

LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE

Salem United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming Congregation

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR FEBRUARY:

Week of February 4

Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalms 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

Week of February 11

2 Kings 2:1-12
Psalms 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9

February 14 - Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
or Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalms 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Week of February 18

Genesis 9:8-17
Psalms 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:9-15

Week of February 25

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
Psalms 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25
Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9

FROM PASTOR PHIL

Dear Members and Friends of Salem,

We will soon enter into the season of Lent. Often portrayed as a season of penitence, of fasting, of giving up, Lent is a solemn time. This year, I want us to see what it would be like to enter into a time of reflection of what it means that God loves us more than anything we can ask or imagine. We will do so, beginning with Ash Wednesday.

This year, Ash Wednesday falls upon Valentines Day, February 14. This seems like a paradox. The day we honor our mortality coincides with the day we celebrate romantic love. I want us to look deeper, to see if we can move beyond the commercialized and commodified notions of love. And let us move beyond any performative guilt of Lent and into a deeper understanding and appreciation of just how deeply we are loved.

We will gather for Ash Wednesday service at 7pm on February 14. Let us begin our journey towards Easter with intentionality and hope. To that end, I share with you a poem that we have used in Adult Sunday School.

The Bravest Thing We Can Do

By Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

Trust your belovedness.
Let it be a protest,
an act of resistance,
a song of celebration.
Trust your belovedness in a world
that is rarely satisfied.
Wear it like a badge of honor.
Speak it as confidently as your last name.
Tattoo it to your heart.
When outside forces
chip away at your sense of self,
when life asks you
to hand over the keys,
remember the water.
Remember creation.
Remember how it was good,
so very good.
Let that truth hum through your veins.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1: Matthew Flood
- 2: Kyle Smith
- 9: Owen Butzlaff
- 10: Kelly Bass, Audra Smith
- 11: Terrie Smith, Bryce Corning
- 13: Debbie Hoffman
- 16: Molly Hill
- 17: Mary Cutler, Tyler Denu
- 19: Kyle Sundby
- 21: Charity Durnen, Isaac Burgenske
- 22: Amy Luginbuhl, Henry Butzlaff
- 23: Kelly Borelli
- 24: Carla Hageman, Terri Fiez, Wyatt Denu
- 25: Rhoda Gust, Joyce Gust

*Let the church office know if we missed your birthday.

Sing it so loud
that it drowns out the weariness of the world,
for the bravest thing we can ever do
is trust that we belong here.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Phil

VOLUNTEER AT BADGER PRAIRIE NEEDS NETWORK

Members of Salem have always been generous when supporting Badger Prairie Needs Network, donating pounds of food, hundreds of Thanksgiving meals, birthday bags and recently thousands of diapers and wipes. The food pantry is entirely led and run by volunteers. There are many ways that you can help and share God's love outside the walls of Salem. Find your fit in one of the many jobs in the pantry. Pantry shopping support, which includes keeping the store stocked and helping the guests during open pantry hours, produce prep and retail food recovery are options. Bilingual interpreters are needed to help patrons navigate between Spanish and English, as 60% are Spanish-speaking. Join a food-packaging shift, repackaging prepared food from commercial cafeterias into grab-n-go meals for distribution. Sign up for

a community meal as it takes many hands to run the community event. Four thousand weekend meals were served in 2023. Volunteers are needed to install 400 flags on the summer holidays as part of the Flags4Food team.

Kathy Hauser has been volunteering at BPNN for almost three years. She states that she started volunteering when there wasn't much to do during the pandemic and now it has become part of her weekly routine. She most often does the pantry shopping support role. Those duties include stocking shelves before shopping begins, and then during the shopping shift monitoring meat distribution, restocking eggs, milk and prepared meals in the walk in cooler and distributing limited availability items. She restocks shelves; answers guest questions and helps guests understand the limits on some of the items. Dave and Diane Triplett work in the pantry two mornings per week. They work also to get the pantry shelves stocked, sort incoming donations and assist the patrons during shopping. Dave dons warm clothes and gloves as he handles food in the walk in cooler. Along with working with other members of Salem when volunteering there are others from the community that you are sure to know. Kathy has encountered a former neighbor, a former teacher of one her sons and former soccer, basketball and karate parents.

Barb Smith has worked the repackaging shifts, preparing meals from Epic for distribution. BPNN's food recovery program, which prevents food from going to waste, is quite impressive. Thirty-eight tons of food was diverted from landfills in the past year. Several businesses that have their own cafeterias donate excess food, which is then repackaged into small quantities under strict conditions in the kitchen. Doug Smith and Hugh Hauser have both participated in the food recovery program driving or riding along to pick up food from Kwik Trip, Costco and grocery stores. These local businesses donate food that is approaching its "best by" date. Hugh has also done Second Harvest sorting, unloading the pallets of food delivered by Second Harvest and placing them in the designated areas. Barb & Doug also participate in the Flags4Food program. Diane orders the diapers and period products from The Village Diaper Bank on a monthly basis. Dave helps her get these products from the diaper bank using the pantry's box truck. They are also working on learning Spanish so they can communicate better with the clients.

If you are interested in learning more or becoming a volunteer, register for a new volunteer orientation on the BPNN website, <https://www.bpnn.org/volunteer>. Members have already registered for orientation in February. Attending the orientation isn't a commitment to being a volunteer but allows you to learn what is available and get a tour of the facility. Volunteers have complete control over the shifts they choose so your commitment can be as flexible as you want. You may have a special skill that you could share.

Diane states that it gives her great comfort and joy to know that by volunteering at BPNN, she is able to serve God by serving others.

COUNCIL CORNER

I would like to welcome everyone into the month of February, we now have a bitter cold and snowy January behind us and are a bit closer to spring.

When the council met in January we had as one of our tasks to fill certain roles and committee responsibilities. I am happy to report that we did a very good job of filling in some of the critical roles. Cari Bass will take on the role of the Vice-President of the council in 2024 and the role of President of the council in 2025. Thank you, Cari!

We also discussed updating our membership directory in 2024 and Kris Wilbricht and Krista Nechvatal will lead that effort. Barb Smith will continue as council secretary and Julie Adams will continue as church treasurer. Dave Triplett will continue on the Board of Christian Education; Hugh Hauser will head up the Stewardship Committee and Gary Nechvatal has agreed to join the Building and Grounds committee. We have also filled spots on the Finance, Personnel and Music and Worship committees (please see the current listing and openings). Thanks to everyone who is involved in a committee.

We are discussing the creation of a new group of people to focus on membership and growth at Salem. We would like to look at current membership and engagement, develop a program to invite people from the community to church, develop a process of how to welcome people into the building and organize the more social aspects of events at the church. If this is something that interests you or you are interested in participating on another committee, please contact me or anyone on the council for more information.

From a financial perspective we finished 2023 in the black with year-to-date income from general stewardship at \$307K and Expenses at \$293K.

Regarding the music department we are still in the search process for a Choir Director. Jeffrey Phoumyvong will continue to play the piano at our Sunday services and will accompany the Chancel Choir on the Sunday's that they sing.

Please feel free to reach out if you have a question or concern. Thank you for your support of Salem UCC.

John Cashman

2024 Salem Committee Members

1. 2024 Vice President and
2025 President
Cari Bass

2. Board of Christian Education
Sarah Pundt
Dave Triplett, 2024
Kelli Malueg, 2025
Cara Bahr, 2026

3. Council Secretary
Barb Smith

4. Church Treasurer
Julie Adams

5. Finance Committee
John Cashman
JoAnn Aebly
Hugh Hauser
Kerry Steinagel
Linda Paulis
Julie Adams
Pastor Phil

6. Nominating Committee
John Cashman
Hugh Hauser
Open Spot

7. Music and Worship
Pastor Phil
John Cashman
Julie Sundby
Jon Pundt
Carrie Coenen

8. Personnel Committee
John Cashman
Kris Wilbricht
Kerry Steinagel
Cari Bass

9. Stewardship Committee
Pastor Phil
Hugh Hauser
Open spots available

10. Church Directory
Krista Nechvatal
Kris Wilbricht

11. Youth Ministry Team
Sarah Pundt
Julie Adams
Kathy Hauser
Krista Nechvatal
Kristin Runnheim

12. Building and Grounds
Scott Cullen
Gary Nechvatal

13. 2024 Membership and Growth
Open positions

LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE THROUGH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sarah Pundt, Director of Christian Education
608-692-3239 or spundt@salemchurchverona.org

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday school is provided for all ages PreK-Adult every Sunday morning 9-10am from September 17, 2023-May 19, 2024. All volunteers who serve with our children and youth have been trained and screened through our Safe Church Guidelines. Please contact Sarah Pundt for more information.

Age Group	Location
Pre-K (age 3)-grade 5	Lower Level
Middle/High School	2nd Floor Classroom
Adults	1st Floor Conference Room

Sunday school leaders will have a planning meeting in January to prepare for the spring semester. Please watch your email for details on date and time.

SAVE THE DATE

June 23, 24, & 25
5:45-7:30pm

Join us for our intergenerational VBS program and community meal. Mark your calendars and watch for more details in future newsletters.

VBS 2024

Adult Class *Mighty Network*

The Mighty Network is a private online interactive platform that provides space for the adult class calendar, links to resources, and space for online conversations between group members. You do not need to attend the adult class to participate in this online resource and you do not have to join this online community to participate in the class. Because this network is private (just for Salem use and not intended for the general public), please contact Sarah Pundt for login information to join the group.

Topics for Adult Class

We will be finishing with our ONA continuing education soon and moving on to other topics and our Lenten study. Please watch the Mighty Network and the Friday weekly news for more details. Please contact Sarah Pundt with any questions.

The UCC Beyond Salem

The UCC Beyond Salem For information on UCC Resources and Events, use the following links to access programming of particular interest.

UCC Digital Programming

<https://www.ucc.org/programming-webinars/>

UCC News Digest

<https://www.ucc.org/news/>

WI Conference Life Newsletter

<https://www.wcucc.org/about-wcucc/1446-2/>

UCCI Camps

<https://ucci.org/>

SALEM YOUTH NEWSLETTER

Sarah Pundt, Interim Director of Youth Ministry
608-692-3239 or spundt@salemchurchverona.org

February 2024

Wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

Youth Opportunities at Salem: Grades 6-12

Youth and parents are encouraged to join our Salem UCC Youth Ministry Mighty Network. This is an online platform that allows us to have all our youth information, events, rsvp options, pictures, prayer requests, and discussions in a single place on a private network. Please contact Sarah Pundt for more information.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

At our January Lock-In, we watched the movie "Soul Surfer." This true story is about a young competitive surfer, Bethany Hamilton, who is emerging as an elite athlete when she suffers a shark attack and loses her arm. Prior to the shark attack, this Bible verse from Jeremiah 29 was shared at a youth group gathering Bethany attended. After the shark attack, she tried to understand how this scripture fit with the reality she was living. It wasn't easy and Bethany asked a lot of the same questions we ask sometimes when things don't go our way: why me?, what is this supposed to mean?, how is this "God's plan" for me?. Bethany has an incredible spirit and how she lived after the shark attack can teach us a lot about how we can respond to and use the events in our lives that are beyond our control. God did not cause Bethany's accident to happen, but God can use the events of our lives in ways that are beyond our comprehension. When have you experienced loss or disappointment that later revealed something more to you? How is God working through you or in your life? How can this scripture help you when you suffer disappointment?

Youth Group

Youth grades 6-12 gather twice per month for fellowship, faith, and fun. Gatherings take place at Salem UCC unless otherwise noted. Friends are always welcome!

Thank You!

To Rod and Kristin Runnheim for overseeing the campfire (in the frigid temps!) during our lock-in and Kelli Malueg for staying overnight with us.

Youth Sunday

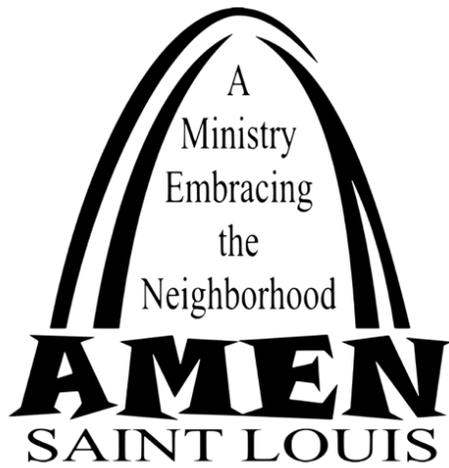
Our Youth Sunday worship service is one of the highlights of our program year. It takes a lot of team effort and individual work to put together, but it is a powerful experience for anyone who participates.

Youth Sunday will be **March 17**. We will use some (or all) of our gatherings in January and February to prepare for this special worship service. Please note the listed dates on the calendar. We will also have a run-through on Saturday morning March 16. I encourage everyone to participate how and when they are able.



Culver's Fundraising Event March 27 @5-8pm

Join us and help earn money toward our SALT Trip to St. Louis. We have signed up for a shift at Culvers in Verona. We will receive a percentage of the restaurant's profits earned during our shift. We need at least 4 adults to be present during the event and as many youth as want to participate are welcome. Wear your Salem swag and help spread the word about our church and our youth mission trip. This is a great way for us to participate in the Verona community and earn some money for our trip. Tell your friends and family to join us for dinner and boost our sales (the percentage of profit we receive increases with larger sales)! Please note: this is the same week as Holy Week and school spring breaks.



SALT Trip to AMEN! St. Louis July 9-14, 2024

Registration Deadline: Feb. 18, 2024

Youth grades 6-12 are invited to save the date and join us for our SALT Trip 2024! AMEN! St. Louis is a ministry of Oak Hill Presbyterian Church, providing Urban Mission Experiences for Youth and Intergenerational Mission Teams. We will stay in the AMEN! House next door to the church. The AMEN! staff will plan a variety of service activities and corresponding learning opportunities. Naturally, we will save time for some St. Louis fun! More details regarding serving and learning experiences will be provided closer to our departure.

Each participating youth is asked to contribute \$150 toward trip expenses. We will cover the remaining costs from our SALT Trip funds from fundraisers. Please contact Sarah Pundt if you need financial assistance.

\$50 Downpayment and firm participation commitment due on or before Feb. 18.

YOUTH CALENDAR

February

- 4** @ 6:30-7:45pm Youth Gathering
- 18** @ 6:30-7:45pm Youth Gathering
- 18** SALT Trip Registration Deadline

March

- 3** @ 6:30-7:45pm Youth Gathering
- 16** @ 9-11am Youth Sunday Run-Through
- 17** **Youth Sunday!**
- 27** @5-8pm Culver's Fundraiser

SALT Trip to AMEN! St. Louis
July 9-14
(Register by Feb. 18)

Scholarship Opportunity

Salem is pleased to make available scholarships for current church members for expenses during the first year of college, trade school, or technical college. To receive one of these scholarships, interested persons must complete an application form by April 1, 2024. Contact the church office to receive an application form should you wish one.

Please note this is not limited to high school seniors. Older adults who are planning to attend college, trade school, or technical college are likewise encouraged to apply.

FEBRUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 Give Online				1 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98	2 10AM-2PM - Serve at Meals for Madison	3
4 9AM - Sunday School 10:15AM - Worship 6:30-7:45PM - Youth Gathering	5 Eve - Boy Scouts	6 5:30-6:30PM - Cub Scouts	7 6PM - BRC 6:30PM - Bells 6:45PM - Chancel	8 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98	9	10
11 9AM - Sunday School 10:15AM - Worship	12 Eve - Boy Scouts	13 5:30-6:30PM - Cub Scouts 6PM - Finance 7PM - Council	14 ASH WEDNESDAY 7PM - Ash Wednesday Service	15 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98	16	17
18 9AM - Sunday School 10:15AM - Worship 6:30-7:45PM - Youth Gathering	19 Eve - Boy Scouts 6-8PM - Quilt Group	20 5:30-6:30PM - Cub Scouts	21 6PM - BRC 6:30PM - Bells 6:45PM - Chancel	22 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98	23 MARCH NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE	24
25 9AM - Sunday School 10:15AM - Worship	26 Eve - Boy Scouts	27 5:30-6:30PM - Cub Scouts 6:30PM - BOCE Meeting	28 6PM - BRC 6:30PM - Bells 6:45PM - Chancel	29		

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2024

SAVE THE DATE FOR YOUTH SUNDAY

Sunday, March 17, 10:15am

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 14, 7pm

VOLUNTEER AT BPNN

See info inside



DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS

These Days, Our Daily Bread and *The Upper Room* devotional booklets are provided by the Women's Guild and available on the wall inside the main entrance to the church and in the information box near the outdoor labyrinth. Please help yourself.

SALEM CHURCH STAFF:

PH: 608-845-7315

www.salemchurchverona.org

Pastor

Rev. Philip Hobson

phobson@salemchurchverona.org

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cbahr@salemchurchverona.org

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Dawn Lingard

musicdirector@salemchurchverona.org

Director of Handbells:

Carrie Coenen

Church Council President:

John Cashman

An Open
and Affirming
Congregation

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Living Out God's Love
SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

