



Salem Lutheran Church

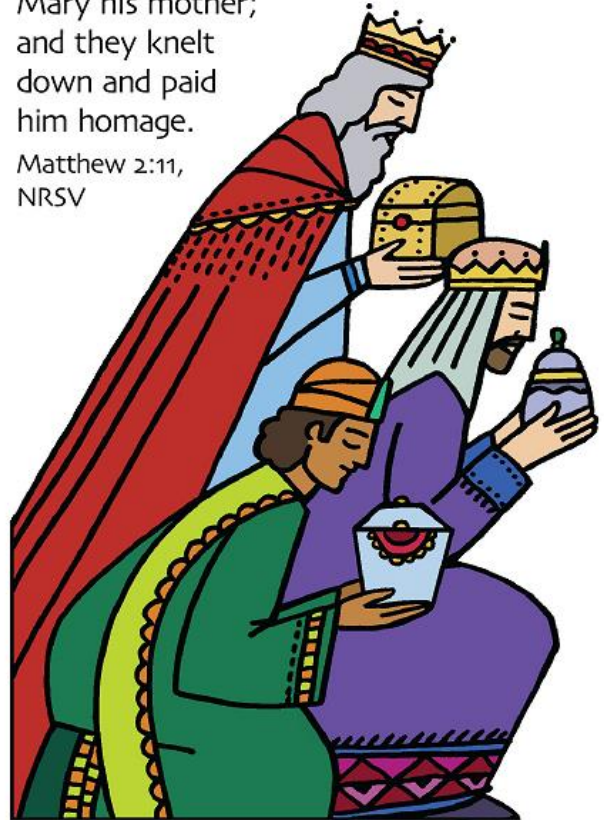
shalom - salaam - salem - peace

A Reconciling in Christ Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Celebrating the Epiphany of Our Lord

*January 7, 2024
9:30 AM*

On entering the house,
they saw the child with
Mary his mother;
and they knelt
down and paid
him homage.
Matthew 2:11,
NRSV



The Reverend Marjo Anderson, Pastor
marjoanderson@aol.com
203-982-3441 (cell)

Karl Kraft, Office Manager
salemsec123@sbcglobal.net

3160 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604
Telephone: 203-336-3300;

www.salembridgeport.org
www.facebook.com/salembridgeport
YouTube – Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport CT

Welcome

We want you to feel safe so please know that we have 3 units of the best air cleaner on the market in the sanctuary. (A big thank you to Bill Winter for getting our 3rd one repaired!). There is also one running in the lounge for when we have worship, coffee hour, or adult forums there. Also, you are most welcome to wear a mask at worship if you'd like.

The feast of the Epiphany (“manifestation” or “revelation”) of Our Lord concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

The season of Epiphany begins on the 12th night of Christmas (the eve of January 6th) and continues through the Sunday prior to Ash Wednesday. It centers around 3 festivals, the Epiphany of Our Lord, when it was revealed to 3 kings from the East that the baby Jesus was the long-awaited King of the Jews, the Baptism of Our Lord, when it was revealed at Jesus’ baptism that he was God’s beloved Son, and the Transfiguration of Our Lord, when it was revealed to Peter, James, and John that Jesus was God’s beloved Son.

Please note that Pastor Marjo has prepared an Epiphany House Blessing take-home insert for you so that you may bless your home in this New Year.

Upcoming services at our regular time include:

Sunday Jan 14 – The Baptism of Our Lord

Sundays Jan 21, Jan 28, & Feb 4 – Sundays after Epiphany

Sunday February 11 – The Transfiguration of Our Lord

Wednesday Feb 14 – Ash Wednesday at Our Saviour’s Lutheran, 160 Hill Farm Rd., Ffd

It’s a brand new year and time for new year’s resolutions! So we encourage you to resolve to grow in your relationship with God. And what better way than through talking to God and listening to God? That’s exactly what happens when we pray and read & study scripture. We can do those things on our own, of course, but when we do them together it’s far more impactful – kind of like addition and multiplication. Praying and studying on our own is like adding 4 + 4 which gives you 8, but praying and studying together is like multiplying 4 x 4 which gives you 16. Certainly, we are “better together”.

And so we invite you to join us for:

***prayer on our conference line at 681-999-0232, using access code 673980#, at noon Mon-Fri.**

You can pray silently & anonymously, ask for particular prayers, or offer your own;

***our weekly prayer gathering on Zoom, Wednesdays at noon, at this link:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82882777326?pwd=VCtObFRPOGI3cTR3elI2ZmtiZEpadz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82882777326?pwd=VCtObFRPOGI3cTR3elI2ZmtiZEpadz09;); and

***Bible Study 6:30-7:25** on zoom as we pick up our study of Romans with chapter 8 at this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89119212353?pwd=WFdhU3ZaL1BUb2syZmdzREdTZVpsdz09>

If you cannot access zoom just let us know and you can join one of us via speakerphone.

Gathering

GATHERING MUSIC There Shall a Star from Jacob Come Forth

There shall a Star from Jacob come forth,
And a sceptre from Israel rise up,
And dash in pieces princes and nations.

As bright the star of morning gleams,
So Jesus sheddeth glorious beams
Of light and consolation!
Thy Word, O LORD, radiance darting,
Truth imparting, gives salvation;
Thine be praise and adoration!

Words: Original German text compiled by Christian Charles Josias von Bunsen
Music: There Shall a Star from Jacob Come | Félix Mendelssohn

Performance # 1 arr. Sanders, by the Indianapolis Men's Chorus
Videography Zach Rosing Productions, Recorded at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church
Indianapolis, IN, 12/15/13
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZwuI0swkqA> [5:05]

Performance # 2 by the Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew,
Wilmington, DE,
David Christopher, organist and music director, 12/12/16
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmitaJfCzow> [5:17]

Please note that here we go live on Facebook.

WELCOME

Welcome in the name of the God who spoke Light into being,
in the name of Jesus, the Light of the World,
and in the name of the Spirit who enlightens our hearts and minds!

It is so good to be here!

Thank you for joining us today! Thank you, those of you who are here in person with us!
And thank you, those of you out there in cyber space, wherever – and whenever! – you are!

For those of you who don't know me,
I'm Pastor Marjo Anderson of Salem Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, CT in the US.

To find out more about our ministry or to contact us,
you can go to our website, SalemBridgeport.org, to our Facebook page, SalemBridgeport,
and to our YouTube channel, Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport CT.

Links to our donate page and worship bulletin –
which has both the order of worship and announcements – as well as other resources
are included on our website at SalemBridgeport.org/Live.

Today we enter the season of Epiphany which means “revelation”,
by celebrating the Epiphany of Our Lord, when it was revealed to 3 kings from the East
that the baby Jesus was the long-awaited King of the Jews.

Next Sunday we will celebrate the 2nd festival in the season of Epiphany,
the Baptism of Our Lord, when it was revealed at Jesus' baptism that he was God's beloved Son.
The season will conclude on February 11th with the third great festival,
the Transfiguration of Our Lord.

Today please stay for an adult forum regarding the possibility
of distributing some of Salem's cash assets through a foundation over a period of years.

We invite you to join or regular weekly activities:
our Monday-Friday noon prayer on our conference line,
our Wednesday weekly prayer at noon on zoom,
and our Wednesday evening Bible study at 7:00 on zoom,
as well as the Anti-Racism Accountability Group on zoom at 4:00 on Mondays.

I'll be away at a Prayer Summit on Friday and Saturday this week.
Should you need emergency pastoral care, please contact the church office.

For more details on these announcements or to hear about other upcoming events
please see our worship bulletin at SalemBridgeport.org/Live.

Any other announcements? prayer requests? God-sightings?

Then let's begin our worship with prayer:

Gracious God, you are the sun of righteousness, our light in the darkness, our bright morning-star!
You made all that exists and yet you care for the humblest of human beings.

Today, as we worship, we ask that you would enlighten our minds,
that you would lighten our spirits, and that you would shine in our hearts,
that all might come to know your boundless power and your infinite love.

We ask this in Jesus' name and by the power of the Spirit. Amen

OPENING CAROL

The First Noel

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 300)*

**The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

**And by the light of that same star three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

**This star drew near to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

**Then entered in those wise men three, full rev'rently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

**Then let us all with one accord Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
That hath made heaven and earth of naught
And with his blood mankind hath bought
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel Born is the King of Israel**

*Text: based on Matthew 2:1-12, Luke 2:8-11, English traditional; Meter Irregular
Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional, arr. John Stainer, 1840-1901
Text and Music are in the Public Domain.*

*Performance by Christmas Songs and Carols - Love to Sing, 11/21/13
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5uud2fjtoo> [5:03]*

Word

Please be seated.

A READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come!

And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you!

For darkness shall cover the earth,

and thick darkness the peoples;

but YHWH will arise upon you,

and God's glory will appear over you.

Nations shall come to your light,

and kings and queens to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around;

they all gather together, they come to you;

your sons shall come from far away,

and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant!

Your heart shall thrill and rejoice!

because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,

the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

A multitude of camels shall cover you,

the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,

and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD!

Word of God! Word of Life!

Thanks be to God!

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS: Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;
that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;
that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.

Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.

May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.

Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.

In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute,
and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.

May all kings bow down before him,
and all the nations do him service.

For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress,
the oppressed, and those who have no helper.

He has compassion on the lowly and poor,
and preserves the lives of the needy.

From oppression and violence he redeems their lives,
and precious is their blood in his sight.

Word of God! Word of Life!

Thanks be to God!

A READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT: Ephesians 3:1-12

This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — for surely you have already heard of the commission of God’s grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God’s grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Word of God! Word of Life! **Thanks be to God!**

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS: Matthew 2:1-12 *You may stand if you so desire.*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage”. When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage”. When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Word of God! Word of Life! **Thanks be to God!**

You may stand if you so desire.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR EPIPHANY

Let us affirm our faith together.

**You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.**

**You, O God, are infinitely generous, good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved your love for us in Jesus Christ,
who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.**

**You, O God, are Holy Spirit
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.
You are our God. We worship you**

The Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia

Taken from A New Zealand Prayer Book, The Church of the Province of New Zealand, p 481.

https://prodigal.typepad.com/prodigal_kiwi/2011/06/sunday-an-affirmation-of-faith.html

PURPOSE STATEMENT

As members and friends of Salem Church, let us remind ourselves who we are:

We are a community of Christian disciples called by the Holy Spirit.

**In response to God's transforming love, we share our joy through praise and service,
that we may encounter God, build relationships, and change lives.**

May it be so!

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people,
we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

So they can be heard online, these petitions will be offered by the leaders at the microphones.

Humble the hearts of your faithful people,
that we seek to be servants of your gospel and witnesses to your mysteries.
Give us boldness in faith, that we make the good news of Christ's birth known to all people.
We pray for our mission partners, especially today for the Ephraim French 7th Day Adventist Church
and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land;
We pray for Fairchild Wheeler High School and all schools
that they be free of violence and disruptive behavioral challenges;
and we pray for Salem members & their families, especially those celebrating birthdays this week:
Barbro Lund
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Establish justice on earth for all its inhabitants.
Lead us to protect fragile ecosystems and endangered species.
Empower the work of all who research, engineer, and make accessible
alternative and renewable sources of energy. Make us careful stewards of your creation.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Nations shall come to your light and kings to your dawning.
Remove corruption and fear from the hearts of leaders and authorities.
Lead governments to expand policies and resources that care for refugees and all migrants.
Strengthen the work of resettlement agencies, especially Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Move us to defend the cause of all who are in need, all facing poverty, & all who are oppressed.
Come quickly to those who feel that their lives and livelihoods are fragile.
Bring comfort, strength & hope to all in need, especially Austin, Barbro, Barry, Bob, Boni, Bud,
Christopher, Cindy, Cliffy, Clyde, Dave, David, Dennis, Diane, Dolores, Dorothy, Francesca, Hans,
Ivy, Janice, Jasmina, Jeanette, Jeff, Jessica, Joe, Joey, John, Karen, Kevin, Lynn, Marija, Pastor Marjo,
Mary Lou, Melvin Jr, Melvin Sr, MJ, Natalie, Pastor Paul, Pastor Paula, Sara, Sasha, VL,
& all we name in our hearts & on our lips.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

As the magi offered gifts to the Christ child, empower us to give generously.
Prosper the work of ministry partnerships in our community,
especially those that go beyond providing social services to working for social justice,
and that also pass on the faith to the next generation.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You have redeemed the lives of your faithful departed.
Through the love of Christ, gather us into one body with them,
and reveal to us the mystery hidden for ages in the One who created all things.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You are invited to offer your own prayer petition at this time, either silently or aloud.

Abide with us, O God of mercy, & receive our prayers according to your abundant grace. **Amen**

Thanksgiving

OFFERING PRAYER

Jesus, you said, “Give and it will be given to you...
for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

**Give us the confidence to cheerfully give
our tithes and offerings of time, talent and treasure to your work in this place,
trusting that you will provide abundantly for all our needs.
We pray this in the power of your Spirit. Amen**



OFFERING INVITATION

Please be seated.

In response to God’s grace, it is our joy to return to God our tithes and offerings.
We are grateful for your generosity, which not only is an exercise of and witness to your faith,
but which funds our ministry together here at Salem.

If you are a member of another congregation,
we encourage you to give to your home congregation first,
but invite you to contribute to our ministry also
so that we can continue to take our worship online
as a witness to the power and love of the amazing God we serve.
Simply go to the menu on our website at SalemBridgeport.org and click “donate”
or scan the QR code here in our Sunday worship program
with a QR reader on your smart phone which will take you to that page.

OFFERTORY HYMN **Brightest and Best of the Stars**

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Lutheran Book of Worship # 84)*

- 1 Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid.
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant redeemer is laid.**
- 2 Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining;
low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
angels adore him in slumber reclining,
maker and monarch and savior of all.**
- 3 Shall we then yield him, in costly devotion,
odors of Edom, and off'rings divine,
gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
myrrh from the forest and gold from the mine?**
- 4 Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
vainly with gifts would his favor secure;
richer by far is the heart's adoration,
dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.**
- 5 Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid.
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant redeemer is laid.**

Text: Matthew 2:1-12; Reginald Herber, 1783-1826, alt.; Meter 11 10 11 10

Music: MORNING STAR; James P. Harding, 1850-1911, adapt.

The Text, Music & Arrangement are in the Public Domain

Performance by Choir of Trinity Church, Swarthmore, PA,

James Smith, Director of Music

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wQnHRW0nX0> [3:47]

Sending

Please be seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Sunday we will celebrate the 2nd festival in the season of Epiphany, the Baptism of Our Lord, when it was revealed at Jesus' baptism that he was God's beloved Son. The season will conclude on February 11th with the third great festival, the Transfiguration of Our Lord.

Today please stay for an adult forum regarding the possibility of distributing some of Salem's cash assets through a foundation over a period of years.

We invite you to join or regular weekly activities:

our Monday-Friday noon prayer on our conference line,
our Wednesday weekly prayer at noon on zoom,
and our Wednesday evening Bible study at 7:00 on zoom,
as well as the Anti-Racism Accountability Group on zoom at 4:00 on Mondays.

I'll be away at a Prayer Summit on Friday and Saturday this week.

Should you need emergency pastoral care, please contact the church office.

For more details on these announcements or to hear about other upcoming events please see our worship bulletin at SalemBridgeport.org/Live.

THANK YOU

Before we end the live-streamed portion of our worship,

I want to especially thank those of you out there in cyberspace who have worshipped with us. I hope you will join us again.

If you'd like to know more, or if you'd like to talk or pray with me, you can reach her through Salem's website or Facebook page.

BLESSING

As we say good-bye to our online worshippers,

I'd like to offer to all who are worshipping with us, both in-person and in cyberspace this blessing based on today's 1st reading from the book of the prophet, Isaiah, chapter 60:

Arise, shine; for your light has come and God's glory has risen upon you!

Lift up your eyes and you shall see and be radiant!

Your heart shall rejoice because abundance is poured out on you, as you proclaim the greatness of our God!

Here ends our Facebook live stream.

Meal & Dismissal

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

You may stand if you so desire and make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
who Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps us in the one true faith. **Amen**

God's love is infinite and unconditional.

As individuals we have only to accept it and live in its light. The moment we confess, we are forgiven.
As together we gather for worship, so together we confess our sins as our community,
and together we are forgiven, restored, and made new.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God, we confess:

**that too often we focus on the things we lack,
that too often we are attached to our own personal agendas,
that too often we insist on doing things our own way,
that too often we are oblivious to the needs for justice around us.**

God who has heard our confession both forgives and forgets every failing. **Amen!**

Loving God, teach us:

**to see your amazing abundance rather than any lack,
to listen more - to you and to each other - and to talk less,
to trust in your power and not our own,
to build relationships with those who are not like us.**

God who has given us the will to do these things ✝ graciously gives us the power to perform them.
Amen!

COMMUNION

Please be seated.

God be with you!

And also with you!

Open your hearts!

We open them to God and one another!

Let us give thanks to the God of all!

It is right to give God thanks & praise!

In the night in which he was betrayed....

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let these gifts to us be blessed.

Blessed be God, who is our Bread; may all the world be clothed and fed. Amen

The body of Christ given for you and the blood of Christ shed for you.

*During communion, you may take your communion elements during worship
or hold on to your kit until you get home.*

If you take the elements inside the church, open the kit over the pew to prevent spilling on the carpet.

After the service, please dispose of your own kit either in a waste receptacle at church or at home.

The body & blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you & keep you in divine grace! **Amen**

SENDING HYMN I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 815)*

**I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.
God gave the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.**

**In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.**

**I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path and show me the way to the Father.**

**In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.**

**I'm looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race, we shall know the joy of Jesus.**

**In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.**

*Text: based on John 12.46, Ephesians 5.8-14, 1 John 1, 5, Revelation 21.23;
by Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934; Meter 10 7 10 8 and refrain*

Tune: HOUSTON, Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934;

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*Performance by First-Plymouth Church Lincoln Nebraska on 08/19/18,
sung by the congregation and men of the Plymouth Choir,
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZ78sCBWIrQ> [4:33]*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace,
and let your light so shine that the world might be drawn to worship Jesus!

Thanks be to God!

PEACE

As Christ reconciles us with God,
let us be reconciled with each other by sharing the peace of the Lord!
The peace of the Lord be with you always!
And also with you!
Please share that peace!!

POSTLUDE

We Fall Down

Verse **We fall down We lay our crowns At the feet of Jesus
The greatness of mercy and love At the feet of Jesus**

Chorus **And we cry holy holy holy And we cry holy holy holy
And we cry holy holy holy is the Lamb**

CCLI Song # 2437367 by Chris Tomlin

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Performance by Calvary Chapel Petaluma Music, 12/31/20

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znKDfiZqdPg> [4:13]

CREDITS

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Announcements

Save the dates! A Special Congregational Meeting was held on 10/29 at which the congregation voted to close and so we have signed a covenant with the synod that commits us to a specified process of dissolution which will begin in January. There are practical and legal procedures which must be followed, and as the synod leads us through these, we ask your patience and your prayers. **Today following worship we will have an adult forum to discuss the possibility of distributing some or all of our financial assets via a foundation.** *In keeping with the contract we signed, we will NOT be discussing what 501c3 organizations we might wish to support with a legacy gift.* That will be discussed at **the next congregational meeting which will be conducted by Pastor Maria Hammons, in person on January 14th following worship.**

As Salem continues its ministry through April, expenses continue as well. If we are to give the maximum amount of our assets, we are depending on YOU to fulfill your pledge for this year and to continue your giving in 2024. While we can cover expenses from our endowment, we would much rather be able to celebrate the commitment and generosity of each and every one of our members!

As important as your financial contributions are, please remember that YOU are even more important than your money! Showing up for prayer, Bible study, Salem activities, and ecumenical events – either in person or on zoom or on conference calls – is just as impactful and sometimes more impactful than writing a check, so please think about that when you are invited to participate in events listed in these announcement pages!

You are invited to join the Anti-Racism Accountability Group hosted by Pastor Marjo and Jeanette Harris on Mondays 4:00-5:00 on zoom. The group began in the fall of 2020 as a response of our Southern CT Lutheran pastors to the murder of George Floyd, but has grown into a diverse group that includes people who are White and Black, Christian, Jewish, Unitarian, and Rastafarian, clergy and lay, and from CT, MA, and DE. Some come every week while others drop in as their schedule permits. The link is on Salem's calendar, so please drop in and see what God is doing to help us fulfill our baptismal call to work for justice!

Besides our Bible study on Wednesdays at 7:00-8:00 on zoom, you have another opportunity for Bible Study on zoom as well on Tuesday evenings 7:30-8:30. This group, led by Pastor Rip Hoffman, looks at the gospel for the coming Sunday. For the link, contact Pastor Marjo or Pastor Hoffman.

You are invited to join members of the New England Synod on the first Monday and third Thursday of the month 7:15-7:45ish on zoom as we undergird the anti-racism work of our synod with prayer. *The next date is January 18th.* The link is on Salem's calendar.

Jeanette "Momma J" Harris & Genesis Gospel Café invite you to their monthly Inner-View Chat & Chew, which is usually held on the third Saturday of the month, sometimes on zoom and sometimes in person. **For information on the January meeting, currently scheduled for 01/20, contact Jeanette at 203-366-6778.**

Like our prayer breakfasts, a lunch is held each month to build relationships among Lutheran and other congregations in our area at noon at Old Towne Restaurant in Trumbull. **The upcoming dates are January 27, February 24 and March 23.** If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Bruce Tomasko, bltomasko@yahoo.com.

Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County – Building Dreams in Fairfield – Your Gift Matched Dollar-for-Dollar – Still Time to Give! There is still time to make the dream of homeownership in the town of Fairfield possible for four families! We need to raise \$800,000 to build these homes in the Tunxis Hill neighborhood located at 240-246 Greenfield Street. The Elizabeth and Joseph Massoud Family Foundation and an anonymous Fairfield family are offering a dollar-for-dollar match for donations up to \$400,000. If Habitat CFC can raise \$400,000 through our Annual Appeal, the money will be matched, and we will have the funds needed to complete the Fairfield homes! Please donate today to support our goal to help four low-income, working families achieve their dream of home ownership in the town of Fairfield! Give online! Scan the QR code or visit habitatcfc.org/donate or mail a check to 1542 Barnum Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06610. For more info, contact us at 203-333-2642 (phone) or 203-333-2650 (fax) or www.habitatcfc.org. If you've recently given please know we appreciate your gift.

Thank you for contributing to our collection of hats, scarves, gloves, and mittens for our "Mitten Tree"!

Thank you for your contributions to Salem's Food Assistance Fund! While we may not have our own food pantry anymore, some of our members and others are still in need of food and Pastor Marjo distributes \$25 stop & shop cards as needed, requested and as available. We encourage you to donate to Salem's food assistance fund. You can give using the envelopes found in your quarterly envelope packet or you can put a check in the donation box at Salem marked "food assistance." In addition, you may send a check to the office or drop it in church mailbox or give it or cash to Pastor Marjo.

If you'd like to do more than feed people, you can also contribute to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund which is used to help members who have other financial needs. If you have financial needs, please contact Pastor Marjo or Parish Nurse Carol Lansing.

We are grateful to God for answering our prayers that there would once again be a food pantry in this building. Here's how it happened! While the Ephraim French Seventh Day Adventist Church that purchased the building from us wanted very much to start a food pantry, they were unable to get permission from CT Food Share who said there were too many pantries in the area. They and we kept praying. Meanwhile a food pantry to which members of our congregation used to deliver food closed, and they began delivering to the Bishop Jean Williams Food Pantry which operated out of a church on Worth St. Three years ago that church building was sold and purchased by Transforming Lives Church. While they knew that as their congregation grew they would eventually need all of the building, they agreed to allow the food pantry to stay for three years. As the end of that time period approached, the Bishop Jean Williams Food Pantry needed a new space. That's when we discovered how God had been using Salem to be an answer to our own prayers and those of the Ephraim French Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Bishop Jean Williams Food Pantry! The pantry is now renting space from the SDA church right here at 3160 Park Avenue! Because of how God has worked, over 500 families came by to pick up food the week of Thanksgiving, and food was delivered to an additional 200 families! Thanks be to God!

Do you want to talk or pray with your pastor? Well, just like you call your doctor or dentist to schedule an annual wellness visit or a visit to deal with a particular issue, you can contact Pastor Marjo via text or phone at 203-982-3441, or through Office Manager Karl Kraft via text at 203-336-3300 or email at salemsec123@sbcglobal.net . Our bodies are intimately connected with our minds and hearts and spirits, so the health of one part impacts the health of the other parts.

1. Get your annual “spiritual” – just the way you get your annual physical.

Call or text Pastor Marjo at 203-982-3441 to arrange a time to discuss how you are, and let her know how she can pray for you.

Or if you prefer to use email to set something up, send your email to salemsec123@sbcglobal.net.

2. Call in to our prayer line at 681-999-0232, using access code 673980#, at noon Mon-Fri for prayer. You can pray silently & anonymously, ask for particular prayers, or offer your own.

OR join our weekly prayer gathering on Zoom, Wednesdays at noon, at this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82882777326?pwd=VCtObFRPOGI3cTR3elI2ZmtiZEpadz09>

3. Begin a fast or establish a new healthier habit.

4. Commit yourself to some new work of charity and one new work of justice.

If you're wondering what the difference is, it's like this.

If people are hungry and you give them fish, that's CHARITY.

If people are hungry and you teach them to fish, that's EMPOWERMENT.

If people are hungry and you work to change laws so that they receive high enough wages from their jobs so they can afford to buy fish, that's JUSTICE.

If you're not sure how to “do justice” as God commands through the Prophet Micah (6:8), Pastor Marjo can offer suggestions.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Adrian of Canterbury, teacher, died around 710

Tuesday, January 9, 2024

African by birth, Adrian (or Hadrian) worked with Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury, in developing the church in England.

He was director of a school at which church leaders were trained.

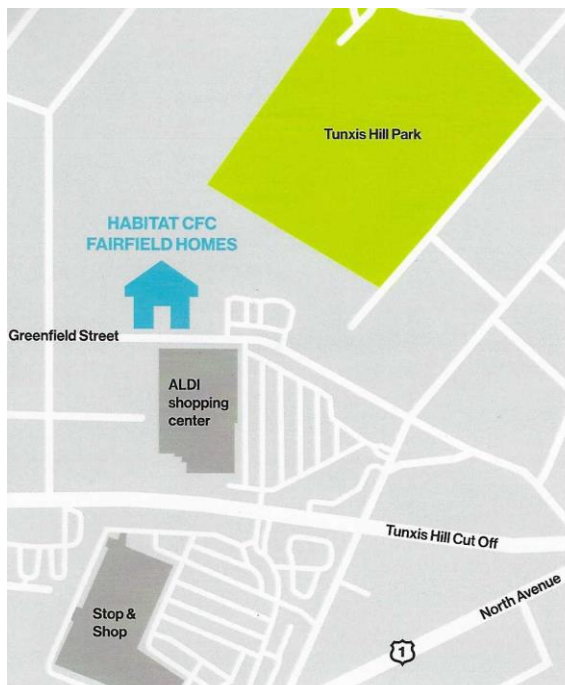


Building Dreams in Fairfield

Your Gift Matched Dollar-for-Dollar!



Still time to give!

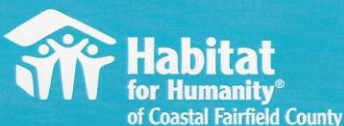


There is still time to make the dream of homeownership in the Town of Fairfield possible for four families!

We need to raise **\$800,000** to build these homes in the Tunxis Hill neighborhood located at 240-246 Greenfield Street. **The Elizabeth and Joseph Massoud Family Foundation** and an anonymous **Fairfield family** are offering a **dollar-for-dollar match for donations up to \$400,000!** If Habitat CFC can raise \$400,000 through our Annual Appeal, the money will be matched, and we will have the funds needed to complete the Fairfield homes! Please donate **TODAY** to support our goal to help four low-income, working families achieve their dream of homeownership in the Town of Fairfield!

Give Online! Scan the QR code or visit habitatcfc.org/donate.

If you've recently given, please know we appreciate your gift.



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