

the Bugle

"In those days a decree went out..."

You know the story. We tell it every year on the eve of Christmas. We imagine a town filled with guests who arrived to record their place in a census ordered by the emperor. Each citizen was fulfilling their obligation in a process that mandated a return to their hometowns. We imagine Joseph and Mary coming from some 60 miles away, late in the stage of pregnancy. Tired and road weary they searched and searched, but all the available rooms were occupied, leading them to seek shelter in a humble stable where Mary gave birth to her first-born son. We imagine a dark cave or barn with animals all around, wide-eyed in wonder as creatures gaze into the manger where they recently were fed. It was there that a baby, securely wrapped in bands of cloth, lay sleeping on the remaining hay. We imagine lowly shepherds in nearby fields, gazing across the meadow, content that their sheep are safely bedded down for the night. We imagine an angel, then a multitude of angels singing praises to God announcing the recent birth in Bethlehem. We imagine the excitement of the shepherds, curious and eager to see this "thing" revealed by the Lord. We imagine scraggly, dirty shepherds stumbling into a crowded stable to see what would prompt a heavenly choir during the night watch. We imagine Mary quietly pondering the visit, the wonder and awe of what this might mean for her baby boy. And we then imagine the shepherds singing and dancing as they returned to the fields with a renewed sense of hope and joy in their hearts.



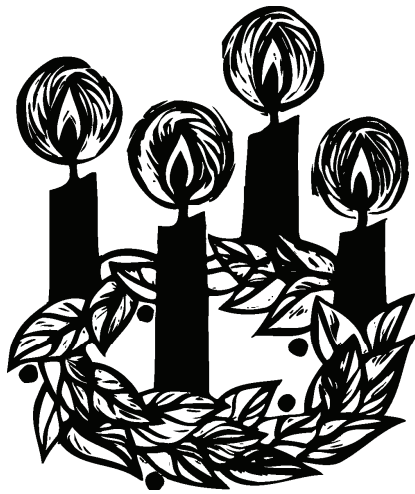
Isn't it amazing how simple words of ***"In those days..."*** prompt imagination, curiosity, awe, and excitement as we ponder the story, light candles, and sing of a silent and holy night many years ago? Amazing and yet special as we imagine and hope beyond hope that the mystery and wonder of that first Christmas would stir in our hearts anew in our day. The story is old, but the promise is just as real for us as for the first witnesses of the wondrous birth. Christ the Savior is born! Hallelujah!

Blessed Christmas to you all, and I hope to see you in worship this Advent and Christmas season.

- Pastor Craig

The Advent Wreath

One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting amid growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images revealed in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree. In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath.



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The Bugle is published monthly for \$10 per year by Salem Lutheran Church, 1700 W. War Memorial Dr. Peoria, Illinois 61614-6724 phone: (309) 688-9212

Periodicals Postage Paid at Peoria, IL 61601

POSTMASTER:
Send Address Changes to:
Salem Lutheran Church,
1700 W. War Memorial Dr.,
Peoria, IL 61614-6724

Pastoral Emergency Number:
In case of emergency please call:
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Sunday Worship through December 17
8:15am / 10:45am
Education Hour
9:30am

Christmas Greetings

Let our members know they're remembered by providing a cheery greeting for their Thinking of You bags! You may bring you cards beginning on **Sunday, November 26 through Sunday, December 10.** The names of people to be remembered are:

Lynn and Ed Akers, Nancy Bastian, Betty and Matthew Bennett, Alf Berg, Ruth Bock, Carl and Helen Buerger, Sue Colloton, Dolly Conley (Ruth Bock's sister), Marty and Joan Creager, Velma Crowley, John Day, MaryAlice Erickson, Vi Gruber, Ron and Norma Hartman, Ron Hipple, Janet Jones, Bea Kent, Clarence and Lois Knutson, Carol Love, Suzanne McMickle, Bob Middleton, David Mills, JoAnn and Paul Misselhorn, Carolyn and Henry Noe, Jo Nolde, Rosy Park, Kay Peterson, Linda Peterson, Marty Plunkett, Marjorie Ryberg, Marilyn Setterlund, Phyllis Shadley, Marilyn Smith, Fred Stamerjohn, Wanita Van Scoyoc

The bags will be located outside of the Social Hall through **Sunday, December 10.** If you are interested in delivering these greetings, please sign-up at the Welcome Center. Bags will be available for delivery on **Monday, December 11.** These Christmas greetings are sure to be cherished!

[PREPARE THE WAY]

Advent

Join in Community! Sunday Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 3 - Sunday, December 17: 8:15AM / 10:45AM; 9:30AM Education Hour
Sunday, December 24: 10AM



Join us at Salem Lutheran Church to celebrate the beginning of the Advent Season with Lessons & Carols on **December 3 at 3pm** at Salem Lutheran Church. Donations will be collected to support Adopt Our Families program for the Center for Prevention of Abuse. New items being collected are items that keep people warm: **throw blankets, robes, pjs, socks, mittens/ gloves, winter hats.**

If you wish to make a monetary donation please make checks payable to the Center for Prevention of Abuse. A short reception with light refreshments is to follow the service. Come enjoy this immersive Advent activity on **Sunday, December 3 at 3pm!**

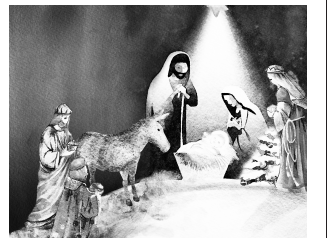


Service of Solace, Dec 13

Christ's coming proclaims hope for all who are grieving or otherwise find the holiday season difficult. Experience words of forgiveness and the comfort of Christ in this service on **Wednesday, December 13, 6:30pm in the Faith Chapel.**

Sunday School Christmas Message, Dec 17

Sunday School children will be offering their Christmas message during the **10:45am worship service on December 17.** The children have been practicing their songs and reading parts and are excited to share with you the wonderful message of Jesus' birth. Sunday School families should plan to attend the second service that day as children participate throughout the entire service.



What a wonderful opportunity for children to participate in worship and be a part of the message to the congregation. And it's an important opportunity for the Salem family to support the children and enjoy the message that they have to offer! We will join our voices together in praising God for the wonderful gift of Jesus and the life everlasting He gives.

Parents please note: There will be practice for all Sunday School children on **Saturday, December 16 from 9:30-11:00am in the Sanctuary.** This is the only time we have to practice the entire message. Children practice their songs during Sunday School time in the weeks leading up to December 17, but on Saturday, we will pass out costumes and practice the readings and songs. Please try to attend.



In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

Advent 4:

Sunday, December 24: 10AM

Candlelight

Sunday, December 24: 7PM

Christmas Day

Monday, December 25: 10AM

First Sunday of Christmas

Sunday, December 31: 10AM

December Food Collection: Let's Make A Meal!

Throughout the month of December please consider donating items for Salem's partner in ministry - Bethel United Methodist Food Pantry. Let's make a meal! Please consider during the month of December donating : **canned meat, canned vegetables, canned fruit and Jiffy mixes.**

Fair Trade Holiday Sales on December 3

The Fair Trade team wishes to say a huge thanks to the Salem community for the continued support of the Fair Trade ministry. Let us help you with your holiday shopping! Stop by between services on **Sunday, December 3** and we will be happy to help you shop for items for friends and family. We carry a good variety of coffees, teas, fruits and nuts, hot cocoa, olive oil, and of course our candy bars which are perfect for stocking stuffers. If you can't make it that Sunday but would like to purchase some items, please contact Jennifer Gallas, and she will be happy to get it to you. Thank you and a blessed holiday season to all of you!

Your Generosity Makes a Difference

Outreach Ministry was able to bless the following community partners with donations ranging from \$500-\$750. The gifts were possible because of the faithful stewardship giving of Salem members. **Bethel United Methodist Church, Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU) Missionary Salih Arbeyi, Center for Prevention of Abuse, Crittenton Centers, C.T. Vivian Primary School, Global Mission Teams Luke and Jamie Ulrich, Lutheran Hillside Village, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center, Midwest Food Bank, the Neighborhood House,** are all doing great work in our community and beyond. Monetary gifts can make a real difference in the programs of these organizations and in the lives of the people they serve. Your offering has been a blessing, and we thank you for your support.

Noisy Can Offering, Dec 10

The Noisy Can offering on **Sunday, December 10**, will be designated for The Center for Prevention of Abuse. The Lessons and Carols event on Sunday, December 3, includes a partnership The Center for Prevention of Abuse to support their "Adopt Our Families" program. This program provides essential items for families that receive services. The Center for Prevention of Abuse is a local 501(c)3 NonProfit Organization that has been serving Central Illinois since 1975. *More information about specific items that are being collected at the December 3 event is on page 3.*

Lutheran Social Services Giving Tree

Help make Christmas very special to the families at Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). LSSI provides services for over 750 children and adults in the Central Region. Salem Lutheran will be hosting a giving tree for 20 children and 10 teenage gift requests.

The giving tree board is available on the second floor for gift request tags. Please plan to purchase an item of clothing and a toy, game, or miscellaneous item with a \$30.00 limit for the combined items. This way each child receives two gifts – one practical gift and one fun gift. ***Gifts should be placed in gift bags unwrapped by Sunday, December 10.***

Having been part of the collection process previously, this is a truly rewarding task. This makes the holidays a little brighter for the children and adults; it also provides you with a warm feeling of Christian charity. Please consider taking a gift tag request to make Christmas bright for children in the care of LSSI.



Affirmation of Baptism

Congratulations to Isaac Hartman and Emily Peterson for affirming their baptism on Reformation Sunday. Please pray for these students and their families as they also continue their faith journey.

Ladies' Night Out

The next Ladies' Night Out at Salem Lutheran in the Social Hall is **Monday, December 4 at 6pm.** Please sign up at the Welcome Center.

Poinsettia Donations

The church will purchase poinsettias for the Chancel to provide a more festive atmosphere. You may make a donation along with any information describing "in honor" or "in memory" or "in celebration". Suggested donation amount is \$15 per plant. Forms available at the welcome center or on request at the office.



Be Like Jesus

Save the date - Be Like Jesus event is on **February 24 from 10am-2pm** at First English Lutheran Church. More details in the upcoming months.



Sunday School Students Learn about Lutheran Heritage

On Sunday, October 29, Sunday School celebrated Reformation Sunday with faith-forming activities.

FROM THE PARISH NURSE, LORI REIMER

Whether you like this time of year or not, the winter months are approaching and with it comes a change in weather. Winter storms including blizzards can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice and high winds. These can lead to a higher risk of car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks from overexertion. A winter storms are unpredictable and can last hours or days. They can cause problems with our power and therefore our heat and our communication. Those most vulnerable are the elderly, children, sick individuals, and pets.

Guidelines to stay safe in the winter, include:

- Know your areas risk for storms. Be alert to and knowledgeable of the different weather alerts (advisories, watches, and warnings) and the appropriate response for each of them.
- Prepare your home for winter which includes smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Gather supplies you may need in case you have to stay home for a few days. Be sure you include extra batteries, food and water, medications as well as needs for your pet.
- Make an emergency kit for your car which includes snacks, water, blanket, flashlight.
- Know the signs and basic treatment for frostbite and hypothermia
- Frostbite causes loss of feeling and color around face, fingers, and toes. Signs are numbness, white or gray-yellow skin, and firm or waxy skin. If this occurs go to a warm room and use warm washcloths or soak in warm (not hot) water for 30 minutes. Pat dry. Do not vigorously rub or use a heating pad.
- Hypothermia is usually a low body temperature and below 95 degrees is an emergency. Signs are exhaustion, shivering, confusion, drowsiness, slurred speech, fumbling hands, and memory loss. If this occurs, get to a warm room and remove any wet clothing. Warms the center of the body first- chest, neck, groin, and head then keep wrapped in warm blankets.

For more information go to ready.gov/winter-weather or cdc.gov

BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS!
DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

December 1 William Fischer Alexander Zapf	Bonnie Gallas Lucas Owen	Bernice Kent Gerald Snyder	Michael Petrakis
December 2 Henry Arnold Darlene Ford Susan Hamann Wren Jolliff	December 8 Caleb Bastian Joanne Bridges	December 16 Margaret Steele	December 29 Beth Cooper Spencer Lantz Grant Peterson Kathleen Self
December 3 Hailey Zapf	December 10 Dan Starzynski	December 17 William Ricketts	December 30 Braden Wallstedt
December 4 Martha Plunkett	December 11 Walter Bastian Wanita Van Scoyoc	December 18 Audrey Koeltzow Nancy Peterson Payton Rook	
December 5 Susanne Hermanson Donald Hoffman Grayson Rook Rosemary Swanson	December 12 Holland Taubert Koss Jody Jean McKinty Greg Roberts Marjorie Ryberg Hans Vandervlugt	December 19 Julia Hokanson	
December 6 Isaac Hartman	December 14 Viola Gruber	December 20 Ashlynn McKinty Julianna Rees	
December 7 Jon Arehart	December 15 Julie Gannon Laura Hartman	December 24 Richard Peterson	
		December 25 Jack Cooper	
		December 27 Joel Brinkman	

Thank you!

Thank you to all who were involved with the Salem Thanksgiving Dinner and 140th Anniversary Celebration on **November 15** especially Helene Peterson for coordinating the meal and volunteers, Bonnie Gallas and Inez Norgard for securing Thrivent Action Teams, Bea Kent for sharing her wonderful memories, Meghan Peterson for preparing the video, and Pastor Craig for the presentation. Thank you to all the many helping hands and those who attended, brought guests, and contributed. The freewill offering totaling over \$1000 will be used to purchase grocery cards for C.T. Vivian Primary School families in need.

Planning to Make a Year-End Charitable Contribution to Salem?

If you are planning a gift to offset 2023 income, you'll want to be aware of the official rules from the IRS: "Donors must deliver or mail checks on or by **December 31, 2023**, in order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2023. Checks that are placed in the church offering on the first Sunday of 2024 will not qualify for a charitable contribution deduction in 2023, even if the check is pre-dated to 2023 or was actually written in 2023. However, checks that are written, mailed and post-marked in 2023 will be deductible in 2023 though they are not received by a church until 2024." Thank you for keeping these things in mind as you plan your giving.



Santa Lucia

The Brage Swedish Lodge will be celebrating Santa Lucia on **Sunday, December 10 at 2pm in the Salem Social Hall** and would like to invite the congregation. Refreshments will be served after the program.

PRAYER REQUESTS

THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR...

- Salem's growing ministry

DIRECTION...

- Salem Congreg. Council
- Salem's Pastor and Staff

PRAYERS REQUESTS...

- Salem's Sister Congregation: Trinity Lutheran Church (Olney)
- The men and women of our armed forces
- Support for all caregivers when loved ones suffer
- Individuals suffering from depression
- People of Guatemala
- Ulrich family in Malawi

- Jocette and Salih Arbeyi missionaries through CRU
- Families at Crittenton Center
- Midwest Food Bank
- Wally Bastian and his family
- Luan Borquist
- Jim Chelgren
- Butch Conard
- John and Tanya's daughter-in-law and their family
- Ken Gulliford
- Ron Hipple
- Family of Robert Hoffman
- Lesley Howard
- Helen Johnson
- Julie Kotewa
- Lizzie
- Brenda and Mike Newcomb
- Caroline Noe

- Jo Nolde
- Tim, Jessica, and Daniel Peterson
- Linda Peterson
- Rosy Park
- Donita Lynn Purcell
- Sarah
- Charlie Shane
- Debi Smith
- the family of Frances Walter
- Brant Wegrzyn

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY...

Stateside: Ian Borquist, Gibson Gonzalez, Emily Graff, Barry Joyce, Talon Maki, Ashley Owen, Lucas Owen, Jim Sterling, Jason Sterr



JOSEPH

The day had been long,
Their journey was done.
During the night,
Mary gave birth to a son.
The stable was quiet,
The shepherds had left,
The animals were resting,
And Mary now slept.
And Joseph was awed,
By what had begun.
His guardianship
Of God's only son.

Luan Borquist – Christmas 2023

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE: *We welcome the light of the Christ child!*

Advent 4: Sunday, December 24: 10AM

Candlelight Service: Sunday, December 24: 7PM

Christmas Day: Monday, December 25: 10AM

First Sunday of Christmas: Sunday, December 31: 10AM