



February 2023

the  
SPIRIT

# Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

*A Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Congregation*

## Light and Life and Lent

Emma sat in her doctor's office, trying to have faith and not panic. The Dr walked in, sat down, looked at her, & began to speak. "Well, Emma, the bad news is that you have cancer, but before we talk about that, I need to tell you the good news: it's treatable."

Perhaps some of us have actually heard such words, but whether we have or not, I think all of us know much we need faith in the midst of fear, how much we need hope in the midst of despair, and how much we need light when the darkness is all around us.

That's kind of where we are in our Sunday Bible readings this month. This Sunday Jesus challenges us to let our light shine, and the following week we find him shining like the sun on his 3 closest friends. Why did God reveal Jesus to Peter, James and John in such an amazing, dramatic, and memorable way? I think it was to do just what Emma's doctor was doing, following the bad news with the good. According to all 3 synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), Jesus predicts his death 3 times, and in each of the 3 gospels, the transfiguration happens on the heels of the 1st prediction. That means that Jesus knows that he will suffer & die and he has shared that with his disciples, but he knows that in order for him and for them to survive what's to come, they will need to have faith and hope.

What does that mean for you and me? Well, let's go back to our story of Emma. Emma had had no symptoms of illness – unless you counted feeling a little less energetic and joyful than she had in the past. But surely that was just age. Nevertheless, she had gone for her routine physical and they had discovered the cancer.

I like to think of these weeks leading up to Ash Wednesday as the time when each of us needs to schedule our annual spiritual exam. Where are we on the scale of faith? Is there anything that you have resigned yourself to? Or do you believe that God can do the impossible? Where are you on the scale of hope? Is there anything that you've given up on? Or do you believe God can make a way where there is no way? Where are you on the scale of joy? Are you depressed or emotionally flat? Or are you overflowing with excitement at what God has done for you? If you are not filled with hope when things seem hopeless, if you don't have faith in God's ability to do the impossible, if you are not absolutely vibrating with joy despite forecasts of gloom and doom, then the bad news is that there *is* something wrong with your spiritual health. But the good news is that there are treatments! And the treatments begin in Lent.

On Ash Wednesday you will hear the call to the "discipline of Lent" – which involves **self-examination, repentance, prayer, fasting, sacrificial giving, and works of love and justice**. But how can you put those things into practice?

Here are my suggestions:

1. **First, make an appointment to come see me, your pastor, your spiritual health director, for your annual wellness visit** – either in person or

via zoom or by phone. Traditionally Lent talks about **examining** our inner life and **repenting**, but all that really means is sharing how you're feeling, what questions or concerns you have, what issues have arisen, and how you are doing in the faith, hope, love, and joy departments. I'm happy to listen, to share, to pray, and to offer counsel if needed.

2. Use Ash Wednesday as your day to begin a new habit of shared **prayer**. During Lent this year **every day at noon from Monday-Friday beginning on Thursday 2/23, I invite you to come together as Salem for a short prayer call on a conference call line. Just call this free conference call number: 681-999-0232. Then when prompted, enter the access code: 673980#**. You don't have to pray out loud. I'm happy to do the praying – for you and everyone else on the call, for other Salem members and friends, and for our congregation as we step into the future God has already prepared for us. The prayer will be as long as it needs to be, but may only be 5 -10 minutes, so call in when you can and leave when you must.

3. Use Ash Wednesday as your day to begin your Lenten **fasting**. What is God calling you to give up, or change, or add to your life so that you can experience more abundant life? **Use these next few weeks to reflect on what you eat, how you exercise, and how you are giving of your time and money, so that you're ready to begin some new habits on 2/22**. I'll certainly be listening to what God is calling me to do during Lent, and I'd love to hear what God is saying to you!

4. Finally, there are the *works of love* – both *charity* and *justice*. *Charity* seeks to meet the immediate needs of people – for food, clothing, shelter, etc. But that's only the first step. The next step is *Justice* which seeks to change the systems of society so that everyone will have all they need – food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, work that provides a living wage, & the opportunities to live fully into their God-given potential. **What charitable works are you doing now and what more can you do? What are you doing to create a more just society, and what more can you do?** Remember, you don't have to change the world all by yourself. Just let God lead you to one more charitable and one more justice action this Lent. It can be as simple as reading a book to increase your awareness of the injustices around us. Again, give it some thought so that when we talk, we can share where God is leading us.

The next 2 weeks Jesus gives us a picture of the shining light that awaits each one of us in our personal lives and in our life together. As we journey through Lent 2023, I encourage you to receive and hold firm to the life-giving and joy-filled vision that I know God will give us, to empower us in the months and years to come!

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

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

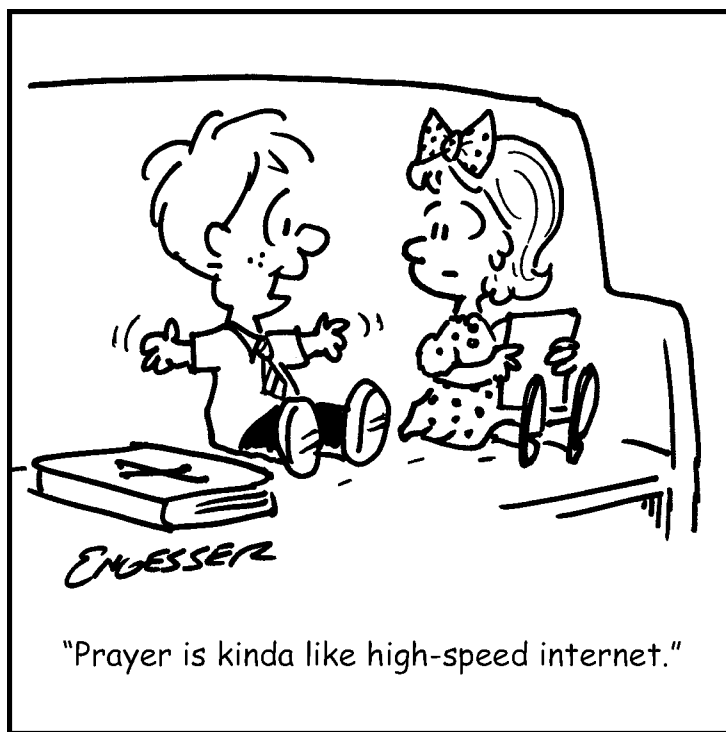
Barbara  
Bernedette  
Dolores  
Frank  
Grace  
Jonathan  
Linda  
Steve  
and all we name in our hearts.



## LEADERSHIP AT SALEM

### COUNCIL

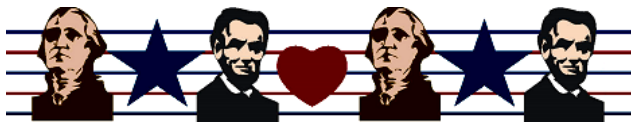
Marjo Anderson, Pastor  
Rich Lansing, President  
John Bryk, Vice-President  
Nancy Headford, Secretary  
Rich Kenyon, Treasurer  
Sandra Brown  
Frank Dukenski  
Steve Kuczo  
Carol Lansing  
Tom Larson  
Cindy Roberts  
Bill Winter



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

Next deadline date is **February 15th** for the March issue!

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



# February 2023 Salem Lutheran Church



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

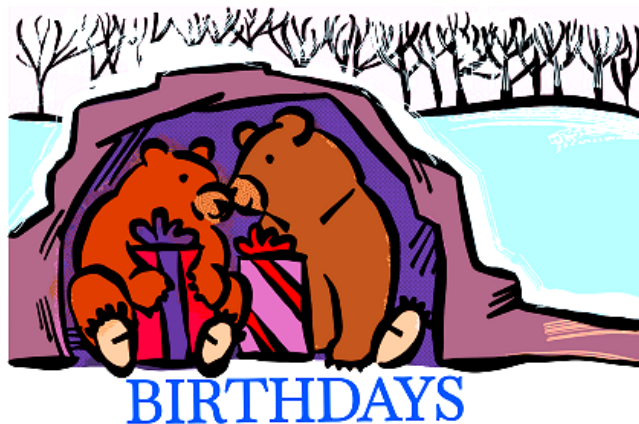
FRI

SAT



			<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray</li> <li>6:30pm Bible Study on ACTS</li> <li>8:30pm ELCA Talks at the Desk S2-Ep 1</li> </ul>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center</li> </ul>	<p>4</p>
<p>5</p> <p><b>Epiphany 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30am Worship (in the Lounge)</li> <li>10:30am Semi-Annual Congregational Meetir</li> </ul>	<p>6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism</li> <li>6:30pm Social Ministry Committee Meeting</li> </ul>	<p>7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and</li> </ul>	<p>8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray</li> <li>6:30pm Bible Study on ACTS</li> <li>8:30pm ELCA Talks at the Desk S2-Ep2</li> </ul>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center</li> </ul>	<p>11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9am The BREAKFAST Gathering!</li> </ul>
<p>12</p> <p><b>Epiphany 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30am Worship</li> </ul>	<p>13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism</li> </ul>	<p>14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and</li> <li>6pm Stewardship Committee Meeting</li> </ul>	<p>15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray</li> <li>6:30pm Bible Study on ACTS</li> <li>8:30pm ELCA Talks at the Desk S2-Ep 3</li> </ul>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center</li> </ul>	<p>18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11am Inner-View Chat n Chew</li> </ul>
<p>19</p> <p><b>Transfiguration of Our Lord</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30am Worship</li> </ul>	<p>20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism</li> <li>6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting</li> <li>7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting</li> </ul>	<p>21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and</li> </ul>	<p>22</p> <p><b>Ash Wednesday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray</li> <li>6:30pm Bible Study on ACTS</li> <li>8:30pm ELCA Talks at the Desk S2-Ep 4</li> </ul>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center</li> </ul>	<p>25</p>
<p>26</p> <p><b>Lent 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30am Worship</li> <li>6pm Sunday Night Alive!</li> </ul>	<p>27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism</li> <li>7pm Council Meeting</li> </ul>	<p>28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and</li> </ul>				

Roberta Bellows.....	1
Hailey Dewalt.....	3
Keith Murphy.....	3
Kerry Schulz .....	13
Bill Winter .....	13
Michael Gulyas .....	13
Ann Martin .....	14
Carol Lansing.....	16
Talisha Burrus.....	17
Pablo Cruz.....	22
Scott Luciani .....	22
Judy Albers.....	26
Katie Adams .....	27



The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Greater Bridgeport and Vicinity Presents:



# Black History Month

## Scholarship Prayer Breakfast

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2023**  
**9:00AM**

CREATIVE VENUE AND RENTALS  
 40 LOGAN ST.  
 BRIDGEPORT, CT 06607

**TICKETS: \$35**



Guest Speaker:  
**Rev. Dr. Charlie Stallworth**  
 East End Baptist Tabernacle Church



\$IMABPT21

**Rev. William D. McCullough-President**  
**Rev. Brenda J. Barnes-Vice President**





## Seafarers International House

*Harbor of Hospitality*

123 East 15th Street  
New York, NY 10003  
Phone: (212) 677-4800  
[www.sihnyc.org](http://www.sihnyc.org)

January 6, 2023

Salem Lutheran Church/Grace Lutheran Church/Cub Scout Troop  
Carol Lansing  
3160 Park Ave  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Dear Carol,

We are sending you a warm **thank you** for your generous donation of satchels, knitting, time, and supplies to fill Christmas at Sea satchels.

As you know, some people celebrate Christmas through January 6. We continued to deliver Christmas-at-Sea satchels through the first week of January, when some crews on container ships reached the shore for the first time since the holidays. Many Eastern European merchant mariners enjoyed their satchels on Orthodox Christmas.

**Thanks to your enthusiasm**, we broke the record and were able to deliver **2,875** Christmas-at-Sea satchels this season! Thank you for having shared the joy of Christmas with seafarers who could not be with their loved ones. Your satchels, knitted goods, and other donated supplies show them that we appreciate their sacrifice.

Please, check out our social media accounts on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to see posts of the happiness you brought to seafarers, who felt the spirit of the season because of your generosity.

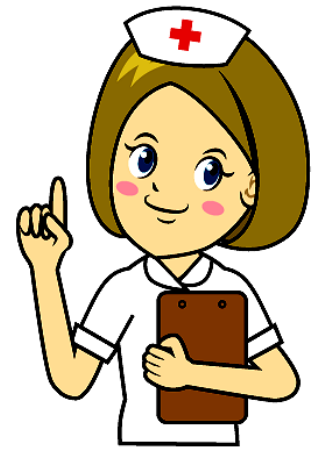
Again, thanks for spreading joy this Holiday Season to people you may never meet, yet who provide vital services to all of us as they transport medicine, supplies, fuel, food, - in short 90% of world trade!

**Wishing you all the best for 2023**, - the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Seafarers International House's mission to seafarers and to immigrants. More on that topic in correspondence throughout the year.

Henryk Behnke  
Director of Development & Communications  
(212) 667-4800 ext. 7203 [henryk@sihnyc.org](mailto:henryk@sihnyc.org)

# How Does Depression Affect the Heart?

When you experience depression, anxiety, or stress, your heart rate, and blood pressure rise, there's reduced blood flow to the heart, and your body produces higher levels of cortisol, a stress hormone. Over time, these effects can lead to heart disease. Depression and anxiety can also develop after cardiac events, including heart failure, stroke, and heart attack.



**Identify the cause of your depression, stress, or anxiety and address it. Seek therapy if necessary.** You may feel down for a couple of days, but if it goes on for two weeks or more, you may need to seek help. Depression is a problem when it causes sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed. It can lead to various emotional and physical issues and decrease your ability to function at work and home.

**Choose healthy habits, and don't rush them.** If you weren't in the habit of exercising, start gradually. Something as simple as walking for thirty minutes a day, even if you do only ten minutes at a time, can help your heart. Physical activity can also improve your mental well-being, lower your risk of depression, and improve your overall quality of life. If reaching for unhealthy foods has become a habit, try using healthier cooking techniques or substituting ingredients to cut down on fat, added sugar, sodium, and calories. Grab healthy snacks, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, or choose undressed salads and other low-fat dishes when eating out.

**Incorporate other healthy lifestyle changes one at a time.** Don't try to fix everything at once. That's especially true if one of the habits you want to break is smoking. Quitting smoking can be difficult. If you smoke, talk with your healthcare professional to determine if you need medications or other help to quit. Therapies may include nicotine replacement or prescription medications. You could also ask for a referral for a smoking cessation program.

Ultimately, you have to take care of yourself to break the cycle of feeling down. That could be doing something structured, such as yoga class or tai chi practice, or something you can do anywhere, such as meditating, listening to music, or reading a book.

For more information, call 1-800-242-8721 or visit [www.heart.org/cause](http://www.heart.org/cause).



## HEART ATTACK WARNING SIGNS

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.** This feeling often comes along with chest discomfort. But it can also occur without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs** may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

**If you or someone you're with has one or more of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.  
Get to the hospital right away.**

If you're the one having symptoms, and you can't access the emergency medical services (EMS), have someone drive you to the hospital right away. Don't drive yourself, unless you have absolutely no other option.

---

**For more information, contact your nearest American Heart Association office or call  
1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721)  
or online at [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org).**

# 5 Myths about Heart Health

## **Myth #1: I need to avoid all cholesterol**

Your body makes cholesterol to help your brain and organs function normally. You don't need to get it from food, but that doesn't mean that foods high in cholesterol are bad for you. Saturated fats are a bit more harmful because they can convert to bad cholesterol that can build up in your arteries.

## **Myth #2: Sugar isn't really worth watching compared to fat and salt**

While we don't know exactly how sugar affects the heart, research shows that sugary beverages can raise your blood pressure and increase chronic inflammation. Try to replace some of those drinks or dilute them with seltzer. Over time, you'll become more sensitive to sweetness and crave them less.

## **Myth #3: Weight loss is the key to heart health**

The number on the scale doesn't tell the whole story. You could need to lose weight and be healthier than you think, or fit into your clothes but still be at risk. Make sure you are not hypertensive or have diabetes, and talk with your doctor about starting regular exercise.

## **Myth #4: Kids aren't at risk until they're older**

Because of the rise of obesity rates in children, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children between ages nine and eleven take a blood test to check cholesterol levels. Checking early helps prevent heart disease later in life. Kids also set their habits very early. Let's get them on the right path by setting good examples for them and encouraging their play.

## **Myth #5: Intense exercise will do more for my heart health**

You don't need to be lifting weights or walking 20,000 steps a day. Just make small changes and adapt them to our lifestyle. Park farther away at the store or take the stairs instead of the elevator. Do a ten-minute dance or yoga video. Getting up to 30 minutes of exercise a day for about 5 days a week will really limit your risk of heart disease.



On behalf of the family of  
**Clifford S. LaRose**  
We would like to thank you for your attendance  
and kind expressions of sympathy

### **Miss Me...But Let Me Go!**

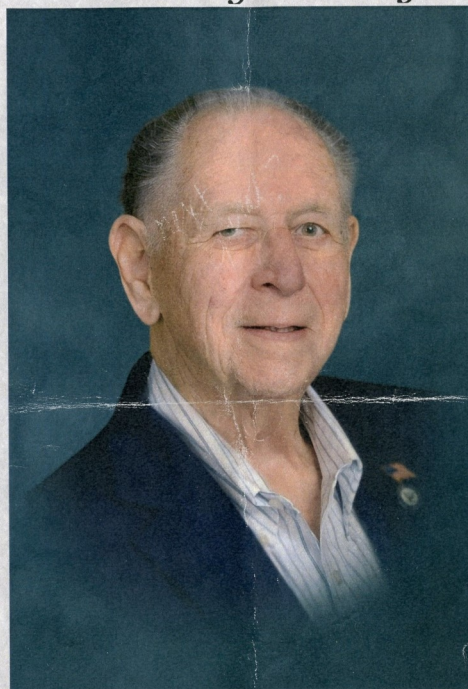
When I come to the end of the road.  
And the sun has set for me,  
I want no rites in a gloom filled room  
Why cry for a soul set free?

Miss me a little – but not too long  
And not with your head bowed low.  
Remember the love that we once shared;  
Miss me – but let me go.

For this is a journey we all must take  
And each must go alone;  
It's all a part of the Master's plan  
A step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sick of heart  
Go to the friends we know  
And bury your sorrow in doing good deeds,  
Miss me – but let me go.

## **In Loving Memory**



**Clifford S. LaRose**  
May 3, 1937 ~ November 24, 2022

#### **Clifford S. LaRose**

Cliff joined his heavenly family on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 2022. He lived a long life of 85 years and was humble and grateful for all the blessings in his life.

He was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut on May 3, 1937 and was the son of Clifford and Margaret LaRose. He grew up on Iranistan Avenue during times when you could walk to the ball fields. He was dearly loved by his sisters, especially Margaret and attended Bassick High School. He graduated in 1956 and entered into the United States Navy. He served on the Franklin D Roosevelt CVA 42 in the Mediterranean and North Atlantic. After leaving the service he began to work for the United States Post Office and eventually became the director of the collection and delivery for the greater Bridgeport area. He was a wonderful leader and boss and often became a father figure to the young men he mentored.

He met the love of his life on a blind date on New Year's Eve, 1961, Treva Rimini. They were married for over 40 years before her passing in 2007. He was a loyal care giver for her and her biggest cheerleader in difficult times. He deeply understood the meaning of "for better or worse". They had many years of laughter and love and spent time traveling and with friends and family. They were involved with Boy Scouts, Bridgeport Little League and The Barnum Festival. He served on the board of directors for Lawn Croft Cemetery and was a generous donator to many charitable causes.

He eventually served on the board of directors for the Barnum Festival and was the recipient of the Volunteer of the year in 2009. They were devout Christians and members of Salem Lutheran Church in Bridgeport. Later in life Cliff became a member of Good Shepard Lutheran Church in Monroe, Ct.

In his novel The Twelve, author Justin Cronin wrote, "As long as we remember a person, they're not really gone. Their thoughts, their feelings, their memories, they become a part of us."

Cliff was an amazing father, grandfather, brother and friend. He touched the lives of so many people. He was a true patriot and wore his veteran gear with pride. It infuriated him to witness people who did not know how to pay respect to our flag and our country. He enjoyed sports but especially his beloved Giants and Red Sox. His favorite game of the year was the Army/Navy game where he enjoyed the rivalry with his son-in-law Gary. He had an incredible sense of humor, even near the end of his life he said he was quite a joker. "If you only knew me when I was younger, I was somethin'". His body may have failed him in the end, but his spirit and humor was still a part of who he was.

Cliff was preceded in death by many family members and his wife, Treva LaRose. He is survived by his son Clifford D LaRose of Monroe, Ct and his daughter and son in law Jan (LaRose) and Gary Ewing of Gainesville, GA. He treasured his grandchildren Margaret (Ewing) Ellis and her husband Haydn Ellis of Gainesville, GA and James Thomas "JT" Ewing also of Gainesville.

Celebration of Life will be held 3:00 pm Saturday December 3, 2022 at Gainesville First United Methodist Church, 2780 Thompson Bridge Road Gainesville, Georgia. The family will receive friends following the service at the church. Reverend Carolyn Clifton will officiate.

In lieu of flowers we ask that donation be made to your local church or Veterans Organization. Memorial Park North Riverside Chapel 989 Riverside Drive Gainesville, Georgia is in charge of arrangements. For online condolences [www.memorialparkfuneralhomes.com](http://www.memorialparkfuneralhomes.com)

## **Clifford S. LaRose**

### **Date of Birth**

May 3, 1937  
Bridgeport, Connecticut

### **Date of Death**

November 24, 2022  
Gainesville, Georgia

### **Celebration of Life Service**

Saturday, December 3, 2022, 3:00 pm  
Gainesville First United Methodist Church  
2780 Thompson Bridge Road  
Gainesville, Georgia 30506

### **Officiating**

Reverend Carolyn Clifton



# WEEKLY AND MONTHLY EVENTS

**Welcome to WONDROUS WEDNESDAYS!** On Wednesday we have 2 wonderful opportunities to live into our mission of Encountering God, Building Relationships, and Changing Lives. The links are all on the calendar on our website at [SalemBridgeport.org](http://SalemBridgeport.org) under the Resources Tab.

**\* Every Wednesday at 12:00 noon we meet on zoom for prayer.** You can pray out loud if you want, or you can simply ask others to pray for you or for the concerns on your mind or heart. The more we talk with God and the more we listen to God, the more God is able to work through us. And the more we pray TOGETHER the more the power of prayer is multiplied.

**\* And finally, every Wednesday at 6:30 pm we conclude with an Evening Bible Study 6:30-7:30 on zoom, led by Pastor Marjo and Jeanette Harris.** Join this diverse and interesting group of people for a study that is not simply informational but transformational. We continue our study of the book of Acts, concluding at 7:15 with a brief service of Holy Communion.

**The next breakfast and faith discussion will be held on December 10th at Grace Lutheran Church, 150 Chapel Street, Stratford, at 8:00 (7:00 to help cook).**

**Please join Jeanette Harris and Genesis Gospel Café at the next Inner-View Chat'n'Chew, Saturday December 17th at 11:00 am.** Details forthcoming.

**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](#):**



# Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

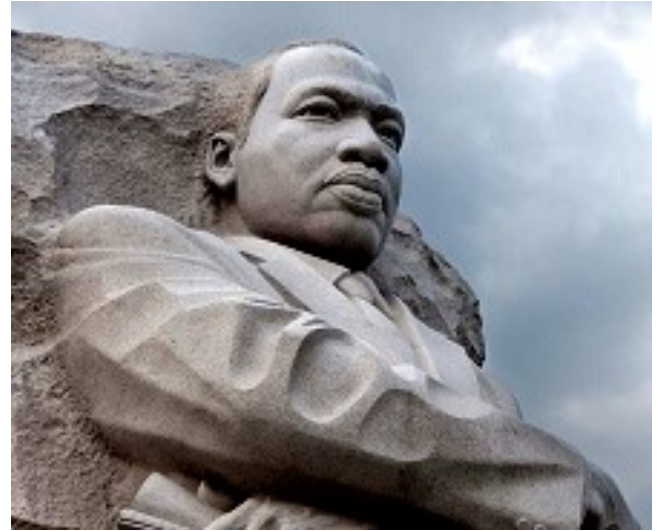
**STORIES** OF FAITH IN ACTION

## Prayers for the fulfillment of King's dream

By Andrea L. Walker

I was 4 years old when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. I was too young to understand the import of his words while he lived. Yet I remember the importance of those words, his struggles and his assassination to the Black community as I grew up in Chester, Penn. The community felt he was one of theirs. Not only was he a marvelous young African American preacher and civil rights leader, but he was also educated at Crozer Theological Seminary, just up the road in Upland, Penn.

In the late 1960s and '70s a framed picture of the civil rights leader hung in almost every Black home—at least in every one that I entered. His picture hung in a prominent place in Granny Bettie's kitchen. There was a picture in Granny's best friend's home, in my Aunt Lucille's home and in all the homes of my family members. King's words and legacy were celebrated in our community long before his birthday was designated a national holiday.



Many in the community took to heart the words he preached, the speeches he made. I especially remember hearing the words, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character" on my grandmother's television. I sat on a stool in a corner of the kitchen as Granny and her friends sipped instant coffee and talked about the possibilities. What would it look like for Blacks to be seen as brilliant and beautiful and capable—as equal to whites? My granny wanted King's words to be true for me and my siblings.

Granny Bettie was born in the 1920s, when Calvin Coolidge was president. She grew up in the South at a time when grown men were referred to as "boy" and grown women could only be "gal." Her mother, whom I called Grandma Essie, was the daughter of a slave. My granny picked cotton when she was a young girl and had only a sixth-grade education. When she moved north, she did domestic work. Often referred to as "gal" well into her 50s, she did not know what it was like to be judged by the content of her character.

When Barack Obama was declared the Democratic nominee for president, many believed that King's words had come true. I was so hopeful and yet afraid to believe. Some 45 years after MLK's speech, on the night of the 2008 election, I sat alone watching the results. When Obama was declared president-elect, with tears in my eyes, I thought, "I wish Granny were here to see this."

The community was so hopeful; I was so hopeful. Many would say that as pastor of a white congregation, I am evidence of the dream becoming real. Yet at the dawn of 2023, King's words have yet to be realized. After all these years, mothers of Black children still worry about how their children are perceived. I worry as my 16-year-old grandson gets his driver's license, as he travels with his track team, as he walks in this world; will the prayers of his pastor-grandmom be enough to keep him safe? My grandson stands six feet tall and has an athletic frame, and though he has a baby face and the cutest dimples, I do not know if he will be judged by the content of his character or be thought of as a threat because of his beautiful brown skin.

My prayer for all children in 2023 is that Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream will soon be their reality.

Andrea L. Walker is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Washington, D.C. Before her current call, she traveled extensively as ELCA Global Mission area director for Madagascar West and Central Africa. She has a heart for justice and wants to always lift the stories of women.