



Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

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

3rd Sunday
after Epiphany

January 24,
2021
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

We invite you to read these readings for the 2nd & 3rd Sundays after Epiphany as you prepare for worship.

First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]

¹Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

²At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me". But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me". But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again". ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me". Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." [¹¹Then the LORD said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. ¹²On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. ¹⁴Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

¹⁵Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. ¹⁶But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son". He said, "Here I am". ¹⁷Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." ¹⁸So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him".

¹⁹As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.]

Psalm: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

¹LORD, you have searched me out; O LORD, you have known me.

²You know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

³You trace my journeys and my resting-places and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

⁵You encompass me, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain to it....

¹³For you yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴I will thank you because I am marvelously made; your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

¹⁵My body was not hidden from you, while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in your book; my days were fashioned before they came to be.

¹⁷How deep I find your thoughts, O God! How great is the sum of them!

¹⁸If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand; to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

¹²“All things are lawful for me”, but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful for me”, but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”, and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh”. ¹⁷But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

Jonah 3:1-5, 10 The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, “Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you”. So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days’ walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s walk. And he cried out, “Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

Psalm 62:5-12

⁵For God alone I wait in silence; truly, my hope is in God.

⁶God alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold, so that I shall never be shaken.

⁷In God is my deliverance and my honor; God is my strong rock and my refuge.

⁸Put your trust in God always, O people, pour out your hearts before the one who is our refuge.

⁹Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath; those of low estate cannot be trusted.

Placed on the scales together they weigh even less than a breath.

¹⁰Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no empty pride; though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.

¹¹God has spoken once, twice have I heard it, that power belongs to God.

¹²Steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord, for you repay all according to their deeds.

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

Mark 1:14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news”.

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people”. And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

**Here in this place new light is streaming; now is the darkness vanished away.
See in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in – the lost & forsaken. Gather us in – the blind and the lame.
Call to us now, and we shall awaken; we shall arise at the sound of our name.**

**We are the young – our lives are a myst'ry. We are the old who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of hist'ry, called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in – the rich and the haughty. Gather us in – the proud and the strong.
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly; give us the courage to enter the song.**

**Here we will take the wine and the water. Here we will take the bread of new birth.
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion. Give us to eat the bread that is you.
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion lives that are holy and hearts that are true.**

**Not in the dark of buildings confining, not in some heaven, light years away,
but here in this place the new light is shining: now is the Kingdom, now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever. Gather us in and make us your own.
Gather us in – all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.**

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950; Meter 10 9 10 10 D

Music: GATHER US IN; Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Text and Tune: Marty Haugen, b. 1950; © 1982, GIA Publications, Inc.

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WELCOME

Welcome in the name of the God calls us to live in love with God, with one another, and with all of creation!

Thank you for joining us today! Thank you, members of Salem!

Thank you, others who are here with us in the zoom room!

Thank you, to those of you out there in cyber space, wherever – and whenever! – you are!

For those of you who don't know me,

I'm Pastor Marjo Anderson of Salem Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, CT.

While our offices are closed at present, you can always find us at our website: SalemBridgeport.org, on our Facebook page, SalemBridgeport, and on our YouTube channel, Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport Ct.

As the more infectious strain of the coronavirus has made its way to CT, the state dept of health encourages us to double down on our efforts to contain the spread of the virus. Those of us who can worship online will continue to do so, except for special events like our upcoming congregational meeting. .

If there are Salem members you know who are not able to join us online from their homes, please contact either me or our parish nurse so we might facilitate their participation, either by loaning them a digital tablet and teaching them to use it, or by providing a place for them to watch our service outside their home.

No matter how we worship, we'll stream to FacebookLive and post to our YouTube channel.

One of our videos has had over 1.6K views, and others have numbered in the hundreds. which means we are reaching more people now than we have for decades, maybe ever.

Christ has commanded us to go into all the world to share the story of God's power and love.

And now you don't have to knock on doors, or stand on street corners, or approach friends at work – all you have to do is tap that “share” arrow under our worship video! What could be easier?!

Just this week I heard the story of a congregation that since the start of the pandemic has planted new churches in 4 different countries, simply by sharing their Facebook worship with their friends and family!

Links to our donate page and worship bulletin

which has both the order of worship and announcements, as well as other resources are included on our website at SalemBridgeport.org/Live.

Please remember that you may reach me by text, telephone, or email – anytime.

If I am not able to pick up right away, leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Messages can also be left for Karl on the church answering machine which he can access remotely.

During this Epiphany season, we focus on our call to leave our nets, to leave the comfort of what we know, and follow Jesus wherever he leads!

As we begin our worship, let us pray:

O God, you have called us to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as still untrodden, through perils yet unknown.

Give us faith to go out with good courage,

not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us.

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

Word

Because we took a Sunday to celebrate the Epiphany, we got a Sunday behind in the lectionary, but as I looked at the readings assigned to last week and this week there such similarities that it seemed this would be the perfect Sunday to catch up.

The first obvious connection were the gospel readings which were both about Jesus calling the disciples, but when I looked at the Old Testament readings I noticed even more connections, as they are all about God calling people into relationship on their journeys through life.

First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

¹Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. ²...Eli...was lying down in his room; ³...and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me". But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me". But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again". ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me". Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹⁰...the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Gospel: John 1:43-50

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me".... ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses ... and also the prophets wrote, Jesus ... from Nazareth". ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see". ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you". ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these."

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

¹The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, ²"Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you". ³So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh.... ⁴...And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.... ¹⁰When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

Mark 1:14-20

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news". ¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people". ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

SERMON

The Reverend Marjo Anderson

Epiphany 2 & 3

24 January 2021

1 Samuel 3:1-10, John 1:43-50, Jonah 3:1-5, 10, Mark 1:14-20

Salem, Bridgeport

“What Is God Saying to YOU?”

I’ve been spending a lot of time praying and reflecting on prayer lately.
Our Wednesday noontime prayer has become an important part of my week,
I’ve popped into a Bible study at Cross of Christ in Waterbury a few times
to join their study on prayer,
I’ve been reading a book on prayer,
and I’ve been working with the pastoral leaders in our conference
as we plan a joint midweek Lenten series called “Lenten Adventures in Prayer”.
And as I read over the lessons for Sunday it dawned on me
that almost all my time in these various prayer ventures has focused on OUR part in prayer –
when to pray, where to pray, how to pray, and for what we should pray –
but very little of my time has been focused on God’s part in prayer –
what God is saying to us.

So let me ask you: how do you hear God?
That’s a serious question and I would absolutely love to stop talking right now
and have you all share.
But I realize we’re on Facebook Live
and you may not feel comfortable witnessing to the entire world,
but I do invite you to maybe share at coffee hour,
or give me a call later this week and we’ll talk.

One of the ways I hear God is as a voice in my head.

Sometimes that voice is soft and whispers to me things like:

“You should call so-and-so....” or

“You should really stop procrastinating and get to work on your sermon....” or

“You really shouldn’t let that racist remark stand unchallenged....“

I know it’s God’s voice because it’s saying the things that I know God wants.

Some people may call it their conscience.

Others may view it as the voice of an angel sitting on their one shoulder,

balancing the devil on the other.

But for me it’s God.

And I’m pretty sure you all know what it’s like to hear God whisper such things in your ear.

God also speaks to me in a very loud and clear voice.

This doesn't happen often, but it certainly makes those times all the more memorable.

One time when I was young I didn't listen.

I thought I knew better than God.

But I didn't.

And that decision ended up leading me down a path to a particular life goal that has been much harder and longer than I ever imagined.

In fact, I think that's what contributed to my being like Nathaniel, not really expecting that my future would ever be much different from my past or present.

I had disobeyed and chosen my own path and the longer I was on it, the more I knew it wasn't leading where I wanted to go, but it wasn't like I could go back and start over!

I was like Jonah, who disobeyed, hopped aboard a ship bound in the opposite direction, and found himself in the middle of a storm,

being thrown overboard and left to drown in the sea.

But God showed up with a big fish to swallow him

and transport him to the place he could fulfill his destiny.

So God speaks in a small whispering voice, and in a loud clear voice.

And **God speaks through events and circumstances** as well.

Like with the voice, these events and circumstances can be large or small.

They can be huge life-changing events –

like a whale for Jonah, a pit for Joseph, a burning bush for Moses,

angels for Mary and Joseph, a star for the magi,

a transfiguring vision for Peter, James and John, blinding light for Paul,

a mighty wind, tongues of fire and speaking in tongues for the apostles,

getting a full scholarship to your first choice school, being healed from cancer,

or finally finding the love of your life after over 50 years.

Or they can be small daily life events –

like asking God to find \$1 in lost change and finding it,

or asking God to please help you find your phone

and looking down to see it

in a place you know you looked at least 3 times before,

or praying for someone you haven't spoken to in weeks

and having that person call right after your prayer.

God also speaks through the words of others.

I said that I was like Jonah –

that I had gone off in the opposite direction from what God had wanted.

And then I was like Nathaniel,

assuming my future would simply be an extension of my past and present and not expecting anything much from God to change it.

But then just as Jesus spoke to Nathaniel

and told him that he knew everything about him and offered him a new life, God spoke to me again in that clear, loud voice and said,

“I know where you are to go — where you will find what you desire – and don’t worry, even though this isn’t the easiest path, I will get you there.”

It was that loud clear voice, but as progress appears slow or non-existent, there have been times I’ve doubted whether it was really God’s voice.

And then God used another way of speaking – through other people.

So as I was looking ahead over the next 3 years

and doubting whether anything really significant could happen in my ministry in just 3 years’ time,

I got a phone call from a friend and in the course of the conversation he said,

“that was the biggest miracle that’s ever happened to me.

It took **3 years**, but it happened!”

And I knew that was confirmation of what God had promised –

that it was indeed God’s voice I had heard –

confirmation from God coming through the voice of another person.

God speaks in whispers and in a loud clear voice.

God speaks through miraculous events – as small as a lost coin or as big as a whale.

God speaks through the words and actions of other people.

God speaks through the so-called “coincidences” of our lives.

I say so-called because I’ve learned

that what may appear as coincidences to the eyes of those without faith, are in fact one of the ways that God delights in surprising us with joy.

And God speaks through a physical sensation that some would describe as “chills”, or as someone once called it, “the supercharge of the Holy Spirit”,

with the Holy Spirit lighting up every cell in the human body and making them shimmer with life energy.

The Bible says that God has spoken in many and various ways.

The Bible itself is the story of God speaking – not just to those in the stories but to us as well.

In my own life God speaks to me in whispers and in a clear loud voice.
God speaks to me in miracles great and miracles small.
God speaks to me through people in their words and actions.
God speaks to me through quirky coincidences on an almost daily basis, and sometimes through physical sensations.

The question is:

How is God speaking to you?
What is God saying to you?
Where is God calling you?

I hope you will not only reflect on those questions;
I hope you will share the answers.

Because the more you share about what God is saying and doing in your life,
the more things God will say to you and do in and through you.

It took Samuel awhile to recognize God's voice.
It took Nathaniel a bit to realize how amazing it would be to follow Jesus.
It took Jonah awhile to understand God had not given up on him.
But they, like Andrew, Peter, James and John, eventually followed where God led.
And their stories have impacted the world for thousands of years,
continuing to impact us today.

My prayer for you this day is this:
May you hear God's voice.
May you follow where God leads.
And in the journey may you find all you need. **Amen**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Guided by Christ made known to the nations,
let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

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

Let us pray for the church throughout the world, for pastors and teachers,
for deacons and deaconesses, and for musicians and servers,
that all proclaim the good news of God's reconciling love.

For our mission partners, especially today for Camp Calumet Lutheran;
& for Salem members & their families, especially for those celebrating their birthday this week:
Tiffany Claus, Eliana Llanos, and Liz Bales

God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for skies and seas, for birds and fish, for favorable weather and clean water,
and for the well-being of creation,

that God raise up advocates and scientists to guide our care for all the earth,
God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for those who provide leadership in our cities and around the world,
for nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations,

for planning commissions and homeless advocates,
that God inspire all people in the just use of wealth,
God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for those who are sick, distressed, or grieving; for the outcast & all who await relief,
especially Andrea, Audry, Barbara, Bud, Jerry, David, Diane, Dolores, Eron, Grace, Hazel,
Jacob, Jana, Katherine, Liz, Maria, Martha, Ron, Sarah, Steve, and all we name in our hearts,
that in the midst of suffering, God's peace and mercy surround them,
God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray that as individuals and as a congregation we hear and obey your call
to move out of our comfort zones into ever deepening relationships
that span differences in race, class, political affiliation, and religious denomination.
God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In thanksgiving for our ancestors in the faith whose lives serve as an example of gospel living,
let us pray that they point us to salvation through Christ,
God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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

The pastor concludes:

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent,
for the sake of the One who dwells among us, Jesus Christ. **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

Here I Am, Lord Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 574

- 1. I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?**

Refrain: **Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.**

- 2. I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people’s pain.
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send? (Refrain)**

- 3. I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send? (Refrain)**

Text: 1 Samuel 3:1-18, Isaiah 6:1-8; Daniel L. Schutte, b. 1946; Meter 7 7 7 4 D and refrain

Music: HERE I AM, LORD; by Dan Schutte; Arranged by Eric Shanfelt

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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; & 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

Before we end the live-streamed portion of our worship,

I want to especially thank those of you out there in cyberspace who have worshipped with us.

I hope you will join us again.

And in the meantime, know that God is calling you into ever deepening relationship

No matter how difficult it is to get your attention, God will keep trying.

No matter how far you run, God will not let you get away.

No matter how little you may expect, God is just waiting to surprise you.

The God who created you,

the God who knows everything about you,

the God who loves you a bazillion times more than you can ever imagine, is calling you.

May you find all you seek in God's waiting arms. **Amen**

Meal

COMMUNION

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

Amen!

Sending

of gathered worshippers

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, listen for God's call, follow where God leads, and prepare to be amazed!
Thanks be to God!

SENDING SONG

We Are Called

Worship & Praise # 147

Everyone, please join in on the refrain, and if you'd like to sing the verses, join in on those, too!

Come! Live in the light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom, to live in the freedom of the city of God.

**We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.**

Come! Open your heart! Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless so hatred and blindness will be no more.

**We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.**

Sing! Sing a new song! Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign, and we'll walk with each other as sisters and brothers united in love.

**We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.**

Text: David Haas, b. 1957; Meter irregular

Music: WE ARE CALLED; David Haas, b. 1957

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Announcements

You are invited to a special worship service online tomorrow, Monday, January 25th at 3 pm which will include a virtual choir piece that Pastor Marjo will be singing in (her first ever virtual choir experience!). The hymn is actually one of her favorite Marty Haugen ones: “Neither Death nor Life”. The worship is part of the 2021 Calvin Worship Symposium. Last year our synod’s worship team, including Bishop Hazelwood and Jeanette Harris, traveled to Michigan for the annual symposium. This year it was free, online, and spread out over 3 weeks, so Pastor Marjo attended a number of the events as the Church looks forward to where God is calling us to express our faith in worship and witness now and in the years ahead. Here’s the link for the worship service: <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/worship-from-around-the-world-on-romans-8>

Join us for worship on Sundays, 9:30 – 10:30am via ZOOM at this link:

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

Meeting ID: 825 8628 3567 ; Passcode: 792383 ; Dial by your location:

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown) +1 929 205 6099 US (New York) +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma) +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kzOIaBjao>

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.

Upcoming Important Events: On **January 31st**, instead of coffee hour, we’ll have an **Adult Forum on the 2021 budget**. On **February 7th** we’ll have our **Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting with Opening Devotions & Closing Prayer** in place of worship at 9:30.

Sunday Night Alive events continue **NEXT SUNDAY January 31st at 6:00 pm on Zoom**. We’ll be watching the second 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=aTNKcUE4eEdINELiYlFVd1RnYlIXQT09>

Connecticut residents over 75 can now begin making appointments to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Over the coming weeks, Phase 1b will expand to include those over 65, those with underlying conditions, and frontline essential workers. For more information [click here](#).

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.

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

The **Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport's Raising the BAR: Becoming Anti-Racist series continues on the 3rd Thursday each month from 7:30 to 8:15 pm.** You can register on their [website](http://www.salsalabs.org) – <https://default.salsalabs.org/T4ca0bc4e-b5a6-457f-9432-5f3e459aaaa6/464704ca-cfbd-4af1-9836-dc2cefbf86ab> - and join these conversations to learn more, talk in small groups, and continue to engage in anti-racist work.

Inner-View Chat'n'Chew meets the **3rd Saturday of the month at 11:00 on Zoom.** 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.

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.

Every single one of us would no doubt like to go back to the way we used to worship 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 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 or on other special days, 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 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.

We're still searching for recordings of Salem's choir! We're happy to provide special online worship experiences if you have old VHS tapes or DVDs or other video recordings of the Salem Choir to share. Or maybe 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 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 & 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 use in Lent, Holy Week, Easter,** or other special days.

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.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Conversion of Paul

Monday, January 25, 2021

The week of prayer begun by the remembrance of Peter's confession now comes to an end as we recall the pivotal moment in the life of the other pillar of the early church, the apostle Paul.

His encounter with the risen Christ turned him from persecutor of the followers of Christ to one of their leaders.

Timothy, Titus, and Silas, missionaries

Tuesday, January 26, 2021

These three early Christian men were missionary companions of the apostle Paul. Timothy became bishop of Ephesus, Titus bishop of Crete, and Silas was imprisoned with Paul at Philippi until they were delivered by an earthquake.

Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

Women as well as men were important Christian leaders from the beginning, as demonstrated by these coworkers of the apostle Paul.

Lydia, a seller of purple goods, lent her home for a church;

Dorcas was known for charitable works;

and Phoebe was a deacon in the church at Cenchrae.

Thomas Aquinas, teacher, died 1274

Thursday, January 28, 2021

One of the most brilliant and creative theologians in the church's history,

Aquinas worked to bring together scripture and the philosophy of Aristotle.

A member of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), Aquinas was also a hymnwriter.

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.*