



Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

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

*1st Sunday
after Christmas*

*December 31, 2023
9:30 AM*



**LESSONS
& CAROLS**

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Welcome

*A most blessed New Year's Eve to you and yours
as we continue to celebrate the 12 days of Christmas,
rejoicing together in the gift of God
made manifest in the birth of the Christ child -
not only over 2000 years ago,
but in his birth today -
in the hearts of those who invite him in
and welcome him as their Lord and Savior.
May you be blessed during our worship this morning
and throughout the coming year!*

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEARS!

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, we participate in an ancient tradition of lessons and carols which tells the story of how Christmas began at the creation of the world and continues to this time and place.

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.

Pastor Aaron Best and St Matthew Baptist Church invite you to their Freedom's Eve Service TODAY at 1:30 PM at 126 Washington Ave. or online on Facebook. For more info call 203-414-9366 or go to www.stmatthewbaptist.org . Church parking located in rear of 87 Washington Ave ("Make the Road CT"). Online giving by Givelify, Zelle, or CashApp.

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.

Readings for the First Sunday after Christmas – Although we will not be reading the lessons appointed for this Sunday, we encourage you to take some time this week to read them – Isaiah 61:10—62:3 (clothed in garments of salvation), Psalm 148 (the splendor of the Lord over earth and heaven), Galatians 4:4-7 (children and heirs of God), and Luke 2:22-40 (the presentation of the child). The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung at funerals, and sometimes after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

Readings for New Year's Eve – Although we will not be reading the lessons appointed for this celebration, we encourage you to take some time this week to read these as well – Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 (for everything there is a season), Psalm 8 (how majestic is God's name in all the earth), Revelation 21:1-6a (a new heaven and a new earth), and Matthew 25:31-46 (the Son of Man separating the sheep and the goats). At the turn of the year we meditate on endings and beginnings, knowing that all the world's time begins and ends in God. Not only do we reach out to meet people's immediate needs, we are called to topple the systems of injustice that create such need in the first place.

Gathering

GATHERING CAROL Of the Father's Love Begotten

(as found in the ELCA worship book, Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 295)

- 1 Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.
- 2 Oh, that birth forever blessed, when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer, first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.
- 3 This is he whom seers in old time chanted of with one accord,
whom the voices of the prophets promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long-expected; let creation praise its Lord
evermore and evermore.
- 4 Let the heights of heav'n adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing;
pow'rs, dominions, bow before him and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent, ev'ry voice in concert ring
evermore and evermore.
- 5 Christ, to thee, with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be:
honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory evermore and evermore! Amen

One License Song # 81061

Text: Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348-413; tr. composite; Meter: 8 7 8 7 8 7 7

Music: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, Plainsong mode V, 13th cent.

Text and Music are in the Public Domain.

*Performance # 1 Arr. K. McChesney by the Handbell Choir of First Presbyterian Church, Boise, ID, 12/09/18
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99utoV0yVmU> [3:25]*

*Performance # 2 Arr. for solo piano by Pam Turner, sheet music at 222.pamturnerpiano.com, 09/13/17
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7ignlSDXW0> [2:46]*

*Performance # 3 by the bell choir at St Mary of the Mount & Prince of Peace Parish, Pittsburgh, PA, 12/06/20
with arrangement by Dr. Thomas Conroy. Used with permission. [2:56]*

*Performance # 4 Arr. by Walter Pelz. Sung by the Plymouth Choir of First Plymouth Church, 12/11/16,
Tom Trenney, conducting; Joanne Rodland, organist
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLpMSIvU4xs&t=19s> [6:11]*

Please note that here we go live on Facebook.

WELCOME

Welcome in the name of the God who spoke in ancient times through the Law and the Prophets,
in the name of God's Word made manifest in human form over 2000 years ago
in the person of Jesus Christ,
and in the name of the God who speaks to our own hearts and minds right here and now
through the gift of the Holy Spirit!

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.

**Tomorrow New Year's Day, at 11:00, you are invited to join me and
the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance for our annual Emancipation Day Worship,
at 2319 Fairfield Avenue.**

We invite you to join our regular weekly activities:

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 this Wednesday.

**Next Sunday please join us for an adult forum regarding the possibility
of distributing some of Salem's cash assets through a foundation over a period of years.**

**For more details on these announcements or to hear about other upcoming events
please see our worship bulletin at SalemBridgeport.org/Live.**

Any other announcements? prayer requests? God-sightings?

Then let's begin our worship with prayer:

God of boundless power and endless love,
you are the transcendent force that brought all of creation into being,
& at the same time you are the immanent power that resides in the hearts of those who love you.
Open our minds and hearts, our bodies and souls to receive all that you desire to give.
Make us open channels so that your love and mercy and grace
might flow through each one of us to every person in our lives.

Let the ripples of your love and grace

cause justice to flow like water, and your truth like an ever-flowing stream,

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

OPENING CAROL Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 270)*

- 1 Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

- 2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail, th'incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

- 3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

*Text: based on Isaiah 9:6, Malachi 4:2, Luke 2:13-14, John 1:1-14,
 2 Corinthians 5:19,
 by Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.; Meter 7 7 7 7 D and refrain*
*Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847;
 arr. William H. Cummings, 1831-1915*

Text and Music are in the Public Domain.

*Performance by the congregation of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA,
12/12/17*

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTDSz-7D0sI> [3:11]

YEAR B – CHRIST CANDLE

ADVENT WREATH CANDLELIGHTING

Leader: Throughout the four weeks of Advent we lit the candles of hope, peace, joy & love, to remind us of the gifts God has given us in Jesus.

(Light the 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th candles.)



LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

Leader: We light the Christ candle to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world.

(Light the Christ Candle.)



Pastor: Let us pray.

Gracious God, as we light this Christ candle, fill us with your Holy Spirit, until our lips bear witness to the Light of the World, and our lives so shine that others see the hope, peace, joy and love within us and we may be your light in a dark and dreary world.

People: **You have opened the eyes of our hearts so that we may see.
We are no longer bound by our blindness to live with no hope.
You have invited us to be caught up in your vision of a new order of things.
With Mary, we can say, "My soul magnifies the Lord...."**

Pastor: Lord we celebrate your coming to us in Jesus your Son.
Prepare us for that joyful day when he will come again.
In the meantime, accept our imperfect offerings - our broken selves –
as we struggle to be faithful, as we yearn for your coming when all will be made new.

All: ***Glory and honor and praise and thanksgiving be unto you O Lord Most High.
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel! Amen***

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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_thZGERq2g [1:45]

Word

Please be seated.

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 1:1–5, 14–18

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ^{the} earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day....

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. · God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night — and the stars. · God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

FIRST CAROL

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 284, vss. 1, 3, & 4)*

- 1 **'Twas in the moon of wintertime when all the birds had fled,
that *God the Lord of all the earth sent angel choirs instead;
before their light the stars grew dim, and wond'ring hunters heard the hymn:
Jesus your king is born! Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria!**
- 3 **The earliest moon of wintertime is not so round and fair
as was the ring of glory on the helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt with gifts of fox and beaver pelt.
Jesus your king is born! Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria!**
- 4 **O children of the forest free, the angel-song is true;
the holy child of earth and heav'n is born today for you.
Come, kneel before the radiant boy, who brings you beauty, peace, and joy.
Jesus your king is born! Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria!**

**original: "mighty Gitchi Manitou"*

*Text: based on Luke 2:8-16, by Jean de Brebeuf, 1593-1649; tr. Jesse E. Middleton, 1872-1960, alt. ;
Meter 8 6 8 6 8 8 and refrain*

Music: UNE JEUNE PUCELLE, French folk tune, c. 16th cent.

Text © 1927 The Frederick Harris Music Company;

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Arrangement © Augsburg Fortress

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Performance by Zack von Menchhofen, cago, at St. John's Lutheran Church, Richlandtown, PA, 01/02/21

*Played from the 1982 Hymn #114. Organ is a Batholomay and Sons (Fritzsche) pipe organ
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IIJ8OIu2o> [4:55]*

SECOND LESSON: Micah 5:2–5a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore God shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the remnant of the ruler's family shall return to the people of Israel.

The ruler shall stand and shepherd them in the strength of YHWH,
in the majesty of the name of YHWH their God.

And they shall live in safety,
for now the ruler shall be great to the ends of the earth;
and shall be their peace.

SECOND CAROL

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 272, verses 1-2)*

- 1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung,
it came, a flow'r so bright, amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.**
- 2 Isaiah had foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,
when half-spent was the night.**

*Text: based on Isaiah 11:1, Luke 2:7-16, German carol, 15th cent.;
tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845-1925, st. 3;
John C. Mattes, 1876-1948, st. 4; Meter 7 6 7 6 6 7 6*

*Music: ES IST EIN ROS, Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge, Köln, 1599;
arr. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621*

Text and Music are in the Public Domain.

Performance by Barbara Bulger Verdile, Interim Music Director

and Choir of Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church, 12/27/20

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PZfl0u7FNM> [5:15]

THIRD LESSON: Hebrews 1.1-3a

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word.

THIRD CAROL

Joy to the World

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 267)*

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive its King;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.**
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.**

*Text: based on Genesis 3:17-19, Psalm 98, 100, Isaiah 55:12-13, Luke 2:10,
by Isaac Watts, 1674-1748; Meter C M and repeat*

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

Text & Music are in the Public Domain

*Performance by Megan C, vocalist, and Dr. Thomas Conroy, organist,
at St Mary of the Mount and Prince of Peace Parish in Pittsburgh, PA.
Used with permission from Dr. Conroy.*

FOURTH LESSON: Luke 1:26–35, 38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The young woman's name was Mary. And the angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! God is with you!" But she was much perplexed by the angel's 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 child, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Child of the Most High, and YHWH 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 and will be called the Child of 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.

FOURTH CAROL Once in Royal David's City

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 269, verses 1-2)*

- 1 Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child.**

- 2 He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.**

*Text: based on Micah 5:2, Philippians 2:5-11, Revelation 7:13-17;
Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818-1895; Meter 8 7 8 7 7 7*

Music: IRBY, Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805-1876

Text and Music are in the Public Domain.

*Performance by the choirs of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney
as stated at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_qxu9R5xk8 [3:55]*

FIFTH LESSON: Matthew 1:18–25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of YHWH appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel" which means, "God is with us".

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

FIFTH CAROL

That Boy-Child of Mary

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 293, verses 1, 2 & 6)*

That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable, a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.

1 What shall we call him, child of the manger? What name is given in Bethlehem?

That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable, a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.

2 His name is Jesus, God ever with us, God given for us in Bethlehem.

That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable, a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.

6 Gladly we praise him, love and adore him, give ourselves to him in Bethlehem.

That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable, a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.

Text: based on Luke 2.7, 21 by Tom Colvin, 1925-2000; Text Meter: 5 5 5 4 and refrain

Music: BLANTYRE, Malawi traditional, adapt. Tom Colvin

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*Performance by Tim McNabb, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Halifax, 11/30/20
402/655 in our hymn series.*

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKH7HrWS6lk> [2:55]

SIXTH LESSON: Luke 2:8–20

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

SIXTH CAROL

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 275, verses 1-2)*

- 1 Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.**
- 2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.**

*Text: based on Matthew 2:1-3, Luke 2:8-14, James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt., sts. 1-3;
Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, st. 4; Meter 8 7 8 7 8 7*

Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813-1879

Text and Music are in the Public Domain.

*Performance by Zack von Menchhofen, cago, St. John's Lutheran Church, Richlandtown, PA
01/02/21 (The organ is a Batholomay and Sons (Fritzsche) pipe organ.)*

as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=We6LfN1yA-w> [2:53]

SEVENTH READING: 2 Corinthians 4.1-6

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness", who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

SEVENTH CAROL Let All Together Praise Our God

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 287, verses 1, 2, & 5)*

- 1 Let all together praise our God
before the highest throne;
today God opens heav'n again
and sends the only Son, and sends the only Son.**

- 2 From God's right hand the Son descends,
is born an infant small,
and lies in poverty, his bed
a manger in a stall, a manger in a stall.**

- 5 A wonderful exchange you make:
you take our flesh and blood,
and in return give us to share
the shining realm of God, the shining realm of God.**

*Text: based on Genesis 3:24, Luke 2:1-14, John 10:7, 9, Philippians 2:6-8, Revelation 3:7,
Nikolaus Herman, 1480-1561; tr. hymnal version; Meter 8 6 8 6 6*

Music: LOBT GOTT, IHR CHRISTEN, Nikolaus Herman

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*Performance by Tim McNabb, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Halifax,
12/16/22 (Accompaniment Style: Classic Big Band)*

as found at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QXNJli_1_4 [2:55]

You may stand if you so desire.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR CHRISTMAS *(based on Romans 1:1-7)*

Let us affirm our faith together.

**We believe that we have been called to be messengers of the gospel,
the good news which God promised beforehand
through the prophets in the holy scriptures,
the gospel concerning God's own dear Child,
who was descended from David according to the flesh
and was declared to be Son of God
with power according to the spirit of holiness
by resurrection from the dead,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
through whom we have received a calling
to bring about the obedience of faith among all people
for the sake of his name, and because we belong to Jesus Christ,
To us is given grace and peace from God in Christ through the power of 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.

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people,
we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

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

You inspire faith in our hearts & call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring.
Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being.

Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neuro-divergent, living with disability,
or bearing invisible illness.

We pray for our mission partners, especially today for Lutheran World Relief,
Lutheran Disaster Response, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's World Hunger Appeal, and
the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

We pray for Fairchild Wheeler High School, and for the safety, protection, thriving and wellbeing
of elected/appointed officials and their families in our city and state.

And we pray for Salem members & their families, especially those celebrating birthdays this week:
Ray Anderson and David Larson.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons.

As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love.

Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable.

We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children

to provide basic needs, protect from abuse & neglect, address trauma & rescue from trafficking.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness,
especially Austin, Barbro, Barry, Bob, Boni, Bud, Christopher, Cindy, Cliffy, Clyde, Dave, David,
Dennis, Diane, Dolores, Dorothy, Francesca, Hans, Ivy, Janice, Jasmina, Jeanette, Jeff, Jessica, 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.

We pray especially for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness,

all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery,

and those experiencing complications from long COVID.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Let our communities of faith be joyful and welcoming places for all ages and generations.

Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth,

the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace.

Continue to comfort those who grieve,

especially the families & friends of Joe, Jim, Phyllis, Anne, & Lay Licensed Minister Phil Krakowiac.

Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace. **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 CAROL In the Bleak Midwinter

(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s worship book, ELW # 294)

- 1 In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.**
- 2 Heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign;
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.**
- 3 What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man I would do my part; yet what I can give him — give my heart.**

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830-1894; Meter Irregular

Music: CRANHAM, Gustav Holst, 1874-1934

Text and Music are in the Public Domain.

Performance by The Choir Boys and posted by Chet Valley Churches

11/25/20

at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAzQIS4-MpY> [4:29]

Sending

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please be seated.

Tomorrow New Year's Day, at 11:00, you are invited to join me and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance for our annual Emancipation Day Worship, at 2319 Fairfield Avenue.

We invite you to join or regular weekly activities:

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 this Wednesday.

Next Sunday please join us for an adult forum regarding the possibility of distributing some of Salem's cash assets through a foundation over a period of years.

For more details on these announcements or to hear about other upcoming events please see our worship bulletin at SalemBridgeport.org/Live.

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 today's 7th reading
from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 4:

Do not lose heart, for you are saved by God's mercy!
For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness",
who desires to shine in your heart
to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God
in the face of Jesus Christ. 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

The First Noel

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,
Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 300, verses 1-3)*

**The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

**And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

*Text: based on Matthew 2:1-12, Luke 2:8-11, English traditional;
Meter Irregular*

*Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional,
arr. John Stainer, 1840-1901*

Text and Music are in the Public Domain.

*Performance by Ellen S, vocalist, and Dr. Thomas Conroy, organist,
at St Mary of the Mount and Prince of Peace Parish in Pittsburgh, PA.
Used with permission from Dr. Conroy.*

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 CAROL

He Came Down

*(as found in the ELCA worship books,
This Far by Faith # 37 and Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 253)*

He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
he came down that we may have light; hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace; hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;
he came down that we may have joy; hallelujah forevermore.

Text: based on John 1.1-14, Cameroon traditional; Meter L M

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional; arr. John L. Bell, b. 1949

Text and Tune are in the Public Domain.

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Performance by the Oonte Orphans & Vulnerable Children Choir from Namibia, 12/04/20

*Video background by Joe Hackney from Pixabay, Posted by Chet Valley Churches
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXrB500CuCg> [1:33]*

CREDITS

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Announcements

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.*

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 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.

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.**

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 January 20th, 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.

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!

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.

Let’s stay connected! Much of Pastor Marjo’s and Salem’s Office Manager, Karl’s work can be done from their homes, but generally Karl is here on Thursdays to take care of tasks that cannot be accomplished remotely, and Pastor Marjo is happy to meet with you in-person here should you so desire. If we can help in any way, please know that you can call Salem’s church office at 203-330-3300 and leave a message and your message will be picked up remotely and your call returned or send an email to SalemSec123@sbcglobal.net. **Please also do not hesitate to call or text Pastor Marjo at 203-982-3441 or email her at marjoanderson@aol.com. She would be MORE THAN HAPPY to hear from you!**

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!

Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County – Building Dreams in Fairfield – Your Gift Matched Dollar-for-Dollar – Still Time to Give! There is still time to make the dream of homeownership in the town of Fairfield possible for four families! We need to raise \$800,000 to build these homes in the Tunxis Hill neighborhood located at 240-246 Greenfield Street. The Elizabeth and Joseph Massoud Family Foundation and an anonymous Fairfield family are offering a dollar-for-dollar match for donations up to \$400,000. If Habitat CFC can raise \$400,000 through our Annual Appeal, the money will be matched, and we will have the funds needed to complete the Fairfield homes! Please donate today to support our goal to help four low-income, working families achieve their dream of home ownership in the town of Fairfield! Give online! Scan the QR code or visit habitatcfc.org/donate or mail a check to 1542 Barnum Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06610. For more info, contact us at 203-333-2642 (phone) or 203-333-2650 (fax) or www.habitatcfc.org. If you've recently given please know we appreciate your gift.

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

Name of Jesus

Mon, January 1, 2024

By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus' life.

The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus' name are signs of God's salvation given to us through him.

Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church, died 1872 Tue, January 2, 2024

Loehe was a pastor in nineteenth-century Germany.

Loehe's chief concern was that a congregation find its life in the holy communion, and from that source evangelism and social ministries would flow.

He sent pastors to North America, Australia, New Guinea, Brazil, and Ukraine.



FREEDOM'S EVE SERVICE

St. Matthew Baptist Church
126 Washington Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604
Tel: (203) 414-9366 / Website: www.stmatthewbaptist.org
December 31, 2023 @ 1:30 PM
Streaming Access: Facebook Live.
Online Giving: Givelify, Zelle, or Cash App

CHURCH PARKING LOCATED IN REAR OF 87 WASHINGTON AVENUE (MAKE THE ROAD CONNECTICUT)





2024 Emancipation Day Service

Sponsored by
The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Greater Bridgeport & Vicinity
& The Greater Bridgeport Branch NAACP



Monday, January 1, 2023

11:00AM



Bishop Theodore T. Plummer
Full Gospel COGIC
Guest Preacher



Rev. William D. McCullough
IMA President



Rev. Brenda Barnes
IMA Vice President

Location:
Russell Temple CME Church
555 Connecticut Ave.
Bridgeport, CT 06607

 
Facebook.com/ima.bridgeport/live



Building Dreams in Fairfield

Your Gift Matched Dollar-for-Dollar!



Still time to give!



There is still time to make the dream of homeownership in the Town of Fairfield possible for four families!

We need to raise **\$800,000** to build these homes in the Tunxis Hill neighborhood located at 240-246 Greenfield Street. **The Elizabeth and Joseph Massoud Family Foundation** and an anonymous **Fairfield family** are offering a **dollar-for-dollar match for donations up to \$400,000!** If Habitat CFC can raise \$400,000 through our Annual Appeal, the money will be matched, and we will have the funds needed to complete the Fairfield homes! Please donate **TODAY** to support our goal to help four low-income, working families achieve their dream of homeownership in the Town of Fairfield!

Give Online! Scan the QR code or visit [habitatcfc.org/donate](https://www.habitatcfc.org/donate).

If you've recently given, please know we appreciate your gift.



1542 Barnum Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06610
203-333-2642 • Fax 203-333-2650
www.habitatcfc.org

