



October 2021

the  
SPIRIT

# Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

*A Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Congregation*

## The Continuing Gift of the Reformation

October is the month we celebrate Reformation Day – and this year the 31<sup>st</sup> just happens to fall on Sunday! That's the day in 1517 that Martin Luther posted his 95 theses. Back then he posted them by nailing them to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany; today he'd be posting them on social media. The idea was to start a public conversation, to have a discussion, to create a movement to change the status quo, to shake things up, to find a way into a new paradigm.

While we often credit Martin Luther with starting the whole Reformation that day, it wasn't really Martin Luther who started it. It was the Holy Spirit who is CONTINUALLY working – in all who are open to the Spirit – to enlighten minds, empower spirits, and set hearts on fire, changing and growing and transforming believers, and moving the Church forward in faith to wherever God is calling it. The Spirit after all is the Spirit of Truth, and speaks the same truth to all. Luther's views were not new. Many who came before him had similar views, including Pierre Valdo and the Waldenses, John Wyclif and the Lollards, and Jan Hus, who was burned at the stake for his reforming efforts. What allowed the changes that Luther preached to take hold was the new technology of the printing press. Today, as we stand at the next huge shift in technology – digital / online technology, we have the opportunity to once again change the world.

So what does it mean to be "Lutheran"? Often we think it means thinking and saying and doing the things that we learned when we were growing up Lutheran. We think of our liturgy and hymnody and traditions and we think that's what "being Lutheran" means. But holding on to those "things" in actual fact makes us UNLutheran! **To be truly Lutheran means not to adhere to the content but to the intent, not to hold fast to things but to principles, not to focus on the "what" but on the "why".**

And what are those principles? Well, here are 3 that have to do with worship:

1. **Worship must be in the "language of the people".** That means that our hymns & liturgies & scripture translations & terminology must never be in an insider "church" language, but in the everyday language of those who are **not yet** part of the church. Luther didn't use the churchy music he'd grown up with – he set new texts to drinking songs that were being sung in the local bars! When he was criticized for that, his response was "Why should the devil have

all the good tunes?!" 😊 Luther understood we were to sing to God a NEW song. While we may equate Lutheranism with wearing robes, lighting candles, listening to organ music, & using terms like "chancel" & "narthex", the fact is that those things no longer make sense to an un-churched person, & so they are not truly "Lutheran".

2. **Word and Sacrament are both essential.** Back in Luther's time it was the Sacraments that were important, not the Word. The Bible and the liturgy were in Latin, so if you were an average person who did not know Latin you had no idea what was being said at worship. And for those who did under-

stand, not much attention was given to the explanation of God's Word. If there was a sermon at all, it didn't necessarily have anything to do with scripture. Luther understood that the secret to living a life of faith was to be grounded in the Word, and so he spent his life studying it, teaching it, preaching it, and writing about it. To be truly Lutheran means to take the Bible seriously and follow its instructions – even when it seems daffy or difficult or dangerous.

3. **The priesthood is one of all believers.** Back when we were growing up the pastor led every part of the service except the music. It was only when the Lutheran Book of Worship came out in 1978 that there were finally parts reserved for "assisting ministers". While the pandemic limited our use of assisting ministers at in-person worship for a while, we are grateful that we are once again blessed with having the voices of 2 assisting ministers each Sunday.

**And here are a few of Luther's principles for surviving a pandemic** (or as they called it in Luther's day, a plague):

1. Support government initiatives to provide healthcare for those who need it.
2. Let your words and actions demonstrate your love for God and for your neighbor.
3. Do NOT be rash or reckless; don't disregard the things that can counteract sickness and death;  
avoid putting yourself at risk; don't claim your trust is in God when you are simply tempting him.
4. Trust the science and common sense God has given you.
5. Use medicines, sanitize, purify the air, and avoid going anywhere you don't have to go.

Or in summary: (click here for the whole article: <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/plague-advice-from-luther/>)

**"...by God's decree the enemy has sent us poison and deadly offal. Therefore I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence...."**

I am grateful for what the Spirit did through Luther. I am grateful for the principles of our Lutheran faith. I am grateful for the theological cornerstone of Lutheranism: "justification by grace through faith". And most of all I am grateful for the way that grace shows forth in the endless, undeserved love that God has for every part of God's good creation. Including me. Including you.

Abundant blessings be yours!

*Pastor Marjo*

Pastor Marjo Anderson

## SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

Website - [www.salembridgeport.org](http://www.salembridgeport.org)

Facebook - [www.facebook.com/SalemBridgeport/](http://www.facebook.com/SalemBridgeport/)

### Church Office Hours

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

### Worship Services

Sunday 9:30am In Person Worship

### Salem's Staff

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

Karl Kraft, Office Manager  
Office Phone (203) 336-3300  
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Jennifer Reyes, Sexton  
Pablo, Cruz, Sexton  
Office Phone (203) 336-3300, ext. 10

## LEADERSHIP AT SALEM

### COUNCIL

Marjo Anderson, Pastor  
Ray Anderson, President  
Tom Larson, Vice-President  
Nancy Headford, Secretary  
Rich Kenyon, Treasurer  
Liz Bales  
Sandra Brown  
John Bryk  
Frank Dukenski  
Steve Kuczo  
Rich Lansing  
Judi Nielsen  
Diane Tomasko

## We Are Grateful



### Food Assistance

Marjo Anderson, Barbara Howard

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

Joan B	Daphne B
Barbara B	Peter K
Sam B	Bobby W
Erick D	Anna
Grace D	Barbara
Hannah & Joseph	James S
Bob H	Sarah R
Dennis H	Brooks A
Sylvitha	Angie
Jay	Liz F.
Mike R	Hazel P
Jane M	Katherine P
Jana B	
William S	



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

Next deadline date is **October 15th** for the  
**November issue!**



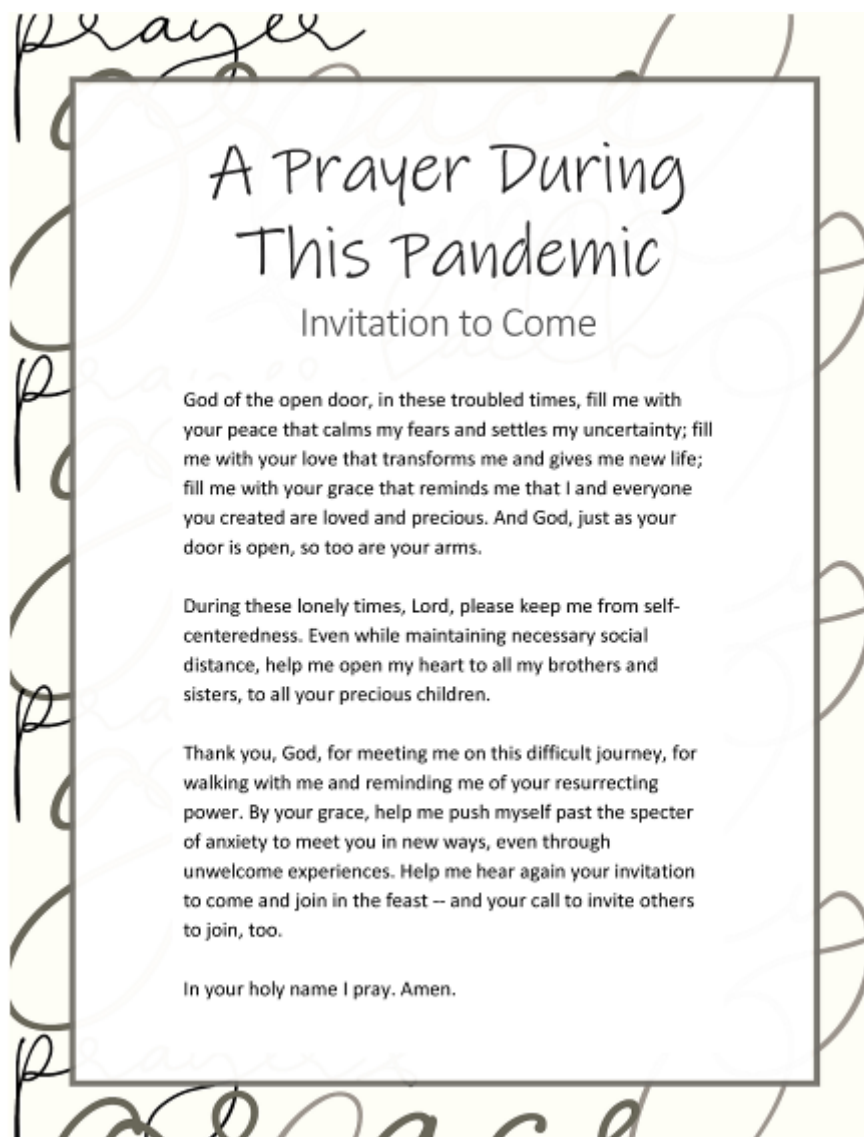
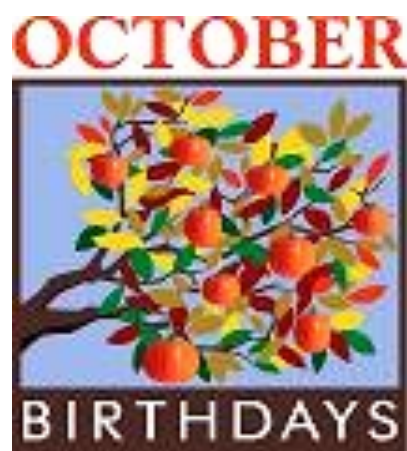
# October 2021 Salem Lutheran



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI Oct 1	SAT 2
					6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	
3 <b>Pentecost 19</b> 9:30am In Person Worship 10:30am Forward on the FIRST 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church 7pm STEPP Group - CR	4 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on Anti 6pm Boy Scouts - Community Room	5 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and Tex 12pm Book Club 7pm STEPP Group - CR	6 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 5pm Pre-Marital Counseling 6:30pm Bible Study	7 6pm Cub Scouts - Community Room	8 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	9 8am The BREAKFAST Gathering! 1pm Cub Scouts 103
10 <b>Pentecost 20</b> 9:30am In Person Worship 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church 7pm STEPP Group - CR	11 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on Anti 6pm Boy Scouts - Community Room 6:30pm Social Ministry Committee Meeting	12 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and Tex 6pm Stewardship Committee 7pm STEPP Group - CR	13 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 5pm Pre-Marital Counseling 6:30pm Bible Study	14 6pm Cub Scouts - Community Room	15 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	16 11am Inner-View Chat n Chew
17 <b>Pentecost 21</b> 9:30am In Person Worship 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church 7pm STEPP Group - CR	18 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on Anti 6pm Boy Scouts - Community Room 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting 7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting	19 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and Tex 7pm STEPP Group - CR	20 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 5pm Pre-Marital Counseling 6:30pm Bible Study	21 6pm Cub Scouts - Community Room	22 Reid - Hall Wedding - times tbd 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	23
24 <b>Pentecost 22</b> 9:30am In Person Worship 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church 7pm STEPP Group - CR	25 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on Anti 6pm Boy Scouts - Community Room 7pm Council Meeting	26 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and Tex 7pm STEPP Group - CR	27 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 5pm Pre-Marital Counseling 6:30pm Bible Study	28 6pm Cub Scouts - Community Room	29 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	30
31 <b>Reformation Day</b> 9:30am In Person Worship 10:30am Christ Presbyterian Church 6pm Sunday Night Alive! 7pm STEPP Group - CR	<div> <div> <i>Sola Gratia</i>            Grace Alone         </div> <div> <i>Sola Fide</i>            Faith Alone         </div> <div> <i>Sola Scriptura</i>            Scripture Alone         </div> </div>					

Marissa Luciani .....	1
Brandon DeWalt.....	2
Peggy Claus.....	4
Alicia Rosa .....	11
Joel Hintz .....	16
Leah Hintz.....	16
Philip Raschke .....	16
John Wilkins.....	16
William Sokoloski .....	17
Wes Murphy .....	18
Erin McPadden .....	19
Mary Ann Kenyon.....	20
Edith Larson.....	20
Scott DeWalt .....	21
Karen McPadden .....	21
Merlee Lange .....	21
Frank Claus.....	27

Megan Watts .....	28
Katherine Larson .....	31



# **In-Person Salem Lutheran Church Worship Participation Guide as of August, 2021**

These guidelines will help you to plan and make the most of your in-person experience.

1. Do not come to church if you are feeling sick. If you are not fully vaccinated, do not come to church if you have been exposed to someone with Covid.
2. If you are outside, you do not need to wear a mask unless in a crowded situation.
3. Because of the Covid variants, if you are inside the church and fully vaccinated, it is recommended that you wear a mask, especially if you are immunocompromised. If you are not fully vaccinated, you should wear a mask.
4. Hand sanitizer is available at the entrances to the church.
5. A Greeter will drop a communion kit into your hands. Hold on to the kit until communion.
6. A Greeter will hand you a bulletin and put your name on an attendance sheet.
7. An offering box is available upon entering the Sanctuary. Offerings may also be made virtually or mailed in.
8. The worship service will follow a different format that will limit the amount of the congregation's participation. There will be no singing by the congregation indoors.
9. 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 church, open the kit over the pew to prevent spilling on the carpet. You will take the empty kit after the service to the waste basket in the back of the church.
10. If you need to use the bathroom, only one person is allowed in the rest rooms at a time. The restrooms in the Narthex will be available for use. Please use the sanitizers in the rest rooms to clean up after use. There will be wastebasket located outside the restrooms for paper towels and sanitizers.



# WEEKLY AND MONTHLY EVENTS

**Mid-Week Wednesday Worship through Prayer!** 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. Or you can simply click on [this link](#).

**"Forward on the FIRST" adult forum on zoom!** 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

**Salem and Friends Prayer Gathering & Take-out Breakfast, sponsored by the Salem Men**, is held on the **2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month at 8:00 am**. 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 **3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at 11:00**, so mark your calendars for **June 19<sup>th</sup>**. 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.

**There are many ways to find the zoom link for worship and all other Salem events.** The most reliable way is to go to our website - [www.salembridgeport.org](http://www.salembridgeport.org), choose the Resource tab, and click on Calendar. Then on the calendar, go to the day, the event, and when you click on it, it will open up the zoom invitation. You can click on the link, or copy and paste it into your browser. To see how to do this, [click here](#):

We also include the zoom links in our weekly email blasts, and in this announcement section of our Sunday bulletin. You can find links to Sunday worship materials like the bulletin, sermon, and donate page at [www.salembridgeport.org/live](http://www.salembridgeport.org/live). Or to see how to get there, [click here](#):

# Breast Cancer Awareness



Breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women, except for skin cancers. A woman has around a 12% chance to develop invasive breast cancer in her lifetime. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women, exceeded only by lung cancer.



Breast cancer is a malignant (cancerous) tumor that starts from cells of the breast. These cancer cells may grow into (invade) surrounding tissues or spread (metastasize) to distant areas of the body. The disease occurs almost entirely in women, but men can get it too.

There are breast cancer risks factors that cannot be changed such as: older age, being female, genetic factors, family or personal history of breast cancer, white race, dense breast tissue, and menstrual periods before age 12 or lasting after age 55. Even without risk factors, a woman can still get breast cancer.

Factors that could lower your chance of getting breast cancer are:

- Having children before age 30
- Breast feeding for several months
- Not using birth control pills
- Not using hormone therapy after menopause
- Not drinking more than one alcoholic drink per day
- Not being overweight or obese
- Exercising around 1 1/2 - 2 1/2 hours per week keeping a healthy weight

Ovarian Self-Awareness means knowing the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer and what's normal for your body. It also means understanding how your lifestyle factors and family's health history impact your personal cancer risk.

## KNOW YOUR NORMAL

Because there is no effective test for ovarian cancer and many of the symptoms can be confused with common menstrual or digestive complaints, it is difficult to detect at an early stage.

**Fact:** 2/3 of women diagnosed will die from the disease.

Being Ovarian Self-Aware is your best bet when it comes to early detection and prevention.

## Signs + Symptoms:

### Primary:

- Bloating
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Needing to urinate urgently or often

### Secondary:

- Fatigue
- Upset stomach or heartburn
- Back pain
- Pain during intercourse
- Constipation
- Menstrual changes

**Take Note:** The symptoms of ovarian cancer are feelings you might dismiss as normal facts of life – heartburn from eating too much spicy food or feeling bloated as a result of your period. When these symptoms persist or worsen for 2-3 weeks, see your doctor and ask:

**"Could it be my ovaries?"**

## ANTIBIOTICS CONFUSION

There is a crucial need to educate older people about the use of antibiotics, according to a recent paper that found that a sizable minority misuse the medications.

The information comes from a survey of more than 2,200 adults ages 50 to 80 that was part of the University of Michigan's National Poll on Healthy Aging, sponsored by AARP.

Researchers found:

- ♦ **Nearly 13 percent** of those with antibiotic prescriptions stopped taking the drug before running out of the medication
- ♦ **34 percent** wrongly believe antibiotics can be used to treat a cold or the flu.
- ♦ **More than half** of those who reported having "leftover" antibiotics used to treat an earlier ailment took the old drug.
- ♦ **About 20 percent** have used antibiotics without consulting a doctor or pharmacist.



The CDC announced eligible individuals for the Pfizer Covid booster shot for those who received their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine six months ago or longer. Those eligible for the booster are: (1) those over the age of 65, (2) those over the age of 18 with an underlying health condition, or (3) those frontline workers at higher risk of COVID-19 exposure due to their profession.

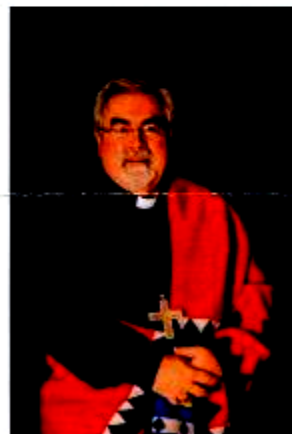




United  
Lutheran  
Seminary

Dear friend of the Seminary,

Even as I write this, I am uncertain what our learning environment will look like at United Lutheran Seminary this fall. The pandemic has been a stark reminder of our inability to see around corners. But as we have done for nearly 200 years now, at ULS we trust in God for the grace needed to continue raising up rostered leaders for the church. We look to scripture and our history for guidance, and we remember how people of faith, finding themselves in adversity, have always called upon God to be present with them in their uncertainty.



We call on God today, too. The church is the Body of Christ, and when one member of the body rejoices, we all rejoice. When a member is in pain, we too are called to be in solidarity. I know congregations are experiencing trauma. The rules seem to change daily, testing our ability to be the communion of saints in these uncertain times. We are working diligently to train nimble and empathic leaders to serve the needs of our evolving communities. I am counting on your partnership to help us in this endeavor through your financial support, prayers, and wisdom.

I wish I could say that this is the first time our campuses experienced a pandemic, but of course, any student of history knows this is not the case. At the end of World War I, the so-called “Spanish flu” ravaged the world and our country in four successive waves, killing more people than those who had died in the war itself. The Gettysburg and Philadelphia seminaries were not left unscathed.

Half of the student population of the Philadelphia seminary volunteered to be part of a burial detail at Mt. Airy’s Ivy Hill Cemetery. A young student who had enlisted in the military died from the flu at Camp Hancock, Georgia on November 6, 1918, just days before the Armistice. What were his classmates thinking and feeling when they gathered in Schaeffer-Ashmead Memorial Chapel to commend young William S. Wright to God’s eternal rest? Perhaps they were wrestling with some of the same existential issues we too are thinking about. Classes and worship were canceled, and students were urged to quarantine. By the end of the pandemic, an estimated 12,000 people would die in Philadelphia alone.

In Gettysburg, there is scant record of the on-campus effort to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, but we know from other sources that a young US Army major by the name of Dwight D. Eisenhower faced a massive challenge to keep the troops of Camp Colt (located on the battlefield near present-day Long Lane) from becoming sick. By November of 1918, 150 soldiers in his command would die from the flu and a full third of his camp would contract it. The community of Gettysburg, including members of the seminary population, were under quarantine and had limited access to resources that could help. They did what they could to stem the rising tide of the illness, canceling events and festivities to mitigate the spread of disease.

Now again, a century later, we are called upon to bind up the spiritual and physical wounds of the sick and walk with those who mourn the loss of loved ones. I am inspired by those pastors who have shown innovation and energy despite the uncertainty of the situation from month to month. I am beginning to think that “normal” never existed except in our memories. We have always lived in the liminal space of not knowing how challenges to the Seminary’s life and mission would arise, whether external (climate change and energy use), internal (the gradual changes in church and congregational life), and both—like our call to seek racial reconciliation and to end discrimination against those who been marginalized for far too long. COVID and its variants are simply one aspect of the challenge we face in being the Body of Christ in this time and place.

On the brighter side, we have 372 students enrolled for classes this fall. Some of them have known no other experience at the ULS than virtual classes and worship. The past two commencement ceremonies took place in a virtual environment (and we’d like to give a life-affirming in-person celebration when it is possible to do so). Our new students who come to us with unique gifts and growth edges are bravely answering a call to ministry in a time when the church is in flux and new ways of doing ministry are quickly becoming a necessary part of any servant leader’s skill-set. Perhaps I will find myself saying to these students, “Welcome to a life of meaning and purpose, the narrative of which is a complete mystery to all of us, save for Christ who loves us.” This is the best certainty I can offer right now.

As the Spanish flu pandemic afflicted our communities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and our ancestors responded in faith and compassion, we are called to be present in this time of pain and uncertainty. It sounds ironic, but *this time of need is a good time to be the church*. Our faith is called to action; we are called to serve in the face of all forms of danger, and to offer hope when many are tempted to despair. In this moment, we can lay claim to the promise of Romans 5:4-5, that “endurance produces character, and character produces hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” Hope does not disappoint us.

What does this mean in the Lutheran sense? The power of God’s love is stronger than anything this or any uncertain moment can throw at us. The power of Christ’s love sustains the efforts of our students at the seminary, our pastors in the field, and our ordinary living, filling it with sacred possibilities. Hope does not disappoint us, because we have Christ, and we have each other.

Thank you for your continued support of United Lutheran Seminary. Of your charity, please remember us in your giving this fall. Together, we are building hope for the future of the church and world.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Guy Erwin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R. Guy Erwin  
President  
United Lutheran Seminary





Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

# Cultivate Character

*By Aaron Fuller*

During the summer, my congregation's Bible study group decided to read the book of James. We had two reasons. First, James is only five chapters and thus, we thought, would be a fast read. Second, we knew Martin Luther had called this book "an epistle of straw," which intrigued us. As we studied together, we quickly learned that both we and Luther were wrong—James is long and rich with wisdom.

We ended up studying James all summer and, in doing so, wrestled with the question "What do my words and deeds say about my faith and about me?" We discovered that James doesn't advocate for earning one's righteousness through works, as Luther thought, but instead stresses the importance of one's character in Christ. Character is one's identity reflected in what one says and does.

Thinking about character naturally leads to many questions. This month's lectionary readings from James offer the following questions to reflect on Christian character: Do our actions and words align with our Christian faith? What virtues form a Christian character? How do practices such as prayer affect our character?

I've also been asking myself, "Does character matter?" Based on how our society talks about politics and justice for people of varying race, gender and sexual orientation and for the poor, my answer would be no. In media today, we receive messages that lack

compassion, empathy and humility—the virtues of character.

I even watch fellow Lutherans, people who have expressed deep faith in Jesus, say and do things online and beyond that contradict Christ's call to suffer with and alongside all of God's people. I'm prone to this as well. Many of us today act and speak reactively and have become less discerning in how we live out our relationships with friends, family and strangers. As a result, our emotional and spiritual wellness has suffered, which has left us feeling hopeless and alone. Such unwellness can lead to suicide, thoughts of suicide and harm, mental health struggles and acts of violence. All this happens, I believe, because we don't think character matters.

Our September readings from James prove that character indeed matters. Yet for Christians, character is not a matter of choice; it starts when we allow ourselves to be formed by Christ.

As James writes, "Draw near to God, and [God] will draw near to you" (4:8). Only when we draw near to Christ and allow him to work in us will we be able to discern what to do and what to say and, importantly, reject anything that erodes our Christian character.

**Aaron Fuller** is a bi-vocational pastor serving as a Navy Reserve chaplain.

## Female Doctors Serving in Rural Communities in Tanzania



Ceremony at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania Health Department. (Photo: Daudi Msseemaa)

It's not just a graduation. And it's not just a job. When Lightness Gudu finished her medical course and became Lightness Gudu, MD, it was a step toward answering her calling: helping people heal in places where there aren't enough doctors. Her assignment to Iambi Lutheran Hospital in the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) helped fill a great need across rural Tanzania. Most doctors are concentrated in urban areas. Iambi is several hours away from the nearest city, and rural hospitals across the country are struggling to keep their doctors. Lightness' calling is made possible by an ELCA grant that provides scholarships to train doctors and specialists to work in

rural Lutheran health facilities across Tanzania. The grant has made a tremendous impact on the ability of rural Lutheran hospitals to offer the highest quality service. There are currently 12 medical scholarship recipients. The program is administered by the ELCT Health Department.

At the handover ceremony, the ELCT Health Department and the church's secretary general gave speeches about the importance of the work, the faithfulness of God and the devotion of Lightness to complete her education. During the service she was commissioned to the head of Iambi Lutheran Hospital by the general secretary of the Central Diocese, which owns the hospital. After the ceremony and prayers, there was a party to celebrate her achievement: a young woman in a field dominated by men, thriving in the difficult environment of university and ready to serve in even more difficult environments. Following a Tanzanian custom, she cut her cake and fed pieces of it to people in the room, including her future boss and five fellow ELCT medical scholarship recipients.

A piece of that cake was for the ELCA — the thousands of people who made her scholarship possible, who support a program that keeps essential medical professionals in rural hospitals.