



February 2024

the
SPIRIT

Salem Lutheran Church

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

A Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Congregation

Our Last Lent Together

It's hard to believe that it's already February, Ash Wednesday is around the corner, and we'll be in the season of Lent before you know it. There will be 5 weeks of Lent, then Holy Week, then Easter, then Salem's last public worship service (which I think of as a kind of "wake"), & then our final members-only service (which I think of as a "private graveside burial").

There is a lot of anticipatory grief already – as happens when a person you love is terminally ill and dying – and that grief gets expressed in different ways – through anxiety and depression, through anger and sorrow, through denial and bargaining. But **through it all, God walks with us.**

I have certainly learned more in these last few years than I learned in the first 35 years of ministry, as God has worked to transform my mind and heart. One of the things that has changed is how I view small congregations. I used to look at some who had only a dozen or so members and could only afford a supply pastor and I'd think that it would be a better stewardship of resources for them to merge or to close. But then God taught me two things.

First, God brought Pastor Gabrielle Beam and Mary of Bethany Church into my life to show me a congregation that had only 12 members, and was not only worshipping, but ministering to people on the streets, working to banish illiteracy, and getting pastors and congregations to work together to accomplish incredible feats – like putting on a 2-day Christian festival which attracted 28,000 people to Seaside Park in Bridgeport! So I learned what should have been obvious to me in scripture – that when a dozen church members are empowered by the Holy Spirit, they can turn an entire city around, or in the case of Jesus' disciples, they can set the world on fire!

Second, God has shown me how important it is for some to stay in the congregation that they've been in their entire lives. There are a lot of you. And for some, the ties go back to your parents. That's why I fought so hard to stay here at 3160 Park Avenue and to keep the congregation open for as long as possible. It was my deepest desire that everyone who wanted to live out the rest of their church life at Salem would have the opportunity to do that, because I know that while some will find a new congregation and adjust, others may never find another church home and will simply fall away.

But that's not how the congregation voted. And while that deeply saddens me, I understand, because 3 years ago I would have agreed with that decision. Since then, however, God showed me a

different vision, but not enough others grasped it.

Here, however, is the one thing that I want you to know: God is still in charge and is still at work – in Genesis Gospel Café and other congregations in the city, as well as in other Lutheran congregations in the surrounding towns, and God is still at work in each and every member of Salem, in each and every one of you! I know that God has not brought me along a very different path these last 5 years for no reason; God has a plan and a purpose for my life that he is still working out. And God has a plan and a purpose for each of you as well.

This is our last Lent together, so I invite you to come to worship every Sunday, to come to noon prayer on zoom on Wednesdays, and to call in to the prayer line every weekday at noon. Right now we are experiencing anticipatory grief. Real grief will hit after Salem closes. But the closer we draw to God on our Lenten journey, the more spiritual resources we will have to help us weather the grief that is to come.

For now, let me leave you with these promises of God from scripture:

"Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning." [Psalm 30:5b]

"... you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, your hearts will rejoice & no one will take your joy from you." [John 16:22]

"You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness." [Psalm 30:11]

"...you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy." [John 16:20]

Put those verses up on your refrigerator or your bathroom mirror. Repeat them every day. And then trust that the God of boundless power and endless love WILL keep every one of those promises.

Abundant blessings be yours!

Pastor Marjo

Pastor Marjo Anderson

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

Website - www.salembridgeport.org

Facebook - www.facebook.com/SalemBridgeport/

Church Office Hours

Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Worship Services

Sunday 9:30am In Person Worship

Salem's Staff

The Rev. Marjo Anderson, Pastor
Cell Phone (203) 982-3441
marjoanderson@aol.com

Karl Kraft, Office Manager
Office Phone (203) 336-3300
salemsec123@sbcglobal.net

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

Barbara
Bernedette
Dolores
Jonathan
Linda
Steve
and all we name in our hearts.



LEADERSHIP AT SALEM

COUNCIL

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

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Legacy Workshop in January and to the Council who met with Pastor Maria to complete step two of the process. The third step in the Legacy process will be a congregational meeting after worship on Sunday February 11th to officially vote on the distribution of our cash assets.

This is all part of the specified process of dissolution to which we committed when we signed a covenant with the synod as part of the vote to close on 10/29/23. There are practical and legal procedures laid out by the state, our synod, and our constitution which must be followed, and as the synod leads us through these, we ask your patience and your prayers.

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

Next deadline date is **February 15th** for the March issue!

Email submissions to
salemsec123@sbcglobal.net

February 2024 Salem Lutheran Church

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU
Feb 1

FRI
2

SAT
3



IT'S LEAP YEAR!

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU Feb 1 | FRI 2 | SAT 3 |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| 4 Epiphany 5 ● 9:30am Worship | 5 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group ● 7pm Council Meeting ● 7:15pm Synod Anti-Racism Prayer Gathering | 6 ● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In | 7 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer ● 7pm Bible Study on Romans | 8 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In | 9 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 5pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center | 10 ● 9am The BREAKFAST Gathering! |
| 11 Transfiguration of Our Lord ● 9:30am Worship ● 10:30am Congregational Meeting | 12 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group ● 6:30pm Social Ministry Committee Meeting | 13 ● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 6pm Stewardship Committee Meeting | 14 Ash Wednesday ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer ● 7pm Bible Study on Romans | 15 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 7:15pm Synod Anti-Racism Prayer Gathering | 16 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 5pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center ● 6pm Pray CT Summit planning meeting | 17 ● 11am Inner-View Chat n Chew |
| 18 Lent 1 ● 9:30am Worship | 19 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group ● 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting ● 7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting ● 7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting | 20 ● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In | 21 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer ● 7pm Bible Study on Romans | 22 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In | 23 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 5pm Rostered Leaders - God at the Center | 24 |
| 25 Lent 2 ● 9:30am Worship | 26 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 4pm Anti-Racism Accountability Group ● 7pm Council Meeting ● 7pm Council Meeting | 27 ● 9:30am Rostered Leaders' Tuesday Talk and ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In | 28 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In ● 12pm Wednesday Weekly Prayer ● 7pm Bible Study on Romans | 29 ● 12pm Noon Prayer Call In | <div style="border: 2px solid purple; padding: 10px;"> <p>Call in to our prayer line at 681-999-0232, using access code 673980#, at noon Mon-Fri for a brief time of prayer. You can remain silent and anonymous, ask for particular prayers, or offer your own prayers.</p> </div> | |

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Hailey Dewalt..... | 3 |
| Keith Murphy..... | 3 |
| Kerry Schulz | 13 |
| Bill Winter | 13 |
| Michael Gulyas | 13 |
| Ann Martin | 14 |
| Carol Lansing..... | 16 |
| Talisha Burrus..... | 17 |
| Pablo Cruz..... | 22 |
| Scott Luciani | 22 |
| Judy Albers..... | 26 |
| Katie Adams | 27 |



**God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.**

– Psalm 46

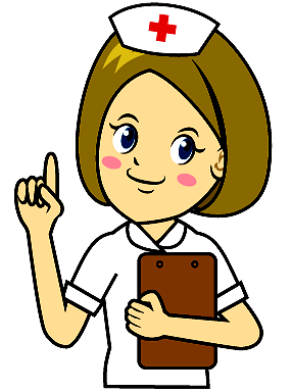
CPR – What You Need to Know

CPR – or Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation – is an emergency lifesaving procedure that is performed when the heart stops beating. Immediate CPR can double or triple the chances of survival after cardiac arrest.

Keeping the blood flow active, even partially, extends the opportunity for a successful resuscitation once trained medical staff arrive on site.

There are two commonly known versions of CPR:

1. **For healthcare providers and those trained:** conventional CPR using chest compressions and mouth-to-mouth breathing at a ratio of 30:2 compressions-to-breaths.
2. **For the general public or bystanders who witness an adult suddenly collapse:** compression-only CPR or Hands-Only CPR. Hands-Only CPR is CPR without mouth-to-mouth breaths.



2 STEPS to Save a Live

1. Call 9-1-1 (or send someone to do that)
2. Push hard and fast in the center of the chest

HEART ATTACK vs. CARDIAC ARREST

Cardiac Arrest: Occurs when the heart malfunctions and stops beating unexpectedly. Cardiac arrest is an “ELECTRICAL” problem.

Heart Attack: Occurs when blood flow to the heart is blocked. A heart attack is a “CIRCULATION” problem.

The Facts About High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is when your blood pressure (the force of blood flowing through your blood vessels) is consistently too high. There are 5 simple steps to control your blood pressure:

1. **Know your numbers** – Most people want to stay below 130/80 mm Hg, but your healthcare provider can tell you your personal target blood pressure.
2. **Work with your doctor** – Your healthcare provider will help you make a plan to lower your blood pressure.
3. **Make a few lifestyle changes** – in many cases, this will be your doctor’s first recommendation:
 - Maintain a healthy weight
 - Eat healthier with lots of fruit, vegetables, low-fat dairy, and less saturated and total fat
 - Reduce sodium
 - Stay active
 - Limit alcohol (one drink per day for women, two for men)
4. Check your blood pressure at home
5. Take your medication exactly the way your doctor says.

Encountering God: Moving Forward with a Changing Church
An online Lenten Study in the New England Synod

Every Monday in Lent a brief new video will be shared engaging us in scripture and reflection. You can use the videos on your own or include them in your congregation's Lenten practice. Either way you are invited to join us Thursday evenings in Lent from 7-8 p.m. on Zoom for conversation with the presenter from the video and others across the synod. (The videos will be available in Spanish. / Los videos estarán disponibles en Español.) [Register for Zoom link here.](#)

[Videos may be found here](#) and will be linked in the Monday Medley each week starting on Monday, February 19. The video link will also be sent directly to all those who've registered using the registration link above. Please encourage your congregation members to register so they'll receive the links directly.

Each Thursday evening beginning February 22, there will be a Zoom conversation with that week's facilitator. A summary, accompanying Bible verse and discussion questions for each week may be found [here](#).

ENCOUNTERING GOD:
Moving Forward with a Changing Church
A Lenten Collaborative Bible Study
Five weeks starting Feb. 19th through March 21st

Week 1 - Genesis 8: The Flood Subsides

Rafaela Radcke, LLM Santuario/ Nuevo Amanecer, Synod Council

Week 2 - Ezekiel 37:1-14: The Valley of Dry Bones

Rev. Elizabeth Nees, Transition Consultant, Coach (PCC), Dean Boston Metro

Week 3 - Matthew 15: 21-27: The Canaanite Woman's Faith

Rev. Dr. Richard Simpson, Canon to the Ordinary, Episcopal Diocese of Western MA

Rev. Jennifer Gregg, Missioner for Servant Leadership

Week 4 - John 3: Nicodemus Visits Jesus

Cassandra Wilson, Synod Council, Member of Redeemer, Woburn, MA

Week 5 - Luke 24: The Walk to Emmaus

Ryan Heckman, Christian Education Director, St. Matthew, Avon, CT

Inquiries and Zoom registration: mwhyte@nesynod.org



November 13, 2023

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Chair

Darrin Scott Fodor

Immediate Past Chair

Robert F. Moriarty

Vice Chair

Colleen Connor

Treasurer

Ryan C. Sheppard, CPA, CFF

Treasurer-Emeritus

Stan Weiss, CPA

Secretary

Descera Daigle, Esq.

Clergy Member-at-Large

Rabbi Evan Schultz

Executive Director

Carla Miklos, MS, CED

BOARD MEMBERS

Tony DeLise

Peter DiDomenico

Nancy Hamson

Kristin Jennings

Deborah B. Keeley

Meredith McCormack

Meg Murray

Jonathan E. Orell, Esq.

Philip C. Palmieri

Sharon Risley

Joan C. Ryan

Mary Catherine Santa

Mark Scott

ADVISORY BOARD

John McKinney

Evie Angel

Timothy W. Clark

Lisa Doocy

Joel Z. Green, Esq.

Thomas Kreidler

Charlie MacDonald, CAC

Toby Meshberg

Colleen Mulrooney

Michael S. Rosten, Esq.

Rev. David W. Spollett

Ellen P. Tower

Rev. Dr. Steven A. Treash

Alexander J. Trembicki, Esq.

Ms. Sally Wallace

Rev. Paul Whitmore

Laura Wilbur

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

Dear Pastor Anderson,

Please forward our thanks to the volunteers who helped with the wonderful Food Drive organized by Rich Lansing on October 28. Their commitment demonstrates that together we can build a better future for our struggling neighbors.

Because of their generosity, we can offer meals and companionship through our Community Kitchen; groceries, toiletries and other items through our Food Pantry - and so much more. This help is invaluable to local households in need.

As we continue to address the issues of hunger and homelessness and adapt to meet the needs of our community, we will never waver from our core belief that no one should worry about where their next meal will come from or how they can find a place to call home.

Thank you for making a difference. Together we will continue creating success stories in 2023 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Michelle D. Stearns
Volunteer Program Manager

In accordance with IRS guidelines, please note that no goods or services were provided in consideration for your contribution. Your gift is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law.



**BRIDGEPORT
RESCUE MISSION**
Expanding Hope. Rebuilding Lives.



Serving the hungry, homeless
and addicted of Coastal
Connecticut since 1993.

725 Park Avenue | Bridgeport, CT 06604 | 203 333 4087 | BridgeportRescueMission.org

January 12, 2024

Pastor Marjo Anderson
Salem Lutheran Church
3160 Park Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604-1199

Dear Pastor Anderson,

Thank you for your financial support over this past year. Because of your gifts, we have been able to care for the hungry, homeless, and addicted in Coastal Connecticut. Noted below is the total of donations for the period **01/01/2023-12/31/2023**. We are grateful for your partnership.

With Gratitude,

Larry Fullerton
Executive Director

RECEIPT

This receipt certifies Bridgeport Rescue Mission has furnished no goods or services in consideration of this contribution. Your gift is tax-deductible within limits established by the IRS.

TOTAL: \$25,000.00



GIVE FOOD • SAFE HOUSING • RECOVERY • HOPE **TODAY**

Interested in monthly giving or planned giving? Contact us at (203) 333-4087 ext. 103



Global Refuge

Welcoming Newcomers Since 1939

700 Light Street
Baltimore, MD 21230
410-230-2858
globalrefuge.org

***“God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.”***

Psalm 46

Ms. Marjo E. Anderson
507 Whitney Ave
New Haven, CT 06511-2306



January 12, 2024

Dear Ms. Anderson,

On behalf of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Board of Directors, I want to extend **heartfelt thanks for your strong support of our crucial mission as we work to realize a world where all immigrants and refugees are protected, embraced, and empowered in just and welcoming communities.**

With more than 100 million people around the world displaced from their homes, we have seen tremendous growth in the need for our essential services. **As part of our mission to build a bigger table to welcome and serve newcomers,** we have made a decision to allow our organization to meet this historic moment.

Starting this year, we have adopted a new name — **Global Refuge.**

We understand that this may feel like a big change. But rest assured, our new name in no way alters our mission. Our work of welcoming newcomers while transforming communities through ministries of service and justice, informed by our Lutheran heritage and 85 years of experience, continues unabated. Our relationships with the Lutheran community will continue, including with congregations and affiliates who are integral partners in the work of welcome, as do our efforts to engage ecumenical and interfaith communities.

This was not a decision we took lightly. With the need continuing to grow, the Board began a discovery process over 20 months ago to answer the question: how can we continue to meet our mission? It was through two national surveys, interviews, a wealth of other research, and much prayerful discernment that we reached the decision that a new name will help us build a bigger community to help us serve more immigrants and refugees.

LIRS was forged in faith 85 years ago, and our faith-based identity is integral to our work of welcome. Having grown up as a Lutheran, it is a gift to me – and I trust to you as well – to embrace the future with innovative programs to fulfill our mission of welcoming the newcomers in our midst. It's imperative that we continue to **demonstrate our faith through compassionate acts of grace.**

Again, I simply cannot thank you enough for your partnership in mission. The generosity of faithful friends like you means the world to our new neighbors. There is so much more we can – and must – do together to offer hope and provide refuge to those who need it most.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for how we can best share our message, please be in touch. You can contact us at workofwelcome@globalrefuge.org.

In grateful partnership,



Bryn Bjella Parchman
Board Chair, Global Refuge

P.S. To learn more about this new chapter for the organization, visit www.lirs.org/globalrefuge.

Welcoming newcomers since 1939



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service is now Global Refuge, a nonprofit serving newcomers seeking safety, support, and a share in the American dream. For 85 years, we have welcomed more than 750,000 of those seeking refuge from around the globe, upholding a legacy of compassion and grace for people in crisis. **We walk alongside** individuals, families, and children as they begin their new lives in the United States through our work in refugee resettlement, welcome and respite services for asylum seekers, economic empowerment and employment, and family unification for unaccompanied children.

At Global Refuge, welcoming newcomers isn't just our duty—it's an inherent part of our identity, rooted in our **Lutheran heritage and inspired values** and serving as a testament to our unwavering **commitment to those in search of refuge.**



WEEKLY AND MONTHLY EVENTS

Welcome to WONDROUS WEDNESDAYS! On Wednesday we have 2 wonderful opportunities to live into our mission of Encountering God, Building Relationships, and Changing Lives. The links are all on the calendar on our website at SalemBridgeport.org under the Resources Tab.

* **Every Wednesday at 12:00 noon we meet on zoom for prayer.** You can pray out loud if you want, or you can simply ask others to pray for you or for the concerns on your mind or heart. The more we talk with God and the more we listen to God, the more God is able to work through us. And the more we pray TOGETHER the more the power of prayer is multiplied.

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

The next breakfast and faith discussion will be held on February 10th at Grace Lutheran Church, 150 Chapel Street, Stratford, at 9:00 (8:00 to help cook).

Please join Jeanette Harris and Genesis Gospel Café at the next Inner-View Chat'n'Chew, Saturday February 17th at 11:00 am. Details forthcoming.

There are many ways to find the zoom link for worship and all other Salem events. The most reliable way is to go to our website - www.salembridgeport.org, choose the Resource tab, and click on Calendar. Then on the calendar, go to the day, the event, and when you click on it, it will open up the zoom invitation. You can click on the link, or copy and paste it into your browser. **To see how to do this, [click here](#):**

We also include the zoom links in our weekly email blasts, and in this announcement section of our Sunday bulletin. You can find links to Sunday worship materials like the bulletin, sermon, and donate page at www.salembridgeport.org/live. **Or to see how to get there, [click here](#):**



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

A remarkable life of faith, told on film

Documentary profiles Lutheran pastor and prison minister Frankie San

The steel door slammed shut. The wheelchair was rolled down to "The Rock," a vast open space of steel tables and chairs bolted to the floor where death row inmates gather. They peered through the bars of their cells as the word spread: "Is that Frankie San? I can't believe it!"

It was true. Frankie San was back in prison one last time to say goodbye, perhaps forever this side of heaven. Frail with dementia, the diminutive former Buddha follower turned Lutheran minister spent five decades in South Carolina prisons serving "the least of these," as the Bible calls them.

The old-timers remember his unconditional love. The younger ones have only heard about the legendary character who worked as a counselor, a librarian but, most importantly, a trusted friend.

Born in Tokyo in 1929, Kyuzo Miyaishi was a devotee of Buddhism and emperor worship and was ready to die for his country in World War II. Then came the bombs, a destroyed country and an impoverished family. He tried to commit suicide.

He met an American missionary who told him about Jesus Christ and how the Son of God died on the cross to save anyone who believes from their sins. He heard about "a new life in Christ" and wanted it. By faith, he became a Christ follower.

A very long story short, he wound up in Columbia in 1961, 32 years old and broke.

He later would describe everything that happened as God's plan. He studied at Columbia Bible College and Lutheran Theological Seminary and was ordained by the Lutheran Synod.

While working in a restaurant, Kyuzo noticed a bus that regularly passed by. He learned it was taking inmates to the nearby prison. He started bowing to the inmates as they sped by, the traditional Japanese gesture of paying honor. Word spread about the strange kimono-clad man, and prisoners jostled on the bus to see him. They were not used to being shown honor.

The strangers on the bus ignited Kyuzo's zeal to minister to the lost and lonely. He got a job at CCI. Frankie San was born. His "new life" began. From that day in many S.C. prisons, his passion was to serve inmates who did terrible things but were made in God's image.

He introduced himself to inmates by saying: "I am Frankie San. I love you, and Jesus loves you too, no matter what you've done. He will forgive you if you ask him." He served one inmate at a time. Only God knows how many in 50 years.

He volunteered to be a caregiver in the AIDS prison unit when the dreaded disease hit. A newspaper carried a picture of Frankie hugging a patient, considered dangerous back then. He was with them when they died.

A former inmate he taught to read and write recently wrote that he now is in college "and all of this would not have happened had you not stopped by my cell" years ago.

A convicted murderer recalls that Frankie San's words about Jesus came back to him 20 years later in a solitary confinement cell. "God slowly began to rebuild me," he said. He is now a productive, free citizen.

On Frankie's last trip to prison a few weeks ago, 35 death row inmates gathered around to greet him. Tough men cried. Some bowed in thanks.

Frankie's journey into the haze of dementia momentarily seemed to lift. The smile came back. His eyes brightened. He was back among his flock. Everyone encircled him and prayed for him. He was taken back home to hospice care.

So how do you explain Frankie's decision to give himself a voluntary life sentence in prison?

"I had almost nothing when I came to this country. Now I have nothing but Jesus Christ," he wrote. "I have lived alone. But all these lowly people came along and loved me as I love Jesus. What more can I ask for in my lifetime?"

There is a new documentary about his life, "Prisoner by Choice: The Frankie San Story." Visit prisonerby-choice.com to watch a trailer and to order a DVD of the film, which will be available soon through streaming and video-on-demand platforms.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.

Palm Oil Production in Burundi Transforms A Community

E LCA World Hunger partners with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in rural, isolated eastern Burundi, near the Tanzanian border. The region was hard hit by the violence of civil war between Hutus and Tutsis in the 1990s and again by political unrest in 2015. Because of this history, migrants and displaced people head for the border region in hope of entering Tanzania.

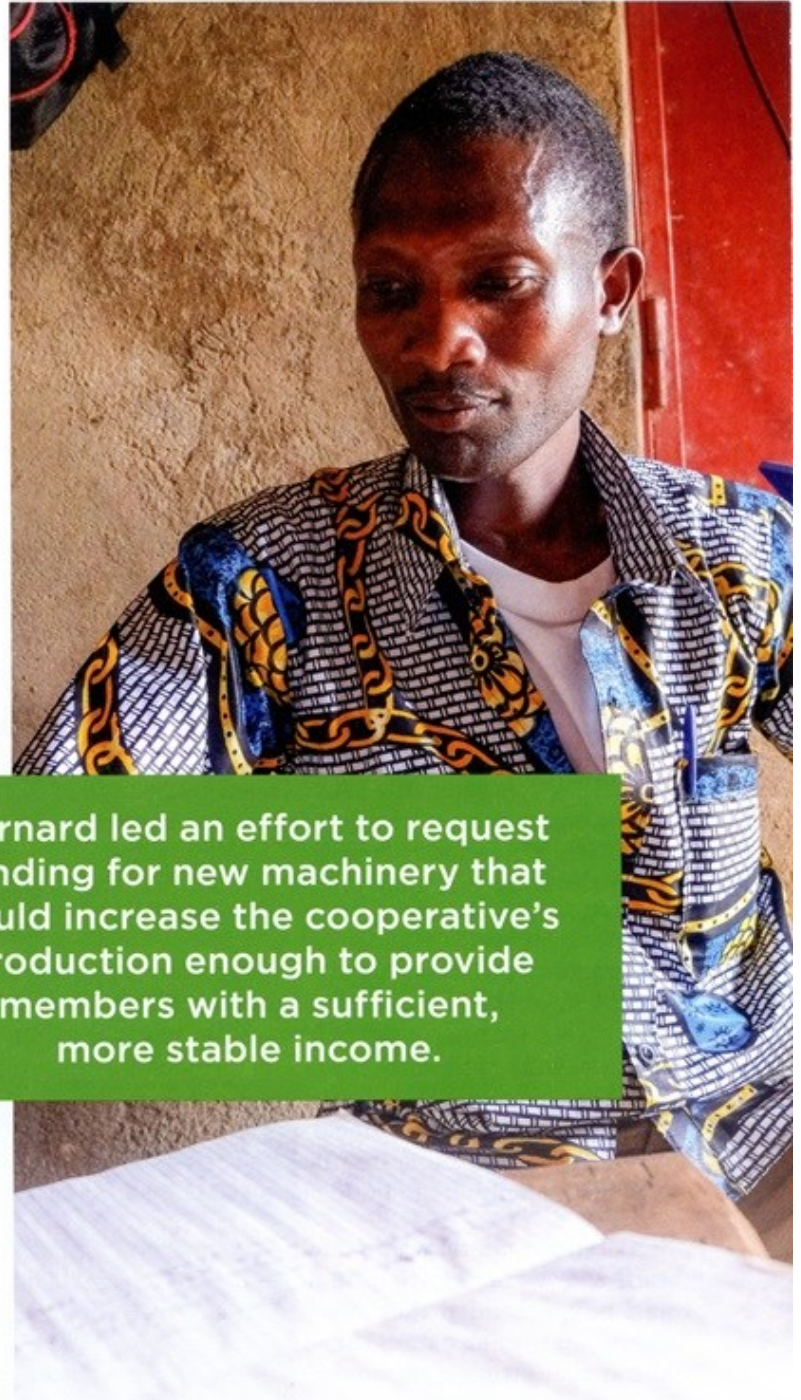
Now, as refugees return home to Burundi, they experience poverty due to the lack of employment opportunities and limited access to land ownership. LWF accompanies neighbors facing these challenges in the region and has collaborated with community members to implement a holistic set of programs that empower adults and youth to create opportunities for themselves and their families.

Bernard leads a local palm oil production cooperative in Burundi. Initially Bernard and his co-producers were using strenuous and inefficient methods to extract oil from the palm fruits, which limited their profits. However, after hearing about LWF's work in the region, Bernard led an effort to request funding for new machinery that would increase the cooperative's production enough to provide members with a sufficient, more stable income.

Thanks in part to gifts to ELCA World Hunger, LWF was able to meet Bernard's request. The new machinery had a significant impact on the community: neighbors and people from nearby villages brought their fruits to Bernard's cooperative to have the oil extracted for a fee, which created an additional income stream for the cooperative.

As president of the cooperative, Bernard was responsible for organizing meetings and managing the group's finances. He was able to hire four workers to help harvest his crops, and the oil-extraction project had a significant impact on his life. With the increased profits from it, Bernard built a nice house near the market for his family and was able to pay for their medical expenses.

The project's success is a testament to LWF's commitment to supporting communities in need, in collaboration with partners such as ELCA World Hunger. Bernard's leadership and hard work were crucial in making the project's success a reality.



Bernard led an effort to request funding for new machinery that would increase the cooperative's production enough to provide members with a sufficient, more stable income.