



January 2020

the  
SPIRIT

# Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

*A Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Congregation*

## All Things NEW (Again and Again!)

*"...See, I am making all things new....these words are trustworthy and true." [Revelation 21:5]*

It's a new year! And God is already at work doing a new thing!

The truth is that God is ALWAYS doing a new thing. The God whom we proclaim is One who not only performs acts of creation, but whose very nature is creation itself. God is always creating and God's creation – from a blade of grass to a human being to a star – is always in process – never standing still and never staying the same, but always, always growing and changing.

Back in the 1950s the world had changed. World War II was over, and the GI bill provided returning veterans with educational opportunities many had only dreamed of before. These (mostly) men married and the couples had children, and good incomes along with the affordability of the automobile allowed many families to move out of the cities into the newly developing suburbs. Church was still the primary place of social connection, and as families grew, so did church attendance.

Salem was part of this trend, and the congregation's swelling numbers could no longer be contained within the walls of its red brick building on lower Park Avenue. Neither was there room for all the cars. And so Salem, like so many other congregations sold their building and purchased property in the newly developing suburban landscape. But unlike most congregations, Salem did not erect a traditional building but went with a design that was ahead of its time, with a design that defied tradition and with technology that was cutting edge.

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That building has served us well for over 60 years, but during those 60 years, God's creation has continued to change and transform. In American culture a person's identity used to be forged primarily by family and faith. Today, identities are shaped primarily by the culture around us – it's all

about making sure that we – and our children – have "the good life", as defined economically and socially. Mainline Protestantism is on the decline with the ELCA expected to be down from over 5 million in 1988 to a mere 67,000 in 2041.

Many lament the fact that the Christian Church is dying, but the central message of the Christian faith has always been that out of death God brings new life. By many metrics, Salem may look like it's dying, but that's simply an illusion born of fear. We still have over half a million in our endowment and our building and property are a multi-million asset. The truth is that God is already at work making us new and if we do what God calls us to do, we will not only survive but will lead the way into a whole new era of Christianity, just as we did back in the 1950s.

The Church that God is building is going to be one that none of us can yet envision in full – except that it will likely be much closer to that of the early church, one in which the focus is not on maintaining the institution but on encountering the power and love of the living God – for when that power and love is poured into our hearts, something inside of us is changed. We are filled with a peace that passes understanding, a joy that bubbles up in an everlasting spring, and a love that impels us to reach out to share with others the abundant life Jesus promised. That love is what carries on the work of Jesus, breaking down barriers – like race and class and creed – that exist everywhere else in our world, but have no place in the church.

There is very little that is certain about this coming year, very little that we can predict, and even less that we can control. But this we can count on: as long as we do what God has called us to do, God will continue to give us the resources we need to do it. And what we are called to do is to put our trust, not in our own understanding, nor in each other, nor in our bank account, but in God and God alone. We may not know what's coming, or where we're going, but we know that if we walk with God, we will end up exactly where we're supposed to be. So in the meantime, take a deep breath, relax, and get ready to enjoy the adventure!

Blessings abundant!

*Pastor Marjo*

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

## SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

3160 Park Avenue  
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604  
Phone (203) 336-3300 ▪ Fax (203) 336-8813

Website - [www.salembridgeport.org](http://www.salembridgeport.org)

Facebook - [www.facebook.com/SalemBridgeport/](http://www.facebook.com/SalemBridgeport/)

### Church Office Hours

Monday to Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

### Worship Services

9:30am Traditional Worship

### Salem's Staff

The Rev. Marjo Anderson, Pastor  
Cell Phone (203) 982-3441  
[marjoanderson@aol.com](mailto:marjoanderson@aol.com)

Karl Kraft, Office Manager  
Office Phone (203) 336-3300  
[salemsec123@sbcglobal.net](mailto:salemsec123@sbcglobal.net)

Jennifer Reyes, Sexton  
Pablo, Cruz, Sexton  
Office Phone (203) 336-3300, ext. 10

## LEADERSHIP AT SALEM

### COUNCIL

Marjo Anderson, Pastor – [marjoanderson@aol.com](mailto:marjoanderson@aol.com)  
Frank Dukenski, President – [fduzenski@aol.com](mailto:fduzenski@aol.com)  
Ray Anderson, Vice-President – [andersray4@gmail.com](mailto:andersray4@gmail.com)  
Nancy Headford, Secretary – [nancy9881@att.net](mailto:nancy9881@att.net)  
Rich Kenyon, Treasurer – [rich@kenyonbusiness.com](mailto:rich@kenyonbusiness.com)  
Katie Adams – [keadams333@gmail.com](mailto:keadams333@gmail.com)  
Liz Bales – [the2bales@gmail.com](mailto:the2bales@gmail.com)  
Sandra Brown – [sjbrown@snet.net](mailto:sjbrown@snet.net)  
Steve Kuczo, Staff Support – [skuczo@aol.com](mailto:skuczo@aol.com)  
Evan Lansing  
Emily Sokoloski – [emilysokoloski@gmail.com](mailto:emilysokoloski@gmail.com)  
Diane Tomasko – [dtomasko01@yahoo.com](mailto:dtomasko01@yahoo.com)  
Bill Winter, Property – [wjwinter@optonline.net](mailto:wjwinter@optonline.net)

### SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE

Pastor Marjo Anderson – [marjoanderson@aol.com](mailto:marjoanderson@aol.com)  
Frank Dukenski – [fduzenski@aol.com](mailto:fduzenski@aol.com)  
Ray Anderson – [andersray4@gmail.com](mailto:andersray4@gmail.com)  
Liz Bales – [the2bales@gmail.com](mailto:the2bales@gmail.com)  
Sandra Brown – [sjbrown@snet.net](mailto:sjbrown@snet.net)  
John Bryk – [jbryk@znclaw.com](mailto:jbryk@znclaw.com)  
Richard Lansing – [rlansing@optonline.net](mailto:rlansing@optonline.net)  
Jean Larson – [tjcklarson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tjcklarson@sbcglobal.net)  
Bruce Tomasko – [bltomasko@yahoo.com](mailto:bltomasko@yahoo.com)

### LIGHT –

Leaders Inviting Growth through Hope for Tomorrow

### Source Team:

Pastor Marjo Anderson – [marjoanderson@aol.com](mailto:marjoanderson@aol.com)  
Ray Lansing – [raylansing@yahoo.com](mailto:raylansing@yahoo.com)  
Bill Winter – [wjwinter@optonline.net](mailto:wjwinter@optonline.net)  
Tom Larson – [tjcklarson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tjcklarson@sbcglobal.net)

### Reflection Team:

Katie Adams – [keadams333@gmail.com](mailto:keadams333@gmail.com)  
Jean Larson – [tjcklarson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tjcklarson@sbcglobal.net)  
Frank Dukenski – [fduzenski@aol.com](mailto:fduzenski@aol.com)  
Joel Hintz – [brondle@aol.com](mailto:brondle@aol.com)

**Newsletter deadline is the 15th of each month  
unless otherwise noted in the monthly  
calendar.**

**Next deadline date is **January 15th** for the  
**February issue!****

**Email submissions to  
[salemsec123@sbcglobal.net](mailto:salemsec123@sbcglobal.net)**



# January 2020 Salem Lutheran Church



SUN



MON



TUE

WED

Jan 1

Office Closed - New Year's Day

THU

2

FRI

3

4pm Musical Theatre Afterschool Camp

SAT

4

5

9:30am Worship  
10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church  
12:30pm New Directions Ministries  
6:30pm SLAA - CR

6

7pm Scouts - CR

7

9:30am Pastors' Text Study  
1pm Calumet interviews - lounge  
6pm Stewardship  
7pm STEPP Group - CR

8

8:30am Pantry Setup  
9:30am Bible Study

9

8:30am Pantry Setup  
4pm Food Pantry  
7:30pm Choir

10

4pm Musical Theatre Afterschool Camp

11

8am PLTI - Lounge  
8:30am Gather Together - Human Trafficking

12

9:30am Worship  
10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church  
10:45am Adult Forum - Verse 4  
12:30pm New Directions Ministries  
6:30pm SLAA - CR

13

6:30pm Executive Committee  
6:30pm Social Ministry  
7pm Council  
7pm Scouts - CR

14

9:30am Pastors' Text Study  
7pm STEPP Group - CR

15

Golden Hill Supper  
9:30am Bible Study

16

7:30pm Choir

17

4pm Musical Theatre Afterschool Camp

18

8am Men's Breakfast - DeGreening  
11am Inner-View Chat n Chew  
6pm NDM - Hall Rental

19

9:30am Worship  
10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church  
10:45am Adult Forum - 2020 Budget  
12:30pm New Directions Ministries  
6:30pm SLAA - CR

20

Office Closed - MLK Day  
6:30pm Finance Committee  
7pm Scouts - CR

21

9:30am Pastors' Text Study  
6pm CCGB Delegate Meeting  
7pm STEPP Group - CR

22

8:30am Pantry Setup  
9:30am Bible Study

23

8:30am Pantry Setup  
4pm Food Pantry  
7:30pm Choir

24

4pm Musical Theatre Afterschool Camp

25

26

9:30am Worship  
10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church  
10:45am Adult Forum  
3pm Workcamp 2021 Informational Meeting  
6:30pm SLAA - CR

27

7pm Scouts - CR

28

9:30am Pastors' Text Study  
7pm STEPP Group - CR

29

9:30am Bible Study

30

7:30pm Choir

31

4pm Musical Theatre Afterschool Camp





# Worship Assistants

## SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

January 2020

	Jan 5	Jan 12	Jan 19	Jan 26
Assisting Minister				
Lector/Communion Minister				
Altar Prep Team	Anita Papp Cindy Roberts	Bob Reichelt Chris Wolff	Bob Reichelt Chris Wolff	Sandra Brown Emily Sokoloski
Ushers	Rich & Carol Lansing	Ray & Eileen Anderson	Mike Caragol Tom Larson	Joe Bales John Bryk
Flowers Given By	Nancy Headford		Nancy Headford	Sandra Brown
Coffee Hour				Murphy family
Tellers	Sandra Brown Diane Tomasko	Liz Bales Frank Dukenski	Steve Kuczo Bill Winter	Ray Anderson Dale Danowski



Calling all coffee hour hosts. PLEASE contact the church office to secure a date for coffee hour. Coffee hour is a wonderful tradition at Salem. It gives all of us a chance for fellowship among our members. Thank you for your continued support. Contact the office at (203) 336-3300, or email [salemsec123@sbcglobal.net](mailto:salemsec123@sbcglobal.net).

Haley Danowski.....	2
Iris Murphy.....	3
Joseph Jambriska .....	3
Reinhardt Lange.....	3
David Larson .....	5
Marjorie Shapleigh .....	7
Elissa Velez.....	9
Allison Bryk.....	11
Barbro Lund.....	11
Kristin Schulz.....	21
Tiffany Claus .....	24
Eliana Llanos.....	24
Michael Lange .....	27
Elizabeth Bales.....	28
Jeff Johnson.....	29
Christiane Wolff .....	31



2020  
Blood Pressure  
Screening Dates

Jan 20	Jul tba
Feb 2	Aug tba
Mar 8	Sep 13
Apr 5	Oct 4
May 3	Nov 8
Jun 7	Dec 6



"I suspected it was done that way."

**Salem Book Club** meets on the first Tuesday at noon in the Salem Lounge. The book club will not meet in January. Upcoming selections are:

Feb. 4th: **Carnegie's Maid** by Marie Benedict,  
Mar 3rd: **The Perfume Collector** by Kathleen Tessaro,  
April 7th: **The Lost Girls of Paris** by Pam Jenoff.

New members and guests are welcome to join us February 4th. Please bring your lunch.



The following people have asked for healing, help, guidance or comfort.

Joan B	Peter K
Marge S	Bobby W
Barbara B	Anna
Sam B	Barbara
Erick D	James S
Grace D	Sarah R
Hannah & Joseph	Brooks A
Bob H	Angie
Dennis H	Liz F.
Sylvitha	Hazel P
Jay	Katherine P
Jinny L	
Mike R	
Jane M	
Jana B	
William S	
Daphne B	





# Celebrate Salem!

Our stewardship campaign has been celebrating Salem by providing a snapshot of some of the activities in the Salem community. If you haven't returned your pledge, there are pledge cards available in the Gathering Space. It is through your contributions that we can host these activities.

Below is the talk given by Alexander Valbuena of Troop 103 on November 3, 2019

A scout is reverent. The twelfth and final point of the scout law, and perhaps the most important. But why is that, why is it that a scout places his duty to God so highly on his list of chores? Well the answer may be simpler than you think, that the answer is that God's will and support is one of the most important things that can be had. The will of God is supreme and him being all knowing, it is no wonder why his support is so valued. This is why the scouts and adult leaders at troop 103 are so thankful to God and those who would help facilitate his will, in our case Salem. Because of Salem, the scouts turn themselves into tools of faith and spread good will, making us able to assist others, whether it be through donating our time at the food pantry here or serving the church at the roast beef dinner, I know for a fact that the scouts who I lead are glad to lend a helping hand and fulfill their oath to the scout law and to that previously mentioned twelfth point, a scout is reverent. Why is it important to lend ourselves to faith in what we do? The answer lies in the plan God has for each of us, to spread his good word and show our true colors, those colors being of good Christians and of faith, of kindness and in carrying out our duty to God, which in truth is a duty to others, a duty of selflessness. Salem provides the opportunities needed for the scouts to help others, to end their day after a project of service knowing that they indeed have carried out his will, that they have helped out someone in need and shown their kindness, that they have once again kept the promise they make every Monday night to obey the scout law, in fact right beneath our feet in the room that is lent to us. However we do it, troop 103 strives to assist our community in many ways. One of the scouts' favorite events is the roast beef dinner, which helps to serve the community.

It is about that time of year where the scouts have to prepare for the yearly Churchmen's Roast Beef dinner, where as I'm sure you know, the scouts donate their time to assist in the wonderful event hosted by the church and troop. With the increase in preparation for the event, I also see an increase in energy and excitement amongst the scouts. I start to hear things such as "Alex, is it almost time for the Roast Beef Dinner?" and "I can't wait for the roast beef dinner this year!" This leads me to believe that the scouts enjoy taking their time and going out of their way to help others. And for this I thank Salem for helping to make these boys into better people, to make themselves more willing to assist others. But what change is seen in the scouts? I see a spiritual change in the scouts, where they turn their moral compasses in the right direction, towards God and his will.

I see this change whenever I meet with the scouts. For example, the older scouts take pride and joy in helping the younger scouts learn new skills. My own Assistant Senior Patrol leader, Johnny Wargo, offers himself up to assist the scouts himself, to teach them new skills and to spread his knowledge so that the new scouts may be better than him one day. The young scouts change in a positive way as well. The younger scouts are always in a mood to help. Whenever I am in the midst of a meeting, I constantly get questions from the younger scouts of whether or not I need help. I get them so often that I even asked one time, "Why do you guys want to help so badly?" I got a very simple answer from Julian, who said, "A scout is helpful." These changes in the scouts, these positive strides towards living a life of purpose, I give some credit to Salem, for providing an opportunity to troop 103 to make these boys better, and for directly having an impact on their lives.

Another time the scouts enjoy is whenever we help with the food pantry. The last time we did this was a few months ago, where we helped to unload a truck full of food, organize it, and store it in the pantry and nursery. It proved to be a very physically taxing job, especially among the younger and weaker scouts, but somehow their spirits and wills remained strong. Somehow, the scouts were able to power through, finish the job, and return to their campsite on the hill right outside this church. Their spirits remained strong, knowing that all this work was worth it, that in the end, their momentary suffering would benefit someone in need, someone they knew was suffering more than they were. In this way do the scouts lend their time and stay true to the scout oath and law, and perform their duties by helping here at Salem.

In conclusion, Salem Lutheran Church has had the effect of benefitting the lives of the scouts of troop 103, who spread the will and good word of God through their work and volunteering in the community. With your help and continued support, sponsorship and partnership with Salem has allowed for change in the lives of the young boys who pass through troop 103 and helps to shape and support the community around it. My name is Alexander, and from the bottom of my heart I thank Salem. Thank you.

# We Are Grateful

## After School Music Program

Marjo Anderson (in honor of Walter Ladue baptism)

## Capital Improvements

Al & Dot DeWalt (in memory of Garrie Schulz),

## Food Pantry

Congregation B'nai Israel, Rich & Carol Lansing, Judi Nielsen

## Memorial Donations

Andy & Karen Andrews

Sandra Brown (in memory of Doris Koehler)

Dom & Nancy D'Andrea (in memory of Garrie Schulz and Doris Koehler)



Pastor Anderson,  
Thank you so much  
for doing Walter's  
baptism. Both boys are  
blessed beyond words  
having such a loving  
community around them.  
My experience with Salem  
was amazing and I hope  
my sons have the same  
experience with their  
church. Love, Kristi & Jeff

## Clothes and Toys for the Needy for Christmas 2019

With two Thrivent grants of \$250 each and donations of \$160, toys and clothes from Salem parishioners, we were able to help 34 people from the Greater Bridgeport area. Nineteen children received toys, mittens, and hats. Fifteen adults have new holiday clothes. Merlee Lange, Helen Nordvall, and Carol Lansing shopped for the toys and clothes. Sandra Brown, Helen Nordvall, Merlee Lange, Esther kunin, and Carol Lansing wrapped the gifts. Richard and Carol Lansing delivered the presents.

Salem congratulates member Nick Roberts (and mom Cindy and grandfather Dave Albers!) who was just honored at his Turning Blue ceremony on December 5th. The Turning Blue Ceremony celebrates the day that an infantry soldier-in-training graduates from basic training and receives the blue cord that all infantrymen wear on the arm of their dress uniform. It's the proud symbol the soldier earns for serving in the Army as an infantryman. It's a really special occasion when they earn it! After a few weeks leave at home in December Nick will fly out to his duty station at Fort Campbell in Kentucky.

God bless, Nick! Your church family holds you in prayer!





**FROM THE SOUTHWESTERN CT AREA AGENCY ON AGING**

THESE MAY BE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION IF  
THEY LAST SEVERAL WEEKS.

- Feelings of sadness
- Anxiety or emptiness
- Endless feelings of grief
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Feeling tired all the time, no energy
- Feeling restless, irritable or agitated
- Eating more or less than usual
- Not enjoying activities anymore
- Feeling sick all the time
- Using alcohol or drugs to feel better
- Difficulty concentrating & making decisions
- Not bathing or changing clothes
- Thinking about suicide or death

**DEPRESSION IS NOT A NORMAL PART OF  
AGING.**

IF YOU SEE YOURSELF OR A LOVED ONE  
IN THE DESCRIPTION ABOVE,  
CONTACT A PHYSICIAN OR MENTAL HEALTH  
PROFESSIONAL. ( see reverse side for phone numbers)

**WITH TREATMENT AND SUPPORT  
YOU CAN FEEL BETTER!**

**YOU CAN RECOVER!**

**LIFE IS GOOD!**



From  
Our  
Parish  
Nurses

## Medicare Wellness Visit

If you have just gone on Medicare you can have a free medicare wellness visit. This visit will create a personalized prevention plan for you. For more information ask your doctor about this program or contact Jennifer Dzney from St Vincent's Physician Support Services. Call (203) 382-2389 and leave a voice mail message.

# Let's Stop Smoking



St Vincent's Smokestoppers has two programs: prevention classes and cessation classes. The programs educate people about the dangers of tobacco including electronic cigarettes and chewing tobacco, For health reasons, it is better never to start smoking or to quit smoking as soon as possible. Second and third hand smoke are real dangers to others.

Electronic cigarettes or "E-cigs" are nicotine delivery devices. They are unregulated by the FDA. The "E-cigs" come in 7000 flavors and are very habit forming. Carcinogenic and other irritating chemicals are in "E-cigs". Chewing tobacco or spit tobacco has 28 cancer causing chemicals that certainly affect ones health.

For more information, contact [www.stvincents.org](http://www.stvincents.org) or e-mail [smokestoppers@swimacrossthesound.org](mailto:smokestoppers@swimacrossthesound.org) or <https://www.stvincents.org/Medical-Services/Cancer-Care/Screenings-Prevention/smoking-cessation>

## DAILY ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN MENTAL HEALTH

- Take a walk. Breathe in the fresh air.
- Take a yoga or Tai Chi class.
- Turn off the TV; knit, read or draw instead.
- Call a friend. Spend time around positive people.
- Listen to music. Dance (even by yourself).
- Work or volunteer.
- Write in a journal or diary.
- Put up a birdfeeder
- Play a card or board game.
- See your doctor regularly.
- Take medications as prescribed.
- Go to a religious service.
- **Make a list of things you can be thankful for.**
- **SMILE, LAUGH, HUG SOMEONE!**

**CONTACT YOUR PHYSICIAN -  
or MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL.**

Resources:

**Infoline dial 211**

**Southwest CT Mental Health System  
Hotline (800) 586-9903**

**Franklin S. DuBois Center  
(203) 388-1600 for crisis program call (203) 358-8500**

**Southwestern CT Area Agency on Aging  
1-800-994-9422 or (203) 333-9288**





## DID YOU KNOW?

As the Council of Churches focuses on Education Reform this year, we are challenging all of our member congregations to **GET THE FACTS** about the state of education in Connecticut, find out how **TOGETHER** we can **ADVOCATE** for reform!

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Connecticut has the 3rd worse opportunity gap in the United States  
*this is the gap between black and white 4th graders in reading*
- 75% of 3rd graders in Bridgeport are not reading on grade level
- 90% of 8th graders In Bridgeport are not doing math on grade level
- If Bridgeport got the same funding per student as Hartford, it would receive at least \$13.3 million more each year.
- Students eligible for free lunch are chronically absent 3X more than their classmates... and attendance is a better Indicator of risk of "dropping out" than test scores
- The average rate of child poverty in Bridgeport is 30.3% of African American children, 34% of Latino children, and 17.3% of White children.
- 28% of Connecticut African American and Latino children have experienced 2 or more ACES\*, compared to only 15% of white children.

\* Adverse childhood experiences, such as experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect, witnessing violence, or other potentially traumatic events.

## WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

### RESEARCH and ADVOCATE for Education Reform.

- **PLAN a backpack drive** for at-risk and low-income youth to ensure that they have the supplies they need. This is often a summer project for which CCGB supplies information and support.
- **VOLUNTEER at or DONATE to an Education Reform nonprofit agency.**
  - \* *Contact one of the following agencies to learn about their needs:*
    - FaithActs for Education - (203) 868-0443
    - Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance - (203) 579-2727
    - Center for Children's Advocacy - (203) 335-0719
- **MENTOR a youth in middle or high school** for approximately 1 hour per week during the school year.
  - \* *<http://www.unitedwaycfc.org/find-mentor-program-right-you>*
- **SERVE on your local Juvenile Review Board**
  - \* *Contact CCGB at (203) 334-1121 or email [info@ccgb.org](mailto:info@ccgb.org)*
- **VOLUNTEER to work with Project Learn** providing after school homework and tutorial help with enrichment activities for elementary school students at Summerfield United Methodist Church in the East End of Bridgeport
  - \* *Contact Rev. Herron Gaston at 203-367-8783*
- Advocate for the passing of legislation that supports:
  - \* Fully funding and implementing prior and new reforms
  - \* Ensure there is a menu of programs, services, and supports that meet the needs of youth, families, and communities
  - \* Improve coordination, collaboration, and blended funding across agencies and municipalities
  - \* Prioritize youth, family, and community voices
  - \* Remove youth under 18 from adult correctional environments pre- and post-trial
  - \* Address inhumane conditions of confinement of youth

Legislative priorities provided by the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance at  
<https://www.ctjja.org/2019-legislative-priorities>

[www.ccgb.org](http://www.ccgb.org) \* [info@ccgb.org](mailto:info@ccgb.org) \* (203) 334-1121  
1718 Capitol Avenue, Bridgeport CT 06604





## The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Inc.

*Leveraging Hope, Transforming Communities*

*Service \* Dialogue \* Collaboration*

November 20, 2019

Dear Salem,

January 1, 2020 marks the beginning of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport (CCGB). Working in partnership with donors, congregations, community partners and clients, CCGB has initiated and sustained enduring progress in meeting the needs of people at risk and breaking the cycle of poverty and crisis in the Greater Bridgeport area.

Among the most significant accomplishments since 1945 are:

- Ensuring In the late 1940's that the needs of veterans returning from WWII were met
- Founding the Connecticut Food Bank in 1982 which provides over 20 million meals annually
- Providing educational and youth services programs that have impacted directly over 20,000 K-12 youth in Bridgeport and surrounding communities and engaged over 2,000 volunteers
- Leading ecumenical and interfaith events which bring together hundreds of people each year, building community through education, dialogue and advocacy
- Founding the Bridgeport Re-Entry Roundtable, now replicated across Connecticut, and providing essential services to thousands of formerly incarcerated men and women
- **Over 75 years, CCBG has directly improved the lives of at least three (3) million children and adults with services, education, food, clothing, housing and financial support!**

CCGB has excelled in its mission to "**create and sustain a more just, healthy, and vibrant society.**" To expand and enhance the CCGB's impact, we need to increase our resources – financial and volunteer.

As part of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, the Board of Directors has established several new giving levels and societies. These new levels of giving and societies are intended to secure major gifts from new donors, but even more important, to inspire our current donors to increase their level of support commensurate with their resources. Enclosed is a brochure describing these new giving opportunities, with a list of the giving societies on the back page.

Thank you for Salem's consistent and generous support of CCGB. As we approach our 75<sup>th</sup> year, please consider increasing your level of giving. Together we will continue to "create and sustain a more just, healthy, and vibrant society."

Sincerely,

*Cass*

Rev. Cass Shaw, President and CEO

*and thank you for hosting*

*The CREATE classes*

*As a food Pantry helper - I echo Cass's appreciation!*

**Advocacy \* Food Equity and Economic Development \* Ecumenical & Interfaith  
Re-Entry \* Youth in Crisis**

*Peter Mitchell*

1718 Capitol Avenue · Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604-1531  
Tel: 203.334.1121 · Fax: 203.367.8113 · [www.cccb.org](http://www.cccb.org)





# Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

**STORIES** OF FAITH IN ACTION

## What are the 12 days of Christmas?

Cory Driver

Christmas, according to the liturgical calendar, isn't just a day, but a season. Many Christians know the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" or recall that Shakespeare's Twelfth Night is about the last night of Christmas. But what defines the Christmas season?

The 12 days of Christmas are a reversal of the season of Advent. Traditionally, Christians have fasted during Advent as we await the celebration of the birth of our Savior. The period from Christmas Day to the day before Epiphany (the celebration of the magi visiting Jesus, the baptism of Jesus and the beginning of his earthly ministry) is a period of daily feasting. This is surprising, given the reason for celebrating several of the days.



The first day of Christmas, the Feast of the Nativity, is obvious enough as a reason to celebrate. The Messiah has been born into the world! The next day, however, is the feast of St. Stephan, the first Christian martyr, who was killed under the authority of Saul of Tarsus/Paul (Acts 8:1). The emotional whiplash of celebrating the birth of the Savior and then the next day celebrating the life and martyrdom of the first person to die for Christ is stunning. However, tradition calls for a joyful feast to celebrate the faithfulness of Stephen, even unto death.

The next day, the third of the 12, celebrates the life of St. John the Apostle. He was, traditionally, the only disciple who wasn't martyred. Tradition holds that John took care of Mary, the mother of Jesus, made disciples, grew old and finally died a natural death in Ephesus.

The fourth day of Christmas is the most shocking. The Feast of the Holy Innocents commemorates the death of all boys in Bethlehem, aged 2 and under, at the hands of Herod the Great's soldiers (Matthew 2:16-18). Again, we feel the emotional rollercoaster, as we're reminded that the Christian life isn't simply one of sweetness and joy, but also of pain, hardship and injustice. Nevertheless, the fourth day of Christmas is the Feast of the Holy Innocents, rather than a fast, because we celebrate the One who has conquered sin and death and doesn't surrender these precious little ones, or any others, to the grave forever.

The following days celebrate Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket's resistance to injustice; the holy family; Pope Sylvester, who resisted the Donatist and Arian controversies (in many Germanic-speaking countries, New Year's Eve is still called "Sylvester"); the circumcision of Jesus; St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen, who defended the doctrine of the Trinity; Jesus' presentation and naming in the Jerusalem temple; the hermitage of St. Simon on the pillar; and even two American saints: Elizabeth Ann Seton and John Neumann.

These 12 days help Christians remember that the life of faith is full of challenges and hardships but also contains plenty of reasons to celebrate as we remember the heroes and heroines of the church, and most importantly, our Lord and Savior.

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# A Church Without Walls



Gilberto Quesada Mora, president of the Iglesia Luterana Costarricense (ILCO, Costa Rican Lutheran Church), has an understanding of evangelism that starts with walking with others and advocating for their needs.

"The principle form of invitation that we extend is when we place ourselves along certain populations and walk with them. This can be in a public march, in a demonstration or also in a religious activity," Quesada Mora said. "By acting naturally and being authentic, we make ourselves known in a different way."

The church centers its mission on the most vulnerable: indigenous people, urban poor, peasant farmers, Nicaraguan immigrants, and people living with HIV and AIDS.

Founded in 1988, the ILCO has seven congregations and nine mission points with approximately 500 members. Quesada Mora estimates that it accompanies an additional 500 people through various ministries.

"The Costa Rican Lutheran Church has taken upon itself the historical challenge of accompanying and furthering the struggle to defend the human rights of [impoverished and marginalized]," Quesada Mora said. "What moves the Lutheran church is not the immediate affiliation of new members, but rather the accompaniment of processes that free people from historic bonds, be they religious, political, social and even cultural."

The church's commitment to personal witness and accompaniment has drawn people in. "For years our motto was 'a church without walls,'" said Geraldina Álvarez Rocha, pastor, feminist theologian and human rights activist in the ILCO. "When people heard that, they immediately became interested out of curiosity."

An ELCA grant helps fund work to build up more leaders like Álvarez Rocha. The project "is a proposal for the empowerment of the church, above all the empowerment of congregational leaders, working in five major areas of church life - organization, leadership formation, liturgy, sustainable stewardship and infrastructure," she said.

One of the biggest challenges facing the ILCO, she said, is how it can distinguish itself from non-governmental organizations. In her work, Álvarez Rocha wants the church to move from providing services to lifting up initiatives developed by community members.

"Without a doubt, I believe that the most exciting part is the fact that we have proven we can be a church that tries to reform itself in time and space," she said. "We are a church that is moving forward with strength, slowly but surely."