

LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE

Salem United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming Congregation

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR JULY:

Week of July 4:

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10
Psalm 48
2 Corinthians 12:2-10
Mark 6:1-13

Week of July 11:

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19
Psalm 24
Ephesians 1:3-14
Mark 6:14-29

Week of July 18:

2 Samuel 7:1-14a
Psalm 89:20-37
Ephesians 2:11-22
Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Week of July 25:

2 Samuel 11:1-15
Psalm 14
Ephesians 3:14-21
John 6:1-21 Psalm 130

MARK-ET PLACE

Nehemiah Days for the Church

These are Nehemiah days for the church. My reference is to the Old Testament Book of Nehemiah and to the recovery of congregational life after the pandemic.

The historical setting of the Book of Nehemiah is easy to describe. The time is about 430 bc. The exile is ended. When Babylon captured the Kingdom of Judah in 586 bc, numbers of Jews – notably the ablest, youngest, and smartest – were carted off to Babylon while those less capable of staging a rebellion were allowed to remain in their Jewish homeland. This, in simplified terms, was the political catastrophe known as the exile. By the time of Nehemiah, Babylon is out of power and those banished to Babylon are allowed to return to Jerusalem and Judea.

The returning exiles find Jerusalem in disrepair. The wall around the city is broken and the city gates have been destroyed by fire. Jerusalem is but a shadow of what it was, and it is vulnerable to new and further attack.

We have not been in political exile, of course, but the pandemic all but closed the church for well over a year. The building is as solid as ever, but the congregation needs to be rebuilt and the church's mission, including its worship, needs to be restored where it can be restored and replaced where it needs to be replaced. Our "Jerusalem," in other words, is broken, burned, and vulnerable.

The Book of Nehemiah tells how the walls and gates of Jerusalem were rebuilt. There isn't space in this column to line out how the work took place. We can only note here that the effort took prayer, work, the labor of families, excellence of stewardship, and the reading of scripture.* The people recalled their history and pledged themselves to new faithfulness. They vowed, "We will not neglect the house of our God" (Neh. 10:39). In time the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt and its gates were restored. The end result was "the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away" (Neh. 12:43).

I expect to hear the joy of Salem far away as you rebuild and reconstruct your church after the exile that was the pandemic.

I am sure God will send you some "Nehemiah" to lead you in the work. Notice how I framed that sentence: to lead you in the work – not to do all the work for you. The work is yours to do and God expects you to do it.

There are no short-cuts to the rebuilding of the church. The work starts not with the congregation you want and then wishing for it but with the congregation you have and dedicating it toward the purpose of post-pandemic vigor. The effort will take all it took in

continued on next page...



JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 4: Monica Bachmann
- 5: Ann Nelson, Frank Westphal
- 6: Paul Wieland
- 7: Robert Zurbuchen
- 8: Chris Wilbricht
- 9: Oliver Tennyson
- 11: Jon Pundt, Theresa Bass
- 14: Zoey Shaw
- 17: Kylie Hageman
- 18: Sabrina Jacobus
- 26: Craig Rhiner
- 27: Dale Yurs

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



DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS AVAILABLE

Our Daily Bread, These Days and The Upper Room devotional booklets are available in the information box located next to the outdoor labyrinth or if you come to in-person worship you can find them on the wall in the entryway. We can also mail them upon request. These booklets are provided by the Salem Women's Guild.

...*Mark-et Place* continued

the days of Nehemiah: prayer, work, the labor of families, excellence of stewardship, and the study of scripture. Above all, it will take resolve – not on *somebody's* part, but – on *your* part: “We will not neglect the house of our God.”

As for me, I commend you to God and to the “Nehemiah” whom God will send to take my place, all in the confidence of knowing “the joy of the Lord will be your strength” (Neh. 8:10).

MEY

*I do not mean to suggest Nehemiah and his people got everything right. Toward the end of the book, for example, they practiced an exclusiveness we would find offensive today.

UPCOMING SERMONS

July 4: Christian Witness in a Secular Nation

July 11: The Heritage of Holy Communion

July 18: My Parting Hope for Salem

July 25: How to Welcome Your New Pastor

August 1: Farewell Sermon: My Song of Grateful Praise

WOMEN'S GUILD MEETING IN JULY

The Salem Women's Guild will be having a business meeting on Thursday July 1st at 1:30pm, instead of the regular June meeting. All Guild members are invited to attend, as we will be meeting outside on the patio. In case of rain, bring your mask as we will meet in the fellowship hall and will social distance per CDC guidelines. No food will be served at this meeting.

SPECIAL OPEN HOUSE FOR ALL THE WOMEN OF SALEM

(In Place of Koinonia)

As we say goodbye to Pastor Mark Yurs after his 30 years of service at Salem church, we also want to celebrate the special place his wife and our friend, Sherrol, has in the heart and life of our church community. All the ladies of the church are invited to an evening honoring Sherrol on July 22nd from 6:30-8:00pm for an informal time of conversation, reminiscing and send our friend off with our best wishes!

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The men's group of Salem United Church of Christ to meet on Thursday, July 8, at 6:30 PM, at the home of George Adams. A light supper will be provided and we will enjoy a time of conversation and Bible study.

OUR GRADUATING SENIORS



Avery Durnen

A lifelong member of Salem, Avery was baptized here as an infant and also celebrated his Confirmation in high school. He regularly attended Sunday school when he was younger and has benefited greatly from his experience in the youth program. Avery specifically highlights his mission trip experiences to Cincinnati, Alamosa (CO), and Madison as influential in understanding himself and how he can use his skills and interests to help others. Participating in Salem's Bell Choir has also encouraged Avery to realize the importance of having music in his life; a hobby he now plans to continue through college and his adult life. Avery's scouting interests regularly intersected with his connections to Salem. He is particularly grateful for the opportunity to create the outdoor labyrinth for the church as his Eagle Scout project. It was a great merger of the values he learned from both organizations, and he is very happy that Salem was the beneficiary of the culmination of his scouting work. Avery is the son of Dan and Charity Durnen and is graduated from Verona Area High School. He plans to pursue a degree in Environmental Engineering at UW-Milwaukee. We will celebrate Avery in worship on July 11.



Anna Putney

Anna Putney has been a lifelong member of Salem UCC. She was baptized in 2003 and confirmed in 2018. In her Salem scholarship application, Anna credits Salem with emphasizing the importance of working for the greater good in every aspect of life. This approach to life has contributed to Anna's desire to pursue a nursing career. She looks forward to healing people physically through her work, but also deeply values cultivating relationships with the individuals receiving her care. The welcome Anna feels at Salem has also encouraged her to seek that same welcome in other areas of her life. This helped her in the college selection process as she instinctively sought a school environment that embodied that same friendly and inclusive atmosphere. Overall, Anna feels the call to dedicate herself to being part of something bigger than herself. Anna is the daughter of Beth and Scott Putney and the granddaughter of Anna May Rhiner. She graduated from Verona Area High School and will pursue a nursing degree at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN. We will celebrate Anna during worship on July 18.

LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE THROUGH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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

*Our morning Sunday school program is on hiatus during the summer months.
Explore the resources below to find meaningful ways to enrich your faith at home or on the go.*

FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Take-Out Church

Grab a slice of the Gospel to go! Pizza delivery boxes are filled with faith-focused activities and items for children, youth, and families. The pizza box can slide neatly under the seat of the car for easy travel, and it includes games and activities to occupy everyone on long trips. The boxes also contain items and many ideas for fun and sabbath both indoors and outdoors at home. Pick up some Take-Out Church for your family near the side door entrance to the church or contact Sarah Pundt.

ADULTS

Dwelling in the Word: The Parables

The Damascus Project is an online Christian Education resource through the WI Conference UCC. On Thursdays through June and July the Damascus Project is offering a free online Bible study using the spiritual practice of Dwelling in the Word. Meeting days are Thursdays, 12 to 12:30 pm June 10, 17, 24 AND July 8, 15, 22 (no meeting on July 1). Come once or come every time. No preparation needed. And when we say 30 minutes, we mean it! To receive a weekly email reminder and the meeting link go to the Damascus Project network and search under Events. You may need to create a free account to join. <https://learning.the-damascus-project.org/feed>

Listen Up! Bible Study

In this Bible study series God's word is alive, with something new to say to all of us. It does not simply teach information about the Bible. It listens to God speak. Each study focuses on a specific book of the Bible. The complete collection of studies and leader guides is available for checkout from Sarah Pundt. Use these materials for a personal study or a small discussion group. If you would like assistance forming a Bible study group or would like to participate in a group, please contact Sarah Pundt.

SMALL GROUPS

Our small groups are gradually shifting back to in-person gatherings. We look forward to seeing you!

Koinonia

A Celebration of Sherrol July 22 @ 6:30-8pm
Please note that Koinonia will meet on the 4th Thursday of July in a combined gathering with the *Caring Friends Group* to celebrate Sherrol Yurs. If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Remus cindyremus@yahoo.com.

Parent's Promise

Salem Fellowship Hall July 15 @ 7pm
This group is for parents of tweens, teens, and young adults. Join this circle of parents for conversation and fellowship as we support each other in raising young people of faith. Newcomers and visitors are always welcome! Please contact Sarah Pundt for more information.



Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35 (NRSV))

"Come to the Table"

Dates: Aug. 15, 16, & 17

Time: 5:45-7:45pm

Who: All Ages

Cost: Free!

PROGRAM: Each evening will begin with a community meal followed by programs for children, youth, and adults. Come for the meal only, come for the program only, or come for the entire evening! We will explore three different Bible stories of Jesus hosting people for a meal. Through these versus we will be reminded that Jesus' love changes everything, we always have enough of what we need, and everyone is welcome. The children and youth will enjoy projects, games, Bible stories, music, and more. The older youth and adults will join a discussion group led by Cathy Kwilinski.

PARTICIPANTS: Programs available for all ages. The children's program is geared for children ages 3 and up. We are unable to offer nursery care for younger children this year because of Covid-19 precautions. Youth grades 6-12 have a variety of ways to participate depending on their interests. Please contact Sarah Pundt for more information.

REGISTRATION: Our VBS program is always offered free of charge. We do request that you register in advance to help with our planning.

- Families with children/youth under age 18 must complete a Registration Form and Waiver. (Emailed to Sunday school families and located on the church website)
- Everyone (adults included) attending VBS is asked to complete the "Save You A Seat" form (found on the next page). This helps us plan food quantities and program supplies.

Please return registrations to Sarah Pundt by July 15

MISSION PROJECT: Birthday Kits for BPNN

Our VBS theme focuses on the Christian practice of inviting people into our midst. A great joy for many children is inviting friends to share a birthday cake. For children who face food insecurity birthday celebrations are often limited. As we gather at VBS for our community meals and fellowship, let's work together to create special birthday memories for Dane County families. BPNN provides birthday kits to 200 area children per month. To help make the luxury of a birthday cake a reality for these families, we will be collecting the supplies needed to create birthday kits. Donations can be brought to church through July and early August until the end of VBS. BPNN requests the following items:

- cake mix
- prepared frosting
- 9x13 cake pan
- package of birthday candles
- disposable party plates and napkins (please do not provide items intended to be gender or age specific since we are unable to predetermine which items go to a specific child)
- large gift bags (used to assemble the individual birthday kits)
- monetary donations: check payable to Salem UCC. Write BPNN Birthday Kit in the memo

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Volunteers are the backbone of a successful VBS program. Please prayerfully consider how you can support our congregation. Review the volunteer options and contact Sarah Pundt spundt@salemchurchverona.org.

Volunteer at VBS



Location: SALEM UCC
Dates: AUGUST 15, 16, & 17
Time: 5:45PM-7:45PM
Ages: EVERYONE

We need volunteers to make VBS a success! There are many tasks to do before, during, and after VBS. Prayerfully consider how you can support our congregation and the local community. Please contact Sarah Pundt spundt@salemchurchverona.org or 608-692-3239. Check the boxes you're interested in, and we will contact you with more information. Thank you!

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Craft/Project Station Volunteer | <input type="checkbox"/> Donate Supplies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Games/Activities Volunteer | <input type="checkbox"/> Decorate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> Setup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drama Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drama Participant | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Preparation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mission Project Volunteers | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Donation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Story Volunteers | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity/marketing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen Volunteers | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registration Table | <input type="checkbox"/> Help as needed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group Shepherds | |

Name: _____

Email / Phone: _____

Dates Available: _____ August 15
 _____ August 16
 _____ August 17

You're Invited to Vacation Bible School!

Come to our Table!

Let us know you are coming,

And we will save you a seat!

Last Name: _____

	August 15	August 16	August 17
Dinner Only 5:45-6:15	*Children_____ Youth_____ Adults_____	Children_____ Youth_____ Adults_____	Children_____ Youth_____ Adults_____
Program Only 6:15-7:45	Children_____ Youth_____ Adults_____	Children_____ Youth_____ Adults_____	Children_____ Youth_____ Adults_____
Dinner & Program 5:45-7:45	Children_____ Youth_____ Adults_____	Children_____ Youth_____ Adults_____	Children_____ Youth_____ Adults_____

***Children: Age 3-grade 5**

Youth: Grades 6-12

Everyone (including adults) attending VBS needs to complete this "Save You a Seat" form. Parents/Guardians must also complete a separate registration form and waiver for any participants under age 18. Please contact Sarah Pundt spundt@salemchurchverona.org .

SALEM YOUTH NEWSLETTER

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

JULY 2021

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

Youth Opportunities at Salem

Grades 6-12
All Are Welcome!

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!

July 11 @4-8pm

Outdoors with John and Cari Bass

John and Cari have invited the youth to their rural, wooded property in Barneveld to enjoy the hiking trails, outdoor labyrinth, cookout dinner and fellowship. We will carpool from church and should arrive back in Verona by 8:30pm. We need one or two parents willing to help with the carpool. Please RSVP on the Mighty Network so we know how many cars we need for transport.

July 25@6:30pm Outdoor Movie Night

Watch the Mighty Network for details as the date draws near.

Spend time with us... Do you have a special interest or hobby you would like to share with Salem's Youth? Intergenerational connections are vital to healthy faith development in young people. Please contact Sarah Pundt to plan and schedule your event.

YOUTH CALENDAR

July

- 11** @ 9am Senior Recognition (Avery Durnen)
@ 4-8pm - *Outdoors with John & Cari Bass*
- 12** @ 6:30 YMT Meeting
- 18** @ 9am Senior Recognition (Anna Putney)
- 25** @ 6:30pm Youth Gathering
Outdoor Movie Night

August

- 15, 16, 17** @ 5:45-7:45 VBS

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Salem Youth Garden Project

The garden is growing like a weed (and growing lots of weeds too!) Blaise Westphal, Amy and Owen Luginbuhl, and Chase and Brianna Runnheim have all taken shifts so far to care for the garden. This produce will be shared with the church congregation and donated to local organizations to help others gain access to locally grown food.

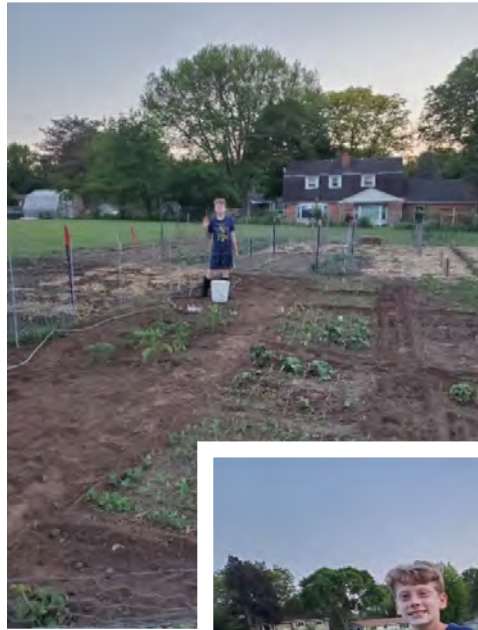
At Your Service

Do you need assistance with lawn mowing, yardwork, outdoor painting, or dog walking? The youth of Salem would like to serve you. They are looking for opportunities to help their Salem community by providing any work that can be done outdoors, or in an otherwise Covid- safe environment. Please contact Sarah Pundt for more information or to schedule a service.

Random Acts of Kindness

We will kickoff this service experience on June 27 at our youth gathering. Each youth will be given \$10 with the challenge to bless someone in the community. Their efforts can benefit a family member, a friend, or a stranger. Results of this challenge will be shared at our July 25 youth gathering and in the August newsletter. It will be exciting to see where the Spirit will move our youth this summer.

We challenge members of the congregation to participate by performing a Random of Act of Kindness. Share your experience and story with the youth by emailing Sarah Pundt spundt@salemchurchverona.org. Let's get that Spirit moving everywhere!



JULY 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 1:30PM - Women's Guild	2	3
4 Independence Day - 4th of July 9AM - Worship	5	6	7	8 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98 6:30PM - Men's Fellowship at George Adams's	9	10
11 9AM - Worship 4-8M - Youth Outdoors with John & Cari Bass	12	13 6PM - Finance 7PM - Council	14	15 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98 7PM - Parent's Promise	16	17
18 9AM - Worship	19	20 6:30PM - BoCE	21	22 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98 6:30-8PM - Open House for Women of Salem (to celebrate Sherrol)	23 AUGUST NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE	24
25 9AM - Worship 6:30PM - Youth Gathering - Outdoor Movie Night August 1 9AM - Worship (Mark's last Sunday) 10AM - 2PM - Retirement Open House	26	27	28	29	30	31

JULY NEWSLETTER 2021

JULY GUILD MEETING

Thursday, July 1, 1:30PM

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE RECOGNITION

Avery Durnen (Sunday, July 11)

Anna Putney (Sunday, July 18)

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH HONOR SHERROL

*Join the women of the church on July 22, 6:30-8pm
as we honor Sherrol before Mark's Retirement.*

SAVE THE DATE!

*A Retirement Open House following Mark's final
worship service on August 1 (10am - 2pm)*

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Congregation

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Living Out God's Love
**SALEM UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

