



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

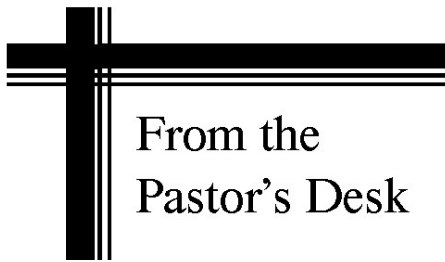
God's work. Our hands.

The Salem *LIFE*

Newsletter of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sandwich, Illinois

August 7, 2025

VOL. 52, NO. 8



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

Some years ago, I spent a day at the Lincoln Museum in Springfield. It gives you a fascinating chance to immerse yourself in the reality of that time. Another time, my family went to the Conner Prairie Interactive History Park near Indianapolis. There we spent a day in the 1840's,

watching a blacksmith making nails, a potter making canisters, and people doing many other tasks, like weaving, woodworking, or running a general store. Both of these historical sites give you a chance to see how people managed the tasks of daily life, and how hard they had to work to get everything done.

I was delighted to go to these places for a day, but I wouldn't like to live there. It isn't just because I love my electricity, phone, and other electronics. The past is the past, and there is no way to really live there again. Reenacting is a fun game, but it isn't real life. We can't live again in another time.

Sometimes earlier times seem appealing, because we are in such a time of rapid change. We live in a state (and nation) that is aging. The number of retired people is expanding greatly, as the mass of Baby Boomers retires. The population continues to grow more and more diverse. The day when "minority" groups outnumber the historical "majority" is just around the corner.

The jobs that people do are changing as well. Many jobs that people used to do simply don't exist any longer. Cars and machines have computers built into them. The AI revolution means that many people will have to learn to do their jobs in partnership with AI, while many other jobs will simply disappear, as companies find ways to do that work without so many workers. That makes it tough for many workers, including young people graduating and looking for their first real job to make a start. What will be available for them?

As much as we might wish that we could bring back the past, we can't do it. Times have changed. There is no going back. It will never be 1960, 1980, or even 2020 again! (Not many of us miss the "bad old days" of COVID.)

There is something in all of us that longs for the past. We look at the "Good Old Days," (usually when we were young, or even the "good old days" remembered by our parents,) and we wish they could return. Complaining about how life has changed from those days has become a favorite pastime for many.

The church is one place where people want to relive the past. Many people want their churches to look just as they did 20, 30, even 50 years ago. I hear people talk about the days when churches were filled every week, when Sunday Schools burst at the seams, when the church held a central place in society. Like it or not, those days have come and gone. Church attendance in ALL denominations has dropped significantly in the past decades. Some are ready to throw up their hands in despair and say, "People just don't care about God like we used to."

Continued on page 3

Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church

Serving Christ!

1022 North Main Street - PO Box 105 - Sandwich, IL 60548

Phone: (815) 786-9308

Email: Salemilc@comcast.net

Web site: wearesalemchurch.org

Pastor

Reverend John Rothfusz
Phone: (779) 901-0803
pastorjohnrothfusz@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant
Financial Secretary, Etc.
Bookkeeper
Traditional Worship Coordinator
Director of Contemporary Worship
Organist/Pianist
Organist/Pianist
Maintenance

Staff

Kelly Clason salemilc@comcast.net
Gina Carlson salem-gina@comcast.net
Karen Wesson salem-karen@comcast.net
Nancy Rex salem-rex@comcast.net
Libby Welsch salem-libby@comcast.net
Gloria Gilbertson
Connie Hanson
Nancy Hayes

Staff Office Hours: Tues.—Thurs., 9 am—2 pm; Fri, 9 am-12 noon

Happening this week...

Sunday, August 10 **Back-to-School Celebration**

9:00 am Worship

10:00 am Coffee Fellowship outdoors, weather permitting for Sundaes on Sunday, and Water Games

Monday, August 11

9:00 - 12:00 Quilting Day

5:00 pm Praise Team

6:00 pm Handchimes

Tuesday, August 12

9:00 - 12:00 Quilting Day

Wednesday, August 13

10:00 am Methuselah Coffee Group

11:30 am Lunch Bunch at Tapa La Luna

Thursday, August 14

8:30 -10:30 am Our Sharing Pantry Distribution

7:00 pm Salem Choir

7:00 pm AA

Friday, August 15

7:30 pm AA

Sunday, August 17

9:00 am Worship

10:00 am Coffee Fellowship

10:10 am Adult Bible Study

In Our Church Family.....

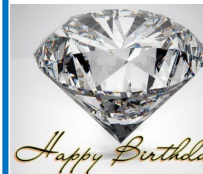
PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

- ⇒ Ellie Allen (*friend of Dori Burau*)
- ⇒ Eileen Negley*
- ⇒ Stan Benson*
- ⇒ Missi Lewis (*neighbor & friend of Todd Claxton*)
- ⇒ Marilyn Long (*neighbor & friend of Todd Claxton*)
- ⇒ Mari Eklund (*Mother-in-Law of Pastor John*)



*Indicates Salem member

AUGUST "DIAMOND PLUS" BIRTHDAYS



8/7 Jean Hanson
8/7 Donna Kimmey
8/13 Linda Benson
8/16 Ron Cunz
8/27 Ron Gengler

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR:

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10: Genesis 15:1-6; Psalm 33:12-22; Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16; Luke 12:32-40

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17: Jeremiah 23:23-29; Psalm 82; Hebrews 11:29-12:2; Luke 12:49-56



But I disagree! We live in 2025, not in 1840, 1950, or 1980. These are exciting days to be God's people! The world has changed, and that gives us the opportunity as God's people to change in ways that will meet our new day. The good news of Jesus that we proclaim never changes, but the way that we proclaim it needs to be fresh every day. How does the gospel call us to love and to serve our neighbor right now? How might the Holy Spirit lead us out of our desires for the past and into God's good future?

Yours in Christ,

Pastor John



August 5, 2025 Salem Congregation Council Meeting Highlights

The Congregation Council met at Salem on Tuesday, August 5, 2025, starting at 6:29 p.m. Council members Jacqueline Beverage, Ron Cunz, Alan Deaton, Walter Farley, Donna Fraley, Bonnie Guyer, Connie Hanson, Durk Hellinga, Sharon Wallis and Pastor John Rothfus were present.

Durk reflected on forgiveness, as a murderer was on trial and family members of victims gave impact statements. Just as Jesus forgave his enemies from the cross, some of these followers of Jesus called on him to help them forgive one who caused such harm.

The council voted to accept the minutes of the July 1 Congregation Council meeting, as prepared by Alan Deaton.

The Financial reports for June were examined. These are the following balances as of the meeting.

General Fund:	\$ 5517.08	Capital Fund:	\$ 33,806.76
Designated Fund:	\$ 40,339.49	Loan Balance:	\$ 398,073

Council members heard monthly reports from Pastor John Rothfus and from council members representing Salem's committees. They reviewed the calendar to highlight events coming up in September and look for conflicts.

The Christian Education Committee shared that we will be starting a Children's Church time in September for 3-7 year olds. They will leave worship after the children's sermon, and return for the offering. This is to help some of the little ones who have trouble sitting during the quiet times.

The Membership Support Committee shared cookies and visits with homebound members. They will be sharing an updated directory listing on Rally Day.

The Mission Committee celebrated many active mission activities at Salem, including 72 quilts and 36 personal care kits that we created. They also sent a team on a Youth Mission Trip to Benton Harbor, Michigan, and it was a very good experience.

The Outreach Committee built a float for the Freedom Day parade and Salem members greeted the community.

The Worship team reported that we will begin a shared music practice night on Thursdays, with the Praise Team, Chimes, and Salem Choir meeting at 5, 6, and 7 p.m. The hope is that it will be easier for members to participate and for people to share in more groups.

The Salem Tech Team is putting together a plan to put digital screens in the sanctuary. They hope to have a plan in the next month or two.

The group heard council comments from each member.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer at 7:24 p.m.

RALLY DAY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2025

“Children of the Heavenly Father”

Celebrating our Heritage as Children of God at Salem Lutheran Church

Rally Day at Salem will take a slightly different tone this year. On Sunday, September 14, we invite everyone—adults and children, lifelong members and those who have joined us recently—to join in celebrating our shared relationship as Children of the Heavenly Father. It will be a time to refresh memories or to gain new insights into Salem Lutheran Church. We begin with a joyful worship service at 9:00 a.m. sharing Word and Sacrament, Prayer, Praise and Thanksgiving.

As is our usual custom, Food and Fellowship will follow worship. We are planning a festive potluck brunch with a bit of a twist. Our adventurous cooks are invited to try their hands at some of the dishes featured at Salem’s famous Smorgasbords/Scandinavian Dinners. Who remembers meat balls, lemon rice, prune cream, sand tarts, and so many more? Suggested recipes will be posted on a display in the narthex. Please choose one to prepare to help bring back those memories. Of course, traditional brunch options will be appreciated as well.

There will be a display featuring some of Salem’s history and a lively trivia tournament for all ages (no peeking at the historical display during the game). After a year’s absence, we will bring back the Dessert Raffle to benefit our Sunday School program. Donations of sweets for the raffle will also be appreciated.

Once summer activities and the Sandwich Fair are behind us and Fall is in the air, we hope you will join us as we gear up for a new season of worship, learning, and fellowship at Salem Lutheran Church. Please mark your calendars for September 14, and save the date!



MISSION TRIP TO BENTON HARBOR, MI

Pastor John, Wyatt Farley, and AJ Parkison joined a group from St. John Lutheran in Mendota to join in a Youthworks Mission Trip to Benton Harbor, MI, from July 20-25. They joined a group of 55 youth from across the Midwest in a week of service work.



Pastor John and the boys spent days painting a church basement, packing food at a food bank, helping at an adult day care center with special needs adults, and clearing weeds and brush at a Resale shop. They worshipped, ate and played with the group, and slept on a church basement floor. It was a great experience to learn and grow in faith as we served our neighbors in need.



Thursday Music Night Starting in September

After quite a bit of discussion, the music groups at Salem decided to move to a single practice night, on Thursdays, starting after the Fair. Praise team will practice at 5 p.m., Chimes at 6 p.m., and the Salem Choir at 7 p.m.

We have real gifts of music at Salem Lutheran, with vital, joyful groups sharing their music. We hope that this can make it easier for members to share in the groups on one evening. New singers and chimers are always welcome – no experience necessary!

Children's Church to Begin

Several young mothers have been working with the Christian Education Committee to plan for a Children's Church time for the youngest kids, who have difficulty sitting during the quiet parts of the service. Kids aged 3-7 will leave after the Children's Message, and return for the Offering. They will spend that time doing craft projects or learning Bible stories. We hope that this will better serve the needs of parents and some of the youngest kids.

Confirmation Classes Starting

Salem Lutheran shares confirmation classes with St. John Lutheran in Somonauk. These classes will begin September 10 at 6:30 p.m. at Salem. Students and friends 7th grade or older are welcome.

Fair Worship

During the Sandwich Fair, Community Worship will be at the Ag Land Stage on **Sunday, September 7** at 8:30 a.m. Pastor Matthew Jones will preach and area pastors will share in that.

Worship at Salem Lutheran will be at 10:30 a.m. that day. It is good to make time for worship whatever may be happening.

Property Committee.....

Church Work Days

The property team is planning for church work days on Friday & Saturday, September 19-20. There are quite a few projects, both indoor and outdoor, to keep our church in good condition. Please put those dates on your calendar and plan to join together in making a difference for Salem Lutheran.

Drums Available

The property team is working to declutter closets and storage areas. We have some drums and other items in the basement hall by the elevator if anyone would like to claim them before they are thrown away.

Member Support Committee.....

Christmas in July!

Members of Salem's Member Support Committee baked and packed cookies for our homebound members on Sat, July 26. They delivered the cookies along with a cheerful visit to brighten people's day. God's Work. Our Hands.

Christian Education Committee.....

Children Helping Other Children

Donations in the little white church was emptied recently and the Christian Education Committee chose to send \$286.00 to Lutheran Disaster Response for the Kerrville, Texas flooding - children helping other children!!!

Outreach Committee.....

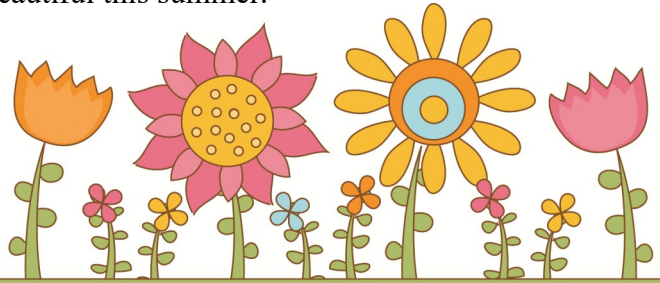
Outreach T-shirts

The "You are Loved" dusk blue t-shirts will soon be here and members of the Outreach Committee will be passing them out to everyone who ordered one. Thank you for spreading God's message that He loves us!



Lawn mowers and gardeners:

Thank you for keeping Salem grounds and gardens beautiful this summer.



Our Sharing Pantry Donation List

Market List

Tuna

Rice

Cereal

Baked Beans

Kleenex

Toothpaste

Diced Tomatoes

Canned Corn

Canned Green Beans

Instant Oatmeal



Donna Fraley continues to serve as Salem's representative of the Our Sharing Pantry Board. Jan Dunn, Alan Deaton, and Donna Fraley are regular Our Sharing Pantry volunteers. This is an updated list of the needs they have, especially for the upcoming months of August and September. As you shop for your own groceries, if you see a good bargain on any of these items, you may consider picking them up for a pantry donation. There are lists near the basket outside the sanctuary. Thank you for all you do for our neighbors who are struggling to make ends meet.



Northern IL Food Bank

Volunteers packed 1500 bags of potatoes in July.

We packed 7,500 pounds of potatoes, providing 6,250 meals.

Those who have already signed up will be packing food on August 19.

The upcoming date is Tuesday, Sept 16.

Lunch Bunch

Pictured below are folks who attended Lunch Bunch at Fondita Mexican Grill in Ottawa on July 9. The next Lunch Bunch is on August 13 at 11:30 at Tapa La Luna, 226 E Lincoln Hwy, DeKalb.



Please sign up so that lunch reservations can be made at Tapa La Luna.

The Ruth Unit is scheduled to gather for their annual luncheon at Star 34 at 11:30 am on Wednesday, August 27. Please call Ruith (815.786.2674) or Joanne (815.786.2864) if you plan to attend or if you need a ride. New members are welcome to join them.

Ditch Clean-Up Scheduled: Join Us!

Salem volunteers will clean up litter along West Sandwich Road on **Saturday, August 23**. We will start at 8:00 am at Prairie View Elementary School.

The Farleys will bring garbage bags, vests for safety, and shuttle you back to your car when you are done. Please dress for the weather and wear heavy boots or shoes.



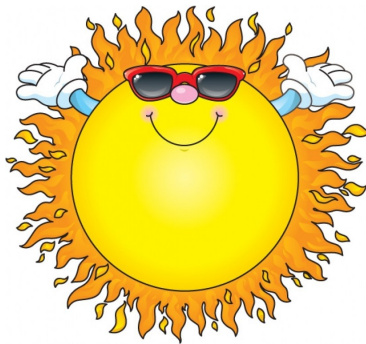
- August 10: Diaper Closet
- August 11 & 12 Quilt Days
- September 14: Rally Day
- September 21: Children Church begins
- September 21: Sunday School kicks off
- September 21: Styrofoam Recycling

Salem Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 105
Sandwich, IL 60548

Sunday, August 10

Blessing of Students, Teachers, Backpacks

As our students and teachers prepare to head to school, we want to pray for them and encourage them. They are working hard and learning important things, and we rejoice to see them grow and mature. We will have a special blessing for them in worship on August 10, followed by Sundaes on Sunday and a special Water Fun Day for our kids and all who want to take part.



Sunday, August 17

Looking for Team Captains!

CROP WALK Co-coordinators Jan Dun and Cindy Fraser invite you to be a Team Captain to build a team of walkers for CROP WALK. The Team Captain Training Rally will be from 2:00-3:00 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. The Crop Hunger Walk takes place on Sunday, October 5th, 2025 at the Sandwich Fairgrounds. If interested, please talk with Jan. The CROP WALK meets hunger needs locally and worldwide.

Thank You

Laverne Mattson

For many years, Laverne Mattson supplied the tractor and wagon for the 4th of July parades. The parade participation is our outreach effort to be involved in a community activity, hosted by the Sandwich Park District, with blocks and blocks of spectators. Dean Lundeen agreed to pull his trailer with his truck for the 2025 Freedom Days Parade. THANK YOU!