

LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE

Salem United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming Congregation

NEWSLETTER | OCTOBER 2025

A message from Pastor Phil

Dear Members and Friends,

The story goes that many, many years ago, a gardener had to walk down to the river to draw water and bring it back to water their garden and provide water for their family.

Every day, the gardener would put a pole across their shoulders, with two clay pots tied to the ends. They walked down the path to the river and dipped each pot into the clear water, then walked back up to their house.

One day, one of the pots started crying. "What's wrong?" asked the gardener.

"I have a crack in my side. Every day, water has spilled out of me. I am no good to you. I waste so much water that you cannot use."

The gardener smiled and looked at the clay pot and said, "Tomorrow, when I carry you to the river I want you to look at the two sides of the path."

The next day, on the way down to the river the clay pot saw that this side of the path was just dirt and rocks. But on the way back from the river, the other side had beautiful grasses and wildflowers of all kinds. And there were bees, and butterflies, and birds, and all sorts of beautiful creatures among the grasses and flowers.

"I don't understand," said the pot with the crack in it.

The gardener smiled and said, "I know you have a broken spot. I know that you spill water out when I walk back from the river. That water helps all those flowers and plants grow. And everyone who goes to the river for water sees them. Without you, without that spot in you that you think is a mistake, the world would be so much less beautiful. You are not useless. You make the world a better place"

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Phil

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR OCTOBER

October 5

Luke 17:5-10

October 12

2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c

October 19

Luke 18:1-8

October 26

Joel 2:23-32 and
Luke 18:9-14

Salem's Upcoming FUTURE events:

November 16

Annual meeting and
potluck following
worship

November 29

Holiday church
decorating

November 30

Advent by Candlelight

More details in next
month's newsletter!

Faith Formation

Dear Salem Family,

As the fall season begins in full, I give thanks for the many people who have stepped forward to nurture the faith of our community this year. Please join me in offering a heartfelt *thank you* to those who have signed up to be Sunday School leaders, mentors for our confirmation youth, participants in the SALT trip, and encouragers for our young people. Your willingness to share your gifts is a blessing to us all.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a Faith Formation leader, please reach out to me at faithformation@saalemchurchverona.org to see the ways you can be involved in this ministry! You can also stop by the awesome Faith Formation board at the back of the sanctuary for more information.

Our Contemplative Community continues to meet regularly on **Fridays at 6:30PM**, practicing *Lectio Divina* with scripture, poems, blessings, and stories. It has become a gentle space to rest in God's presence together. Consider joining us!



I am also grateful to John Cashman for mowing paths through our prairie! If you find that you connect with the sacred in nature, I invite you to walk these paths, smell the grasses, listen for birdsong, and feel the earth beneath your feet. We may even do this during Contemplative Community! Come find out!



Looking ahead:

- Confirmation – Our program, *Confirm, Not Conform*, will begin on October 5. We will bless our confirmands and their mentors in worship that morning, then gather that evening from 6:00–7:30 PM. Confirmation will continue to meet on the first Sunday of each month.
- Step In Youth Gatherings – Our youth will begin gathering on October 19 with a meaningful service opportunity: joining the CROP Walk in Madison. More details to come! Step In Youth Gatherings will continue to meet on the third Sunday of each month.

Thank you for your prayers and support as together we grow in faith, hope, and love.

Peace and blessings,

Emily
Director of Faith Formation
faithformation@saalemchurchverona.org

Council Corner

Rally Sunday... or Rally Season?

At Salem, we're reimagining Rally Sunday as the beginning of Rally Season. This is a time not just to kick off the program year, but to open wide the doors to connection, community, and meaningful involvement.

This season, we're inviting everyone to consider how you might step into church life. Not just in big, time-consuming ways, but in ways that fit your comfort, schedule, and abilities. Whether you're a longtime member or just starting to feel at home here, **there's a place for you.**

Have you ever thought about being a liturgist, but the walk up front or the steps make it hard to say yes? We can bring the microphone to you!

Would you love to welcome people at the door, but aren't able to collect the offering? That's absolutely okay. Your friendly smile at the entrance is more than enough!

Do you have a musical gift (voice, instrument, or otherwise) but feel hesitant about a full-time commitment? What if you offered a piece during the prelude, offertory, or benediction? Even a one-time contribution can lift hearts and deepen worship.

This is a season of possibility, where participation is shaped by accessibility, inclusion, and joy. If your heart is saying "maybe," let's have a conversation. **There's a way for everyone to belong.**

Let's make this Rally Season a celebration of our beautiful, diverse, and spirit-filled community. If you're interested in getting involved, reach out to anyone on council (listed below) — we'd love to help you find your fit. Or look for the sign-up clipboards in Fellowship Hall. We look forward to seeing your name!

Cari Bass - Council President

Other members include : Joann Aebly, Kris Wilbricht, Chad Malueg, Krista Nechvatal, Kerry Steinagel, Chuck Hart, Heather Thoma, Karen Williams

Thank You!

Word of Thanks

Many thanks for the prayers and the get well cards sent to me during my hospitalization and rehabilitation! With a half hip replacement, I will no longer take a risk on my bike. It was moving to have thoughtful Salem friends remember me!

Thank you so very much!

May God Bless You!

Joan Gering

Joyful Announcement



My son Michael and his wife Amanda welcomed their first baby into the world September 20.

His name is **Henry Robert Fiez**.
Weight 8 lbs. 12 oz., length 21.5 inches.

Such a blessing.

Terri Fiez

Have some news to share?

Please submit NOVEMBER newsletter items by October 23rd to:

office@saalemchurchverona.org

Pictures are always welcome too!

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Judy Hansen
- 13 Anna Yurs
- 14 Mark Hodel
- 15 Julie Adams
- 15 John Cashman
- 15 Dianne Gintz
- 15 Ephraam Bahr
- 17 Abigail Reece (Wilbricht)
- 22 Ken Anderson
- 26 Rebecca Hagenston
- 27 John Hageman
- 30 Larry Skupien

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**



Mission Opportunities

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 in the fellowship hall.

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 the 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 the dining room for meal service and keep the 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 the dish return area and move soiled dishes to the 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 removing 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.

See a Mission Committee member with any questions: JoAnn Aebly, Karen Williams, Kathy Hauser, Mary Cutler

Give a Family the Gift of a Thanksgiving Dinner



Thanksgiving will be here faster than a turkey trot and Badger Prairie Needs Network looks forward to providing families with a delicious holiday dinner from turkey to pie. **If you would like to sponsor a household for Thanksgiving, consider a donation of \$75.** Every bit helps so give what you are able to provide towards a family's holiday meal.

Your cash donation helps BPNN purchase ingredients in bulk quantities, so the pantry is fully stocked with holiday ingredients everyone loves. Cash and **checks (made out to Salem)**, designated to BPNN thanksgiving dinner will be collected until October 26.

Thank you for your continued support of this holiday tradition.

OCTOBER 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6-7:00 Scouts 6:00 BRC rehearsal 6:30 Handbell practice 7:00 Chancel rehearsal	2	3 6:30 pm Contemplative Community	4 9:00-11:00 am Crafting Community 11:30-12:30 pm BPNN Community Meal (SALEM VOLUNTEERS)
5 9:00 am Faith Formation 10:15 am Worship Blessing of Journey of Confirmation in worship -Chancel Choir 6 pm Confirmation	6 6:15-8:30 Scouts	7 6-7:30 Scouts	8 6:00 BRC rehearsal 6:30 Handbell practice 7:00 Chancel rehearsal	9	10 6:30 pm Contemplative Community	11 9:00-11:00 am Crafting Community
12 9:00 am Faith Formation 10:15 am Worship -BRC	13 <i>Columbus Day</i> 6:30-8:30 Scouts	14 6-7 Scouts 6 pm Finance Mtg 7 pm Council Mtg	15 6-7 pm Scouts 6:00 BRC rehearsal 6:30 Handbell practice 7:00 Chancel rehearsal	16	17 6:30 pm Contemplative Community	18 9:00-11:00 am Crafting Community 11:30-12:30 pm BPNN Community Meal
19 9:00 am Faith Formation 10:15 am Worship -Handbells 6 pm Youth Gathering	20 6:30-8:30 Scouts	21 6-7:30 Scouts	22 6:00 BRC rehearsal 6:30 Handbell practice 7:00 Chancel rehearsal	23 DEADLINE for November newsletter submissions	24 6:30 pm Contemplative Community	25 9:00-11:00 am Crafting Community
26 9:00 am Faith Formation 10:15 am Worship -Chancel Choir	27 6:30-8:30 Scouts	28 6:30 pm BOCE	29 6 pm BRC rehearsal 6:30 Handbell practice 7:00 Chancel rehearsal	30	31 6:30 pm Contemplative Community	

Salem church staff and Contacts:

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An Open
and Affirming
Congregation

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Living Out God's Love
SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

