



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

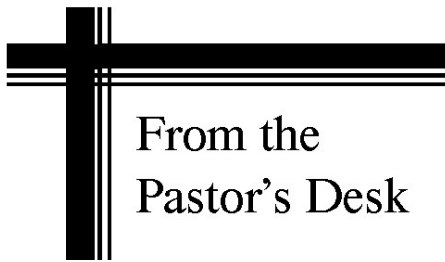
God's work. Our hands.

The Salem *LIFE*

Newsletter of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sandwich, Illinois

October 9, 2025

VOL. 52, NO. 10



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

“Are You an Owner or a Renter?”

A friend of mine opened my eyes to a new understanding of being the church. He asked me, "Have you ever rented a car?"

"Sure I have, lots of times when I travel," I said.

"O.K." he said. "Do you ever rotate the tires of the car you rent?" Never. "Have you ever washed the car?" Not once.

"Have you ever changed the oil?" I've never given it a thought.

"But have you done any of those things with the car that is sitting in your garage?" Sure I have, many times, I told him.

Why the difference? Because one I'm just using, I realized, but the other I have an investment in.

My friend wasn't done with me yet. "Does your church have mostly 'renters' or 'owners'?" I looked at him real hard. I was trying to make the connection. He saw the blank look in my eyes.

"You know, do you mostly have people who use the church for their convenience, or do you have mostly people who are committed to the church?" Tough question to ask; harder question to answer.

So, are you a renter or an owner? A renter goes to church when it's convenient; an owner is a part of the church always. A renter worships occasionally on Sunday mornings; an owner worships Jesus every day. A renter has ministry done for them; an owner does ministry for others. A renter quits when they get tired; an owner never gives up. A renter complains when things aren't going their way; an owner prays to have God change their heart. A renter occasionally gives their money; an owner gives their life for God's work in the world.

These are just a few things that, in my opinion, separate renters from owners. And honestly I don't know if we have renters (I'm sure we do) or if we are mostly owners (I pray we are).

The point is, God is inviting us, through Jesus, to be owners; to own the faith that he gives us, to own the cross we are to carry and to own the ministry we have been created to do.

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Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church

Serving Christ!

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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
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Gloria Gilbertson
Connie Hanson
Nancy Hayes

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

Happening this week...

Sunday, October 12

- 9:00 am Worship/Kids Church
- 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship
- 10:10 am Adult Bible Study/Sunday School

Monday, October 13

Tuesday, October 14

- 6:00 pm Outreach
- 6:30 pm Finance Committee

Wednesday, October 15

- 10:00 am Methuselah Coffee Group
- 10:00 am Member Support Committee
- 6:30 pm Confirmation at St. Johns

Thursday, October 16

- 8:30 -10:30 am Our Sharing Pantry Distribution
- 5:00 pm Praise Team
- 6:00 pm Handchimes
- 7:00 pm Salem Choir
- 7:00 pm AA



Friday, October 17

- 7:30 pm AA

Saturday, October 18

- 8:00 am Adopt-a-Road

Sunday, October 19

- 9:00 am Worship/Kids Church
- 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship
- 10:10 am Adult Bible Study/Sunday School
- 10:15 am Fellowship Committee

In Our Church Family.....

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:



- ⇒ Becky O'Hanlon*
- ⇒ Fred Staffeldt (*father of Fran Parkison*)
- ⇒ Bonnie Longwell (*neighbor of Ruth White*)
- ⇒ Alice Michalowski (*friend of Laura Caupert*)
- ⇒ Donna Kimmey*
- ⇒ Marlene Kee*
- ⇒ Laverne Mattson*
- ⇒ Nicholas Kulbartz (*son of Paul Kulbartz*)
- ⇒ Stan Benson* *Indicates Salem member



It is with deep sadness that we announce that Bill Negley passed away on October 2, 2025. May he rest in eternal peace in the arms of Jesus. Visitation and a funeral service was held October 8, 2025, with Pastor John Rothfusz officiating. Please continue to keep Eileen and the family in your prayers. May God comfort all who mourn.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR:
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12: 2 Kings 5:1-3,7-15c; Psalm 111; 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19: Genesis 32:22-31; Psalm 121; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5; Luke 18:1-8


God has called you to Salem Lutheran, and it is your church home. We are blessed to have you with us. How can you take ownership of your faith, and of the ministry that we do together? How can you take pride in your church, and make our witness shine out like a light on a hill? Ministry doesn't just happen magically. It is not for someone else to do. If we can each take pride and ownership in our church, and treat it with the same loving care that we show to our own homes and cars, just imagine what ministry we might do together for the Lord.

Our lives, our faith, and our church are all given to us as a trust by God. Our calling is to receive them with thanks, and use them well. God has brought you to this place, and given you time, talents, and treasures to share. Let us each be owners, and claim our role in this ministry we share in Jesus' name.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor John



OCTOBER "DIAMOND PLUS" BIRTHDAYS



10/3 Janet Kaiser
 10/11 Donna Fraley
 10/16 Ruth White
 10/27 Marlene Kee
 10/28 Sandra Martens

Happy Birthday

October 7, 2025 Salem Congregation Council Meeting Highlights

The Congregation Council met at Salem on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, starting at 6:28 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 Rothfusz were present. Treasurer Dean Lundeen was also present.

Jackie Beverage led the devotion.

The council voted to accept the minutes of the September 2 Congregation Council meeting, as prepared by Alan Deaton.

The Financial reports for August were examined. These are the following balances as of the meeting. Treasurer Dean Lundeen presented the finances, noting a number of property expenses that were higher than expected. He is working on a first draft of the 2026 budget.

General Fund:	\$ 0	Sweep:	\$5172
Designated Fund:	\$ 37,266.06	Outstanding Checks	\$4300
Capital Fund:	\$ 28,731.76		

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

The Mission Committee noted that 54 school bags were completed. The Northern Illinois Food Bank team loaded 5000 pounds of potatoes.

The property team reported that a new shed has been built and will be installed south of the parking lot. They have approved a project for next spring for Augustine Bros. to recaulk and maintain our windows and doors. Support for that project would be welcome.

The CROP walk was very successful and expects to meet its target of \$20,000.

The group heard council comments from each member.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer at 7:29 p.m.



Sharon Wallis of the Christian Education Committee passed out a Children's Bible to (L-R) Hadleigh Brain, Lila Mattson and Henry Hayes on Rally Day.

Rally Day brunch featured some Smorgasbord dishes.



Evan Beverage played the part of the Shepherd looking for the lost sheep.



- 10/18: Adopt-a-Road
- 10/19: Diaper Sunday
- 10/22: Ruth Unit Bible Study
- 10/25: Trunk or Treat & Weenie Roast



THANK YOU!! Thank you to all who donated supplies! Sunday School students packed 54 school kits for Lutheran World Relief. A special thank you to the quilt group members who sewed the bags: Cheryl Carls, Jerri Kuhn, and Paula Mueller.



Another month with Potatoes! Volunteers packed 1,004 bags of potatoes in September. We packed 5,020 lbs of potatoes, providing 4,183 meals. Those who have already signed up will be packing food on October 21.



The Fellowship Committee planned an afternoon of visiting an 1850 barn that is getting restored, a new barn that was built by a kit, and a garden that takes up the whole block. After visiting these sites we enjoyed a pot luck at Pam and Steve Pescitelli's home. Pictures will soon be posted to Salem's website, www.wearesalemlutheran.org.



CROP HUNGER WALK 2025

Dollars are still coming in from partnering restaurants and donors. As of the day we walked, approximately \$18,000 of the \$20,000 goal was raised. Co-chairs Jan Dunn and Cindy Fraser invited Pastor Dave Kaul to lead the walkers in prayer. Sunday School students and leaders collected donations and walked in the neighborhood to help fight hunger.



THANK YOU!





Salem's 22nd Annual



TRUNK OR TREAT

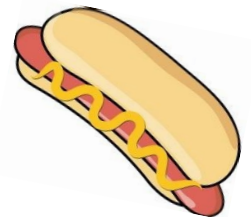
Saturday, October 25 — 2-3 pm

We invite all members and friends to park their decorated vehicles in the parking lot and hand out treats. Please sign-up if you plan to bring your vehicle. We have invited the children of the community to participate along with our own members. Please bring your children or your grandchildren and invite your friends and neighbors.

Bonfire & Weenie Roast



3-5:00 pm
after Trunk or Treat



Immediately following Trunk or Treat the Fellowship Committee will host this fun-filled outing for EVERYONE, regardless of age. Come alone or bring the whole family! Invite friends. Bring lawn chairs & dress for the weather. If you can, consider bringing an extra chair or two for any guests. The committee will provide the hot dogs, the makings for s'mores, and beverages. Those attending are asked to bring a dish to pass.





Northern Illinois Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Beloved in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we write to you in this moment of national and global tension with clarity and conviction. Our faith compels us to stand where Jesus stands—with and for those whom society often seeks to exclude, erase, or diminish.

Our shared confession that every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) grounds us in the conviction that all people possess inherent dignity. The incarnation of Jesus Christ reveals God's profound solidarity with humanity—especially with those who are marginalized or oppressed. The gospel we proclaim insists that our neighbor's need is the occasion for our love and that our public life is shaped by justice, mercy, and a commitment to the common good.

Further, we have a shared tradition in our social teachings which grounds us. The [ELCA's Social Message on Immigration](#) reminds us:

"We are to respond to newcomers as we would to Christ—welcoming them, meeting their immediate needs, and advocating for justice in our laws and policies."

Likewise, our recently adopted [Social Statement Faith and Civic Life](#) affirms that Christians are called to be *"a public witness, holding leaders accountable when they fail to protect the vulnerable."*

We are living through a time when vulnerable communities are being scapegoated and attacked. Immigrants and refugees are vilified, though Scripture commands us to welcome the stranger. People of color continue to bear the devastating weight of racism woven into the fabric of our society. Transgender people, beloved by God, are being targeted with laws and rhetoric that deny their dignity and even their right to exist. These assaults on our siblings are not political abstractions—they are deep wounds in the body of Christ.

In this time of division and fear, we, as people grounded in our faith, insist on love. This commitment flows from our faith in Christ crucified and risen—the One whose love breaks down barriers, confronts hatred, and transforms hearts.

Love insists on the **dignity of every human being**.

Love insists on **justice** for the marginalized and oppressed.

Love insists that the **church must reflect God's diverse, life-giving community**.

Love insists that **we listen, speak, and act with respect**, even in disagreement.

Love insists on **hope**, trusting that God's kingdom of justice and peace will prevail.

This love also compels us to speak clearly against Christian Nationalism, which our Churchwide Assembly named as a distortion of the Christian faith and an unhealthy form of patriotism. Christian Nationalism confuses the Gospel with political power, turns God into a mascot for the state, and privileges some people over others based on race, religion, or birthplace. This is not the way of Jesus. The kingdom of God is not a nation, not a culture, not a political ideology—it is God's reign of love, justice, and mercy for all people.

Therefore, as bishops of this church, we declare that the ELCA cannot be silent. Our call is clear:

To proclaim the God-given dignity of every human being.

To resist systems and ideologies, including Christian Nationalism, that oppress, dehumanize, or erase.

To stand shoulder to shoulder with those who are targeted or harmed.

To bear public witness that the love of Christ is stronger than fear, stronger than hatred, and stronger than death.

We call on all members of the ELCA to join us in prayer, advocacy, and action:

Pray for those who are vulnerable and for all who work for justice.

Advocate in your communities, legislatures, and Congress for laws that protect migrants, advance racial justice, and safeguard LGBTQIA+ people.

Engage in the holy work of hospitality, creating spaces of safety, affirmation, and belonging for all God's children.

Model respectful dialogue in a polarized world, seeking understanding rooted in love.

Hold fast to hope, trusting that the Spirit is still at work renewing creation and reconciling the world to God.

In baptism, we are marked with the cross of Christ forever. That cross is not only a sign of our hope—it is also a summons to follow Jesus into solidarity with those who suffer.

In the power of the Spirit, let us be bold. Let us be faithful. Let us insist on love—in our words, our actions, our public witness, and our life together.

Together in Christ,
Bishop Stacie Fidler, Northern Illinois Synod

Bishop Kevin Strickland, Southeastern Synod
Bishop Susan J. Briner, Southwestern Texas Synod
Bishop Becca Middeke-Conlin, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod
Bishop Vivian Davila, Caribbean Synod
Bishop Donna Simon, Central States Synod
Bishop Bill Gohl, Delaware-Maryland Synod
Bishop Anne Edison-Albright, East Central Synod of Wisconsin
Bishop Pedro Suarez, Florida-Bahamas Synod
Bishop Deborah Hutterer, Grand Canyon Synod
Bishop Paul Erickson, Greater Milwaukee Synod
Bishop Felix Malpica, La Crosse Area Synod
Bishop Stephen R. Herr, Lower Susquehanna Synod
Bishop Wayne Miller, Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Bishop Katrina D. Foster, Metropolitan New York Synod
Bishop Philip C. Hirsch, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod
Bishop Jen Nagel, Minneapolis Area Synod
Bishop Scott Alan, Johnson Nebraska Synod
Bishop Nathan, Piphon New England Synod
Bishop Christa Compton, New Jersey Synod
Bishop Emily K. Hartner, North Carolina Synod
Bishop Julie Schneider-Thomas, North/West Lower MI Synod
Bishop Kevin Jones, Northeastern Iowa Synod
Bishop Amy Odgren, Northeastern Minnesota Synod
Bishop Laura Barbins, Northeastern Ohio Synod

Bishop Christopher deForest, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop Katherine Finegan, Northern Great Lakes Synod
Bishop Erik Gronberg, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod
Bishop Meggan Manlove, Northwest Intermountain Synod
Bishop Martin Halom, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee, Northwest Washington Synod
Bishop Daniel G. Beaudoin, Northwestern Ohio Synod
Bishop Kristen Papsen, Northwestern PA Synod
Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar, Oregon Synod
Bishop David Nagler, Pacifica Synod
Bishop Meghan Johnston Aelabouni, Rocky Mountain Synod
Bishop Jeff R. Johnson, Sierra Pacific Synod
Bishop Ginny Aebischer, South Carolina Synod
Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Bishop Amy Current, Southeastern Iowa Synod
Bishop Bryan Penman, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop Brenda Bos, Southwest California Synod
Bishop Melissa L. Stoller, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop Keith Marshall, Southwestern Washington
Bishop Tracey Breashears Schultz, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Bishop Craig Miller, Upper Susquehanna Synod
Bishop Lee M. Miller II, Upstate New York Synod
Bishop Phyllis Milton, Virginia Synod
Bishop Scott Dalen, Western Iowa Synod

Salem Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 105

Sandwich, IL 60548

Ditch Clean-Up Scheduled

Salem volunteers will finish up the summer Adopt-a-Road schedule on Saturday, October 18. We meet at 8:00 am at Prairie View Elementary School and clean ditches along West Sandwich Road. The Farleys will bring garbage bags, vests for safety, and shuttle you back to your car when you are done. Dress for the weather.

Halloween is coming!

Can you celebrate with us on October 25?

- 1) Bring a decorated trunk to Trunk or Treat, *and/or*
- 2) Visit the decorated trunks on October 25 from 2-3 pm.
- 3) Bring a dish to pass and enjoy the bonfire and weenie roast from 3-5 pm.

