

SALEM CONNECTION

MARCH 2022



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Several pastors in the area found that biking has several parallels to what we are experiencing in these days of Covid. Pr. David Peterson from St. John's, Cedarbrook shared some of his thoughts.

Bikers do not like "false tops." What are "false tops"?

A "false top" is when you are riding up a steep hill and thinking you are almost to the top but...when you crest that perceived "top," you find that it is not the top of the hill at all. Your mind and body are ready to exhale, rest and coast. But another hidden hill awaits you.

When it comes to these months of Covid, the "false top" analogy sounds familiar, doesn't it? First it's masks, then vaccinations, then boosters. And every time we think we're going to get back to "normal" a new variant pops up and it feels like we just took 2 steps backward. So, we ask, "Where is the top of this wicked ride called 'Covid?'" Here we are, as a nation and as a church, climbing proverbial hills...hills with all sorts of "false tops." How do we climb the hills ahead?

In biking, there are two ways to climb a hill. One way is to charge ahead with power and reckless abandon. Bicyclists call this style of climbing "pounding and grinding" (pounding the pedals/grinding the gears)." When you know the route and you know the length of the ride, you know not only where the hills are, but you also know where the downhills and the flats are. You can pace yourself for what is ahead...and pound and grind at will!

If we knew the route that Covid would take we could plan ahead. If we knew the end of Covid, we would know when and how to conserve energy and hope. The trouble is, like an unknown, hilly route for a bicyclist, there are many "false tops" that are certain to be ahead of us as a Church.

Bikers know that "pounding and grinding" will not work on unfamiliar hilly routes. Experienced riders learn to "spin" pedal. They gear down, using the leverage of the bike's lower gears to conserve energy for what is ahead.

If you have "pounded and grinded" up hills your whole life (that's me), spinning can, at first, be discouraging because you're pedaling faster and going slower. Shifting from grinding to spinning up hills means retraining your muscles, your expectations and your heart. It shifts the body from anaerobic to aerobic training.

With Covid, the danger of discouragement and burnout is real. The hills have gotten steeper and the route ahead, less certain. I suppose we can keep grinding and pounding as Church...doing the same things over and over again and expecting different results. But dreaming and hoping we'll get back to "normal" may set us up for disappointment on this ride. We need to retrain our minds, our spirits, and our bodies to more of a "spinning" approach. We need to learn new habits in worship, service, study and outreach in order to avoid being burned out, individually and as churches. Retraining and learning new habits is very hard. (...and we are not just talking biking here).

Another habit that experienced bikers learn is that the best way to conquer hills is to travel in a team. There is an enormous boost from riding in a group. In fact, pace lines (riding in a line/group of riders) can increase your speed by as much as 2-3 mph on a long ride! We are not only better together when biking, but we are also better together as church.

So how do we face the hills ahead? We look back at what was behind us and learn from it. Then we train and plan and work together for what is ahead...as best as we can.

Your fellow traveler in Christ,

- Pastor Mike

THE HEARTLAND CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY is Sunday March 13th at 3:00 pm at Bethel Lutheran Church in Little Falls. Salem's voting delegates are Pastor Amanda, Pastor Mike, Tim and Kim Coughlin. This year's visiting delegates are Myron & Shirley Midthun. Please keep our conference and delegates in your prayers as they meet and prepare for the NE-MN Synod Assembly coming up in April.

MENTORS ARE WORSHIPPING WITH CONFIRMATION STUDENTS DURING LENT. After worship they will spend time reflecting on the worship service together, planning any other activities they may want to pursue, and getting to know each other better. Please keep Salem's confirmation students and their mentors in your prayers as they journey together in faith.

TURNING TOWARD'S GOD'S ABUNDANCE is our theme for midweek Lenten worship this year. Lent is a season of repentance, turning to God and asking for God's goodness to wipe away our sins and show us how to live anew. Lent also turns us toward Easter and the abundant life our Lord offers through his cross and resurrection. Each Wednesday we'll sing Holden Evening Prayer and reflect on one of five divine attributes taken from the Sunday Gospel readings during Lent: Compassion (Luke 13:1-9), Love (John 12:1-8), Faithfulness (Luke 4:1-13), Forgiveness (Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32) and Mercy (Luke 13:31-35).

LENT MIDWEEK SCHEDULE: Evening worship will be at Salem every Wed. in Lent at 7 p.m. A free will offering supper will be served each Wed. from 5:30-6:30, March 9 – April 6. Aitkin area pastors will reflect on the theme “Turning Toward God’s Abundance.” Worship offerings will be divided between the Cuyuna Range Food Shelf and Midwives for Haiti.

Wed. Mar. 2	7:00 pm	Ash Wednesday worship
Wed. Mar. 9	5:30-6:30	Supper
	7:00 pm	Worship Holden Evening Prayer “Compassion” Pr. James Muske, Bethesda, Malmo
Wed. Mar. 16	5:30-6:30	Supper
	7:00 pm	Worship Holden Evening Prayer “Love,” Pr. Rebecca Hinz, Bethlehem, rural Aitkin
Wed. Mar. 23	5:30-6:30	Supper
	7:00 pm	Worship Holden Evening Prayer “Faithfulness,” Pr. Mike
Wed. Mar. 30	5:30-6:30	Supper
	7:00 pm	Worship Holden Evening Prayer “Forgiveness,” Pr. Amanda
Wed. April 6	5:30-6:30	Supper
	7:00 pm	Worship Holden Evening Prayer “Mercy,” Pr. Reggie Denton, 1 st - Aitkin

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Sun. April 10	9:00 am	Palm Sunday Worship Procession with palms
Thurs. April 14	7:00 pm	Maundy Thursday Worship 1st Communion
Friday April 15	7:00 pm	Good Friday Worship Tenebrae Service
Sun. April 17	8:15 am	Easter Worship with Communion
	9:30 am	Easter Worship with Communion



THE KOFFEE KLATCH is starting up again at Heartwood on the 3rd Friday of the month at 1pm. All are invited to come join the Bible study and the conversation. The next gathering will be Friday, March 18th at 1:00 pm.

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

READERS

March 6 Warren Balfany

March 13 Gary Guida

March 20 Nancy Meyer

March 27 Warren Balfany

USHERS

Ed & Sherri Godfrey

Mark Boike, Randy Holmwig, Herb & Barb Schoon

Clark & Joyce Marshall, Becki Zender

Nory & Peggy Hunze, Chuck Lubowitz, Karla Peterson



March Birthdays

- 1 Alice Neibergs
- 3 Craig Henningson
- 4 Annette Olson
- 6 Les Chileen, Brett Midthun
- 7 Pastor Amanda, Mary Lobitz, Louie Smilich, Emberly Voller
- 9 Shirley Harker
- 10 Sue Stromberg
- 12 Randy Holmwig, Rad Royer, Les Taylor (101!)
- 15 Renee Gilmer, Ken Stebbins
- 16 Rod Ogard, Al Schiffler
- 18 Natalie Gavin, Marlene Prill, LeRoy Ryan, Lisa Slepica
- 20 Cory Brix
- 21 Erik Christenson, Barbara Schiffler
- 22 Emmet Deseth
- 25 Abe Deseth, Sandra Tietz
- 30 Richard Hicks
- 31 Pam Magnuson, Nancy Pelant

March Wedding Anniversaries

- 3 Wayne & Joyce Kohnen (1962)
- 4 Mark & Debbi Carlson (1977)
- 20 Clark & Joyce Marshall (1971)
- 30 Maurice & Lisa Slepica (2002)



ATTENTION THRIVENT MEMBERS!

Your Thrivent Choice Dollars are available to you to designate until March 31st. Just call Thrivent Financial at 800-847-4836 and say "Choice Dollars." Or visit Thrivent.com. to assign available funds. You may choose to designate those funds to Salem. Thank you!



Dear Friends,
We are truly thankful for your support of Midwives for Haiti. Your donations make a difference! Thanks to you, we are delivering another year of vital programs in Haiti. Whether your donation helps to stock a maternity unit, supply our skilled birth attendant students with necessary school supplies, supply traditional birth attendants with clean birth kits or keep lifesaving accessible to expectant mothers—**you** are a part of our success during these difficult times! Thank you for sharing our vision and for keeping the mothers and infants of Haiti close to your heart.

Dear Salem,
Thank you for the scholarship that I received! I am attending UMD and all money received is helpful in paying my tuition.
Noelle Jones

Join us for good food and fellowship!!

Lent is just around the corner and we are happy to announce that we are bringing back our Wednesday Lenten Suppers!! You are all invited to come to Lenten services early to enjoy a dinner prepared by congregation members. Salem youth and friends will begin serving meals at 5:30 p.m. and suppers will be served March 9—April 6. There will NOT be a supper on Ash Wednesday. Free-will donations are accepted and will go to a youth retreat or activity. If you are interested in preparing a meal or the dessert, please sign up at the kiosk in the narthex. Please come and join us for supper and worship, as we prepare to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord!



Kris Schmidt

GO FISHING? ME?

When Ruth and I first came to Salem Lutheran we did not know anyone that was a member.

I had never fished! I had zero fishing gear.

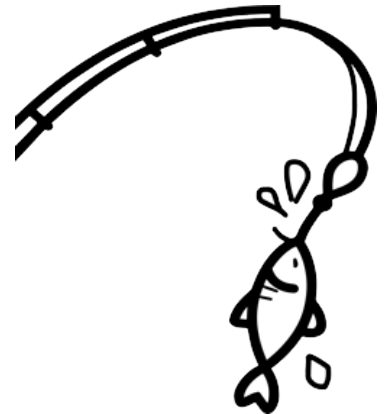
I took a chance and joined 18 strangers on my first fishing trip. We went to the most beautiful lake you can imagine with all kinds of islands and wildlife.

The captains (those that bring their private boats) set me up with pole and bait. They seemed to enjoy introducing me to the art of fishing. Everyone catches all kinds of fish!

The cabins are modern and the food is awesome.

Little by little I got to know these men I went fishing with. Makes us all closer as a family.

If you are like I was, nervous and timid about being with people you don't really know, except as faces in Salem, I say take that step and come fishing.



I left with 18 strangers and came back with 18 friends!!

Ladies: Encourage your man to go fishing as it's about a vacation for you too!!!

I have lots of stories.

Glenn Sues

LIBRARY NEWS

As we were pulling books to display for Lent, the question of giving up something for Lent came to mind. Those who advocate giving something up cite Luke 9:23 [Then he said to them: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."] Some Christian denominations argue that there is nothing Biblical about giving up candy, etc. for Lent. Others promise to add something during the Lenten season such as prayer, fasting, giving time and/or money, daily Bible reading, or books that focus on the way to the cross. These viewpoints can lead to interesting discussions about sacrifice and the meaning of Lent in our faith journey.



If you are seeking more information, or want to contemplate Christ's journey from Palm Sunday to Easter, there are a variety of books and DVD's to check out on display in the Salem Library.

Salem Camping Trip

For over 20 years many Salemites and friends have been camping together! We do this usually mid-June, arriving at the camp on a Sunday and leaving for home on Wednesday morning.



Activities include swimming, golfing, shopping, visiting, relaxing, eating, biking, and sharing a potluck—usually supper, sometimes breakfast. Did I forget to mention that many of our group fish? Two Harbors was our destination for many years, but for around the last ten years, we have gone to Trails RV campground near Walker. We reserve most of the temporary spots so we can keep our group together. Some of the men bring boats, so if you enjoy fishing, you will get the opportunity.

Most of us have campers, but Trails RV offers tent sites too. They will get you close to the rest of us and provide electricity. The pool and the bathrooms are close and there is a nice meeting room that we have available in case of rain! Many of us meet there for board games in the afternoon or evening. All activities are optional! We have a campfire and Bible study each evening. This year's camping dates are June 19-22. We are always looking for new campers. You do not need to be a member of Salem to be a part of this!

If you are interested or want to hear more, please call me, 218-556-1463.

Becky Guida

Salem Outreach Update

As a Non Profit Executive director I started when Love In the Name of Christ was relatively small, one full time staff and two part time and over 60 volunteers. On my first day I was told the mortgage balloon payment was due in 6 months. \$180,000 was needed to be raised to pay off the building and keep the doors open. It was a shock I didn't see coming, but with the grace of God and the help of the community, this was the first of many obstacles we had to overcome. Over the course of 8 years we grew and launched new and exciting programs. In 2019 we had 7 full time staff and thought we were doing so well. Once COVID hit things changed. We had to make a decision to stay open and press on, or close, probably for good. Love INC in Fairbanks landed a federal grant to help with COVID relief and the nonprofit grew overnight.

I tell this story because Salem Outreach is in much the same position as Love INC was when I started. Things are going ok but not great. There is a need to overcome some of the obstacles we face as an outreach of Salem Lutheran. My main concern is Salem Lutheran budgeted to burn \$77,365 in reserves in 2022. The outreach ministries have a total unrestricted cash reserve of roughly \$128,000. To put it another way Salem Outreach will spend 60% of the reserves this year without a sustainability plan in place.

To make matters worse, the Mustard seed net income for January was only \$250.95 after expenses. Salem's Outreach income for the month of January was \$795.96 while expenses were \$22,526.04 with a net loss of (-\$21,730.08). At this burn rate we have 6 months' cash reserves.

I asked the Outreach Governing Board a simple question, what is our sustainability plan? The OGB is formulating a plan to increase our fundraising events, and work to identify areas we can reduce spending.

This is where I need your help, Salem Outreach is not sustainable. I know that for many in our community this ministry is vital and has impacted someone you know very closely. Today Salem needs your help. This year we will need to focus on closing the budget gap of \$77,000. You can help in many ways, consider designating your gift to Salem Outreach, share the ministry with your friend and encourage their support, host a fundraiser, set up a monthly recurring donation of \$10, or stop by and give of your time.

Thank you for your support over the past 30 years.

Jason Kempthorne
Director of Outreach

Salem Outreach Governing Board January 18, 2022

Present were: Pastor Mike, Pastor Amanda, Jason Kempthorne (Director), Chuck Lubowitz, Jacob Walker, Paul Tesdahl, Sandy Kretlow, Mark Carlson, Cathy Aykens, and Jadell. Teppi Bundy was absent.

MSC: Motion, Seconded and Carried.

Open with prayer by Pastor Amanda.

We welcomed our new members Mark Carlson and Paul Tesdahl (council rep.) to the board.

Secretary's report for Dec 14,2021 was approved.

Election of Officers:

Chair: Chuck Lubowitz MSC

Co-Chair: Mark Carlson MSC

Secretary: Sandy Kretlow MSC

Financials: Cathy Aykens MSC

Financials: Cathy went over the financials. MSC

Jason:

Jason has been meeting with SW and MS to work out plans and new strategies so they are on the same page.

Working on ways to have for better communication between church council and outreach board.

Talked about grants:

United Way Grant has a balance of \$2400.00 to be used for furniture and bedding.

Hallett Trust has a balance of \$3940.00 which is unrestrictive.

ELCA Grant is for hunger has a balance of over \$9000.00, which is to be used for Lunch Bunch.

Mille Lacs Grant has \$1220.00, which is used for gas.

Talked about the Expectations of the OGB members. responsibilities and commitments

Motion was made to send the copy of Salem Outreach Volunteer Management Policies and our Salem Outreach Volunteer Handbook to the council for approval. MSC

We were given the SLC Covenant to sign and pledge to work together to pursue the common mission of the congregation. There was a list of 10 expectations we are to follow.

Motion was made to move money from Line # 2157 (\$46.33) back to the ELCA Grant, Line # 2805 Honduras Gifts (\$2000.00) back to the ELCA Grant, and Line # 2910 Reserves (\$4010.60) back to ELCA Grant. This money is to reinstate the ELCA Grant for money that was used for other needs. ELCA grant is for Lunch Bunch only. MSC

Mustard Seed and Salem West had no concerns.

Scrip sales for the year 2021 was \$637.39. November was \$114.00 and December was \$140.00.

Next meeting will be February 15, 2022 at 1 p.m.

Submitted by Sandy Kretlow, Secretary.

Salem Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes from January 27, 2022

Council Mission Statement: *We exist, with God's help, to provide leadership for the Salem Lutheran Church Congregation*

MSC = The motion was seconded and carried.

Present: Pastor Mike Briggs, Jena Reed, Al Schiffler, Paul Tesdahl, Warren Balfany, Tracy Perpich, Renee Voller, Peter MacKay, Don Hales, Mark Boike, Pastor Amanda, Jason Kempthorne

Welcome

- Welcome to Pastor Amanda and Director of Outreach Jason Kempthorne

Call to Order

Opening Prayer by Pastor Mike

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Approve minutes of the Dec. 16, 2021 Council meeting. **MSC.**

Treasurer's Report

- Tracy presented the treasurer's report. Insurance has gone up due to both additional coverage and increased rates. December was a good month for offerings.
- Discussed the \$49K overage from last year and where to put it. A suggestion was made to put it in reserves for now and establish a working group to see where it is needed.

Motion: Put the \$49K into reserves and establish a working group to look at where the money is needed. **MSC.**

- Working group will be Ruth, Don, Jason, Terry, Paul and Tracy.

Motion: Approve the Dec. 2021 Financial Reports. **MSC.**

Pastor Mike's Report

- Pastor Mike put presented the Designation of Duties document that explains how he and Pastor Amanda with divide/share duties.

Motion: Split the duties as described, including the following:

- One full day each month for prayer as a necessary ministry of absence
- One day each month for participation in a peer growth group
- At least one day off each week

MSC.

- While the constitution was recently approved, in section 12.01 our constitution specifies that the "senior pastor" has vote on the church council. The model constitution allows it to read "pastor(s)." Since Pastor Amanda arrived, we'd like it to say "pastor(s)."
 - Pastor Mike contacted the Synod and this can be changed by a simple majority vote at any meeting of the congregation. It will be put forth at the next congregational meeting.

Pastor Amanda's Report

- Happy to be here!

- Has been busy figuring out the structure and schedules, reading our constitution, budget etc.
- Working on a Council Retreat and a Mutual Ministry team among other things.

Outreach Report

- Jason is happy to be here and is learn everything he can about our Outreach Program.
- Started an Outreach email newsletter and looking to do this in print as well.
- Noted that 60% of outreach volunteers are not part of Salem.
- Looking to improve internal communication, external communication, and fiscal management.
- Presented Resolution 22-01 to give him authority to enter into and sign grant agreement and contracts on behalf of Salem Lutheran Church.

Motion: Grant Jason Kempthorne authorization as stated in the Resolution 22-01. **MSC.**

- Presented the Salem Outreach Volunteer Handbook.

Motion: Accept the Salem Outreach Volunteer Handbook as presented. **MSC.**

- Presented the Salem Outreach Volunteer Management Policies document.

Motion: Accept the Salem Outreach Volunteer Management Policies document as presented. **MSC.**

Committee Reports & Team Assignments

- Capital Appeal: Paul presented the 4th quarter report. Noted that this spring the mortgage will be under \$1M!!
- Facilities/Kitchen: Al noted that they were pleased with the cleaning service. They are looking at increasing the volume of the bells.
- Faith Formation/Youth: Renee noted that the team brought Pastor Amanda up to speed.
- Day Care: Renee noted that they have a meeting on Thursday. Hopefully open in September. The name will be Big Dreamer's Daycare.
- Welcome: Don stressed the need for everyone to wear their nametags!! Need to put this in the newsletter and maybe the bulletin.
- Worship & Music: Tracy stated the team felt the need to keep to one service Memorial Day to Labor Day. We need to look at having an outside service.

Motion: Keep one service Memorial Day to Labor Day. **MSC.**

Unfinished Business

- Masks/Communion: Discussed the continuing need to wear masks during the service.

Motion: Continue wearing masks during the service and fellowship hall and continue the hybrid communion until reviewed at the next meeting. **MSC.**

- Pastor Amanda's installation: Brunch after the installation. Help is needed!
- Custodian Position: No viable candidates.

Action: Pastor Amanda will post the job opening on facebook.

- Council Retreat: This will be held on February 6th, between 11am and 2pm.

New Business

- Salem's Weather Cancellation Policy was discussed.

Motion: Update the policy with Debbie's suggestions. **MSC.**

- 6th Nominating Committee Member: Only 5 positions were filled. Shirley stepped forward to fill the 6th position.

Motion: Accept Shirley Midtun to fill the 6th position. **MSC.**

- Lenten Offering was discussed.

Motion: Send half of the Lenten offering to the local food shelf, and half to the Midwives for Haiti. **MSC.**

SOS

- An SOS was submitted regarding the distribution of the Summerfest funds. This cannot be answered until the moving expenses for Pastor Amanda are finalized. This will be addressed at the February meeting.

Announcements

- The Council Retreat will be held on February 6, 2022 at 11:00am at the church.
- The next regularly scheduled Exec. Team meeting will be February 15, 2022, at 3:00pm in the conference room.
- The next regularly scheduled Council meeting will be on February 24, 2022, at 5:30pm in the conference room.

Meeting Adjourned

Motion: To adjourn. **MSC**

- Pastor Amanda closed in prayer

Prepared by: Jena Reed

MARCH 2022

Salem Lutheran Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 9:00 AM Piecemakers 2:00 PM Staff Meeting 5:00 PM Worship & Music Comm Mtg	2 ASH WEDNESDAY 6:30 AM Women's Bible Study 5:00 PM Salem Ringers Rehearsal 7:00 PM Worship	3	4 8:00 AM Men's Bible Study	5
6 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Worship and Sunday School Heartland Conference Gathering	7	8 9:00 AM Piecemakers 2:00 PM Staff Meeting 3:00 PM Welcome Team Meeting 6:00 PM Faith Formation Team Mtg	9 6:30 AM Women's Bible Study 5:00 PM Salem Ringers Rehearsal 5:30 AM Supper 7:00 PM Worship	10	11 8:00 AM Men's Bible Study	12
13 CAMP SUNDAY! 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Worship and Sunday School 10:00 AM Brunch	14	15 9:00 AM Piecemakers 1:00 PM Outreach Governing Board Mtg 3:00 PM Executive Team Meeting	16 6:30 AM Women's Bible Study 5:00 PM Salem Ringers Rehearsal 5:30 PM Supper 7:00 PM Worship	17 6:00 PM Lion's Mtg	18 8:00 AM Men's Bible Study 1:00 PM Koffee Klatch @ Heartwood	19
20 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Worship and Sunday School	21	22 9:00 AM Piecemakers 2:00 PM Staff Meeting	23 6:30 AM Women's Bible Study 5:00 PM Salem Ringers Rehearsal 5:30 PM Supper 7:00 PM Worship	24 5:30 PM Council	25 8:00 AM Men's Bible Study	26
27 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Worship and Sunday School	28	29 9:00 AM Piecemakers 2:00 PM Staff Meeting	30 6:30 AM Women's Bible Study 5:00 PM Salem Ringers Rehearsal 5:30 PM Supper 7:00 PM Worship	31		

March Cause of the Month at The Mustard Seed: Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry



STAFF

Pastor	Michael Briggs	pastor@salemdwd.org
Pastor	Amanda Kempthorne	pastoramanda@salemdwd.org
Office Manager	Deborah Carlson	office@salemdwd.org
Financial Manager	Ruth Blum	finance@salemdwd.org
Praise Team Coordinators	Becky Klingelhofer, Noreen Steinbrecher	
Pianist/Organist	Becky Klingelhofer	
Salem Ringers Director	Kevin Edstrom	
Choir Director	Kevin Edstrom	
Director of Outreach	Jason Kempthorne	outreach@salemdwd.org
Mustard Seed Manager	Jacob Walker	mustardseed@salemdwd.org
Mustard Seed Asst Manager	Bev Kunz	
Mustard Seed Asst Manager	Debbie Olson	
Salem WEST Manager	Jade Horner	west@salemdwd.org

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