



# *Salem Lutheran Church*

shalom - salaam - salem - peace

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

*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent*

*Reconciling in Christ  
Sunday*

*February 25, 2024  
9:30 AM*



**Jesus Rebukes Peter**

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[www.salembridgeport.org](http://www.salembridgeport.org)  
[www.facebook.com/salembridgeport](https://www.facebook.com/salembridgeport)  
[YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/salembridgeport) – 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes** in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. Last Sunday we looked at the first covenant, the one God made with Noah. Today we look at the second, the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.

**Pastor Marjo will be on vacation from 2/24-3/6. Karl will be on vacation 2/18-28.** Should you need emergency pastoral care, you may call the church cell 203-336-3300 or Pastor Chris Files at 203-767-4189.

**TODAY WE ARE CELEBRATING RECONCILING IN CHRIST SUNDAY.** Salem member, Cake Elie, will be preaching, so we hope everyone will come out to hear the message God has given her! There will be no communion that day.

**PLEASE JOIN US in discussing Dr. Jemar Tisby's How to Fight Racism book!** Sponsored by the New England Synod's Anti-Racism Committee and Calumet Lutheran Ministries, 2 zoom options are being offered: **THIS TUESDAY February 27<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM and Wednesday February 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM.** *Please note that Dr. Tisby himself will be joining us on the 27<sup>th</sup>!* To sign up, go to [www.calumet.org/howtofightracism](http://www.calumet.org/howtofightracism) .

**NEXT SUNDAY (3/3) WE WELCOME The Rev Paul Sinnott to preach & preside at worship.** Pastor Sinnott served on the staff of 3 different bishops (Isaksen, Payne, and Hazelwood), and after retiring, has served interims at St. James in Southbury and Immanuel in Oxford. He is one of the most active participants in our Anti-Racism Accountability Group hosted by Pastor Marjo and Jeanette Harris.

**Pastor Marjo, our Officers, and our Council would like to offer praise to God and thanks to all of you for your participation in Salem's final congregational meeting** on February 11. Our heartfelt prayer was that the Spirit would be mightily present, that everyone would be respectful, expressing their truth in love, that the difficult and challenging work of Salem's leadership would be truly appreciated, and that everyone would leave the meeting feeling that God's will had indeed been done. We thank almighty God for answering our prayer!

## INTRODUCTION TO RECONCILING IN CHRIST SUNDAY



*Freed by God's grace, the body of Christ on earth leads a joyous dance of transformation, integrating sexuality and spirituality, justice and mercy.*

*Through continuous reformation, the Church embraces in holiness and into wholeness people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, strengthening all for authentic, visible, faithful lives.*

*Dedicated to radical reconciliation, the Church falls into the heart of God's passionate intent, co-creating a world without outcasts, calling all to serve as guests and hosts at God's table of blessing and power.*

*Reconciling in Christ (RIC) is a program of Reconciling Works: Lutherans for Full Participation, begun in 1983 as a way for Lutheran communities of faith – congregations, campus ministries, camps, colleges, synods of the ELCA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and other independent organizations – to answer the inclusive call of the Gospel.*

*Reconciling Works has and continues to open doors, tear down walls, & builds tables for full inclusion and prodigal grace for our church.*

*Working at the intersection of oppressions, Reconciling Works embodies, inspires, advocates and organizes for the acceptance & full participation of people of all sexual orientations & gender identities within the Lutheran communion and its ecumenical and global partners.*

*After education, discussion, and mutual discernment, Salem voted, in 2010 to approve an Affirmation of Welcome statement and became an official Reconciling in Christ congregation, listed on the RIC web site as a witness to the community and the church at large.*

*We also include this identification (“A Reconciling in Christ Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”) on the front cover of our weekly bulletin, in our newsletter, and on other publications. The multicolored hearts symbol is another way of identifying ourselves as RIC.*

*Every year, usually on the last Sunday of January, Salem celebrates Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Sunday, a day set aside to reflect on our call to welcome people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.*

# Gathering

## GATHERING MUSIC

## Draw the Circle Wide

*Refrain* Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still.  
Let this be our song: no one stands alone.  
Standing side by side, draw the circle, draw the circle wide...

- 1 God the still-point of the circle  
Round you all creation turns  
Nothing lost but held forever  
in God's gracious arms (*Refrain*)
- 2 Let our hearts touch far horizons  
So encompass great and small  
Let our loving know no borders  
Faithful to God's call (*Refrain*)
- 3 Let the dreams we dream be larger  
Than we've ever dreamed before  
Let the dream of Christ be in us  
Open every door! (*Refrain*)

#101422

*Words: Gordon Light*

*Music: Mark Miller*

*Voices Together 802*

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*Performance # 1 by Bellevue Presbyterian Church, 01/21/2*

*Brennan Michaels, conductor; Daniel Bates, song leader; Wayne Slater, organist  
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47XfedM77gw> [4:30]*

*Performance # 2 by In-the-Middle Choir Daniel Patrick Smith and Marion Wise, soloist,  
08/21/17*

*as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFBgyP9EufA> [4:18]*

*Performance # 3 by Eastminster United Church, United Church of Canada, Toronto East End,  
04/13/18*

*Hilary Seraph Donaldson, Pastoral Musician ([www.breakintosong.ca](http://www.breakintosong.ca))*

*Scott Pietrangelo, Music Leader ([www.soundcrowd.ca](http://www.soundcrowd.ca))*

*as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcIQrWOYug8> [4:38]*

***Please note that here we go live on Facebook.***

## WELCOME

Welcome in the name of God from whom and with whom and to whom we journey!

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](http://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](http://SalemBridgeport.org/Live).

### **We invite you to join or regular weekly activities:**

Our Mon-Fri noon prayer on our conference line will continue while Pastor Marjo is away

Please check Salem's bulletin and calendar for up to date info on Wednesday noon prayer on zoom, Wednesday Bible Study, and Monday's 4:00 Anti-Racism Accountability Group.

Our Anti-Racism Accountability Group will also continue on zoom at 4:00 on Mondays, unless we notify you otherwise.

**ON TUESDAY at 7 pm on zoom Dr. Jemar Tisby will join our synod's discussion of his book, How to Fight Racism.**

**Another discussion will be held on Wednesday at 9:30 am although without the author.**

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

**Links to the above events are found on our calendar at [SalemBridgeport.org](http://SalemBridgeport.org)**

**Any other announcements? prayer requests? God-sightings?**

**Then let's begin our worship with prayer:**

Most Holy and Most Gracious God,

You are the God who made us, who designed us, who endowed us with unique abilities & gifts.

You have planted within us promise and potential,

and you have a plan and a purpose for each of our lives.

You are the God who calls us into a covenantal relationship,

and who loves us not because of what we do, but because we are your children.

You are the God who shows us our own starry sky promise.

You are the God who makes promises and keeps them,

and who asks us to listen with love, follow with faith, and journey with joy.

Thank you for being our way-maker, miracle worker, promise keeper and light in the darkness.

Help us to hold on and believe in even your most outrageous promises,

so that when they are fulfilled we can sing your praise to everyone we meet.

We pray in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Spirit. Amen

## **CALL TO WORSHIP FOR RECONCILING IN CHRIST SUNDAY**

Giver of Life, in the midst of life exploited by greed and abuse of power,  
**have mercy on us.**

Giver of Life, in the midst of life shortened by hate and exclusion,  
**have mercy on us.**

Giver of Life, in the midst of life destroyed by war and conflict,  
**have mercy on us.**

Giver of Life, in the midst of life groaning for fullness and dignity,  
**have mercy on us.**

Giver of life, You created us all in your image and we squandered this gift of life.  
And the whole humanity and creation lament with us.  
**Have mercy on us.**

When God created the whole creation, God saw that it was good.  
God loved all that God created and God continues to love all.  
May the giver of life make all things new through Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
**Amen**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY FOR RECONCILING IN CHRIST SUNDAY**

Let us pray.

Gracious and liberating God,  
who in Jesus knows what it's like to be an oppressed person,  
what it's like to live in a world as a rejected soul cut off from the community,  
and what it's like to experience state-sanctioned violence just for being oneself,  
guide us to be fierce advocates for our LGBTQIA+ siblings in Christ.

**Amen**

## OPENING SONG

## All Are Welcome

*(as found in the ELCA worship book Evangelical Lutheran Worship # 641)*

**Verse 1** Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,  
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;  
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

**Refrain** All are welcome! All are welcome! All are welcome in this place.

**Verse 2** Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;  
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus: *(Refrain)*

**Verse 3** Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat:  
a banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us: *(Refrain)*

**Verse 4** Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone  
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;  
let us bring an end to fear and danger: *(Refrain)*

**Verse 5** Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,  
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter: *(Refrain)*

*Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950; Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen;*

*Text & Music © 1994 GIA Publications. Inc..*

*7404 S. Mason Ave.. Chicago. IL 60638. [www.giamusic.com](http://www.giamusic.com). 8.442.3358*

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*Performance by Plymouth Church DSM , 09/08/19*

*as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhvnbhPvbsA> [5:24]*

# Word

*Please be seated.*

## **A READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16**

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.” Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.”

God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”

Word of God! Word of Life!

**Thanks be to God!**

## **A READING FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS: Psalm 22:23-31**

You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob’s line, give glory.

**Stand in awe of the LORD, all you offspring of Israel.**

For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty;  
neither is the LORD’s face hidden from them;

**but when they cry out, the LORD hears them.**

From you comes my praise in the great assembly;

**I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.**

The poor shall eat and be satisfied,

**Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!**

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;

**all the families of nations shall bow before God.**

For dominion belongs to the LORD,

**who rules over the nations.**

Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship;

**all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.**

Their descendants shall serve the LORD, whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.

**They shall proclaim God’s deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying to them,**

**“The LORD has acted!”**

Word of God! Word of Life!

**Thanks be to God!**



## **A READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT: Romans 4:13-25**

The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason, it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”) — in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations”, according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Now the words, “it was reckoned to him”, were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Word of God! Word of Life! **Thanks be to God!**

## **A READING FROM THE GOSPELS: Mark 8:31-38**

*You may stand if you so desire.*

[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Word of God! Word of Life! **Thanks be to God!**

**SERMON**

*Please be seated.*

**Cake Elie**

*You may stand if you so desire.*

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR RECONCILING IN CHRIST SUNDAY**

Please join me as we confess what we believe.

**We believe that God's grace is all-inclusive,  
and we affirm that all God's children are welcome here.**

**We believe that Christ calls us to reconciliation and wholeness  
in a world of alienation and brokenness.**

**As disciples of Christ seeking justice and reconciliation between peoples,  
we at Salem welcome, without exception, all people  
regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity,  
physical-mental ability or disability, socio-political position, age or station in life.  
We recognize that each person is a unique creation of God  
and by the grace of God is called a "Child of God".**

**We proclaim that all are welcome at Salem:  
to worship God, receive the sacraments and share in the fellowship and service.  
As disciples, we commit ourselves to exercise our faith,  
treasuring one another's similarities and accepting our differences  
in the spirit of love and good will  
as we continue to discover what it means to be "Reconciling in Christ."**

**"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ,  
and has given us the ministry of reconciliation."**

## **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 FOR RECONCILING IN CHRIST SUNDAY** *Please be seated.*

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things,  
let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

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

We turn to you for meaning, holy God.

Nurture in your children the gifts of the Spirit and let the mind of Christ guide the church.

Give wisdom and discernment to our bishops, pastors, deacons, teachers, and leaders.

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 that Fairchild Wheeler High School & all schools be protected & free from all violence,  
including gun violence, bullying, prejudice, racial bias, abuse, and hazing.

And we pray for Salem members & their families, especially those celebrating birthdays this week:  
Judy Albers, and Carlee Claus.

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

We turn to you for renewal. Save lives & ecosystems threatened by pollution & a changing climate.

Cleanse the earth's waters and restore the soil.

Preserve rainforests, deserts, and wildlife, that generations to come may cherish your creation.

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

We turn to you for justice.

Uphold the worth & dignity of every person, especially any who experience hatred & rejection  
because of gender, ability, sexual orientation, color, ethnicity, or religion.

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

We turn to you for healing, especially for Austin, Barbro, Barry, Bob, Boni, Bruce, Bud, Christopher,  
Cindy, Cliffy, Clyde, Dave, David, Dennis, Diane, Dolores, Dorothy, Francesca, Hans, Ivy, Janice,  
Jasmina, Jeanette, Jeff, Jessica, Jim, Joe, Joey, John, Karen, Kevin, Lynn, Marija, Mary Lou, Melvin Jr,  
Melvin Sr, MJ, Pastor Paul, Pastor Paula, Sara, Sasha, VL,  
and all we name in our hearts & on our lips.

Send compassionate helpers to any who suffer because of war and violence.

Shelter unhoused people, befriend those who are lonely, bring hope to any in despair,  
and console the bereaved.

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

We turn to you for purpose. Remind us of your faithfulness to this congregation.

Increase our trust in your guidance and keep us near the cross.

Grant that our acts of service will express Christ's sacrificial love.

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

We turn to you for peace. We honor the saints who lived in service to others.

Inspire us by their example until you gather us into your kingdom.

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

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**We shall all be reconciled in Christ, united & one in our life together.**

**Praise to God who has loved and created us! Praise to God who has lived with us & accepted us!**

**Praise to God who dwells with us and sends us into the world! Amen**

# Thanksgiving

## OFFERING PRAYER FOR RECONCILING IN CHRIST SUNDAY

Let us pray.

Many are the diverse gifts of the children of God.

**Give us eyes to see diversity as an opportunity for our community  
to broaden our understanding of your love.**

**And, bless the time, talents and gifts of those gathered here today. Amen**



## OFFERING

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 it 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](http://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    God, We Gather as Your Children / For All the Children**

*(as found in the ELCA worship book All Creation Sings # 1038)*

- 1. God, we gather as your people to raise our song above,  
and we dare to claim the promise of Your love,  
though the day may not yet be here, we trust it soon will be,  
when your children will be free.**

*Refrain:*

**O, may our hearts and minds be opened, fling the church doors open wide.  
May there be room enough for ev'ryone inside.  
For in God there is a welcome, in God we all belong.  
May that welcome be our song.**

- 2. Oh, we sing for all the children, that one day they be free;  
and we sing for generations yet to be,  
that they never have a reason to doubt that they are blest,  
May they, in Your love, find rest. *Refrain***

- 3. Oh we pray for all the young lives cut short by fear & shame  
so afraid of who they are & whom they love.  
May the message now be banished that Your love is for the few;  
may their faith in You renew. *Refrain***

- 4. God, we're working for the future when children far and wide  
can live their lives with dignity and pride.  
As they grow in strength and stature, may they join us hand in hand,  
as against all hate we stand. *Refrain***

*Text: based on Matthew 18:5, Mark 9:37, Luke 9:48, Romans 15:7, Galatians 3:27-29  
by David Lohman, b. 1961; Meter 14 11 14 7 and refrain*

*Music: WELCOME BE OUR SONG by David Lohman*

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*Performance by Lay Catholic Christians and friends who stood up and sang out to spread the good news of Christ's love, gathering to encourage voters to vote for LGBTQ rights as they sung their hearts out in support of LGBTQ young people.*

*as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wLQ63LMC-A> [6:25]*

# Sending

*Please be seated.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**We invite you to join or regular weekly activities:**

Our Mon-Fri noon prayer on our conference line will continue while Pastor Marjo is away. Please check Salem's bulletin and calendar for up to date info on Wednesday noon prayer on zoom, Wednesday Bible Study, and Monday's 4:00 Anti-Racism Accountability Group. Our Anti-Racism Accountability Group will also continue on zoom at 4:00 on Mondays, unless we notify you otherwise.

**ON TUESDAY at 7 pm on zoom Dr. Jemar Tisby will join our synod's discussion of his book, How to Fight Racism.**

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**Links to the above events are found on our calendar at [SalemBridgeport.org](http://SalemBridgeport.org)**

## 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 **Pastor Marjo**, you can reach **her** through Salem's website or Facebook page.

## RECOMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION AND BLESSING

God, you have called us into being and joined us to one another through love.

**Creating, Redeeming, Sustaining God, we invite you transform our minds and hearts that we might come to love, appreciate and value the beautiful diversity you have created within the human family.**

**Show us the beauty in every skin color –**

**from the whiteness of snow to the blackness of ebony.**

**Help us hear music in the various languages, dialects, and accents around us.**

**Melt our hearts wherever we see love and affection expressed, no matter what the gender.**

**Let the fragrant aromas of different ethnicities whet our appetites for cultural delights.**

**Our lives are but a breath, but our breaths are drawn from your divine Spirit.**

**You have created us as walking paradoxes, as divine dust.**

**Transform our spirits that we might see You in every human face.**

May God who has planted these desires in your heart, delight in fulfilling each and every one!

**Amen**

***Here ends our Facebook live stream.***

# Dismissal

SENDING HYMN

Faith of Our Fathers

*(as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's worship book,  
Evangelical Lutheran Worship, # 813)*

- 1 Faith of our fathers, living still  
in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword.  
Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy  
whene'er we hear that glorious word.  
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,  
we will be true to you till death.**
- 2 Faith of our mothers, daring faith,  
your work for Christ is love revealed,  
spreading God's word from pole to pole,  
making love known and freedom real.  
Faith of our mothers, holy faith,  
we will be true to you till death.**
- 3 Faith of our sisters, brothers too,  
who still must bear oppression's might,  
raising on high, in prisons dark,  
the cross of Christ still burning bright.  
Faith for today, O living faith,  
we will be true to you till death.**
- 4 Faith born of God, oh, call us yet,  
bind us with all who follow you,  
sharing the struggle of your cross  
until the world is made anew.  
Faith born of God, O living faith,  
we will be true to you till death.**

*Text: Frederick W. Faber, 1814-1863, st. 1, alt.; Joseph R. Alfred, b. 1947, sts. 2-4*

*Text sts. 2-4 © Joseph R. Alfred, admin. Augsburg Fortress; Meter 8 8 8 8 8 8*

*Music: ST. CATHERINE by Henri F. Hemy, 1818-1888; James G. Walton, 1821-1905, refrain  
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*Performance by Tim McNabb, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Halifax,  
07/28/22, Accompaniment Style: Gospel Sisters; with lyrics*

*as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJJgMcrI1KA> [3:30]*

## BLESSING

In work and worship  
Gathered and scattered  
Now and always

**God is with us.**  
**God is with us.**  
**God is with us.**

God is with you - of whom shall you be afraid?  
May you go out into the world filled with Spirit of the God  
who made you, loves you, and empowers you to live fiercely. **Amen**

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace, do justice, love kindness, and be a reconciling force in the world!  
**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 MUSIC

### Way Maker

*Verse 1* You are here moving in our midst I worship You I worship You  
You are here working in this place I worship You I worship You

*Chorus* (You are) Way Maker Miracle Worker Promise Keeper  
Light in the darkness my God that is who You are

*Verse 2* You are here touching ev'ry heart I worship You I worship You  
You are here healing ev'ry heart I worship You I worship You

*Verse 3* You are here turning lives around I worship You I worship You  
You are here mending ev'ry heart I worship You yeah I worship You Lord

*Tag* That is who You are (*repeat 3 times*)

*Bridge* Even when I don't see it You're working (*repeat*)  
You never stop You never stop working (*repeat*)

CCLI Song # 7115744 | Osinachi Kalu Okoro Egbu

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Performance "Way Maker Opener" by Covenant Church– 04/12/20 (Easter)  
as found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEP53RlqbF4> [5:51]

***Please note that here we go live on Facebook.***



## CREDITS

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## Announcements

**Update on our regular weekly activities:**

**Our Mon-Fri noon prayer on our conference line** will continue while Pastor Marjo is away

**Our Wednesday noon prayer on zoom** will likely also continue,  
but please check Salem's calendar to confirm.

**Our Anti-Racism Accountability Group** will also continue on zoom at 4:00 on Mondays,  
but again, please check Salem's calendar to confirm.

**Our Wednesday 7 pm Bible study is on hold for Lent, so instead...**

**You are invited to join in a Lenten Bible Study from our New England Synod,  
“Encountering God: Moving Forward with a Changing Church”  
Videos will be sent out on Mondays with discussion on Thursdays on zoom.**

**02/19-22 Week 1 – Genesis 8 – The Flood Subsides –**

Rafaela Radcke, LLM Santuario / Nueo Amanecer, Synod Council

**02/26-29 Week 2 – Ezekiel 37:1-14 – The Valley of Dry Bones –**

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

**03/04-08 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

**03/11-15 Week 4 – John 3 – Nicodemus Visits Jesus –**

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

**03/18-22 Week 5 – Lke 24 – The Walk to Emmaus –**

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

*For more info and to register, contact [mwhyte@nesynod.org](mailto:mwhyte@nesynod.org)*

**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 March 15<sup>th</sup>.*** The link is on Salem's calendar.

**You are invited to join Lay Licensed Minister Jeanette Harris for the next Genesis Gospel Café's Inner-View Chat & Chew on Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup>.** For more info or to RSVP, please contact "Momma J" at 203-366-6778 or [jharris524@yahoo.com](mailto:jharris524@yahoo.com) .

**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 next lunch will be on March 23.** If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Bruce Tomasko, [bltomasko@yahoo.com](mailto:bltomasko@yahoo.com).

**Pastor Gabrielle Beam and Mary of Bethany Church invite you to join the launch of their public worship service at the Cathedral of Faith, 2319 Fairfield Avenue, at 7 pm on Palm Sunday Eve Saturday March 23.** Their Anglican bishop will be there as well as many local clergy from Bridgeport and beyond. Your presence would be greatly appreciated!

### **Looking ahead to Holy Week!**

#### **Palm Sunday, Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday, Holy Wednesday...**

Remember back in the day when there were Holy Week services every night of the week? Well, there still are! The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Greater Bridgeport will be hosting *an ecumenical service at the Cathedral of Faith, 2319 Fairfield Ave, at 7 pm every night in Holy Week, beginning on Palm Sunday 3/24 & continuing thru Good Friday 3/29. We invite Salem members to specifically attend Sunday through Wednesday.*

#### **Maundy Thursday & Good Friday...**

As we worshipped with *Our Saviour's Lutheran Church* on Ash Wednesday, so we will also join them at *7:30 pm on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, 160 Hill Farm Road, Fairfield.*

**REFILL THE PANTRY 2024.** We are gearing up for another year of making a positive impact in our community. We are reaching out to invite you to join us once again for our Refill the Pantry food collection program. Last year, with God's guidance and the generosity of our volunteers, we have been able to provide essential food items to countless individuals and families in need. Together, we collected 17,700 pounds of food and over \$12,000 for five food pantries. This year, we aim to make an even greater impact, and we believe that with your continued support, we can achieve this goal. We scheduled ten food collections for this year going to five local food pantries. Your participation would mean a great deal to us and, more importantly, to those in our community who rely on the support provided through Refill the Pantry. Please let Rich Lansing at [rlansing@optonline.com](mailto:rlansing@optonline.com) know if you are able to participate this year.

**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!

**It's a brand new year and time for new year's resolutions!** So we encourage you to resolve to grow in your relationship with God. And what better way than through talking to God and listening to God? That's exactly what happens when we pray and read & study scripture. We can do those things on our own, of course, but when we do them together it's far more impactful – kind of like addition and multiplication. Praying and studying on our own is like adding 4 + 4 which gives you 8, but praying and studying together is like multiplying 4 x 4 which gives you 16. Certainly, we are “better together”. **And so we invite you to join us for:**

**\* our prayer line at noon Monday-Friday** for a time of prayer. You can pray silently and anonymously, ask for particular prayers, or offer your own prayers. The number 681-999-0232, access code 673980#, is also listed on Salem's calendar under the Resources tab at SalemBridgeport.org.

**\* our weekly Prayer Gathering Wednesdays at noon on zoom.** The zoom link is on Salem's calendar under the Resources tab at SalemBridgeport.org . If you cannot access zoom just let Pastor Marjo or Jeanette Harris know and you can join one of us via speakerphone; and

**\* our regular evening Bible Study Wednesdays at 7:00 on zoom as we continue to make our way through the book of Romans, picking up with chapter 9.** The zoom link is on Salem's calendar under the Resources tab at SalemBridgeport.org . Again, if you cannot access zoom just let us know and you can join one of us via speakerphone.

**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.

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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

### **Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, died 1921**

**Sunday, February 25, 2024**

Born in Norway and trained there as a deaconess, Fedde was asked to come and minister to the poor and to seamen in New York City. She established the Deaconess House in Brooklyn as well as Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis.

### **George Herbert, hymnwriter, died 1633**

**Friday, March 1, 2024**

An excellent scholar, Herbert served briefly in the English parliament, then became a parish priest. He was known for devoted care of his parishioners, as well as for writing poetry and hymns, including "Come, my way, my truth, my life." He died at age 40.

### **John Wesley, died 1791; Charles Wesley, died 1788; renewers of the church**

**Saturday, March 2, 2024**

These brothers led a revival originally intended to remain within the Church of England, one that involved frequent communion and advocacy for the poor. Except for a brief time in America, they worked in England. Charles was also a prolific hymn writer. After their deaths, their work led to the formation of the Methodist Church.

**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](mailto:mwhyte@nesynod.org)

**Dr. Jemar Tisby's "How To Fight Racism"**

Sponsored by the Anti-Racism Advisory Board of the New England Synod, ELCA & Calumet Lutheran Ministries



Join with others in reading and discussing Dr. Tisby's book. There are two Zoom options:  
**FEB 27 or FEB 28**  
Note that Dr. Tisby will be joining us on the 27th!

**HOW TO FIGHT RACISM**  
JEMAR TISBY  
Courageous Christianity and the Journey Toward Racial Justice

[www.calumet.org/howtofightracism](http://www.calumet.org/howtofightracism)