



# Salem Lutheran Church

## OUTREACH

### April 2019

#### 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.** Contemporary 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

#### 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..*

Recently Salem Lutheran Church addressed a request from a same-sex couple to be married. We are in a process of prayer, conversation and discernment, whether to allow Salem’s pastor(s) the authority to use their discretion in approving and presiding over all pastoral acts taking place in the sanctuary. Extending this pastoral care our LGBTQ brothers and sisters, their families and supporters, has been a major issue in many of our mainline denominations leading to major schisms. It has been a cause of concern in our congregation and community as well.

Since four letters to the editor have been published in the Graphic in the recent weeks in opposition to Salem’s process of discernment about becoming a more open and affirming congregation, I have decided to weigh in as well. These thoughts are my own, based on over twenty years of conversations, bible study and prayer, reading and attending conferences and continuing education events. I am aware and accept that colleagues, family members, parishioners and many others, have deeply held convictions that differ. I share mine in a spirit of Christian charity as understood by Thomas Aquinas holding to, “the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God” (Catechism of the Catholic Church).

For Lutherans the most recent split came in 2009, upon the adoption of a social statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust by a vote of 676-338. There is a schism challenging unity of Methodists now, after the UMC General Conference held in St. Louis in February 2019. By a 438-384 vote the conference upheld “The Traditional Plan” rather than passing the “One Church Plan,” allowing for unity despite differences of thought and action in the U.S. and abroad. In 1985 the United Church of Christ (UCC) began a process of welcome of all persons regardless of their gender identity and as of April of 2017, twenty-seven percent of UCC congregations are Open and Affirming as well as twenty of the UCC 38 regional conferences, most new church starts, all seven seminaries affiliated with the UCC and several UCC-related campus ministries.

“In 1976, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church declared that “homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim

with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church”; In 2003, the first openly gay bishop was consecrated; in 2009, General Convention resolved that God’s call is open to all; in 2012, a provisional rite of blessing for same-gender relationships was authorized, and discrimination against transgender persons in the ordination process was officially prohibited; and in 2015, the canons of the church were changed to make the rite of marriage available to all people, regardless of gender” ([www.episcopalchurch.org/lgbtq-church](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/lgbtq-church)) Individuals and congregations who have disagreed and wanted to hold to the more traditional understanding are seeking to join the Anglican union.

The question of full inclusion of the LGBTQ community has caused tensions among individuals, families, churches and communities. It is truly a global challenge as sexual harassment and assaults have been all consuming in our news of late. Recently the Southern Baptist Convention had come to terms with the sexual misconduct of over two hundred church workers assaulting seven hundred victims in the past twenty years. In February the Vatican held a four-day summit revealing the widespread denial and complacency of the global problem of abuse, reported and ignored for the past two decades. There have been ongoing revelations of abuse within the entertainment industry and sports world, in schools, among coaches, in the military and government assaulting prisoners of war and using sexual violence as an act of humiliation and ethnic genocide is widespread; the sex slave and trafficking of those most vulnerable are almost considered normative.

I believe we have participated in the perpetuation of these horrors of these acts of sexual assault while we scape goat those in the LGBTQ community who have often been the victims of much of this violence. Members of the LGBTQ community can be demonized for the decay of sexual morality in our world, they can be excluded, bullied, assaulted, prosecuted, persecuted and even murdered. How can these unchristian acts against God’s Beloved be acceptable? Why can’t two faithful, loving, contributing people from the LGBTQ community, raised by loving, faithful, contributing members of our congregations be free to publicly proclaim their commitment to be faithful to each other, their families and their communities before God and acknowledge God’s blessing for them.

As a pastor, I have stood before a couple at the altar, held in my hands an

infant about to be baptized, offered the body and blood of Christ in bread and wine, stood over a casket, asking God to bless them all; and wondered if there might be some sin, some barrier that excludes them. This was the Apostle Paul’s quandary as he shared the gospel with gentiles, the marginalized group in his day. I believe it’s in those times when our faith is tested to believe that, “indeed nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38). It’s been said that upon the death of Martin Luther a scrap of paper was found in his pocket with the recently scribbled words, “we are beggars this is true.”

When Martin Luther married his beloved Katie Von Bora, it was a marriage that defied Catholic teaching and the cultural laws and norms of his day, punishable by excommunication and exclusion from all the sacraments including burial. Katherine Luther was the first woman to be considered an equal partner in marriage to include the right to own, manage, sell and inherit property. The marriage of Martin and Katie gave us a new vision of a successful marriage of two people who loved God, each other, and their neighbors as well; as it was said their house, a former monastery, had an open-door policy and was at times a bed and breakfast, an orphanage and a hospital during the plagues. No longer was a woman considered the exchange of property from father to groom. She was an equal, and Katie was one of the first women to inherit the full estate upon the death of Martin. But old ideas and traditions die hard. I still have to remind brides to be, and occasionally their fathers, that they are not to be given away, they are not property. Two faithful people enter the covenant of marriage to publicly affirm their love which will be a witness to the love of Christ to the church; to all, regardless of sexual orientation and status.

I have been asked by many, “but what does the bible have to say about the marriage of same gender persons?” The bible has lots to say and little to say about a whole host of issues. People hate it when I say that. They will argue that the bible speaks with clarity one simple thing and if I agree and tell them what I think that simple answer is, they will tell me that clearly, I am mistaken. We can thank Luther too for this ambiguity. Luther was the one who convinced much of the western world that the Pope was not the final authority. Grace, faith, word and reason alone was sufficient. Luther translated the bible into the native language of the Germans and told them to read it daily and

wrestle with its messages of law and grace and live by its teachings. That changed things and it continues to change things to this day.

What I say is this, laws change the gospel does not. When the church split over the issue of slavery, both sides justified their positions based on their understanding of scripture. The same was true when women received the same rights and responsibilities on all church matters as men and could now be ordained. Recent scholarship has challenged Luther's anti-Semitic writings against the Jews and the Anabaptists and Catholics as well. Civil laws and church doctrine, once upheld by a certain reading of Scripture, have changed. That God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, has not. That we are saved by grace through faith was the final resolution to the struggles of both the Apostle Paul and Martin Luther. God's grace is enough.

But what does the bible have to say about the issue of homosexuality? There are seven biblical texts that may speak to the issue, and I would say not in a definitive way that would exclude a person from the LGBTQ community from making a faithful and public request to have their love for each other honored and blessed in the same way afforded to others. One scriptural reference is from the story of the Men of Sodom (Genesis 19:1-16) It is from this story that we get the prohibition against sodomy. The story describes an angry mob who come to Lot's house to sexually assault two of his guests. Lot offers instead his two virginal daughters in place of the guests for the men in his community to do with them as they please. This is not a story about a love two people may or many not be capable of sharing, but a supposed group of powerful heterosexual men driven to despicable acts of sexual violence. Much like what we have been hearing about in the news of late. A similar story is told about the men of Gibeah in Judges 19.

A second biblical text often cited by those arguing against mutual, loving, same sex relationships is found in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10. Recent scholarship has led some to argue that these prohibitions spoke to the same types of abhorrent behavior we have heard about the numbers of – mostly males – who publicly advocate for a traditional – one man and one woman in a monogamous life long relationship – but privately, secretly, divisively, sexually abuse others. In the Greco-Roman culture it was a known practice that certain teachers, owners of slaves, philosophers, corrupt men of

privilege, would abuse young boys. The English word used to describe these acts is a probation against "male prostitutes" and "sodomites." The Greek word is Malakoi, which is more literally translated as the "soft ones" or "effeminate ones" This does not describe a mutual, accountable relationship but again, an act of sexual violence against those who are in a subservient role in the relationship. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, the scriptures do not offer us a quick and easy solution in our present debate over, homosexuality (Dr. James L. Bailey, Wartburg Seminary HOMOSEXUALITY: "THE SEVEN" BIBLICAL TEXTS– 1998).

Shalom,

Pastor Joel Guttormson

## *Palm Sunday Worship*

**Sunday, April 14th**

8:30am Traditional Worship Service

9:30am Faith Formation– Chapel; Creature Praise Choir; Coffee Fellowship

10:30am Contemporary Communion Service

4 year olds– 2nd grade sings

Bake Sale in the narthex this morning



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*Maundy Thursday and 5th Grade First  
Communion Service*

**Thursday, April 18th**

6:15pm 5th Grade meal

7:15pm Maundy Thursday and 5th Grade First Communion Service



**Prayer Vigil begins in the Chapel following the Maundy Thursday Service  
and ends prior to the Good Friday Service**

*Good Friday Worship*

**Friday, April 19th**

7:15pm Stations of the Cross Service



*Easter Sunday Worship*

**Sunday, April 21st**

8:30am Traditional Easter Service

9:00-11:00am Easter Breakfast

9:30am Easter Egg Hunt

10:30am Contemporary Easter Worship

*Salem Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes*

Monday March 11, 2019 – 5:30 pm

President Brad Evenson called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Members present: Delane Behr, Shannon Bruhns, Brad Evenson, Sondra Nelson, Willie Skellenger, Stephanie Steffens, Mike Swenson, Pastor Joel Guttormson and Cindy Haugsdal. Absent: Pastor Melinda McCluskey, Ashley Hoffman

Devotions and Prayers: Willie Skellenger led devotions and Pastor Joel led us in prayer.

**Secretary's Report:** A motion was made by Mike, seconded by Delane to accept the minutes of the previous meeting as written. All approved.

**Communication and Correspondence:** Cindy read a thank you note from Life-Serve Blood Center for Salem providing a constant source for blood donation and a thank you from ELCA for the donation from Salem (noisy offering) for Good Gifts (\$2071.00). Receipt was given to the Treasurer. Cindy also shared requests for financial support from July Jubilee Committee for the LM-opoly fundraiser 2019 for the Sesquicentennial celebration this summer and from LM After Prom committee for support of After Prom activities on April 13, 2019. A motion was made by Delane, seconded by Shannon to give \$150 to City of LM. All approved. Sondra moved that we give \$75 to After Prom, seconded by Delane, all approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mike provided a written report.

Total income for the month \$24, 583.79. Expenditures \$27,690.08. Checking account balance \$36,896.26. Heating Project balance \$87,030.23

**Financial Secretary's report:** Sondra provided a written report of the general offering contributions for the month of February. February total general offering contributions were \$13,855. There were no services on the 2/23 and 2/24/2019 weekend due to weather. A motion was made by Delane, seconded by Shannon to accept the treasurer and financial secretary reports as written. All approved.

**Board Reports**

**Board of Worship and Music:** Shannon provided a written/verbal report. She reported continued work on simplifying the bulletin layout; planning usher/

communion server/acolyte training in Fall 2019; working on revision of Board of Music/Worship handbook; Kathy Nelson coordinating special music schedule; Altar Guild member attended meeting to benefit coordination between Music/Worship Board and Altar Guild. Summer outdoor service tabled to next month's meeting.

**Board of Life and Growth / Board of Stewardship and Social Ministry:** Willie provided a verbal report. Noisy offering from 3/17-4/14/2019 will go to summer youth activities; Prayer vigil will be organized, beginning the end of Maundy Thursday service until the Good Friday service; this board will be serving the last soup supper of Lent; continue work on the 100th Anniversary of Sanctuary for this summer, including a wedding dress fashion show.

**Board of Property and Management:** Delane had no report.

The council requested the Board of Property and Management attend to changing the burned out light bulbs in the Chancel of the Sanctuary. Delane reported that he had the bulbs. Status of the stained glass window in the NE corner of the Sanctuary was discussed. No action decided.

**Board of Youth:** Sondra and Jennifer provided a written report, Sondra presented verbal report. The February ski/tubing trip was cancelled due to weather; Family Fun Day is scheduled for 11:30 am on Sunday, March 24th ; free will offering will be collected at Lent soup suppers for summer youth activities; planning an Easter egg hunt and breakfast (proceeds will fund youth events); 5th grade students and parents have started First Communion classes with Pastor Melinda; Pray and Play has 2 more sessions planned; 3rd and 4th grade Faith Formation students have been writing to pen pals at Mills Harbor and will have a get together in April. Council asked Sondra to contact LM Graphic to consider a story about the Mills Harbor Pen Pal project.

#### **Pastor Reports**

**Lead Pastor's Report:** Pastor Joel shared a written/verbal report which includes a list of Pastoral acts in February and reflected on how his energy and actions reflect on the expectations of the congregation as defined in the Salem Ministry Site Profile. Following the Annual meeting a member shared this message with the Executive Council, "We all should know as a minister you are involved with many activities and/or people every day, but there is little communications to members of this fact...I feel there are some members of

the church who look at your job as preaching on Sunday morning and can't figure out why we need more than one minister. We should know better but if you don't continue to remind us of your involvement, many of us forget." In response to this comment Pastor Joel has assembled a three-ring binder of all his pastoral reports to the congregation and council since August of 2016. It is available in the office for review and he welcomes any direct questions as to how he accounts for his time. Pastor Joel, Pastor Melinda and Helen are scheduled for a meeting at the Synod office on March 19, 2019.

**Associate Pastor's Report:** Pastor Melinda submitted a written report which includes a list of Pastoral acts in February. She is on vacation March 11-15.

**Communication Director:** No Report was given.

A motion was made by Mike, seconded by Sondra to accept all Board/Pastor reports as presented. All approved.

**Old Business:** No old business.

**New Business:** Brad reported that he had been contacted by the Cemetery committee regarding the recommended action/process when weather/snow makes getting into the cemetery difficult. Discussion resolved that when there is a need to hire snow removal to access the cemetery, the cost would be passed on to the family.

There was general discussion on how to encourage participation in worship/attendance by inactive members as well as giving and stewardship. All are encouraged to invite someone to worship!

**Transfer:** Don and Jan Smith to 1st Presbyterian Church, Sun City, AZ.

A motion was made by Stephanie, seconded by Mike to approve the transfer. All approved. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Motion to adjourn made by Willie, and seconded by Delane. All Approved. The meeting was adjourned.

Our next regular meeting will be Monday, April 8, 2019 at 5:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Haugsdal

*Youth Fundraiser*

**Rummage Sale— for our youth service trip to Savannah, GA**

**Saturday, May 4th, 9:00-11:30am at Salem**

We need your help! We need things to sell. If you have some things lying around that you no longer use, but are still in good shape, share them with us! Items that sell well are pictures, kitchen items, baby items, puzzles, etc.

Please bring your donated items to the west side of the education wing, room 11, by Friday, April 27th.

**Bake Sale— Sunday April 14th**

Stop by the bake sale table in the narthex to pick up some yummy baked goods! Free will donations will go towards the youth service trip to Savannah, GA in July, 2019



On Saturday, May 11, Letter Carriers across the United States will once again use the U.S. Postal Service’s universal delivery network not just to pick up and deliver mail, but also to collect and distribute food to the hungry in our communities—all part of the 27th annual Letter Carriers’ Food Drive.

Again, this year Boy Scout Troop 44 of Lake Mills will be assisting with the pick-up. Community and rural postal customers are encouraged to leave a bag of non-perishable foods at their mailbox. Food collected will be brought to the Lake Mills Food Shelf which serves families living in the Lake Mills School District served by Lake Mills area churches.

Food items that are always needed are: Baked or Pork n’ beans, vegetables, beef stew, chili, spam, tuna, hamburger helper, peaches, pears, pasta noodles, rice, peanut butter, cold cereal, and paper products.

Of course, we will accept all donations. However, please check that food items have not reached their expiration date or been previously opened.

**SALEM RECORDS— March**

**Memorials:**

Steve Canny- \$10 clothes closet

Eleanor Ness- \$10 general fund, \$10 mission quilters, \$20 clothes closet, \$60 building heat/AC, \$110 Hannah-Sarah circle

Ruth Zingg - \$10 general fund

**Funerals:**

Eleanor Ness

Steve Canny

**Transfer:**

Don and Jan Smith

*Reserve your special date to sponsor the 2019 8:30am worship service broadcast on KIOW 107.3 radio in Forest City.*

The service can also be heard at 8:30am on cable Channel 2.

Cost for 2019 is \$83.

Dates Available:

March 24, 31	June 9, 16	Sept. 1
May 5, 12	July 28	Oct. 20, 27
	Aug. 18	

Call the office to reserve your dates.

641-592-1771

*Salem Women of the ELCA*

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 33

**Altar Guild**

April 2nd at 7pm  
Fellowship Hall

**Altar Guild for April**

JoAnn Villa  
Janet Swenson  
Marilyn Hoffman

**WELCA Meeting**

April 18<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm  
Fellowship Hall

**Communion Schedule**

Sundays, April 7th and 21st (8:30)  
Sundays, April 7th, 14th, 21st and  
28th (10:30)

Saturday, April 6th

**Mills Harbour & LMCC**

Wednesday, April 24th

**Birthdays:** Grace Circle

**Program:** Sarah Circle

*April 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

**Salem Lutheran Church**

401 South Lake Street

Lake Mills, IA 50450

**Address Service Requested**

LABEL