



# *Salem Lutheran Church*

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

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

*4<sup>th</sup> Sunday  
after  
Epiphany*

*January  
31, 2021  
9:30 AM*



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YouTube – Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport CT

# Gathering

*We invite you to read these readings for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany as you prepare for worship.*

## **Deuteronomy 18:15-20**

*[Moses said:]* The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: “If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.” Then the LORD replied to me: “They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak — that prophet shall die.”

## **Psalm 111**

Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,  
in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.  
Great are your works, O LORD, pondered by all who delight in them.  
Majesty and splendor mark your deeds, and your righteousness endures forever.  
You cause your wonders to be remembered; you are gracious and full of compassion.  
You give food to those who fear you, remembering forever your covenant.  
You have shown your people the power of your works in giving them the lands of the nations.  
The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice; all of your precepts are sure.  
They stand fast forever and ever, because they are done in truth and equity.  
You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever; holy and awesome is your name.  
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;  
all who practice this have a good understanding. God’s praise endures forever.

## **1 Corinthians 8:1-13**

Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge”. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him.

Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists”, and that “there is no God but one”. Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth — as in fact there are many gods and many lords — yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. “Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

## GATHERING MUSIC

## `Made a Way

*Verse 1:* **Standing here not knowing how We'll get through this test  
But holding onto faith You know best  
Nothing can catch You by surprise, You've got this  
Figured out, and You're watching us now**

*Verse 2:* **But when it looks as if we can't win  
You wrap us in your arm and step in  
Ev'rything we need, You supply, You've got this  
In control, and now we know that**

*Chorus 1:*  
**You made a way when our backs Were against the wall And it looked as if it was over  
You, You made a way and we're standing here Only because You made a way**

*Verse 3:* **Now we're looking back on Where we've come from  
Because of You and nothing we've done  
To deserve the love and mercy You've shown  
But Your grace was strong enough to pick us up**

*Bridge 1:*  
**You move mountains, You cause walls to fall With your power, You perform miracles  
There is nothing that's impossible  
And we're standing here Only because You made a way**

*Bridge 2:*  
**You move mountains, You cause walls to fall With Your power, You perform miracles  
There is nothing that's impossible  
And we're standing here Only because You made a way  
And we're standing here Only because You made a way  
We're standing here Only because You made a way**

*Chorus 2:* **You made a way, You made a way You made a way, You made a way**

*Tag:*  
**Don't know how, but You did it, made a way Don't know how, but You did it, made a way  
Don't know how but You did it Don't know how but you did it  
Don't know how but You did it Don't know how but you did it**

*Chorus 3:*  
**Don't know why but I'm grateful Don't know why but I'm grateful  
Don't know why but I'm grateful Don't know why but I'm grateful  
Don't know why but I'm grateful**

*Tag*  
**And we're standing here only because You made a way**

*CCLI Song # 7071768. Travis Greene  
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## WELCOME

Welcome in the name of the God who has given us power and authority to build the kingdom of God on earth!  
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](http://SalemBridgeport.org),  
on our Facebook page, SalemBridgeport,  
and on our YouTube channel, Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport Ct.

We give thanks that at the moment Covid rates are decreasing and that some people have received vaccinations.  
At the same time we remain cautious as the virus continues to evolve and new strains of the disease emerge.  
Please, whether or not you have received your vaccination, remain both prayerful and careful –  
continue wearing your mask, maintaining social distancing, and limiting contacts as much as possible.

While next Sunday we will have a hybrid in-person/zoom congregational meeting  
with opening devotions and closing prayer,  
please note that all safety precautions will be maintained.

Depending on how that goes and how diligent everyone is,  
we may be able to have in-person worship once or twice a month,  
with zoom or pre-recorded services on the intervening weeks.

No matter how we worship, we'll stream to Facebook Live 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 recently 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](http://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, at his baptism you poured out your Spirit onto your Child, your Son, your heir, Jesus.  
In our baptism you have poured out your Spirit on us as well.  
Teach us to live into the power you have given us, not for our own sake, but for the sake of others,  
that we may build your kingdom here on earth – a kingdom of justice, mercy, and peace.  
We pray in the name of Jesus and by the power of your Spirit. **Amen**

# Word

## Mark 1:21-28

*[Jesus and his disciples]* went to Capernaum; and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God”. But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching — with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

**SERMON**

“Kingdom Authority”

“...he taught them as one having authority...”

What does that mean? And why is it important for us?

The story of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark begins with his baptism  
at which God sends the Holy Spirit which gives him power and authority,  
and then says, “this is my beloved child with whom I am well pleased” which announces that authority.  
This is my beloved child, my son, my heir.  
God, the Ruler of the Cosmos, is announcing the heir to the throne.

The very next thing that happens is that Jesus is driven into the wilderness to be tempted –  
and what is he tempted to do?

Although Mark does not tell us, according to the Matthew and Luke,  
he is tempted to use the power that God has given him for his own purposes –  
to satisfy his own physical and material needs, to accumulate wealth, and to acquire fame.

The temptation goes on a long time.

But eventually Jesus understands that it is God alone who has all the power.

Without God a he can’t take a single breath, or utter a single sound or move a single muscle.

Everything that he is and everything that he has comes from God.

God is the one who created all that exists, and so all power in heaven and earth belongs to God.

Jesus comes to understand that the power he has been given has been given only to use for God’s purpose.

It’s like being hired by the owner of a company to be its executive director.

The executive director is given power and the authority to use that power not for his or her own benefit,  
but for the sole purpose of carrying out the wishes of the owner.

Once Jesus understands what it means to have been given power and the authority to use it,  
he recruits his staff and begins to publicize his vision.

The people listening immediately recognize his authority, except for one man who resists and refuses.

Upset by this new rabbi who is calling for change, big change, drastic change, hard change,  
he stands up in the middle of the service and screams at Jesus.

And that’s when Jesus uses the power that he’s been given authority to use.

He doesn’t ignore the man, he doesn’t argue with the man, and he doesn’t call for the man to be thrown out.

Instead he understands that the man is possessed by fear or rage or grief or pain,

and so speaking with the authority he’s been given

Jesus uses his power to cast out those demons which are resisting Gods will.

So what does all of this have to do with us? A lot as it turns out.

Because the power and authority which God gave to Jesus at his baptism, Jesus gave to us at our baptism!

Yes, you heard me right.

You and I have been given the power of the living God –

the power to move mountains, the power to cause walls to fall,

the power to cause chains to break, the power to perform miracles.

It’s not something we Lutherans talk much about, but it’s there in the Bible and in our theology.

If you believe you were given the Holy Spirit in baptism

then you will understand that you have indeed been given the same power

that in the beginning moved across the waters of chaos and brought the world into being.

Baptized into Christ we have been given power to further God’s kingdom on earth.

We’ve been given power to do God’s will.

We’ve been given authority to carry out God’s plans.

So as executive directors, what is our responsibility to the owner of our lives?

I see it as a three-fold task:

First, we are to make sure that we carry out our job as it is described in the employee handbook.

That is where we find the basic instructions and guidelines,  
the vision and purpose, the goals and objectives, the strategies and procedures.

For Christians that handbook is called the Bible.

And it's our job to make sure that we fulfill the roles and responsibilities laid out in it –

to love God with all our heart and mind and soul and body and to love our neighbor as ourselves;  
to do unto others as we would want them to do unto us;  
to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God;  
to care for the “widow, orphan, and stranger”, the marginalized, the disenfranchised, the oppressed;  
to love one another as Christ has loved us;  
to forgive as we have been forgiven,  
to stop judging others;  
to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us; to go out into the world and make disciples...

You get the idea.

So there's the employee handbook, but that only covers things in general.

When it gets down to the daily day to day decisions, things are not always as clear,  
especially as circumstances change in the world around us.

So secondly, in addition to carrying out all the things that were written out for us in the beginning,  
we also have to be in constant communication with the owner

to make sure that as his desires and wishes change, we're on the same page.

For Christians that means prayer, not just the part where we talk, but the part where we listen.

It means being open to the many ways God communicates with us –

through angels and human messengers, through dreams and visions,  
through things God shows us and words God speaks to us,  
through circumstances and events, through signs and miracles.

So there's the employee handbook or the Bible and the constant communication or prayer.

And the third way we carry out our jobs as executive directors of the life God has given us

is by being the face of the owner, by embodying in ourselves the spirit of the one we represent.

As Christians that means exhibiting the fruits of the spirit –

Love not Judgment, Joy not Negativity,  
Peace rather than Anxiety, Patience rather than Impatience,  
Kindness instead of Harshness, Goodness instead of Strife,  
Faithfulness not Distrust, and Self-control not Rage.

So our job as Exec director of the life god has given us is 3-fold:

1. to carry out the instructions in the handbook/the Bible;
2. to be in constant touch with the owner to ensure that every decision is in line with the owners vision; and
3. to represent the owner, God, by modeling our lives on Jesus.

God gave Jesus power and the authority to use that power.

Jesus used it to preach and teach, to love and forgive, to heal and restore, and to fight for justice and truth.

He used it to move mountains, to cause walls to fall, to cause chains to break, to perform miracles.

He used it calm wind and wave, turn water into wine, walk on water, and feed thousands with a few fish.

And after he left this earth he poured out upon the disciples that same Spirit that God had poured into him,  
giving his disciples the same power and authority that God had given him

He even promised, “You will do even greater things than I”!

You have been given the power of the living God and the authority to use it to build God's kingdom on earth.

As the executive director of the life God has entrusted to you,

steep yourself in the Bible, steer your way through prayer, and steel yourself with the fruit of the spirit.

And I promise you that your life will never be the same. **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 all who share the gospel and proclaim freedom in Christ throughout the world:  
prophets, teachers, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders; for the church and its ministries;  
for our mission partners, especially today for New Direction Ministries  
and Christ Presbyterian Church Fairfield;  
& for Salem members & their families, especially for those celebrating their birthday this week:  
Chris Wolff, Roberta Bellows, Keith Murphy, and Hailey DeWalt.  
God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for all God's works in creation: plants & animals, water & soil, forests & farms;  
and for those tasked with protecting our natural resources and all that exists.  
God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for government and leaders: cities and nations,  
rescue professionals and legal aid attorneys, elected officials and grassroots organizers;  
and for all responsible for the well-being of civil society.  
God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for caregivers, hospice workers, and home health aides  
and for those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit: those suffering from Covid-19,  
those who have lost loved ones during the time of this pandemic, those living with HIV/AIDS,  
those struggling with mental illness, those who are hungry or homeless,  
those who are sick and hospitalized, and all in any need,  
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....  
God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for the people of God in this place and for other needs in our community.  
God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for the covenant God made with us in the waters of baptism,  
in thanksgiving for the baptized who have died in 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, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **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 a QR reader on your smart phone which will take you to that page.

## OFFERTORY SONG

### Majesty

**Majesty! Worship his majesty! Unto Jesus be glory, honor and praise!  
Majesty! Kingdom authority flows from his throne unto his own -- his anthem raise!  
So exalt! Lift up on high the name of Jesus!  
Magnify! Come glorify Christ Jesus the King!  
Majesty! Worship his majesty – Jesus who died, now glorified, King of all kings!**

*(Repeat song as desired.)*

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Performance by the Reverend Marjo Anderson.*

## 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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SENDING SONG

### God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind

- 1 **God of tempest, God of whirlwind, as on Pentecost descend!  
Drive us out from sheltered comfort; past these walls your people send!  
Sweep us into costly service, there with Christ to bear the cross,  
there with Christ to bear the cross!**
- 2 **God of blazing, God of burning, all that blocks your purpose, purge!  
Through your church, Christ's living Body, let your flaming Spirit surge!  
Where deceit conceals injustice, kindle us to speak your truth,  
kindle us to speak your truth!**
- 3 **God of earthquake, God of thunder, shake us loose from lethargy!  
Break the chains of sin asunder, for earth's healing set us free!  
Crumble walls that still divide us; make us one in Christ our Lord,  
make us one in Christ our Lord!**
- 4 **God of passion, God unsleeping, stir in us love's restlessness!  
Where the people cry in anguish, may we share your heart's distress.  
Rouse us from content with evil; claim us for your kingdom's work,  
claim us for your kingdom's work!**

*Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923; © 2000 GIA Publications, Inc.; Meter 8 7 8 7 8 7 7;  
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*Music: CWM RHONDDA; John Hughes, 1873–1932; the Tune is in the Public Domain.  
Performance by the Reverend Marjo Anderson.*

### 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  
And through that relationship you have the power to change not only your own life,  
but the world.  
To find out more, read your Bible, pray, and cultivate the gifts of the Spirit.  
And if you'd like to know more, please don't hesitate to contact me.  
Just reach out on Facebook or through our website.  
In the meantime, may you be abundantly blessed this day and always! **Amen**

# Meal & Dismissal

*for zoom gathered worshippers*

## 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!**

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace.  
Steep your thoughts in God's Word,  
steer your words through prayer,  
and steel your actions by cultivating the fruit of the Spirit!

**Thanks be to God!!**

# Announcements

## **Today at 9:30 Zoom Worship at:**

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

Meeting ID: 825 8628 3567 Passcode: 792383

One tap mobile +13017158592,,82586283567# US (Germantown) +13126266799,,82586283567# US (Chicago) or catch us on Facebook Live.

## **Toda y at 10:30 Zoom Adult Forum on the 2021 budget at:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83809597292?pwd=cEFDU1k1aDMwR0tURXIWSTJPNG8vQT09>

Meeting ID: 838 0959 7292 Passcode: 969938

One tap mobile +19292056099,,83809597292# US (New York)

## **Tonight at 6:00 Sunday Night Alive at:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82224426828?pwd=aTNKcUE4eEdINEliYIFVd1RnYlIXQT09>

Meeting ID: 822 2442 6828 Passcode: 209780

One tap mobile +13017158592,,82224426828# US (Germantown) +13126266799,,82224426828# US (Chicago)

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.

## **Wednesday at 12:00 noon Prayer Gathering at:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82882777326?pwd=VCtObFRPOGI3cTR3eII2ZmtiZEpadz09>

Meeting ID: 828 8277 7326 Passcode: 688740

One tap mobile +13017158592,,82882777326# US (Washington DC) +13126266799,,82882777326# US (Chicago)

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 pray for each other's and the world's needs.

**Next Sunday at 9:30** we will have the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting with Opening Devotions and Closing Prayer in place of worship. You may attend in person or via Zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81678003895?pwd=K2N3enRwdUJjbUFtdjh4cjM2WEF4UT09>

Meeting ID: 816 7800 3895 Passcode: 173058

One tap mobile +19292056099,,81678003895# US (New York)

**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](#).

**Upcoming Worship** – Depending on how next Sunday's in-person meeting goes, how diligent everyone is, and current covid rates, we may be able to have in-person worship once or twice a month, with zoom or pre-recorded services on the intervening weeks. No matter how we worship, we'll stream to Facebook Live and post to our YouTube channel. *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 Facebook Live and post to our YouTube channel.

The **Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport's Raising the BAR: Becoming Anti-Racist series continues on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month from 7:30 to 8:15 pm.** You can register on their [website](#) –

<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.

**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](http://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](http://www.salembridgeport.org/live). Or to see how to get there, [click here](#):

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

**Inner-View Chat'n'Chew** meets the **3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**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!

**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.

**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.

**Did you enjoy The Best of Lucia?** We're happy to provide other 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](mailto: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 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](mailto:salemsec123@sbcglobal.net) or by leaving a message on the church phone, 203-336-3300.

## **UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS**

### **Presentation of Our Lord Tuesday, February 2, 2021**

Forty days after the birth of Jesus we mark the day Mary and Joseph presented him in the temple in accordance with Jewish law. There they were greeted by Simeon, an aged priest who offered the song "Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace", as well as by the prophet Anna, who spoke of the redemption of Israel.

### **Ansgar, Bishop of Hamburg, missionary to Denmark and Sweden, died 865 Wednesday, February 3, 2021**

A monk who helped bring Christianity to Scandinavia, Ansgar returned to Germany where he was named bishop of Hamburg. He is remembered for his love for poor people.

### **The Martyrs of Japan, died 1597 Friday, February 5, 2021**

Christianity was brought to Japan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries. The religion was suppressed, however, and in 1597 26 missionaries & converts were crucified. Nevertheless, Christianity survived and later prospered.

# 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](http://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](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.*