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As we turn the page to close one year, we also open a new set of pages in a new year. We reflect on what has been but even more importantly, we anticipate what is yet to come. The year of Luke comes to a close while the year ahead will primarily be based on Matthew’s gospel. On January 4, we will join the magi in offering our gifts of worship to honor the newborn king, the first and greatest child of the most high God, Immanuel, God with us in the flesh for the sake of the world. January 11, we will celebrate this same child, now adult as Jesus begins his public ministry beginning with his baptism. On this Sunday, we will welcome cousins-Margaret and Ruth O’Connor to the family of faith through baptism as well as a three-generation family (Todd and Annette McKey, Gabriel and Jennie Smith and their children Audrey, Griffin, Grady) as new members of Salem. At the same time, we will give thanks to God for making us all members of the body of Christ and fellow workers in God’s kingdom as children of God and heirs of eternal life through the waters of Holy Baptism. On January 18, we will learn of the first disciples to be called into public ministry and we will ponder the question, “where are you staying?” It will be an exciting three-week journey and I am honored to proclaim the gospel with you.

A transition into the next year also gives me pause to give thanks to God for the privilege of being your pastor for the past 7 years but now to look into the future hope for me in retirement and for you to anticipate who God will bring to serve among you as your next called pastor. Bishop Busboom will be with us on January 25 to preach and formally bring a close to my call of service among you. There will be tears of sadness as we share our goodbyes but I pray there will also be tears of joy and celebration for the many ways God has blessed us through our time together as we lean



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into a future with hope. So dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we go our separate ways, be kind to one another encourage one another, reflect the love of Jesus together and know that Christ is with you.

Blessed to serve through Jesus with you!

Pastor Craig



WOMEN'S CIRCLES

REBECCA CIRCLE

Rebecca Circle will meet at Salem on **Tuesday January 13th** at 10am.

LYDIA CIRCLE

Wednesday, January 14th at 1:00 PM



JOIN US IN SERVICE CUDDLES WITH KINDNESS COLLECTION

We invite you, in the last weeks of our collection, to donate new, stuffed animals, with the tags still on, for the Cuddles with Kindness collection. Our collection tub has been moved to the first floor atrium area and will remain there until Sunday, **February 1st**. The items will then be delivered to Cuddles with Kindness for their Annual Valentine's Day Drive for the OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois.

For 17 years, Cuddles with Kindness® has been collecting stuffed animals for the OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois with a mission to provide comfort to children going through rough times. Thousands of kids who need extra snuggles will receive a cuddly stuffed animal.

Thank you for your support of this wonderful organization. If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Brinkman at kellyjasonbrinkman@att.net.

MIDWEST FOOD BANK

Come serve at Midwest Foodbank on Wednesday **January 28th, 9-11 am**.



HAPPENINGS



CALLING ALL CARING COOKS

The Caring Cooks ministry will have our first cooking session **Sunday, January 11th** immediately following coffee hour. Come ready to prep your favorite dish to freeze and share with Salem family and friends in need of a hot meal. We will have all necessary storage/freezer containers for your use!

Questions reach out to Gayle Young at gyoung9194@gmail.com or call 309-369-7113 .

FAIR TRADE SALE

Fair Trade items will be available for purchase on **Sunday, January 4th** after worship. Supporting fair trade ensures that producers in developing countries receive fair wages and work under ethical conditions, empowering communities and promoting sustainability. Thank you for your support!

If you are in need of items, you are welcome to contact:

Jennifer Gallas
(309) 256-5862
pew117@aol.com



HAPPENINGS

Birthday blessings!

JAN 1 David Mills Kylie Swanson Jennifer Wallstedt	JAN 13 Lesley Baumgartner JAN 17 Erinn Setterlund Ambrosch	JAN 28 Jackie Ripper Kaylee Stenzel JAN 30 Donald Swanson
JAN 2 Eleonore Hansen	JAN 18 Anitra O'Connor	JAN 31 Gary Snider
JAN 4 Robert Arehart Maryanne Rastatter	JAN 19 Brent Salverson Jason Sterr	
JAN 5 Allison Bridges	JAN 20 Gwyn O'Day	
JAN 8 Dorothy Strickler	JAN 21 Quincy Ashby	
JAN 9 Jacklyn McKinty	Sharon Mollenhauer	
JAN 10 Grace Miller	JAN 22 Matthew Grebner Dennis Gustafson Mitchell Shoultz	
JAN 11 Liam Cochran Matthew Reimer	JAN 24 Rachel Gonzales-Shoultz	
JAN 12 Dean Doughty Allysan Mohr	JAN 25 Kay Bartholomew	

If your name should have been on this list but wasn't, please call Salem's Office: (309)688-9212



BREAKING BREAD MINISTRY WINTER SESSION

The midweek Breaking Bread meals will begin again starting Wednesday, January 21st and will continue through **Wednesday, February 11.**

See the Bugle Blast for more information.

If you have any questions, contact Gayle Young at:

gyoung9194@gmail.com.

FAITH FORMATION

YOUNG ADULTS

ESCAPE ROOM JANUARY 6TH | 6-8PM

It's time for an escape room adventure at Escapetown Peoria! Put your teamwork and critical thinking skills to the test!

If you plan to attend, please let Kaitlyn know by December 28th so the spots can be reserved.

BREWED THEOLOGY STORYTELLING JANUARY 20TH | 6-8PM

This week we will be spending some time with Brewed Theology's guide on storytelling. How do we share our stories with others? Why is it important for us to not only tell our stories, but to hear the stories of others?

Join us this week to explore these questions together!

YOUNG ADULT CARE PACKAGES

Salem will be sending care packages to our young adults near and far. Along with some small treats, we like to include a gift card to a store, or restaurant.

If you would like to donate a gift card to this ministry, please contact Kelly Brinkman at kellyjasonbrinkman@att.net for more information about types of cards and amounts requested. Thanks so much for your generosity!



ANNUAL EPIPHANY SKIT JANUARY 11TH

There are no Sunday School classes (ages 2 years - high school) on January 4.

We will resume classes on **January 11** and will be celebrating Epiphany with our annual Epiphany Skit - stories about Jesus from his dedication in the Temple where we meet Simeon and Anna; King Herod's jealous rage of another king; visit of the Wise Men when Jesus was a very young child; flight to Egypt; and Jesus at the age of 12 years being left in the Temple by his family. All the stories where we learn more about who Jesus is and then carry us to his baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River as an adult.

Everyone is invited to join us! You might hear a story that isn't quite as familiar to you. The skit will take place in Second Floor Lounge at 10:30am.

WORSHIP MINISTRY

JANUARY WORSHIP VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

	DATE			
TEAM	Jan. 4	Jan. 11	Jan. 18	Jan. 25
Ushers	Earl & Bonnie Gallas	Larry & Julie Kotewa	Bill & Suzanne Ligon	Jeff & Pam Machacek
Welcome Team	Roberta & Lisa Coates	Schroeder Family	Roberta & Kaitlyn	Peterson Family
Lector	Susan Otten	Helene Peterson	Amy Hoffman	John Grabel & Seth Uphoff
Communion Assist.	Leo & Roxanne Vandervlugt	Todd & Kirsten Kelly	Craig and Gayle Young	Kammerer Family
Livestream Operator	Meghan Peterson	Mark Hartman	Aaron Grebner	Tim Hickey/Mark Janco
PPT	Landon Peterson	Isaac Hartman	Matt Morateck	Brent Wallstedt

- Please review the schedule for January.
- If you are scheduled to volunteer and cannot, please contact Danielle.
- If you are available and would like to volunteer, please contact Danielle.

WORSHIP MINISTRY

PACK THE PEWS!

As all of you probably know by now, Pastor Craig’s last Sunday with us here at Salem will be on **January 25, 2026.**

The Worship & Music committee is planning a festive celebration to commemorate Pastor’s time here at Salem Lutheran Church. Our Bishop Busboom is planning to attend as well.

So...we would like to Pack the Pews to give Pastor Craig and Karen a heartfelt “Bon Voyage,” a tribute, as well as a Thank You for the many years of leadership we enjoyed.

As you are able, we strongly encourage the entire Salem membership to come to Church that particular Sunday to help with this celebration! For those unable to come to church or live farther away, you can still be part of this celebration via live-streaming/internet services.

Come one, come all!

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Jim Morose (friend of Earl Gallas)
 - Lynn Akers
 - Dennis Rhoades
 - Luan Borquist
 - Joanie Creager
 - Maddy, friend of Julia Wallstedt
 - Mike
 - Tim, Jessica, Daniel Peterson
 - Linda Peterson
- Kay Peterson
 - Sheryl Sattler
 - Jocette and Salih Arbeyi (missionaries through CRU)
 - Tim Walters
 - Greg Gebhards
 - Thelma Neal
 - Sally Smith
 - Dennis Gustafson
- PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY:

 - Ian Borquist
 - Gibson Gonzalez
 - Emily Graff
 - Barry Joyce
 - Talon Maki
 - Greg Miller
 - Ashley Owen (deployed)
 - Lucas Owen
 - Jim Sterling
 - Jason Sterr



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