. Two Saturdays in a row, they mixed, rolled, cut out dog bones, baked, and packaged the dog biscuits. We made 140 bags of dog biscuits, quite a feat for us. We hope all the dogs in your family and neighborhood enjoyed these special treats made with love!

Please pray for Seth and the Comfort Dog Team in the coming year. We want to go where God wants us to go and be available when He calls. Of course, this ministry is a team endeavor, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Seth’s handlers, his ministry partners, and our support members for their faithful service. And many thanks to our wonderful ESLC congregation who always welcomes Seth and all of us with love and encouragement! Happy New Year and may God bless you with His peace, love, and comfort in the coming year.

To God be the Glory,
Kyra Carbone, Top Dog



Left to right - Paula Rigoni,
Diane Williams and Jean Dombi.

ON-LINE GIVING Remember you can give on-line. Just go to our church website at www.eternalshepherd.org and click on the On-line Giving bar in the top right corner on the homepage. ~Thank you for your faithful support.



Volunteers Needed for BabyRead

BabyRead is an early literacy program dedicated to low-income families in Oconee County. Volunteers are needed to read one-on-one to moms and their babies or toddlers at public venues twice a month for one hour each time. Covid options are available which don't require face-to-face contact. We are, also, looking for volunteers in management, leadership, and administrative positions. To become a BabyRead volunteer, call (864) 643-8083 or visit www.babyread.org.



FOOD BANK NEWS: Please help us in collecting preferred needed canned, or boxed grocery items each month to help restock the Golden Corner Food Pantry's shelves. **January's** preferred product is **"Canned or Dried Beans"** (Please place items in one of the trash cans marked Food Bank down by the main Fellowship Hall). *~Thank you for your generosity and support.*



Scrip Cards are available and make *great gifts* as well as earn money for Eternal Shepherd at the same time. Please note we have Publix, Ingles and Walmart gift cards available. For orders please contact **Beckie Rau** at (864) 944-6096. After the order is received one of the Scrip ladies will contact you to make arrangements for delivery. Scrip Card Team: **Beckie Rau, Libby Dunlap, Elisabeth Baker & Sue Hauser.** *~Thank you for*



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Habitat For Humanity is in need of **volunteers throughout the organization.** There are jobs for men and women in all areas. Please consider helping in this worthwhile organization. Find out more about serving with us at <https://www.oconeehabitat.org>.

CARD CART NEWS! - If you have a chance, stop by the **Card Cart Ministry Display in the Fellowship Hall.** You might find a card that is just perfect for someone you know! There is a wide variety for all kinds of occasions and the price is perfect!!! \$.50 for all cards and \$5.00 for a box of 12 found on the bottom of the cart.



Hospitality Happenings for January

1/1 – New Year’s Day 10am service only

1/8 – Colleen Wakeman

1/15 – ???

1/22 – ???

1/29 – ???



Hospitality is going forward full speed since the conclusion of the Pandemic. We have provided for Memorial Services and Sunday Bible Study. We always remain committed to our church and are always looking for new members. This requires as little or as much as you would like to help with: providing food, set-up, serving and clean-up.

All these are helpful and needed.

If you are new to any of these, please contact me at 864-784-0421 and I will gladly help. ~Colleen Wakeman

January Birthdays

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 – Pat Pfeiffer | 16 - Jim McKibben |
| Doug Zirbel | 17 – Monica McCrary |
| 5 – LJ Rebholz | 18 – Beth Renfroe |
| Adam Warber | 20 - Enid Miller |
| 7 – Susan Robirds | Susan Tyner |
| Joyce Thompson | 21 - Richard Grotheer |
| 8 - Don Pitts | 22 - Dennis Hippchen |
| 9 – Karee Keefer | Bill Smith |
| Sara Baumann | Larry Snyder |
| 10 - Ron Bode | Gerry Walton |
| Benjamin Madden | 23 - Carol Shealy |
| Carol Welte | 24 - Eric Schmidt |
| 11 – Bill Findlay | Grover Stewart |
| Ed Seeley | 27 – Ken Dunlap |
| 14 – Susie Williams | 29 – Sherry Wyatt |
| Jacquie Wilson | 30 – Mike Hauser |



January Anniversaries

- 2 – Dan & Bonnie Franzen
- 8 – Jeep & Jean Feldt
- 13 – Cecil & Cara Murray
- 15 – Ray & Sherry Wyatt
- 20 – Henry & Julie Gambrell
Mike & Sue Kunce
- 24– Craig & Kathy Bergeson
- 27 – Jim & Elaine Randles
- 31 - Monty & Julie Moore



SPECIAL GIFTS/MEMORIALS

In November the following gifts were given:

In loving memory of *Rein Brueggeman*
the Property Fund received a gift of \$24.14



In loving memory of *Richard Hull*
the General Fund received a gift of \$23.84

In loving memory of *Richard Kulper*
the General Fund received a gift of \$48.13

In loving memory of *Micky Louderback*
the Little Lambs Preschool Fund received a gift of \$100.00

In loving memory of *Skip Wakeman*
the Choir Fund received gifts of \$140.00
the Comfort Dog Minsitry Fund received gifts of \$250.00,
and the General Fund received gifts of \$198.84,
and the Mission Quilt Sewers Fund received a gifts of \$96.93

In loving memory of *Sarah Wanthal*
the Choir Fund received a gift of \$25.00,
and the General Fund received gifts of \$180.00

Other Gifts:

The Church Bus Fund received gifts of \$49.06

The Comfort Dog Ministry Fund received gifts of \$242.07

The Disaster Response Team Fund received gifts of \$121.14

The Elders Fund received a gift of \$100.00,
and a gift of \$600.00 from CCCF Giving Thanks Grant

The Food Bank Fund received gifts of \$96.26

The General Fund received a gift of \$800.00 from Blessings Shared Grant

The Haiti Missions Fund received gifts of \$1,080.00

The Honduras Mission Fund received gifts of \$17,044.19

The Little Lambs Preschool Fund received a gift of \$96.71

The LWML Fund received gifts of \$48.36,
and a gift of \$1,000.00 from Blessings Shared Grant

The Operation Christmas Child Fund received gifts of \$1,027.19

The Toys for Gods Kids Fund received gifts of \$266.88

The Youth Fund received gifts of \$121.13

Little Lambs Tales

Happy New Year!






Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

*New Year's Blessings to you and yours
from Little Lambs Preschool!*

Your New Year

Start your new year by keeping a journal of your life.

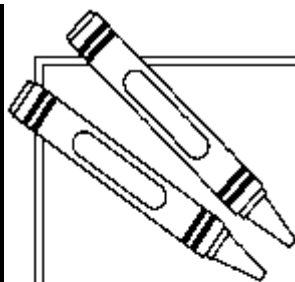
You will need:

-  a spiral notebook
-  contact paper
-  permanent marker



How to make and use your journal:

- Use the contact paper to cover the front of the notebook.
- Put your name and a name for the journal on the cover.
- Decorate the cover with drawings or stickers.
- Each day (or once a week) write down your thoughts, prayers, poems, dreams and the date. You can also make drawings to go along with your writings.



Just for KIDS

New Year's Resolutions

Use the code to read some important words to live by.

CODE:	A=1	D=4	H=8	L=12	P=16	T=20	X=24
	B=2	E=5	I=9	M=13	Q=17	U=21	Y=25
	C=3	F=6	J=10	N=14	R=18	V=22	Z=26
		G=7	K=11	O=15	S=19	W=23	

8 1 22 5 14 15 15 20 8 5 18 7 15 4 19

2 5 6 15 18 5 13 5

8 15 14 15 18 25 15 21 18 6 1 20 8 5 18

1 14 4 13 15 20 8 5 18

4 15 14 20 13 9 19 21 19 5

7 15 4 19 14 1 13 5

11 5 5 16 20 8 5 19 1 2 2 1 20 8

8 15 12 25

12 5 1 18 14 20 8 5 20 5 14

3 15 13 13 1 14 4 13 5 14 20 19

Answer: Have no other gods before me; Honor your father and mother; Don't misuse God's name; Keep the Sabbath holy; Learn the Ten Commandments.

SERVICE TIMES

8:30 a.m. Worship Service
(Communion 2nd & 4th Sundays)

9:45 a.m. Sunday School
& Adult Bible Study

11:00 a.m. Worship Service
(Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays)



THOSE WHO SERVE

Pastor: David Hammer

Deaconess: Holly Cox

Secretary: Celeste Entrekin

Preschool Director: Gina Cote

Choir Director: Rick Schmidt

Choir Accompanist: Michelle Rowland

Organist: David Phillips

MISSIONARIES

Joanna Johnson, Taiwan

Nate Esala, Lutheran Bible Translators

David & Dr. Arianna Shirk, Kenya

S.E.D. Missionaries to Peru

Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church
220 Carson Rd.
Seneca, SC 29678