



God is love.
Whoever lives in love lives in God,
and God in him.

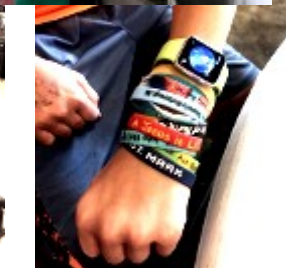
1 John 4:16

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
A Reconciling in Christ
(RIC) Congregation

National Youth Gathering—Houston



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*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.*

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

3160 Park Avenue

Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

Phone (203) 336-3300 ▪ Fax (203) 336-8813

Website - www.salembridgeport.org

Facebook - www.facebook.com/SalemBridgeport/

Church Office Hours

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

Worship Services

9:30am Traditional Worship

4:30pm SNAC

Sunday Night Alive Dinner Church

Salem's Staff

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

Mark Adamy, Music Director
adameus7@aol.com

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

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

Elizabeth Frohrip, Deacon
Home Phone (203) 683-7460
salemaim123@sbcglobal.net
(on disability leave)

LEADERSHIP AT SALEM

COUNCIL

Marjo Anderson, Pastor – marjoanderson@aol.com
Ray Lansing, President – raylansing@yahoo.com
Ray Anderson, Vice-President – andersray4@gmail.com
Kevyn Jackman, Secretary – kevynj363@gmail.com
Lauren Nordvall, Treasurer – lnordvall@aol.com
Katie Adams – keadams333@gmail.com
Frank Dukenski, – fdukenski@aol.com
Nancy Headford, Stewardship – nancy9881@att.net
Steve Kuczo, Staff Support – skuczo@aol.com
Noah Lansing -
Cindy Roberts - robjcrb@gmail.com
Kaitlyn Rosa -
Emily Sokoloski - emilysokoloski@gmail.com
Tracey Wilkins, Secretary – traelwil@gmail.com
Bill Winter, Property – wjwinter@optonline.net

SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE

Pastor Marjo Anderson – marjoanderson@aol.com
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Liz Bales – the2bales@gmail.com
Sandra Brown – sjbrown@snet.net
John Bryk – jbryk@znclaw.com
Richard Lansing – rlansing@optonline.net
Cliff LaRose – trevclif@att.net
Jean Larson – tjcklarson@sbcglobal.net
Bruce Tomasko – bltomasko@yahoo.com
John Wilkins – about2bike@gmail.com

LIGHT –

Leaders Inviting Growth through Hope for Tomorrow

Source Team:

Pastor Marjo Anderson – marjoanderson@aol.com
Ray Lansing – raylansing@yahoo.com
Tracey Wilkins – traelwil@gmail.com
Bill Winter – wjwinter@optonline.net
Tom Larson – tjcklarson@sbcglobal.net

Reflection Team:

Katie Adams – keadams333@gmail.com
Jean Larson – tjcklarson@sbcglobal.net
Frank Dukenski – fdukenski@aol.com
Joel Hintz – brondle@aol.com

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

Next deadline date is **August 15th for the **September issue!****




Email submissions to salemsec123@sbcglobal.net



July 2018

Salem Lutheran Church



Sun Jul 1	Mon 2	Tue 3	Wed 4	Thu 5	Fri 6	Sat 7
<p>ELCA National Youth Gathering - Houst</p> <p>Pentecost 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 		<p>Thomas, Apostle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Pastors' Text Study 	<p>Office Closed</p>			
<p>8</p> <p>Pentecost 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Pastors' Text Study 11:30am Pastors' Book Group 	<p>11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8:30am Pantry Setup 	<p>12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8:30am Pantry Setup 4pm Food Pantry 	<p>13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6pm Summersong & Salem Picnic 	<p>14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8am Men's Breakfast
Summersong						
<p>15</p> <p>Pentecost 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 	<p>16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30pm Finance Committee 7:30pm Executive Committee 	<p>17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Pastors' Text Study 	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
Summersong						
<p>22</p> <p>Mary Magdalene, Apostle</p> <p>Pentecost 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 	<p>23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7pm Council 	<p>24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Pastors' Text Study 	<p>25</p> <p>James, Apostle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8:30am Pantry Setup 	<p>26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8:30am Pantry Setup 4:30pm Food Pantry 	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Pentecost 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Pastors' Text Study 				

Community Room
 Sun 6:45 SLAA
 Mon 7:30 Boy Scouts
 Tue 7:00 STEP



August 2018

Salem Lutheran Church



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed
Aug 1

Thu
2

Fri
3

Sat
4



5 Pentecost 11 ● 9:30am Worship at United Congregational Church 2200 North Ave	6	7 ● 9:30am Pastors' Text Study	8 ● 8:30am Pantry Setup	9 ● 8:30am Pantry Setup ● 4pm Food Pantry	10	11 ● 8am Men's Breakfast
12 Pentecost 12 ● 9:30am Worship at United Congregational Church 2200 North Ave	13	14 ● 9:30am Pastors' Text Study ● 11:30am Pastors' Book Group	15 Mary, Mother of Our Lord	16	17	18
19 Pentecost 13 ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Coffee Hour	20 ● 6:30pm Finance Committee ● 7:30pm Executive Committee	21 ● 9:30am Pastors' Text Study	22 ● 8:30am Pantry Setup	23 ● 8:30am Pantry Setup ● 4:30pm Food Pantry	24 Bartholomew, Apostle	25
26 Pentecost 14 ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Coffee Hour	27 ● 7pm Council	28 ● 9:30am Pastors' Text Study	29	30	31	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px;"> <p>Community Room Sun 6:45 SLAA Mon 7:30 Boy Scouts Tue 7:00 STEP</p> </div>



Worship Assistants

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

July, 2018

	July 1	July 8	July 15	July 22	July 29
Assisting Minister					
Lector/Communion Minister					
Altar Prep Team	Jean Larson Diane Tomasko	Jean Larson Diane Tomasko	Anita Papp Cindy Roberts	Anita Papp Cindy Roberts	Bob Reichelt Chris Wolff
Ushers	Mike Caragol Tom Larson	Ashley Baronavski Samantha Baronavski	Joe Bales John Bryk	Rich & Carol Lansing	Ray & Eileen Anderson
Flowers Given By	Dick & Roberta Bellows	Ray & Janice Lansing	Nancy Headford	Sandra Brown	DeWalt family
Coffee Hour	Carol & Rich Lansing	Youth Breakfast		Jean & Tom Larson	Sandra Brown Anita Papp
Tellers	Nancy Headford Bill Winter	Emily Sokoloski Tracey Wilkins	Rich Kenyon Kaitlyn Rosa	Frank Dukenski Cindy Roberts	Ray Lansing Noah Lansing

You can now sign up in the Narthex for Sunday morning Worship Assistants. You can sign up to be the Assisting Minister, or Lector/Communion Minister. You can also email (saalemsec123@sbcglobal.net) or call (203-336-3300) the church office.

Coffee hour hosts are needed for **July 15th and Aug 19th and after**. PLEASE contact Linda Bryk 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 Linda at (203) 268-8008, or email her at momryk@yahoo.com.



Worship Assistants

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

August, 2018

	Aug 5 At United Congregational	Aug 12 At United Congregational	Aug 19	Aug 26
Assisting Minister				
Lector/Communion Minister				
Altar Prep Team			Nancy D'Andrea Emily Sokoloski	Jean Larson Diane Tomasko
Ushers			Mike Caragol Tom Larson	Ashley Baronavski Samantha Baronavski
Flowers Given By	Marjo Anderson	Cindy Roberts Judi Nielsen	Sandra Brown	Joan Crossman
Coffee Hour	No coffee hour	No coffee hour		
Tellers	Ray Anderson Kevyn Jackman	Nancy Headford Bill Winter	Emily Sokoloski Tracey Wilkins	Katie Adams Rich Kenyon

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Cary Andren..... 1
 Katherine Horton..... 1
 Miriam Llanos3
 Karl Kraft.....4
 Katherine Johnson..... 8
 Teresa Roehrich 8
 Dick Bellows 9
 Jon Baronavski9
 Paul Baronavski, Jr.....9
 Annette Marquardt 13
 Kimberly Sokoloski 13
 Kevyn Jackman 16
 JoAnn McMaster..... 16
 Laurie Kulakowski..... 19
 Anita Papp20
 Dolores Kuczo 22
 Lisette Vazquez 22
 Victor Ladue 23
 Ryne Cotter 26
 Corey DeWalt 30



Josephine Anderson 1
 Gloriana Claus 1
 Christine Larson..... 3
 Janice Lansing..... 6
 Morgan Danowski 8
 Bryan DeWalt 8
 Cindy Roberts..... 10
 Kaitlyn Rosa 12
 Diane Tomasko..... 13
 Carl Roehrich..... 14
 Richard Lansing, Jr..... 16
 Pauline Boyum 18
 Mary Anne Caragol..... 18
 Evan Lansing 18
 Brenda Vazquez 21
 David Schulz..... 23
 Jean Larson 24
 Frank Dukenski..... 25
 Sharon Norberg 27

SALEM BOOK CLUB

SALEM BOOK CLUB's summer read is Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate which will be discussed on September 4th in the Salem Lounge at noon. Everyone welcome for the discussion. Please bring your lunch.



<u>2018</u>	Jul 15	Oct 14
<u>Blood Pressure</u>	Aug	Nov 11
<u>Screening Dates</u>	Sep 9	Dec 9

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

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





SUMMERSONG 2018

a fun summer musical theater camp

- *Sing! Dance! Act! Create!*
- *Learn how to perform in a musical play -
and present it at the end of the week*
- *Join SummerSong where kids learn new skills and have a chance to explore their musical, theatrical, and artistic interests and abilities in a fun & safe environment, guided by educator and Broadway performer, Mark Adamy, & his talented staff.*

for ages 5 to 14

July 9 thru July 13 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

and/or July 16 thru July 20 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Closing performance on Fridays at 5 p.m.

On Fridays there will be a dress rehearsal from 3-4:30

Before-care and After-care available upon request for additional fee

**Salem Lutheran Church * 3160 Park Avenue * Bridgeport, CT 06604
(on the Bridgeport-Fairfield line)**

www.salembridgeport.org

www.facebook.com/salembridgeport

Phone: (203) 336-3300 Fax: (203) 336-8813

Our Director!

About the Artist

A multi-talented keyboardist and vocalist, Mark Adamy delivers performances full of soulful musical presence, skillful technique, and scintillating arrangements.

His heart for education in the arts leads him to teach at various schools including Dea Music and Art School and The Village Montessori School. Mark had taught eager students piano, voice, violin, and theatre. He approaches curriculum with passion and dedication to excellence, using his music to promote cultural diversity. He also serves as a Music Director at a church in Bedford, NY, as well as right here at Salem Lutheran Church in Bridgeport.

A former Boston resident, Mark won honors including Entertainer of the Year and Boston Music award nominations. Now a resident of the greater New York City region, Mark has played venues small and large. Concert and tour credits span a wide range of styles. He has shared the stage with greats like James Brown and The Four Tops, accompanied Broadway productions, and directed off-Broadway ones. He has jammed with jazz artists at venues ranging from New York's Russian Tea Room and Knitting Factory to Boston's Symphony Hall.

With his love of music and children, Mark can't wait for Summersong to begin!

Classes!

MUSIC AND VOICE:

A complete song-learning class, designed to help young and advanced performers learn more about singing and music. Areas covered include vocal technique, breath control, rhythm, melody, and sight-reading. Students expand their vocal range, fine tune their ears, strengthen breathing, and learn new music, all in a week!

DANCE:

This dance class teaches the basic elements of both movement and dance, space and flow and how each relates to one another both individually and as a group. The eight basic loco motor movements, musical rhythms, beat and time, opposite directions and some basic ballet are also taught. Many different types of music as well as hip-hop and jazz dance steps will be introduced in these fun and innovative classes. Basic Ballet and Tap will also be covered! The dance classes are sure to be loads of fun and you will learn how to shake a leg or two!

THEATRE:

Early Acting provides literature-based exploratory groups that encourage confidence by building theatre and life skills in a fun and supportive environment. The process rather than the end product is emphasized. Developmentally appropriate exercises and activities teach beginning terminology and theatre skills in every class. Students also learn valuable life skills such as taking turns, listening, self-confidence, being part of a team, cultivating actor/creators, innovators, and creative collaborators. This all takes place in a safe atmosphere where it is easy to make new friends. We will work on the acting in our final performance in this class as well.

ARTS AND CRAFTS:

Children of all ages love the chance to be creative and there is a lot of fun and learning as children explore clay, painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, textile arts, while making new friends and learning about the wonderful world of art. Some of these items will appear in our final show!

Students will be divided into three groups and will rotate into all classes that will be scaled to their age and skill levels:

Group 1 students (completed grades pre-K/K)

Group 2 students (completed grades 1-3)

Group 3 students (completed grades 4-8)

Salem Youth asked for YOUR Help to raise money for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal!

YOU RESPONDED!

All groups attending The ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston this summer were asked to bring an offering to support the Global Farm Challenge, a yearlong, youth-driven fundraising challenge to support the agriculture-related programs of ELCA World Hunger, our church's ministry to end hunger and poverty.

Salem's youth stepped up to the challenge. During June, there were "barn banks" throughout the church. People were asked to fill the banks with their donations. With everyone's help, our youth were able to take a check for \$1,500.00 with them to Houston. Salem's \$1500 was enough to provide 2 cows, 2 goats, 3 piglets, 3 roosters, chicks, honeybees, 1 vegetable garden, 1 fruit tree seedling, and farm tools.

Thanks to generous friends of ELCA World Hunger, all gifts toward the Global Farm Challenge will be matched – dollar for dollar – up to \$515,000.

We Are Grateful

Food Pantry

Joe & Liz Bales

Outreach Fund

Esteban Sebourne

Virtual Improvements

Tom & Jean Larson

Youth—National Gathering—Global Farm Challenge

Dave & Judy Albers, Marjo Anderson, Joe & Liz Bales, Sandra Brown, Nancy & Dom D'Andrea, Karl & Linda Kraft, Ray & Janice Lansing, Rich & Carol Lansing, Tom & Jean Larson, Cindy Roberts



Condolences to Ron & Charlotte Schlegel and their family. Their son-in-law, Eric Haaijer died Friday, June 22, 2018.



Our Church Family



Have you seen the cross in the corner of the playground near the gate?

Pastor Andrew Holbrook of Christ Presbyterian tells about it: "My father in law built this cross to go in a prayer garden at his home in South Carolina. He went to be with the Lord face to face in 2016. When my mother in law sold their home she asked if we would like the cross for our church. Our hope is to create a small space in the play area where someone could pause and rest awhile and pray at the foot of the cross. With Steve's help and anyone else's contribution we would like to do some landscaping and maybe add a bench so people could stop and pray as they come to the food pantry or come in to church."



You're invited to a picnic!

Salem and Summersong will host a picnic on July 13th at 6:00 pm after the Summersong closing program.

Come to the program.

Stay for the picnic.

Food Safety at the Farmer's Market

Shopping at a farmer's market is a great way to get locally-grown, fresh fruit, vegetables, and other foods for you and your family.

As these markets have grown more popular, there have been questions about the safety of the foods purchased there. There are some basic guidelines that you should follow to ensure that the farm-fresh food is safe.

Before and after preparing fresh produce, wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap. Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water just before eating, cutting or cooking. We don't recommend washing fruits and vegetables with soap or detergent or using commercial produce washes.

Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it is still important to wash it first. Any bacteria present on the outside of items like melons can be transferred to the inside when you cut or peel them. Be sure to refrigerate cut or peeled fruits and vegetables within two hours after preparation.

There is a list of Farmers' Markets in the Bridgeport area on the Parish Nurse bulletin board in the hallway outside of the lounge.

Health Tips from FoodSafety.Gov



From
Our
Parish
Nurses

Poison Ivy Safety Tips

Recognize the poison ivy plant and avoid it. Unlike any other plant or vine, there are three leaves on each stem. The surface of the leaf looks oily. During most of the year, the leaves are dark green, but in the fall they turn reddish. You could also be allergic to poison sumac in CT. Never burn poisonous plants. The inhalation of the smoke could be deadly.

Contact with the sap of the poison ivy plant causes the skin to burn and itch if you are allergic. A rash, swelling, and possibly blisters may develop from 24 hours to as long as 7 days after contact. The sap on contaminated items like implements, gloves, or clothing can also affect you. Once skin and articles are washed, contamination is halted. Contact with the blisters does not spread the dermatitis.

If exposed, scrub the affected area thoroughly with soap and water. Wash clothes and implements that are contaminated. Cool wet compresses may help relieve itching. If your face especially around your eyes, the area between your legs, or a portion of your body is affected, call or see your doctor. He will decide if you need medications such as antihistamines or cortisone in ointment, pill, or shot form.

Remember: Leaves of 3 – Let them be.

Four Risks to Health from Sugar Sweet Drinks

Risk #1 Risk of Heart Disease

- If 20 percent of calories are from added sugar
- Than 40 percent increased risk of dying from heart disease
- If 21 percent or more calories are from added sugar
- Then the risk of dying from heart disease more than doubles



Risk #2 Obesity

- 70% of adults are overweight or obese
- Puts you at risk for heart disease, stroke, HBP, and Diabetes
- Drinking more than one sugary drink a day can add hundreds of extra calories to your intake leading to weight gain
- Greater intake of these beverages means a decrease in nutrients that your body needs to stay healthy

Risk #3 Diabetes

- Research links higher risk for diabetes to sugar sweetened beverages
- Diabetes can damage your heart, eyes, kidneys, and nerves
- Diabetes is linked to excess weight which can result from drinking too many sugary beverages

Risk #4 Tooth Decay

- Sugar sweet beverages increase your risk for cavities
- Promotes the breakdown of tooth enamel
- Makes your teeth weak



At Born Ready Fitness, his team provides Personal Training programs, Bridal Programs, Executive Wellness Coaching, Corporate Wellness, Pre and Postnatal programs, Diagnostic Wellness Testing, Yoga and Pilates, Self-Defense, MMA Training, Nutrition Coaching, Massage Therapy, Personal Chef Services, or Cooking Classes with themes. Striving for top quality, they excel at giving their clients all the necessary tools to create “self-care before health-care”. The Born Ready way is all about balance, believing that creating a less stressful, healthier, and a more positive energy-filled environment in our everyday lives will greatly increase our quality of life.

Michael Gulyas, Salem member and owner of Born Ready Fitness, wants to make sure you are taking care of yourself on all levels to improve the quality of your life.

To contact Michael, visit his website at BornReadyFitness.com, email him at BornReadyFit@gmail.com, or call him at 203.895.8715.

Summer is a great time to get outdoors and engage in physical activity, but there are often barriers to overcome....

Barriers to Physical Activity

Given the health benefits of regular physical activity, we might have to ask why two out of three (60%) Americans are not active at recommended levels.

Many technological advances and conveniences that have made our lives easier and less active, many personal variables, including physiological, behavioral, and psychological factors, may affect our plans to become more physically active. In fact, the 10 most common reasons adults cite for not adopting more physically active lifestyles are:

- Do not have enough time to exercise
- Find it inconvenient to exercise
- Lack self-motivation
- Do not find exercise enjoyable
- Find exercise boring
- Lack confidence in their ability to be physically active (low self-efficacy)
- Fear being injured or have been injured recently
- Lack self-management skills, such as the ability to set personal goals, monitor progress, or reward progress toward such goals
- Lack encouragement, support, or companionship from family and friends, and
- Do not have parks, sidewalks, bicycle trails, or safe and pleasant walking paths convenient to their homes or offices.

Understanding common barriers to physical activity and creating strategies to overcome them may help you make physical activity part of your daily life.

Look for suggestions for overcoming these barriers in the next issue of the Spirit!

WHO WE ARE AT SALEM

IDENTITY

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

MISSION

**In response to God's transforming love,
we share our joy through praise and service.**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Pray.

Listen to God and to one another.

Be open to new ideas.

Recognize and share our talents and resources.

Communicate honestly and lovingly and respect other opinions.

Plan, follow through, and evaluate.

TOP 4 PRIORITIES

**1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy
to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.**

**2. Make necessary changes
to attract families with children and youth to our church**

**3. Develop the spiritual generosity of the people
to financially support the ministry of the church.**

**4. Work to renew and revitalize the community around the church
by building coalitions with partners that share this vision and commitment.**

PRIORITIES WITH UNUSUALLY HIGH FOCUS

**1. Work to renew and revitalize the community around the church
by building coalitions with partners that share this vision and commitment.**

**2. Deepen our connection to God and to one another
through stronger worship services.**

**3. Adapt the opportunities provided by the church,
making them more accessible given the pace and schedule of life.**



The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Inc.

Leveraging Hope, Transforming Communities
*Service * Dialogue * Collaboration*

June 5, 2018

Dear Marjo,

As The Council's fiscal year draws to a close, I'm writing to thank you for your partnership and participation in our joint ministry, and make sure that our records agree with yours. If not, please let me know! Active membership in The Council is based on three things: commitment to our shared mission and vision, attendance by your delegates at quarterly meetings, including the Annual Meeting, and the provision of a financial contribution to our work. *The Council of Churches' fiscal year began on July 1st, 2017 and will end on June 30th, 2018. Financial contributions are counted with this time frame in mind.*

Your congregation is one of our strongest partners, and I am deeply grateful for all you do to further our ministry throughout the Greater Bridgeport area, through volunteer time, attendance at events, generous financial contributions, and networking. Thank you!

- According to our records your delegates, you, Sandra Brown, William Winter, John Wilkins attended all of the delegate meetings this year. Please extend our thanks to everyone, as these meetings are critical avenues for communication and fellowship.
- Also according to our records, so far in this fiscal year your congregation has donated \$3,051. Your generosity translates into the delivery of critical services for people in need, and an ecumenical and interfaith witness to the wider community. Again, thank you!

Finally, whether you anticipate that the coming summer months will be busy with vacation bible school and mission trips, or offer you time for a little rest and relaxation, I hope that as the Pentecost season unfolds you will know the power and comfort of the Holy Spirit in the life of your congregation.

In God's grace,

Cass L. Shaw
President & CEO

**Advocacy * Food Access & Economic Development * Ecumenical & Interfaith
Re-Entry * Youth in Crisis**

1718 Capitol Avenue · Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604-1531
Tel: 203.334.1121 · Fax: 203.367.8113 · www.cccb.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

Faith, freedom and compassion: Lutherans and civic duty

Nelson H. Rabell-González

Freedom is a quintessentially Lutheran and American ideal. Yet as ELCA members approach Independence Day, it's important for us to acknowledge where Lutheran and American notions of freedom diverge.

A founding parent of the United States, Benjamin Franklin, said, "They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Franklin's vision of liberty may inspire one to strive for complete and absolute freedom, nevertheless it should be interpreted in the context of civil life and emancipation from a colonial power. On the other hand, Martin Luther spoke of freedom in terms of liberation from something and for something. In his 1520 treatise, *On the Freedom of a Christian*, Luther wrote, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." As members of the ELCA, how can we reconcile this tension between our political and theological understandings of freedom?

Freedom or liberty, in a political or civil sense, is the ability to speak, act, live and think without restrictions. Therefore, in the American Revolutionary War of the 18th century, the famous Patrick Henry quotation, "Give me liberty or give me death!" shows revolutionaries believed there was no viable option but freedom. Freedom was understood by many in the 13 colonies as a gift from God. As they struggled to free themselves from the British colonial rule, the early Americans used this divine sanction to justify the American Revolution as morally righteous and virtuous. Thomas Jefferson, another founding parent, wrote of a "God who gave us life [and] gave us liberty." Luther's theological contribution to Christian thought and practice is reflected in this ideology, albeit, I believe the founding parents' individualistic understanding of freedom is devoid of Luther's concern for the well-being of others.

Luther's understanding of freedom and liberty is grounded on his understanding of God's grace. He would agree with Jefferson that God gave us life and freedom. Yet Luther would argue that Christians are freed from sin, death and the devil—the realities that get in the way of our communion with God and each other. Moreover, he believes we are freed from this trinity of evil for the sake of the world.

While he might agree with our founding parents that freedom is a gift from God that enables us to experience life without restrictions, Luther would ask, who benefits from our liberty? For Luther, the answer is our neighbors, not ourselves. We are no doubt beneficiaries of God's gift of freedom, but, as I have heard in some congregations, "we are blessed to be a blessing for others." This concern for others, in Luther's view, is not limited to the welfare of the nation but rather the whole world. Therefore, Christians have been called by God in baptism to serve in the nation in which they live but not at the expense of other nations or peoples. Just like we are called to be subject to all, for their sake, we are freed in our baptism to proclaim in word and deed the cosmic love of God for all nations.

Luther would ask who benefits from our liberty. For Luther, the answer is our neighbors, not ourselves.

Luther started his critique of the medieval Roman Catholic Church precisely because there was no freedom of conscience and thought within the ecclesiastical structures at the time. Here lies another parallel between the Reformation and the American Revolution. The pursuit of freedom to openly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ led Luther to question the indulgences and the authority that sanctioned them. His concern though, was not just about individual rights but about the purity of the church's ministry and practice. Luther, like American revolutionaries, raised his voice against an oppressive institution.

Luther believed freedom is a gift from God, not just for our sake but for the sake of the world. As Lutherans, we believe we are free so that we can free others. We are called to experience this freedom of movement, thought and speech so that others within our nation and abroad may also experience joy, happiness and the pursuit of freedom. But we need to be mindful that freedom, or our version of freedom, is never meant to be imposed on others. If we do, we become agents of slavery and domination.

This Independence Day, let us celebrate freedom as Luther would have us ... not with fireworks but by serving our neighbors with a faith active in love. Amen.

Rabell-González is associate pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi, Calif. He was born and raised in Puerto Rico and is a graduate of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (2002). Rabell-González is married to Dr. Fabiola Ramos. They have two children: Hiram Rabell-Ramos (18) and Sofia Rabell-Ramos (16). Their dog's name is Lucas.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.

Asia/Pacific Mission Update

Asia Pacific The fall 2017 Global Mission Updates noted developments in the Lutheran Church in Cambodia (LCC) which is a part of the Campaign for the ELCA. The Rev. Daniel Orn was ordained in November, as announced, and a relationship agreement between the LCC and ELCA was signed. While the Lutheran Church in Singapore helped “birth” this church, as ELCA we are blessed to be part of the further growth of the church in Cambodia.

The ordination in Cambodia occurred in conjunction with a meeting of the Mekong Mission Forum (MMF). The MMF is a consortium of churches and agencies that encourages mission in the Mekong River area, including Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar. It is particularly supported by Lutheran churches in Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore, plus other Asian churches and including those in Europe and the US that engage in mission in the region. It is through this forum that the ELCA has participated in the development of Lutheran churches in Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam; relationships with the Protestant churches in Laos and Vietnam; and community and sustainable development projects in various places.

In January, the one-million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG) held its first Synod (assembly) since Bishop Jack Urame took office. Bishop Urame and his leadership team continue to bring a fresh voice to a church and country that faces the challenge of linguistic and cultural differences. Martin Luther Seminary (the principal seminary of the ELCPNG) graduated its first three women in the Bachelor of Theology program, paving the way for possible ordination. Bp. Urame is leading the discussion toward women’s ordination.



The first three BTh women graduates of Martin Luther Seminary, ELC-PNG

Several ELCA missionaries in the region are making contributions that reach beyond their immediate places of service. Dr. Jeffrey Truscott (Singapore) has written two books based on his experiences in Asia and now widely read: *Worship: A Practical Guide* and *The Sacraments: A Practical Guide*. He also has lectured in Indonesia, India, Malaysia and China. Dr. Eric Trozzo (Sabah, East Malaysia) is helping bring better understandings of Lutheran identity not just in Sabah, but to other parts of Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Australia. Dr. Phillip Baker (regional representative, Cambodia) has become a theologian-envoy as he has lectured and provided theological guidance among churches in Myanmar, Indonesia, India, Cambodia and for regional bodies.

Summer Theatre

Celebrating new plays, musicals and young artists.

GODSPELL

COME SING ABOUT LOVE

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz. Book by John Michael Tebelak.

Conceived and Originally Directed by John Michael Tebelak.

Parables vibrantly come to life in this most beloved family-friendly musical based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. Follow Jesus and his disciples as they create a community and teach tolerance and kindness through lessons intertwined with an eclectic blend of songs. This 2012 revival version is updated with contemporary references and features new arrangements of Stephen Schwartz's (composer of *Wicked* and *Pippin*) score, include the songs "Day by Day," "All Good Gifts," and "Beautiful City."

July 27, 2018 at 8pm

July 28, 2018 at 8pm

July 29, 2018 at 3pm

Edgerton Center

GENERAL PUBLIC: \$22

SENIOR CITIZENS: \$15

FACULTY/STAFF/ALUMNI: \$15

STUDENT: \$10