



From Pastor Phil

Dear Members and Friends,

When I was first considering ministry, the pastor I grew up with represented what I thought a minister should be: bearded, having a lot of books, drinking a lot of coffee, and smoking a pipe.

Three out of four ain't bad. Beard? Check. (This is in part because when I got engaged, I was clean-shaven. Mary asked me, "You will grow the beard back for the wedding, won't you?" I had the good sense to realize this wasn't really a question.) Coffee? Check. Books? Check. Pipe? No, thank you. (Also Mary's influence, but I am also the generation where health class showed us really ugly pictures of lungs.)

So, I own a lot of books. You might think that books could easily fit into two categories: professional and recreational. But novels offer insight into the human condition, which is often at the heart of ministry. And reading certain biblical scholars often helps me relax. (Yes, I am weird that way.)

But what happens when you have too many books? I used to think there was no such thing. These are my favorites, that is my TBR (to be read) pile, and those are my emotional support books, thank you very much.

Some books are perennial. I return to them time and again. Others are worth the one read, but I have no need to keep them. Again, my wife's wisdom comes through: We do not need to bring anything more into the house without getting rid of something else first.

I'm gonna see if I can get a few dollars at the used book store, and try not to walk out with more than I walked in with. Maybe the public library can use some.

The process of doing all this is a little bit of excavation of my life, my ministry, and my studies. And it may parallel some healing acts in life. Some things, it is time to give thanks for what I gained from them and let them go.

However you are this summer, may what you have nurture your life and challenge you to grow in faith. And may you let go of the things you no longer need.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Phil

Letter from our new Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry

Dear Salem Family,

I'm so excited and honored to serve as your new Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry! Growing up at Salem, I was shaped by the love and creativity of this community, especially through our children and youth ministries. Stepping into this role feels like both a homecoming and a hopeful new beginning. I'm deeply grateful for the faithful leadership of Sarah Pundt, who planted seeds of care and commitment here. I look forward to tending what she began and dreaming with you about what might grow next.

Before I dive into all that's ahead, I want to pause to say a heartfelt thank you. Doug and Barb Smith recently refurbished the playset outside, creating not just a play space but a beautiful sacred space where our children can pray (I mean play!) together. Their gift of time and care is already blessing the youngest among us and will continue to for years to come.



As we begin a new program year, I invite you—**yes, you, and yes, even YOUth**—to help shape the future of faith formation at Salem:

- ✨ If you enjoy visioning, planning, and nurturing big-picture ideas, consider joining the **Board of Christian Education (BOCE)** or the **Youth Ministry Team (YMT)**.
- 🌱 If you prefer hands-on ministry, building relationships, and learning together, we're also looking for **Sunday School teachers** for all ages.

Curious? Reach out to me at faithformation@salemchurchverona.org or speak with a board member. This is an invitation for people of all ages. Let's discover together how your gifts can shine!

There's so much to look forward to in this season of growth. I'm already grateful for the Spirit moving among us, and I cannot wait to grow in faith and wonder with you.

Peace and blessings,
Emily, Director of Faith Formation

Faith Formation Happenings in September

Sunday School Teacher Training & Mini-Retreat

Saturday, September 7 | After Worship until 1:00 PM

We'll prepare for the year ahead, build a teaching schedule, complete Safe Church training, and share lunch and reflection.

Yes, this falls on **Iron Man Sunday**, so we'll need to find creative ways to get to and from church. But if the Magi could figure out how to avoid King Herod, I'm confident we can navigate Verona traffic. 😊

Whether you're returning or new, we'd love to have you there. Please be sure to let Emily know if you plan to attend

faithformation@salemchurchverona.org



Rally Sunday

September 14 | Celebration During and After Worship

Rally Sunday marks the beginning of Salem's program year! In Faith Formation world, that means these things will be available to everyone after worship:

- 📅 A program year calendar to take home
- 📝 Sunday School registration forms
- 🌐 Information about the youth **SALT Trip** to the Pine Ridge Reservation (SD)
- 🏡 Information about a **family-friendly SALT Trip** to Blue Mounds State Park

Sunday School Classes Begin on September 21

This year's Sunday School theme is: **A Year of Sacred Seeking Together**

We begin with **Seeking God Together**, exploring spiritual practices that can deepen and transform our relationship with the Sacred and with one another.

👉 **Sunday School begins Sept. 21 at 9:00 AM** — we will gather all together (adults, youth, and children) in the church library for an intergenerational session on centering prayer.

👉 **Sunday School on Sept. 28 at 9:00 AM:**

- **Adults** — Conference Room (main floor, by church offices)
- **Youth** — Youth Room (second floor)
- **Children** — Lower Level

✨ **Youth Group & Confirmation Begin in October**

In October, we will begin a new rhythm of gathering:

- **Confirmation** will meet on the **first Sundays of the month in the evening** (October 5th).
- **Youth Group** will meet on the **third Sundays of the month in the evening** (October 19).

Exact times are still **TBD** as I make rounds meeting with youth individually to see what works best for everyone's schedules. Stay tuned for more details! If you are interested in participating in confirmation, please reach out to Pastor Phil at phobson@saalemchurchverona.org or Emily at faithformation@saalemchurchverona.org

Contemplative Community

Fridays, 6:30–7:30 PM in the Church Library or Outdoors

A gentle weekly space to wind down and encounter the sacred. We continue to gather in scripture, silence, and prayer. No experience needed—simply come as you are.



Founder's Day Food Drive

Dear Salem Family,

As the Founders Food Drive in honor of Debbie Bass's 90th Birthday draws to a close, we have our Salem Family to thank.

It has been a tremendous success, and once again Salem has led the way. The food we have collected from our various locations we had bins has been wonderful, but Salem has contributed by far the most. What a testament to the care we have for our neighbors.

All this in celebration of Debbie's 90th Birthday!! She'll be the first to say "it wasn't just me, it was a village past and present."

We will be delivering our 2nd round of food to BPNN today and I'd imagine Salem folks will be there to help sort and put it away on the selves. We'll let you know how many pounds of food we collected. On behalf of my Mom and our family, Thank you, Thank you, Thank you.

Peace and Love,
John Bass

Council Corner

Rally Sunday – September 14 at 10:15

Mark your calendars and join us for **Rally Sunday on September 14 at 10:15** as we gather to kick off a new season of worship, learning, and fellowship together!

Following worship, the **Church Council and Board of Christian Education** will host a **potluck meal**. This is a chance to share good food and even better conversation around the table.

We'll also be holding a **Mission Fair** during fellowship time. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the many committees and ministries that help shape the life of our church. From worship and education to outreach and care, there's a place for everyone to share their gifts.

Some of you may be invited to consider serving on a committee this year. We hope you will prayerfully think about how your time and talents might support the work we do together. Even if you're not sure where you might fit, come explore the possibilities and see where the Spirit is guiding you.

Let's celebrate the start of a new church year with joy, connection, and purpose. We look forward to seeing you there!

Cari Bass
Council President

Community Meal at Badger Prairie Needs Network

On Saturday November 1, 2025 members of Salem will be volunteering at the community meal. This is an opportunity to live out God's love by serving our community. Twelve members of the congregation will be needed to assist in various ways throughout the morning. No prior experience is needed and you do not need to be a regular BPNN volunteer to sign up to help. Youth and families are welcome, please see age requirements for the specific roles. Read about the opportunities to assist with the meals and decide which role you would like to do. A sign up sheet will be available later in September. Community Meal Server Assistant from 11:15 am to 2:30pm - 4 individuals needed

Ages 14+ Help serve the popular community meal. Work with a crew captain to serve a hot & healthy free buffet style meal. Responsibilities include serving at the hot wells and cleanup of the server and dining room after the meal. Community Meal Bussing Assistant from 11:30 am to 2:30pm - 2 individuals needed

Ages 15+ without parental supervision. 9+ with a parent. Staff the bussing station, scrape and sort incoming dishes, take full bins to dishwashing area and sanitize trays.

Community Meal Dining Room Assistant from 11:15 am to 2:30 pm - 4 individuals needed

Ages 14+ with parental supervision. 9+ with a parent. Under the direction of the Dining Room/Servery crew captain, set up dining room for meal service and keep dining room area clean throughout the meal service, including wiping tables and cleaning up spills. Greet guests and assist with plates and drinks as needed. Set up and monitor dish return area and move soiled dishes to dish room as needed. Restock beverages as needed. Assist in overall cleanup tasks in the dining room. Community Meal Dishes Steward 10:15 am to 12:00 pm - 2 individuals needed

Ages 16+. Support the meal team by keeping work surfaces, cookware and tools cleaned and organized. Operate the commercial dishwasher, training provided. Oversee the cleaning of floors and remove garbage.

All volunteers are required to wear closed-toe shoes and avoid loose clothing. Long hair must be tied back. All volunteers under 18 must have a parent or legal guardian complete a release of liability form.

Questions, see members of the mission committee.

SEPTEMBER

2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6 11:30 am Community Meal
			6:30 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal		6:30 pm Contemplative Community	
7 Special Music 9 am Worship Sunday School Teacher Training	8	6 pm Finance 7 pm Church Council	6:30 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	6:30 pm Contemplative Community	6:30 pm Contemplative Community	11:30 am Community Meal
14 BRC/Handbells Rally Sunday 10:15 am Worship Potluck Fellowship	15		6:30 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	6:30 pm Contemplative Community	6:30 pm Contemplative Community	11:30 am Community Meal
21 Handbells 9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Worship	22 Submission due date: Please send to office@salemchurch verona.org	BOCE meeting	6:30 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	6:30 pm Contemplative Community	6:30 pm Contemplative Community	
28 Chancel Choir 9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Worship	29	30				

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

4: Colleen Bass
5: Madeline Moll
6: Katie Banaszak
7: Debbie Bass
8: Owen Luginbuhl
8: Dick Phillips
13: Gladys Schmid
14: Blake Adams
16: Katherine Shubal
15: Isaac Bahr
19: Mark Kryka
22: Curtis Herfel
22: Margaret Kryka
22: Dawn Lingard
27: Lena Woodis
31: Krista Nechvatal



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

7: Doris Waldmann
8: Megan Price
8: Cathy Kwilinski
8: Emma Burgenski
9: Reid Adams
10: Eliese Yurs
12: Conlin Bass
15: Joan Gering
16: Lisa Hart
16: Nathan Bahr
18: Deborah Zurbuchen
20: Tucker Malueg
21: Kathy Homb
24: Aayla Bahr
25: Lydia Durnen
26: Ellie Burgenske
29: Ivy Grotelueschen

Doris Waldmann-98th Birthday Celebration

Please join Dawn Lingard and Steve Witcraft as they host fellowship hour on September 7th, celebrating Doris' actual birthday! Brunch goodies and cake will be served.

Staff Contacts

-Pastor Phil Hobson
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An Open
and Affirming
Congregation

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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SALEM UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
Living Out God's Love

