



Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

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

*For those with
hearing challenges*

*The 4th Sunday
of Easter*

*April 25, 2021
9:30 AM*

THE GOOD SHEPHERD
LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE
FOR THE SHEEP.

JOHN 10:11



Y is for YIELD

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YouTube – Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport CT

Gathering

GATHERING MUSIC He Shall Feed His Flock from The Messiah by G. F. Handel

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd
and He shall gather the lambs with his arm, with his arm.
And carry them in his bosom
and gently lead those that are with young
Come unto Him all ye that labour.
Come unto Him, ye that are heavy laden
and He will give you rest.
Take his yoke upon you and learn of Him
for He is meek and lowly of heart
and ye shall find rest unto your souls

*Text & Music by George Frideric Handel
This song is in the Public Domain.*

The performances are by:

HARMONIOUS CHORALE – GHANA

*Harmonious Impressions on G.F Handel's work, A BEAUTIFUL CHRISITMAS 2 #ABC –
Video: Take2Films; Audio: Mido Productions; Stage/Lights/Production: Iam Adinkra
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQDG3D7PLo0> [6:13]*

*Regula Mühlemann, Weihnachtskonzert für den Bundespräsidenten ZDF 2017
Neue Philharmonie Westfalen Rasmus Baumann, Leitung;
Wallfahrtskirche St. Marien - Marienbasilika Kevelaer
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUIO5rse8zM> [5:17]*

*Collegium 1704, Václav Luks
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsoEg6h6EXc> [4:00]*

Please note that at this point we go live on Facebook.

WELCOME

Welcome in the name of the God who raised Jesus from the dead and who raises us to new life!

Thank you for joining us today!

Thank you, those of you who are here in person with us!

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

For those of you who don't know me,

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

While our offices are closed at present, you can always find us at our website:

SalemBridgeport.org,

on our Facebook page, SalemBridgeport,

and on our YouTube channel, Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport CT.

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.

As we move forward into a future with so much that is uncertain, the one thing that is certain is that God is there to help us if we ask.

And so I invite you to join us on zoom Wednesday at noon for a powerful time of prayer.

The link is in the announcement section of our worship bulletin and on our website at SalemBridgeport.org/Resources/Calendar.

Tonight at 6 pm, we invite you to “zoom in” to our Sunday Night Alive event for a conversation with a creative group of people as we Imagine and Dream and Envision what it is that God is calling us to, both as individuals and as communities of faith.

Today we finish up our series on Y PRAY?, focusing on the Y for YIELD, as we look at the story of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who, in the supreme act of yielding, gave up his life for his sheep.

Today we'll reflect on what it means for us to yield our lives to God and so let's begin right now by yielding in prayer.

God, our Shepherd,

We gather today to worship you, to praise you, and to bless your holy name.

We thank you for the green pastures and still waters you have provided.

We thank you for protecting us and comforting us through the dark valleys.

We come today to have our souls restored.

Help us yield to your loving will as you set us on the path of justice for your name's sake, giving us the courage to lay down our lives for those in need.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Spirit. Amen

OPENING HYMN

Take My Life

Holiness, holiness is what I long for.
Holiness is what I need.
Holiness, holiness is what You want from me.

Faithfulness, faithfulness is what I long for.
Faithfulness is what I need.
Faithfulness, faithfulness is what You want from me.

So take my heart; transform it.
Take my mind; inform it.
Take my will; conform it to Yours, to Yours, oh, Lord.

Righteousness, righteousness is what I long for.
Righteousness is what I need.
Righteousness, righteousness is what You want from me.

So take my heart; transform it.
Take my mind; inform it.
Take my will; conform it to Yours, to Yours, oh, Lord.

Oh, so take my heart; transform it.
Take my mind; inform it.
Take my will; conform it to Yours, to Yours, oh, Lord,
to Yours, to Yours, oh, Lord.

Yes, take my heart; transform it.
Take my mind; inform it.
Take my will; conform it to Yours, to Yours, oh, Lord,
to Yours, to Yours, oh, Lord.

CCLI Song # 1617154

Scott Underwood

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Performance by: members of the music ministry of St. John the Baptist Catholic Parish, Newburgh, IN, 02/27/21

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRUtDeRx-Tg> [3:11]

Word

READINGS

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

You restore my soul, O LORD, and guide me along the path of justice for your name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;

for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

John 10:11-18

[Jesus said:] “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd...”

1 John 3:16-24

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ died for us. And we, too, ought to lay down our lives for our sisters and brothers. If you have more than enough material possessions and see your neighbors in need yet close your hearts to them, how can the love of God be living in you? My children, our love must not be simply words or mere talk – it must be true love, which shows itself in action and truth. This, then, is how we'll know we belong to the truth ... because we keep the commandments and do what is pleasing in God's sight. The commandments are these: ...believe in the name of God's Own, Jesus Christ, and ... love on another as we were told to do. Those who keep these commandments live in God and God lives in them. We know that God lives in us by the Spirit given to us.

Acts 4:5-10

The next day [the] rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead...”

SERMON

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit,
we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

So they can be heard online, these petitions will be offered by the leaders at the microphones.

Loving Shepherd, you know your own and your own know you.
Your voice calls us to your loving embrace.
Strengthen your church throughout the world that we bear witness to your expansive love.
We pray for our mission partners, especially today for Camp Calumet Lutheran;
and for Salem members & families, especially those celebrating birthdays this week:
Judi Nielsen, Julia DeWalt, Ian Dow, Tracey Wilkins, and Howard Swanson.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gracious Shepherd, you are generous with the gifts of goodness and mercy.
Restore your creation to wholeness
so that cities and towns, countryside and wilderness, may abound with life.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Hope-giving Shepherd, the nations and peoples are your heritage.
Place into the hearts of all leaders and rulers the passion to serve.
Crucify any desire to overpower others and give leaders joy in lifting up the lowly.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Abiding Shepherd, your love flows as we reach out to those around us.
Move us with your Spirit, so that we lay down our lives for those in need,
especially those who suffer injustice due to race, culture, class, language, immigration status,
gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical-mental disability, age or station in life.
Help us love one another in truth and action.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Saving Shepherd, you restore us to wholeness. Bring healing wholeness to all in need,
Especially Andrea, Audry, Barbara, Bud, Jerry, Diane, Dolores, Eron, Grace, Hazel, Jacob,
Katherine, Liz, Maria, Martha, Ron, Sarah, Steve, and all we name in our hearts.
Pour your life-giving Spirit into our hearts and transform our lives.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Eternal Shepherd, you hold us securely in your loving hands.
In the assurance of resurrection hope, we remember the saints whom we commemorate this day:
Mark, Philip, James, and Catherine of Siena, as well as those we love who have died in you.
Bring us, with them, to dwell in your house forever.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

The pastor concludes:

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you,
trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Thanksgiving

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

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 and offerings of time, talent and 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 INVITATION

In response to God's grace,
it is our joy to return to God our tithes and offerings.
Although our offices at 3160 Park Avenue in Bridgeport, CT
are 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 ANTHEM **The Lord Is My Shepherd**

The Lord's my Shepherd; I'll not want. He makes me down to lie
in pastures green. He leadeth me the quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness, e'en for His own Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear none ill
for Thou art with me and Thy rod and staff me comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnished in presence of my foes;
my head Thou dost with oil anoint and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me
and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

Text: Psalm 23, "Scottish Psalter", 1650, Based on Francis Rous and William Whittingham

Tune: CRIMOND, by Jessie Seymour Irvine

This hymn is in the public domain.

Performance by the Joint Hymnal Choir, Kampala, Uganda,

hosted by St. Francis Chapel, Makerere, 07/27/20,

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EOyq972ie4&t=97s> [3:18]

Sending

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANK YOU and BLESSING

Before we end the live-streamed portion of our worship,
I want to especially thank those of you out there in cyberspace who have worshipped with us.
I hope you will join us again.

God knows the best path to the desires God has placed within our hearts,
but just as the only way for Christ to conquer death was to die,
so we, too, must be willing to trust not in our own logic or ability to get there, but in God's.
The more we give up our lives to God & to others, the more abundant life God will return to us.
If you'd like to know more, or if you'd like to talk or pray together,
you can reach me through our website or facebook.

In the meantime, know that my prayer for you is that you would yield to God,
and in so yielding, you will discover new life and joy.

Amen

Please note our FB Livestream ends here.

Meal & Dismissal

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.

*During communion, you may take your communion elements in church
or hold on to your kit until you get home.*

*If you take the elements in the church,
open the kit over the pew to prevent spilling on the carpet. Grape juice stains!
Take each element by lowering your mask, consuming, and raising your mask back up.
After the service, take the empty kit to the wastebasket in the back of the church.*

The body & blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in divine grace!
Amen!

***After our Sending Song and the Dismissal, please wait as the ushers will dismiss you by pew
in order to comply with pandemic protocols.
Please move quickly through the narthex to where you can safely visit outdoors.***

SENDING SONG

All to Jesus I Surrender

All to Jesus I surrender; All to him I freely give.
I will ever love and trust him, In his presence daily live.
I surrender all, I surrender all, All to thee, my blessed Saviour, I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender; Humbly at his feet I bow;
Worldly pleasures all forsaken, Take me, Jesus, take me now.
I surrender all, I surrender all, All to thee, my blessed Saviour, I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender; Make me, Saviour, wholly thine;
Let me feel thy Holy Spirit, Truly know that thou art mine.
I surrender all, I surrender all, All to thee, my blessed Saviour, I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender; Lord, I give myself to thee;
Fill me with thy love and power, Let thy blessing fall on me.
I surrender all, I surrender all, All to thee, my blessed Saviour, I surrender all.

*Maranatha Christian Church is a small church with a big heart located in United Kingdom.
We do not ask for money. The gospel is free!*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4WbR_AtoK0

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, surrendering all to the God who loves you! **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Take My Life, That I May Be

- 1 Take my life, that I may be consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.**
- 2 Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.**
- 3 Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King;
take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee.**
- 4 Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use ev'ry pow'r as thou shall choose.**
- 5 Take my will and make it thine, it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is thine own, it shall be thy royal throne.**
- 6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.**

*Text: based on Matthew 10:39, Mark 8:35, 12:38-44, Luke 7:36-50, 14:26, John 12:1-8,
Romans 12:1, Galatians 2:20; Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, alt.; Meter 7 7 7 7*

Music: PATMOS, by William Dexheimer Pharris, b. 1956

This hymn is in the Public Domain.

Performance by:

*Leann Albrecht singing for live worship recording/ Hymns4Worship/ Integrity Music
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKh8e7HOPAo> [3:55]*

Announcements

You may have been vaccinated, but please bear in mind that not everyone is able to receive the vaccine due to their health condition. *This past week saw the greatest rise in Covid cases worldwide since the beginning of the pandemic, despite efforts at vaccinating populations. Salem member and VP at St. Vincent's Hospital, Dale Danowski, tells us that cases have risen from as few as 10 beds a few weeks ago to 25 now, and that the majority of patients are younger. Of particular concern is the fact that some people who have been hospitalized with Covid were fully vaccinated.* The more cautious we are, the faster we can reach herd immunity and get back to normal. So, please, let's all do our part to end this pandemic. As Christians Jesus calls us to love our neighbor, so please maintain 6' physical distance and keep your mask on over your nose and mouth as long as you are on church property. It's not about how safe WE feel, but about how safe we make OTHERS around us feel.

Thank you for doing your part to help keep everyone at Salem as safe as possible!

During communion, you may take your communion elements in church or hold on to your kit until you get home. If you take the elements in the church, open the kit over the pew to prevent spilling on the carpet. Take each element by lowering your mask, consuming, and raising your mask back up. After the service, take the empty kit to the wastebasket in the back of the church.

Sunday Worship Services – WE are no having in-person worship each week and streaming it to Facebook. For those of you who enjoyed our zoom worship, we regret that we do not yet have the technology to offer a high quality hybrid/zoom worship. In fact, we're not aware of any congregation that has figured this out. If you cannot worship in person and would like communion, please contact Pastor Marjo so that that can be arranged.

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, and so we invite you to join our midweek prayer gathering. 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. The zoom link is on the calendar on Salem's website at Salembridgeport.org under the Resources Tab.

Sunday Night Alive meets the last Sunday of the month – which is TONIGHT!...at 6 pm.

This month we get together for a conversation with a creative group of people as we Imagine and Dream and Envision the exciting things to which God is calling us, both as individuals and as communities of faith. You won't want to miss this chance to gather together with old friends and new, people like you and people unlike you - who LIKE you, even LOVE you, as the beloved child of God you are! So PLEASE, join in our faith-filled fun and fellowship -- and invite someone else to come with you! The link is here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82224426828?pwd=aTNKcUE4eEdINeliYlFVd1RnYlUXOT09>

Meeting ID: 822 2442 6828 Passcode: 209780;

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

Forward on the FIRST! Now that we are worshipping in-person, we needed to come up for a new plan for adult forum and specifically for our Forward discussions. We realized that not everyone is able or comfortable meeting in person. Plus, since we used to have trouble hearing at Council meetings even when we were sitting side by side(!), trying to hear in the lounge with every one spaced 6' apart isn't going to work. So we want to meet by zoom. Yet as wonderful as zoom technology is, it doesn't work when you have more than one person in a small space on zoom – there's too much sound feedback. So here's the plan: if you want to participate in adult forum, please bring your laptop or tablet or smart phone with you, and after worship, we can spread out into different rooms – lounge, music room, music office, workroom, church office, narthex – or you can sit outside or in your car. For those who prefer, you may stay in the sanctuary and have that be your shared zoom room. And of course for those who are worshipping via Facebook live, simply join from the comfort of your own home – or wherever you are. We are also moving our Forward discussions to the FIRST Sunday of the month, since that follows our Council meeting and will allow us to bring you the most timely information possible. As always, the zoom link will be on the calendar at SalemBridgeport.org/Resources/Calendar. PLEASE JOIN US! :D

"Wrap the Capitol" - National Day of Prayer & Action - Streaming on FacebookLive – Please save the date for National Day of Prayer. On Thursday, **May 6, 2021**, FaithActs will wrap the State Capitol in prayer and action. Through outreach from hundreds of prayer warriors across the state, we'll make sure Governor Lamont and legislative leadership stand for education justice during their closed-door budget negotiations. When they go quiet, we'll go loud! And bring God to the negotiation table. Right now, we're planning for socially distanced, in-person participation from pastors and virtual participation from other members and supporters. The FaithActs team will keep you posted as we finalize the details.

FaithActs for Education is a grassroots community organizing nonprofit based in Connecticut. We are people of faith building power to get our children the education they deserve. We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to graduate from college, take care of their family, and fulfill their God-given potential. We build relationships, we build leaders, and we build power through community organizing and civic engagement. Founded in October 2014, FaithActs is more than 500 members and 70 churches strong. We've turned out thousands of Bridgeport voters, demanded stronger governance from the Board of Education, prevented busing cuts for 2,300 elementary school students, and secured millions of additional dollars for Bridgeport public education. For more info go to: RSVP - <https://faithacts.org/rsvp>

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, so mark your calendars for May 8th**. 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.

Inner-View Chat'n'Chew meets the **3rd Saturday of the month at 11:00**, so mark your calendars for **May 15th**. 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. The theme for Evites are sent out to those on the Genesis mailing list but you can also find the Zoom link on Salem's calendar.

The **Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport's Raising the BAR: Becoming Anti-Racist** series continues on the **3rd Thursday each month from 7:30 to 8:15 pm**, so mark your calendars for **May 20th**. 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.

Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County invites you to their Virtual Benefit Fundraiser, "Back to the Future: Take 2", a Video Program Premiere on **May 22nd, 7:30-8:00 pm**. Hear homeowner stories, tour sites, and get an update on Habitat CFC's work during the past year. Gather with your close ones, relax from the comforts of your own home, and enjoy the show! Your generous financial support is crucial to helping families build a place to call home. This event is FREE but requires registration. Visit: HFHBenefit.givesmart.com to register. Questions? Interested in sponsorship? Contact: Suzanne Francis, Events Coordinator: sfrancis@habitatcfc.org 203-520-7690.

The **Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport** invites you their **Virtual Spring Fling at 7:00 pm May 25th**. Enjoy a Broadway inspired musical performance from the comfort of your own home with special musical guests, Chris Coogan and Michele Grace.

THANK YOU!!! – Even though our staff works primarily from their homes, 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.

There are many ways to find the zoom link for 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](#):

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.

Upcoming Commemorations

Mark, Evangelist Sunday, April 25, 2021

He was not numbered among the twelve apostles, yet Mark was probably a member of the early church community. The gospel that bears his name is the shortest and most direct, and many scholars think it was the first to be written.

Catherine of Siena, theologian, died 1380 Thursday, April 29, 2021

This theologian was the first woman among Roman Catholics to receive the title "Doctor [teacher] of the Church". Catherine was a Dominican sister known for her mystical visions as well as her work on behalf of people who were poor and imprisoned.

Philip and James, Apostles Saturday, May 1, 2021

Philip was one of the first disciples of Jesus, and called Nathanael to "come and see". He later responded to an Ethiopian official's request for teaching and baptism. Little is known of James, the son of Alphaeus, called "the Less" to distinguish him from another apostle named James.

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.*