



Salem Connection

August 2025

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Are you someone who orders the same entrée at a restaurant? Do you use the same lure every time you fish? Do you have a normal route you drive, or a routine you follow every morning? How often do you try something new? Most people tend to be creatures of habit. In my grandfather's words, "I know what I like, and I like what I like!" There is fulfillment in the familiar, peace in the predictable, and contentment in what is comfortable. But we also know the cliché: familiarity breeds contempt.

This is a small part of why we underwent our summer worship experiment. Changing worship patterns allow us to experience God's presence in different ways, opening ourselves to something that just might spark faith! There's other reasons for the experiment too – like giving singers a break from leading every Sunday, and more time to practice for a better blended sound.

Nearing the end of our experiment, worship and music has asked for feedback so we can make decisions for the future of worship at Salem. But we are trying to make these decisions in a void – very few people (9) participated in giving feedback!

Here's what we heard:

- we need the notes to the unknown songs (a songbook/on the screen)
- "I was surprised that I liked it!" and "I was just going to skip, I'm glad I didn't"
- appreciated we didn't choose praise songs with repeating lines
- was hoping for more instruments to make the sound fuller (guitars, maybe drums)
- "I want other, younger, people to be welcome with music that speaks to them"
- a few didn't like the long time of singing before worship (both hymns and praise)
- stronger voices, sound is great, less bongos
- long time to stand during opening two songs
- what happened to sharing Christ's peace?

From that list, there are things we have already adapted. Some things are completely dependent on who offers their abilities (like a guitar player) or how we participate in songs we don't know.

About providing music notes - due to licensing restrictions, we cannot publish music notes. Salem would need to buy another license (\$200-250 per year), and we were not ready to invest this until we know the results of the experiment.

So – what are the results? We need to hear from you!! Do we go back to a blended style (hymns at the beginning, praise songs at the end)? Do we continue this alternating pattern for the rest of this year? How do you want to worship God together? Let us know by August 12 in writing or in conversation. (Question pages are on the usher stand – please sign your name so we can follow up!)

Thank you, Salem, for going along with something out of the ordinary this summer!

~Pastor Amanda



Worship Notes at Salem

Thank you to those serving in August:

READERS

- 3** Tina Royer
10 Glenn Suess
17 _____
24 Ken Stebbins
31 Shirley Midthun

USHERS

- 3** Mark & Cindy Larson, Curt & Sylvia Hoge
10 Randy Holmvig, Nory & Peggy Hunze, Mark Boike
17 Clark & Joyce Marshall, Roger & Marlene Prill
24 Herb & Barb Schoon, Chuck Lubowitz & Karla Peterson
31 John & Raye Cragun, Becki Zender, Rod Ogard

COMMUNION SERVERS

- 10** _____, _____, _____
17 _____, _____, _____
24 _____, _____, _____
31 _____, _____, _____

OFFERING COUNTERS

2 Needed!

Interested in being an offering counter?

Offering Counters switch at the beginning of each new month, we are in need of offering counters for August as well as the upcoming months! If this is your first time counting offering, we have many individuals who are pros (they have done it a time or two) and they are more than willing to teach our new individuals how to record the weekly offerings!

Faith and Coffee?

Sunday morning fellowship is a perfect time to talk through what God brought to your attention in worship. Grab a cup, a treat, and finish this sentence,

"Today I noticed..."



August Worship Schedule

- 3** 9:00a.m. Praise Worship
10 9:00a.m. Traditional Worship
17 9:00a.m. Praise Worship
24 9:00a.m. Traditional Worship
31 9:00a.m. 5th Sunday Worship

Fall Music Schedule:

Keep a lookout for the Fall Music Schedule in the next few weeks!

We are looking for new voices and instruments to join the Praise Team! If you are interested in joining or just want to test it out, all are welcome to join Praise Choir practices, held at 5:30p.m. on Wednesdays!

Heartwood Bible Study

The monthly Bible study at Heartwood will take place on August 11th at 1:00p.m.

From The Library:

August is a wonderful time to read in a hammock, in a lounge chair, or on the dock. It is a way to maintain students reading skills over the summer break.

The Salem Library is open whenever the church is open. Please sign out books, games, movies, and music with the cards in the pocket and leave the cards in the box on the desk.

There are a variety of items for all ages. Games and movies are great for rainy days. Audio books and DVDs are good for long car trips. Quiet reading before bed helps with the transition to back-to-school bedtimes.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Faith Formation!

Women's Bible Study, Wednesdays at 3:00p.m.

Men's Bible Study, Fridays at 8:00a.m.

Both of these are still taking place weekly!
If you are looking to join a Bible Study, there is always room for one more at the table!

Mark Your Calendars! Rally Sunday is September 7th! This will kickoff the Fall Festivities here at Salem including Sunday School & Kids Club! Be sure to keep an eye out for the Kids Club 2025-2026 Schedule! We are excited to see you **ALL** again this fall!

2025 Vacation Bible School: True North

Vacation Bible School True North guided our kids on the ultimate Alaskan adventure with northern lights shining over majestic mountains, racing rivers, and glistening glaciers. As kids trek the tundra, they explored how easy it is to lose sight of what's true in our wild world today. Pointing them toward Jesus, Jesus is everywhere, here in Deerwood, in Minnesota, and way up NORTH IN ALASKA. This year they checked out wild animals and learned how God designed them to live in this big wild world. During "Sticky Scriptures" the kids found places in their Bibles to read and mark the verses with special sticky notes... to remind them where to check for answer as to why we put our TRUST IN JESUS.

Every 20 minutes they were off to a different room or station to learn something new! During Glacier Games, Tundra Treats, Wild Bible Adventure or Imagination Station, they were always learning the same important ideas central to the message of the day! Trusting Jesus and Loving all of God's Children.

We joined Immanuel Lutheran Church of Crosby again this year, as it was so successful last year. We had a volunteer staff of 37 Adults, about 14 teens and several 6th grade helpers. Immanuel provided the TRUE NORTH t-shirts for volunteer Station Leaders and Crew Leaders, which was a wonderful way to identify which Leaders were designated to be with kids.

We are very thankful that our Memorial Committee voted to cover the \$15.00 registration fee, so that made VBS free to all children. This total of \$1,005.00 covers most of the cost of the program materials purchased from Group Publishing.

The big message we shared with the kids at VBS this year was that Jesus is a faithful friend we can always trust. JESUS IS OUR TRUE NORTH!



2025 VBS Crew

Women's Retreat 2025

Join us for a weekend of fun and getting to know other women in our congregation and some women from First Lutheran in St. Paul! We will be retreating to the beautiful Bay Lake Retreat Center again this year **October 3 – 5**, Friday through Sunday. **From the Pastor:** Our learning and conversation sessions will focus on forgiveness. Throughout the weekend, we will explore Scripture for examples of forgiveness while we learn ways to seek forgiveness when we've done wrong and grant forgiveness when others wrong us. We will also spend a portion of time working through barriers to forgiveness and how we forgive ourselves.

Welcome Team Update

Salem's Welcome Team will be hosting an orientation: October 12 and 19 after worship. Those interested in membership might appreciate this overview of the church and its ministries, and the church will welcome new members in worship on October 26.

Parents Day Off

Sunday, August 17th 2:00-5:00p.m.

Drop off children, potty trained through entering 6th grade and take the afternoon off! We will play games, create, head to the Deerwood Park (weather permitting), and have snack.

This is open to all in the community!

Register on Salem's website: www.salemdwd.org

Spiritual Gifts Team

Everybody Matters – The Widow's Mite

Luke 21:1-4

As HE looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

Jesus knows our circumstances and our every need. We are asked to tithe and at times to give sacrificially. Each of us is called to search our hearts and heed God's prodding to give support for God's mission on earth. Pray about what God is asking of you and listen for His answer.

Kids Club 2025-2026

As we approach the end of summer, we have something to look forward to here at Salem! Our youth ministries will be starting back up again come September! Kids Club is a monthly after school program, where kids in grades 3-6 are invited to join in on activities that our congregation members select! If you have a passion or hobby that you would like to share with the youth of our congregation and community, contact the church office to get your date to help with Kids Club! If you have a particular month or idea in mind, mention that you Grace! We are hoping to have a schedule out by the end of the month!

Church Council News

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you to all of you who worked to make VBS a success and those of you who pack lunches for Lunch Bunch every Friday. Thank you to the Memorial Committee for providing the financial support for VBS.

We are now preparing for Deerwood Days. Please look at the sign-up sheets and see ways that you can be a part of this opportunity to reach out to our community and to raise money for our Outreach programs, our Church, and our Capital Appeal Campaign.

Our giving patterns have been down for the first part of the year. Our congregational meeting on July 27th was to inform you of the current situation and to look at priorities for the 2026 budgeting process. We want to hear from you. Call or talk to Council members if you did not attend the meeting.

On July 6, 2025, Chris Farrell had an article in the Minnesota Star Tribune titled: **Charitable giving rises, a sign of sound money management.** Total giving rose 3.3% after subtracting inflation." (Although the dollar amounts are smaller, studies suggest those with fewer resources give a greater proportion of their income than higher income peers.)" We have a very generous congregation, and we are optimistic that offerings and financial support will follow this trend. "Volunteering numbers also jumped: The Census Bureau and Americorps reported more than 28% of the population age 16 and older formally volunteered between September 2022 and September 2023. The number of volunteers is closing in on pre-pandemic levels." The percentage of Salem members who volunteer is much higher than this. The article concludes with: "Giving and volunteering also create a sense of meaning and fulfillment as individuals. This sense of purpose is why I believe giving should lie at the core of sound money management.

The questions we think about when giving and volunteering should influence other money choices, including what we spend our money on and how we save. Personal finance is about how to use our hard-earned money to support our values and goals through our giving, spending and saving habits."

In September, Outreach is looking at God's Work - Our Hands for ways to serve our community. Watch for more information.

We are looking for ways to replace Kathi and Sherri - our Kitchen Coordinators. Please share your ideas and consider ways to "fill their shoes."

Thank you for being Jesus' hands and feet in our community.

Lynn Hansen

Salem Lutheran Church Council President

Deerwood Days - August 8th & 9th

Deerwood Days Weekend is QUICKLY approaching & we are SO excited! We encourage you all to join in on the fun, we here at Salem are in need of individuals to help with set up, sales and clean-up! If you are able to help with any of those tasks, check out the times in the Narthex OR call the church office!

Here is a snapshot of the weekend!

- Thursday, August 7th: 8:00a.m. Help with setting up tents, tables and chairs
- Friday, August 8th: 9:00a.m.-5:00p.m. Help with Meatball, Ice Cream & Lefse sales
- Saturday, August 9th: 9:00a.m.-3:00p.m. Help with the Silent Auction
9:00a.m.-5:00p.m. Help with Sales & Clean-Up!

We look forward to seeing the great Salem team come together to make this year's event a grand success!

Special Celebrations in August



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

1 Barbara Schmidt
4 Joann Cordie
7 Carol Brezina
Ellen Uglem
8 Kent Savick
9 Audrey Birkliid
11 Noelle Jones
Ron Martin
12 John Cragun
Jason Jones
Ron Sikkema
13 Teddy Skattum
Greg Skeim
14 Cecil Schmidt

15 Megan Syrstad
17 Donna Grunzke
Debbie MacKay
19 Karla Peterson
Rose Steinke
23 Laurie Ogard
25 Shirlee Bengston
26 Joyce Marshall
27 Jessica Jones
Shelia Mayne
28 Audrey Anderson
Mary Jo Schoenike
30 Carol Blomberg
Nancy Tighe
Ann Zillmer



1 Jay & Sue Stromberg
4 Nory & Peggy Hunze
5 Roger & Marlene Prill
Peter & Debbie MacKay
6 Leroy & Helen Ryan
7 Jeff & Heidi Mitchell
10 Brad & Kay Johnson
12 Jerry & Shirley Huxford
13 Glenn & Nikki Knutson
19 Al & Janet Niemann
21 Paul & Diane Hein
Jason & Amber Holmvig
22 David & Rose Steinke
25 Jason & Jessica Jones

Caring for One Another

Looking to strengthen your connection with fellow members of the congregation? Send a Birthday or Anniversary card and celebrate another year with them!



In July a few of our congregation members joined Pastor Amanda on a Wednesday evening to learn how to serve home communion to those who are unable to join us in person! Thank you to those who took the time in learning this skill and are helping serve our congregation!

Financial Updates

Salem Lutheran Church Profit & Loss June 2025

	100 Church	150 Building	TOTAL
Income			
4000 · Offerings	29,087.94	0.00	29,087.94
4100 · Building Fund	0.00	8,135.31	8,135.31
4900 · Other Income	2,246.95	115.90	2,362.85
Total Income	31,334.89	8,251.21	39,586.10
Expense			
	30,684.13	8,628.00	39,312.13
Net Income	650.76	(376.79)	273.97

June Benevolence

Synod ELCA \$1,739.43
YAGM Support \$109.81
VLM Support \$109.81

\$1,959.05 Total

Information Provided by Aimee Watson,
Financial Manager at Salem Lutheran Church

Thank you for the continuous generosity!

Salem Outreach Governing Board – June 24, 2025

Present were: Pastor Amanda Kempthorne, Jason Kempthorne, Randy Sykes, Mark Boike, Linda Sudman, Kay Bendorf

Guest: Julie Fritz, Jake Walker

Absent – Nancy Tighe and Cathy Aykens

MSC: Motion was made, seconded motion carried to start meeting.

Opened with a prayer by Pastor Amanda

Secretary report was emailed to board members. Approval of minutes was made by Kay Bendorf and seconded by Jason Kempthorne.

Financial report was approved. MSC. Motion of approval was made by Linda Sudman and seconded by Mark Boike.

Mustard Seed: Mustard Seed Sales for May 2025 were \$51,565.00.

Salem West Impact Report for the month of May: 31 referrals and 30 completed orders. A total of 67 individuals were helped. Total volunteer hours for May were 855.

There has been \$167,305 in goods delivered to the community YTD.

The In Kind impact is \$353,189.54 YTD.

Mustard Seed Report: Jake

Sales have been up for the summer which is good. Donations are coming in.

Furniture Barn is cleaned out. The plastic containers are all moved out so the barn is ready to go.

Jake will be going to Emily Days on July 19. He will have a booth set up to promote Salem Outreach/ Mustard Seed and try to recruit new volunteers.

Survey was completed by volunteers. Wanted to make sure the volunteers were being heard and if there were any concerns that their voices were heard. The overall feedback from the survey was positive. Management was doing a great job.

New Business:

2026 Salem Outreach will be working with the Outreach Program in Brainerd Lakes to provide bags of food to the clients we serve at Salem West. These will be called Welcome Boxes. New referrals will receive freeze-dried bags of food with their order.

Bobcat Angle Broom – for ground cleanup and snow removal. We are looking to purchase this attachment for the skid loader. Cost is about \$2,650. This will help with the cleanup in the parking lot, behind the Mustard Seed back doors & snow removal.

Crib orders - Outreach purchased 20 cribs that have all been delivered to clients

Old Business:

New Name –Randy Sykes Article was printed in the Salem Church Newsletter for the month of May & June. We hope to get more conversation going on coming up with one name for the Mustard Seed/ Salem West.

Continued on the next page.

Fall service project –Nationwide ELCA Service day is September 7th. GWOH –Gods Work Our Hands. We discussed what we might want to do as a group on this day. Some ideas were:

- ◇ Volunteer and Food package here at Salem Church Sunday, Sept 7th
- ◇ Volunteer at the Mustard Seed/Salem West on Sept 13 to work in the back room. You will sort, clean and wash items to be priced. Great way to see how Salem West back room is run.
- ◇ Write greeting cards
- ◇ Volunteer with the Quilters here at Salem

Mission Trip 2026 was discussed. Council will ask the congregation is this something we want to budget for in Dec for 2026.

Next OGB Meeting will be July 15, 2025

Closing Prayer by Pastor Amanda

Adjourn

Salem Lutheran Church Council

June 26, 2025

We exist with God's help, to provide Leadership for Salem Lutheran Church.

MSC=The motion was seconded and carried.

Call to Order

Members Present: Pastor Amanda Kempthorne, Mark Boike, Lynn Hansen, Sherri Godfrey, Don Hales, Nate Van Risseghem, Tina Royer, Julie Fritz, Alan Niemann Members absent: Sylvia Hoge

Opening Prayer: Pastor Amanda

SOS announcement: None

Approval of the Agenda: add to agenda- Missions 2026, Quarter 2 update- outreach to present, Crosby market

Motion to approve the June 26 agenda with additions, MSC

Discussion questions for Chapter 4 of Unlocking Your Church's Invite Culture

(15 min.)

- Invite someone with a personal relationship to you. They are more apt to attend
- More out of the box ideas in the nondenominational churches
- We have had polka church, drum group, Lutheran lounge act, outdoor worship.

Approval of minutes:

Motion to approve May 22,2025 meeting minutes. MSC

Approval of Financials:

Motion to have a special Congregational meeting on July 27 (announce July 13, and 20) to address budget shortfalls and explore giving options. MSC.

Motion to approve the May 2025 financial report. MSC

Pastor's Report – Pastor Amanda:

- Interviews and hiring new Custodian Mike Walker. Training started June 23rd. Cleaning service is in place until the end of the month
- Outdoor worship at Serpent Park, June 29 (worship planned, gathering materials)
- Home Communion Visitors, commissioning in future. Need to train volunteers. Finalizing visit list
- Planning feedback from worship experiment, planning conversation for end of July
- Summer Worship planning
 - preaching at Bay Lake Island on August 3
 - Deerwood Days Sunday Worship
 - continuing education through August 19

Continued on the next page.

-5th Sunday August 31 on Labor Day weekend

-Following council directives in securing and inventorying personnel files

Outreach Report – Mark – See minutes of OGB June 24, 2025

New Volunteer badges

5 new volunteers

Will provide meal boxes for all clients

Volunteer Survey done

Sept 7 several service projects planned for GWOH (God's Work, Our Hands)

*After reviewing the Mustard Seed Sales, the Council congratulates Jason and his entire team on doing a fantastic job in May setting the second highest monthly sales in the history of the Mustard Seed! Highest sales are usually in November during the Taste of Christmas.

Committee Reports:

Capital Appeal -Next meeting Sept.

Columbarium -Don and Alan – Next meeting next May

Facilities- Nate- furnace has been repaired. Does the parking lot need stripes? Suggested that since we are having budget issues, this is not a priority

Faith Formation – VBS planning. Need volunteers

Memorial – Don- Reconfirmed campership applications. Provided money to Men's Retreat, Women's Retreat, and VBS

Spiritual Gifts– Council input and suggestions: Lynn to send ideas to council and council will reply

Technology – Julie- no report

Welcome – Tina- Working on 2-3 families who want to join.

Worship and Music – Julie - Worship Experiment: going well, will have mid-week meeting in July to ask for feedback. Elsa Ray's organ had been delivered.

Unfinished Business:

Home Communion- See Pastor's report

Parents Night Off- looking for people to host this sometime this summer. Tina will call two people we heard were interested.

Deerwood Days: Next meeting is July 9. Sign-up sheets will go out then. Have several donations for silent auction.

Budgeting Timeline - Committees to have budgets to Aimee by August 31

Compensation Working Group Meets for salaries in July

New Business:

Communication - SOS, Quarterly Updates, Connection Articles

Continued on the next page.

What else can we do to "check the pulse" of the congregation? Listening sessions? Have them in the Fellowship Hall, Cards to fill out two weeks before listening sessions with concerns to be addressed.

Resignation Letter: Kathi Sharp and Sherri Godfrey have decided to retire as kitchen coordinators by December 31, 2025. The Council accepted their letter. The Council thanked them for their dedicated 8 years of volunteer service. They have done such an excellent job and can never be thanked enough.

Outreach Mission plans for 2026. OGB would like to know what priorities the Council has for mission trips for next year. Global? Local? Mission funds from Honduras have been spent. If we want to do any mission, there will need to be fundraising.

The Council requests Outreach to plan/ budget for a mission trip or short missions in the 5-state area for 2026.

Crosby Market: We need to have a table at one of the markets this season. We can advertise for the church and outreach. Tina Royer offered to ask the Welcome Committee if they would take on this project. Some Council members also offered to assist

Quarter 2 listening session- OGB wants to present: With the now scheduled All Church meeting, OGB will have to have a separate meeting for the church.

Announcements:

Executive Team Meeting: July 15, 2025, 3:00pm Next Council Meeting: July 24, 2025, 6:30pm

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:35pm.

Closed in Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Fritz



August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 9:00am Traditional Worship	28	29 9:00am Piecemakers	30 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice	31	1 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Lunch Bunch	2
3 9:00am Praise Worship	4 9:00am Lunch Bunch	5 9:00am Piecemakers 6:00pm Faith Formation	6 1:00pm Deerwood Days Meeting 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice	7 11:30am Catholic Charities Meal Distribution 12:00pm Office Closed	8 Office Closed 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Deerwood Days	9 9:00am Deerwood Days 9:00am Serpent Lake Association Meeting
10 9:00am Traditional Worship 10:00am Facilities Meeting	11 1:00pm Bible Study at Heartwood	12 9:00am Piecemakers 5:00pm Worship and Music Meeting	13 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice	14	15 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Lunch Bunch	16
17 9:00am Praise Worship 2:00pm Parents Day Off	18	19 9:00am Piecemakers 1:00pm Outreach Governing Board Meeting 3:00pm Executive Team Meeting	20 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice	21 6:00pm Cuyuna Range Lions Meeting	22 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Lunch Bunch	23
24 9:00am Traditional Worship	25	26 9:00am Piecemakers	27 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice	28 6:30pm Council Meeting	29 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Lunch Bunch	30
31 9:00am Worship	1 Labor Day Office Closed	2 9:00am Piecemakers 5:00pm Worship and Music Meeting	3 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice	4 11:30am Catholic Charities Meal Distribution	5 8:00am Men's Bible Study	6