



Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

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

*The Fourth
Sunday in Lent*

*March 14, 2021
9:30 AM*

New England Synod
Worship



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To live among God's faithful people

Gathering Meditation

Pastor Steven Wilco, Associate to the Bishop

As we enter this time of worship, I invite you now to pause and center your body. You might wish to close your eyes if you feel comfortable. Bring attention to your breath, feel the air going in and out.

It is the breath of God. It is the Spirit of God promised in baptism. Your breath is holy. It is the breath of God.

It is that breath that connects us to one another and to all living things. Though we are not gathered in person to worship, we remain connected one to another through the Spirit of God moving within us. It is the Spirit that helps us to live among God's faithful people even when we cannot gather in person.

As you continue to bring awareness to your breath, let it remind you of the whole communion of saints who are gathered in ways we cannot see. Let it remind you of your deep connection to God and to one another.

As we worship now, I invite you to keep coming back to your breath and remember the great communion of saints gathered with you across time and space. Amen.

Confession and Forgiveness

Pastor Bill Barter, Associate to the Bishop

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer. **Amen.**

God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Fountain of living water,

pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.

Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are † forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus.

Amen.

Song: To Christ Belong, in Christ Behold

All Creation Sings Hymn #958

Deacon John Weit, ELCA Executive for Worship, Rostered in the New England Synod



1 To Christ be - long, in Christ be - hold God's
2 The brood - ing Spir - it moves un - seen as
3 Re - joic - ing in God's prom - ise strong, our



won - ders still un - fold: the bur - ied
liv - ing wa - ters stream to quench all
treasure and our song, in faith we



grain springs forth a - gain with fruit one hun - dred - fold.
thirst and bring to birth a new com - mu - ni - ty.
cling, and glad - ly sing: to Christ we now be - long.



Bap - tized in - to the death of Christ, with
The bind - ing shroud is here re - leased, the
In Christ a - bide, in Christ be - hold the



Christ from death we rise, drawn through the
veil of sin and grief, and in their
world be - loved and whole. In love re -



night by dawn - ing light in - to a - bun - dant
place a wreath of grace and robes of joy and
main, by love pro - claim God's won - ders still un -



life, in - to a - bun - dant life.
peace, and robes of joy and peace.
told, God's won - ders still un - told.

Text: Susan R. Briehl, b. 1952

Music: WONDERS, Robert Buckley Farlee, b. 1950

Text © 2011 Susan R. Briehl, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Music © 2011 Robert Buckley Farlee, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Prayer of the Day

Pastor Bill Barter, Associate to the Bishop

Let Us pray.

God of wilderness and water, your Son was baptized and tempted as we are.

Guide us through this season, that we may not avoid struggle,

but open ourselves to blessing, through the cleansing depths of repentance

and the heaven-rending words of the Spirit. **Amen.**

To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper

Reading: Micah 6:6-8

Selsa Corporan, Graduate of La Escuela de Ministerio Laico, Gloria Dei, Providence, RI

"With what shall I come before the LORD,

and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,

with calves a year old?

Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,

with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,

the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;

and what does the LORD require of you

but to do justice, and to love kindness,

and to walk humbly with your God?

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

Thanks be to God.

Acclamation: Nothing in All Creation

All Creation Sings p. 34



Noth-ing in all cre - a - tion can sep-a-rate us from the love of God.



Noth-ing in all cre - a - tion can sep-a-rate us from the love of God.

Reading: Excerpts from “The Power of Love” by Episcopal Presiding Bishop Michael Curry
Bruce Heroux, School of Lay Ministry Class of 2020, St. Matthew-Trinity, Pawtucket, RI

Someone once said that Jesus began the most revolutionary movement in human history. A movement grounded in the unconditional love of God for the world - and a movement mandating people to live that love, and in so doing to change not only their lives but the very life of the world itself.

"He didn't die for anything he could get out of it. Jesus did not get an honorary doctorate for dying. He didn't... he wasn't getting anything out of it. He gave up his life, he sacrificed his life, for the good of others, for the good of the other, for the wellbeing of the world... for us.

That's what love is. Love is not selfish and self-centered. Love can be sacrificial, and in so doing, becomes redemptive. And that way of unselfish, sacrificial, redemptive love changes lives, and it can change this world.

"If you don't believe me, just stop and imagine. Think and imagine a world where love is the way."

Imagine our homes and families where love is the way. Imagine neighborhoods and communities where love is the way.

Imagine governments and nations where love is the way. Imagine business and commerce where this love is the way.

Imagine this tired old world where love is the way. When love is the way - unselfish, sacrificial, redemptive.

When love is the way, then no child will go to bed hungry in this world ever again.

When love is the way, we will let justice roll down like a mighty stream and righteousness like an ever-flowing brook.

When love is the way, poverty will become history. When love is the way, the earth will be a sanctuary.

When love is the way, we will lay down our swords and shields, down by the riverside, to study war no more.

When love is the way, there's plenty good room - plenty good room - for all of God's children. "Because when love is the way, we actually treat each other, well... like we are actually family.

Acclamation: Nothing in All Creation

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13

Jed Lindholm, School of Lay Ministry Class of 2020, Immanuel, Holden, MA

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

Thanks be to God.

Acclamation: Nothing in All Creation

Reading: “And the Waters Will Flow From Your Altar, Lord” by Simei Monteiro

Vimar Rodriguez, Gloria Dei, Providence, RI

And the waters will flow from your altar, Lord

And flood the earth.

And we will be like a garden watered,

Cared for,

Exposed to life.

Oh! Let these waters come,

Impetuous and pure,

And destroy the power

And clean the paths

Which my people will take,

Which my people will take,

Singing and rejoicing,

In an endless celebration,

The Word, Life, Freedom

And the Resurrection!

And the waters will flow from your altar, Lord,

And clean away the debris

And we will have the courage to act,

To serve,

To change the world.

And the waters will flow from your altar, Lord,
Life will be rekindled,
And we will see the new creation,
Act,
Of your love.

Acclamation: Nothing in All Creation

Gospel: John 7:37-39

Alan Crowley, School of Lay Ministry Class of 2021, Good Shepherd, Jericho, VT

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

Children's Sermon

Kim Bergstrand, Associate to the Bishop

Have you ever been really thirsty? Like *super* thirsty, as on a hot, hot summer day when you're outside at the beach, playing with friends, cleaning up the yard, maybe you've gone out for a hike or out jogging? And all you can think about is getting a nice cold drink of water. I don't know about you but when I get like that I start to get cranky and tired. I might even get a headache if I don't get water soon.

Well, we get cranky and don't feel well when we get thirsty like that because it's our body's way of telling us to stop and pay attention. Because on a hot, hot day when we're working or running around a lot we can get dehydrated and that's not healthy. Our bodies need water to function well and live so our brain gives us some signals. It tells us it's time to stop and take a drink. And do you remember how good that sip of water tastes when you're thirsty like that? It tastes so, so good. And then you feel so much better.

Pastor Rodriguez is going to talk about water as well – Jesus as living water pouring God’s love into you and into me. So much love that it overflows right out into the world. Sometimes, just like when we get thirsty on a hot, hot day, we find ourselves running on empty. But Jesus promises us that God will always be there, loving us, filling us up to overflowing.

Take a minute to think about what it looks like when God’s love overflows through you. Do you think it looks like a smile? Maybe it’s a hug or a kind word? It might be a drawing or a phone call or even a letter. Maybe it’s sharing something you love with someone else. I bet there are all kinds of ways that God’s love flows through you.

But sometimes we might not notice it. I have an idea that might help us notice. Next time you turn on the faucet or reach for a glass of water, think about how God’s love is filling you up and how you’d like to share that love with someone else. And take just a moment and pray:

Dear God, thank you for water. Thank you for life. Thank you for loving us so much that it overflows. Help me to share that love today wherever I go. Amen.

Sermon

*Pastor Santiago Rodriguez, Gloria Dei, Providence, RI
& Dean of La Escuela de Ministerio Laico (Spanish School of Lay Ministry)
English translation by Vimar Rodriguez, Gloria Dei, Providence, RI*

Lord, please shed your love and your word within us so that that words that come out of our mouths may reach the listeners and they may receive your blessing. Amen.

We would like to take advantage of this time to speak about our baptism and, moreover, to speak about the meaning of that baptism. We would like to talk about the *affirmation* of our baptism.

In the Lutheran church we are accustomed to reaffirming our faith, our baptism in different ways. We do it in the ritual of confirmation. We baptize kids. We instruct them, especially in Lent. And then when they are teenagers then we celebrate what we call confirmation. We are also accustomed to celebrating the affirmation of our baptism when we receive a new member in our church. We also do it when a person who has been away from the church for a long time returns – we do a ritual of affirmation of baptism. Because for us it is very important to continuously remember this great gift we receive from God.

With baptism we are declared children of God. With baptism we receive a new identity. And you and I know how important our identity is. One of the biggest crises we have right now is the crisis of identity. We have lost the meaning of who we are. That’s why we have so many problems of exclusion and isolation, the problem of racism, people who think they are better than others because of their color or race. All of these problems reveal a very raw reality. This is what we call the crisis of identity. We have forgotten who we really are. We need to remember that we are all children of God. And if we are conscious of that reality we will be able to receive the blessing of being able to relate to one another as equals. No one will be able to feel superior to another. We are *all* children of God.

So the affirmation of baptism keeps us alert. Remembering who we are is a blessing, and that blessing we have to make a reality every day.

The reformers would insist that one of the most powerful elements of baptism is the water, because we have water everywhere. That's why they would insist that we use that element of water to remember our baptism. Every time we shower to remember our baptism. Every time we wash our hands to remember our baptism. Every time it rains to remember our baptism.

It calls to my attention the passage we just read from the Bible. God uses that image of water, and it says that everyone who is thirsty and everyone who believes will receive the living waters: a water that is going to flow abundantly. What does it mean for water to flow from within us abundantly? That means that the unconditional love of God, his abundant mercy upon us, for us. But this abundant love becomes so real in our lives that it fills us the same way that when you pour water into a glass and it overflows. It allows us to continue to share that love of God, the generosity of God with others.

Episcopal Bishop Michael Curry in his sermon about the power of love tells us that Jesus began a movement about love. He painted a very powerful image: what if all the world was dominated by the power of love. Where would hate be? Where would violence be? Where would division be? That message from Bishop Curry invites us to be part of that movement, the movement about love. But not just any love: unconditional love, the love that is expressed in exchange for nothing, love that is sacrificial.

So, when we affirm our faith, we remember that love is the biggest Christian vocation we have: to be comprised of that revolution of love, fighting for justice, accompanying the poor in their suffering, remember our pact in baptism and of being in community and praying one for another and sharing the body of Christ all together. Let us take that figure from the gospel we read today and keep it in our minds and our hearts, remembering that love that God has put inside of us never goes dry because they are like flowing waters that come from within us abundantly. And this will never end. Amen.

Song: How Deep Is Your Compassion

John Christianson & Kristy Moore, St. Paul, Arlington, MA

Chorus

How deep is your compassion
How high your mercy
How wide are your loving arms
That surround even me.

Chorus

Unlike my brother I was restless
Feeling my wild oats again.

So I took what belonged to me
And I left my family.
I did not know then,
Chorus

Then to a far off land I wandered,
Squandered ev'rything I owned.
'Til in desperate poverty
My Father's love for me
Was calling, "Come back home."

Chorus

My father saw me from a distant.
He'd been waiting all the while for me.
I heard him call my name
And through my tears of shame
I could finally say,

Chorus

To serve all people, following the example of Jesus

Mission Moment – ELCA World Hunger

Doreen and Pr. Dave Rinas, New England Synod World Hunger Co-chairs

Learn more about this year's New England World Hunger focus on projects in Rwanda and Malawi by visiting our website: <https://www.nelutherans.org/faithinaction/worldhunger>. Matching funds are available to encourage every congregation to contribute to the project. You can donate through your congregation or directly on the synod website: www.nelutherans.org

Lament for Racism by Rev. Dr. Sharon Fennema

Southern CT Anti-racism Accountability Group (LLM Jeanette Harris and Pastors Marjo Anderson, Chris Files, Paul Sinnott, and Steven Wilco).

God of the cross and the lynching tree, of the jail cell and the street corner, of the bible study and the police car, look upon the world you have made. See how it is full of hatred and how violence inhabits the earth.

Gunshots ring out under the heavens that declare your glory, singing the destruction of your children. Do you not hear the songs? How long, O God, will you keep silence? **How long will we fail to be your voice?**

The streets and sidewalks of your dwelling place flow with blood, pouring out the cries of your beloveds. Do you not hear the cries? How long, O God, will you keep silence? **How long will we fail to be your voice?**

The breaths snatched from lungs swirl on wind that blew creation to life, echoing with the last gasps of your dear ones. Do you not hear the gasps? How long, O God, will you keep silence? **How long will we fail to be your voice?**

The bones that you knit together in a mother's womb are broken, rattling with the earth-shaking suffering of your people. Do you not hear the rattling? How long, O God, will you keep silence? **How long will we fail to be your voice?**

The clanging of cell doors resounds amidst the music of the spheres, tolling the lives stolen by systemic oppression and unspeakable violence. Do you not hear the tolling? How long, O God, will you keep silence? **How long will we fail to be your voice?**

The crashing of fire-licked windows mingles with the praise and prayers of generations, shattering the refuge and safety of your sanctuaries. Do you not hear the shattering? How long, O God, will you keep silence? **How long will we fail to be your voice?**

In these days, as in days past, mothers and grandmothers have become mourners. Fathers and grandfathers have become grievors. Children have become wanderers in vacant rooms. Kinfolk have become pallbearers. Communities have become filled with empty chairs. Remember the people you have redeemed, Holy One. Remember the work of salvation brought about by your love. You made a way out of no way for slaves to cross the sea on dry land. Arise, O God, and defend your own cause. **Raise up in us the cries of outrage.**

You made water to flow in the desert for Hagar and Ishmael when they were driven out. Arise, O God, and defend your own cause. **Raise up in us commitment to the long struggle for justice.**

You cast out demons so that people might be to community. Arise, O God, and defend your own cause. **Raise up in us the determination to drive out racism, even from ourselves.**

You witnessed the death of your Beloved Child. Arise, O God, and defend your own cause. **Raise up in us the grief that cannot be comforted.**

You brought new life from the crucifixion of state violence and the wounds of abandonment. Arise, O God, and defend your own cause. **Raise up in us the courage to speak truth to power, and hope to hatred.**

God of the ones with hands up and the ones who can't breathe, look upon the world you have made. Do not forget your afflicted people forever, so that we might praise your holy name with joyful lips. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Vimar Rodriguez, Pastor Santiago Rodriguez, & Selsa Corporan, Gloria Dei, Providence, RI

Let us pray.

Let us pray for those who are affirming their baptism and for all the baptized everywhere, that they may be redeemed from all evil and rescued from the way of sin and death.

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

That the Holy Spirit may open their hearts to the grace and truth.

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

That they may be kept in the faith and in communion with your holy church

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

That they may be sent into the world in witness to your love.

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

That they may be brought to the fullness of your peace and glory.

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

[prayer continues extemporaneously in Spanish]

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy. **Amen.**

Sharing the Peace

Mark Winzler, Associate to the Bishop

God's peace passes all understanding. It also overcomes pandemics and our inability to gather in person to share that peace. Take this moment to serve others and be served by others by sharing that peace. Share it with others gathered with you, whether in person or online. Share a word of peace on social media, send a word of peace in a note in the mail, plan to make a phone call after worship. However you do it, don't keep that peace to yourself! And know this:

God's peace is with you now, with you this day, with you always.

Offering

Mark Winzler, Associate to the Bishop

One of the ways we serve all people is sharing the resources and gifts we have. Take this moment to offer in service to God and in service to your neighbors some of the gifts you have. We encourage you to pause and share your financial gifts with your local congregation whether going online or writing out a check. We encourage you to consider as you are able a gift of individual mission support to support the work the New England Synod by going to www.nelutherans.org/donate or mail a check to the New England Synod at PO Box 13, Worcester, MA 01614. We also encourage you to share your other gifts with your neighbor. How is God calling you through your baptism to serve all people following the example of Jesus?

Offering Song

Restore in Us, O God

ELW #328

Pastor Bill Barter, Associate to the Bishop



- 1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -
- 2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from
- 3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -
- 4 Three - per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.
fruit - less fear un - furl our lives like spring - time bud and flow'r.
tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.
we, when all our search - ing ends, may see you face to face.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: BAYLOR, Hal H. Hopson, b. 1933

Text © 1989 Hope Publishing Company.

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Lord's Prayer

Silas Levine, School of Lay Ministry Class of 2021, Immanuel, Oxford, CT

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

To strive for justice and peace in all the earth

Charge

Pastor Sara Anderson, Associate to the Bishop

Take a moment now, as we prepare to be sent forth from worship, to consider how you have experienced that love from God in your own life this week. What has filled you with a sense of wholeness and peace? When were the moments where you felt full to bursting?

Now, pause to consider how that grace might flow from you to work toward justice and peace in all the earth? Which of your neighbors near or far are in need of your care? Where do you have influence to change systems that exclude or discriminate? Is there a place of conflict in which you can speak truth in love with a strong and peaceful heart?

Striving for justice and peace in all the earth sounds like a big task. It is! It's an ongoing and never-ending task. But I invite you now to consider one thing that you can commit to in the week ahead to live that allows you to live out your baptismal identity and encourage the work of justice and peace.

Write it down and put it on your bedside table or on your desk. Put a reminder on your calendar or in your phone. Or choose some small item to remind you that you can carry around in your pocket.

Whatever method works for you, pause and make that commitment now, trusting that God will fill you with what you need to live out your baptismal call in the world.

Blessing and Dismissal

Bishop Jim Hazelwood

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you eternal peace.

Amen.

Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God.

Song: Where Justice Rolls Down

John Christianson, St. Paul, Arlington, MA

Chorus

Where justice rolls down like a mighty water
And righteousness grows like an ever-flowing stream
And mercy resounds like the waves on the ocean
Let praises rise high on the songs of the redeemed

There is a river that streams from the temple
Begins as a trickle but ends in the sea
As it grows healing it will give
Where it flows ev'rything will live

Chorus

Wade in the water and feel the strong current
Remember the stagnance of stale life before
God is here leave the past behind
In these clear waters you will find

Chorus

Announcements

Please join us at 7:00 pm NEXT Sunday 21 March on zoom for “Light in the Darkness”, our Service of Lament & Hope, as we mark the 1 year of the pandemic lockdown in CT. You are invited to have a **piece of fabric to tear** as a symbol of our laments and a **candle to light** as a symbol of our hope in God.

For the zoom link, [click here](#) or copy and paste this address into your browser:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84436179501?pwd=Smw0TzJXYUh2ZUNySDhIZWpNRlRqdz09>

Lent 2021

Midweek Series – Lenten Adventures in Prayer – on zoom for area Lutheran churches

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

Wednesdays at 7:30 pm or Thursdays at 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!

Maundy Thursday – 7:30 pm April 1st – most likely we’ll have a drive-in worship for area Lutheran churches held at Our Saviour’s Church, 160 Hill Farm Rd, Fairfield,

Wednesday at 12:00 noon Prayer Gathering at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82882777326?pwd=VCtObFRPOGI3cTR3elI2ZmtiZEpadz09>

Meeting ID: 828 8277 7326 Passcode: 688740

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

If ever we needed prayer, it's now! Agreed? While we can (and should!) pray on our own, scripture teaches us that there is power in group prayer. Jesus says, "I tell you truly that if two of you on the earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven." Author Frank Peretti writes that it is our prayers that empower the angels to fight the spiritual battles which are where the real battles are fought and won. If there is something you or your family or congregation needs, then the more people you have praying for it, the more power that prayer wields. You don't have to pray out loud, if you don't want to, but your presence with us will mean more than you know. So please, join us on Wednesdays at noon on zoom for a half-hour as we turn our worries and cares over to the Lord in prayer. The zoom link will be on the calendar on Salem’s website at Salembridgeport.org under the Resources Tab.

The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport’s Raising the BAR: Becoming Anti-Racist series continues THIS THURSDAY (the 3rd Thursday each month) at 7:30 pm.

You can register on their [website](#) by [clicking here](#) 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 THIS SATURDAY (3rd Saturday of month) at 11:00.

It’s a time of fun and fellowship that gives us a chance to celebrate the gift that God has given us in one another. Details are included on Evites sent out to those on the Genesis mailing list but you can also find the Zoom link on Salem’s calendar.

Sunday Worship Services, Coffee Hours, and Forward on the Fourth Adult Forums:

While we are most grateful to God for the vaccines, we need to remember that the pandemic is not over - yet. Someday it will be, but in the meantime we must continue to exercise care (and prayer!). Although we cannot have in-person coffee hours or adult forums following in-person worship, we can still have these via zoom on the Sundays we worship online.

On the **2nd Sunday** of the month we will have **Coffee Hour** immediately following online worship, where the conversation is informal and free-flowing.

On the **4th Sunday** of the month we will have **Forward on the Fourth** immediately following online worship, at which we'll have a guided discussion of how we as a congregation are moving forward into God's promised future.

If worship on one of these Sundays is on **Zoom**, we will simply stay in the same zoom room.

If worship on one of these Sundays is a **Pre-recorded one**, you'll have to click on the zoom link to join at 10:30.

If you don't know what the difference is between Zoom and Pre-recorded worship, please don't hesitate to ask. Our pastor and our office manager are both happy to explain, as are many other of our congregational leaders. **Remember: the best way to get answers is to ask questions!**

Night Alive meets the last Sunday of the month, so please mark this event on your calendars for 03/28 at 6 pm. You won't want to miss this chance to gather together with old friends and new, people like you and people unlike you - all of which...like you, even love you, as the beloved child of God you are! Stay tuned for details, but when the time comes, the link is here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82224426828?pwd=aTNKcUE4eEdINeIiYlFVd1RnYlXQT09>

Meeting ID: 822 2442 6828 Passcode: 209780

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

+13126266799,,82224426828# US (Chicago)

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**. Although this used to be a men's event, it's now open to everyone, and we are most grateful for the men who sponsor it. (Thank you, Bruce for ensuring that this important time for talking informally about our faith lives continues even in the midst of a pandemic!) It's been outdoors until this month when we met in the lounge. We're working on figuring out how to make the sound work so we can offer this important time on zoom as well.

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](#)**:

The Center for Family Justice invites you to its 125th Jubilee Virtual Gala, 7 pm Friday 26 March, featuring a special surprise announcement, as they celebrate their growth and transformation into the state's first Family Justice Center, dedicated to serving all victims of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse in sex local communities. For tickets go to: centerforfamilyjustice.salsalabs.org/125thjubileegala/index.html.

A GIFT OF THE PANDEMIC: EVANGELISM MADE EASY! We used to have all kinds of reasons we couldn't bring family members or friends to church, many of the reasons involving distance or timing. But one of the GIFTS that God has given us along with the pandemic is FREEDOM to spread the gospel around the world! We are no longer limited within our church walls or bound to any geographical area! And that means that you can invite ANYONE from anywhere around the world to come to worship with you! "But they wouldn't be interested", you say? Well, the truth is more people participate in our worship online than come to worship on our property or even join us on zoom. One of our services currently has had 1.6K views, many services have had hundreds watch the entire service, and every Sunday we have far more watch online than actually gather on zoom. So what on earth are you waiting for? **INVITE A FRIEND TO WORSHIP!**

A whole buffet of worship opportunities – just for you! Every single one of us would no doubt like to go back to the way we worshipped pre-pandemic, but sadly that is not a possibility for now. God is GOOD, however, and has provided so many other ways for us to worship. We are GRATEFUL to God for the technology that still allows us to worship via Zoom services in real-time, or 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!

Let's stay connected!

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.

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.

If you are not able to use online technology, please, PLEASE, let Pastor Marjo or Karl Kraft or Carol Lansing know, so that we can figure out how to keep you connected to your Salem family.

THANK YOU!!! – Even though our building is closed, our ministries (and the expenses to fund those ministries) continue. We are grateful for everyone who continues to give their tithes and offerings to our work here at Salem. We are also grateful to those who have taken advantage of the opportunity to give online, especially to sign up for regular weekly or monthly donations. Every gift no matter how small is appreciated and will enable us to continue to do God's work in this place. If you'd like help signing up for online giving please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Marjo, Karl, Ray Anderson, Jean Larson, or Nancy Headford.

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.*