



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

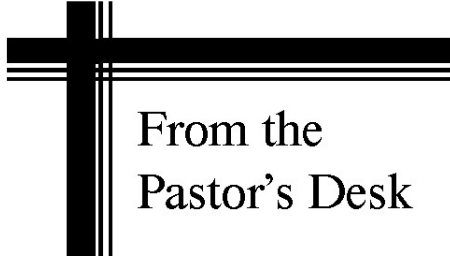
God's work. Our hands.

## The Salem *LIFE*

NEWSLETTER OF SALEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
SANDWICH, ILLINOIS

January 9, 2025

VOL. 52, NO. 1



### From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

At the start of a new year, I would like to share this story:

*The emperor was riding through his land when he saw a very old man digging in the earth to plant trees. "Old man," the emperor shouted, "surely you don't expect to eat the fruit of the trees that you are planting." "I have not given up hope," the old man answered. "While I have strength I will do my duty." "How old are you?" the emperor inquired. "I am 100 years old," the planter said. "God, who granted me longevity, may even allow me to eat the fruit of these trees. But in any case, when I plant trees I am merely imitating God's act of creation when he ordered that the earth bring forth fruit-bearing trees." (Genesis 1:11)*

*"Promise me," the emperor said, "that if you are alive when these trees bear figs you will let me know." Several years later when the trees produced fruit, the old man loaded a basket of figs and made his way to the king's palace. When he arrived at the gate, he was initially refused admission, but due to his persistence and his old age, he was granted an audience with the king.*

*"I am the old man you saw planting trees several years ago," he told the emperor. "I have brought a basket full of figs which I plucked from the trees you saw me planting." So pleased was the emperor with his gift that he accepted the fruit and ordered that the basket be filled with coins. Then he addressed the old man, "Go home, good friend, and continue to participate with almighty God in the act of creation." (From Stories for the Journey, William R. White)*

This old Jewish story may have been the inspiration for Martin Luther to say that if he heard that the world would end tomorrow, he would plant a tree. Our calling as people of faith is to be good stewards and caretakers of all that God gives us, in every moment that we are given. We want to use the time and resources we have just as God would use them.

Our lives are full of uncertainty. Our government and leaders are unpredictable, and the world is filled with many crises. We don't know what the future will hold, for our jobs or the shape of our community. Our church can sometimes face budget struggles as we try to do ministry together. There is much that could make us worry or fret, but also many ways for us to serve and make our world better.

*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](mailto:Salemilc@comcast.net)

Web site: [wearesalemlutheran.org](http://wearesalemlutheran.org)

Pastor

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

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

## Staff

Kelly Clason  
Gina Carlson  
Karen Wesson  
Nancy Rex  
Libby Welsch  
Gloria Gilbertson  
Connie Hanson  
Nancy Hayes

[salemilc@comcast.net](mailto:salemilc@comcast.net)  
[salem-gina@comcast.net](mailto:salem-gina@comcast.net)  
[salem-karen@comcast.net](mailto:salem-karen@comcast.net)  
[salem-rex@comcast.net](mailto:salem-rex@comcast.net)  
[salem-libby@comcast.net](mailto:salem-libby@comcast.net)

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

*In our church family. . .*

## PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

### CURRENTLY—

**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., Mari Eklund, 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, Paula Mueller, 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.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS SUNDAY, JANUARY 12:

Isaiah 43:1-7

Psalms 29

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22



## JANUARY

### "DIAMOND PLUS" BIRTHDAYS

1/8 Nancy Shehorn

1/9 Eileen Negley

1/22 Verdell "Ace" Hanson

1/25 Betty Scofield

In the end, none of us knows how long we will live, or how long it will be until the Lord returns to take us home. A new year draws our thoughts to wonder what to expect in the days to come. Will God give us new and unexpected opportunities to serve, or will the Lord call us home? Whatever may come, we can be sure that God will be with us, to guide and strengthen us on our way. The Lord is faithful, and we can rely on God's faithfulness all the more in times of fear and uncertainty.

Like the old man in the story, none of us know what lies ahead. But we have the choice whether to passively sit back and wait for the future to happen to us, or to step forth in faith to work with God to create the good future that the Lord envisions. In the mean time, we can plant a tree, or show love to a child, or make many other kinds of investments in faith. We may or may not live to see them all bear fruit, but we can be sure that we are participating in God's work of bringing life and hope to the world. Let us leave a legacy of faith in our words and deeds for all who will come after us.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor John Rothfusz

### **Thank You!**

We would like to thank each of you for all of your cards, gifts, and good wishes at Christmas. We feel very blessed to share our lives with you as we serve Christ together. As I mark my first year of serving the Lord at Salem Lutheran, we recognize that God has truly been good to us and to our family by bringing us here. Thank you for your partnership in ministry with us.

Pastors John and Elise

### **Thank You**

Thank you to Jerri Kuhn for crafting a few sets of communion veils for Salem Lutheran. They are linen, with an embroidered cross and are simple and beautiful. We will enjoy using these regularly on the altar for communion.

### **Council Officers for 2025**

At the first Council meeting of the year, the Salem Congregation Council elected officers. They are the following.

President:	Bonnie Guyer
Vice President:	Sharon Wallis
Secretary:	Alan Deaton
Treasurer:	Dean Lundeen

We appreciate their leadership in our midst, and look forward to a good year working together.

### **Welcome New Members**

On Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, we welcomed new members as fellow disciples at Salem Lutheran Church. They are Tim and Karen Gleason, Lisa Harness, and Kelley Mindrup and Paul Kulbartz (not pictured).

We will plan another Inquirers class in the spring for others who might like to learn more or join with us.





## JANUARY 7, 2025, SALEM CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Salem's Congregation Council met at Salem on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, starting at approximately 6:30 p.m. Council members Jacqueline Beverage, Ron Cunz, Alan Deaton, Walter Farley, Donna Fraley, Bonnie Guyer, Connie Hanson, Durk Hellinga, Nancy Rex, Pastor John Rothfusz, and Sharon Wallis attended this meeting. No council members were absent.

Following devotions led by Nancy Rex, council members voted to accept the minutes of the December 3, 2024, Congregation Council meeting as prepared by Substitute Secretary Bonnie Guyer.

Council members studied the financial reports for November 2024. Treasurer Bonnie Guyer reported balances in the following accounts as of January 7, 2025.

General Fund: \$19,174.86

Capital Fund: \$37,130.89

Designated Fund: \$29,813.73

All bills are currently paid. Council members voted to accept the treasurer's report as presented by Treasurer Bonnie Guyer.

Council members heard and read monthly reports from Pastor John Rothfusz and council members representing Salem's committees.

Council members approved the 2025 budget proposal prepared by Salem's Finance Committee for presentation to the congregation for voting at the Annual Meeting of Salem Congregation scheduled for Sunday, January 26, 2025.

Council members reviewed preparations for the Annual Meeting of Salem Congregation scheduled for Sunday, January 26, 2025, starting at 10:00 a.m. The agenda for the meeting was approved, and resolutions to be presented to the congregation for voting were approved. Saturday, January 25, 2025, at 9:00 am, was set as the time for set up for the potluck following the annual meeting.

The following officers for Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church were elected for 2025.

President: Bonnie Guyer

Vice-President: Sharon Wallis

Secretary: Alan Deaton

Treasurer: Dean Lundeen

Council members chose Salem committees to represent during 2025.

**WINTER  
WEATHER**

*It's time to think about winter weather:* If you have concerns about cancellation of worship services or meetings, please check your email or turn in to WSPY 107.1 FM radio for cancellation announcements. The health and safety of our members is our primary concern; so please use your judgment about whether or not to venture out in severe weather.

# New Year Resolutions



January is a time of New Year Resolutions. Now is a good time to think about how to give of yourself through acts of service your time and talents.

How will you give your time to Salem in 2025?

- ⇒ Bring snacks for 60 - 80 people for coffee fellowship. Some weeks people partner with others to share the responsibility. No need to worry about making coffee. It will be done.
- ⇒ Flowers make our church attractive. Would you like to be on the team that plants the flower boxes and keeps them watered and weeded this spring and summer?
- ⇒ The flower garden across Main Street to the west needs to be watered and weeded.
- ⇒ Take responsibility for yard work, specifically the west lots. Especially, after a storm there are many fallen branches that need to be picked up. Could your family or you and some friends take on this responsibility on a timely manner so the mower can mow?
- ⇒ Join a committee: Christian Education (Would you like to lead a Sunday School lesson?), Fellowship, Finance, Member Support, Mission, Outreach, Property, Stewardship, or Worship (Would you consider being a leader or a reader of lessons?). When your interests and skills are matched with the duties of the committee, it's not work—*it's fun!*
- ⇒ If you can carry a tune and have some rhythm, there are two singing groups who would love to have you! Praise Team practices on Monday nights at 5:00 pm and Salem Choir practices on Thursdays at 7:00 pm. Praise Team takes part in the 9:00 o'clock service on the first and third Sundays and Salem Choir sings the second and fourth Sundays.
- ⇒ Salem Handchime Ensemble welcomes new members. Notes are color coded—you don't even need to read music! Chimers practice on Monday nights at 6:00 pm and play occasionally, especially around holidays.

Talk with council members or Pastor John to answer questions you may have before you make a commitment. They will know the answer or will help find answers. Church council members are: Jackie Beverage, Ron Cunz, Alan Deaton, Walt Farley, Donna Fraley, Bonnie Guyer, Connie Hanson, Durk Hellinga, Sharon Wallis.

## Constitution Updates at Salem Congregational Meeting

Salem Lutheran will gather for our Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup> 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.**

### Budget Review : January 19

Join Treasurer Dean Lundeen for Budget Review on January 19 after worship. This is a time for discussion and asking questions before it is reviewed again and accepted at the Annual Congregation Meeting the following week.





### **Northern Illinois Food Bank**

Volunteers packed apples at the Northern IL Food Bank in December. We packed 4,460 pounds of food providing 3,717 meals. The next date is Tuesday, January 21, 2025.

### **Growing Hope Globally Gala**

A Growing Hope Globally Gala is planned for Saturday, February 23, 2025 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Somonauk. The evening starts with a Social Hour with Charcuterie Service from 5:00—6:00 pm, followed by Formal Plated Dinner Service with live piano music at 6:15 pm prepared by The Traveling Chef. Cost is \$150 per plate. Tickets will be available until January 31, 2025 or until capacity is reached. Contact Kelly Clason at 815.325.4075 for more details.



Pictured to the left is the 3N1 Secret Santa Christmas Party hosted by Kim and Jason Boczko with 10 youth attending.

(Below) Sharon Wallis leads a Burning of the Greens celebration for Sunday School youth and adults.



### **Lunch Bunch**

The Lunch Bunch will meet up again on at Sidetrack'd on Wednesday, January 15 at 11:30 am Please indicate on the newly revised sign up in the narthex

### **Diaper Donations: Sun, January 19**

Diaper donations are accepted any Sunday, but especially on the third Sunday of the month. Diapers are passed along to the Sandwich Church of the Nazarene which hosts The Diaper Closet. Families are not required to be residents of Sandwich to receive diapers or other supplies.

### **Community Fellowship Feast: Tues, February 25**

Salem has been asked to prepare sides for the Ham Dinner at St. John's Lutheran Church, Somonauk. Please sign up in the narthex if you are able to prepare a dish to share.



Ruth Unit Christmas Gathering



Sunday School Christmas Program

# Photos from Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2025



Salem Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 105

Sandwich, IL 60548

### *Happening this week...*

Sunday, January 12

9:00 am Worship  
10:00 am Coffee Fellowship  
10:15 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study  
10:15 am Member Support Committee  
5:00 pm 3N1 Meeting at Bethany  
Lutheran Church

Monday, January 13

9am-noon Quilting

Tues, January 14

9am-noon Quilting

Wed, January 15

10:00 am Methuselah Coffee Group  
11:30 am Lunch Bunch  
6:30 pm Confirmation @Salem

Thurs, January 16

8:30 -10:30 am Our Sharing Pantry Distribution  
5:00 pm Contemporary Worship Committee  
6:30 pm Finance Committee  
7:00 am Salem Choir  
7:00 pm AA

Fri, January 17

7:30 pm AA

Sunday, January 19

9:00 am Worship  
10:00 am Coffee Fellowship  
10:15 am Budget Review  
10:15 am Sunday School