



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

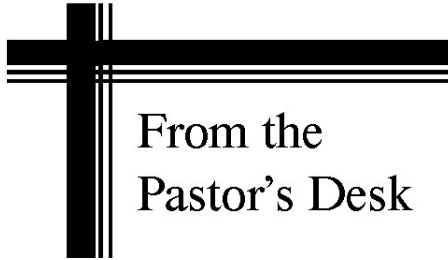
God's work. Our hands.

The Salem *LIFE*

NEWSLETTER OF SALEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
SANDWICH, ILLINOIS

December 5, 2024

VOL. 51, NO. 12



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

I once heard a very provocative question. Do we see ourselves as members of a church, volunteers for church projects, or disciples of Jesus? The answer that we give says a great deal about our relationship to our church, and our relationship to our Lord.

Many people would say that they see themselves as members, people identified with a particular church congregation. As members, we are on the official roll books, and we probably have an accustomed spot in a chair that has conformed to our backside over many years. People will say with great pride that they have been members of Salem Lutheran for 15, 30, or 45 years.

Membership assumes that people generally believe what the church does, and take part to some degree in our activities. Formally, our active members are those who commune or make a contribution with their name on it in this year or last year. A church needs to have members and standards of membership, but these really mean very little to God. The Bible says nothing about the importance of being members of a church. Despite what many people think, membership in a church does not serve as "Hell-fire insurance."

Some people see themselves as volunteers, working for projects at the church, just as they would volunteer to work in the community otherwise. They take part when they choose, and also back out when they want to. This sometimes leads to statements like, "You can't expect us to do so much, because we are all volunteers." There is some truth in that. The church is a voluntary gathering of people of faith, gathered to be a community in Christ, share in Word and Sacraments in worship, and bear witness to Jesus in word and deed to the world. If we are truly volunteers, then we only do as much of those things as we feel like.

But being members and being volunteers are completely inadequate descriptions of our role in the church. Jesus calls us all to be disciples, followers, people who are called by name in baptism, equipped, sent, and commissioned to do God's work in the world. More than making an impression of our bottom on the chair, God calls us to make an impression on the world with our lives, by bearing the living presence of Christ in us in all that we do.

As disciples, Jesus has a claim on all of our lives. We belong to him, and he will direct our lives. Jesus doesn't try to convince us to volunteer or be active in the church. He simply invites: come, follow me, and then go forth as witnesses and servants into all the world. A saving faith in Jesus Christ will demand that we do more than just sit in worship each week. Faith drives us to live as disciples, shaping all of our lives by Jesus' example.

Continued on page 3

Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church

Serving Christ!

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

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

In our church family. . .

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

CURRENTLY— Paula Mueller, Mari Eklund

CONTINUING— Jackie Cline*, Ruth Erickson*, Nancy Fatland*, Tom Glover*, Steve Guyer*, Shirley Hines*, Marlene Kee*, Mick Kimmey*, Baby Henry Ryan-Melchor, Marci Bluestone, Jerry Burd, Darlene Comiskey, Julie Cook, Rayden Davis, Shandol Dulin, Bobby E., Sally Ferko, Lisa Fisch, Elin Frietsch, Kate Gage, Jo Gehlbach, Mary Gliszczynski, Mike Guzzardo, Mark Hanson, Ava Hawbaker, Walter Ihnatiuk, Pamela Isaacson, Dan Jackson, Steven Johnson, Jacob Kenyon, Tanya Kimmey, Bill McGing, Colleen McMahon, Pastor Steve Mindrup, Nick Morgan, Carol Peisker, Joe Petit, Robert Perales, Martha Poggi, Lani Quast, Laurie Jacobson Rappa, Gloria Simpkins, Alphonse Somé, Erin Stiver, Joanne Sumner, Leslie Trettenero, John Wilson, Pearl Undesser, Carol Wilhelm, Tom Wysoglad, Bridget Yaeger.

MILITARY—All people serving in the military, especially: Danny Cassidy, Carson Harris, Brandon Jakubiec, Shawn Jakubiec, Joseph Kimmey, Ross Magee, Garrett O'Dell, Jared Usey, and Kevin Zaleski

*Indicates Salem member.

Please help us keep this list up to date by checking on any persons you may have referred.



Thank you for your generous support. The total intended gifts are \$243,412, with \$178,576 towards the General Fund and \$64,836 for the Capital Fund. Thanks be to God for the abundance He gives us.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8
Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6



DECEMBER
"DIAMOND PLUS" BIRTHDAYS

12-15 Connie Hanson
12-24 Michele Farley

As we baptize each new disciple in the church, we make the following promises:

to live with them among God's faithful people,
bring them to the word of God and the holy supper,
teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,
place in their hands the holy scriptures,
and nurture them in faith and prayer,

so that they may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace.

These are the commitments we make for ourselves, and for those we raise up in faith among us. They are the marks of discipleship among us, showing that we intend to follow Jesus together. We affirm them at baptism, at confirmation, and when people join the church.

How do you live this out in your life? God challenges each one of us to move beyond membership or volunteerism to true discipleship. If you truly believe in Jesus, your faith will move you to develop and deepen these practices of discipleship. Let us each move beyond membership, and truly give our lives to Jesus as his disciples, so that we can find the joy and growth that God wants for our lives and for our church.

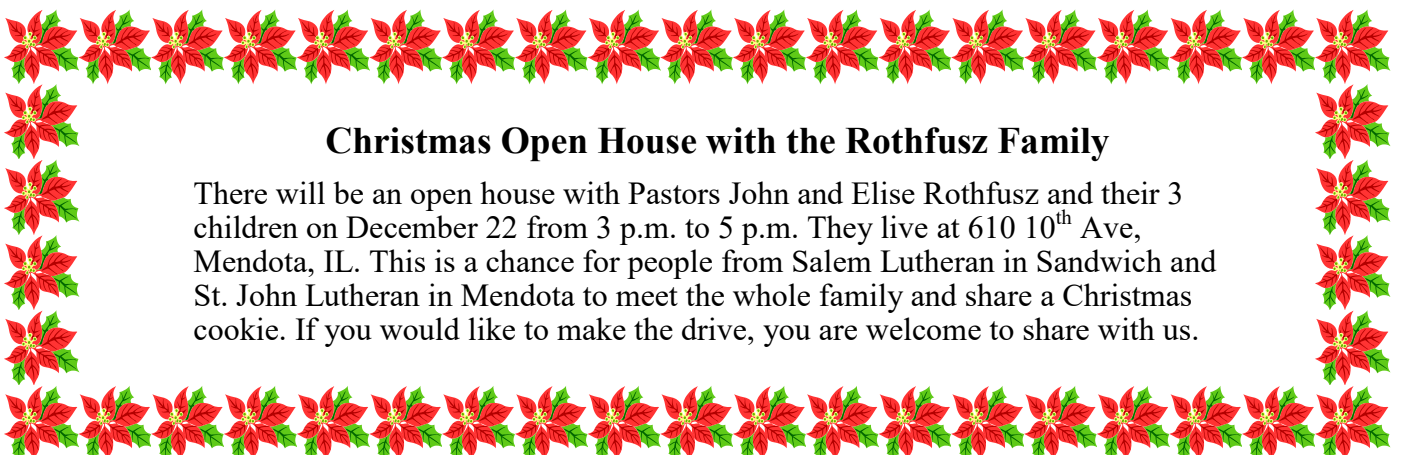
Yours in Christ,

Pastor John



ADVENT MIDWEEK WORSHIP SERVICES

The midweek worship series has begun. You are invited to worship on Tuesdays, December 10 and 17 at 6:00 pm. The services will be a quiet reflection on the Lord who is coming to us at Christmas. These are brief services with cookies and coffee to follow.



Christmas Open House with the Rothfus Family

There will be an open house with Pastors John and Elise Rothfus and their 3 children on December 22 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. They live at 610 10th Ave, Mendota, IL. This is a chance for people from Salem Lutheran in Sandwich and St. John Lutheran in Mendota to meet the whole family and share a Christmas cookie. If you would like to make the drive, you are welcome to share with us.



DECEMBER 3, 2024, SALEM CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Salem's Congregation Council met at Salem on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, starting at approximately 6:45 p.m. following the Advent Midweek Worship Service and snacks. Council members Ron Cunz, Alan Deaton, Walter Farley, Donna Fraley, Bonnie Guyer, Connie Hanson, Durk Hellinga, Nancy Rex, and Pastor John Rothfusz attended this meeting. Council member elect Sharon Wallis also attended. Council member Jacqueline Beverage was absent.

Minutes of the November 5, 2024, Congregation Council meeting as prepared by Secretary Jacqueline Beverage were accepted.

Council members studied the financial reports for October 2024. Treasurer Bonnie Guyer reported balances in the following accounts as of December 3, 2024.

General Fund: \$15,030.90

Capital Fund: \$33,147.25

Designated Fund: \$34,943.29

All bills are currently paid. The treasurer's report as presented by Treasurer Bonnie Guyer was accepted.

Pastor Rothfusz commented on his written report for the month of November 2024 and announced an upcoming baptism and people wanting to become new members of Salem. Council members voted to receive the new members at the worship service on Sunday, December 22, 2024, starting at 9:00 a.m.

Council members serving on Salem committees reported on work being done by the various committees.

The draft of the proposed budget for 2025 was discussed. It was suggested to increase the amount budgeted for benevolence, and a motion carried to add a budget line under the Outreach Committee of \$1200.00 per year for Our Sharing Pantry.

There were written reports from the Outdoor Sign Committee and the Procedures and Guidelines Committee. Discussion during the Procedures and Guidelines Committee report expanded to include policy about changes to room usage and the need to compile and organize a written Procedures and Guidelines Manual for ongoing use.

A motion was made following the report from the Salem Constitution Update Committee to recommend changes made in 2019 and 2022 to the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations be included in Salem's Constitution. These changes will be voted on at Salem's Annual Congregation Meeting.

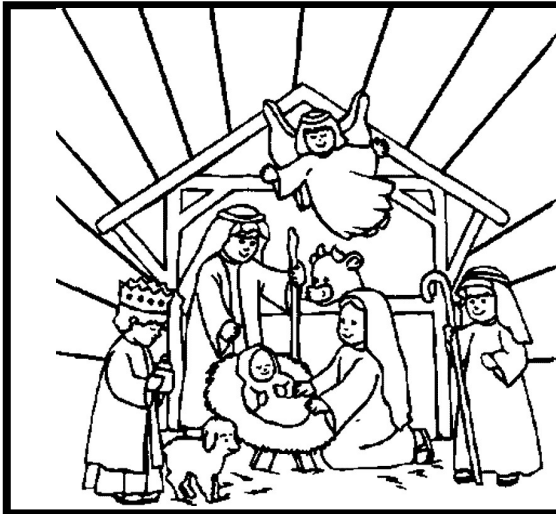
The following dates for events at Salem in January 2025 were established.

- Installation of 2025 Congregation Council members: Sunday, January 5, 2025, during the 9:00 a.m. worship service
- 2025 proposed budget review: Sunday, January 19, 2025, following the 9:00 a.m. worship service
- Annual Meeting of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sandwich, Illinois: Sunday, January 26, 2025, starting at 10:00 a.m.



Offerings to be credited in the calendar year 2024 must be received by December 29, 2024.

Thank you for your generosity to Salem this year.



Please join us for
SUNDAY SCHOOL
CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
DECEMBER 15TH, 10:30 AM

"O Come, Let Us Adore Him"
adapted from a script by Marie Pooler

A traditional telling of the Christmas story in
scripture, song, & verse complete with Mary,
Joseph, Angels, Shepherds & Wisemen.



Salem's Fellowship Committee is planning Christmas Caroling to our homebound members and delivery of the Christmas cookies prepared by the Member Support Committee. All are welcome to go caroling on Sunday, Dec. 15 starting at 2:00 pm. The group will return to the church about 4:00 pm for a chili supper. All are welcome, but please sign-up in the narthex.

Welcoming New

Members – Fellow Disciples

On Sunday, December 22nd, we will welcome new members as fellow disciples at Salem Lutheran. They are Tim and Karen Gleason, Lisa Harness, Paul Kulbartz, and Kelley Mindrup. Tim will be baptized, and the others will be received by affirmation of faith. We will plan another Inquirers class in the spring for others who might like to learn more or join with us.

Salem Lutheran has a gift of being welcoming. Each of you have a role in making sure that each person who comes in is warmly greeted, and never overlooked. That hospitality is a big part of what makes Salem special.



Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 22, 2024 9:00 AM
Service of Holy Communion



Christmas Eve
December 24, 2024 5:00 PM
Candlelight Carol Service of
Holy Communion

SALEM SHARING

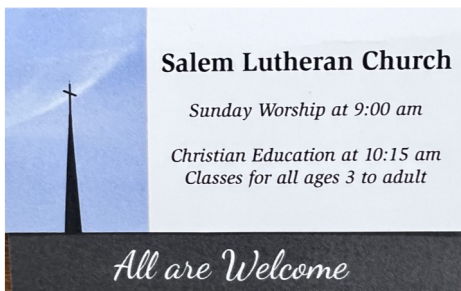
- ◆ Save postage! You may post a Christmas card from your family to your Salem family on the bulletin board in the hallway.
- ◆ Christmas cards are in the vestibule as well as note cards and calendars.
- ◆ Enjoy a puzzle! Pick up a puzzle from the shelves near the coffee fellowship area.
- ◆ Like to read? Books for adults and kids are on the bookshelves near the coffee fellowship area. Borrow books from the library alcove outside the sanctuary.

GETTING TOGETHER

- ◆ Come for coffee and a donut and conversation. The Methuselah Group meets every Wednesday morning at 10:00 am.
- ◆ The Ruth Unit welcomes you (typically on the fourth Wednesday at 1:00). Meetings include a Bible study and/or projects. In December, the meeting will be at Ruth White's home on Wednesday, December 11 at 11:30 am.
- ◆ You're welcome to join Lunch Bunch whenever your schedule allows. It is typically the third Wednesday at 11:30. Transportation and separate checks are available. Next Lunch Bunch meets January 15.
- ◆ Anyone who is interested would be welcome to come help with quilt making for Lutheran World Relief. Work days are the Monday and Tuesday of the second week of each month from 9 am to noon. Come when you can, leave when you want.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you give electronically and wish to put something in the offering plate when it comes your way, you may pick up a symbolic offering envelope from the usher stand to signify your gift which came in some other way.



INVITE SOMEONE

Be prepared to invite someone to Salem with a business card you keep in your wallet for when the occasion arises that you can invite someone to church. Outreach experts say it works best when you offer to pick your guest up from home to give them a ride to church.

NEED HELP?

The Member Support Committee is here to help in times of need. We are willing to help with:

- ◆ Transportation to church, grocery store, or doctor appointments
- ◆ Picking up medicine from pharmacy
- ◆ Meals when you are ill
- ◆ Raking your yard

Call the office to request assistance or tell Pastor John what assistance you need.



Northern Illinois Food Bank

Twenty volunteers worked at the Northern IL Food Bank in November. We packed 2 pallets of canned corn and 1 pallet of green beans. The next date is Tuesday, January 21, 2025 and sign ups will be due on Tuesday, January 7.



Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch met at the Last Chance Saloon in November with a large group! We will skip December and meet up again on Wednesday, January 15 at 11:30 am. Please indicate on the newly revised sign up if you need a ride.



VETERANS DAY SERVICE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2024

Salem Sunday School honored our friends who served in the military with prayer, readings, songs, and cards for each veteran. Pictured with Sunday School children are: (Back row L-R) Dean Burau, Darwin Classon, Ronald Cunz, and Michael Kimmey. Front row: Ace Hanson, Paul Kulbartz, Thomas Glover, James Bernhardt, and William Negley. Not pictured: Ronald Gengler, James Kee, Martin Mueller, George Webster, and Kent Wesson.



STEWARDSHIP SKIT

Some of Salem’s youth performed in “The Shepherd’s Gift” written and directed by Kelly Clason, Donna Fraley, Sandy Martens, and Sharon Wallis. Thanks go to: (L-R) Aidan, AJ, Sami, Evan, Brandon, Wyatt, Tess, Kinley, and Tyler. The skit can be viewed Salem’s Facebook page.

Constitution Updates at Salem Congregational Meeting

Salem Lutheran will gather for our Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 26th after worship. Along with approving a budget and any elections, the voting members will have the chance to vote on several constitutional amendments.

The first set passed with a majority vote in our October meeting. They need to be passed again at this meeting with a 2/3 majority to take effect. They are the amendments to who is eligible to serve on the Endowment Board, the need for a consensus on a Call Committee, and setting the quorum for a congregational meeting at 10% of voting members.

A new set of amendments is also recommended by the Church Council. These are largely housekeeping amendments that we consider after an ELCA churchwide assembly makes changes to the ELCA constitution. Their purpose is to clarify and update the language in our Salem constitution to match the language of the governing ELCA constitution. A number of these changes are required for every congregation, so that all ELCA churches will follow the same rules. Other changes are optional, but recommended. All these amendments can be adopted with a simple majority vote at an Annual Congregational Meeting.

Most of the changes are editorial, or for greater clarity. The 2019 amendments change all instances of the word “synodical” to “synod,” and all references to “the congregation” to “this congregation.” The 2022 amendments include changes to preferred language because of clarity or updated usage of terms. These changes make no fundamental changes in the way that our church or constitution will function. They will simply keep us up to date and in harmony with the whole ELCA.

Copies of these documents are available on the desk in the Coffee Fellowship Room if you would like to review them.

**Annual Congregation
Meeting is set for
January 26 at 10:00 am.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ **Sandwich Lion Club's Franklin Mall Christmas Project....**Sunday will be the last chance to donate non-perishable food items at Salem. If you are able, we hope you will consider adding to the red bin in the hallway near the parking lot entrance. THANK YOU!
- ◆ **Winter Wear for Hope Haven in DeKalb....**Our response has the boxes overflowing. Thank you! There is still time to donate gently worn coats, hats, scarves, mittens or gloves which will be taken to Hope Haven, a local homeless shelter. New items are also welcome.
- ◆ **Festival of Trees....**Salem's Sunday School made ornaments to put on the Salem Christmas tree. Trees are on display at Classic Cinemas Sandwich on December 7th and 8th. Thank you, Libby Welsch, for coordinating our participation in Festival of Trees.
- ◆ **Good News, Great Joy Devotional Books...**Thanks to the Worship Committee for providing advent books for your reading pleasure and devotions.
- ◆ **The Ruth Unit** celebrates in December with a luncheon at Ruth White's home. The meeting is December 11 at 11:30 am.
- ◆ **The Quilting Group** next meets on December 9 and 10 from 9:00 to 12:00 noon to work on Quilts for Lutheran World Relief.
- ◆ **Christmas Offerings.....**The Salem Church Council designated Christmas offerings to Salem's General Fund. If you give electronically and do not receive monthly envelopes from Salem, you may use extra offering envelopes found at Salem. Please mark them for Christmas Offering.
- ◆ **Styrofoam Pick-Up on January 5, 2025....**Alan's "Green Team" pick-up truck will be in the parking lot ready for Styrofoam materials you bring after the holidays. We will take them to the Dart Container Corp. in North Aurora for recycling. Be good stewards of God's creation!
- ◆ **Going Fast....***A limited number of poinsettias are still available. Use order blank below:*

ENV # _____

YOUR NAME(S) _____

_____ HOW MANY PLANTS? _____

I would like my plant(s) listed as follows: (i.e., in memory of, in honor of, etc.)

Will you pick up your plant(s)
after December 24th?
 YES NO

Please enclose \$13.00 per plant.
Amount enclosed \$ _____

Please return your order form to Salem in person or by mail to PO Box 105, Sandwich IL 60548.



Salem Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 105

Sandwich, IL 60548