



Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

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

*for those with
hearing challenges*

*9th Sunday
After
Pentecost*

*July 25, 2021
9:30 AM*



One in Christ!

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www.facebook.com/salembridgeport

YouTube – Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport CT

Gathering

Please note that here we go live on Facebook.

GATHERING SONG 1 All Are Welcome Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 641

Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

All are welcome! All are welcome! All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

All are welcome! All are welcome! All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

All are welcome! All are welcome! All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

All are welcome! All are welcome! All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

All are welcome! All are welcome! All are welcome in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950; Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen;

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7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 8.442.3358

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Performance of Jason Jesteadt's arrangement

by Peter Henderson and members of the MCC Toronto Choir, 09/21/20

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63snPd1oqEU> [4:02]

GATHERING SONG 2

Made a Way

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

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

Chorus 1:

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

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

Bridge 1:

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

Bridge 2:

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

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

Tag:

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

Chorus 3:

Don't know why but I'm grateful Don't know why but I'm grateful
Don't know why but I'm grateful Don't know why but I'm grateful
Don't know why but I'm grateful

Tag

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

CCLI Song # 7071768. Travis Greene

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Performance by Marjo Anderson to Made A Way Backing Track,

with Sean Marques (Saxophone) and Artist Khalisax from the Album "Made a Way" (Saxophone),

Licensed to YouTube by Believe A. (on behalf of Khalisax Music, Mokonla Musique)

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-rwffA8G3s> [6:06]

WELCOME

Welcome in the name of the God who comes
to destroy divisions, overcome obstacles, and make walls fall.

Thank you for joining us today!

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

And thank you, 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.

To find out more about our ministry or to contact us,

you can go to our website SalemBridgeport.org,

to our Facebook page, SalemBridgeport,

and to 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.

Before we begin our worship, a few announcements....

Today at noon you are invited to Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Waterbury
for their Christmas in July worship and potluck.

On Wednesday we have 2 zoom events: prayer at noon and Bible Study from 6:30-7:15.

And on Thursday we urge you to join the Council of Churches' Summer Anti-Racism Series
on zoom from 7:30-9:00.

Now as we begin our worship, will you pray with me?

Creator of us all, we are here to give you thanks and praise!

We thank you that you have created each one of us to be your unique child,

and that you have filled your world with people of different races, ethnicities, cultures, ages,
genders, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities, and religious and political views.

We thank you that in Christ you break down every barrier and tear down every wall
the enemy places between us.

Teach us that it is only when we reach out and build relationships
with those different from us

that we can experience the abundant life you offer.

Motivate us to not just pray, but to work to make peace and justice a reality in our world.

Make your church – this congregation –

a place where all are truly welcomed to come and change who we are by their very presence.

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

Amen

**Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:**

All are welcome! All are welcome! All are welcome in this place.

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Performance by The Beyond the Walls Choir, 08/27/20

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPrzP67jRts> [5:11]

Word

READINGS

Ephesians 2:1-22

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — ⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

¹¹Remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision” — a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands — ¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

SERMON

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit,
we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

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

We pray for the church.

Bless the ministries of our neighboring congregations, especially
Christ Presbyterian Church Fairfield, Christ Home of Unity, Restoration, Charity and Hope,
Genesis Gospel Café, Cross of Christ Lutheran, New Direction Ministries, and Our Saviour's Lutheran.
Empower churches throughout the world & encourage missionaries who accompany global neighbors.
Kindle in us a spirit of collaboration, that all people may know your loving works.

We pray for our mission partners, especially today for Camp Calumet Lutheran,
and for Salem members & families.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for creation.

Send rain to lands experiencing drought and come to the aid of those enduring sweltering heat.
Nurture wheat and barley crops grown for the nourishment of your people
and conserve aquatic habitats and fish populations.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those who govern. Cast out greed, selfishness, corruption, racism, and white supremacy
and inspire our leaders to do kindness, love justice and walk humbly with you. .

Teach them that when the least among us is raised, all of us benefit.

Nurture within them a commitment to ensure that every one of your children
has equal access to medical care, food, education, work
and all that is needed for the abundant life you desire for each one of us.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those bowed down by heavy burdens: those who are unemployed or underemployed,
those unable to find affordable housing, and those without health insurance.

Console those who grieve and hear the cries of those who call to you for healing, especially
Justin, Barbara, Bert, Bud, Dolores, Eron, Grace, Hazel, Jamie, Steve & all we name in our hearts.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for this assembly. Deepen our love for you, and our faith in your power and love.

When we worry that we do not have enough resources for ministry, assure us of your abundance.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for those who have died.

As you sustained them through all their days, so dwell in our hearts,
that we may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints,
the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

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:

We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; 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.

We are grateful for your generosity,

which not only is an exercise of and witness to your faith,

but which funds our ministry together here at Salem.



If you are worshipping with us,

we encourage you to give to your home congregation first,

but invite you to contribute to our ministry also

so that we can continue to take our worship online

as a witness to the power and love of the amazing God we serve.

Simply go to the menu on our website at SalemBridgeport.org and click "donate"

or scan the QR code here in our Sunday worship program

with a QR reader on your smart phone which will take you to that page.

OFFERTORY SONG

For All the Children

God, we gather as your people to raise our song above,
and we dare to claim the promise of Your love,
though the day may not yet be here, we trust it soon will be,
when your children will be free.

O, may our hearts and minds be opened, fling the church doors open wide.
May there be room enough for ev'ryone inside.
For in God there is a welcome, in God we all belong.
May that welcome be our song.

Oh, we sing for all the children, that one day they be free;
and we sing for generations yet to be,
that they never have a reason to doubt that they are blest,
May they, in Your love, find rest.

O, may our hearts and minds be opened, fling the church doors open wide.
May there be room enough for ev'ryone inside.
For in God there is a welcome, in God we all belong.
May that welcome be our song.

Oh we pray for all the young lives cut short by fear & shame
so afraid of who they are & whom they love.
May the message now be banished that Your love is for the few;
may their faith in You renew.

O, may our hearts and minds be opened, fling the church doors open wide.
May there be room enough for ev'ryone inside.
For in God there is a welcome, in God we all belong.
May that welcome be our song.

God, we're working for the future when children far and wide
can live their lives with dignity and pride.
As they grow in strength and stature, may they join us hand in hand,
as against all hate we stand.

O, may our hearts and minds be opened, fling the church doors open wide.
May there be room enough for ev'ryone inside.
For in God there is a welcome, in God we all belong.
May that welcome be our song.

*Words and Music by David Lohman; © 2007 Welcome Song Music;
www>WelcomeSongMusic.com*

*Performance by Lay Catholic Christians and friends who stood up and sang out to spread the good news of Christ's love, gathering to encourage voters to vote for LGBTQ rights as they sung their hearts out in support of LGBTQ young people.
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wLQ63LMC-A> [6:25]*

Sending

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today at noon you are invited to Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Waterbury for their Christmas in July worship and potluck.

On Wednesday we have 2 zoom events:
prayer at noon and Bible Study from 6:30-7:15.

And on Thursday we urge you to join
the Council of Churches' Summer Anti-Racism Series on zoom from 7:30-9:00.

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.
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.

As we are in the middle of our sermon series on Ephesians,
let me offer all who are worshipping with us this blessing
from chapter 3, verses 20-21 of that book:

*Now to the One who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think,
according to the power at work within us,
to that One be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen*

Here ends our Facebook live stream.

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 during worship
or hold on to your kit until you get home.
If you take the elements inside the church,
open the kit over the pew to prevent spilling on the carpet.
After the service, please dispose of your own kit
either in a waste receptacle at church or at home.*

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

Let justice roll like a river, and wash all oppression away.
Come, O God, and take us, move and shake us;
come now, and make us anew, that we might live justly like you.

“Take from me your holy feasts, all your off’rings and your music.
Let justice flow like waters, and integrity like an ever-flowing stream.”

Let justice roll like a river, and wash all oppression away.
Come, O God, and take us, move and shake us;
come now, and make us anew, that we might live justly like you.

How long shall we wait, O God, for the day of your mercy to dawn,
the day we beat our swords into plows, when your peace reigns over the earth?

Let justice roll like a river, and wash all oppression away.
Come, O God, and take us, move and shake us;
come now, and make us anew, that we might live justly like you.

Hear this, all of you who use the poor in your thirst of power and riches:
the Lord will turn your laughter to tears, on the wondrous Day of our God.

Let justice roll like a river, and wash all oppression away.
Come, O God, and take us, move and shake us;
come now, and make us anew, that we might live justly like you.

“Even now, return to me, let your hearts be broken and humble,
for I am gracious, gen’rous and kind.” Come and seek the mercies of God.

Let justice roll like a river, and wash all oppression away.
Come, O God, and take us, move and shake us;
come now, and make us anew, that we might live justly like you.

You have been told the way of life, the way of justice and peace:
to act justly, to love gently, to walk humbly with God.

Let justice roll like a river, and wash all oppression away.
Come, O God, and take us, move and shake us;
come now, and make us anew, that we might live justly like you.

*Text and Music: Marty Haugen; copyright 1991 GIA Publications
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Performance by Marty Haugen as found on Marty Haugen Anthology II: 1985-1989 –
The Best of Marty Haugen © 1997 GIA Publications, Inc. Released on 01/01/97,
Provided to YouTube by NAXOS of America and posted on 08/28/16.
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2Ku8VfhCis> [4:51]*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Reach out to people who are different from you.
And experience the transforming power of the living God! **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Different Races, Different Faces

Ahh...yeh...ahh...

Human beings from everywhere,
different cultures have to share
but there is something that's quite clear
there's a question that's only fair
it's the elephant in the room
that's not leaving no time soon
brings a question to each mind
that's been asked a million times:

Why did you make us this way –
black, red, white, brown, and yellow?
Why did you make us this way –
different places, different races?
But every race that you made is beautiful
and every place you made is beautiful!
The moon shines at night and the sun in the day!

I'm glad you made us this way – different faces, different places.
I'm glad you made us this way – black, red, white, brown, and yellow.
But every race that you made is beautiful
and every place you made is beautiful!
The moon shines at night and the sun in the day!

I'm glad you made us this way – different faces different places!
I'm glad you made us this way – black, red, white, brown, and yellow!

Ahh....

Text & Music by Gregory Stewart, ©
Performance by Gregory Stewart and Jessica Blake
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as found at this link: <https://youtu.be/299yltuNREI> [1:53]

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. The more cautious we are, the healthier those around us will be. As Christians Jesus calls us to love our neighbor, so, please, let's all do our part to end this pandemic. 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 all 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. After the service, please dispose of your own kit in a waste receptacle.

Sunday Worship Services – We are now doing in-person worship with live-streaming to Facebook. Although we will be indoors this Sunday due to the semi-annual meeting, *weather permitting, we will be worshipping outdoors as much as possible this summer, so please bring a lawn chair if you can, or you are welcome to sit at the picnic tables.*

Pastor Errol Johnson and his congregation, Christ Home of Unity, Restoration, Charity and Hope – or CHURCH are now worshipping in our sanctuary from 12-1:00 on Sundays. If you see them, please give them a warm welcome!

Today at noon, you are invited to join Jeanette Harris and Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, 1555 Hamilton Avenue, Waterbury for a Christmas in July worship and potluck.

Wednesday at 12:00 noon please join our 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)

The link is also on the calendar on our website at Salembridgeport.org under the Resources Tab.

The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport ENCOURAGES ALL MEMBERS of our congregations to join in their Raising the BAR (Becoming Anti-Racist) 2021 Summer Series via ZOOM. This summer we will join in facilitated conversations on Jemar Tisby's new book, How to Fight Racism. **You are welcome to attend any or all of the 5-part series. every other Thursday.** Each session is from 7:30-9:00 pm. The dates are: 7/29, 8/12 & 26. **Register here:** <https://ccgb.salsalabs.org/summerserie2021/index.html>

You will receive the Zoom link a week before the first session. The Zoom link will remain the same for all sessions. Check out the reviews for Tisby's book here:

https://www.google.com/books/edition/How_to_Fight_Racism/G7bWDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover

Please help feed the hungry! The ELCA World Hunger Appeal not only provides food for hungry people, it also works to alleviate the root causes of hunger and poverty. To participate in this effort, Salem received a request that is focused on specific projects in Malawi and Rwanda—including providing food, school supplies and mattresses for orphans and vulnerable children (at a cost of \$6. per child). Also included is training in welding, tailoring, entrepreneurship and cooperatives. Pastor David and Doreen Rinas for the World Hunger Team announce a matching grant for the first \$100 that each congregation in the New England Synod contributes to the World Hunger Appeal this year. Please consider making a contribution to the World Hunger Appeal. If you do this by check, make it payable to Salem and on the memo line note WH Rwanda & Malawi 2021. If you contribute to Salem online, use the ELCA World Hunger option. We are asking that contributions be made by July 31. Contributions will be sent on to Synod as a total amount from Salem. – Social Ministry Committee

Salem and Friends Breakfast & Faith Discussion, sponsored by the Salem Men, is held on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 8:00 am. Please join us...and invite a friend!

Inner-View Chat'n'Chew meets the 3rd Saturday of the month at 11:00, so mark your calendars for August 21st. 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.

Save the Date for our next Sunday Night Alive IN-PERSON event the last Sunday of August, 8/29, at 6:00. It's Caribbean night in the picnic grove, complete with delicious food, great music and fun dancing. 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!

In September we will probably meet at 6 pm on the last Sunday evening of the month on zoom, in which case the link is here.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82224426828?pwd=aTNKcUE4eEdINeliYlFVd1RnYlXOT09>

Meeting ID: 822 2442 6828 Passcode: 209780;

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

+13126266799,,82224426828# US (Chicago)

Thanks for attending Salem's Semi-Annual Meeting. Elected to new terms on Council were John Bryk, Frank Dukenski, Richard Lansing, and Steve Kuczo. Following the congregational meeting, the Council met to elect officers. Congratulations and Thanks to President Ray Anderson, Vice-President Tom Larson, Secretary Nancy Headford, and Treasurer Rich Kenyon.

Let's stay connected! 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. If we can help in any way, please know that you can 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.

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.

The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport Names The Reverend A. Iona Smith Nze as its Next President & CEO

The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport is pleased to announce that after a nation-wide search, its Board of Directors has selected the Reverend A. Iona Smith Nze (of Bridgeport!) to serve as its the next President & CEO following the upcoming retirement of its current President & CEO, the Reverend Cass Shaw on June 30, 2021.

The Rev. Smith Nze has been the Senior Pastor of Bethel AME Church in Bridgeport since 2017 and will continue to perform certain pastoral duties at Bethel AME Church through spring of 2022. She has extensive leadership experience in public, non-profit and religious settings. Prior to her first pastoral assignment in 2007, the Rev. Nze managed a variety of outreach programs addressing crisis prevention, food insecurity and immigrant support. Throughout her sacred and secular careers, she has been a visionary thinker, gaining valuable experience in both managing budgets and raising funds. Having served on the Board of Directors of the Council for the past two years, she has a keen understanding of the Council's programs and the strategic partnerships and alliances that provide critical support. She is a gifted orator who holds the distinction in the First Episcopal District for preaching Annual Sermons in three Annual Conferences in under five years. She will be an exceptional spokesperson for the Council throughout the greater Bridgeport community where she is already an advocate through Congregations for a New Connecticut (CONNECT), the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Greater Bridgeport (IMA) – the predominantly black organization of congregations, of which Pastor Marjo is a part, that predates our predominantly white Council of Churches) – and FaithActs for Education.



With experience as pastor of a member congregation of the Council, The Rev. Smith Nze is deeply committed to strengthening ties with current members and connecting with new congregations. “The Board of Directors is confident that the Council will continue to thrive under the spirited leadership and direction of the Reverend Smith Nze, and is grateful to the Reverend Shaw for her outstanding service to the community over the past eight years,” said Board Chair Doug Varga.

The Council formally introduced the Rev. Smith Nze at its Annual Meeting held virtually on Thursday, June 17th.

New Directors elected are: Beswick Channer, Assistant Principal, Bassick High School; Father Reggie Norman, Priest, Our Lady of Fatima Roman Catholic Church; the Rev. Rhonda Taylor, Pastor, Golden Hill United Methodist Church, Bridgeport; and Carolyn Vermont, Community Liaison for Mayor of Bridgeport

Directors nominated for new term or office are: Aileen Brill, Esq., Christ and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Westport; the Rev. Curtis Farr, Rector, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Fairfield; **and our own Bonnie McWain, of Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport**