

LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE

Salem United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming Congregation

NEWSLETTER | JANUARY 2024

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR JANUARY:

New Year's Day

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

Psalms 8

Revelation 21:1-6a

Matthew 25:31-36

January 6 (Epiphany)

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

Week of January 7

Genesis 1:1-5

Psalms 29

Acts 19:1-7

Mark 1:4-11

Week of January 14

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)

Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

John 1:43-51

Week of January 21

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalms 62:5-12

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

Week of January 28

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalms 111

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

FROM PASTOR PHIL

Happy New Year!

When I was growing up, New Years Eve meant gathering with families who had been friends since my grandparents' generation. Recently, the daughter of the couple whose house we went to found film from her father's camera, and developed photos from the 1970s and 80s. There might be one, two, three, or even four generations in each picture. Every year had a different theme. It might have been a certain era, or different parts of the world, or favorite characters from literature. We would come together and all eat dinner and then watch for the ball to drop in Times Square on the TV. We might do sparklers or roman candles in the backyard at midnight.

Thanks to those photos, I have been able to better remember those times. Since then, each of these families has since gone their separate ways. No one is left of my grandparents' generation. And the next generation is getting a little more sparse as well. Seeing these photos brought back so many memories. There I am with my family, at various stages of my awkward adolescence or not so polished teenage years.

I used to want to hide my awkwardness and unsophisticated past self. But it is who I was that has brought me to who I am today. From the mistakes of my past come some of the hard-won wisdom I have now. And the element of God's grace throughout my life has let me know the importance of giving myself a break and starting over.

Our biblical faith is built upon memory. The memory of people traveling through the wilderness, vexing God with questions and doubts and being what gets described as "stiff-necked." The memory of people who have known the saving acts of God in their own lives, in the lives of their family, their community, and all creation. Even the memory of disciples who never seem to get it right.

The psalms are full of remembrances that lead to hope. They offer us a vision, as if to say, "We know that you were with our ancestors in their times of trouble, and so we know that we too shall make it through these difficulties."

In all of this, the love of God does not let them, or us, go. We are loved. And even in this world of difficulty, war and rumors of war, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never overcome it.

Happy New Year!

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Phil



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1: Calvin Dettman
- 4: Kris Wilbrict, Salem UCC (1923)
- 5: Angela Quade
- 6: Neal Smith
- 7: Melanie Corning
- 10: Zach Nechvatal
- 14: Linda Bieri
- 16: Sherrol Yurs, Cora Hageman
- 17: Ellie Fitzwilliams
- 19: Kenneth Behnke
- 20: Kari Westphal
- 24: Cari Bass
- 26: Dan Durnen
- 28: Anika Quade
- 29: Ginger Dassow
- 30: Kathy Butzlaff

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

COUNCIL CORNER

On behalf of the Salem Church Council, I would like to wish everyone a very happy new year!!! We hope you all felt the joy of the season.

As we move into 2024, I will be providing an update from the council in each month's newsletter. For this January update I would like to start by thinking about the many things that I am thankful for at Salem.

First, I am thankful for Dawn Lingard's return home and want to wish her God's grace as she continues her recovery. We eagerly await the day that she will be once again with us in worship.

I am also thankful for all the staff at Salem. Pastor Phil will be coming up on his first full year at Salem in June and we appreciate the energy and spirit with which he has started his ministry here.

Sarah Pundt continues lead our Christian Education Department, we are truly lucky to have a person of such talent and dedication at that post.

Carrie Coenen continues to inspire us with her leadership of the Bell Choir and Cara Bahr continues to help keep our day-to-day operations together. We have also been blessed to have Jeffrey Phoumyvong to help fill in on piano accompaniment while we await Dawn's recovery.

Our Choir Director Tyme Baez has recently resigned due to personal reasons and is returning to his home state of New York. We appreciated his time with us and wish him well. We have restarted the search process for a new Choir Director. In the meantime, I am thankful for Julie Sundby and Jon Pundt and their leadership of both choirs as we await our next director.

I would like to thank George Adams, Guy Williams, and Kathy Shubak for all that they have done for the church over the last three years on the council. Many thanks also to Krista Nechvatal, Cari Bass and Kerry Steinagel who are beginning their three-year terms on the council.

As we move into 2024 the church has many blessings and will also have a few challenges. The current total for pledges including E-givers is just under 300K. The budget approved at the annual meeting in November is at 361K. There are several variables in the budget and currently there are a few vacancies to fill. As we move forward the council and the finance committee will meet monthly and will work to balance the budget with the actual income generated from the offerings. We will keep everyone posted as things progress throughout the year.

Finally, I would like to steal a salutation from Pastor Phil that I really enjoy hearing each Sunday before the sermon, for we are all recipients of the grace of God in whom we can do all things.

Thank you all for your support of Salem, we look forward to a great year in 2024.

Grace and Peace, John Cashman

WOMEN'S GUILD

THANK YOU from the Women's Guild to all who helped in any way with the Christmas Bazaar and Raffle! It was a busy weekend of preparing food and baked goods, organizing and setting up the Fellowship Hall, conducting the luncheon and raffle, and cleaning up! We had many willing workers in all areas, and that is what helps us to have a successful event. Our competent chairpersons, Becky Hagenston, Mary Cutler, and Cindy Remus keep things running smoothly.

Laughter and holiday cheer could be heard and felt as the morning progressed. Our young people assisted once again with the raffle, announcing and distributing the prizes to the winners. Jack McCarthy, grandson of Pat McCarthy, was the winner of our grand prize, a quilt made by Salem's Quilters. Total proceeds from the Bazaar and Raffle was \$2,444.09.

NEW! SALEM GEAR (ORDER BY JAN 28!)

We are offering newly designed Salem T-shirts, hoodies, and half-zips in a variety of colors at reasonable prices. We will be placing one more order at the end of January. Order forms are in Fellowship Hall or contact Julie Adams gradamsiii@uwalumni.com for an electronic order form. All proceeds benefit the Salem Youth Ministry.

2023 WOMEN'S GUILD RAFFLE WINNERS

PRIZE	DONATED BY	WINNER	PRIZE	DONATED BY	WINNER
1. Sunny Skies Quilt	Salem's Quilt group	Jack McCarthy	32. \$30.00 gift card to Miller & Son's	Mary & Dwight Cutler	Terri Droster
2. \$50.00 cash	Judy Hansen	Violet Remus	33. \$10.00 gift card to Bath & Body Works	Gerri & Harlan Hall	Craig Rhiner
3. \$25.00 gift card to Target	Gerri & Harlan Hall	Elsie Oliver	34. \$50.00 cash	Anna May Rhiner	Angela Quade
4. \$15.00 gift card to The Fifth Quarter	The Fifth Quarter	Diane Luginbuhl	35. 2 value baskets and 2 scoops custard	Culvers	Howard Gust
5. \$25.00 gift card to Kwik Trip	JoAnn & Gary Aebly	Diane Flood	36. \$20.00 gift card to Miller & Son's	Nan & Bob Zurbuchen	John Bass
6. \$20.00 cash	Debbie Bass	Kathy Homb	37. \$40.00 cash	Helen & John Hageman	Doug Smith
7. \$50.00 gift card to Ginko Tree	Ginko Tree	Heather Thoma	38. \$100.00 gift card to Miller & Son's	Miller & Son's	Aayla Bahr
8. \$50.00 gift card Verona Shopping	Ken Behnke-First Weber	Ellie Collier	39. \$25.00 gift card to Pizza Ranch	Gerri & Harlan Hall	Marsha Behnke
9. \$100.00 cash	Salems Women's Guild	Zach Nechvatal	40. Hand mixer (valued at \$50.00)	Dorn's Hardware	Lisa Hart
10. \$20.00 gift card to Millers & Son's	Nan & Bob Zurbuchen	Sandra Rost	41. \$25.00 cash	Heather Thoma	Nan Zurbuchen
11. 2 value baskets & 2 scoops custard	Culvers	Heather Thoma	42. \$50.00 gift card Verona Shopping	Ken Behnke-First Weber	Joan Gering
12. \$25.00 cash	Heather Thoma	Cole Droster	43. \$20.00 gift card to Miller & Son's	Nan & Bob Zurbuchen	Gary Aebly
13. \$25.00 gift card to Kwik Trip	Elsie Oliver	Kevin Luginbuhl	44. \$25.00 gift card to Pizza Ranch	Pizza Ranch	Arlene Larson
14. \$50.00 cash	Becky Hagenston	Kevin Luginbuhl	45. \$50.00 cash	Anna May Rhiner	Terri Gust
15. \$30.00 gift card to Millers & Son's	Mary & Dwight Cutler	Joyce Gust	46. \$30.00 gift card to Miller & Son's	Mary & Dwight Cutler	Lisa Hart
16. \$25.00 cash	Heather Thoma	Kevin Booth	47. \$150.00 gift card to Miller & Son's	Miller & Son's	Bob Berry
17. \$25.00 gift card to The Ginko Tree	Martha & Kevin Booth	Bob Berry	48. \$50.00 cash	Becky Hageston	Owen Luginbuhl
18. \$50.00 cash	Verlis Luchsinger	Melanie Hellrood	49. \$25.00 Visa card	Capital Bank	Theresa Droster
19. \$50.00 gift card to Miller & Son's	Miller & Son's	Doug Smith	50. \$20.00 gift card to Miller & Son's	Nan & Bob Zurbuchen	Barb & Doug Smith
20. \$25.00 gift card to Pizza Ranch	Pizza Ranch	Joan Uren	51. \$100.00 cash	Salem Women's Guild	Paul Wieland
21. \$50.00 cash	Anna May Rhiner	Brad Bergin	52. \$20.00 cash	Debbie Bass	Violet Remus
22. \$20.00 gift card to Miller & Sons	Nan & Bob Zurbuchen	Marsha Behnke	53. \$25.00 gift card to Dunkin Donuts	Chuck & Lisa Hart	Doug Smith
23. \$25.00 gift card to Vitense Gotland	Diane & Dave Triplet	Arlene Buckle	54. \$50.00 gift card to Miller & Son's	Miller & Son's	Deb Zurbuchen
24. \$20.00 cash	Debbie Bass	Mary Cutler	55. \$50.00 cash	Cindy Remus	Ellie Collier
25. 2-\$10.00 gift cards to The Draft House	The Draft House	Mary Cutler	56. \$25.00 gift card to Visa	Capital Bank	Aayla Bahr
26. \$25.00 gift card to Kohl's	Chuck & Lisa Hart	Cara Bahr	57. \$50.00 cash	Anna May Rhiner	Becky Zurbuchen
27. \$50.00 cash	Judy Skupien	Shirley Zubuchen	58. 40in wreath	Julie Sundby	Aayla Bahr
28. \$50.00 gift card to Miller & Son's	Miller & Son's	Judy Skupien	59. 2-48in evergreen roping	Julie Sundby	Joyce Gust
29. \$25.00 gift card to Target	JoAnn & Gary Aebly	Ken Behnke	60. Treat bag from Sow's Ear \$15.00	Sow's Ear	Frank Westphal
30. \$50.00 gift card to Amazon	Diane Luginbuhl	Guy Williams	gift card,mug,goat soap,pancake mix		
31. \$25.00 cash	Heather Thoma	Karen Fletcher	61. \$40.00 cash	Rosemarie Wieland	Marsha Behnke

ONA CONTINUING EDUCATION

In January 2017 Salem UCC voted to become a designated Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation.

As part of our ONA Statement, we pledge to “commit ourselves to the ongoing work of being an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation”. To honor the anniversary of our ONA designation, please participate in one or more of the opportunities provided. Read and familiarize yourself with our ONA Statement (listed below), come to the workshop offered by Jeff Rabe on Jan. 25, or attend the series in the adult Sunday school class. For more information on the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ, please visit their website <https://openandaffirming.org/>

ONA Workshop

Special Guest, Jeff Rabe (Hosted by Sarah Pundt) Jan 25 @6:30-8pm

The singular THEY...Understanding Gender Identity in Today's World

Using the UCC-commissioned Our Whole Lives (OWL) Sexuality Education Curriculum for Sr Adults, this program explores biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, pronouns, and sexual orientation. The program explains terms such as: cis / trans / non-binary; introduces participants to the history of the fluidity of sexuality; explores Pride Flags; and so much more! The gathering offers a safe space to ask questions, and provides tools and information to better understand, and advocate, for all of God's people.

Jeff Rabe, Director of Christian Education at First Congregational UCC in Madison, shares his 30+ years of experience in Children & Youth Ministry, and nearly 20 years as an OWL Facilitator, to share the Mission of OWL, and how it is used, for all ages, as a holistic curriculum to better understand the broad spectrum of sexuality.



ONA Statement

The purpose of Salem United Church of Christ is to live out the love of God in ways that are faithful to God, relevant to today, open to all, and striving to improve. We are an open and affirming congregation that believes that all people are created in God's image and thus are loved and blessed equally by God. And as it states in Luke 10:25-28, we should "Love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, with all our mind, and our neighbor as ourselves."

- We welcome and celebrate everyone, including people of all ages, races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family configurations, economic circumstances, faith backgrounds, and physical and mental abilities.
- We celebrate the beauty and uniqueness of each expression of God's diverse family as well as our oneness in Christ.
- In our community of faith all people are encouraged to participate and share their talents and energy in worship and sacraments, leadership positions, ordained ministry, lay ministry, learning, service, mission and fellowship.

We commit ourselves to the ongoing work of being an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation, striving to demonstrate in all ways that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome at Salem United Church of Christ.

LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE THROUGH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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

He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27, NRSVUE)

This very familiar Bible verse is included in Salem's Open and Affirming (ONA) Statement which the congregation voted on and adopted in January 2017. Throughout the month of January we will honor this anniversary by continuing our education on ways we can better support members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The last line in our ONA Statement pledges that "we commit ourselves to the ongoing work of being an ONA Congregation." Ratifying this ONA Statement was not just one moment in time. Rather, it was the beginning of an important journey professing to the world our unconditional welcome to all. Participate in the adult Sunday school class or in the special workshop on January 25. Come with your questions, ready to learn, and grow in your understanding.

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.

Christian Education Calendar	
<i>January</i>	
7	@ 9am Sunday School Classes Resume
23	@ 6:30pm BoCE
25	@ 6:30pm ONA Workshop: <i>Understanding Gender Identity</i>
TBD	Sunday School Leader Meeting

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

Love is Louder: Listening Deeply to LGBTQIA+ Experiences

Jan. 7, 14, 21, & 28

In honor of the 6th anniversary of the Salem congregation confirming its Open and Affirming Covenant, we will explore this webinar series offered through the Nurture the Soul UCC series. Part of our ONA Covenant is our pledge to continue to learn and grow in order to expand our welcome to everyone. Please join us for these important conversations.

Thank you... Thank you to everyone who participated in the Illuminated Advent Path. Volunteers worked together to create a festive atmosphere for fellowship, fun, and reflection. We also had a large group of visitors from Salem and the surrounding community walk the path.



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/>

Youth Opportunities at Salem: Grades 6-12

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

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.

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!

A heartfelt thank you goes out to Cindy Remus for leading our gingerbread house gathering before Christmas. Cindy baked and prepared all the gingerbread houses and provided the supplies for us to decorate them. It was a fun evening!

Thank you also to the youth who participated in the Illuminated Advent Path. You did a great job sharing the nativity scene with visitors to the path.

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.

Salem Gear

Thank you to Julie Adams for leading us in our Salem Gear fundraiser. Please note that we will be taking one more clothing order in January. Hurry and update your Salem wardrobe for our SALT Trip or other times we are out in the community. Order forms are in fellowship hall or contact Julie Adams gradamsiii@uwalumni.com.

Overnight Lock-In Jan. 19-20 @5:30pm-9am

One of our favorite events is back by popular demand! Come join us for food, fun, and fellowship. Our evening will begin with some pizza followed by free time and some fun scheduled activities before our evening movie. If we have snow, we can plan on sledding and a campfire. Bring a sleeping bag, pillow, and cot/air mattress. If you wish to participate but cannot stay overnight, please contact Sarah Pundt. *Parents: Sarah needs a second adult to come for the evening and stay overnight. Please let her know if you are available.*



Illuminated Advent Path



Gingerbread Houses

JANUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98	5 10AM-2PM - Serve at Meals for Madison	6
7 9AM - Sunday School 10:15AM - Worship 6:30-7:45PM - Youth Gathering	8 Eve - Boy Scouts	9 5:30-6:30PM - Cub Scouts 6PM - Finance 7PM - Council	10 6PM - BRC 6:30PM - Bells 6:45PM - Chancel	11 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98	12	13
14 9AM - Sunday School 10:15AM - Worship	15 Eve - Boy Scouts 6-8PM - Quilt Group	16 5:30-6:30PM - Cub Scouts	17 6PM - BRC 6:30PM - Bells 6:45PM - Chancel	18 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98 6:30PM - Men's Fellowship	19 5:30PM-Sat 9am - Youth Overnight Lock-in	20
21 9AM - Sunday School 10:15AM - Worship	22 Eve - Boy Scouts	23 5:30-6:30PM - Cub Scouts 6:30PM - BOCE Meeting	24 6PM - BRC 6:30PM - Bells 6:45PM - Chancel FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE	25 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98 6:30PM - ONA Workshop: <i>Understanding Gender Identity</i>	26	27
28 9AM - Sunday School 10:15AM - Worship	29 Eve - Boy Scouts	30 5:30-6:30PM - Cub Scouts	31 6PM - BRC 6:30PM - Bells 6:45PM - Chancel	 Give Online		

JANUARY NEWSLETTER 2024

ONA WORKSHOP

Thursday, January 25th
Understanding Gender Identity

YOUTH OVERNIGHT LOCK-IIN

5:30PM Friday, Jan 19-9am Saturday, Jan 20

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES RESUME

January 7 @ 9am



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.

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Church Council President:

John Cashman

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Congregation

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Living Out God's Love
SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

