October 2023 SPIRIT SPIRIT Salem Lutheran Church shalom - salaam - salem - peace A Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Congregation

A Call to Salem to Remain Open and Live

Jesus' last words to his disciples were that we were to go and make disciples. In other words, it is our task, both individually and collectively to pass the gospel on to the next generation. There are no caveats – such as cultural change or that we have tried multiple times before and failed - that excuse us from that task. As long as we have life – as individuals and as a congregation – we are expected to live out the Great Commission. It may seem to some like a monumental, even impossible, task, but along with the commission he gives us a promise – that he will be with us always. The Spirit came to connect us with Jesus, the Vine, and as long as we are attached to the Vine, we will have life and have it abundantly. Therefore, it is incumbent upon this congregation to follow in faith so that the Spirit might bring life and health and growth to our current members and to those with whom we share the gospel.

While there are hundreds of congregations in Bridgeport and beyond, there is a need that few, if any, are meeting. A new Lutheran mission can meet that need. The younger generation and those who did not grow up in the church are looking for congregations that present a God that is intimately connected with everyday life, and where worship connects with people's bodies and hearts and spirits as well as their minds. Evangelical and Pentecostal congregations offer this kind of worship and connect people with such a God. But if people happen to be gay or have a gay friend, they will not feel comfortable with doctrines that see such people as in need of "fixing" or "healing". White mainline denominations welcome the LGBTQIA+ community, but their worship is formalized, geared to mind, and presents God as a more transcendent being rather than an immanent one intimately involved in one's day to day life.

Because our Lutheran theology stresses that we are to communicate in the "language of the people", it allows us the freedom to worship in whatever way meets the needs of those who hunger for the gospel. A new mission can offer the kind of worship that young people and unchurched people are looking for. And, we can offer it to everyone, no matter what race or culture or sexual orientation or age.

Besides presenting an immanent God and vibrant worship involving heart and mind, body and soul, and besides being a welcoming community for all, one other component would be necessary for a new Lutheran mission in Bridgeport. In order to reach the younger generation and in order to leverage the impact of this new kind of ministry, it must be as much an online community as it is an in-person one. Salem already has experience with prayer gatherings and Bible studies that reach out across geographical, racial, and denominational boundaries, but the online presence of a new ministry must utilize even more media, including radio, podcasts, blogs, and online pastoral care. Some members of Salem may feel called to leave the congregation and go to another and their choice should be respected. For others, however, Salem will always be their church family, and if Salem no longer exists, they may simply fall away from the church. Those who believe that Salem can grow and thrive should be given the choice and the resources to remain at Salem and to continue to provide worship, prayer, Bible study, pastoral care, service opportunities, and ecumenical connections for all who feel called to remain. Staying open just to serve the current membership in our current ways, however, is not enough. Those who stay must also be committed to providing significant financial resources as well as some time and talent. Salem would provide office space and support for a new mission developer. Both Salem's pastor and Genesis' lay licensed minister must work alongside that developer. At least a few of Salem's members should be part of the new mission's steering committee. Worship services would be separate from Salem's, but prayer gatherings, Bible studies, social service and social justice activities, and fellowship events could and should be shared.

Voting to close Salem ends Lutheran ministry in Bridgeport, the largest and poorest city in CT. Voting to close Salem leaves only suburban Lutheran churches that are facing the same eventual end as Salem. Voting to close Salem ends the possibility of providing the kind of new church that offers what few, if any other churches in Bridgeport or our synod offer.

Voting to keep Salem open is more than a vote for the status quo, because maintaining only what already exists is not enough to justify its existence. Voting to keep Salem open must also include a commitment to starting a new mission in Bridgeport. At some point, the current Salem will likely close as its current membership dies or moves away; but if Salem continues long enough to fund and support a new mission, there will be a new "Salem" mission that will continue the work of Salem, the New England Synod, and the ELCA.

In Deuteronomy 30:19 God says, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live." I pray that Salem chooses life.

Castor Marjo Blessings abundant!

Pastor Marjo Anderson

#### Introductory Statement to the Agenda for the Special Congregational Meeting to be held on 10/29/23

The following statement includes:

- the purpose of the upcoming congregational meeting on 10/29/23;
- a list of what has taken place since our semi-annual meeting on 06/18/23;
- a summary of what we have learned since that meeting; and
- the reason the Council is proposing this particular resolution.

Having had conversations, built relationships, hosted joint service activities, and worshipped with 4 congregations over the past year for the purpose of determining a merger partner, and having had a straw poll that limited those potential merging partners to 2, the congregation voted at its semi-annual meeting on June 18, 2023 that the Council set a date for a congregational meeting to be held "by the end of October for the purpose of voting on Salem's direction". A Synod representative will be present at the meeting.

Since the time of the June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, a number of things have taken place:

- The current executive committee (Pastor Marjo, President Cindy Roberts, Vice-President Sandra Brown, Secretary Nancy Headford, and Treasurer Rich Kenyon) composed a letter to be hand-delivered to each of the 4 congregations who were named as potential merger partners.
- Current congregation president Cindy Roberts and former president Richard Lansing met with the leaders of the 4 congregations to deliver the letters in person.
- The Salem Council voted to call in not only the help of the Synod Consultant for Mergers and Closures (Pastor Maria Hammons), but also the Bishop's Associate for Mission (Ms. Kim Bergstrand).
- Pastor Marjo, Cindy Roberts, and Jeanette Harris (Lay Licensed Minister and Mission Developed of Genesis Gospel Café in Bridgeport) met with Pastor Maria Hammons and Kim Bergstrand.
- Pastor Maria Hammons and Kim Bergstrand came to Salem and led an adult forum.
- Following the forum, Pastor Marjo, Cindy Roberts, Sandra Brown, Pastor Maria Hammons, and Kim Bergstrand met for a debriefing session.
- Also following the forum, the Council asked Pastor Marjo to invite Kim Bergstrand to come back.
- Following Pastor Marjo's request to meet with Kim, Bishop Hazelwood met with Pastor Marjo instead.
- Bishop Hazelwood met with the Salem Executive Committee, and committed to meeting with the synod attorney to make sure the resolution meets legal requirements and to lay out what is involved in the process of Pursuing Holy Closure. He asked the Executive Committee to lay out a vision and purpose for Remaining Open and Developing a New Mission
- Bishop Hazelwood and Pastor Maria Hammons met with the Salem Council to assist in the wording of the resolution and the explanatory materials which were prepared by the bishop, the synod attorney, and the executive committee and approved by the Council.

At the time of the June 18th meeting, we understood the choices to be three: continuing as a congregation, merging with one of the 2 remaining potential partners (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Trumbull and First Presbyterian Church of Fairfield), or closing. Since that time, we have learned that while both of the 2 remaining potential merging partners are always open to receiving individual members, neither is open to pursuing a legal merger. In fact, we received a letter from Holy Trinity stating that they were never open to merger and had repeatedly told us so, a fact that came as quite a surprise to most of Salem's leadership. In addition, the bishop explained that mergers with non-ELCA congregations are not possible on a congregational level, but must begin on an adjudicatory (in the case of the ELCA, the synod) level.

Because merger requires an affirmative vote from both congregations, legal merger with either of those congregations is no longer an option. That means that the vote at our congregation this month will be a choice between choosing to live or to die, i.e., between remaining open and closing.

#### SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH SPECIAL CONGREGATION MEETING FOLLOWIG WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2023 – IN PERSON ONLY

PLEASE NOTE: Only this one resolution may be discussed and voted upon at this meeting. The vote is on the resolution (the choice between options 1 & 2 as stated in bold print) ONLY. The explanations offered below the resolution ("Should the congregation vote...") are NOT part of the resolution and therefore will NOT be voted on.

#### I. OPENING DEVOTION

#### II. RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY SALEM COUNCIL

#### Motion Regarding the Future of Salem Lutheran Church

#### The Salem Council moves that the congregation vote either to:

1. Remain Open in its current form but with a commitment to Live by developing a new mission OR

#### 2. Pursue Holy Closure.

#### Should the congregation vote to Pursue Holy Closure:

- 1. A covenant between Salem's Council and the New England Synod Council would be adopted and signed to initiate this process.
- 2. An official process of "Holy Closure" would be triggered and would be overseen and guided by the synod's Consultant for Holy Closure and Merger, currently Pastor Maria Hammons.
- 3. The congregation would engage Synod Attorney Brad Cook who would assist with filing the necessary legal paperwork.
- 4. The synod consultant for "Holy Closure" would lead a legacy workshop in which the congregation meets and designates to churches and/or 501c3 non-profits to receive all of its financial assets.
  - a. This will include a gift of 10% to the Synod's Congregational Care Fund to support ministry with NE Synod churches facing non-sustainability.
  - b. This may include money designated to mission development. If the congregation so chooses, the parishioners can vote to include as part of their legacy giving to leave money to the New England Synod's Mission Development Fund. Such a development would be contingent upon the submission of a ministry exploration proposal to the Associate to the Bishop for Mission, review and recommendation based on that proposal by the New Synod Mission Table, and final approval by the New England Synod Council.
  - c. This may include money designated to congregations receiving a significant number of Salem's parishioners
  - d. This may include money designated to other 501c3 non-profits.
- 5. All members would receive letters of transfer to the congregation of their choice. Members who have not identified a congregation at the time of closing can receive a letter of good standing to take to any congregation they choose to join in the future.
- 6. All remaining congregational property is inventoried and sorted.
  - a. Historical records are sent to the Lutheran archives in Philadelphia for a fee or given to a local historical society.
  - b. Other items (worship furnishings, office equipment, books, etc.) are given away to other churches or nonprofits or sold locally. They synod can assist in networking with other congregations especially for distribution of sacred items.
- 7. Dates for final worship services are set. Typically, a larger celebration service is held first, with opportunity to invite community members and past members and leaders; then the final service is a smaller service of leave-taking.
- 8. Legal votes are taken on the dissolution of the congregation. This requires a 2/3 majority vote.
- 9. Called rostered leaders and paid staff would continue their work until the congregation is legally dissolved, and those who have served the congregation for a significant time would typically receive a severance package which is recommended by the Council and approved by the congregation.

#### Should the congregation vote to Remain Open and Live:

- 1. The congregation would continue its worship, prayer, Bible study, social service activities, and ecumenical work to meet the spiritual needs of its current membership.
- 2. Pastor Marjo Anderson would continue serving as pastor.
- 3. The congregation may donate funds to congregations to which current members officially transfer
- 4. In future years the congregation would continue its commitment to tithing its member giving and the recipients would continue to include the New England Synod, the Council of Churches, and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance.
- 5. The congregation would commit to funding and supporting a new mission development in Bridgeport so that, should Salem eventually close, the Lutheran presence in Bridgeport would not be lost.
  - a. The congregation would work with the synod/ELCA in establishing this new mission, identifying a specific area/need for such a mission, and preparing a proposal and a budget.
  - b. The congregation would commit a portion of its paid staff's time to support this mission development.
  - c. The congregation would commit to recruiting members of Salem and others to serve on a steering committee for this new mission which would meet regularly with the Mission Developer(s) and the Associate to the Bishop for Mission.
  - d. The congregation would commit to sharing its rented space with this new mission.
  - e. The exploration phase typically lasts 3-12 months, but can take longer.

#### III. CLOSING PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

Respectfully Submitted, Nancy Headford, Secretary

### Voting member list as of 09/30/23

Albers David	Kidwell Nancy	
Anderson Eileen	Kolar Marija	
Anderson Josephine	Kuczo Dolores	
Anderson Marjo	Kuczo Stephen	
Anderson Raymond	Kulakowski Laurie	
Andrews Andy	Ladue Kristen	
Andrews Karen	Lange Merlee	
Brown Sandra	Lansing Carol	
Bryk John	Lansing Richard	
Bryk Linda	Larson Jean	
Caragol Mary Anne	Larson Thomas	
Caragol Michael	Lund Barbro	
Crossman Joan	Marshall Beverly	
D'Andrea Nancy	Martin Ann	
DeWalt Alvin	McWain Bonnie	
DeWalt Dorothy	McWain James	
DeWalt Elise	Murphy Keith	
DeWalt Scott	Murphy Susan	
DeWalt Todd	Murphy Wes	
Dow lan	Nelsen Judi	
Dow Suzanne	Reinhard Reichelt	
Elie Cake	Roberts Cindy	
Headford Nancy	Schulz David	
Howard Barbara	Schulz Priscilla	
Kenyon Richard	Tomasko Bruce	

Tomasko Diane Tripodi Danowski Dale Winter William Wolff Christiane



#### *October 2023 Salem Lutheran Church*

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Oct 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ntecost 18	12pm Noon Prayer Call In	• 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and	12pm Noon Prayer Call In	12pm Noon Prayer Call In	12pm Noon Prayer Call In	
9:30am Worship	4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group     6:30pm Social Ministry Committee Meeting	• 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	<ul> <li>12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer</li> <li>7pm Bible Study on Romans</li> </ul>		<ul> <li>5pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center</li> </ul>	
8 ntecost 19 9:30am Worship	9 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In • 4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group	10 • 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In • 6pm Stewardship Committee Meeting	11 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In • 12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer • 7pm Bible Study on Romans	12 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	13 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In • 5pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	14 • 9am The BREAKFAST Gathering!
15 ntecost 20 9:30am Worship	16 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In • 4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group • 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting • 7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting	17 • 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	18 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In • 12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer • 7pm Bible Study on Romans	19 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	20 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In • 5pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center • 6pm Pray CT Summit planning meeting	21 • 11am Inner-View Chat n Chew
22 entecost 21	23 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	24 • 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and	25 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	26 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	27 • 12pm Noon Prayer Call In	28
9:30am Worship	4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group     7pm Council Meeting	12pm Noon Prayer Call In	<ul> <li>12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer</li> <li>7pm Bible Study on Romans</li> </ul>		• 5pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center	
29	30	31				
formation Sunday	12pm Noon Prayer Call In	Reformation Day				
9:30am Worship	4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group	9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and				
10:30am Congregational Meeting	• you need to consider the output of the processing of the procesing of the processing of the processing of the processi	<ul> <li>12pm Noon Prayer Call In</li> </ul>				

#### 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

#### **New Covid Variant Appears**

The Huffington Post reports that the new BA.2.86 variant (the latest Omicron strain) nicknamed "Pirola" has sparked concern as it has 34 more variations, which could make it easier to avoid vaccines. It has been detected in 15 countries so far including the US. The main symptoms are aches and pains, a continuous cough, change and taste/smell, fever, fatigue, a runny nose, a sore throat, diarrhea, eye irritation, and rashes.

Please continue to get updated vaccines, and as the change in season drives us to spend more time indoors, continue use of air-cleaners. If you are over 65 or have any chronic health condition, you are encouraged to wear a mask, which will offer additional protection against all airborne viruses, including Covid, RSV, and the flu.

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

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

Email submissions to salemsec123@sbcglobal.net

# 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 (Completed: 2,400 pounds of food and \$1,480 in cash)

#### **Sep 16**

Bishop Jean Williams, Stop&Shop 4531 Main St, Bridgeport (Completed: 2,455 pounds of food and \$691 in cash)

#### Sep 30

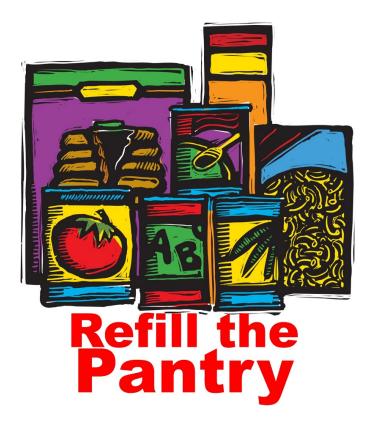
Sterling House, Stop&Shop 200 E. Main St, Stratford

#### **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



Marissa Luciani	
Brandon DeWalt Peggy Claus	
Joel Hintz	
Leah Hintz	16
John Wilkins	16
Wes Murphy	18
Erin McPadden	19
Mary Ann Kenyon	20
Edith Larson	
Scott DeWalt	21
Karen McPadden	21
Merlee Lange	21
Frank Claus	27
Megan Watts	
Katherine Larson	31



# Seafarers

## Christmas at Sea

#### **Collection dates:**

#### <mark>September 10 – December 3</mark>

#### **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

#### **Breast Cancer Awareness**

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

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

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

- Having children before age 30
- Breast feeding for several months
- Not using birth control pills
- Not using hormone therapy after menopause
- Not drinking more that one alcoholic drink per day

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

#### KNOW YOUR NORMAL

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

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

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

- Not being overweight or obese
- Exercising around 1 1/2 2 1/2 hours per week keeping a healthy weight

- Primary:
- <sup>o</sup> Bloating
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Pelvic or
- abdominal pain
- Needing to urinate
- urgently or often

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

"Could it be my ovaries?"

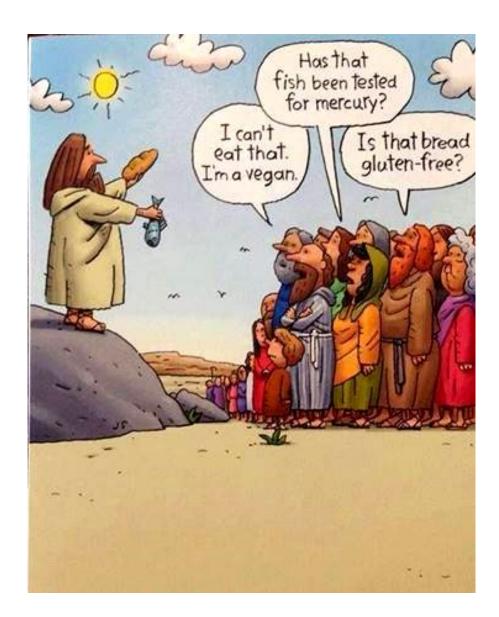
- Signs + Symptoms:
  - Secondary:
  - Fatigue
  - Upset stomach or
  - heartburn
     Back pain
  - Pain during intercourse
  - <sup>o</sup> Constipation
  - Menstrual changes



Don't forget to get your flu shot, RSV shot, and the new updated Covid booster shot this fall.







# A life changing Journey to the HOLY LAND NEW ENGLAND SYNOD ELCA

# With Bishop Jim and Pastor Lisa Hazelwood JAAN $15^{TH} - 25^{TH}$ , 202

#### Boston, MA (BOS) Package Price : \$



#### **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 ...

# Bring the Bible alive in your life

New England Synod ELCA 20 Upland St, Worcester, MA (508) 791 - 1530 (f) D Q **Good Shepherd Travel** Toll Free: 1-844-659-5263 www.goodshepherdtravel.com



## **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 October 14th 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 October 21st 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 - <u>www.salembridgeport.org</u>, 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, <u>click here</u>: