

the Bugle

At times my computer, cell phone or internet router is slow or even fails to work at all. Everything looks the same, but the function is not up to par. “The lights are on, but no one is home.” For many years, the solution to poorly functioning electronics has been, reboot, refresh, unplug and restart to see if that makes a difference. It seems like such a minor thing, but more times than not, that resolves the issue. As we turn the page, and begin a new set of months for the coming year, it is a bit like a reboot. Many people make resolutions and vow to make changes for healthier living. “I will be kinder, more patient, eat healthier, consume less, exercise more, pray more, read the Bible more, attend worship more, expand my circle of friends, learn a new hobby, spend less, worry less, and on and on the list goes.” You name it, many well-intended promises are made each year for the sake of rebooting and either starting or restarting life choices for the sake of improved living.

Perhaps you have a reboot you are considering in your future. Maybe it is the same set of resolutions you made last year. You started off well but after a few weeks or months, old practices returned, and your good intentions fell off the wagon like a sock that falls behind the drier to collect dust until rediscovered by the service technician or moving company years later.

January starts off with the journey of visitors from distant lands, bringing their treasure chests filled with gifts fitting for a king: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. For years they had scanned the night sky searching for a sign that would reveal a new beginning for the world to see. So, we also celebrate the gift of the Christ child, and we anticipate his coming anew among us still. But so often, the excitement and joy of Christmas gets packed up with the decorations and returned to the closet until next December and the process resumes all over again.

What might it look like if we hold onto the gift of Christmas long after the leftovers have been eaten and boxes are put away? What if we recommit our lives to reflecting the joy of Jesus well into the new year so that the joy and excitement become a new pattern for our lives together? What if?

New Year's blessings – Pastor Craig



Congregational Annual Meeting

In accordance with Salem’s constitution, this article, along with verbal announcement at worship, constitutes official notice of our annual meeting to be held on **Sunday, January 28 at 9:30am** in the sanctuary.

A Budget Question and Answer session will be provided on **Sunday, January 21 at 9:30am** in the sanctuary.

WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY

Worship on **Sunday, December 31** will be at **10am**. The church office will be closed on **Monday, January 1** for observance of New Year's Day.

Epiphany Sunday, January 7, two worship services resume at **8:15am** and **10:45am**.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY

Salem Welcomes New Members



Molly Sloter



Greg Miller and Sarah Billington

Salem Lutheran also welcomes Patrick and Sandra Monroe, and Amanda Giltner (will be pictured in the February Bugle).



Craig Swenson, Senior Pastor
cswenson@salemofpeoria.com

Toni Greving
Office Coordinator
office@salemofpeoria.com

Meghan Peterson, Communications
mpeterson@salemofpeoria.com

Gretchen Petrakis,
Director of Sunday School
gpetrakis@salemofpeoria.com

Lori Reimer, Parish Nurse
lreimer@salemofpeoria.com

Maggie Sloter, Director of Music & Choir Director
msloter@salemofpeoria.com

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In case of emergency please call:
Pastor Craig: 309-258-4759 or
Lori Reimer: 309-303-3808

EXPERIENCING UNBEARABLE LOSS

In 2005, Salem’s Parish Nurse, Lori Reimer, and her family suffered an “unbearable” loss when Lori’s daughter Allison, died suddenly at the age of 20 of a brain aneurysm. Allison grew up at Salem and many remember her love of life, family, friends, Girl Scouts, Camp Tapawingo, and Greenville College. She loved teddy bears and had quite a collection of her own while growing up.

Since 2015, Lori has collected teddy bears in Allison’s memory annually for patients at the Children’s Hospital of Illinois. The project has blossomed. Lori’s largest collection was in 2020 when almost 500 teddy bears were collected in Allison’s memory. Lori currently donates the bears she collects directly Cuddles with Kindness®.

Spreading Kindness

In 2023, Salem collected 130 stuffed animals! How many fuzzy friends can Salem donate this year?

The teddy bear collection in memory of Allison Reimer for Cuddles with Kindness® will begin on **Sunday, January 14 through February 4**. Many of the children Cuddles with Kindness® serve have compromised immune systems, so to keep them germ-free and as clean as possible all stuffed animals must be new with the tags still attached. A collection bin will be in the atrium area, and monetary donations to Cuddles with Kindness® are welcomed.

Cuddles with Kindness®

During January, learn more about Cuddles with Kindness®. Cuddles with Kindness® is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to providing comfort to kids in need. Their mission is to comfort children facing traumatic situations while inspiring kindness and compassion. With help from Salem Lutheran Church and others, Cuddles with Kindness® hopes to collect

thousands of stuffed animals for the thousands of kids who need those extra snuggles for when they might be going through a hard time.

Founder, Taylor Larson spent 9 days in the OSF Children’s Hospital of Illinois when she was a child. During her stay, she received a bear on Valentine’s Day. It changed her forever. Today, Taylor and the Cuddles with Kindness® organization delivers thousands of stuffed friends to children each year.

Children receiving the cuddly teddy bears could be sick in the hospital, kids who have lost everything in a house fire, are in a children's home or maybe have been through a natural disaster. The need for these fuzzy friends is endless. It may be something small, but it can mean a lot. Help us in our mission of “kindness.”



CUDDLE WITH KINDNESS® CORE VALUES

- C** - Compassionate to others.
- U** - Understanding of all backgrounds and situations.
- D** - Dependable to the community and those we serve.
- D** - Dedicated to service of others.
- L** – Leadership
- E** - Ethically Minded
- S** - Spread Kindness

January Food Collection

Salem partners with the Bethel United Methodist Church food ministry by collecting non-perishable goods for their pantry.

Suggested items for donation:

Canned vegetables, canned fruit, canned beans, canned meat, cereal, peanut butter, dry noodles, mac and cheese, stuffing, spaghetti, rice, instant potatoes, paper towels, and toilet paper.

You can help feed others by bringing your donations at any time to Salem during the month.

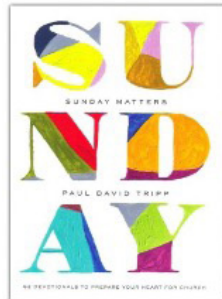
Midwest Food Bank Volunteer Serving Opportunity on Wed, Jan 24 from 9am-11am



Salem's volunteer serving opportunity at Midwest Food Bank has had about eight dedicated volunteers (THANK YOU!), but would love to have a few more! Please register online to volunteer at: <https://portal.goldenvolunteer.com/timeslots/KMWigaHPOt> (link will also be in the Bugle Blast.)

If interested please plan to meet at the Peoria Division (9005 N Industrial Rd, Peoria, IL 61615) at **9am on Wednesday, January 24**. If you have questions please contact John Grabel (iron_man_46@yahoo.com).

Salem Library



***Sunday Matters* by Paul David Tripp
(264 TRI)**

Do you find your spirit eager to attend Sunday services, but your mind and heart distracted? How can you better prepare to worship God? Tripp offers 52 devotions to help you engage more joyfully and passionately at church. Each includes Scripture, thought-provoking questions, and theologically rich meditations on gratitude, divine grace, our identity in Christ, and more.

***When Faith is Forbidden: 40 Days on the Frontlines with Persecuted Christians* by Todd Nettleton
(272.092 NET)**

For more than 20 years, Todd Nettleton has traveled to restricted nations for VOM to meet men and women who boldly live out their Christian faith at great cost. In his new book from Moody Publishers, *When Faith Is Forbidden: 40 Days on the Frontlines with Persecuted Christians*, Todd invites you to travel with him to meet these bold believers and hear their stories. Each stop on this journey will challenge you to reflect on your own walk with Christ along the sometimes-difficult path toward our heavenly home.

To access and view the library collection (saalemofpeoria.com), look for the Learn tab, click on Salem Lutheran Library, click again on Library Catalog and scroll through the online collection. Or search, (saalemofpeoria.com/salem-lutheran-library).

Questions? Please contact Karen Swenson at 309-258-5708 or at klswen@hotmail.com

Epiphany Sunday, January 14

The feast of Epiphany ("manifestation") concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people.



Sunday School will reconvene on **Sunday, January 14 at 9:30am** celebrating Epiphany as Preschool-high school youth will share in the Epiphany story and activities.

Youth Groups, January 14

Faith for Life Confirmation

On **Sunday, January 14 from 2pm-4pm at First English Lutheran Church**, Faith for Life Confirmation for 6th-8th grade youth resumes monthly at First English Lutheran (6-8th grade youth)

High School Youth

On **Sunday, January 14 from 2pm-4pm** high school youth will work on a service project at Salem putting together care packages for young adults from Salem Lutheran Church.

6th-12th Grade Youth and Families

Dinner and activity to follow high school service project and confirmation class at Salem Lutheran for 6-12th grade youth and their families from 4:30pm-6pm.

Northern Conference Youth Board: Be Like Jesus Day of Service

Saturday, February 24, 10am-2pm at First English Lutheran Church, Peoria for K-8th Grade Youth (Senior and Post High Small Group Leaders are Needed). **Registration due by January 28.** \$24 per participant, includes: t-shirt, light lunch, and service project supplies. Registration forms available at the Welcome Center, and checks to be made out to NCYB. Please see Amy Schroeder with any questions.

Salem Book Club

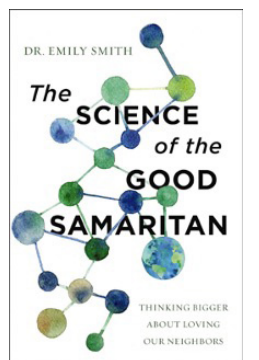
Salem Book Club will meet on **Wednesday, January 24 at 7:30pm via Zoom**. You are invited to join us! The book for this month is "The Science of the Good Samaritan" by Dr. Emily Smith.

About the book:

Join Dr. Emily Smith, global health expert and creator of the popular Facebook page Friendly Neighbor Epidemiologist, as she dives into what loving your neighbor--as illustrated in the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan--truly means. Combining Dr. Smith's expertise as a scientist with her deep Christian faith while drawing from her journey from small-town Texas to a prestigious university, "The Science of the Good Samaritan" shares fascinating stories from Dr. Smith's life and the lives of other inspiring people around the world to show us how to:

- Find shared values with people from different backgrounds, faiths, and cultures than our own
- Reach outside our immediate circles to bring in those on the margins
- Redefine our concept of "neighbor" and love our neighbors in more practical and global ways
- Bridge the gaps of society's disparities and inequities

You can help reimagine and create a better world--and it all starts with authentically loving your neighbor.



FROM THE PARISH NURSE, LORI REIMER

Salem Blood Drive, Jan 22 from 1pm-6pm

This time of year, we are making New Year's resolutions. Take a moment and make a resolution to give the gift of life. The short time it takes you to give could mean a lifetime to somebody else. Salem's next Blood Drive is **January 22, 2024, from 1pm-6pm** and you are eligible to give if you haven't donated since November 27, 2023. Sign-up at the Welcome Center or you can go online at redcrossblood.org and search for Peoria Salem. Whatever your reason is for giving, blood donors like you play an extremely important role to help ensure a safe and adequate blood supply is available during the winter months. If you are unsure of availability, walk-ins are welcome but signing up ahead does help insure adequate staffing and less waiting time. Also, don't forget to do the Rapid Pass before arriving to decrease your time at the drive.

If you have any questions, please contact Lori Reimer through the church office or her email, lreimer@salemofpeoria.com.



Thank You

In addition to warm items donated, thanks to your generosity through the Lessons and Carols offering and the Noisy Can Offering **\$2,344.57** was offered to the Center for Prevention of Abuse. Thank you!

The Faith Formation ministry team would like to extend a thank you to the Women of Salem for their gift of \$1,500 to the youth ministry program. This donation is being used to help with registration costs for our youth and chaperones, attending the synod youth retreat, and the ELCA national youth gathering. Faith Formation appreciate the generosity of the Women of Salem as they support the faith formation of our young people.

Thank you for the Christmas package full of cards and goodies. We love receiving them every year! - Betty and Matthew Bennett

Thank you for the bag of lovely Christmas cards. Please thank the Sunday school children for all the candy. Blessings to you all! -MaryAlice Erickson

Rebecca Circle

Rebecca Circle plans to meet on **Tuesday January 2 at 10am** at Salem.

Fair Trade

Fair Trade items will be available for purchase on **Sunday, January 7** in between worship services.

Salem Churchmen

Salem Churchmen will have a kitchen cleaning project 6pm on **Monday, January 22**, followed by Salem Churchmen meeting and pizza at 7pm.

Join us for our first rehearsal...

MORTON CIVIC CHORUS

**ENCORE
2024**

Bring a
singing friend!

January 8, 2024 • 7:00pm

Salem Lutheran Church

1700 W. War Memorial Drive • Peoria, Illinois

For information call our director, Denise Adams at 309-682-6237

2024 SHOW DATES:

May 23–25, 7:30pm • May 26, 2:00pm

Bertha Frank Performing Arts Center • Morton, Illinois
Adults \$20.00 • Students \$10.00 • All proceeds benefit



CENTRAL ILLINOIS
MEMORIAL KIDNEY FUND
P.O. Box 235, Morton, IL 61550

BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS! JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

January 1

Gregory Aubrey
Chris Johnson
David Mills
Kylie Swanson
Jennifer Wallstedt

January 2

Eleonore Hansen

January 4

Robert Arehart
Adam Oertley
Maryanne Rastatter

January 5

Matthew Wiesehan

January 8

Dorothy Strickler

January 9

Jacklyn McKinty

January 11

Liam Cochran
John Petrakis

January 12

Lynette Davis
Dean Doughty
Margaret Onyun
Meghan Onyun
Nathan Onyun

January 13

Lesly Baumgartner

January 17

Erinn Ambrosch

January 18

Kelly Knobloch
Anitra O'Connor
Andrea Roberts

January 19

Brent Salverson
Jason Sterr

January 20

Gwyn O'Day
Lauren Swanson

January 21

Quincy Ashby
Sharon Mollenhauer

January 22

Matthew Grebner
Dennis Gustafson

January 23

Richard Nelson

January 24

Betty Bennett
Rachel Gonzales
Rachel Malone

January 25

JoAnn Misselhorn

January 28

Jackie Ripper
Kaylee Stenzel

January 29

Jocyle Nolde

January 30

Donald Swanson

January 31

Gary Snider

PRAYER REQUESTS

• Salem's growing ministry

DIRECTION...

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

PRAYERS REQUESTS...

• The men and women of our armed forces
• Support for all caregivers when loved ones suffer
• Individuals suffering from depression

• Ulrich family in Malawi
• Jocette and Salih Arbeyi missionaries through CRU
• Families at Crittenton Center
• Midwest Food Bank
• Luan Borquist
• Butch Conard
• Karen Erickson
• the family of Vi Gruber
• Charles Hettrick
• Ron Hipple
• Julie Kotewa
• Brenda and Mike Newcomb
• Tim, Jessica, and Daniel

Peterson

• Linda Peterson
• Rosy Park
• Donita Lynn Purcell
• Brant Wegrzyn

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY...

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

Outreach: Serving Opportunities

All are invited to join Kelly Brinkman for a meeting on **Sunday, January 21 at 7PM** via Zoom to discuss plans for the Outreach ministry at Salem in 2024. As people "growing in Christ to love and serve," Outreach is looking for groups, and individuals, to help plan for proposed projects that serve the congregation as well as the local and global communities. New ideas are welcomed that can be impactful to outreach ministry. Please contact the church office for the zoom link, or if you have any questions. Come join to answer God's call to serve one another.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Lessons & Carols

Thank you to all participants that offered their talents as Salem Lutheran Church celebrated the beginning of the Advent Season with Lessons & Carols on **December 3.**

