



Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

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

*for those with
hearing challenges*

*2nd Sunday
in Advent*

*November 29,
2020
9:30 AM*



The Reverend Marjo Anderson, Pastor

marjoanderson@aol.com

203-982-3441 (cell)

Karl Kraft, Office Manager

salemsec123@sbcglobal.net

Jennifer Reyes and Pablo Cruz, Sextons

jen92979@optimum.net

203-455-7583

3160 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604

Telephone: 203-336-3300;

Fax: 203-336-8813

www.salembridgeport.org

www.facebook.com/salembridgeport

YouTube – Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport CT

Gathering

*Although we will not be using these readings today,
they are those assigned for the First Sunday of Advent,
and we invite you to read them as you prepare for worship.*

Isaiah 40:1-11

- ¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God
²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.
³A voice cries out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.
⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.
⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.
⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"
¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.
¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

- ¹You have been gracious to your land, O LORD; you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.
²You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins.
⁸I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.
⁹Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you, that your glory may dwell in our land.
¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
¹¹Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
¹²The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase.
¹³Righteousness shall go before the LORD and shall prepare for God a pathway.

2 Peter 3:8-15a

⁸Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’ ”

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

**All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!
Furrows lie open for God's creative task:
this, the labor of people who struggle to see
how God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free.**

**People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel";
she conceived him, "God with us," our brother, whose birth
restores hope and courage to children of this earth.**

**Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;
new highways opened, new protocols declared.
Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!
All clear ev'ry gateway, in haste, come out in haste!**

**We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live
in our world; he his present, in neighbors we see
our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.**

One License Song # 92276

Text: Albert Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946;

Music: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; arr. Skinner Chávez-Melo, 1944-1992;

Text and tune © 1972 Alberto Taulé, admin. Virgil C. Funk;

Tr. © 1995 Madeleine Forell Marshall, admin. AusburgFortress;

arr. © Estate of Skinner Chávez-Melo; Tune: TAULÉ

Reprinted and Streamed with permission under OneLicense #A-727372

Performance by English Lutheran Church, Lacrosse, WI

at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70bRC2Upbd8>

Begin Livestream

WELCOME

Happy Saint Nick's Day on this 6th day of December, which is also the 2nd Sunday in Advent. Normally the season focuses on waiting - waiting for light in the midst of a growing darkness. This year, however, it seems like we have done nothing but wait – wait for the pandemic to be over, wait for reemployment, wait for money to pay the bills, wait for racial justice, wait for bipartisan leadership, wait for hope, wait for peace, wait for joy. It's as if we've been in Advent since March, and so we're not going to wait for Christmas. This year we are having a different kind of Advent, as we focus right in on the Christmas story, and sing Christmas carols beginning the first week of Advent and continuing through the 12th Day of Christmas.

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

While our offices at 3160 Park Avenue are closed at present, you can find us at our website: www.SalemBridgeport.org , on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SalemBridgeport , and on our YouTube Channel: Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, CT.

Over these months of the pandemic we have been worshipping in many and various ways, via pre-recorded services on Facebook and YouTube, online services on Zoom, outdoor services, drive-in services, and even 1 indoor in-person worship service before the pandemic forced us back to Phase 2.

Until it is deemed safe to once again gather in-person indoors, we will be showing our love by working to contain the pandemic as we worship online. Today we're on Zoom, and we plan to be on December 20th as well. Next Sunday, December 13th, is St. Lucia Day, and as I will be on vacation, Jean Larson and I are preparing a pre-recorded "Best of Lucia" service for you. Whether our worship is via zoom or pre-recorded, we will always try to stream to Facebook.

We've had over 1000 people check out our worship on FB & hundreds watch an entire service, which means we are reaching more people with the gospel now than we have for decades. If you are on Facebook, please share our worship on your page and we will reach even more with the good news of God's love and power!

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

As we begin our worship, let's pray:

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.

There is so much uncertainty in our lives, that we are often overcome by anxiety and fear.

Into the darkness of our spirits, shine the light of your presence.

Into the sorrow of our hearts, pour joy.

Into the chaos of our minds, bring peace.

Help us this day not only to know that you are with us, but to experience your very presence.

We pray in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Spirit. **Amen**

YEAR B – SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – PEACE
ADVENT WREATH CANDLELIGHTING

Pastor: Last Sunday we lit the first candle in our Advent Wreath, the Candle of Hope. We light it again as we remember that Christ will come again to fulfill all of God's promises to us and to bring to the world everlasting hope.

(Light the 1st candle.)

Leader: The second candle in our Advent Wreath is the Candle of Peace. It is sometimes called the Bethlehem Candle to remind us of the place in which preparations were made to receive and cradle the Christ child.



Pastor: Peace is a gift that we must be prepared for. God gives us the gift of peace when we turn to him in faith. The prophet Isaiah foretells of Christ when he speaks of "the Prince of Peace." Through John the Baptist and all the other prophets, God asks us to prepare our hearts so that Christ may come in. Our hope and our peace are in God, and in his son Jesus Christ.

Leader: We light this candle today to remind us that Christ brings peace to all who trust in him.

Pastor: Let us pray. *(a brief silence)*
Loving God, we thank you for the peace you give us through Jesus. Help us prepare our hearts to receive Him. Bless our worship. Guide us in all that we say and do. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem. **Amen**

(Light the 2nd candle.)

ADVENT SONG

Light One Candle

All: **Light one candle for hope, one bright candle for hope,
He brings hope to ev'ry heart, He comes, He Comes!
Light one candle for peace, one bright candle for peace,
He brings peace to ev'ry heart, He comes, He Comes!
Light one candle for joy, one bright candle for joy,
Ev'ry nation will find salvation in Beth'lem's baby boy.
Light one candle for love, one bright candle for love,
He brings love to ev'ry heart, He comes, He Comes!
He brings love to ev'ry heart, He comes, He Comes!**



One License Song #25661

Words and Music by Natalie Sleeth; © 1976 Hinshaw Music, Inc.,

Reprinted and Streamed with permission under OneLicense #A-727372

Performance by The Cherub Choir of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Southern Pines, NC,

Choirmaster/Organist Dr. Homer A. Ferguson III, Pianist Lydia Gill, December 2, 2018.

at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWXWNZLock4>

Word

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus came about. When Jesus' mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, her husband, an upright person unwilling to disgrace her, decided to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ This was Joseph's intention when suddenly the angel of God appeared in a dream and said, "Joseph, heir to the House of David, don't be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. ²¹ She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus – 'Salvation' – because he will save the people from their sins." ²² All this happened to fulfill what God has said through the prophet:

²³ "The virgin will be with child and give birth, and the child will be named Immanuel" – a name that means "God is with us". ²⁴ When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed. ²⁵ He did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world.
Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

Individual worshipers are invited to offer the petitions as so moved by the Spirit.

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience.
Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions.

We pray for our mission partners,
especially today for the Bridgeport Rescue Mission and the Center for Family Justice;
& for Salem members & their families, especially for those celebrating their birthday this week:
Barbara Howard, Dale Danowski, and Ashley Palmarozza.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth.
Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch.
Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems
so that all creation can declare your praise.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Steadfast God, you call us to seek justice.
Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort.
Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot
and righteousness rain down from above.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth.
Make even the disparities between your people.
Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike.
We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season.
Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely,
tend those who are sick or struggling with depression,
and gather all people in your healing embrace, especially Judy, Andrea, Audry, Barbara, Bud, Jerry,
David, Diane, Dolores, Dawn, Eron, Grace, Hazel, Jacob, Jana, Katherine, Liz, Maria, Martha, Ron,
Sarah, Steve, and all we name in our hearts.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness
and taught us to continue their faithful work,
especially Nicholas of Myra, whom we remember this St. Nick's Day.
Make their generous lives an example for all.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

The pastor concludes:

Draw near to us, O God, & receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Thanksgiving

OFFERING PRAYER

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

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

OFFERING

In response to God’s grace, it is our joy to return to God our tithes and offerings. Although our building at 3160 Park Avenue in Bridgeport, CT is closed at present, our ministry continues because of your generosity.

If you are watching and are part of another faith community, we encourage you to give your tithes to your own church first, and, if in addition to that, you would like to support our work here at Salem, we would be most grateful.

Simply go to the menu on our website at SalemBridgeport.org and click “donate” or scan the QR code here in our Sunday worship program with

OFFERTORY SONG **Of the Father’s Love Begotten**

- 1 Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore.
- 2 Oh, that birth forever blessed, when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer, first revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore.
- 4 Let the heights of heav'n adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing;
pow'rs, dominions, bow before him and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent, ev'ry voice in concert ring evermore and evermore.

One License Song # 81061

Text: Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348-413; tr. composite

Music: Plainsong mode V, 13th cent.;

Text Meter: 8 7 8 7 8 7 7

Tune Name: Divinum mysterium

This hymn is in the public domain.

Performance by the bell choir at St Mary of the Mount and Prince of Peace Parish in Pittsburgh, PA, with arrangement by Dr. Thomas Conroy. Used with permission.

Sending

of cyberspace worshippers

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANK YOU and BLESSING

Before we end the live-streamed portion of our worship,
I want to especially thank those of you out there in cyberspace who have joined us.
Know that God drew you to this worship for a reason.
Know that no matter what challenges you face,
God not only has the power to help you,
God loves you enough to use that power in your life.
I hope you will join us again.
And in the meantime,
may you find peace in the knowledge that God is with you. **Amen**

End Livestream

Meal

COMMUNION

God be with you!
And also with you!
Open your hearts!
We open them to God and one another!
Let us give thanks to the God of all!
It is right to give God thanks and praise!

In the night in which he was betrayed...

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let these gifts to us be blessed.
Blessed be God, who is our Bread; may all the world be clothed and fed. Amen

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

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

Sending

of physically or zoom gathered worshippers

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, and remain at peace, for Christ is with you!
Thanks be to God!

SENDING HYMN

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heav'nly music floats o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hov'ring wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow:
look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
oh, rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!

For lo! The days are hastening on by prophets seen of old
when with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold,
when the new heaven and earth shall own the prince of peace their King
And the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

OneLicense Song # #92234

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876; Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900

This hymn is in the public domain.

Performance by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m71c9p9a1dA>

Announcements

There are many ways to find the zoom link for worship and all other Salem events. The most reliable way is to go to our website - www.salembridgeport.org, choose the Resource tab, and click on Calendar. Then on the calendar, go to the day, the event, and when you click on it, it will open up the zoom invitation. You can click on the link, or copy and paste it into your browser. To see how to do this, [click here](#):

We also include the zoom links in our weekly email blasts, and in this announcement section of our Sunday bulletin. You can find links to Sunday worship materials like the bulletin, sermon, and donate page at www.salembridgeport.org/live. Or to see how to do it, [click here](#):

To join today's zoom worship at 9:30 just click on this link –

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82586283567?pwd=c3hwV1g5eFVYU3RwQ3ZzSEQyRzc5Zz09>

Don't forget to join us for our virtual coffee hour on zoom at 10:30! Coffee hour continues at 10:30 on Sundays via Zoom. To join, just click on this link - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86881604946?pwd=WE11ZkNGd3ZwaU5WS1JTMnlLZ1Ywdz09> - (Meeting ID: 868 8160 4946) (Passcode: 069124) or go to our website: www.salembridgeport.org, click on the Resource Tab, then on calendar, & then on the date & event, and a zoom invitation with link as well as call in information will appear. Remember that even if you don't have a laptop or a tablet or a smart phone, you can join by calling - even from your landline - one of these numbers - One tap mobile: +13017158592,,86881604946# US (Germantown) Dial by your location: +1 929 205 6099 US (New York) and entering the ID and passcode.

Join us each day on Facebook as we count up the 24 days to Christmas! On odd numbered days we tell the Christmas story in 12 parts, and on even numbered days we have surprise gifts – just for you! We are grateful to everyone who participated in our Sunday Night Alive recording session last Sunday and to those who have recorded things on their own for this project. Sandra Brown, Bill Winter, Grace Dukenski and Bruce Tomasko are among our readers, and other members of Salem and Genesis Gospel Café, along with friends from New Direction Ministries and elsewhere have contributed gifts of music, poetry, prayer, art, humor, and so much more. Each day when you open the door, know that along with the story or gift inside is something far greater – the promise that the God of all creation comes to you in the person of Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit!

Lord, Teach Us to Pray! Want to know how to pray? Want to see how prayer can change your life? Need prayer? Then join us each **Wednesday** on zoom at **noon** for a half-hour as we delve more deeply into the Lord's Prayer, and pray for each other's needs. The zoom link will be on the calendar on Salem's website at Salembridgeport.org under the Resources Tab.

Game Night! Every Thursday from 6:00-7:00 we gather online to see what the "Gaming Commission" has planned for us. Sometimes we play Bingo or Scattergories. Sometimes we play Headbands or Trivial Pursuit. Sometimes we act out Charades. But ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS, we LAUGH! For more information, speak with Jeanette or her daughter, Lynnette Lawson. Zoom link is available on Salem's calendar.

Salem and Friends Prayer Gathering & Take-out Breakfast, sponsored by the Salem Men, is held outdoors in the picnic grove on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 8:00.

The Inner-View Chat'n'Chew meets the 3rd Saturday of the month **11:00-1:00**. It's a time of fun and fellowship that gives us a chance to celebrate the gift that God has given us in one another. Evites are sent out to those on the Genesis mailing list but you can also find the Zoom link on Salem's calendar.

Sunday Night Alive events continue the last Sunday of the month, normally at 6 pm! There are other exciting plans ahead. Stay tuned!

The Search Is on...for Audio & Video Recordings of Salem's Choir! Do you have an old VHS tape or DVD or other video recording of the Salem Choir? Do you have an old reel-to-reel or 8-track or cassette audio recording? Did you ever film the choir with your phone? Or what about recordings of Lucia or our children's musical productions? We'd love to build up a digital library of Salem's musical treasures. Since singing increases significantly the amount and projection of the aerosols we produce when we breathe or speak, in-person singing is a high-risk activity which we cannot in good conscience allow for the duration of the pandemic, but we would dearly love to enjoy music in other ways. If you have any such recordings, please contact our Office Manager Karl by emailing him (salemsec123@sbcglobal.net) or calling the church and leaving a message (203-336-3300). We will figure out how to convert and copy your recordings so that we can all enjoy them. **We're especially looking for recordings we could use for Christmas or Easter or other special days.**

A whole buffet of worship opportunities – just for you! Every single one of us would no doubt like to go back to the way we worshipped pre-pandemic, but sadly that is not a possibility for now. God is GOOD, however, and has provided so many other ways for us to worship. Even if we get to Phase 3, there are those in our church family who due to health concerns are not able to gather with us indoors and have requested that we have zoom services sometimes. When the weather is too cold to keep windows open for ventilation or when the roads are too snowy, or if we are in Phase 1 or 2, or if someone worshipping tests positive for Covid and we need to self-quarantine, we'll be worshipping via zoom. When the pastor is on vacation, there will be pre-recorded services on Facebook and YouTube. While each one of us has our preferences, remember that we are a community in Christ who loves and looks out for one another. When we're worshipping your favorite way give thanks! And when we're worshipping in someone else's favorite way, give thanks for that, too!

Online Worship – Online worship is here to stay. Far more people participate in our worship online than come to worship on our property or even join us on zoom. In fact, up to 8 times as many as those gathered physically watch the entire service online, and many weeks we have over a thousand people who at least watch some of it! So no matter what format we use for worship in the future, we plan to stream via Facebook Live. Where the service is pre-recorded in the sanctuary it will also be streamed on YouTube. If you can't watch at 9:30 Sundays, video worship services will be saved to Facebook and also posted on YouTube so you can watch them later. Closed Captioning will be provided when available. For help turning on Captioning contact Karl or Pastor Marjo.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pastor Marjo and Salem's Office Manager, Karl, work primarily from their homes but generally come in once a week to take care of tasks that cannot be accomplished remotely. Even though we must operate differently in these times, if we can help in any way, please know that you can still call Salem's church office at 203-330-3300 and leave a message and your message will be picked up remotely and your call returned. Please also do not hesitate to call or text Pastor Marjo at 203-982-3441.

Need help finding a Salem zoom meeting or need to set one up? Just go to our website at SalemBridgeport.org, click on the Resources tab, then on Calendar. On the calendar just find the day and click on the event and a zoom invitation will appear. Sometimes you may have to click on "(+2 more)" in order to see additional vents that don't fit in the calendar square. 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.

Technology have you stumped? If you'd like some (VERY BASIC!) technology help – like accessing zoom on your iPhone, tablet, or pc, or downloading and using the Venmo or Cash app, or anything else, please speak with Pastor Marjo or call or email Karl.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342
Sunday, December 6, 2020

Little is known about Nicholas, except that he was a bishop in present-day Turkey. According to legend, he was famous for his giving to the poor, and so has become a symbol of anonymous gift-giving.

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, died 397
Monday, December 7, 2020

While a governor of northern Italy, Ambrose was elected bishop of Milan on the same day he was baptized. He was a famous preacher, a writer of hymns we still sing today, and helped lead St. Augustine to faith.

THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF GREATER BRIDGEPORT

*If you're reading this online, just click on the underlined links for details.
Or go to CCGB.org*

WHY DO WE ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE?

- [Why Advocacy - A Study Guide for Congregations](#)

The Council of Churches and our member congregations have prioritized the issues listed below for our advocacy efforts. Policy changes in these areas will have an immediate, positive effect on our communities and the neighbors we serve.

Climate Change

learn about how addressing food insecurity and reducing our food waste can make a huge difference

- [Combatting Food Insecurity](#)
- [Ways to Reduce Food Waste](#)
- [Articles from Earth Day 2020](#)

Criminal Justice Reform

help us pass the Clean Slate bill and give people a real second chance

- [Clean Slate Bill - A Study Guide for Congregations](#)

Education Equity

all children in Bridgeport and beyond deserve a quality education

- [Call to Action](#)
- [CCGB's Goals and Initiatives](#)
- [Education Reform - A Study Guide for Congregations](#)

Immigration Reform

how shall we "welcome the stranger" with respect and care?

Gun Violence Prevention

"do not stand idly by while your neighbor's blood is shed" Leviticus 19:16

- [Overview of Resources](#)
- [Do Not Stand Idly By Campaign](#)
- [Congregational Toolkit \(PCUSA\)](#)

Resources on the CT Legislature

Here you can find basic guides, templates and resources for raising your voice and getting involved!

- [Guide to Written Testimony for a Public Hearing on CT Legislation.pdf](#)
- [How a CT Bill Becomes Law.pdf](#)

Ebony and Ivory? Wonder why some of your friends are saying “Black Lives Matter” when obviously all lives matter? Wonder why when we have anti-racism laws, people keep talking about “systemic” or “structural racism”? Wonder why the church is so focused on this issue? If you’re looking for answers to these and other questions, here are some great ways to learn:

1. **The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport invites its members to take the following steps to work for a more just and equitable society:**

*Starting on **September 17**, and going at least **through May 20, 2021** we will hold monthly zoom meetings, **the third Thursday of every month from 7:30 to 8:15 PM**. You can register on our website –

<https://default.salsalabs.org/T4ca0bc4e-b5a6-457f-9432-5f3e459aaaa6/464704ca-cfbd-4af1-9836-dc2cefbf86ab> - & join these conversations to learn more, talk in small groups, & continue to engage in anti-racist work.

*You can take the 21 day Racial Equity Challenge - <https://default.salsalabs.org/T6ccaac28-05da-4baf-88a8-d1c2b9b86893/464704ca-cfbd-4af1-9836-dc2cefbf86ab> - all by yourself, to continue to learn, reflect, and act. This is a great resource created by the Myers Park Presbyterian Church, in Charlotte, VA.

*Also, here is a link - <https://default.salsalabs.org/Tc340bebd-4d68-4800-b754-7c48a473cd23/464704ca-cfbd-4af1-9836-dc2cefbf86ab> - to a document which lists these resources and our recommendations for a number of local and national organizations doing excellent anti-racism and justice work.

2. **Read the 2019 Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent**

& its accompanying Explanation at

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Slavery_Apology_Explanation.pdf?ga=2.119362624.853575714.1565027421-1958052405.1536241629 or go to ELCA.org, scroll down to “Resources”, scroll down to “Racial Justice”, and click on the Declaration to read and/or download.

3. **Listen to this video lecture** by Tom Skinner:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvKQx4ycTmA> . It gives a much more detailed history of slavery in this country than we received in our history classes at school, & explains how it was the issue of slavery that created the divide between mainline & evangelical Christians.

4. **Read the book, Dear Church: a Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US** by Lenny Duncan. There have been many explanations for the church’s decline, but Duncan sees a direct correlation between the church’s lack of diversity and its lack of vitality. Part manifesto, part confession, and all love letter, Dear Church offers a bold new vision for the future of the ELCA and the rest of mainline Protestant Christianity and calls everyone – leaders and laity alike – to the front lines of the church’s renewal through racial equality and justice. *Salem has a few copies of the book, so if you would like to borrow one, please speak with Pastor Marjo.*