



February 2021

the
SPIRIT

Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

A Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Congregation

Sensational Surprises in Prayer

Dear Friends,

The more I pray, the more astounded I am at the prodigious power of prayer.

What are the deepest desires of your heart? What are the things you long for, yearn for, pray for? Are there things you've prayed for that haven't yet happened? Prayers that it seems God must not have heard or may have forgotten about? Are there things you felt sure God had promised you and yet they are not materializing? Do you sometimes feel that instead of getting closer to your goal, there's an entire line of gigantic football players forcing you backwards?

I felt that way a few months ago, and in the midst of tears and sobs, I told a friend that if I was going to continue to believe in God's promises and God's faithfulness I would need a sign. She said, "Well, if you need a sign, God will give you a sign". And the next thing I knew I had a vision of a man I had never seen before. Then my phone vibrated. It was a message asking me to call, from someone whose name I had seen on a zoom screen and heard speak, but whom I had never seen or met. When I called him he told me God had told him to send me \$1000 because I had prayed for it. First of all I was completely blown away by the fact that the phone message had come within seconds of my vision. Second, I couldn't believe a stranger wanted to send me money! And third, I couldn't remember when on earth I had asked God for \$1000. It took a few minutes before my mind could process everything that was happening, but finally it dawned on me! The night before I had heard God tell me, "If the church doesn't want to spend money on air cleaners, you buy them." And I had replied, "God, have you seen my bank account lately? If you want me to buy them, you'll have to provide the money." That was the same night God told this man to send me money. It was the very next morning that we were speaking.

You'd think that miracle would be enough to keep me from ever doubting again. But, of course, the devil's not going to give up that easily! I'll be fine for days or weeks, and then things will happen that will cause me to doubt again. I was in one of those tearful doubting moods on Friday, and was kind of mumbling to God, "...yeh...it's me again...and yeh...I know you keep giving me signs...and yeh...I know I should trust you by now...but what I can say...I think I need another sign...(sign)..." Within minutes my phone rang. It was the SAME GUY God had sent last time!!! My tears turned to laughter as I answered the phone and said, "You know, I guess you're my "Sign Guy!"

Yes, there are times when I doubt and I just can't seem to see any sign of God's presence. But there are other times when I'm full of faith and signs of God's presence are EVERYWHERE! Yesterday was one of those days when just about everything I saw or heard seemed like a sign of God's promise and presence. I was in this ZONE of answered prayer and it was simply AWESOME.

How did I find my way to that awesome zone? Well, 2 books helped. One is called When God Winks: How the Power of Coincidence Guides Your Life by Squire Rushnell (click [here](#) for link) and it's a short book filled with stories that will blow your mind. The second is called How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People by Pete Greig (click [here](#) for link) and is not only filled with powerful stories but with an easy to remember guide for praying. It's actually this guide that we will be exploring this Lent as we gather together online with Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Fairfield, Genesis Gospel Café of Bridgeport, and Cross of Christ Lutheran Church of Waterbury. For more details and to see how to participate in this study on the transforming power of prayer, see the article on the next page.

The other thing that I believe helped me find my way into that awesome zone of God's presence and power is our Wednesday noon prayer gathering on zoom. That plus increased time praying with others as well as by myself is transforming my life into one that is far more exciting and has far more potential than I've ever experienced before. It's truly been an astounding adventure thus far.

Lent begins this month, and as the traditional "Discipline of Lent" encompasses prayer, fasting, and works of empowering love, I invite you to join me on this adventure into prayer. I hope you'll read one of the books above. I hope you'll join us for our weekly prayer gathering on Wednesdays at noon in the zoom room (click [here](#) for the link or find the full zoom invitation on the calendar on our website. And I very much hope you will join Pastor Christoffersen, Momma Jeanette Harris, and me as we embark on a Lenten Adventure in Prayer.

Abundant Blessings Be Yours!

Pastor Marjo

Pastor Marjo Anderson

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

3160 Park Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604
Phone (203) 336-3300 ▪ Fax (203) 336-8813

Website - www.salembridgeport.org

Facebook - www.facebook.com/SalemBridgeport/

Church Office Hours

Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Worship Services

9:30am Zoom Worship

Salem's Staff

The Rev. Marjo Anderson, Pastor
Cell Phone (203) 982-3441
marjoanderson@aol.com

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LEADERSHIP AT SALEM

COUNCIL

Marjo Anderson, Pastor
Ray Anderson, President
Tom Larson, Vice-President
Nancy Headford, Secretary
Rich Kenyon, Treasurer
Liz Bales
Sandra Brown
Judi Nielsen
Emily Sokoloski
Diane Tomasko
Bill Winter

We Are Grateful



Outreach

Richard & Mary Ann Kenyon



Newsletter deadline is the 15th of each month
unless otherwise noted in the monthly
calendar.

Next deadline date is **February 15th** for the
March issue!

Email submissions to
salemsec123@sbcglobal.net



February 2021

Salem Lutheran Church



SUN	MON Feb 1	TUE 2	WED 3	THU 4	FRI 5	SAT 6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on # 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of Our Lord 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6pm God at the Center 	
7 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church 12:30pm New Directions Ministries 	8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on # 6:30pm Social Ministry Committee 6:30pm Social Ministry Committee Meeting 	9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and 6pm Stewardship Committee 	10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 	11 	12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6pm God at the Center 	13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8am The NO BREAKFAST Gathering!
14 Transfiguration of Our Lord <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Worship & Coffee Hour 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church 12:30pm New Directions Ministries 	15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on # 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting 7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting 	16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and 	17 Ash Wednesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 7:30pm Ash Wednesday Worship 	18 	19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6pm God at the Center 	20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11am Inner-View Chat n Chew
21 First Sunday in Lent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Worship & Coffee Hour 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church 12:30pm New Directions Ministries 	22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on # 7pm Council Meeting 	23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and 	24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 7:30pm MidWeek Lenten Adventures in Pray 	25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:30am MidWeek Lenten Adventures in Pray 	26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6pm God at the Center 	27
28 Second Sunday in Lent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Worship & Coffee Hour 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church 12:30pm New Directions Ministries 6pm Sunday Night Alive! 						



MIDWEEK LENTEN ADVENTURES IN PRAYER

TWO DAYS/TIMES

WED 7:30 PM

THU 10:30 AM

Week 1 (Feb 24/25) - The **Y** is for WHY Pray?

Week 2 (March 3/4) - The **P** is for PAUSE!

Week 3 (Mar 10/11) - The **R** is for REJOICE!

Week 4 (Mar 17/18) - The **A** is for ASK!

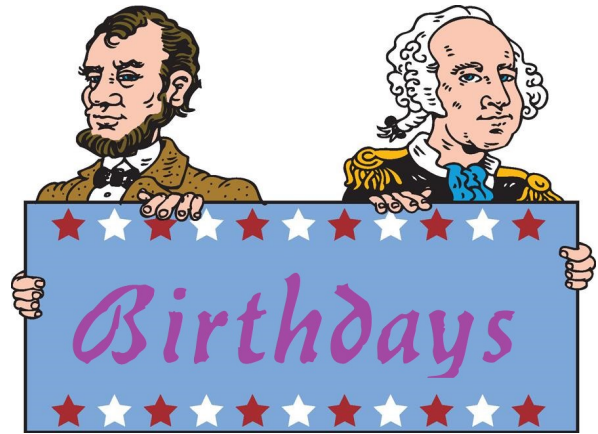
Week 5 (Mar 24/25) - The **Y** is for YIELD!

"Y PRAY?"

JOIN ZOOM MEETING

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89939840751?pwd=amlvTnJIU1c5MWlIOFozcUtTVnJuQT09>

Roberta Bellows.....	1
Hailey Dewalt.....	3
Keith Murphy.....	3
Kerry Schulz.....	13
Bill Winter.....	13
Michael Gulyas	13
Ann Martin.....	14
Carol Lansing.....	16
Talisha Burrus.....	17
Pablo Cruz.....	22
Scott Luciani	22
Judy Albers.....	26
Katie Adams.....	27aa



Please contact your Parish Nurse Carol if you would like to call, or send a card or note to one of our shut-ins. Carol will let you know if the person would prefer a call or a note.

If you have extra cards that you do not need, please let Carol know.



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

Joan B
Barbara B
Sam B
Erick D
Grace D
Hannah & Joseph
Bob H
Dennis H
Sylvitha
Jay
Mike R
Jane M
Jana B
William S
Daphne B
Peter K
Bobby W

Anna
Barbara
James S
Sarah R
Brooks A
Angie
Liz F.
Hazel P
Katherine P



Don't Develop "Sleep Deprivation"



Everyone needs sleep. School children and teens should get around 10 hours of sleep. Adults need 7-8 hours of sleep per the CDC. According to the National Sleep Foundation, a lack of sleep can result in the following:

- Severe fatigue, depression, and memory loss
- Inability to concentrate, listen, learn, and problem solve
- Impatience, poor judgement, and aggressiveness
- Increased likelihood of contracting illnesses, including colds and the flu
- Poor Nutritional choices, increasing the likelihood of weight gain

Here are some practical tips to help you fall asleep and stay asleep:

- Make time to relax and prepare for sleep
- Don't eat, drink or exercise within an hour before bedtime. Candy, soda, caffeine can cause insomnia
- Switch off the TV and electronic gadgets such as Smartphones, computers, and gaming systems one hour prior to bedtime
- Go to bed at the same time every night
- Keep the house at a comfortable sleeping temperature
- Find a comfortable sleeping position. Have a mattress and pillow that is correct for you
- Minimize allergens in your bedroom by washing bedding weekly, using protective allergy-proof encasings, and not sleeping with a pet if allergic.

Summarized from an article from "Allergy & Asthma Today", Fall, 2015

Connecticut's COVID-19 vaccine rollout began on Monday, January 18, 2021, and residents in the state over the age of 75 can now schedule appointments to receive the vaccine.



Phase 1b will expand to include the following after those 75 and above are vaccinated:

- Residents between the ages of 65 and 74 and
- Residents between the ages of 16 and 64 who have underlying health conditions.

Make an appointment using one of the following tools:

- Healthcare Provider – you may be contacted by your doctor's office.
- Online: A form can be accessed online at [gov/covidvaccine](https://gov.ct.gov/covidvaccine) which allows you to schedule an appointment
- Telephone: Those without internet access can call Connecticut's COVID Vaccine Appointment Assistance Line at 877-918-2224.

For more information [click here](#).



**American
Heart
Association**

**American
Stroke
Association®**

HEART ATTACK WARNING SIGNS

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.** This feeling often comes along with chest discomfort. But it can also occur without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs** may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

**If you or someone you're with has one or more of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.
Get to the hospital right away.**

If you're the one having symptoms, and you can't access the emergency medical services (EMS), have someone drive you to the hospital right away. Don't drive yourself, unless you have absolutely no other option.

**For more information, contact your nearest
American Heart Association office or call
1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721)
or online at www.heart.org.**



Seafarers International House

Harbor of Hospitality

123 East 15th Street
New York, NY 10003
Phone: (212) 677-4800
www.sihnyc.org

January 7, 2021

Salem Lutheran Church
3160 Park Ave
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Dear Friends of Seafarers,

Happy New Year! Thank you for having shared the joy of the season with seafarers who could not be with their families and loved ones. On their behalf we thank you for your generous donation of satchels and supplies to fill satchels.

In the past weeks, our six port chaplains have been busy taking the Christmas-At-Sea satchels that you helped fill with knitted hats, scarves, socks, sweat shirts, a holiday snack plus hand-written holiday cards to the ships before they left to spend the holidays on sea. You should have seen the happy faces. If you like, visit our Facebook page and review the posts of some of the seafarers, who felt loved and cared for because of your generosity.

As you know, the pandemic has led to a crew change crisis as seafarers had to extend their contracts, sometimes to over a year because of travel restrictions around the world. Your satchels showed them that people appreciate their sacrifice in keeping our supply chains moving.

While we did not top last year's record, Christmas-At-Sea has been a great success as the smiling faces of the seafarers who our port chaplains meet attest.

Wishing you all the best for 2021,

Henryk Behnke
Director of Development & Communications
(henryk@sihnyc.org)





Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

Many languages, one growing church

When God spoke to him, Jean Paul Kisuku knew he had to listen.

A pastor in his native Congo, Kisuku had spent years ministering through prayer groups to his fellow Congolese and neighbors in nearby Uganda. After immigrating to the United States and settling in Maryland, he stepped away from ministry to focus on secular work to support his family.

But God had other plans.

"God is moving you to do his work, and if you say, 'yes,' you will be OK," said Kisuku of the calling he felt to return to the ministry.

Kisuku and his family were resettled by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and Christ Lutheran Church, Baltimore. Seeing how the congregation welcomed newcomers, Kisuku reached out to Amsalu Geleta, then a pastor of the congregation, and volunteered to conduct a prayer service there in Swahili, the native language of Congo.

"A wonderful evangelist"

"He gathered five families for the first day in October 2016," said Geleta, who now serves as executive assistant to the bishop and director for evangelical mission in the Delaware-Maryland Synod. "We provided the space, and he started from that. He's a wonderful evangelist, and he reached out to many people who speak Swahili, French, Lingala or English—new arrivals, most of them. And soon they filled their congregation, and it's still growing."

That small prayer service has evolved to become Mountain of God Evangelical International Church, a new congregation bolstered by grants that were funded by Mission Support, the offerings that congregations share with synods and the churchwide organization.

Much of that growth can be attributed to Kisuku's determination to bring God's word to as many people as possible. Many of the African immigrants in and around Baltimore didn't have transportation, so Kisuku began driving to their homes, bringing them to and from church each week.

"I started my ministry like I did in Africa—I go to the people," he said. "For most of them, it's a new country, and they don't know English, they don't know how to drive a car, they don't know how to take a bus. I started to ask people, 'What is travel like for you?' I drive for them, I showed them how to take a bus to get to the hospital, the supermarket."

Seeing his efforts, Christ Lutheran—which hosted Mountain of God's services—helped Kisuku acquire a minivan to transport congregants. And a year ago, Salem Lutheran Church in nearby Cantonsville, Md., purchased a 25-passenger van to transport his parishioners, some of whom travel more than 25 miles to attend services.

In less than four years, Kisuku has built the congregation's numbers to over 150 people hailing from several African countries. The congregation has begun to take a more active role in the synod as well. In addition to raising Mission Support funds through their weekly offering, the congregation's choir performs at area churches and synod events.

Geleta said the growth of Mountain of God has been inspiring for the synod, seeing multiple churches step up to support this new congregation and its mission to bring God to new people. "How can one ministry by itself be born or stand by itself?" he asked. "With the participation of everyone, it helps plant and nurture it to make it grow. And it's the spirit of evangelism to the church that revives us all."

Kisuku is grateful to all those in the synod who have helped make his ministry such a success. But above all, he's thankful to God for calling and believing in him, even when he didn't believe in himself.

"I say thanks for God—it's not just me who did that," he said. "That's from God—he knows me for my name, and that I can do that. I didn't know I could, but he did."



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.

MISSIONARIES AND YOUNG ADULTS IN GLOBAL MISSION



Return to the Holy Land

Working near Jerusalem in the West Bank community of Beit Sahour, Marta Erling Spangler started to see the world through the eyes of the Palestinian Christians and Muslims around her.

One of the first participants in the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) service program when it opened sites in the Holy Land in 2008, Erling Spangler had plenty to see.

While she could visit Jerusalem whenever she wanted, her students at the Evangelical Lutheran School in Beit Sahour needed permits to enter. Few could secure them. She took her access to higher education for granted. Checkpoints and conflict stood between her students and university degrees.

Erling Spangler's growing awareness of her own privilege drew her to focus on social justice after her year of service ended.

Some years later, after volunteering with AmeriCorps in Pittsburgh; earning a master's degree in ethics, peace and global affairs; and working for The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Geneva, she is in Jerusalem again, serving as resource development and board liaison officer with Augusta Victoria Hospital. Operated by the LWF on the Mount of Olives, the hospital provides healthcare services otherwise unavailable to Palestinians.

Living with families and serving in Lutheran schools clustered around Jerusalem, all YAGM participants are immersed in life in the Palestinian community. "YAGM come to walk with us, to worship with us, to struggle with us, to rejoice with us, and to be part of the transformation of peace and justice that is happening in this place," said Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. "They come,

not just for a personal spiritual journey, but to stand in solidarity with us as brothers and sisters in Christ."

For help with the journey, Erling Spangler and others turn to mentors like Imad Haddad, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hope in Ramallah. Haddad said he has seen the YAGM alumnae "growing in understanding the culture, growing in their faith, and in how they used their faith while serving. Coming back is a testimony that they really understood the message."

Today, walking alongside the Palestinian Lutheran community as a professional on the payroll is a new role for Erling Spangler. "The community I was serving is now on the other side of the [separation] wall, and most of them can't come visit me," she said. With no vehicle and a 9-to-5 schedule, she can only visit on weekends.

On the plus side, she feels like she is making a difference: "I'm not making decisions for others. I'm assisting what Palestinians have already decided is necessary, what they are dreaming for society. It feels great to be in that position again."

The program in the Holy Land is one of 11 country programs part of Young Adults in Global Mission.

 **Visit [ELCA.org/YAGM](https://www.elca.org/YAGM) to learn more.**