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# Pastor's Ponderings

Blessed Pentecost, Salem! Can you believe we've been partners in ministry here at Salem for 3 months? Time flies!

Our journey together began just 10 days after the start of Lent (what a season to jump in to a new Interim!). We journeyed through Lent together, with Kaitlyn leading Wednesday Lenten services here at Salem, SAM Dave Griffith filling in when Kaitlyn was at Luther Seminary, and opportunities to gather for Lenten services in the evening with our sister congregation at First

English. Each Sunday in Lent we explored whether we were leading with curiosity or certainty in our lives, and heard Jesus' invitation to embrace curiosity.

As we moved through the holiest days of the church's year, from Palm/Passion Sunday, through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, to the resurrection joy of Easter Sunday, we celebrated Jesus' victory over sin, death, and evil through the power of God's expansive love for all people and creation.

Now, some 50 days after Easter Sunday, we continue to gather each week, celebrating the gift of the Holy Spirit set loose in the world on the Day of Pentecost!

The Holy Spirit is certainly moving here at Salem. In these last 3 months, we've acknowledged and continue to process the collective grief here at Salem brought on by Pastor Craig's retirement. We've just begun to learn what a time of transition feels like as a church, complete with uncertainty, anxiety, new learnings, a bit of discomfort, and the realization that God has not abandoned the people of Salem along this new journey.

We've also celebrated God's faithfulness to us and all people, and the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon God's beloved in these past 3 months. We experienced the promise of the Holy Spirit at baptism, where we all were sprinkled by the waters of baptism at the hands of children, and witnessed with joy and wonder as the waters washed over Henry. We heard the promise of God's unfailing love and life eternal at Dennis' funeral, where we were assured that nothing and no one can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We gave thanks for the creativity of our young people as they shared "The Way of the Cross" with us the Sunday after Easter. We celebrated God's faithfulness as we gave thanks for and blessed our high school graduates as they embark upon the next adventure in their lives. We continue to share God's love and grace with our siblings in Christ at LHV in monthly worship, and by bringing Holy Communion to our homebound members. With gratitude we celebrated God's faithfulness as survivors gathered to praise and pray at Pray for the Cure, and we thanked God for the gifts of teachers and students at Salem Lutheran Preschool's graduation.

In just 12 short weeks, we've witnessed time and time again that God is faithful, Jesus lives, and the Spirit is moving in and among us, Salem, and the world.

Where will the Spirit blow us next, dear church? How can we lean into God's promises of love, grace, mercy, and hope? How might we open our hearts and minds to what the Spirit is doing? Where and how will God do a new thing in our midst?

I don't have all (or any?) of the answers, but one thing is certain: God is faithful, Jesus lives, and the Spirit is moving. God is doing a new thing, and we have the opportunity to join the work of the Spirit. Thanks be to God!

Leaning into hope,

*Pastor Jen*



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## NOISY CAN OFFERING

The Noisy Can offering for Lutheran Social Services of Illinois on Good Shepherd Sunday, April 26th totaled \$529.86.



## LADIES NIGHT OUT

Join us for a Ladies Night Out on Monday, **June 29** at **6:00** at Salem.

**PEORIA CHIEFS GAME**

**JOIN US ON JULY 24<sup>TH</sup> AT THE BALLPARK!**

The Salem Churchmen and Faith Formation will be sponsoring a Chief's game on July 24<sup>th</sup> with more information and a sign-up sheet available later in June.

CONTACT JEFF MACHACEK FOR MORE INFO

## WOMEN'S CIRCLES

### REBECCA CIRCLE

Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM

## FAIR TRADE SALE

Fair Trade items will be available for purchase on **Sunday, June 14th** after worship.

Please contact Jennifer Gallas at 309-256-5862 or at [pew117@aol.com](mailto:pew117@aol.com) if you need Fair Trade items.



# HAPPENINGS

## THANK YOU!

The Salem Churchmen would like to thank the following people who came and assisted on workday on May 2nd:

Eric Schroeder,  
Amy Schroeder,  
Joel Brinkman,  
Jason Brinkman,

Dean Doughty,  
Jason Lantz,  
Gary Setterlund,  
Rosemary Swanson

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

RAINFOREST FALLS JULY 6-9

Faith Formation Ministry at Salem invites children to attend Vacation Bible School at Glen Oak Christian Church. This program is sponsored by Glen Oak Christian and First English Lutheran churches and is **July 6-9 from 6-8 p.m.** Volunteer help is needed, and youth and adults from sister congregations are encouraged to sign up and support this amazing faith forming ministry happening in the heart of Peoria. Please contact Kaitlyn at [kjedrzejowski@salemofpeoria.com](mailto:kjedrzejowski@salemofpeoria.com), or Gretchen Petrakis at [gpetrakis@salemofpeoria.com](mailto:gpetrakis@salemofpeoria.com) if you have any questions.

**Rainforest Falls VBS**  
**July 6-9, 6-8 pm**

**PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION:**



**Hosted at Glen Oak Christian Church**  
**Staff Dinners at 5pm**

**Staff Training:**  
**June 17, 6:30-8pm**  
at Glen Oak Christian Church

**Prop Pick Up:**  
**June 21 (time TBA)**  
at Woodland Baptist Church

**VOLUNTEER SIGN UP:**



## *Birthday blessings!*

**JUNE 1**

Sophia Doty

**JUNE 19**

Earl Gallas  
Donna Miller

**JUNE 2**

Dawn Koeltzow

**JUNE 21**

Edell Berg

**JUNE 3**

John Ford  
Scott Kalbacken

**JUNE 22**

Jeffrey Bastian  
Timothy Hamann  
Shane Snyder

**JUNE 4**

Jane Topel

**JUNE 23**

Morgan Lott  
Jennifer Swanson

**JUNE 6**

Robert Suelter

**JUNE 24**

Walker Koeltzow  
Caleb Lott

**JUNE 7**

Sis Gavin  
Robert Petrakis

**JUNE 25**

Marilyn Smith

**JUNE 9**

Rebecca Snyder

**JUNE 26**

Shawn Blum  
Amy Boland

**JUNE 11**

Mark Hartman

**JUNE 27**

Paula Sydow  
Maxwell Thompson

**JUNE 13**

Grady Smith

**JUNE 14**

Tatum Dierking

**JUNE 30**

Brant Wegrzyn

**JUNE 15**

Mary Luan Borquist

**JUNE 17**

Travis Janco  
Jeff Machacek

**JUNE 18**

Clarence Knutson  
Stacy Lantz

**If your name should have been on this list but it wasn't, please call Salem's Office:**

**(309)688-9212**

## BOOK CORNER

Summer reading opportunities are here! It's the perfect time to learn more and grow in your faith. Join us this summer as we read and discuss selected books. Information about the books we are reading along with the times for discussions can be found in the weekly Bugle Blast newsletters and at the Welcome Center.

You may also contact Gretchen Petrakis, Kelly Brinkman, or the church office if you have any questions.

Happy reading!



## THANK YOU TEACHERS!

We give thanks for the people that have guided our children and youth in faith formation in Sunday School classes this year. Their dedication and devotion to Salem's young people is inspiring and worthy of our gratitude. Thank you to Becky Hagen, Karen Holmes, Amy Schroeder, and Rebecca Sipf for their gifts of teaching and their willingness to share these gifts with others. Thank you also to Kelly and Jason Brinkman for their musical and leadership gifts and their willingness to lead and guide us in making a joyful noise to the Lord each week during our Music Opening. Thank you to Becky Hagen, as well, for planning and organizing the lessons and activities for the Sunday School lessons - making sure that each class had their supplies and creative and engaging activities to go with our lesson each week.

Thank you, also, to Inez Norgard and Jeanne Setterlund for their willingness to serve as substitute teachers and fill in throughout the year. And also deep gratitude to Joann and Randy Blum who shared their gifts with us throughout the year when we had Service Projects and Drama Activities - and we had a great many of these! Their willingness to be there and assist however needed is greatly appreciated.

When you see these people, please extend your thanks and praise for their service and acts of love to Salem's children and youth. We greatly appreciate you!

# SUMMER COOKOUT

On June 28<sup>th</sup> at 5pm at Detweiller's Moose Shelter, Salem will be hosting a summer cookout! There will be delicious food, a prayer walk, and fun summer lawn games.

There will also be some friendly competition with a dessert contest, so bring a yummy dessert to share! Please RSVP at the QR code below or at Salem's Welcome Center. If you have any questions, please reach out to Faith Formation.



# OUTREACH MINISTRY

## MIDWEST FOOD BANK VOLUNTEER NIGHT RECAP

Salem’s involvement in the Midwest Food Bank Volunteer Night on April 29 was both impactful and enjoyable. The event was very well attended, bringing together two youth volunteers and 11 adults for an evening of service and fellowship. Working as a team, the group successfully repackaged 800 pounds of crackers from bulk quantities into smaller, distribution-ready packages. This effort helps ensure that food can be easily shared with individuals and families in need.



Building on this positive experience, Outreach hopes to organize a second Midwest Food Bank volunteer evening in the fall, continuing Salem’s commitment to serving the community and supporting this important mission.



## NOISY CAN OFFERING JUNE 7TH

A Noisy Can offering will be collected on **June 7** to support the Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar.

The Central/Southern Illinois Synod (C/SIS) continues to extend its ministry beyond local boundaries through a vibrant and meaningful relationship with Lutheran communities in Madagascar. This global partnership reflects the Synod’s commitment to shared faith, mutual learning, and collaborative service in Christ’s name.

The Malagasy Lutheran Church is one of the fastest-growing Lutheran bodies in the world, with more than 4 million baptized members, offering a powerful witness to the vitality of faith in Madagascar. Madagascar itself is a place of remarkable uniqueness and contrast. It is the fourth largest island in the world, known for its extraordinary biodiversity. Nearly 90% of its wildlife exists nowhere else on earth, including more than 100 species of lemurs. The island also produces 80% of the world’s natural vanilla, making it an important contributor to global agriculture. Often called the “Great Red Island” due to the iron-rich soil that colors much of its landscape, Madagascar is both rich in natural beauty and challenged by economic hardship. Despite its abundant resources and biodiversity, approximately 90% of the population lives on less than \$2 a day.



At the core of this ministry is the Synod’s companion relationship with the Ambovombe-Androy and Faradofay Synods of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. This partnership is grounded in a model known as “accompaniment,” which emphasizes mutuality, inclusivity, vulnerability, and sustainability. Rather than a one-directional mission effort, accompaniment is about walking together—learning from one another, supporting each other’s ministries, and growing in faith as equal partners.

This relationship is strengthened through ongoing communication, shared resources, prayer, and visits between leaders and congregations. In recent years, leaders from the Malagasy Lutheran Church have traveled to Central Illinois, offering opportunities for worship, fellowship, and cultural exchange. Future visits by Synod leadership to Madagascar will continue to nurture this connection, building deeper understanding and strengthening ties between the communities.

# OUTREACH MINISTRY

## GO TOGETHER

Salem continues to live out its mission of service and discipleship through meaningful partnerships and hands-on opportunities to serve others. One recent example was participation in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod’s “Go Together!” relation-trip to Champaign-Urbana on April 18, 2026. This Synod-wide event brought together more than 60 individuals from 20 congregations for a day centered on connection, service, and shared faith. Hosted at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Champaign, the gathering provided an opportunity for participants to engage in community-focused service projects while building relationships across congregations. Salem was represented by five participants, who took part in both morning and/or afternoon service sessions. The event highlighted the importance of coming together as a unified body of believers, working collaboratively to live out Christ’s mission. In addition to the hands-on work completed, the opportunity to connect with others from across the Synod was a meaningful aspect of the experience.



## PRAYER REQUESTS

- Gary & Vicki Johnson (for their grandson)
- Jim Morose (friend of Earl Gallas)
- Dennis Rhoades
- Luan Borquist
- Joanie Creager
- Maddy, friend of Julia Wallstedt
- Mike
- Tim, Jessica, Daniel, Sarah Peterson
- Linda Peterson
- Kay Peterson
- Sheryl Sattler
- Jocette and Salih Arbeyi (missionaries through CRU)

- Tim Walters
- Greg Gebhards
- Sally Smith
- Dennis Gustafson
- Crystal Grabel
- Niki Keffer
- Allen Bidne
- Pastor Joel Brown
- Merrell Hickey
- Katherine (Joyce Crone’s daughter’s sister-in-law)
- Florence Clark
- Gina Sackman
- Dee Basfield
- Niki Keefer

### PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY:

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

The Bugle  
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