



July/August 2023

the  
SPIRIT

# Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

*A Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Congregation*

## “Worth the Waiting!”

Yesterday I preached on the story often called, “The Binding of Isaac”. To set the story in context, I reminded us of Abraham’s faith journey as told in the book of Genesis. You can read the entire story, starting in Genesis 11:26. But there are a few things that I mentioned briefly in my sermon on which I’d like to elaborate here.

God initiated the first covenant with Abram when Abram was 75 years old. (I just LOVE that God makes promises to people that old!) Abram’s part of the covenant was that he set out on a journey, and while Abram’s journey was a physical one, it was, more importantly, a spiritual one. It was a journey of faith. In return God promised a number of things: to lead Abram, to make of him a great nation, to make his name great, to bless him so that he would be a blessing, to bless those that blessed Abram and curse those that cursed him, and that in Abram all of the families of the earth would be blessed.

God leads Abram and his family for the next 10 years, during which time they not only survive a famine but end up being given incredible wealth. Also during that time, God empowers Abram to defeat the armies of 5 kings with just 318 men, and they are able to rescue not only his nephew Lot but every other captive. God has not only helped Abram survive, but thrive. His wealth, however, only underscores the fact that he has no children to inherit. When God comes to him in a vision and says, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I am your shield and your reward shall be very great”, Abram responds by saying that the only reward he really wants is a child. And then comes what (to me, anyway) is the most beautiful story in the entire Bible. God takes Abram outside and says, “Look towards heaven and count the stars.... So shall your descendants be!” And Abram BELIEVED God, and through faith, Abram was made right with God.

And then Abram and Sarai make their BIG mistake – and this is the crucial part of the story for us. Instead of trusting God to provide a miracle, they used their reason and rationality, their wisdom and knowledge, and their logic and common sense to help God out. Instead of waiting on God, instead of trusting in God’s timing, instead of holding on to God’s promised miracle, they get impatient and take matters into their own hands to solve their own problem – Sarai gives her maid, Hagar, to Abram as a wife and he has his sought-after child with her.

But their way ends up being disastrous. Oh, Abram gets a child all right, but in her jealousy, Sarai is so cruel to Hagar that the pregnant girl runs away. An angel appears to her and sends her back to submit to Sarai. Things are never right, though, and in the end, many years later, when Ishmael is a young adult, Abraham sends both him and his mother away – for good. And the Jewish and Muslim de-

scendants of Abraham’s two sons have been estranged ever since.

**I believe that God has a plan and purpose for Salem.** I can tell you that **in the last 5 years, God has been working** through New Direction Ministries, Christ’s House of Unity, Restoration, Charity, and Hope, Mary of Bethany Church, Ephraim French SDA Church, the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, the Council of Churches, the New England Synod, our local Lutheran congregations, Genesis Gospel Cafe, Jeanette Harris, and me, and many more organizations and individuals **to situate Salem in a unique place in Bridgeport. We stand in the gap between races, ethnicities, socio-economic classes, and denominations. We already serve as a small bridge across those gaps, and I believe that God is calling us to build much wider and stronger bridges. We now have a greater presence in this diverse community of Bridgeport than we have in all the time that I have known Salem, and that goes back 4 decades.** If you don’t believe that, just ask the heads of those churches and organizations in Bridgeport, and they will confirm it.

**If we try to save our life, Jesus says, we will lose it; we need to be willing to risk losing our life in order to find it. If we try to solve our own problems, we will be acting just like Abram and Sarai when they decided to use Hagar to get what they wanted. They did indeed get a son, but it was not the son of promise. By their refusal to wait on God, and by their decision to get what they wanted by their own common sense, they ended up bringing hurt and brokenness and grief to all concerned.**

Of course, even their arrogance and ignorance and faithlessness were not enough to keep God from fulfilling God’s promise. God eventually did give them the son of promise, the son that brought them joy, the son that made them laugh.

**I hear in this story the call to wait. Sure, we can go ahead and make decisions on our own, but I guarantee you, those decisions will only bring hurt and brokenness and grief. But if we follow God, step by step, to visions not yet clear, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils yet unknown, I am 99.44% sure that God will do through Salem what God did through Abraham and Sarah: to make of us a great people, to make our name great, to continue to bless us that we might be a blessing to others, AND to make sure that Salem in Bridgeport continues to the next generation, and the next, and the next.**

May the Abundant LIFE of the Spirit Be Yours!

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)

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

Barbara  
Bernedette  
Dolores  
Jonathan  
Linda  
Steve

and all we name in  
our hearts.



## LEADERSHIP AT SALEM

### COUNCIL

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

## Mailbox Caution

Our area has seen an increase in postal (blue) mailbox thefts. Also, putting your home mailbox red flag up is an invitation for mail thieves. The post office recommends using the mailboxes inside the post office buildings for mailing checks, cash, and gift cards. You may also safely hand these letters directly to your mail delivery person.

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

Next deadline date is **August 15th** for the  
September issue!

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



# July 2023 Salem Lutheran Church



SUN

MON

TUE

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SAT  
Jul 1

Call in to our prayer line at 681-999-0232, using access code 673980#, at noon Mon-Fri for a brief time of prayer. You can remain silent and anonymous, ask for particular prayers, or offer your own prayers.

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Pentecost 5</b> ● 9:30am Worship	● 4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism	● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and	● 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray ● 7pm Bible Study on I Corinthians 1-4		● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	
<b>Pentecost 6</b> ● 9:30am Worship	● 4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism ● 6:30pm Social Ministry Committee Meeting	● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and ● 6pm Stewardship Committee Meeting	● 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray ● 7pm Bible Study on I Corinthians 1-4		● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	● 11am Inner-View Chat n Chew
<b>Pentecost 7</b> ● 9:30am Worship	● 4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism ● 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting ● 7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting	● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and	● 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray ● 7pm Bible Study on I Corinthians 1-4		● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	
<b>Pentecost 8</b> ● 9:30am Worship	● 4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism ● 7pm Council Meeting	● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and	● 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray ● 7pm Bible Study on I Corinthians 1-4		● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	
<b>Pentecost 9</b> ● 9:30am Worship	● 4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism					



# August 2023 Salem Lutheran Church



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Call in to our prayer line at 681-999-0232, using access code 673980#, at noon Mon-Fri for a brief time of prayer. You can remain silent and anonymous, ask for particular prayers, or offer your own prayers.

● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and

● 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray  
● 7pm Bible Study on I Corinthians 1-4

● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center

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**Pentecost 10**  
● 9:30am Worship

● 4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism

● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and  
● 6pm Stewardship Committee Meeting

● 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray  
● 7pm Bible Study on I Corinthians 1-4

● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center

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**Pentecost 11**  
● 9:30am Worship

● 4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism  
● 6:30pm Social Ministry Committee Meeting

● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and

● 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray  
● 7pm Bible Study on I Corinthians 1-4

● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center

● 11am Inner-View Chat n Chew

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**Pentecost 12**  
● 9:30am Worship

● 4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism  
● 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting  
● 7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting

● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and

● 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray  
● 7pm Bible Study on I Corinthians 1-4

● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center

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**Pentecost 13**  
● 9:30am Worship  
● 6pm Sunday Night Alive!

● 4pm S CT Rostered Ldrs Mtg on Anti-Racism  
● 7pm Council Meeting

● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and

● 12pm Lord, Teach Us to Pray  
● 7pm Bible Study on I Corinthians 1-4



# Refill the Pantry

Refill the Pantry program continues this fall with collections for five food pantries from September 2 through October 28 every other Saturday. To sign up as a volunteer or driver, please go to:

## Sep 02

Nourish Bridgeport, Stop&Shop 1160 Kings Hwy Cutoff, Fairfield [volunteersignup.org/ABDEA](https://volunteersignup.org/ABDEA)

## Sep 16

Bishop Jean Williams, Stop&Shop 4531 Main St, Bridgeport [volunteersignup.org/FC9RT](https://volunteersignup.org/FC9RT)

## Sep 30

Sterling House, Stop&Shop 200 E. Main St, Stratford [volunteersignup.org/3RQKH](https://volunteersignup.org/3RQKH)

## Oct 14

Trumbull Food Pantry, Stop&Shop 110 Quality St, Trumbull [volunteersignup.org/AD3L4](https://volunteersignup.org/AD3L4)

## Oct 28

Operation Hope, Stop&Shop, Villa Ave, Fairfield [volunteersignup.org/8DXYW](https://volunteersignup.org/8DXYW)



# Refill the Pantry

# Birthdays



Cary Andren .....	1
Katherine Horton .....	1
Miriam Llanos .....	3
Karl Kraft .....	4
Katherine Johnson .....	8
Teresa Roehrich .....	8
Dick Bellows .....	9
Jon Baronavski .....	9
Paul Baronavski, Jr .....	9
Annette Marquardt .....	13
Kimberly Sokoloski .....	13
Kevyn Jackman .....	16
JoAnn McMaster .....	16
Laurie Kulakowski .....	19
Anita Papp .....	20
Dolores Kuczo .....	22
Lisette Vazquez .....	22
Victor Ladue .....	23
Ryne Cotter .....	26
Corey DeWalt .....	30

Josephine Anderson .....	1
Gloriana Claus .....	1
Christine Larson .....	3
Janice Lansing .....	6
Morgan Danowski .....	8
Bryan DeWalt .....	8
Cindy Roberts .....	10
Kaitlyn Rosa .....	12
Diane Tomasko .....	13
Carl Roehrich .....	14
Richard Lansing, Jr. ....	16
Mary Anne Caragol .....	18
Evan Lansing .....	18
Brenda Vazquez .....	21
David Schulz .....	23
Jean Larson .....	24
Sharon Norberg .....	27
Eduardo Vazquez .....	30
Joan Crossman .....	31



Salem congregation's initial donations to Jeanette Harris and six charities were received with heart-warming feelings of thanks and, in Jeanette's case, tears of gratefulness. During the donation presentations, each charity proudly showed its operation. They will use our donations wisely to help those in need in our community. We all should feel deeply grateful for their courage, care, and vision. Our contribution will provide the additional resources needed to continue and expand their community endeavors. Above all, we should thank God for our ability to help support their ongoing efforts.



Ricky Rivera (COO), Rich Lansing, Carol Lansing, Tshon Cooper-Davis (Director of Volunteers)

Nourish Bridgeport has assembled one of the region's largest food pantries feeding thousands of neighbors dealing with food insecurity. They have also created a diaper/wipe/formula distribution center, provided hot meals in your soup kitchen, led an English as a Second Language program, and developed Connecticut's FIRST not-for-profit Indoor Hydroponic Farm. The produce grown on the farm is distributed to food pantries throughout Bridgeport via CT Foodshare. They are an inspiration by producing abundantly, sharing their abundance of produce, and sharing their heart with all those in need. Salem's congregation contributed \$50,000 to help them help our community.

For over forty years, the Connecticut Foodshare staff and over 8,000 volunteers support individuals and families across our state, helping them deal with food insecurity. Their efforts in distributing nutritious food through local partner programs have significantly alleviated hunger for thousands in Connecticut. They created a network of more than 700 community-based hunger-relief programs - a fantastic feat. Using that network, they provide enough food for forty million meals annually. To this genuine blessing for our community, Salem's congregation, in its appreciation, has awarded CT Foodshare \$50,000.



Joe Bales, Silvia Velky (Network Relations), Cat Carmack (General Manager), Rich Lansing, Tim Buzzee, Bruce Tomasko, Ray Anderson

Just a quick note to say THANK YOU for the very generous gift you and your church made to us earlier this week. It has gotten harder and harder to feed the people of Connecticut but your donation will help us provide 100,000 meals. My most sincere thanks to all of you!

My Best, Jason Jakubowski, President and CEO





Jeanette Harris serves as the Lay Licensed Minister of Genesis Gospel Café and the hostess of Innerview Chat'n'Chew. She shares her devotion and spirit through her love of music, art, drama, and dance. She warms the heart and stirs the spirit within everyone around her. Salem congregation recognized her calling and awarded Jeanette \$50,000 to complete her education toward becoming a Lutheran minister.

Ray Anderson, Carol Lansing, Rich Lansing, Jeanette Harris, and Bruce Tomasko

The Merton Center assembled one of the region's largest food pantries feeding thousands of neighbors dealing with food insecurity. They have also created the most significant day shelter in the area. They provide extras, such as giving the homeless a mail service and providing a shower program. Overall, they offer an exceptional service in responding to the needs of our community's homeless. A true inspiration with their offer of a hand-up instead of a handout and with their sharing of their heart with all those in need. Salem's congregation donated \$25,000 for the additional resources needed to continue and expand the Merton Center's endeavors.



Rich Lansing, Sabine Kuczo (Operations Coordinator), and Carol Lansing. Not shown, Bill Colson (Director) on the phone.



The fantastic staff and volunteers of the Bridgeport Rescue Mission support individuals and families in our community by providing holistic support for each. Their efforts operate with those in need by providing food, clothing, emergency housing, addiction recovery, and for their medical health. Last year, they provide over 850,000 meals which significantly reduced food insecurity in our community. Salem's congregation awarded the Bridgeport Rescue Mission \$25,000 to help them help our neighbors in need.

Rich Lansing, Carol Lansing, Lisa Chester (Director of Development). Not shown, Jose-lynn Hernandez, and Tyrina Thompson





The Center for Family Justice supports individuals and families in our community in addressing domestic violence, sexual violence, and child abuse. They provide emergency housing, investigation and legal support, and personal, supportive care. Their education efforts and awareness events have increased awareness of our community's issues and needs concerning family violence. Salem's congregation donated \$25,000 for their ongoing community support.

Marissa Donnelly (Director of Philanthropy and Impact), John Bryk, Sandra Brown, Paul Santos (COO), Carol Lansing, Rich Lansing, Debra Greenwood (President and CEO), and Mark Antonini (CFO)

Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County's staff and volunteers support individuals and families in our community by providing decent and affordable homes. They are inspired to work with those in need and help them help themselves in obtaining a home. They manage a ReStore site for providing new and gently used furniture, home accessories, building materials, and appliances to the public at a fraction of the retail price. Using the proceeds to help build homes adds to that value. In support of their efforts and dedication, Salem's congregation donated \$25,000.



Ken Essex (Finance), Kevin Moore (COO), Dave Albers, Carol Lansing, Rich Lansing, Carolyn Vermont (CEO), Kristen Alvanson (Development), Bruce Tomasko, and Liz Kemp (Donor Operations)

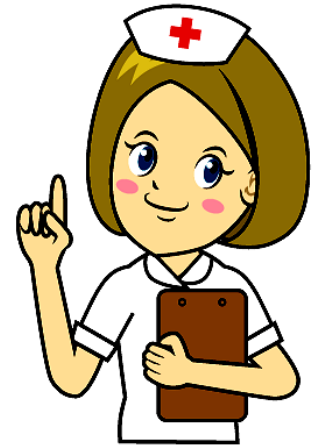
The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport staff and volunteers have supported individuals and families in our community by addressing the needs of at-risk people and breaking the cycle of poverty and crisis. Their efforts include educating children, feeding the hungry through their Hunger Outreach Program, and conducting culinary training. They support youth with problems through the Janus Center, guide former offenders, and build bridges of understanding between all faiths. For their community support, Salem's congregation awarded them \$25,000.

# Get Out and Cautiously Walk

(Excerpts are taken from the American Heart Association's book "The Healthy Heart Walking Book.")

To stay healthy while walking:

- Safeguard against heat stroke.
- Protect your skin.
- Avoid ticks, poison ivy, and stinging insects.



To prevent walking injuries:

- Start walking slowly and increase gradually.
- Wear properly fitted shoes.
- Perform stretching and strength-building exercises regularly.

If you do get an injury apply the “**R-I-C-E**” principle: **R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression, and **E**levation.

See a physician immediately if your pain is severe, if you cannot move the injured part, or if the injury does not seem to be healing after reasonable home treatment.



“I will  
restore health  
to you.”

JEREMIAH 30:17



# 22 Travel Tips for Folks Over 50

- 1) Don't trust over-the-counter drugs overseas. Carry OTC drugs when you travel.
- 2) If going to a sunny place, ask your doctor if any of your prescription medications cause increased sensitivity to the sun.
- 3) Create a simple "Medical Information Form" to carry in your wallet.
- 4) Ask friends who recently visited your destination what they wished they had taken with them.
- 5) Remember that Medicare will not cover you outside of the US.
- 6) Even in the US, Medicare only pays to get you to the nearest hospital. If you need to be evacuated, it is at your expense.
- 7) Take more prescription medicine than you think you will need. (Like an extra weeks' worth).
- 8) Ask your doctor for duplicate prescriptions in case your pills are lost or stolen.
- 9) Put your pills in your carry-on, not your checked luggage.
- 10) Adjust your schedule of prescription medicine to account for time-zones.
- 11) If you are susceptible to motion sickness, the best location in a boat is amidship, and the best location in an airplane is over the wing.
- 12) The 7 triggers of traveler's diarrhea are custards, raw vegetables, raw eggs or unpasteurized cheeses, tap water and ice cubes, leafy green vegetables, raw shellfish, and raw meat.
- 13) Imodium AD is the world's best medicine for traveler's diarrhea.
- 14) Shake the bottle of sunscreen well before applying.
- 15) The world's strongest sunscreens are made with either Americaine or Dermoplast.
- 16) If you get a bug bite or bee sting, apply meat tenderizer (like Accent) to reduce pain and swelling at the site.
- 17) To avoid sunstroke, eat bananas, tomatoes, and oranges which are rich in electrolytes. Also be sure to drink plenty of water.
- 18) Never wear new shoes especially hiking boots on vacation. Take a few weeks to break shoes in first.
- 19) If you take Nitro for your heart, make sure the pills or patches are fresh.
- 20) If you take insulin, carry a prescription for your syringes.
- 21) Make sure your vaccinations are up to date.
- 22) Wear a mask if you are immunocompromised.

Source: "A Senior's Guide to Healthy Travel" by Donald L. Sullivan, Career Press.

# Do you have a local Farmer's Market in your area?

If not, stop by one of the 9 markets in Bridgeport.

<p><b>EAST END Mkt &amp; Cafe</b> Sundays: 9am - 3pm July 16 - Oct 29 1851 Stratford Avenue</p>	<p><b>Stratfield FARMERS MARKET</b> Sundays: 12pm - 3pm June 11 - Oct 29 2200 North Avenue</p>	<p><b>ST. VINCENT'S FARM STAND</b> health &amp; wellness Tuesdays: 11:30am - 4pm June 13 - Nov 28 2800 Main Street</p>	<p><b>East Side market</b> Wednesdays: 10am - 2pm July 12 - Oct 18 752 East Main Street</p>	<p><b>EAST SIDE FARMERS MARKET</b> DOWNTOWN @ MCLEVEY Thursdays: 10:30am - 2pm July 6 - Oct 26 (McLevy Green) Corner of Main &amp; Bank Streets</p>
<p><b>FARM STAND @ BRIDGEPORT HOSPITAL</b> Thursdays: 3:30pm - 5:30pm July 13 - Oct 26 200 Mill Hill Avenue</p>	<p><b>ALLIANCE FARMERS MARKET</b> Fridays: 12pm - 4pm June 9 - Oct 27 1151 Park Avenue</p>	<p><b>GREEN HOPE RESERVOIR FARMERS MARKET</b> Saturdays: 10am - 2pm June 17 - Oct 28 1469 Reservoir Avenue</p>	<p><b>FARMERS MARKET OF BLACK ROCK</b> Saturdays: 9am - 1pm June 17 - Oct 14 (St. Ann's Field) 481 Brewster Street</p>	

## Alzheimer Caregiver Support Group

Date: The group will meet in person on the second Tuesday of every month.

Time: 11am-12pm

Location: The Milford Senior Center

Please contact Christine Lyas for further information

Christine Lyas CDP, CRS-A/D  
Social Services Coordinator  
Milford Senior Center  
(203) 877-5131 x2139



## Do you know anyone in need of food?

Mobile Food Pantry  
**SCHEDULE**  
On-Demand



Get the mobile food pantry schedule when you need it.

Text the word FOODSHARE to 85511, then answer the questions to have the schedule sent to your phone.\*

Once you are opted-in, you will also receive cancellations and schedule changes.

**Connecticut Foodshare**

Our Community. Our Food Bank.

2 Research Parkway, Wallingford, CT 06492  
www.ctfoodshare.org

— Text the word —  
**FOODSHARE**  
to —  
**85511**

**Questions?**

Call us at 203-469-5000

\*Standard text messaging rates may apply.



**The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Inc.**  
*Leveraging Hope, Transforming Communities*  
*Service \* Dialogue \* Collaboration*

June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dear CCGB Friends & Supporters,

I hope this finds you well and enjoying the glorious spring season. I am pleased to report the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Inc. has experienced another successful year, serving the most deserving in our Bridgeport community. I always remain in awe of the grace bestowed upon organizations such as ours. The resilience of our organization having withstood transition in leadership, and still serve our clients with the same dedication and passions as when we began seventy-eight years ago is only because of the support of you.

Some of our achievements include:

- **The FEED Program** – including the Hunger Outreach Network (HON) who distributed 1,000 meals to partner organizations and those who are food insecure; Culinary Careers Training Program (CREATE) graduating 2 cohorts of 10 persons, 85% of whom were either placed in employment or started their own enterprise; and Salt of the Earth Enterprise Kitchen (SEEK). In all the FEED programs serve ten thousand families and individuals each year. We work with as many as forty pantries to share ideas and to inspire entrepreneurs.
- **The Janus Center for Youth in Crisis** – including a Crisis Hotline available 24/7 to runaways, homeless or youth in crisis; Parenting Journey Training; Street Outreach-100 youth; School-based Program-12 students, providing school supplies and essential toiletry items; Summer Enrichment Program; and Projecto Nueva Vida (PNV) serving all citizens reentering our communities, nearly one hundred people per month.
- **Becoming Anti-Racist (BAR)** a series of Congregational and Community partnerships, working with various community groups that strive to bring awareness, offer tools and supports that dismantle systemic racism.

The Council hopes to expand upon these services as well as creating new opportunities to serve our communities more deeply, and impactfully. Your continued and generous support makes our work possible. Please consider giving as generously as you can by using the enclosed return envelope, or you may give online at [www.ccg.org](http://www.ccg.org)

Thank you again for all you do and have done for the Council. Together in this next chapter of the Council, we can achieve our impact, one heart and one life at a time. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Shivonne McKay Annan  
President & CEO

**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.ccg.org](http://www.ccg.org)



# 150 YEARS

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

May 2023

Salem Lutheran Church  
Rev. Marjo Anderson  
3160 Park Ave  
Bridgeport, CT 06604-1103

Dear Pastor Marjo,

On TV these days, you see images of thousands of immigrants at the border or busloads of migrants arriving in NYC to be housed in hotels by the hundreds. Less visible and hidden at sea or in ports are the 1.9 million seafarers bringing us 90% of the goods we need. **While the needs are daunting, Seafarers International House (SIH) has never been deterred from focusing on each and every individual we serve or have served during the last 150 years.**

Since 1873, Seafarers International House has been *lighting the way for seafarers and immigrants* and continues to welcome the stranger – those often unseen in the ports, in detention centers, or walking our busy streets.

It all started with the compassion of one person, the Swedish Pastor Per Johan Swärd who launched our ministry when he arrived in New York to assist vulnerable seafarers and soon recognized the urgent needs of immigrants as well. Swärd and his successors, including us today, took a **very individualized approach, spending a lot of time with a person in need, providing them with accommodations and food, counsel, and pastoral care if desired.**

Please take a moment to **view our 4-minute 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary video**, which highlights how over the years, the organization grew, changed locations, and ultimately **cared for over 2 million individuals from all nations during times of war, great depression, changing political landscapes, and pandemics.** You can view the video on our home page where you can also donate: [www.sihnyc.org](http://www.sihnyc.org)



**Your gift today will expand our services to pre-pandemic levels by helping those in need:**

- **Migrants and asylum seekers fleeing violence, war, and persecution** in Central America, Africa, Ukraine or elsewhere, who avoid the risk of homelessness and exploitation when we provide them with free lodging and social work assistance.

(Please turn page over.)

*Lighting the way for seafarers and immigrants since 1873*

Platinum  
Transparency  
2023

Candid.

**Mariners, stuck on their vessels** as US consulates in their homelands are backlogged and take many months to issue visas to allow shore leave. They receive essentials from our port chaplains, Wi-Fi to contact family or just engage in conversation or a prayer.

**Your gift significantly impacts the lives of people we serve in our New York City home as well as in the ports of Albany, Baltimore, New Haven, and New York & New Jersey:**

- \$35 – help **welcome the stranger** with toiletries packages for an asylum seeker or a *Christmas-At-Sea* satchel filled with warm clothing and holiday greetings for a seafarer.
- \$150 – a **one-time donation at this level qualifies you for a free copy of our 32-page 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration** book, that chronicles the evolution of SIH's services throughout the decades and will be mailed to you in a few weeks. Perhaps more importantly, the gift ensures that **crews from two ships will be visited** by our port chaplains or that our **new social worker can assist a couple of asylums seekers** navigate their new homeland.
- \$1,500 – our anniversary gift level - provides for a **port chaplain to transport seafarers** who have visas to malls and groceries stores for fresh produce or affords an **asylee free accommodations** both for about 2 weeks.

**Please help us continue our tradition of welcoming individual strangers with free accommodations and social work assistance** for people like **Sue** from South Asia seeking political asylum, **Maria** from Central America who escaped gang violence, or **Kamdilichukwu** persecuted for his sexual orientation in Africa, and nationalized **Pedro** who needs affordable accommodations between work assignments on container ships, and mariners like Ukrainian **Aleksander**, who is worried sick for his loved ones back home.

**Share your gift online at [www.sihnyc.org](http://www.sihnyc.org), scan the QR code, or use the enclosed envelope.**

Did you know that most of the people we serve repay that kindness to others? **Imagine the ripple effect if every person that we have helped assists 10 others.** It changes the world! Just as our predecessors envisioned. **THANK YOU for playing your part in that positive change.**

Peace,



Pastor Marsh Luther Drege  
Executive Director

**PS: Give TODAY to light the way for seafarers and for immigrants! The QR code on the previous page will lead you to our home page as well as our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary video.**

*"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:5)*



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# HOLY LAND

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With Bishop Jim and Pastor Lisa Hazelwood

**JAN 15<sup>TH</sup> - 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2024**

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# MISSION SUPPORT

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## THANK YOU

To the members of  
**Salem Lutheran Church**  
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from the  
**New England Synod**

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.  
In grateful appreciation for giving

**\$9,400.00**

for Mission Support beyond the congregation for synod and  
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Synod Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America





Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

Dear reader

As you have likely read in the March issue of *Living Lutheran*, the magazine will cease its print publication with the November/December 2023 issue. This does not mean, however, that we will stop telling stories of this church when the print magazine ends. Throughout the past several years, LivingLutheran.org has been the magazine's online platform, and we are excited about the ways in which we can enhance how you are able to experience the stories and lives of Lutherans throughout the ELCA as we transition to a fully online approach. You will start to see us employing these ways throughout the year, with videos, audio stories and more. This transition will also include a more robust social media presence and more opportunities for user-generated content with the potential for greater engagement from you, our most loyal readers.

The ELCA and its predecessor church bodies have been printing periodicals since 1831, when *The Lutheran Observer* began. Spreading the gospel and sharing the stories of our church have always been at the foundation of who we are as Christians and Lutherans. As many of you probably know, the cost of printing a magazine—including paper, ink and postage prices—has steadily increased, especially during the pandemic, making it difficult to financially support a print edition. Being good stewards of the generous support given to the church is of the utmost importance to our team. While we will no longer print a magazine each month, the sharing and spreading of the good news continues every day.

By focusing on creating more online content and new channels for distribution, we will have more flexibility and options for how we tell the stories of this church. Storytelling will still be at the core of this work. We understand there are a lot of questions regarding your subscription, how the ELCA will reach readers who don't rely on the internet for information and how we will assist those who use *Living Lutheran* for church resources and group discussions. We are still working out answers to those questions and will provide them as soon as possible.

We are excited about what is ahead for the ministry of *Living Lutheran* and the future possibilities of reaching even more people about the great work people are doing in God's name.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



# 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 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.

\* **Our Wednesday Evening Bible Study has resumed and the time is now 7:00 as we study 1 Corinthians 1-4.** The study is inspired by the book, *Basic Christian Leadership: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry* by John Stott. As you know, Paul wrote to congregations who were facing challenges, and so we will be listening to how God is speaking to congregations today through Paul's words. What does it mean that the Bible is the inspired Word of God? How do we discern God's wisdom which is completely different from what seems reasonable and rational to us?

**The next breakfast and faith discussion will be held on September 9th at Grace Lutheran Church, 150 Chapel Street, Stratford, at 9:00 (8:00 to help cook).**

**Please join Jeanette Harris and Genesis Gospel Café at the next Inner-View Chat'n'Chew, Saturday July 15th 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**

## The story behind the story *Finding greater truths behind Bible tales*

By Elise Seyfried

As a little girl, I loved mermaids. I recall being crushed to discover that they didn't exist in real life. I'd look at pictures of "The Little Mermaid," Edvard Eriksen's bronze statue based on the Hans Christian Andersen story, at Langelinie Pier in Copenhagen, feeling so sad that mermaids weren't truly swimming in the ocean.

Then I learned about the haenyo, the sea divers of Jeju Island, South Korea. These women are trained to dive down and harvest conch, abalone, sea urchins and other creatures. They can stay in the water up to six hours at a time and hold their breath for up to three minutes (they carry no oxygen with them). Mermaids! How wonderful! So they do exist—just in a different way than I'd imagined.

We might easily read certain Bible stories and write them off as fiction, especially as we grow older and "wiser." But I've come to believe that our real mission as people of faith is to find the greater truth of these tales.

Every ancient culture had its own creation story, for example. The Navajo told of four seas and of four clouds that joined together to form the first man and woman. Hawaiian natives believed that a cavern (male) and a moonless night (female) united to give birth to the creatures in the sea. The aborigine creation story involves the Father of Spirits awakening the Sun Mother; in Japan, a shoot springing up from the muddy sea entered the sky and became a god.

Do these stories sound strange and unbelievable to modern ears? Of course. Any stranger than the six days of creation in Genesis? All these tales are different, yet they share common elements: a creative force and an original event that set everything in motion. I can appreciate the beauty and poetry of these mythical details without taking them literally—and still worship the glorious Force that created the universe in ways I still don't understand.

Many ancient civilizations had flood stories similar to the Genesis story of Noah's ark, but that doesn't take away from the core message: God loves us and will not let us be extinguished. God's word, God's promise of protection, can be trusted. So in a profound way that story is true.

The spectacular Exodus story of Moses parting the Red Sea is another for which modern information leads to a possible scientific explanation. Scientists in recent years have pointed to the "wind

set-down effect," when a strong wind blowing for many hours can cause the sea level to drop. If this occurred in Exodus, it might have exposed an underwater ridge, which the Israelites might have crossed as if it were dry land. But what is the real message here? Is it not that we are delivered, saved, by listening to and following God (in this case God's messenger, Moses)?

Even the dramatic encounter between the little shepherd boy David and the giant Philistine Goliath may be misunderstood, says author Malcolm Gladwell. If it did actually occur, an over-armored hulk might easily have been bested by a nimble youth expertly using the slingshot and stones he used to protect his flock. Does this interpretation negate the moral of the story (with God on our side, we can defeat the forces of evil)? I think not.

Jesus turning water into wine and walking on the sea? Modern physicists hoping to prove or disprove the first story have written scholarly papers breaking down the chemical elements of both wine and H<sub>2</sub>O. Critics of the second posit that Jesus might have been treading on a thin sheet of ice. To me both miracles beautifully symbolize Jesus' care for us, however they came to be.

The lived experiences of the writers of Scripture are far removed from ours in the scientifically advanced world of today. I would imagine that 2,000 years in the future, our efforts to understand the workings of the universe and the nature of God will seem quite primitive as well. I don't believe for a second, though, that the deep truths at the heart of the Bible will be any less relevant millennia from now.

What Bible stories do you question? Which have strained credulity and even been stumbling blocks to belief? Why not let go of a desire to force these old, old stories into a rigid mold they may never have been meant to fit? We shouldn't fear new information or let it shake our faith. Instead we can search for the treasured lessons within the Bible. Faith. Hope. Love. God's amazing grace and endless mercy.

Maybe, like my mermaids, our new understanding may be quite different from what we've always imagined. But maybe it will be infinitely more meaningful.

Elise Seyfried is a freelance writer whose work has been published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Guideposts* and many other publications. She is author of three books of humorous spiritual essays and director of spiritual formation for an ELCA congregation in Oreland, Pa.





# ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.

## Rebuilding homes and lives in an earthquake-stricken village

**E**arthquakes strike without warning, leaving people little time to react. Such events can be catastrophic, especially in areas without adequate infrastructure.

In April 2015 a powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal, killing nearly nine thousand people and leaving millions homeless. Dudhpokhari, a village of 400 people in the Himalayan Mountains, was almost completely destroyed.



Y. Frankfin Ishida

Lalkumari Gurung

When the earthquake hit, some people were working in the fields and others were grazing animals. Lalkumari Gurung, now 24, was gathering firewood in the nearby woods.

“When I came back to the village, many people were on the road and were crying,” said Lalkumari. “Houses were all damaged or demolished, and dust was rising. Our house had major cracks and was damaged.”

Though it started raining that night, Lalkumari said, the villagers were too afraid of aftershocks to sleep in their houses. Instead they slept in the road on plastic sheets. Because Dudhpokhari is so remote, initial aid from the government didn't begin arriving in the village for a week.

Lutheran Disaster Response partnered with multiple organizations in Nepal to address the earthquake. One partner, Lutheran World Relief, was already engaged in Dudhpokhari with an electricity project. After the earthquake Lutheran Disaster Response collaborated with Lutheran World Relief to rebuild the damaged homes in the village, ensuring that they were stronger than before.

As the village was rebuilt, workers implemented construction techniques for greater earthquake resistance. Concrete pillars and horizontal bands were used to strengthen the walls of homes.

“The rebuilding helped us build up our capacity and confidence,” Lalkumari said. “Without any aid, we might have had to rebuild a house, though unsafe.”

Lalkumari said that she was afraid of another large earthquake but that, when the village experiences smaller ones, she feels safe in her rebuilt house. The village faces other challenges, such as unemployment and lack of education, yet residents trust in the sturdiness of their new homes.

“The biggest thing now is the satisfaction that we have been able to rebuild our lives.”

Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response transform communities around the world. Completely rebuilding a village after an earthquake takes years, but together we can accompany survivors for the long run. Not only are the houses in Dudhpokhari more resilient, but the people are too.

Dudhpokhari



Louisa Ishida