



July/August 2020

the
SPIRIT

Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

A Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Congregation

A "Love Letter" from Kristin Horton to her Salem Family...

Hello, Dear Friends,

I bring tidings from the Merritt Parkway as I'm driving an apartment full of stuff back to Texas as Clay is ending his gap year in Bridgeport. It's a strange time for the world right now as we are all quarantining ourselves from friends and family and seeking to stay protected from Covid-19. Amidst this loss of community, I believe all of us have also been overwhelmed by the horrible videos of African Americans being murdered by officers and vigilantes. The video footage has been horrific to view - particularly for me so far away from my community.

We spend a lot of time in Austin and I spend a lot of time missing my old life, old jobs, old friends, old church. We've moved to the deepest of Deep South states - where racism is ever present. Kate and I made a video for an upcoming community conversation on racism in Lake Travis, TX (the YouTube link is below). While racism is much more present there, it certainly wasn't missing in Fairfield county. Structural racism accounts for differences in schools between Bridgeport and its surrounding towns: the legacy of redlining in the 50s that made homeownership affordable in white neighborhoods whose residents could use that equity to finance college education for their children. Growing suburbanization increased home values as the cities emptied. Families living in cities garnered no wealth from their property. Meanwhile cities continued to support suburban infrastructure (sewage treatment, hospitals, highways, energy production) keeping home values low. Since most states fund schools with homeowners' taxes, that means that places with lower home values have less money to pay for education. People then don't want to live there, and whiter, more suburban places go up in value faster, meaning that those families can finance college and help their kids buy homes in similar neighborhoods. And so on and so on. Even just this one issue effects one generation after another. Then add to this that lower property values mean that property owners are often forced to put in unhealthy businesses - leading to environmental diseases such as diabetes and asthma, affecting people in low income communities more broadly.

So consider now Covid-19. Imagine that for the last four generations your family could not build wealth to live in white suburbs, your schools were poorer and college was out of reach because your parents, limited by their own lack of education, couldn't help pay for it. So you live in overcrowded housing in neighborhoods with no fresh food and high rates of obesity, diabetes, and asthma. Then here comes Covid-19 which kills people with obesity, diabetes, asthma, and any lung disease which may result from living alongside I-95.

Whether or not you as a human being believe that all races were created equal (and certainly this is what the Bible teaches) - the one factor of home loans in the 50s - which were available to whites but not to blacks due to redlining - has changed your life today. This is evidence and an

example of structural racism. Not the acts of an individual, but the way a system disproportionately impacts a certain group of people. I encourage each of us to consider our parents or grandparents and how they bought a home in the 1950s and how that home purchase affected their children's and grandchildren's lives.

While we now reside in the South, Bridgeport will always be my home. I miss the safe space that Salem was for me. My church in Austin is reading Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US by Lenny Duncan, a black ELCA Lutheran pastor, and we are asking questions about how we can increase diversity and engage in social justice work that seeks to undo structural racism. Moreover we are working hard to become an actively anti-racist congregation. The first step is understanding our history as a nation and how it has systematically disenfranchised people who look like our Horton family -- Charlotte and Kate, those sweet little Tomtars.

I encourage you to read Dear Church as a congregation just as my congregation is doing. Or read Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi. Or read How To Be an Antiracist by Ibram Kendi. There is so much out there now to educate yourself with! I strongly suggest taking African American history online at Yale at no-cost. <https://oyc.yale.edu/african-american-studies/afam-162>

I encourage you to watch the video on micro-aggressions that Kate and I created for a community conversation on race we are helping to run here in Texas. While the readers in the video are white, the stories that they are reading were submitted anonymously by black members of the community. As you watch it, consider how continuous micro-aggressions would affect your sense of self, your stress levels, and your genuine happiness and reflect on how they affect Carl and me and our children and all the others who look like us.
<https://youtu.be/FtChYJF69cE>

I welcome questions and thoughts. As Christians we know we need to engage with the least of us. We love and miss you Salem!

Kristin duBay Horton

*Kristin Horton, former Director of Public Health in Bridgeport under Mayor Bill Finch, and her family – husband Carl, and children, Clara (now Clay), Kate, and Charlotte – were long-time members of Salem before Carl's work took them to Austin, Texas. In this time in which racial injustice has been brought to the forefront of our nation's consciousness,
Kristin has some words for her Salem family to consider.*

GUIDE TO VIRTUAL / ONLINE CHURCH

TO ACCESS WORSHIP VIA FACEBOOK:

You do NOT have to be a Facebook member to watch it.

Just go to www.facebook.com/salembridgeport.

On the left, click on videos, which will bring up "Latest Videos".

Then just click on the one you want to watch.

(Sometimes a notice might pop up to say you can't access it, but if that happens, just click on the message and it should disappear and the video should play.)

If you can't hear, please know that the videos are closed captioned, so you can see the text (at least of the speaking parts

if not the singing) as you watch. In order to see the text, however, you need to turn that feature on for your device.

(On my iPhone 6s, I went to Settings, then Accessibility, then scrolled down to Subtitles & Captioning, then turned on Closed Captions & SDH, and voila! The captions appeared like magic!)

TO ACCESS WORSHIP VIA YOUTUBE:

We are also posting our worship on YouTube.

To access worship that way,

go to YouTube.com,

click on the magnifying glass to search for Salem Lutheran Church Bridgeport CT

and we should come up.

There'll be a red circle with a white S in it and under that are the videos.

Once you find Salem on YouTube, subscribe to our channel and it will be easier to find next time.

Again, if you can't hear, videos are closed captioned. Just click on the 3 dots on the upper right corner of the screen to turn on closed captioning.

TO ACCESS COFFEE HOUR, MEETINGS, & OTHER GATHERINGS:

Meetings and Gatherings (like Coffee Hour, Bible Study, Council and Committees) are being held online via Zoom.

If your Salem committee or group would like to meet via Zoom, please contact Karl

by emailing him at salemsec123@sbcglobal.net or by leaving a message on the church phone, 203-336-3300.

To access the invitation go to our website, click on the Resources tab, and click on Calendar.

So if you'd like to join coffee hour, for example, click on "coffee hour" for the date you want, and it will open up the invitation. At the bottom of the invitation is even an option to "copy to my calendars".

Again, if you have any difficulty accessing any meeting or event, call or text me at 203-982-3441

Links to zoom meetings will be emailed out via our weekly email blast (which also posts to Facebook and our website).

TO ACCESS STAFF:

Due to the pandemic, our Office Manager, Karl, and I will be working primarily from our homes.

I have been coming in once a week to record worship

and Karl usually comes in on Thursdays to take care of tasks that cannot be accomplished from elsewhere.

To reach Karl, just call the church number and leave a message.

He will pick up your message remotely and return your call.

And if you need pastoral care – even just to talk – please don't hesitate to call or text me at 203-982-3441.

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 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

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

LEADERSHIP AT SALEM

COUNCIL

Marjo Anderson, Pastor
Frank Dukenski, President
Ray Anderson, Vice-President
Nancy Headford, Secretary
Rich Kenyon, Treasurer
Katie Adams
Liz Bales
Sandra Brown
Steve Kuczo
Evan Lansing
Emily Sokoloski
Diane Tomasko
Bill Winter

We Are Grateful

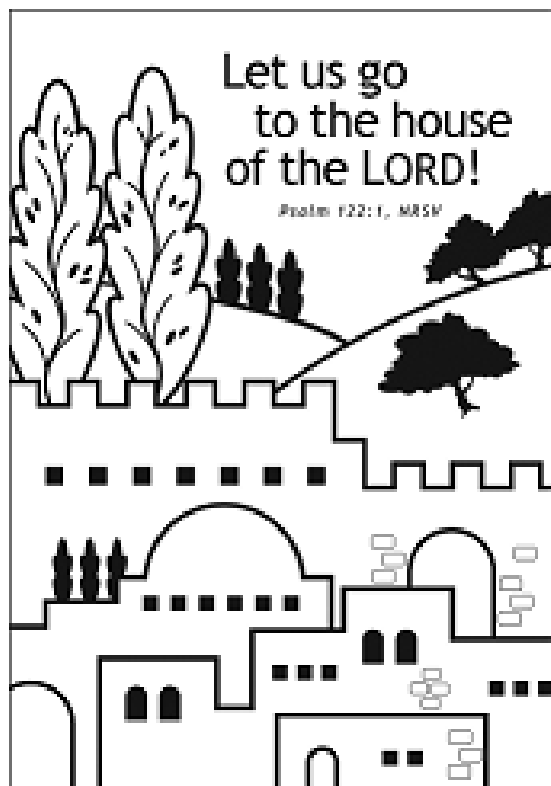


Memorial Donations

Rich & Carol Lansing
(in memory of Reinie Lange)

Outreach

Marjo Anderson



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 2020

Salem Lutheran Church



SUN	MON	TUE	WED Jul 1	THU 2	FRI 3	SAT 4
			● 11am Salem Health & Safety During the Panc			Independence Day
5 Fifth Sunday after Pentecost ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Salem Coffee Hour ● 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church ● 12:30pm New Directions Ministries ● 4:15pm CPC Gazebo	6 ● 6pm Troop 103 - CR, Gazebo	7 ● 9:30am Tuesday Talk & Text Study ● 6pm Stewardship Committee	8	9	10	11
12 Sixth Sunday after Pentecost ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Salem Coffee Hour ● 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church ● 12:30pm New Directions Ministries ● 4:15pm CPC Gazebo	13 ● 6pm Troop 103 - CR, Gazebo	14 ● 9:30am Tuesday Talk & Text Study	15	16	17	18
19 Seventh Sunday after Pentecost ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Salem Coffee Hour ● 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church ● 12:30pm New Directions Ministries ● 4:15pm CPC Gazebo	20 ● 6pm Troop 103 - CR, Gazebo ● 6:30pm Salem Finance Committee Meeting ● 7:30pm Salem Executive Committee Meeting	21 ● 9:30am Tuesday Talk & Text Study	22	23	24	25
26 Eighth Sunday after Pentecost ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Salem Coffee Hour ● 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church ● 12:30pm New Directions Ministries ● 4:15pm CPC Gazebo	27 ● 6pm Troop 103 - CR, Gazebo ● 7pm Salem Council Meeting	28 ● 9:30am Tuesday Talk & Text Study	29	30	31	



August 2020

Salem Lutheran Church



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT
Aug 1



2 Ninth Sunday after Pentecost ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Salem Coffee Hour ● 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church ● 12:30pm New Directions Ministries ● 4:15pm CPC Gazebo	3 ● 6pm Troop 103 - CR, Gazebo	4 ● 9:30am Tuesday Talk & Text Study	5	6	7	8
9 Tenth Sunday after Pentecost ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Salem Coffee Hour ● 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church ● 12:30pm New Directions Ministries ● 4:15pm CPC Gazebo	10 ● 6pm Troop 103 - CR, Gazebo	11 ● 9:30am Tuesday Talk & Text Study ● 6pm Stewardship Committee	12	13	14	15
16 Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Salem Coffee Hour ● 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church ● 12:30pm New Directions Ministries ● 4:15pm CPC Gazebo	17 ● 6pm Troop 103 - CR, Gazebo ● 6:30pm Salem Finance Committee Meeting ● 7:30pm Salem Executive Committee Meeting	18 ● 9:30am Tuesday Talk & Text Study	19	20	21	22
23 Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Salem Coffee Hour ● 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church ● 12:30pm New Directions Ministries ● 4:15pm CPC Gazebo	24 ● 6pm Troop 103 - CR, Gazebo ● 7pm Salem Council Meeting	25 ● 9:30am Tuesday Talk & Text Study	26	27	28	29
30 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Salem Coffee Hour ● 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church ● 12:30pm New Directions Ministries ● 4:15pm CPC Gazebo	31 ● 6pm Troop 103 - CR, Gazebo	 <p>and THEY all ate and WERE satisfied.</p>				



Cary Andren.....	1
Katherine Horton.....	1
Miriam Llanos	3
Karl Kraft.....	4
Katherine Johnson	8
Teresa Roehrich	8
Dick Bellows	9
Jon Baronavski	9
Paul Baronavski, Jr	9
Annette Marquardt	13
Kimberly Sokoloski	13
Kevyn Jackman	16
JoAnn McMaster.....	16
Laurie Kulakowski.....	19
Anita Papp	20
Dolores Kuczo	22
Lisette Vazquez	22
Victor Ladue.....	23
Ryne Cotter.....	26
Corey DeWalt	30

2020
Blood Pressure
Screening Dates

Jul tba Oct 4
 Aug tba Nov 8
 Sep 13 Dec 6



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
Hazel Pasqua.....	29
Eduardo Vazquez.....	30
Joan Crossman.....	31



"Are Forever Stamps OK?"

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

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



Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.



cdc.gov/coronavirus

316917-AMay 13, 2020 11:00AM

Stay Safe in the Sun

1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. It is the most commonly diagnosed type of cancer in the US, but also one of the most preventable and can be cured with early detection. There are 3 basic types: basal cell, squamous cell, and melanoma, the most serious.

We all should do regular skin checks, paying attention to changes in any spots or moles - itching, enlarging or changing shape or color. If that happens, you should see a dermatologist.

We should all use a good sunscreen daily on exposed body parts - broad spectrum mineral sunscreens are better than chemical sunscreens; they are made with titanium dioxide or zinc dioxide whose molecules are too large to be absorbed into the body, thus just work on the surface.

As much as possible cover up, especially during peak sun hours of 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours or more often after swimming or sweating a lot.

Also, hydrate skin by using a good moisturizer and drinking lots of water. Both help to regenerate new skin cells.

Just one blistering sun burn as a child can double the risk of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. 5 or more blistering sun burns at any age can also double the chance of melanoma. Heredity plays a role too.

People still think it is safe to go to tanning salons. It's truly bad for you. Also getting a "base" tan does not prevent you from burning. Dark skinned people are also subject to skin cancers; they may be harder to detect on dark skin as well.

Don't forget to put sunscreen on ears, feet, chest and nose - body parts often forgotten. Wear a hat and sun glasses.

Excerpted from American Way article



From
Our
Parish
Nurses

Tips for effective sunscreen use

- Choose a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or Higher
- Apply sunscreen at least 15 minutes before sun exposure
- Use enough sunscreen to cover your whole body (about an ounce for most adults), and apply it to all exposed areas, including ears, scalp, tops of the feet and legs
- Ask someone else to help you apply sunscreen on hard-to-reach spots like your back
- Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours, or immediately after swimming or sweating

Heat Stroke: Symptoms and Treatment

Heat Stroke results from prolonged exposure to high temperatures, usually in combination with dehydration. Heat stroke is the most serious form of heat injury and is considered a medical emergency. If you suspect that someone has heat stroke -- also known as sunstroke -- call 911 immediately and give first aid until paramedics arrive.

Symptoms of Heat Stroke:

- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness and light-headedness
- Lack of sweating despite the heat
- Red, hot, and dry skin
- Muscle weakness or cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Rapid heartbeat, which may be either strong or weak
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Behavioral changes such as confusion, disorientation, or staggering
- Seizures
- Unconsciousness or fainting
- Body temperature above 104 degrees Fahrenheit

First Aid for Heat Stroke

While waiting for the paramedics to arrive, initiate first aid. Move the person to an air-conditioned environment -- or at least a cool, shady area -- and remove any unnecessary clothing.

Try these cooling strategies:

- Fan air over the patient while wetting his or her skin with water from a sponge or garden hose.
- Apply ice packs to the patient's armpits, groin, neck, and back. Because these areas are rich with blood vessels close to the skin, cooling them may reduce body temperature. Do not use ice for older people, young children, or people with chronic illness.

Risk Factors for Heat Stroke

- Heat stroke is most likely to affect older people or children under age 4 especially who live in apartments or homes lacking air conditioning or good airflow. Other high-risk groups include people of any age who don't drink enough water, have chronic diseases, or who drink excessive amounts of alcohol. Also certain medications and illegal drugs can increase a person's risk.
- Heat stroke is strongly related to a high heat index.
- If you live in an urban area, you may be especially prone to develop heat stroke during a prolonged heat wave. Asphalt and concrete store heat during the day and only gradually release it at night.

Preventing Heat Stroke

When the heat index is high, it's best to stay in an air-conditioned environment with the curtains drawn. If you must go outdoors, you can prevent heat stroke by taking these steps:

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, and a wide-brimmed hat.
- Use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more.
- Drink extra fluids. To prevent dehydration, it's generally recommended to drink at least eight glasses of water, fruit juice, or vegetable juice per day. Avoid fluids containing caffeine or alcohol which are dehydrating.
- Reschedule or cancel outdoor activity. If possible, shift your time outdoors to the coolest times of the day, either early morning or after sunset.

If you're a senior who either can't afford to buy or run an air conditioner, check with your local Area Agency on Aging for programs that can assist you. One such program is the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Outlook for Heat Stroke

After you've recovered from heat stroke, you'll probably be more sensitive to high temperatures during the following week. So it's best to avoid hot weather and heavy exercise until your doctor tells you that it's safe to resume your normal activities.

Troop 103 welcomes two new scouts from Pack 461

Scouts from Troop 103 have been serving as Den Chiefs of Pack 461, located at Capital Harbor Lower School in Bridgeport. Pack 461 had their Blue and Gold and Advancement ceremony on Sunday afternoon, June 7, 2020 via a Zoom meeting.

Eagle Scout Kemoy Blair spoke about what Scouting means to him. Alexander Valbuena spoke about scouting, Troop 103 and the pandemic. The following is the text of Alexander's comments which those of us from Salem thought were applicable not only to Scouts, but to the adult men from the church as well.



I am Alexander Valbuena, Senior Patrol Leader of Troop 103, and an Eagle Scout Candidate. I want to say a few words about scouting, Troop 103, and the pandemic.

As you all know, we are living in some very strange times to say the least, with everyone needing to stay home for the good of everyone. When I was told that we would be going into lockdown, I was excited. I thought to myself, "Yay no more school." I get to stay home for the rest of the year, How could it be better than this?

I'll tell you now, I was wrong, so very wrong. At first, it was an interesting new experience, but with every day came the same old routine. Wakeup, get ready, go to class for two hours, eat, do work, and then play video games. I quickly learned that this quarantine was going to kill me much faster than the virus would.

So I'm sure you're asking by now how I learned to survive this quarantine. Well, scouting is the easy answer to that. Scouting gives us all a flawless roadmap to survive any situation, and this roadmap comes in the form of the scout oath, law, motto, and slogan. These simple words and sayings that we recite every meeting are what you all should be leading your life with, and they will carry you through every situation.

If you follow along with them. In this way you will survive the pandemic and come out being the same person you were before, if not a better person, and this is one of the magical things about scouting.

But what about scouting? Is it in danger during this pandemic? The answer is actually no. The scouting program is still very much alive during this time, and you all are examples of this. Even though you're stuck at home, you take the time to zoom in and take part in scouting. Scouting on a larger scale is also fine, as we have a lot of options for online events and learning. Also, keep in mind guys, scouting has survived two world wars and a pandemic far deadlier than this, so I think it will be okay. So, for the time being, hang in there, follow the principles of scouting, and together, we can make it through this pandemic.

On behalf of our Scouts and leaders, thank you for your continuing support of Troop 103
Wes Murphy
Boy Scout Troop 103 Committee Chair

Recycled Deposit Bottles & Cans

It was brought to my attention that some of the grocery stores have stopped collecting recycled bottles and cans to refund the deposits.

Scout Troop 103 always has several bottle and can collection containers in the Salem church building.

Once the building is reopened, please remember to bring your bottles and cans to church and place them in the containers located on each floor. Scouts will empty the containers and all deposits will be used for our Camping Fund.

Thank you from the Scouts and Leadership of Boy Scout Troop 103 and Wes Murphy, Committee Chair.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

A Faithful Witness

Lutheran depicts an ELCA congregation in new Netflix series

By Jeff Favre

Sheryl Anderson isn't a religious leader or a missionary, but in less than a year she has built a new ELCA congregation, supplying it with an attentive pastor and room for millions of congregants.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church doesn't exist in the physical world, but it's a second home for the lead characters of *Sweet Magnolias*, a series that premiered May 19 on Netflix.

Created by Anderson—a member of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Santa Monica, Calif., and a longtime TV writer—the show is based on a series of novels by Sherryll Woods. It stars several high-profile actresses, including JoAnna Garcia Swisher (Reba, *Once Upon a Time*).

Sweet Magnolias centers on the lifelong friendship of three women in the fictional town of Serenity, S.C. They support each other through the challenges of their businesses, love lives and child-rearing.

Like the rest of Anderson's work, this show is on a secular platform. But this time, she was able to include much of what is important to her faith as a Lutheran.

"I'm not trying to speak the Small Catechism, but my worldview is very much shaped by my faith," she said. "The things that are important to me are grace, redemption and the power of coming together. Those work even if you don't address them in theological terms. Our ladies do go to church in the series, and they know that they can go to their pastor when they have pressing questions."

Although the church in the novel is not Lutheran, Anderson intentionally depicted it as an ELCA congregation in the series, down to displaying the landmark on the building. She also made the pastor (portrayed by Tracey Bonner) a woman, imbuing the character, June, with the qualities she admires in ELCA pastors.

"I knew what she could offer them in terms of counsel and understanding," she explained. "These women can go to her at a moment where they can't even find solace with each other. And she's able to be with them and be still with them and offer them words of grace and hope that help them get themselves back on the path. She does not dictate. She listens and suggests and guides."

One character strengthened by her faith is Maddie Townsend, a mother of three with marital problems. Garcia Swisher said the offer for the role came at an ideal time.

"I've been so blessed to do so many projects that I feel really passionate about and I'm so proud of, but now I want to tell

stories that resonate with me at this moment in my life. I was kind of going to only read for those," Garcia Swisher said. "And it wasn't two weeks later that I got the call and they asked me to be a part of the show. I read the scripts and I instantly gravitated to the sense of community, the female friendships, the idea of resilience."

Garcia Swisher believes the spirituality of the characters rings true, and she thinks viewers of any background will connect with them.

"It really is a special moment where you can have an opportunity to lean into that spiritual side of things and do it in a way that feels super-organic and natural to the setting," she said. "For these people, church, religion and spirituality, and their belief in their faith are very much a part of who they are at their core. And it's beautiful."

One of Anderson's supporters is her real-life pastor, Eric Shafer, who called Anderson an active member of Mount Olive and noted that her faith is easy to see in her work. "She wants to show Christianity as loving and accepting of everyone, not hating and rejecting anyone," he said. "She comes to her television work informed by a deep faith in God and the desire to show the world that regular Christians are people just trying to do good in this world."

Shafer hopes Netflix will be a powerful platform for spreading a positive message.

"Whenever we can bring religion and faith into the public square—like secular television—we show how our faith informs all of our lives and give a wide witness to the love of God for all people," he said. "Sheryl's faithful witness to God's love through her programs is so very important. Her desire to put an ELCA congregation and pastor into her program is just a wonderful gift and bonus for our church."

For Anderson, *Sweet Magnolias* has been one of the best chances for her to merge her life in the church with her work.

"I'm getting a little teary," she said, describing it. "It is a gift to be able to do what I love best, what I feel I was gifted to do, and to have the opportunity to have these remarkable characters portrayed by amazing actresses who have all been on their own faith journey. It's a blessing. I'm thankful for every day. It's my script, but it's [God's] design."

Jeff Favre is an assistant professor at Pierce College in Los Angeles and a frequent contributor to *Living Lutheran*.



Roma Children in Serbia

Many children growing up in Roma communities in Europe live with a history of oppression that began long before they were born. For the Salijevski family, this has meant facing major barriers to education for their seven children.

During the late 1990s, many people migrated from the western Balkan states, including Serbia, into the European Union. Economic and social exclusion, discrimination and regional conflicts drove many Roma people to flee. In 2015, the EU's readmission agreement aimed to return migrants who had overstayed their visas back to the western Balkan states. Repatriation poses major challenges for returnees as well as receiving communities, which often lack effective support systems for those who are coming back.



After spending six years in Germany, where all their school-aged children attended school, the Salijevskis returned to Serbia through this readmission agreement. In the absence of stable work and housing, they ended up living in an informal settlement, with the father and children collecting recyclables in the street as their only form of income. Many Roma children are living or working in the streets. Some, like the Salijevskis, collect recycling, while others resell small items, clean car windows or ask strangers on the street for money.

For the Salijevski children, things changed when they were connected with Children on the Move, a program implemented by Church World Service and its partner the Centre for Youth Integration (CYI) and supported in part by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger. The program aims to reduce the number of children living or working on the streets, ensure that children have access to education, and educate the public and policymakers on the rights and needs of children. Some of those served by CYI are repatriated Roma people such as the Salijevskis.



The Salijevski children began to attend the program's drop-in shelter, where they were able to access education, psychosocial support and basic medical care, as well as make friends with other children. Until then they had spoken only Roma and German, so the children needed support in learning the Serbian language. Meanwhile, the program staff helped the parents access Serbian social services and enroll their older children in the educational system.

Accompanying returning children and their families is one way ELCA World Hunger and our partners share in God's work of building a just world. Thanks to your support, the children of the Salijevski family are spending less time working in the street and more time playing and learning, which points them toward a brighter future.