



Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

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

*4th Sunday
in Advent*

*December 20,
2020
9:30 AM*



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YouTube – Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport CT

Gathering

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

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.” Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.”

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”

Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.

And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies.

Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26

¹Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing; from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.

²For I am persuaded that your steadfast love is established forever;
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.

³“I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn an oath to David my servant:

⁴“I will establish your line forever, and preserve your throne for all generations.”

¹⁹You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people:

“I have set the crown upon a warrior and have exalted one chosen out of the people.

²⁰I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.

²¹My hand will hold him fast and my arm will make him strong.

²²No enemy shall deceive him, nor shall the wicked bring him down.

²³I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.

²⁴My faithfulness and steadfast love are with him, and he shall be victorious through my name.

²⁵I will set his hand on the sea, and his right hand on the rivers.

²⁶He will say to me, ‘You are my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.’

Romans 16:25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God."

³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁴⁶And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for God has looked with favor on the lowliness of this servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is God's name.

⁵⁰Divine mercy is for those who fear God from generation to generation.

⁵¹God has shown the strength of a mighty arm & scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³God has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴God has helped servant Israel, in remembrance of divine mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise God made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and Sarah and to their descendants forever."

⁵⁶And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

GATHERING MUSIC

Angels Among Us
Steve Kuczo, vocalist

Don Goodman & Becky Hobbs

WELCOME

YEAR B – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT WREATH CANDLELIGHTING – LOVE

Pastor: Last Sunday people lit the third candle in our Advent Wreath, the Candle of Joy. We light it and the Candles of Hope and Peace 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, peace and joy.

(Light the 1st, 2nd, & 3rd candles.)

Leader: The fourth candle in our Advent Wreath is the Candle of Love
It reminds us of the love that God has for us.

Pastor: Jesus shows us God's perfect love, God's love in human form.
The bible says that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life."
Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one.
Love is never boastful or conceited, rude or selfish.
Love is not quick to take offense, it keeps no records of wrongs,
it does not gloat over other people's troubles,
but rejoices in the right, the good, and the true.
There is nothing that love cannot face,
there is no limit to its faith, to its hope, to its endurance. Love never ends.

Leader: We light this candle today to remind us how God's perfect love is found in Jesus.

Pastor: Let us pray. *(a brief silence)*
Loving God, we thank you for love you give us through Jesus Christ.
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 4th candle.)



ADVENT SONG

“Light One Candle”

Natalie Sleeth

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! *(repeat line)***

One License Song #25661

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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

Luke 1:26-38

Part 1: ²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Part 2: ³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, & blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Part 3: ⁴⁶And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸for God has looked with favor on the lowliness of this servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is God's name.
⁵⁰Divine mercy is for those who fear God from generation to generation.
⁵¹God has shown strength with a powerful arm;
and has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵²God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³God has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴God has helped servant Israel, in remembrance of divine mercy,
⁵⁵according to the promise God made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and Sarah and to their descendants forever."

⁵⁶And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

SERMON

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.

Gracious God, all generations call you blessed.

In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths.

Inspire the faith of their people.

Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community.

We pray for our mission partners,

especially today for Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response

and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's World Hunger Appeal;

& for Salem members & their families, especially for those celebrating their birthday this week:

Joseph Roberts, Katherine Pytleski, and James McWain.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creator God, you scatter the proud. Everything we have belongs first to you.

Bless and protect the seas, mountains, plains, forests, skies, and soils that surround us.

Give us humility as we tend them.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Righteous God, you humble the powerful and lift up the lowly.

We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they amplify the voices of people in need.

Guide all people entrusted with leadership, to create societies in which everyone can flourish.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty.

Nourish those who lack access to adequate food and nutrition.

Bless the work of advocates, community organizers, and food pantries.

Encourage others to provide for their neighbors in need.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, you pour out mercy to all who cry out to you.

Surround everyone in need of healing in body, mind, or spirit with your tender presence,

especially Andrea, Audry, Barbara, Bud, Jerry, David, Diane, Dolores, Eron, Grace, Hazel, Jacob,

Jana, Katherine, Liz, Maria, Martha, Millicent, Ron, Sarah, Steve, and all we name in our hearts.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Eternal God, you are faithful to the promises you made to our forebears.

We give thanks for the ministry of Katharina von Bora Luther and other ancestors

who organized, planned, dreamed, encouraged, and reached out as they served you.

We give thanks for the bold leadership of female leaders in our own time.

Inspire others with their steadfast witness.

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 & 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 a QR reader on your smart phone which will take you to that page.



OFFERTORY SONG The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

**The angel Gabriel from heaven came, with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary, most highly favored lady." Gloria!**

**Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head; "To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name." Most highly favored lady, Gloria!**

**Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
& Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: "Most highly favored lady." Gloria!**

Text: Luke 1:26-38, 39-55, Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924; Text Meter: 10 10 12 10;

Music: Basque carol; Tune Name: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE;

Both the Text and Tune are in the Public Domain.

Performance by Clarisa Best, vocalist, and Dr. Thomas Conroy, organist,

at St Mary of the Mount and Prince of Peace Parish in Pittsburgh, PA. Used with permission from Dr. Conroy.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

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

Sending

of cyberspace worshippers

ANNOUNCEMENTS, THANK YOU and BLESSING

Meal

God be with you!

Open your hearts!

Let us give thanks to the God of all!

And also with you!

We open them to God and one another!

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

Sending

of physically or zoom gathered worshippers

DISMISSAL

Go in peace & open yourself to the surprising & extraordinary things God has planned for you!

Thanks be to God!

SENDING HYMN

Magnificat (*from Holden Evening Prayer*)

by Marty Haugen

An angel went from God to a town called Nazareth to a woman whose name was Mary.

The angel said to her “Rejoice, O highly favored, for God is with you.

You shall bear a child, and his name shall be Jesus, the Chosen One of God Most High.”

And Mary said, “I am the servant of my God. I live to do your will.

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you.

You have looked with love on your servant here, and blessed me all my life through.

Great and mighty are you, O Holy One. Strong is your kindness evermore.

How you favor the weak and lowly one, humbling the proud in heart.

You have cast the mighty down from their thrones, and uplifted the humble of heart.

You have filled the hungry with wondrous things, and left the wealthy no part.

Great and mighty are you, O Faithful One. Strong is your justice, strong your love, as you promised to Sarah and Abraham, kindness forevermore.

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you.

You have looked with love on your servant here, and blessed me all my life through.

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Performance by St Stephen's Lutheran Church, Lexington, SC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79GlnqXpp1Q>

Announcements

Our online Video Advent Calendar continues each day on our Facebook page, SalemBridgeport, so please tune in to hear the Christmas story in 12 parts with music, art, poetry, and more on the days in between. And don't just tune in, please share the videos with all your friends on Facebook!

To join today's zoom worship at 9:30, as we focus on Mary, 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=WEl1ZkNGd3ZwaU5WS1JTMnILZ1Ywdz09> - (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.

On Christmas Eve, we gather in our parking lot at 7 pm for a primarily drive-in service filled with carols and the story of Christmas, and then invite you inside (masked and appropriately distanced) for a brief service of Holy Communion and Candle-lighting. Then we will proceed back outside and close our worship by singing together (for the first time since the pandemic!) "Silent Night".

Next Sunday we will be joining other congregations in the New England Synod in an online service of Lessons and Carols which will premiere on our FB page at 9:30.

Our next SUNDAY NIGHT ALIVE event will take place next Sunday December 27th at 6:00 pm on Zoom. We'll be watching the first half of our hour-long video, "The Gifts of Christmas", a compilation of the readings and the gifts that were shared as part of our Video Advent Calendar. If you didn't get to see all of our daily video posts this month, this is your chance to catch up. And even if you didn't miss a day, you won't want to miss this chance to gather together on zoom to remember, to celebrate, and to share some laughter and love. You can find the link on our website, SalemBridgeport.org, by clicking on the Resources tab, then Calendar, and then going to the event. Or you can simply click on this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82224426828?pwd=aTNKcUE4eEdINEliYIFVd1RnYlIXQT09>

Online Worship will be the norm until it is deemed safe to once again gather in-person indoors. ***Salem members, if you are not able to join us online from your home, please contact either me or our parish nurse so we might facilitate your participation.*** Perhaps we can loan you a digital tablet and teach you to use it, or provide a place for you to safely watch our service outside your home. No matter how we worship, we'll stream to FacebookLive and post to our YouTube channel.

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 get there, **click here**:

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.

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

Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church, died 1552

Sunday, December 20, 2020

Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katie eventually took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin.

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Saturday, December 26, 2020

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

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.*