



September 2023

the
SPIRIT

Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

A Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Congregation

“Resurrection of a Dying Church!”

Our beloved ELCA is dying. According to projections from the ELCA's own Office of Research and Evaluation, by 2041 we will have fewer than 16,000 in worship across the entire denomination, and by 2050 the whole denomination will have fewer than 67,000 members, down from over 4 million in 1988. And it's not just our Lutheran Church that is experiencing such decline. All of White mainline Protestantism (including our Presbyterian, UCC, Episcopal, and other inter-communion partners) is facing the same fate. Sure, there are a few congregations who will hold out longer than others, but that's like saying a person with terminal lung cancer still has a healthy heart. **But here is what the Biblical witness says: we don't have to die, because Christ can heal us.**

After all, not all congregations are dying. Black Rock Church is a prime example, as is Christ Presbyterian, which recently relocated because of the need for more space. Zion Lutheran in Stamford sold for \$3 million to a Pentecostal church who spent even more money changing the gymnasium into an entirely new sanctuary. St. Paul's in Bridgeport was sold to a Jamaican Pentecostal church who paid off their mortgage in record time. We sold Salem to a Haitian SDA church that packs the place every Saturday.

What I was always taught about such churches was that they were growing because of their conservative theology. But what I discovered over the last 5 years is that such a statement is patently untrue. I have made it a point to visit many of these congregations and rarely have I heard any conservative theology preached at worship. Instead, what I found was an emphasis on praise and thanksgiving, passionate testimonies to the power of God in people's everyday lives, and a joy that was just bursting out of worshippers' hearts – a joy that was so great that they couldn't help but share it!

For as long as I've been alive, Lutherans have made evangelism about inviting people to church – and that is exactly why it has never worked: because we made it about church instead of about God. We made it about the ways we worship, about our service projects, & about our fellowship activities. We made it about our Scandinavian or Germanic cultural celebrations & traditions. Whenever it came to a choice between giving up a beloved tradition and changing in order to reach the unchurched, we chose to cling to what we knew. We chose our denominational and congregational culture over the Great Commission. The vast majority of the unchurched and the vast majority of young people have no desire to come to our kind of worship any more than they want to attend a symphony concert. They'd much rather hang out with their friends at the gym. And they don't have to be part of a church to volunteer at a soup kitchen.

But worship in the congregations that are growing is vastly different from ours. The Holy Spirit is not just assumed or believed to be there, but its presence can be felt in the very atmosphere and experienced in a way that goes beyond the head to captivate the heart and spirit in a life-changing way. Miracles happen all the time in the lives of people in these congregations – precisely because they trust in a God of unlimited power who loves them enough to work miracles.

In his book Everyday Spirituality, Bishop Hazelwood quotes William James

in his classic book, The Varieties of Religious Experience. “[James] distinguishes between primary religious encounters, which are direct personal experience and secondary religion, which involves teachings about the faith or organizational aspects. Most of what happens in [the White mainline] American church life today is secondary religion – information, analysis, and description.... It's secondary because it's one step removed from the religious experience. In contrast, primary religion is a direct experience of the holy.”¹ Those congregations that are growing are those which offer primary religious experience.

But those congregations have a different problem. While most of them don't preach such things on Sundays, there are underlying conservative doctrines, beliefs, and values that show up eventually in Bible studies or conversations – and one of the main doctrines is a conservative view of sexuality that excludes, judges, and often condemns the entire LGBTQIA+ community. Anyone who accepts a gay family member or friend will likely not be comfortable in such a congregation, no matter how meaningful their worship. And so as much as these congregations are growing now, they have a limited audience & their exclusive views will eventually cause their decline.

So what is the answer? I believe that God has offered Salem an incredible opportunity. While there are 400 churches in Bridgeport, there are only a handful that are not either all White or all Black, and if we ever expect racism to disappear in our society, we must be committed to eradicating it in the Church. The few that are racially diverse either tend to rank low on the spiritual vitality scale or high on the conservative doctrine scale. **But here's where we fit: our Lutheran theology is centered on GRACE, and Luther himself fought for spiritual vitality and the kind of worship that is designed not for the comfort of those already in the pews but to welcome those outside the walls.** I'm not expecting Salem members in their 70s and 80s to radically change their worship style, but we could continue as we are and use some of our financial resources to start a **new mission that would offer something that may end up being the very thing that our city and our synod and our entire denomination needs: a spiritually vibrant worship that includes every one of God's children, no matter what their race or gender** If we can do that, then I am convinced that we will see a dying church touched, healed, & raised to new life in the name of Jesus & through the power of the Spirit.

May the Abundant LIFE of the Spirit Be Yours!

Pastor Marjo

Pastor Marjo Anderson

1. Everyday Spirituality: Discover a Life of Hope, Peace and Meaning, by James Hazelwood, published by James Hazelwood, 2019, pp. 214-215.

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

Website - www.salembridgeport.org

Facebook - 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

Karl Kraft, Office Manager
Office Phone (203) 336-3300
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

The following was received from Rev. Sara Smith for nOUR-ish BRIDGEPORT.

Dear Rich & Carol and the entire Salem Lutheran Church,

What an amazing day! When I returned from my summer break and learned of your VERY GENEROUS gift to nOUR-ish BRIDGEPORT! Thank you, Thank you! Thank you!

Please know every dollar will be used to further our mission of providing our neighbors who struggle with hunger, food insecurity, and inaccessibility, healthy fresh food - and a heaping helping of hope!

We have always valued our partnership with Salem - and the good people who call it home. Your care for the poor and less fortunate is inspiring - and a true sign of your faithfulness.

Here's to continuing our relationship and mission together ... with appreciation, Reverend Sara

Please come & volunteer!

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

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

Email submissions to
salemsec123@sbcglobal.net



September 2023 Salem Lutheran Church



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI
Sep 1

SAT
2

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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center 	
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pentecost 14 ● 9:30am Worship	Labor Day ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group	● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and' ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer ● 7pm Bible Study on Romans	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	● 9am The BREAKFAST Gathering!
Pentecost 15 ● 9:30am Worship	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group ● 6:30pm Social Ministry Committee Meeting	● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and' ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 6pm Stewardship Committee Meeting	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer ● 7pm Bible Study on Romans	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	● 11am Inner-View Chat n Chew
Pentecost 16 ● 9:30am Worship	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group ● 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting ● 7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting	● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and' ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer ● 7pm Bible Study on Romans	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	
Pentecost 17	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group ● 7pm Council Meeting	● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and' ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer ● 7pm Bible Study on Romans	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 6pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	

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

Sep 16

Bishop Jean Williams, Stop&Shop 4531 Main St, Bridgeport volunteersignup.org/FC9RT

Sep 30

Sterling House, Stop&Shop 200 E. Main St, Stratford volunteersignup.org/3RQKH

Oct 14

Trumbull Food Pantry, Stop&Shop 110 Quality St, Trumbull volunteersignup.org/AD3L4

Oct 28

Operation Hope, Stop&Shop, Villa Ave, Fairfield volunteersignup.org/8DXYW



Refill the Pantry

Nancy Sidoti.....	2
Bennett Guadagno.....	2
Dennis Norberg.....	3
Richard Kenyon	9
Eileen Anderson	11
Al DeWalt.....	12
Thomas Larson.....	15
Peter Mavilla	17
Susan Molnar.....	22
Jenna Llanos	22
Dorothy Schrum.....	23
Kyle DeWalt.....	24
Olivia Mavilla.....	24

Kim Lange	25
Carol Mavilla.....	26
Stephanie Schott	26
Jennifer Reyes	29
Samantha Baronavski	30



Seafarers

Christmas at Sea

Collection dates: **September 10 – December 3**

Gift Suggestions:

- Woolen caps
- Sweatshirts (L-XL)
- Thermal or White Socks
- Chocolates
- Canned Nuts
- Hard Candy
- Christmas Cards
- Money



If you have questions, contact Carol Lansing at (203) 520-3752

Please place items in the marked box in the Narthex

Churches Collaborate to Hold Drives for Area Pantries

by Operation Hope | Jul 18, 2023 | Donations, Volunteers | 0 comments



We are deeply grateful to have been the beneficiary of a large food drive and collection in June. Bridgeport's Salem Lutheran Church, Easton's First Presbyterian Church and Fairfield's Our Saviour's Lutheran Church partnered to collect a pod full of much needed food and personal care items and \$1,200 in cash donations in June. Many thanks to all donors and especially to the volunteers and congregations from these three churches for helping our neighbors in need in this big way.

This wasn't just a drive held ad hoc. A little bit of history...about a year ago, Salem Lutheran Church created a new focused mission to help alleviate food insecurity in the area. The church decided that they would need to collaborate with other churches. They formed the program, Refill the Pantries, with Salem Lutheran of Bridgeport, First Presbyterian, Our Saviours Lutheran of Fairfield, Holy Trinity Lutheran of Trumbull, and Grace Lutheran of Stratford. The initial thought was to do a drive for a food pantry in each community: Bishop Jean Williams in Bridgeport, Operation Hope in Fairfield, Trumbull Food Pantry in Trumbull, and Sterling House in Stratford. Each church took the lead in getting volunteers for their community. The success of the four drives this spring was amazing and encouraging. Thrivent Financial has also sponsored each drive and gives Refill the Pantries \$250 which they turn over to the pantry.

Refill the Pantries has already scheduled four drives for the September-October period this fall for the same four pantries, and plans to have volunteers from all five churches assist. Mark your calendar - the drive for Operation Hope is October 28, details to follow. It's truly amazing what can be accomplished when working together. Thank you!

Alzheimer's Disease

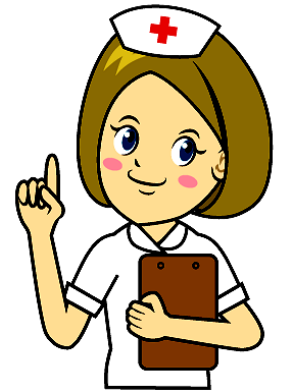
Alzheimer's disease is an illness that destroys large number of nerve cells in the brain. This affects a person's ability to remember things, think clearly and use good judgement.

Doctors do not know what causes the disease. Most of the time it begins after age 60. Nearly half of people over 85 have Alzheimer's. Studies found a heart-related connection where heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high pressure and high cholesterol can increase the risk. Your doctor should monitor your heart health and treat any problems.

Alzheimer's disease usually starts slowly and worsens over time. The rate of progression varies. There is no cure but treatments are available such as medications.

Eating a healthy diet, staying socially active, avoiding tobacco, avoiding excess alcohol, and exercising body and mind help keep the brain healthy and may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's.

The Alzheimer's Association is available for families, caregivers and patients for services, support and research. Call (800) 272-3900 or go to www.alz.org.



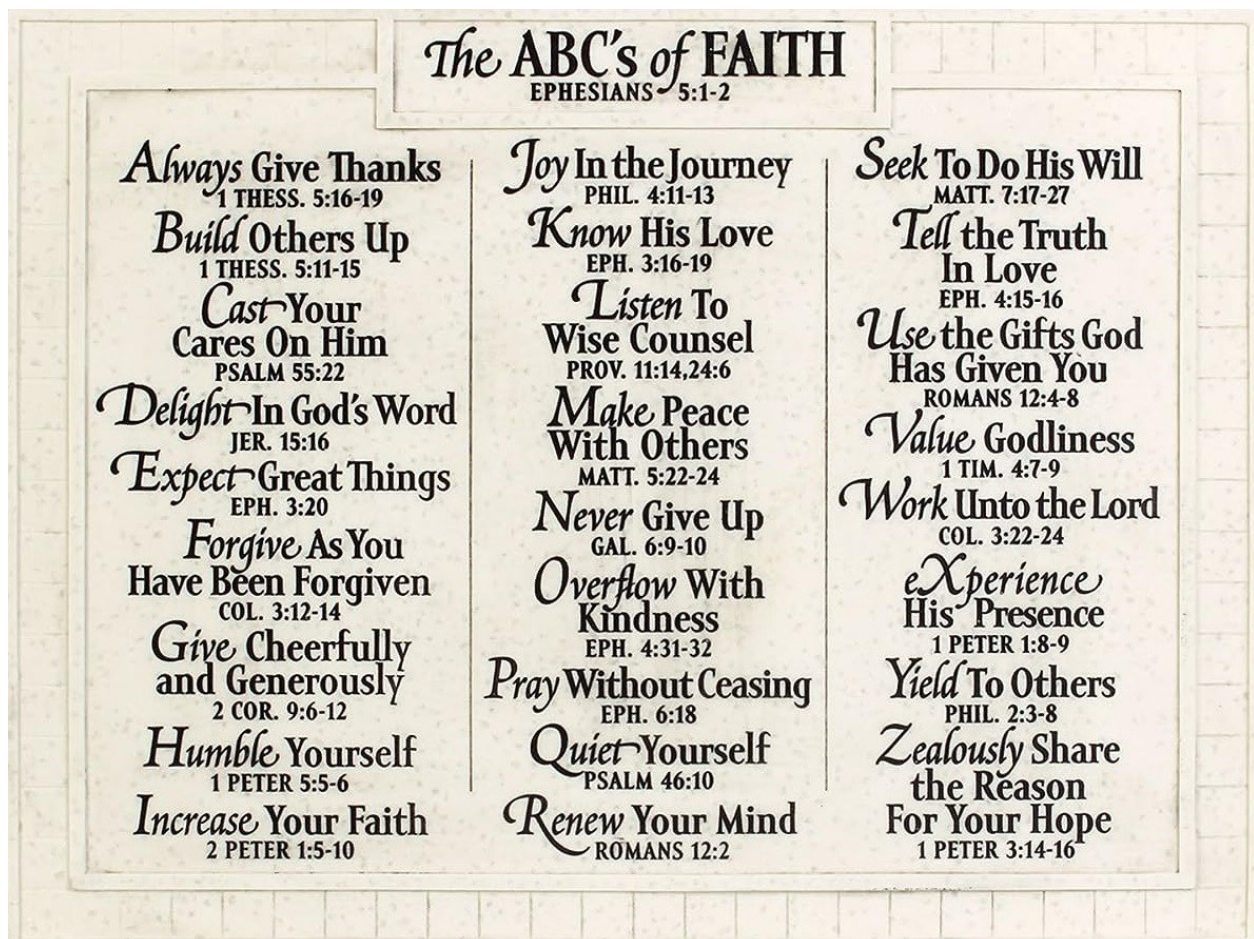
10 Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's

- 1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life** - forgetting recently learned information, forgetting important dates or events, asking the same questions over and over, and relying on memory aids. *[Age appropriate: Sometimes forgetting names or appointments but remembering them later.]*
- 2. Challenges in planning or solving problems** - having difficulties following a plan or working with numbers, taking much longer to do things that they did before. *[Age appropriate: Making occasional errors when managing finances or household bills.]*
- 3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks** - having trouble driving to a familiar location, organizing a grocery list, or remembering the rules of a favorite game. *[Age appropriate: Occasionally needing help to use microwave settings or to record a TV show.]*
- 4. Confusion with time or place** - losing track of dates, seasons and passage of time, trouble remembering where they are or how they got there. *[Age appropriate: Getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later.]*
- 5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships** - having vision problems leading to difficulties with balance and with reading, trouble judging distances, and trouble determining color or contrast. *[Age appropriate: Vision changes related to cataracts.]*
- 6. New problems with words** - having trouble following or joining a conversation, stopping in the middle of a conversation and not knowing how to continue, struggling with vocabulary, trouble naming a familiar object or using the wrong name. *[Age appropriate: Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.]*
- 7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps** - putting things in unusual places, losing things and be unable to go back over their steps to find them again. *[Age appropriate: Misplacing things from time to time and retracing steps to find them.]*
- 8. Decreased or poor judgement** - using poor judgement when dealing with money, not paying attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean. *[Age appropriate: Making a bad decision or mistake once in a while like neglecting to change the oil in the car.]*
- 9. Withdrawal from work or social activities** - due to problems with communications they may withdraw from hobbies, social activities or other engagements, having problems with a favorite team or activity. *[Age appropriate: Sometimes feeling uninterested in family or social obligations.]*
- 10. Changes in mood and personality** - become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful or anxious, becoming upset at home, with friends or when out of their comfort zone. *[Age appropriate: Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.]*

Protect Yourself and Others

Protect ourselves and others by: regular hand-washing; covering our mouth and nose when coughing, etc.; staying home if sick; and getting vaccinated, such as with the flu vaccine. The CDC recommends flu vaccination for everyone six months of age and older. You should receive a flu vaccination even if you are healthy because the virus can be transferred to others. Pregnant women should get the flu shot to protect themselves and their unborn child. Two new flu vaccines have been approved for egg-allergic people. Talk to your doctor about what type of flu vaccine is right for you. There is a more potent flu vaccine for people over 65 years old.

Don't forget to ask your doctor about vaccines for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, and Covid. If you are over sixty, check with your doctor about the shingles, RSV, and the pneumococcal vaccines.





July 17, 2023

Salem Lutheran Church
3160 Park Ave
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Dear Friends of Catholic Charities,

Thank you for your generous \$25,000.00 donation dated June 22, 2023. Your gift has been designated to support The Thomas Merton Center, a program of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County. Thanks to your generosity the homeless, the unemployed and the working poor of Bridgeport will be fed nutritious meals. You are making a difference in our community by helping to treat every human being, especially those who are most vulnerable, with the love, respect and dignity they deserve. This wonderful work would not be possible without the help of YOUR generous support!

The Thomas Merton Center is a refuge for people and families longing to break the vicious cycle of poverty. Rarely before, in our nearly 50 years serving Bridgeport, have our services been utilized by so many people. We believe the sharing of a hot meal is an invitation to come in and share in a place where one can belong; respect and love are mutually given and received; each person is valued and not to be judged; and healing life's hurts is possible with people who care.

Please know how very grateful I am for your contribution to our mission. Your kindness will improve the lives of so many people who need it most!

Warm Regards,


Mike Donoghue
Executive Director

*Many, many thanks for your very generous donation!
We are very grateful for your support of our
most vulnerable neighbors in Bridgeport!*

Catholic Charities of Fairfield County is a 501(c)(3) organization. Kindly save this letter as a receipt for tax purposes. No goods or services have been provided in return for your contribution.

Learn how to increase your impact with a matching gift or estate planning at ccfairfield.org/donate



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

July 23, 2023

Pastor Marjo Anderson
Salem Lutheran Church
3160 Park Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Dear Pastor Marjo,

On behalf of everyone at the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, we thank you for your kind donation of \$825.00 on June 8th, 2023. Your generosity means everything to us and to the community we serve. You have helped many people in Bridgeport who have great difficulties.

- You have provided intervention for youth and families in crisis through the Janus Center case managers.
- You reach into the schools and help students by providing much needed school supplies, toiletries, and counseling sessions.
- You are on the streets through our Street Outreach, with the gifts of food to homeless youth, and guidance to help get them off the streets and into stable housing.
- You reach returning citizens in our PNV program with toiletries, clothing, transportation, food vouchers, and other items that help them move forward in their lives with dignity. This is a life-changing program!
- You create congregational and community partnerships that support community groups and bring awareness and support to Bridgeport residents.
- And, you reach people through the FEED Center, which has distributed over fifty thousand dollars of meals, healthy produce, and rescued produce to the Hunger Outreach Network in the last 8 months.

You do all this through your generous support. Thank you again for your commitment and kindness! We value each of our supporters and are grateful for this and every contribution.

With gratitude,

Terry Schmitt
Interim President and Chief Executive Officer

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



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

July 19, 2023

Rev. Marjo Anderson & Richard Lansing
Salem Lutheran Church
3160 Park Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Dear Marjo and Richard,

You are wonderful! At this difficult time in our world, and at a time when communities are still struggling to recover from the economic and social difficulties caused by the Covid pandemic, your church and its people have stood up to be a voice for understanding, hope, and sustenance! On behalf of all the people that your generosity touches, I want to thank you for the blessing of your \$25,000 gift to the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport.

I cannot thank you enough. Because of your impressive support, you have touched hundreds of people whose needs are great and whose resources are limited. Your impact has been significant. There are dozens of parents who have grown in their ability to raise their children in healthier and happier ways. You have enabled scores of people to learn enough culinary skills to qualify for productive jobs in the food industry. You have invited thousands of young people into a better life through educational opportunities and more supportive environments. And the “least of these” — people seeking to return to society from periods of incarceration — know hope and support in ways that no one else supplies.

That is all because you not only care, but also because you support. So thank you again for standing up for people who are in real need. Your leadership as a major donor enables all this good work, and we are deeply grateful.

Yours in gratitude,

Terry Schmitt
Interim Executive Director

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

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



Our Community, Our Food Bank

July 11, 2023

Salem Lutheran Church
3160 Park Ave
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Dear Salem Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for your gift of \$50,000.00 on 7/6/2023 Unrestricted Grant to Connecticut Foodshare. Your generosity supports our neighbors facing food insecurity with the nutritious foods they need to thrive. We are grateful for your partnership.

With consumer prices at a 40 year high, too many families across Connecticut face challenges putting food on the table. Your generosity allows us to serve our most vulnerable neighbors, including seniors and children. Your support enables us to:

- Conduct more than 100 bi-weekly mobile food distributions across the state with a focus on providing fresh produce to individuals, families, and seniors
- Support more than 500 partner agencies, including food pantries, community kitchens, and backpack programs who are meeting their communities' unique needs
- Address root causes of hunger to increase economic stability and build long-term food security.

On behalf of all of us at Connecticut Foodshare, we are very thankful for your partnership. Stay safe and well!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Jakubowski", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and loops around the line.

Jason Jakubowski, President and CEO

A handwritten note in blue ink, written in a cursive style, says "Thank you so much for this!". It is written above a horizontal line and has a blue underline.

This letter certifies that no goods or services were provided in exchange for your contribution of \$50,000.00 on 7/6/2023 Unrestricted Grant

A life changing Journey to the

HOLY LAND

NEW ENGLAND SYNOD ELCA

With Bishop Jim and Pastor Lisa Hazelwood

JAN 15TH - 25TH, 2024

Boston, MA (BOS)

Package Price : \$4,190



Package Price Includes:

- * Round trip Airfare
- * All nights accommodations in double occupancy luxury hotels
- * Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily
- * Ten days sightseeing in modern, air conditioned private bus
- * English speaking government licensed Christian tour guide
- * And much more . . .

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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 continues at 7:00 on zoom as we study Paul's letter to the Romans. Why Romans, you ask? Well, according to Martin Luther...** "This Epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, and is so worthy that not only should every Christian know it word for word, by heart, but feast on it every day as bread for the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes." While you may not be ready to memorize it or read it every day, we do invite you to study it weekly with us! This week we'll be looking at chapters 2 & 3. The zoom link is on Salem's calendar under the Resources tab at SalemBridgeport.org .

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 September 16th 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, 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. **Or to see how to get there, [click here](#):**



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

Maui wildfires relief

By Candice Hill Buchbinder

Members of Kihei (Maui) Lutheran Church are collecting and distributing relief supplies to help those impacted by the wildfires in Lahaina, Maui. So far donations have included 690 hygiene items, 82 slippers (flip-flop slippers) and 30 prayer shawls that the congregation had collected for "God's work. Our hands." Sunday on Sept. 10.



Ron Rucker, interim pastor of Kihei Lutheran, said there are significant supplies stockpiled on the island, and money and supplies are still being donated. Cleanup and the search for missing people continues.

Rucker and Dave Nagler, bishop of the Pacifica Synod, toured the area on Aug. 22. "The devastation is more than the loss of lives, homes and businesses," Nagler said. "It is an emotional and spiritual wound in the heart of this community. Yet, you can see God already working in and through the hearts and hands of this community to knit this island back together. We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of aloha from people around the country who have reached out and contributed to the recovery. May the rebuild be thoughtful, intentional and focused primarily on the needs of the locals."

Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with the Pacifica Synod and other partners to assess the needs of people impacted by the wildfires and to provide for immediate needs and recovery amid the widespread destruction. To help with relief efforts, you can [donate](#) to Lutheran Disaster Response.



Candice Hill Buchbinder is the ELCA public relations manager.



ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.



Rice Street Gardens

“When I plant my vegetables I feel at home.”

Rice Street Gardens in St. Paul, Minn., is the second-largest community garden in the state, with over 250 plots for local families. Your generosity to ELCA World Hunger, paired with the hard work of gardeners and volunteers, enables this garden to thrive. Each gardener contributes by volunteering during the year, keeping it clean and well-organized, and donating money to buy supplies. In exchange they get to enjoy time in the garden and all the fresh veggies they grow.

A gardener at Rice Street, Elodie came to Minnesota as a refugee from the Congo five years ago. Living in Minnesota was hard for her and her daughter; they were lonely and had trouble finding jobs. One day the Rev. Dana K. Nelson, pastor of Galilee Lutheran Church, visited Elodie at her home and invited her to join Rice Street Gardens, within walking distance of her apartment.

Elodie accepted. Now she grows all kinds of vegetables at Rice Street and cooks them every day for herself and her daughter. In fact Elodie has so many vegetables that she can keep her freezer full all winter. Yet to Elodie the garden means more than this. “When I plant my

vegetables I feel at home,” she said. “I feel like I have the food from my country.”

At the garden Elodie met a young man named Grace, who also came to the United States as a refugee from the Congo. Grace grows vegetables that he remembers from the Congo, especially a dark, leafy green called cassava leaves. Grace and Elodie tend each other’s gardens, and Elodie even keeps vegetables for Grace in her freezer so that he can have them to eat during winter too.

Rice Street Gardens provides a place where newcomers to the United States, such as Grace, Elodie and her daughter, are welcomed and find connections. They can make new friends; stay connected to their food, culture and people; and find ways to support their neighbors, just as Elodie does by storing Grace’s vegetables in her freezer.

The gardeners and volunteers supported in part by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger are growing more than food – they are planting seeds for the kind of world God wants for us, a world where everyone has enough to eat, food they love, support when they need it and a strong community that welcomes and loves them.



Feeding ministries provide immediate support to those in need. Community gardens and agricultural programs help communities grow food to nourish themselves and build stronger communities.