



Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

A Reconciling in Christ Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

***4th Sunday
in Advent***

***December 24, 2023
9:30 AM***



*“Greetings, favored one!
The Lord is with you!”*

Luke 1:28, NRSV

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[YouTube](#) – Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport CT

Welcome to Worship!

We want you to feel safe so please know that we have 3 units of the best air cleaner on the market in the sanctuary. (A big thank you to Bill Winter for getting our 3rd one repaired!). There is also one running in the lounge for when we have worship, coffee hour, or adult forums there. Also, you are most welcome to wear a mask at worship if you'd like.

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent we hear how God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Whatever you want, God!" We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Whatever you want, God!"

This year the Fourth Sunday of Advent this year is also Christmas Eve! While some churches are observing Advent 4 in the morning and celebrating Christmas Eve later in the day, Salem's council decided that due to people's schedules, we are observing Advent 4 at worship this morning, but we will have NO Christmas Eve service here at Salem. We encourage you to find the place and time that works best for you and your family and friends to celebrate this holy night!

Save the dates! A Special Congregational Meeting was held on 10/29 at which the congregation voted to close and so we have signed a covenant with the synod that commits us to a specified process of dissolution which will begin in January. There are practical and legal procedures which must be followed, and as the synod leads us through these, we ask your patience and your prayers. **On January 7th following worship we will have an adult forum to discuss the possibility of distributing some or all of our financial assets via a foundation.** *In keeping with the contract we signed, we will NOT be discussing what 501c3 organizations we might wish to support with a legacy gift.* That will be discussed at **the next congregational meeting which will be conducted by Pastor Maria Hammons, in person on January 14th following worship.**

As Salem continues its ministry through April, expenses continue as well. If we are to give the maximum amount of our assets, we are depending on YOU to fulfill your pledge for this year and to continue your giving in 2024. While we can cover expenses from our endowment, we would much rather be able to celebrate the commitment and generosity of each and every one of our members!

As important as your financial contributions are, please remember that YOU are even more important than your money! Showing up for prayer, Bible study, Salem activities, and ecumenical events – either in person or on zoom or on conference calls – is just as impactful and sometimes more impactful than writing a check, so please think about that when you are invited to participate in events listed in these announcement pages!

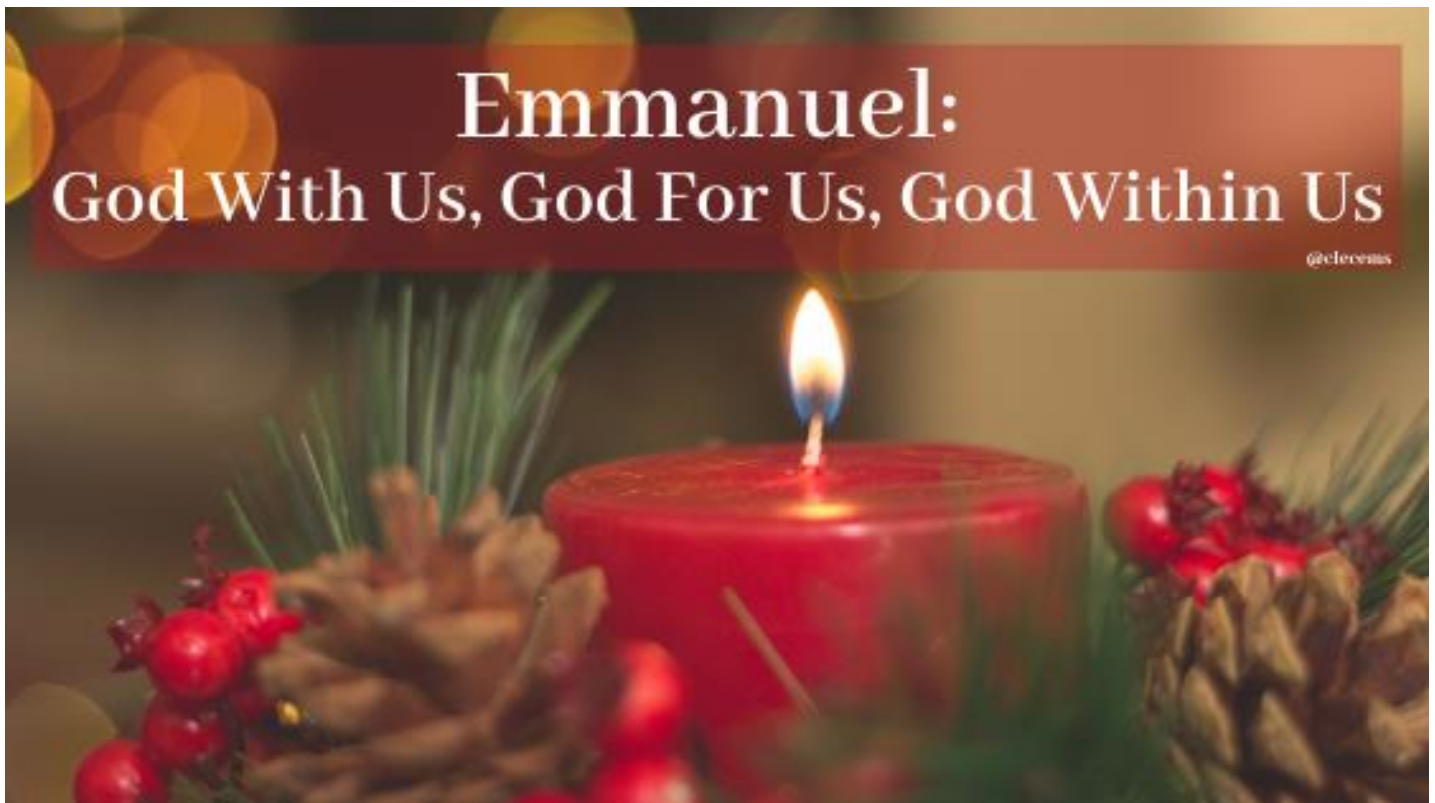
Gathering

GATHERING MUSIC

Emmanuel

Chris Coogan

*This piano piece had its world premiere on November 19, 2023,
at New Paradigm Theatre's "Gratitude" concert,
in thanks for Emmanuel Episcopal Church of Weston's
love, respect, devotion, inclusion, and support of NPT's mission and work.
"Emmanuel" means "God with us", and as Pastor Marjo listened to it,
she could hear in the music an inspired depiction of our life's journey,
with God's presence, our varied responses – sometimes listening, sometimes not –
and yet – still – God's presence consistently, faithfully, lovingly there – always.
Listen, and see if you can hear in the music Emmanuel / God-with-us.*



Please note that here we go live on Facebook.

WELCOME

Welcome in the name of the God who holds boundless power over all creation,
in the name of Jesus Christ, who laid aside that power to become one of us,
and in the name of the Spirit who allows Jesus to live on in our hearts.

It is so good to be here! Thank you for joining us today!

Thank you, those of you who are here in person with us!

And thank you, those of you out there in cyber space, wherever – and whenever! – you are!

For those of you who don't know me,

I'm Pastor Marjo Anderson of Salem Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, CT in the US.

To find out more about our ministry or to contact us,

you can go to our website, SalemBridgeport.org, to our Facebook page, SalemBridgeport,
and to our YouTube channel, Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport CT.

Links to our donate page and worship bulletin –

which has both the order of worship and announcements – as well as other resources
are included on our website at SalemBridgeport.org/Live.

Because of members' schedules, we'll not be having a Christmas Eve service this evening.

We'll be taking a break from some of our regular activities this week,

like our Monday-Friday noon prayer on our conference line,

our Wednesday weekly prayer at noon on zoom,

and our Wednesday evening Bible study at 7:00 on zoom,

as well as the Anti-Racism Accountability Group on zoom at 4:00 on Mondays.

Those activities will begin on or after Wednesday January 3rd.

This Wednesday evening, however, you are invited to join Calumet at 7 pm on zoom

for their annual Social Justice award program,

at which we will be honoring Pastor Nelson Rabell-Gonzalez

who spoke out in the midst of the injustice he and his congregation experienced
in the Sierra Pacific Synod of our denomination.

Pastor Jon Hopkins will be introducing Pastor Rabella

and I will be speaking about our call and commitment as Christians and Lutherans
to work for justice in our world.

To request the zoom link, look for the event on the resource page at calumet.org

Next Sunday please join us for a service of Lessons and Carols

Any other announcements? prayer requests? God-sightings?

Then let's begin our worship with prayer!

Holy God, we come to praise you for who you are and to thank you for all you do.

As you filled Mary with your Spirit, blessing her to be a blessing to the world,

so fill us and bless us that we may trust you, love you, and serve you above all things,
that your will may be done for us and in us and through us.

We pray all these things in the Name of Jesus and by the Power of the Spirit. Amen

OPENING HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

(as found in the ELCA worship book Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 257)

- 1 **O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.**
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.
- 2 **O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay; teach us your will and guide our way.**
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.
- 3 **O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law in cloud, and majesty, and awe.**
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.
- 4 **O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.**
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.
- 5 **O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.**
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.
- 6 **O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.**
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.
- 7 **O come, O King of nations, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you; restore the broken, make us new.**
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.
- 8 **O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.**
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

*Text: based on Exodus 9:9-13, 20:1-21, Isaiah 7:10-14, 11:1, 59:20, 60:1-3,
Jeremiah 23:1-6, 33:14-16, Luke 1:78-79, Revelation 3:7, 22:16,
Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. composite; Meter 8 8 8 8 8 8*

Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.

Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. composite

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*Performance by Tim McNabb, Halifax Lutheran Church, 5/28/20 (50/655 in our hymn series)
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQrZ0qFaGyA> [5:17]*

**YEAR B – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – LOVE
ADVENT WREATH CANDLELIGHTING**

Leader 1: Last Sunday we lit the third candle in our Advent Wreath, the Candle of Joy.
We light it and the Candles of Hope and Peace again
as we remember that Christ will come again to fulfill all of God's promises to us
and to bring to the world everlasting hope, peace and joy.

(Leader 2 lights the 1st, 2nd, & 3rd candles.)

Leader 1: The fourth candle in our Advent Wreath is the Candle of Love
It reminds us of the love that God has for us.

Leader 2: Jesus shows us God's perfect love,
God's love in human form.
The bible says that
"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life."
Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one.
Love is never boastful or conceited, rude or selfish.
Love is not quick to take offense, it keeps no records of wrongs,
it does not gloat over other people's troubles,
but rejoices in the right, the good, and the true.
There is nothing that love cannot face,
there is no limit to its faith, to its hope, to its endurance. Love never ends.

Leader 1: We light this candle today to remind us how God's perfect love is found in Jesus.

Leader 2: Let us pray. *(a brief silence)*
Loving God, we thank you for love you give us through Jesus Christ.
Help us prepare our hearts to receive Him. Bless our worship.
Guide us in all that we say and do.
We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem. **Amen**

(Leader 1 lights the 4th candle.)



ADVENT SONG

“Light One Candle”

Natalie Sleeth

All: Light one candle for hope, one bright candle for hope,
He brings hope to ev’ry heart, He comes, He Comes!
Light one candle for peace, one bright candle for peace,
He brings peace to ev’ry heart, He comes, He Comes!
Light one candle for joy, one bright candle for joy,
Ev’ry nation will find salvation in Beth’lem’s baby boy.
Light one candle for love, one bright candle for love,
He brings love to ev’ry heart, He comes, He Comes!
He brings love to ev’ry heart, He comes, He Comes!

*Text & Music by Natalie Sleeth, 1930-1992; © 1976 by Hinshaw Music Inc.
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*Performance by the Ferguson family, Ella & Eva, vocals; Amanda, violin; Homer, piano; 12/06/20
as found at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_thZGE*

Word

Please be seated.

A READING FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent”. Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you”.

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Word of God! Word of Life!

Thanks be to God!

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing;

from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.

For I am persuaded that your steadfast love is established forever;

you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.

“I have made a covenant with my chosen one;

I have sworn an oath to David my servant:

‘I will establish your line forever,

and preserve your throne for all generations.’”

You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people:

“I have set the crown upon a warrior and have exalted one chosen out of the people.

I have found David my servant;

with my holy oil have I anointed him.

My hand will hold him fast

and my arm will make him strong.

No enemy shall deceive him,

nor shall the wicked bring him down.

I will crush his foes before him

and strike down those who hate him.

My faithfulness and steadfast love are with him,

and he shall be victorious through my name.

I will set his hand on the sea,

and his right hand on the rivers.

He will say to me, ‘You are my father,

my God, and the rock of my salvation.’

Word of God! Word of Life!

Thanks be to God!

A READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT: Romans 16:25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Word of God! Word of Life!

Thanks be to God!

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS: Luke 1:26-38

You may stand if you so desire.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Word of God! Word of Life!

Thanks be to God!

You may stand if you so desire.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR ADVENT

(based on John 1 and John 14:19-26)

Let us affirm our faith together.

**In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing was created.
The life that was in him became light for all people.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

**To all who receive him, who believe in him,
is given the power to become children of God.**

**The Word became flesh, a man named Jesus.
He lived among us, full of grace and truth.
From his fullness, we have all received grace upon grace.**

**In the name of Jesus, God has sent the Holy Spirit to teach us
and to remind us of all that he said and did.
We believe that because he lives, we shall live also,
to the glory of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen**

PURPOSE STATEMENT *(updated by Council in June of 2019)*

As members and friends of Salem Church, let us remind ourselves who we are:

**We are a community of Christian disciples called by the Holy Spirit.
In response to God's transforming love, we share our joy through praise and service,
that we may encounter God, build relationships, and change lives.**

May it be so!

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Please be seated.

With hope and expectation,
we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

So they can be heard online, these petitions will be offered by the leaders at the microphones.

You blessed Abraham and Sarah and their descendants to be a blessing forever.

Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship
with those of other Christian denominations and those of other faiths.

Teach us to focus, not on our differences, but on those values which we hold in common,
that we may work together for justice and peace in all the world.

We pray for our mission partners, especially today for the NAACP of Greater Bridgeport,
and for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

We pray for the safety, protection, thriving, & wellbeing of our school administrators & their families,
especially those at Fairchild Wheeler High School.

And we pray for Salem members & their families, especially those celebrating birthdays this week:
Priscilla Schulz.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

As fields and crops lie dormant, bless them with holy rest.

Prepare them to thrive, that they provide abundant food in due season.

Protect animals who hibernate and provide for all who scavenge for food in the lean season.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority
and to those of us who have the power and privilege that comes with being the dominant culture.

Lead us in breaking down systems of oppression, especially systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion.

Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols

that, without our even noticing, lead us from your call to justice.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill,
especially Austin, Barbro, Barry, Bob, Boni, Bud, Cindy, Cliffy, Clyde, Dave, David, Dennis, Diane,
Dolores, Dorothy, Francesca, Hans, Ivy, Janice, Jeanette, Jeff, Jessica, Jim, Joe, Joey, John, Karen, Kevin,
Lynn, Marija, Pastor Marjo, Mary Lou, Melvin Jr, Melvin Sr, MJ, Natalie, Pastor Paul, Pastor Paula, Sara,
Sasha, VL & all we name in our hearts & on our lips.

Continue to comfort those who grieve, especially the families & friends of Joe, Jim, Phyllis, and Anne.

Rescue all who experience abuse or who live under threat of violence,

especially refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers in search of safe and stable homes.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You are pleased to make your home among us. Grant safety to all who travel.

Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends, families, and chosen families in celebration.

Sustain the work of Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services & others who offer welcome in your name.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We give thanks for Mary and all your servants in every generation who trusted and followed you.

Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You are invited to offer your own prayer petition at this time, either silently or aloud.

O God of hosts, listen to these & all our prayers & restore us with your great everlasting mercy. **Amen**

Thanksgiving

OFFERING PRAYER

Jesus, you said, “Give and it will be given to you...
for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

**Give us the confidence to cheerfully give
our tithes and offerings of time, talent and treasure to your work in this place,
trusting that you will provide abundantly for all our needs.
We pray this in the power of your Spirit. Amen**



OFFERING INVITATION

Please be seated.

In response to God’s grace, it is our joy to return to God our tithes and offerings.
We are grateful for your generosity, which not only is an exercise of and witness to your faith,
but which funds our ministry together here at Salem.

If you are a member of another congregation,
we encourage you to give to your home congregation first,
but invite you to contribute to our ministry also
so that we can continue to take our worship online
as a witness to the power and love of the amazing God we serve.
Simply go to the menu on our website at SalemBridgeport.org and click “donate”
or scan the QR code here in our Sunday worship program
with a QR reader on your smart phone which will take you to that page.

OFFERTORY SONG The Annunciation & The Magnificat

(from Holden Evening Prayer)

**An angel went from God to a town called Nazareth to a woman whose name was Mary.
The angel said to her “Rejoice, O highly favored, for God is with you.**

**You shall bear a child, and his name shall be Jesus, the Chosen One of God Most High.”
And Mary said, “I am the servant of my God. I live to do your will.**

**My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you.
You have looked with love on your servant here, and blessed me all my life through.
Great and mighty are you, O Holy One. Strong is your kindness evermore.
How you favor the weak and lowly one, humbling the proud in heart.**

**You have cast the mighty down from their thrones, and uplifted the humble of heart.
You have filled the hungry with wondrous things, and left the wealthy no part.
Great and mighty are you, O Faithful One. Strong is your justice, strong your love,
as you promised to Sarah and Abraham, kindness forevermore.**

**My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you.
You have looked with love on your servant here, and blessed me all my life through.**

One License Song #01123

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950; Music: Marty Haugen, b. 1950;

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Performance by St Stephen's Lutheran Church, Lexington, SC

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79GlnqXpp1Q>

Sending

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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We'll be taking a break from some of our regular activities this week,

like our Monday-Friday noon prayer on our conference line,

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Pastor Jon Hopkins will be introducing Pastor Rabella

and I will be speaking about our call and commitment as Christians and Lutherans

to work for justice in our world.

To request the zoom link, look for the event on the resource page at calumet.org

Next Sunday please join us for a service of Lessons and Carols

THANK YOU

Before we end the live-streamed portion of our worship,

I want to especially thank those of you out there in cyberspace who have worshipped with us. I hope you will join us again.

If you'd like to know more, or if you'd like to talk or pray with me, you can reach me through Salem's website or Facebook page.

BLESSING

As we say good-bye to our online worshippers,

I'd like to offer to all who are worshipping with us, both in-person and in cyberspace this blessing based on our reading today from Psalm 89.

As you sing of God's love and proclaim God's faithfulness,

you will be persuaded that God's steadfast love is established forever,

and God will be faithful to every promise from this time forth and forevermore. Amen!

Here ends our Facebook live stream.

Meal & Dismissal

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

You may stand if you so desire and make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,
who Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps us in the one true faith. **Amen**

God's love is infinite and unconditional.

As individuals we have only to accept it and live in its light. The moment we confess, we are forgiven.
As together we gather for worship, so together we confess our sins as our community,
and together we are forgiven, restored, and made new.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God, **we confess:**

**that too often we focus on the things we lack,
that too often we are attached to our own personal agendas,
that too often we insist on doing things our own way,
that too often we are oblivious to the needs for justice around us.**

God who has heard our confession both forgives and forgets every failing. **Amen!**

Loving God, **teach us:**

**to see your amazing abundance rather than any lack,
to listen more - to you and to each other - and to talk less,
to trust in your power and not our own,
to build relationships with those who are not like us.**

God who has given us the will to do these things ✚ graciously gives us the power to perform them.
Amen!

COMMUNION

Please be seated.

God be with you!

And also with you!

Open your hearts!

We open them to God and one another!

Let us give thanks to the God of all!

It is right to give God thanks & praise!

In the night in which he was betrayed...

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let these gifts to us be blessed.

Blessed be God, who is our Bread; may all the world be clothed and fed. Amen

The body of Christ given for you and the blood of Christ shed for you.

*During communion, you may take your communion elements during worship
or hold on to your kit until you get home.*

If you take the elements inside the church, open the kit over the pew to prevent spilling on the carpet.

After the service, please dispose of your own kit either in a waste receptacle at church or at home.

The body & blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you & keep you in divine grace! **Amen**

SENDING CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem

*(If singing with piano, we will sing verses 1, 3, & 4 only;
if singing with recording, we will sing all verses.)*

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 279)*

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!**
- 3 How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.**
- 4 O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!**

CCLI Song # 27879

*Text: based on Job 38:7, Isaiah 7:10-14, Micah 5:2, Luke 2:1-14,
by Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893; Meter 8 6 8 6 7 6 8 6*

Music: ST. LOUIS, by Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

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*Performance by the congregation of Grace Community Church Sun Valley, CA
at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jrn6Dscd0M8>*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. And may it be with you according to God's word!
Thanks be to God!

PEACE

As Christ reconciles us with God,
let us be reconciled with each other by sharing the peace of the Lord!
The peace of the Lord be with you always!
And also with you!
Please share that peace!!

POSTLUDE HYMN **My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness**

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 251)*

- 1 My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord; I sing my Savior's praise!
You looked upon my lowliness, and I am full of grace.
Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age this blessing shall proclaim —
great wonders you have done for me, and holy is your name.
- 2 To all who live in holy fear your mercy ever flows.
With mighty arm you dash the proud, their scheming hearts expose.
The ruthless you have cast aside, the lowly throned instead;
the hungry filled with all good things, the rich sent off unfed.
- 3 To Israel, your servant blest, your help is ever sure;
the promise to our parents made their children will secure.
Sing glory to the Holy One, give honor to the Word,
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all adored.

*Text: based on Luke 1:46-55, Revelation 21:4
 based on the Magnificat, With One Voice, 1995; Meter C M D*

Music: KINGSFOLD, English folk tune; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958

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Performance by Tim McNabb, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Halifax

12/05/22; Accompaniment Style: Celtic Dance

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcWVw1Mo0Ik> [2:03]

CREDITS

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Announcements

This Wednesday evening, however, you are invited to join Calumet at 7 pm on zoom for their annual Social Justice award program, at which we will be honoring Pastor Nelson Rabell-Gonzalez who spoke out in the midst of the injustice he and his congregation experienced in the Sierra Pacific Synod of our denomination. Pastor Jon Hopkins will be introducing Pastor Rabella and Pastor Marjo will be speaking about our call and commitment as Christians and Lutherans to work for justice in our world. To request the zoom link, look for the event on the resource page at calumet.org .

Pastor Marjo and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Greater Bridgeport invite you to the 2024 Emancipation Day Service at 11:00 am January 1st at Russell Temple CME Church, 555 Connecticut Avenue.

On Wednesdays, you are invited to our weekly Prayer Gathering at noon on zoom. The zoom link is on Salem's calendar under the Resources tab at SalemBridgeport.org . **Please join us!** *We will resume our gatherings on January 3rd.*

Wednesday our regular evening Bible Study continues at 7:00 on zoom as we continue to make our way through the book of Romans, picking up with chapter 8, verse 5. The zoom link is on Salem's calendar under the Resources tab at SalemBridgeport.org . **Please join us!** *We will resume our gatherings on January 3rd.*

You have another opportunity for Bible Study as well on zoom on Tuesday evenings 7:30-8:30. This group, led by Pastor Rip Hoffman, looks at the gospel for the coming Sunday. For the link, contact Pastor Marjo or Pastor Hoffman.

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 pray silently and anonymously, ask for particular prayers, or offer your own prayers. *We will resume our calls on January 4th.*

You are invited to join the Anti-Racism Accountability Group hosted by Pastor Marjo and Jeanette Harris on Mondays 4:00-5:00 on zoom. The group began in the fall of 2020 as a response of our Southern CT Lutheran pastors to the murder of George Floyd, but has grown into a diverse group that includes people who are White and Black, Christian, Jewish, Unitarian, and Rastafarian, clergy and lay, and from CT, MA, and DE. Some come every week while others drop in as their schedule permits. The link is on Salem's calendar, so please drop in and see what God is doing to help us fulfill our baptismal call to work for justice! *We will resume meeting on January 8th.*

You are invited to join members of the New England Synod on the first Monday and third Thursday of the month 7:15-7:45ish on zoom as we undergird the anti-racism work of our synod with prayer. *The next date is January 18th.* The link is on Salem's calendar.

Jeanette “Momma J” Harris & Genesis Gospel Café invite you to their monthly Inner-View Chat & Chew, which is usually held on the third Saturday of the month, sometimes on zoom and sometimes in person. For information on the January meeting, currently scheduled for 01/20, contact Jeanette at 203-366-6778.

Like our prayer breakfasts, a lunch is held each month to build relationships among Lutheran and other congregations in our area at noon at Old Towne Restaurant in Trumbull. The upcoming dates are January 27, February 24 and March 23. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Bruce Tomasko, bltomasko@yahoo.com.

Thank you for contributing to our collection of hats, scarves, gloves, and mittens for our “Mitten Tree”!

Thank you for your contributions to Salem’s Food Assistance Fund! While we may not have our own food pantry anymore, some of our members and others are still in need of food and Pastor Marjo distributes \$25 stop & shop cards as needed, requested and as available. We encourage you to donate to Salem’s food assistance fund. You can give using the envelopes found in your quarterly envelope packet or you can put a check in the donation box at Salem marked “food assistance.” In addition, you may send a check to the office or drop it in church mailbox or give it or cash to Pastor Marjo.

If you’d like to do more than feed people, you can also contribute to the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund which is used to help members who have other financial needs. If you have financial needs, please contact Pastor Marjo or Parish Nurse Carol Lansing.

We are grateful to God for answering our prayers that there would once again be a food pantry in this building. Here’s how it happened! While the Ephraim French Seventh Day Adventist Church that purchased the building from us wanted very much to start a food pantry, they were unable to get permission from CT Food Share who said there were too many pantries in the area. They and we kept praying. Meanwhile a food pantry to which members of our congregation used to deliver food closed, and they began delivering to the Bishop Jean Williams Food Pantry which operated out of a church on Worth St. Three years ago that church building was sold and purchased by Transforming Lives Church. While they knew that as their congregation grew they would eventually need all of the building, they agreed to allow the food pantry to stay for three years. As the end of that time period approached, the Bishop Jean Williams Food Pantry needed a new space. That’s when we discovered how God had been using Salem to be an answer to our own prayers and those of the Ephraim French Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Bishop Jean Williams Food Pantry! The pantry is now renting space from the SDA church right here at 3160 Park Avenue! Because of how God has worked, over 500 families came by to pick up food the week of Thanksgiving, and food was delivered to an additional 200 families! Thanks be to God!

Do you want to talk or pray with your pastor? Well, just like you call your doctor or dentist to schedule an annual wellness visit or a visit to deal with a particular issue, you can contact Pastor Marjo via text or phone at 203-982-3441, or through Office Manager Karl Kraft via text at 203-336-3300 or email at salemsec123@sbcglobal.net . Our bodies are intimately connected with our minds and hearts and spirits, so the health of one part impacts the health of the other parts.

- 1. Get your annual “spiritual” – just the way you get your annual physical.**
Call or text Pastor Marjo at 203-982-3441 to arrange a time to discuss how you are, and let her know how she can pray for you.
Or if you prefer to use email to set something up, send your email to salemsec123@sbcglobal.net.
- 2. Call in to our prayer line at 681-999-0232, using access code 673980#, at noon Mon-Fri** for prayer. You can pray silently & anonymously, ask for particular prayers, or offer your own.
OR join our weekly prayer gathering on Zoom, Wednesdays at noon, at this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82882777326?pwd=VCtObFRPOGI3cTR3eII2ZmtiZEpadz09>
- 3. Begin a fast** or establish a new healthier habit.
- 4. Commit yourself to some new work of charity and one new work of justice.**
If you’re wondering what the difference is, it’s like this.
If people are hungry and you give them fish, that’s CHARITY.
If people are hungry and you teach them to fish, that’s EMPOWERMENT.
If people are hungry and you work to change laws so that they receive high enough wages from their jobs so they can afford to buy fish, that’s JUSTICE.
If you’re not sure how to “do justice” as God commands through the Prophet Micah (6:8), Pastor Marjo can offer suggestions.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Tuesday, December 26, 2023

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

John, Apostle and Evangelist

Wednesday, December 27, 2023

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Thursday, December 28, 2023

This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.