



April 2022

the  
SPIRIT

# Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

*A Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Congregation*

## Seeking God's Will

*"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." [1  
Corinthians 12:27]*

*"Christ is the head of the body, the church" [Colossians 1:18]*

In 2020 the congregation voted to sell the building to a developer. The more we dealt with him, the more I was convinced that he was lying and that it was a bad idea to sell to him. And so on 2 successive Sundays in worship I prayed these words, "God, if it is your will for this sale to go through, make it go through quickly and easily. But if you do not want us to sell, make that crystal clear to us". We signed the purchase and sales agreement, but when we got the rent back agreement the man had tripled the rent and wasn't going to provide any of the services that he had promised! At that point, Frank Dukenski told the Council that he had withdrawn the agreement to sell. He said, "I know I might not actually have had the authority to do that, but it was crystal clear that that's what we needed to do." And I praised God for answering my prayer!

In December of 2021, the congregation of Salem Lutheran Church again voted in a specially called meeting to sell our property – this time to the Ephraim French Seventh Day Adventist Church for 1.8 million dollars. To be honest, I wasn't convinced we should sell the property and so I prayed, "God, if you don't want us to sell the property, you will have to stop it because I can't." Immediately I had a vision of a train barreling down the track and I heard God say, "Don't stand in front of the train. You'll just get run over. Instead, trust the One who controls the tracks." A few months later I was in Barbados when I got the email announcing the congregational meeting to vote to sell. As I read the email on my phone, my heart heavy, I just happened to be riding a steam train on a plantation we were touring. Suddenly the train slowed down and the tour guide said, "You may have wondered why we've slowed down, but if you look out that window over there, you will see one of our guys has jumped off and is running over there to **switch the tracks**!!!! And I knew it was God saying to me, "Don't worry! You can see that I am obviously controlling the tracks!" We got back home, the congregation voted to sell, but I was still sad -- until I met the people from the purchasing church, that is. We asked them if we might rent back a small classroom on the lower level for Karl and me to share for a few months. Their response was, "Why would you want to do that? Why don't you move into that rear office upstairs?" They were referring to Liz's old office – the second best office in the whole building! At that point I KNEW that selling to these gracious, loving people had been the right thing to do!

They invited us to stay and offered us all the worship, office and storage space we need at a very reasonable price. First Presbyterian Church in Fairfield also made us an offer that gives us about half the space (office not handicapped accessible) for more money and yet our leadership currently is set on going there. To me it makes no sense from a business point of view. Plus I know that there are many Salem members who will not move there with us which is an even greater concern.

And so, since we had two different offers and since our membership was

divided on the issue, I wasn't sure whether Karl and I would be in the new office for just a few months, or whether we would be there indefinitely. I needed to know, because if it was going to be long-term, the office needed some work since it had not been updated since Ann and Bill Martin fixed it up when Liz became full-time 35-40 years ago! I turned to God in prayer and I asked God to give me a sign as to whether I should fix it up or not. And God gave me that sign. Now to understand that sign, you need to remember what I have mentioned to you before - that the clearest message God has ever given me was that someday I would be doing some sort of ministry in Jamaica, so keep that in mind. The wallpaper was falling off the wall and I was thinking that IF I were to fix up the office, I'd like a gold color, and I found 2 colors I liked on the Home Depot site. When I clicked on the new colors I discovered what they were named. They could have been named a thousand different things, but what these 2 colors were named were... PLANTAIN and GINGER BEER! And then I KNEW WITHOUT A SINGLE DOUBT that God was telling me to fix up the office and settle in for the long-term. So of course, I did!

Salem's Council, however, wants to begin worshipping at First Presbyterian in May and move our offices there in September.

Here's the thing. While the Church is NOT the building, the Church is NOT merely the people either. We are all members of the body of Christ, connected with one another. But we ONLY function as a healthy body when we are under the direction of Christ our Head. If we are not listening to the Head, we are NOT the Church – we are simply a religious club or a social clique.

**In order to give every member the opportunity to vote on what they believe God is calling us to do – to stay at 3160 Park Avenue or to move to the First Presbyterian Church in Fairfield – I have called a congregational meeting for Sunday after Easter, April 24<sup>th</sup>, immediately following worship, at approximately 10:30 am. Because of the difficulty we have had zooming people into congregational meetings, the meeting will be IN-PERSON only. The ballot will be a written one, so that you can freely vote your conscience.**

**I ask that each and every member ask Christ what HE wants for Salem. And when you pray, ask that God make the answer crystal clear to you so that you know that it is not your will, but God's. I also ask that each and every member come & vote so that the whole body of Christ at Salem is together.** If you have any questions or concerns, please call or text me at 203-982-3441.

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

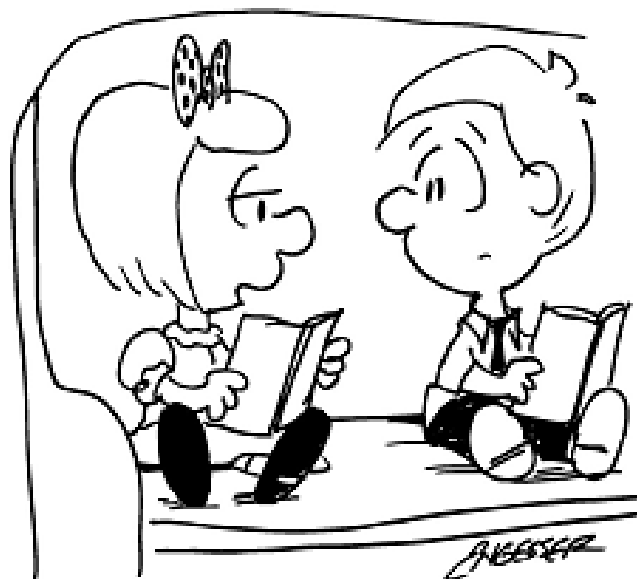
The Rev. Marjo Anderson, Pastor  
Cell Phone (203) 982-3441  
[marjoanderson@aol.com](mailto:marjoanderson@aol.com)

Karl Kraft, Office Manager  
Office Phone (203) 336-3300  
[salemsec123@sbcglobal.net](mailto:salemsec123@sbcglobal.net)

## 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  
Diane Tomasko



"No, Peter Cottontail was not an apostle!"

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

Barbara  
Bernedette  
Christiane  
Dolores  
Frank  
Grace  
Jonathan  
Linda  
Steve  
and all we name in our hearts.



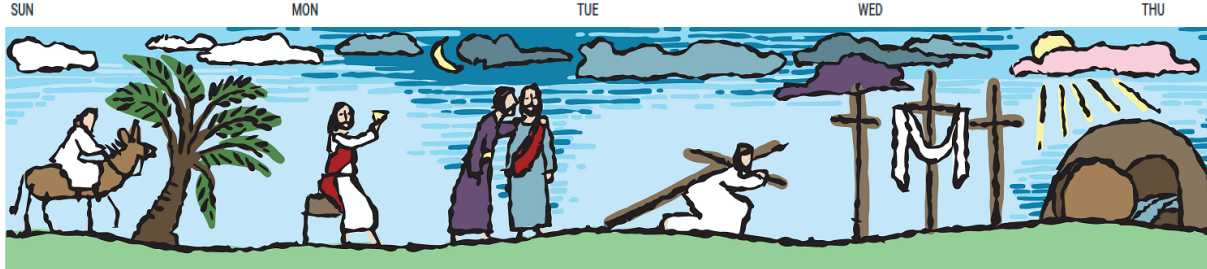
Newsletter deadline is the 15th of each month unless otherwise noted in the monthly calendar.

Next deadline date is **April 15th** for the  
May issue!

Email submissions to  
[salemsec123@sbcglobal.net](mailto:salemsec123@sbcglobal.net)



# April 2022 Salem Lutheran Church



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI Apr 1	SAT 2
3 <b>Lent 5</b> 9:30am In Person Worship 10:30am Forward on the FIRST	4 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on An	5 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and Tr	6 9:30am Bible Study 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 6:30pm Lenten Virtual Dinner Theatre Worship	7	8 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	9
10 <b>Passion/Palm Sunday</b> 9:30am In Person Worship 4pm Southern CT Conference COLLABORATE!	11 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on An 6:30pm Social Ministry Committee Meeting	12 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and Tr 6pm Stewardship Committee Meeting	13 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray	14 <b>Maundy Thursday</b> 7:30pm Worship - Our Saviour's	15 <b>Good Friday</b> 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center 7:30pm Worship - Our Saviour's	16 <b>Vigil of Easter</b> 11am Inner-View Chat n Chew
17 <b>Easter</b> 9:30am In Person Worship	18 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on An 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting 7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting	19 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and Tr	20 9:30am Bible Study 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 6:30pm Bible Study	21 7pm CCGB Delegate Meeting	22 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	23
24 <b>Easter 2</b> 9:30am In Person Worship 6pm Sunday Night Alive!	25 4pm Southern CT Rostered Leaders Mtg on An 7pm Council Meeting	26 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and Tr	27 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray 6:30pm Bible Study	28	29 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	30

# CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**THERE WILL BE A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING FOLLOWING 9:30 WORSHIP (10:30ish) ON April 24<sup>th</sup> (the Sunday after Easter) FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF VOTING ON WHETHER WE STAY AT 3160 PARK AVENUE OR MOVE TO ANOTHER LOCATION. This will be an in-person meeting ONLY. Vote will be by written ballot.** We have closed on the sale of our property to the Ephraim French Seventh Day Adventist Church and we are currently renting back space from them. They have graciously offered us all that we need to stay here, including time in the sanctuary for 9:30 Sunday worship and time in the lounge following that for coffee hour and/or adult forum. They have also offered us the former music director's office for Pastor Marjo and Karl to share, half of the workroom behind what will now be their church office for such things as our copier, printers, router, and file cabinets, a section of the paper supply closet in the workroom, storage for larger items in one of the closets off the stage, as well as a temporary "staging area" in the former food pantry space for things we will be moving off-site to long-term storage. First Presbyterian in Fairfield has also made us an offer. **This is a chance for you, the congregation, to choose where you wish to worship.**

**In our continuing quest to fight back against the power and fear of racism,  
especially in those who say they are followers of Christ,  
we present these opportunities of performance and dialogue  
at Fairfield University's Regina A. Quick Center:**

*Thursday, April 28, 2022 8pm (\$30, \$15 Member)*

Open VISIONS Forum

**"Caste: Examining Race, Culture, & Consequences"**

by Isabel Wilkerson

*Pastor Marjo Anderson and Jeanette Harris  
will host a discussion of this presentation and of the book in general  
on Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:00 on zoom at this link:*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89975646418?pwd=ZG5nSVVmR3NVTXc5dTAwbWtqTWdrZz09>  
or go to [SalemBridgeport.org/Resources/Calendar](http://SalemBridgeport.org/Resources/Calendar) and click on the event for more information

Tickets and additional information is available at: <http://www.quickcenter.com>



# LENT 2022

**Wednesdays in Lent** – On the 5 Wednesdays during Lent – March 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th, and April 6th – we'll gather ONLINE with other congregations from our conference for a Virtual Dinner Theatre Worship experience. Bring your dinner to your desk - or your laptop to the dinner table - and enjoy your meal while participating in a kind of dinner church/cabaret theatre.



The theme is “Looking for Joy in Lent”, and each week’s worship will incorporate a play, scripture, music, prayer, and some time to get to know one another. Each week’s play will be self-contained but the same characters will return each week. We’re looking for volunteers to read a part in the play. Please let Jeanette “Momma J” know if you can play a part. You can call or text her at 203-366-6778 or email her at [jharris524@yahoo.com](mailto:jharris524@yahoo.com).

The worship will be streamed live to Facebook so if you can’t join us in real time you can watch it later. Please invite your family and friends to this novel Lenten experience.

The zoom link is on Salem’s calendar under the Resources tab on our website Salem-Bridgeport.org.

Or just click here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87987712617?pwd=eDFqZVBoTm0zYUtkTU04MDQ5U0tJQT09>

Meeting ID: 879 8771 2617, Passcode: 668342,  
Dial by your location – +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

**Palm Sunday, April 10th** at 9:30 – IN-PERSON at 3160 Park Avenue and streamed live to Facebook



**Maundy Thursday, April 14th** – IN-PERSON at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, 160 Hill Farm Road, Fairfield

**Good Friday, April 15th** – IN-PERSON at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, 160 Hill Farm Road, Fairfield



# ***BOY SCOUT TROOP 103***

## ***23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL*** ***PASTA DINNER***



**SATURDAY APRIL 30, 2022 AT 6PM**

**PASTA, Homemade “HOPCO” Sauce, Treva’s old-fashioned Meatballs,  
Fresh Salad, bread/butter, dessert, &  
bottled water to go, coffee for seated patrons.**

*Admission is \$15*

*Tickets available in advance  
& Evening of the Dinner unless sold out.*

*For Advanced tickets & reservations call:  
Mark Hopco (203)260-2139, or Wes Murphy (203) 892-9477,  
or Angela Arboleda (203) 543-3056*



**HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**4070 PARK AVE, BRIDGEPORT, CT**

**203-374-5561**

**<https://holytrinitybridgeport.org/>**



David Albers.....	1
Timothy Genster.....	1
Reinhard Reichelt.....	3
Marjo Anderson.....	4
Bert Andren.....	8
Miles Wilkins .....	8
Marija Kolar.....	8
Kristen Kulakowski.....	8
Carissa Gulyas.....	10
Grace Dukenski.....	11
Liz Frohrip .....	12
Liliana Vasquez.....	13
Linda Bryk.....	15
Victoria Roehrich.....	16
Joseph Sokoloski .....	18
Gabriella Rosa .....	19
Barbara Davis .....	20

Domenick D'Andrea.....	24
John Watts.....	24
Judi Nielsen .....	25
Julia DeWalt .....	25
Ian Dow .....	26
Tracey Wilkins .....	30



Dear Pastor Marjo and  
Friends at Salem,

Thank you for the beautiful  
bouquet of flowers for my 102nd  
birthday. It was so kind of you  
to remember me and your  
thoughtfulness brightened my  
day.

Best Regards and Blessings,

Josephine Hahn





Information from the National Institutes of Health Website

## **“Know Your Numbers”: Body Mass Index and Waist Circumference**

**Body mass index (BMI)** is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to adult men and women. A BMI below 18.5 is underweight. A BMI of 18.5-24.9 is normal. A BMI of 25-29.9 is overweight and any BMI over 30 is obesity. The higher your BMI the higher your risk for certain diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, gallstones, breathing problems, and certain cancers. **Waist Circumference measurement** helps screen for possible health risks that come with overweight and obesity. If most of your fat is around your waist you're at a higher risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes. This risk goes up with a waist size that is greater than 35 inches for women or greater than 40 inches for men.

Information from the National Institutes of Health Website

## **“Know Your Numbers”: Blood Pressure**

High blood pressure, sometimes called “the silent killer,” is very common. You can have high blood pressure and still feel just fine because high blood pressure often does not cause signs of illness that you can see or feel. One way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure screened. Your blood pressure is high when it measures 140/90 or higher. You have prehypertension when your blood pressure is between 120/80 and 139/89. Normal blood pressure is less than 119/79. If you have high blood pressure it is very important to see a doctor. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart disease, eye problems, kidney failure, and other health problems. Local blood pressure screening sites can be found by going to the Get Healthy CT website: [www.GetHealthyCT.org](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org).

Information from the National Institutes of Health Website

## **“Know Your Numbers”: Blood Cholesterol**

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance which circulates in your blood stream. The liver removes the cholesterol from your body. Too much cholesterol in your blood, over 200mg/dl, is called high blood cholesterol. It can be serious. It increases your chances of having a heart attack or getting heart disease. High blood cholesterol itself does not cause symptoms; so many people don't know that they have it. It is important to find out what your cholesterol numbers are because if you have high blood cholesterol, lowering it reduces your chances of getting heart disease or having a heart attack. For more information about local screenings go to the Get Healthy CT website: [www.GetHealthyCT.org](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org).

Information from the National Institutes of Health Website

## **“Know Your Numbers”: Blood Sugar**

Diabetes means your blood glucose (sugar) is too high. Glucose comes from the food you eat and is also made in your liver and muscles. Insulin is a chemical (a hormone) made by the pancreas. Insulin helps the glucose from food get into your cells. If your body does not make enough insulin or if the insulin doesn't work the way it should, glucose can't get into your cells. It stays in your blood instead. Fasting blood glucose is taken in the morning after not eating for at least 8 hours. Diabetes is a fasting blood glucose level of 126 or higher. Prediabetes is fasting blood glucose of 100-125 and normal fasting blood glucose is under 99. Diabetes that is not well controlled causes serious damage to the eyes, kidneys, nerves, and heart, gums and teeth.

# This Info Could Save Your Life

1. Let's say it's 7:25 pm and you're going home (alone of course) after an unusually hard day on the job.

2. You're really tired, upset and frustrated.

3. Suddenly you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to drag out into your arm and up into your jaw.

You are only about five km from the hospital nearest your home.

4. Unfortunately you don't know if you'll be able to make it that far.

5. You have been trained in CPR, but the guy that taught the course did not tell you how to perform it on yourself.

## 6. HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK WHEN ALONE?

Since many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack without help, the person whose heart is beating improperly and who begins to feel faint, has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness.

7. However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest.

A breath and a cough must be repeated about every two seconds without let-up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

8. Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it to regain a normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get help or to a hospital.

9. . Tell as many other people as possible about this. It could save their lives!

The **total cholesterol measurement** along with **blood pressure**, **blood sugar** and **body mass index (BMI)** will allow you and your healthcare provider to determine your risk for developing **cardiovascular disease caused by atherosclerosis**.

Category	Ideal Number
<b>Total Cholesterol</b>	Less than 180 mg/dL
<b>Body Mass Index</b>	Less than 25 kg/m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Blood Pressure</b>	Less than 120/80 mm Hg
<b>Fasting Blood Sugar</b>	Less than 100 mg/dL



# 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**, has normally been held on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 8:00 am. With the sale of the building happening soon, we are looking at ways to continue the breakfast. If anyone has suggestions, please contact Bruce Tomasko.

**Inner-View Chat'n'Chew** meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> **Saturday of the month at 11:00, so mark your calendars**. 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](#):

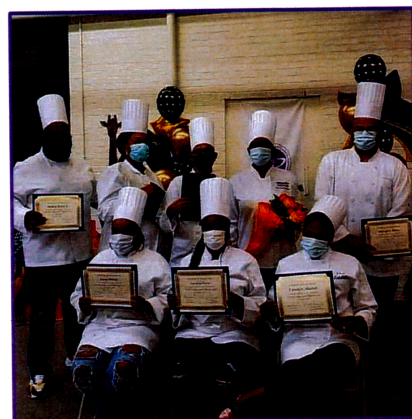
The Rev. Marjo Anderson  
Salem Lutheran Church  
3160 Park Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Dear Rev. Anderson and members of the congregation,

Thank you so much for supporting The Council of Churches with your generous donation of \$1,100 on March 3, 2022. We are grateful for your consistent partnership!

Your gift makes it possible to:

- Provide intervention for youth and families in crisis through the Janus Center.
- Supply Howard, our Street Outreach Worker, with the resources of food and essential needs to homeless youth, to help get them off the streets and into stable housing.
- Supply fresh produce through our Mobile Market Truck to many, including senior citizens and college students.
- Provide free culinary training to low income residents giving them the opportunity for food industry employment.



THANK YOU for being part of this ministry, and helping us bring healthy food, safety, support, and new opportunities to those we serve!

With gratitude,

*Tom Larson*

Tom Larson  
Interim President and Chief Executive Officer

*Marjo & members of Salem -*

*Thanks for your contribution and  
your ongoing support of the Council.*

*Tom*

***We acknowledge that no goods or services were provided in exchange for your donation.***

**Advocacy \* Food Access \* Ecumenical & Interfaith \* Re-Entry \* Youth in Crisis**

1718 Capitol Avenue · Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604-1531  
Tel: 203.334.1121 · Fax: 203.367.8113 · [www.ccgb.org](http://www.ccgb.org)



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

## Accompaniment in a time of crisis

*Lutheran Disaster Response raises \$1.3 million for care efforts in Eastern Europe*

On Feb. 24, Russian forces invaded Ukraine, initiating a humanitarian crisis. Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is accompanying ELCA companion churches and ecumenical partners in their efforts to provide support, supplies and care to people affected by the war. So far, LDR's Eastern Europe crisis response has raised \$1.3 million.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, more than 2 million people are seeking refuge in neighboring countries, including Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Moldova. There are major humanitarian concerns for both internally displaced people and refugees.

Russia has launched air strikes across Ukraine, including on the capital of Kyiv and other major cities. Airports are shut down, and few railway lines are operational. At least 636 civilians have been killed in the conflict to date, and damage to civilian infrastructure has left hundreds of thousands of people without water or electricity. Ukrainian men of military age (18-60) are forbidden to leave the country, so most of those fleeing the violence are women and children.

Through the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), LDR is supporting member churches including the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania.

These churches are distributing basic necessities such as food, water and toiletries, as well as providing pastoral and psychological care and assisting members of Roma communities

and foreign nationals. Additional responses through partners in these countries and others in the region are expected in the coming weeks and months.

A grant to some of these companion churches through the LWF was approved March 9. This grant will allow LWF over a six-month period to establish a coordination structure to support member churches in the response. Through it, the LWF will strengthen the capacity of member churches to fulfill the immediate and long-term needs of refugees and internally displaced people, and to report back to partners effectively.

"Covenant of the smaller Lutheran churches in central and Eastern Europe, ecumenical and other partners has long been a regional priority for the ELCA," said Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, in a message. "In this time of crisis, we accompany our partners with concrete support for their humanitarian efforts through Lutheran Disaster Response."

Eaton continued, "The ELCA is also accompanying those who are responding to the needs of foreign nationals who were in Ukraine when the fighting began and who are trying to cross the border to safety, as well as the partners who focused their ministry on providing holistic support for under-documented and undocumented individuals impacted by this violence in Ukraine."

Gifts made toward LDR's response are used in full to assist those impacted by the war in Ukraine.





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

# ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.

## Middle East and North Africa



Christians have become the remnant of the remnant in the Holy Land, but they remain faithful, from the youngest to the oldest. This picture was taken by former missionary Ben Gray at a confirmation service at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Beit Sahour, near Bethlehem.

### Prayers for Christians in the Middle East

The Middle East and North Africa Desk asks the ELCA to pray for Christians in the Middle East who are suffering. Until recently, Christians in the Middle East were a robust minority community with long histories and deep interfaith relationships, but in some countries the wars of the 21st century have reduced the number of Christians to single percentages. Decades of conflict, the weakness of financial institutions and governments, and this year's repudiation of a "two-state" solution for Israel and Palestine have driven a mass exodus of Christians from the region. Church leaders in the Middle East are speaking of a Kairos moment, deeply concerned for the future of their churches and of Christian witness in the Middle East.

### Seeking the Safety and Viability of Christian Communities in the Middle East

The ELCA's Global Mission unit works with Christians in the Middle East to build leadership capacity, provide relief to refugees, support strategies for sustainable Christian communities, and strengthen Arab Christian awareness in the West. Global Mission supports its companion churches in their efforts to witness publicly and to provide their members with a safe and viable future in the region.

Though bilateral support, historically, has gone to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), the ELCA now provides World Hunger support to Christians and others in need throughout the region through ecumenical organizations such as the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) in Beirut and the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services in Cairo. The ELCA also provides Mission Support to Arabic-speaking seminaries in the Middle East, namely the Near East School of Theology in Beirut and the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo.

The displacement of millions of people in the Middle East makes "people on the move" the focus of the ELCA's action for refugees, migrants and internally displaced people. Support to the Middle East has mainly been administered through such agencies as the Middle East Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran World Relief, St. Andrew's Refugee Services in Cairo, and the ELCJHL.