



# Salem Lutheran Church OUTREACH September 2018

## We invite you to join us for our weekly Worship Services:

### Sunday:

8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship Service

9:30 a.m. Coffee Fellowship- Fellowship Hall

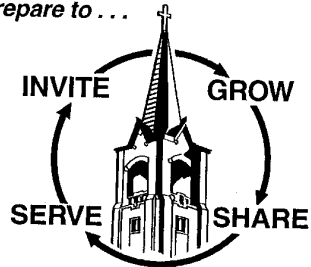
9:45 a.m. Faith Formation- Chapel

10:30 a.m. Outdoor Worship Service

### Saturday:

5:30 p.m. Casual Worship

Prepare to . . .



. . . for Christ's sake

**Pastor Joel Guttormson**  
641.596.0535 ~ joelguttormson@gmail.com

**Pastor Melinda McCluskey**  
563.581.9965 ~ melindamcmc@gmail.com

**Helen Rice, Church Secretary**  
641.592.1771 ~ salem@wctatel.net

**Ruth Sheldon, Organist**  
641.592.0184

**Ashley Hoffman, Communications Director**  
641.590.3087 ~ SalemLMinfo@gmail.com

Jonathan Happel, Worship Coordinator  
641.590.6333 ~ Jonthan.Happel@waldorf.edu

### MISSION

Salem Lutheran Church members have known and now extend to others the invitation from Jesus Christ to know him and his gifts of forgiveness, hope, peace, and purpose. Our desire is to be a welcoming place in service to the Lord who has welcomed us. We seek to grow in our faith through meaningful worship and study. We seek to share the gifts of Christ, both as individuals who reach out in love to our families, our community, our workplaces, and our world, and also as a congregation reaching out with meaningful and supportive services and programming to people of all ages. We seek to be servants, following the example of our Lord Jesus, who said that the greatest life is not the one lived simply for itself, but for the benefit of others.

## *A Message from Pastor Joel Guttormson...*

### SALEM AT THE MOVIES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 AT 10:30 AM AND 5:30 PM

"As churches close and budgets shrink, the new ministers who hear the call to serve must adopt new roles in changing communities....The unchurching of America over the past two decades has been gradual but unrelenting. Baptisms among Minnesota Catholics and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Minnesota's largest Protestant denomination, have plunged about 40 percent since 2000. A record 1 in 5 Americans now reports no membership to organized religion, according the Pew Research Center. The average Sunday church attendance is now fewer than 100. Pastors and priests are among the casualties. One in four of the 9,100 churches in the ELCA can no longer afford a pastor...That's the same for the nation's 17,100 Catholic parishes, according to Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA)."

"We're all asking: How do you creatively engage in the community around you when they don't necessarily care about the church anymore?" said Kyle Roberts, vice president of academic affairs at United Theological Seminary in New Brighton. "It requires a new mind-set and training." (excerpts from an article, "TEST OF FAITH: THE UNCHURCHING OF AMERICA, FEWER MINISTERS, HEAVIER BURDEN." (Minneapolis Star Tribune) by Jean Hopfensperger, August 18, 2018).

About four years ago I began having conversations with an ecumenical group of colleagues after reading a book by Thom & Joani Schultz "Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore" ©2013 group Publishing. Ironically, we met once a month in a once vibrant church in Brunswick Maryland that had closed and had been transformed into a coffee shop after standing vacant for a number of years.

Here are just a few of the statistics they site in their introduction to the book, four out of five Americans say they're sure God exists and identify themselves with a faith group. But less then half of them ever attend church...Every year, 2.7 million church members fall into inactivity...from 1990 to 2000, the combined membership of all Protestant denominations in the U.S. declined by almost 5 million members (9.5 percent) while the U.S. population increased by

24 million (11 percent)....Every year, more than 4,000 churches close their doors...These are just a few of the many statistics that play out in many congregations you and I have worshiped and cared about in our lifetimes.

Then I took the call to serve as lead pastor at Salem in March of 2016. In October of 2017 I continued this conversation at the headquarters of Group Publishing in Loveland Colorado, attending a three-day educational event, The Future of the Church Summit. There I had the opportunity to meet with pastors and lay leaders of many national and international denominations and independent Christian faith organizations.

Now I'm asking you to join me in this conversation Monday, September 10, in our chapel, either at 10:30 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. as we preview the documentary movie, "When God Left the Building." I attended a screening of the movie with the director a year ago at Group Publishing in Loveland, CO. Director Thom Schultz documents the demise of a congregation that couldn't change to uncover why churches – once the heart and soul of their communities – are now shrinking in both size and influence. What he discovers gives unprecedented insight and serves as a powerful wake-up call. The movie reveals the heartache of a church in decline, a congregation that's seen attendance plunge from 900 to 40. It also offers glimmers of hope in new forms of church that are thriving, from a pup outreach in Pennsylvania to a Texas ministry that gathers in 300 neighborhoods every week.

As Salem is involved in a transformational process with the Joshua Group and we think about our ministry, its resources, staffing, building and maintenance needs; it's continued connection to the ELCA and area congregations; to former and future members those active and inactive; where is God and what is God calling us to? Has God left the building? Might God be calling us to do the same?

Pastor Joel

## *A Message from Pastor Melinda McCluskey...*

### **MINDFULNESS IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION by Tim Stead**

This article was featured in the Summer 2018: Mindfulness and Meditation print issue.

The story goes back to the 1970s when Jon Kabat-Zinn, with a PhD in molecular biology, began to develop a meditation-based program to help support people suffering from chronic pain. When he began to realize that the practices might have some significant health benefits, he developed an eight-week program that later became known as Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction. Mindfulness can be described as being more fully aware of your own experience in the present moment in a nonjudgmental way. As he would be the first to admit, mindfulness was not invented by Jon Kabat-Zinn! As a Buddhist friend of mine once said in response to someone's lazy assertion that mindfulness had been invented in America 25 years ago: "Perhaps you should change continents and add on a couple of zeroes!"

But many rightly will argue that something very similar to mindfulness has been around in the Christian tradition since the beginning too. We haven't called it mindfulness. We've called it "silent prayer" or "contemplative prayer," "the desert tradition" or "mystical theology," but it has been there from Jesus, through St. Paul, all the way up to the present. Still, Christianity urgently needs to take on board the insights of mindfulness, and there are three things in particular I would like to note here.

First, there is the particularly Western emphasis on the intellectual, with the corresponding caution, if not downright mistrust, of our experience. We are rightly proud of our intellectual tradition in the West, but there has been an equivalent danger of seeing spirituality as something that happens primarily in the head in terms of pure, beautiful and "correct" thoughts about God. Second, the Western tradition has a history of negative attitudes toward the body as well as the material in general. But God made us mind and body; furthermore, having made us this way, God declared us "good." Third, we need to consider the consequences of our over-emphasis, in Western teaching, on personal sin and judgment. I fully accept that there are actions I may take that are harmful both to myself and to others and that these actions often originate in the mind or with body impulses. But many testify

nowadays that the way we have spoken about these things and the guilt and shame that has been evoked has not, actually, led to changed lives. In fact, it seems more often that it has led to a very harmful kind of repression.

All these things are forms of the “dualism” that has marked recent centuries of Christian development in the West. Gradually we are coming to see such leanings as an aberration from earlier forms of faith and certainly not helpful for the path toward wholeness. The Gospels, though, seem to me to be full of this more holistic approach to spirituality.

### **The Parable: “Waking Up”**

“When he came to his senses, he said: ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!’” (Luke 15:17, NIV).

The parable of the prodigal son is a beautiful story and one that perfectly illustrates the sense of awareness we are trying to explore. Have you ever had the experience of suddenly “coming to” while being fully awake, in the normal sense of the word, all the time? Maybe you were driving along without really thinking. And suddenly you realize where you are and what you have been thinking about for the past who knows how long. This is what happened to the prodigal. He had made some choices and followed them through on a very long journey until he was miles from home. He would have had to think quite carefully, on one level, about travel, board, and lodgings, choices of various forms of entertainment to spend his money on, and the various business transactions required along the way. So his brain was indeed operating, perhaps very effectively. But in another sense he was sleepwalking, with no real awareness of where he was going or where he would inevitably end up.

In the prodigal’s case, it was only when he was reduced to absolute poverty that he “came to his senses.” In other words, there came a moment when he “woke up” from his dream and realized where he was and what he was doing. Only then did he recognize the fact that he did have a choice. He could carry on as he was, or he could return to his father and start again.

We are only ever partly awake—partly aware. If we want to know God and God’s will for us, we need to wake up to where we are and what we are doing. Sometimes it takes a traumatic event to wake us up. But how much better it would be if we spent time practicing waking up. This is what mind-

fulness practice does.

### **The Vignette: “Being” and “Doing”**

“There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part” (Luke 10:42).

The visit of Jesus to Mary and Martha is an oft-quoted story, especially by those of us who would advocate the contemplative life over the active life. I remember the time a preacher opened this passage up to me by saying that there was a bit of Mary and a bit of Martha in all of us. We are not one or the other, but perhaps we ought to understand this as two ways of being in life. I don’t think we can assume that Jesus is saying that sitting and listening is better per se than getting the work done. But he may have been suggesting that there are two ways of being in life, and that we need both, but Mary’s way is of primary importance. Taking time to sit and become aware of Jesus’ words to us must be our starting point. Becoming more fully aware of the big picture must take priority before we rush to do stuff.

The trouble is that for many of us, “doing stuff” is all we know; sitting and listening is a bit of a closed book. Mindfulness, then, helps to develop this kind of awareness.

### **The Prophet: “Making Way”**

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Mark 1:3).

It could be said that John the Baptist is to Jesus as mindfulness is to prayer or the work of God. John came not to save, not to do the work himself, but to help people get ready so that when the moment arrived—when the Savior came—they would be in a place where they were ready to receive what Jesus had to offer.

Mindfulness itself does not fix things but seeks to open up a space where things might (if appropriate) be fixed. In fact, it teaches us more about not fixing things and about learning that it is not our place to try to save ourselves. But it does teach us the skill of opening things up—bringing concerns to the surface—so that, in God’s time and in God’s way, they might be healed or restored. Jesus talked about how what is hidden will be disclosed and what is secret will be brought to light (Mark 4:22). This is what mindfulness does. Then, when things are disclosed and in the light, there is

the chance that God can be more a part of them so that healing or “fixing” may come.

When I started sharing these passages with a group of mainly Christians who had just completed a mindfulness course, a number of other passages with a possible connection with mindfulness began to come to mind.

- On learning the way of not striving: “Look at the birds in the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather in barns, and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matthew 6:26).
- On learning to live in the present moment: “Jesus proclaimed, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near’” (Mark 1:15); “Give us each day our daily bread” (Luke 11:5).
- On learning to perceive in a different way (not primarily intellectual or cognitive): Jesus declares that the purpose of the parables is that “they may indeed look but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand” (Mark 4:12).
- On receiving physical sight: the discourse in John’s Gospel after Jesus healed the blind man (John 9).
- On waking up to something that has been under our noses all along: the disciples who eventually recognized Jesus when he broke the bread at the end of the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–31).
- On the primary dynamic of spirituality of “being” not “doing”: Jesus told us to “Abide in me as I abide in you” (John 15:4).

There is a danger, of course, when you have started to think about mindfulness, to read mindfulness into every Scripture text you come across, but there seems to be enough here to give us certain confidence that, far from straying away from Jesus’ spirituality, we appear to be straying right into the heart of it.

This article was featured in the Summer 2018: Mindfulness and Meditation print issue.

**Salem Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes**

**August 13, 2018 – 5:30pm**

President Brad Evenson called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Members present: Brad Evenson, Mike Swenson, Sondra Nelson, Willie Skellenger, Kathy Chose, Delane Behr, Stephanie Steffens, Linda Helgeson, Kathy Nelson, Heidi Obermeyer, Pastor Melinda McCluskey and Pastor Joel Guttormson.

Devotions and Prayers were led by Pastor Joel. A reading from the book of Acts explored Paul's transformation and culture of the time. We enjoyed an audio clip from the Eastern Mennonite University.

**Secretary's report:** Motion made by Mike, seconded by Sondra to approve minutes of previous meeting. All approved.

**Correspondence:** A thank you was received from Life Serve Blood Center. The Lake Mills community had 36 total donors. A personal thank you from Hannah Evenson was shared.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mike reported the month end checking account balance was \$7,946.44. Total income for the month of July \$21,553.00 with total expenses \$26,242.62. Ending in a negative balance -\$4,689.62.

**Financial Secretary's Report:** no report

A motion was made by Kathy, seconded by Steph to accept the financial reports as written. All approved.

**Board of Worship & Music:** Kathy Chose reported the resignation of Jonathan Happel. Discussion was help regarding the disposal of the old piano and installation of the new one to be completed by Rally Sunday.

**Board of Life and Growth / Board of Stewardship and Social Ministry:** Willie reported the committee had met and discussed upcoming event planning celebrating the laying of the cornerstone of Salem Lutheran Church- 1919. Possible events: wedding dress fashion show, basket auction, \$100 challenge, participate in July Jubilee Parade, create museum of artifacts and historical items, interviews with Historians, Dinner, DVD compilation of Salem, creation of banner to display on the outside of the church. The group is looking for more ideas and additional help. The group met with Tim Johnson and looked at promoting generosity in the church with a proposed change of name of this

group to the Generosity Group.

**Board of Property and Management:** Delane and this group have diligently been working on gathering information to properly maintain the building and keep as cost effective as possible.

**Board of Youth:** Sondra presented a written report highlighting the events of the upcoming year. The group had met and had a 2 hour planning session. Information will be shared on the facebook page. The groups next meeting date 9/16 @ 7pm. Rally Sunday will be held on 9/9.

**Lead Pastor's Report:** Pastor Joel submitted a written report noting Pastoral Acts for the month of July, including a baptism, nursing home visit and hospice visit while on vacation. Also noted, support to One-In-Christ, Bethany, ongoing work with the Joshua Group, Faith Formation and Confirmation Ministry Planning, Fall Leadership Event, Support to members and families in support of our LGBT members, families and community, Coffee Fellowship Mondays, Stewardship, noting Salem has only sent 18% of our benevolence to the synod this year. Discussion was held regarding the wonderful attendance of all camp opportunities for the youth of Salem.

**Associate Pastor's Report:** Pastor Melinda submitted a written report noting Pastoral Acts for the months of June and July. Pastor Melinda also highlighting the need of people going through life changes i.e.: moving from independent to assisted living, shut-ins, etc. to receive pastoral care. Please keep her informed of people going through these changes. There will be a lock in event Oct 12-13 for youth. A request was made by Pastor Melinda to remove the 2 front pews in the church for ease of funerals, Lenten services and youth events and signing. All electrical outlets etc. to be flush mounted. A motion was made by Willie and seconded by Steph to proceed with the removal of the pews, to be placed in storage. All approved.

**Communication Director's Report:** no report

A motion was made by Kathy to approve all reports as written, seconded by Mike. All approved.

**Old Business:** Door opening/unlocking. No action was taken.

**New Business:** Discussion was held regarding proposed By-Law Changes. The proposed changes will move Salem forward to be concurrent with the most

recent edition of the Model Constitution for Congregations of the ELCA adopted in 2016.

Associate Membership for Brian John Endrei Erickson, Sara Lynn Melton and Dylan Milton-Erickson, Babylon NY. A motion was made by Mike and seconded by Willie to accept new associate memberships. All Approved.

Transfer: Neil & Gaye Sletten to Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons MN. Kathy made a motion, seconded by Sondra to accept transfer. After a call for votes, motion carried with 1 opposing vote by Willie.

Our next regular Meeting will be: September 10, 2018. We prayed the Lord's Prayer in closing.

Respectfully Submitted, Heidi Obermeyer

**SALEM RECORDS August**

**Memorials:**

Arlene Fosness: General Fund \$10

Arneida Fosness: General Fund \$10 (correction)

**Transfers:**

Neil and Gaye Sletten

**Weddings:**

Samaria Schmidt and James Weisenborn

**Baptisms:**

Dylan Endrei Melton-Erickson

**The Good Samaritan Ministry is Team is requesting your help!** We are in need of donations to replenish our funds. Our mission is to support our community members in times of need, as modeled to us by the Good Samaritan. Thank you for your help!

## RALLY WITH ONE IN CHRIST LUTHERAN PARISH

Salem will not be having a second service at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 9th into order to have the opportunity to celebrate the Fifteenth Anniversary celebration of the One in Christ Parish at 10:00 a.m. on that Sunday, at the Lake Mills School Auditorium.

Pastor Randy Baldwin sent us a letter greeting and invitation to the celebration in which he writes: "It's hard to believe but it has already been fifteen years since the first joint worship service of One in Christ Lutheran Parish was held at Lake Mills High School, where all seven congregations came together to worship installing five pastors and a Youth Worker. One thing that has been consistent for our life is change. North Prairie closed. Salem's leadership liked the goals of the parish, but decided the parish wasn't the vehicle to let them pursue their goals so Salem voted out of the Parish. Pastors and our Youth Worker took different calls. Sion decided to leave the Parish and Lunder joined the parish. Lots of changes. At the same time lots of ministry together and lots of reasons to celebrate."

As a pastor called to serve as the lead pastor of Salem, I have so appreciate the continued ministry and collegiality Pastor Melinda and I (Pastor Joel) share with Pastor Bill and Pastor Randy and the members of One in Christ. We meet almost weekly for text study and have joint VBS programing. Pastor Randy continues to lead our members in shepherding a joint Steven's Ministry. Pastor Norris has helped shepherd a monthly Caregivers Support Group facilitated by Rachel Olson. I thoroughly enjoy the weekly bible study at Mills Harbor led by Pastor Bill. Our Confirmation Youth can yearly attend the Middle School Lock-in at UNI, the yearly field trip to either Wartburg or Luther Colleges, the community Food Drive and a yearly Bowling with One in Christ fellowship event. Lake Mills could not offer the Summer Meal program without our joint commitment to the program. We have since added the week long July Jubilee Day Camp. We were so blessed to have been able to send four of our youth and two adult chaperones to the Youth Gathering this summer with the Pastors Randy and Bill and youth of One in Christ; which also allowed me to share some pulpit supply opportunities with Scarville, Lunder and Silver Lake. There have also been many times when we were able to offer joint pastoral care to grieving members of both our churches and those in our community, regardless of church affiliation at the funeral of a

loved one.

I would beg to differ with one thing in Pastor Randy Baldwin's letter, what I have witnessed in three years of ministry in Lake Mills is that "Salem's goals" are indeed "shared goals" and my experience is that Salem is only able to reach these shared goals because we continue to be "One in Christ," regardless of any formal agreements we may or may not share. And I whole heartedly agree there continues to be, "Lot's of changes. At the same time lots of ministry together and lots of reasons to celebrate.

So, let us Celebrate! Pastor Darrel Garretts will again preach as he did on that Sunday morning in March fifteen years ago. Following the worship service, there will be a catered meal, followed by a short blue-grass concert and some family games, concluding with an ice cream social. Randy closes his letter of invitation to Salem with the salutation, "It's a blessing to still be working together with Salem in a variety of ways." I whole heartedly agree. As Luther might say, "this is most certainly true!"



**You can just about feel it in the slightly shorter days...Generosity Season is almost here!**

**What is Generosity Season?** That is what we call the part of the calendar stretching from back-to-school time to Christmas.

As summer ends, so does the summer slump, leading to more generosity from members returning from summer vacations and activities. Next, there's fall with it's festivals and pumpkin sales, followed by Thanksgiving, a time of reflection and generosity. And then, of course, Christmas, the most generous time of the year.

**Give Plus** text maximizes our church's ability to receive generous gifts during this season.

Stop by the church office or visit our website to learn more!

*Salem Women of the ELCA*

**Altar Guild**

Sept. 4th at 7pm

**Altar Guild for September**

Sharon Casey  
Jean Rondeau

**WELCA Meeting**

Sept. 20th at 2pm

**Communion Schedule**

Sundays, Sept. 2nd and 16th (8:30)

Sundays, Sept. 2nd, 9th, 16th,  
23rd and 30th (10:30)

Saturdays, Sept. 1st and 15th

**Mills Harbour & LMCC**

Wednesday, Sept. 26th

**Birthdays:** Martha Circle

**Program:** Sarah Circle

*September Worship Schedule*

**Saturdays:**

Casual worship at 5:30 pm in the lounge

**Sundays:**

Traditional service at 8:30am in the sanctuary

Coffee fellowship at 9:30am in the fellowship hall

Contemporary service at 10:30 in the sanctuary

**Rally Sunday and Faith Formation registration will be Sunday, September 9th at 9:15am. Faith Formation will begin September 16th from 9:35-10:20am.**

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**Salem Lutheran Church**  
401 South Lake Street  
Lake Mills, IA 50450

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