



# Salem Connection

## December 2025

Salem Lutheran Church 21276 Archibald Road PO Box 100 Deerwood MN 56444  
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In southern England dating back to the 1700's, there was a strange ritual done on the last night of Christmas, January 5. Villagers would gather in the orchards amid the bare branches of their apple trees, and they would sing. As you can guess, there was some alcohol involved in the form of a wassil – a bowl of warmed ale with mead, cider, spices, and apples. (They had to stay warm somehow!) In the midst of the robust singing, blessings would be shouted at the trees and cider splashed on the roots, all for the sake of next year's harvest.

The practice spread to include home blessings as well, with carolers traveling within the village, stopping at their neighbor's homes, and singing their blessings. We have two carols from this practice:

Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green, here we come a-wand'ring so fair to be seen. Love and joy come to you, and to you your wassail too; and God bless you and send you a happy New Year, and God send you a happy New Year.

We wish you a merry Christmas, we wish you a merry Christmas, we wish you a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year! Good tidings we bring to you and your kin, good tidings of a Christmas and a happy New Year!

The hope of Advent feels very much like this practice. Today, we tromp around in a world that looks very dead: the trees and bushes are all bare, save a few defiant oak leaves. We tiptoe around conversations with family and friends knowing that every topic can be dangerously polarizing, so we silence parts of ourselves. Yet in the face of what may suck the life out of us, we dare stand and say, "We believe you've got life in you yet."

Advent looks at the world the way it is and blesses it. We shout life in what looks dead and gone. Rather than a decoration, we make a declaration. We shout hope into the void. We sing songs of peace in the face of the fighting. We exult in joy over the blessings we look for and name. We dare to love in self-giving ways. We show up in hope – not because everything is fine, but because God is not finished yet.

Whatever is ahead of you – this month, this holiday, this coming year – may you continue in the work of Advent and wassail all of it. Keep blessing what is bare, empty, and unfruitful. And may your love, your prayers, and your shaky songs be trust that God is still on the way.

Peace,  
~Pastor Amanda



# Worship Notes at Salem

## Thank you to those serving in December:

### READERS

- 7** Ken Stebbins  
**14** \_\_\_\_\_  
**21** Warren Balfany  
**24** **3:00p.m.** \_\_\_\_\_  
**5:00p.m.** \_\_\_\_\_  
**28** \_\_\_\_\_

### USHERS

- 7** Mark & Cindy Larson, Curt & Sylvia Hoge  
**14** Randy Holmwig, Herb & Barb Schoon, Mark Boike  
**21** Clark & Joyce Marshall, Roger & Marlene Prill  
**24** **3:00p.m.** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
**5:00p.m.** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
**28** Nory & Peggy Hunze, Chuck Lubowitz & Karla Peterson

### COMMUNION SERVERS

- 7** Becki Zender, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
**14** Becki Zender, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
**21** Warren Balfany, Lynn Hansen, \_\_\_\_\_  
**24** **3:00p.m.** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
**5:00p.m.** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
**28** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

### OFFERING COUNTERS

Jeff Mitchell & Ann Zillmer — thank you both!

## December Worship Schedule

- 7** 9:00a.m. Praise Worship  
Pop-Up Choir  
**14** 9:00a.m. Traditional Worship  
Songs of the Season  
**21** 9:00a.m. Children's Service  
Handbells  
**24** 3:00p.m. Christmas Eve Worship  
5:00p.m. Christmas Eve Worship  
**28** 9:00a.m. Traditional Worship  
Choir

## Winter Music Schedule:

Every Wednesday:  
Bells practice at 5:30p.m.  
Choir at 6:15p.m.  
Praise Team at 7:00p.m.

Choir will sing in worship the second and fourth Sundays of each month.  
Bells will ring in worship the third Sunday.  
The Pop-Up Choir, also known as the volunteer choir, sings the first Sunday.

## Heartwood Ministries

Pastor is leading worship at Heartwood Care Center on Sunday, Dec. 7th at 1:30p.m.

The monthly Bible study will take place on Monday, Dec. 8th at 1:00p.m.

Songs of the Season performance at Heartwood on Sunday, Dec. 14 at 1:30p.m.

## Decorating for Christmas

After Worship on Sunday, December 7th  
All are Welcome & We encourage all those interested and willing to help to join us!

## Sign-Up to Serve on Christmas Eve

Worship Services will be held on December 24th at 3:00 & 5:00p.m. There are sign-up sheets available in on the Kisok to help serve during these services! We appreciate all those who continue to serve in all the ways you feel called to do so!



# Faith Formation!

Greetings Salem families!

We've got something new! Think: the birth of Jesus meets "Kids Say the Darndest Things."

We typically have a live action Christmas program with the reading of Luke 2 late in December. We know Dec 21 isn't convenient, so Faith Formation is suggesting a new style of program.

We'd like to invite your children to participate by sharing their thoughts on the story of Jesus' birth and recording their responses on video. You can review the attached "script" and pick out a few questions your child might respond to. Then, read them the Scripture, ask the question, and record their candid answers.

If you have older children, check with us - they can record the readings! (2nd year Confirmation students get "serving on Sunday" credit)

If you don't want the responsibility, Salem will be recording after worship on **December 7** with the option of costumes, or you can send us your own recording by December 14 to be included.

We hope this will allow some of our shier children to participate and remind the whole congregation to look at Christmas with wonder and joy.

Thanks for being part of Salem!

*From, Pastor Amanda and the Faith Formation Team*



## Sunday School Schedule

Each Sunday at 9:50a.m. for about 30 minutes  
Open to children age 3-12

Registration forms are at the usher stand—and  
let us know if you'd like a prayer buddy!

## December Kids Club

Click Here to Register [www.salemdwd.org](http://www.salemdwd.org)



## Salem's Christmas Make-and-Take!

Wednesday, December 10  
from 3:30 - 5:30pm  
ages pre-K to 12



Gather for a snack and craft some gifts for Christmas! Tables with cool crafts, supplies, and helpers provided!



Register: [salemdwd.org](http://salemdwd.org) by Dec 8  
\*watch for bus route info via email



# Adult Faith Formation

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

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

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

## January Class!

We are looking ahead at 2026's open calendar in January and taking suggestions for a congregation class! What would you like to learn about - Bible stories? Faith and life questions? Prayer practices? Get your requests and suggestions to Pastor Amanda via email, a note, or write it on your worship communication card and drop it in the offering plate. Thanks for your ideas!



# Special Celebrations in December

**BIRTHDAYS**  
THIS MONTH

1	Mary Harder	20	Peter Bartels
	Kristy Tesdahl	21	Greg Gavin
5	Sandy Kretlow		John Pelant
6	Judy Fields	22	Jay Stromberg
7	Carson Holmvg	23	Brenda Stirewalt
	Jerry Huxford	24	Steve Haglund
	Rob Schmidt		Rick Hann
	Arnita Zierke	25	Jeff Mitchell
9	Anna Coughlin	26	Susan Johnson
11	Madison Bordwell	27	Dennis Muggli
12	Jacquelin Brix	28	Whitney Fischer
	Barbara Call		Edna Sorensen
13	Amber Holmvg	29	Bob Erickson
17	Dick Muggli		Di Hein
18	Joel Huntley		Kendall Johnson
	Pete Newton	30	Tim Herberg
	Bryan Syrstad		Tony Kimball
		31	Myron Midthun
			Randy Sykes



10	Wayne & Carol Brezina
11	Josh & Renee Voller
13	Jim & Shelia Mayne
18	Curt & Krista Bordwell



Send a holiday card to  
someone new at church  
during this season!  
Spread love & joy with  
new friends!

## Weather Cancellation Policy

*Adopted by Council February 23, 2023*



### **WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY** **For Salem Lutheran Church and Salem Outreach**

1. First and foremost: If the weather is bad enough to question whether or not Worship is canceled, please err on the side of safety and stay at home.
2. The Pastor or Council President will determine church closures. The Director of Outreach or Council President will determine outreach closures.
3. In the case of inclement weather on a weekend, the decision about worship cancellation will be made by 7:00 a.m. Sunday morning.
- 4 The Pastor will make changes to the church phone message, website, and social media (Facebook and Instagram).
5. People in the congregation are encouraged to call the church for a voicemail message or check online church communications (listed in 3) for weather related announcements.
6. Each group (Quilters, Bible Study Group, Committee, etc) is responsible for informing the group of cancellations due to the weather.



# SONGS OF THE SEASON

at Salem Lutheran

Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> 3:30p.m.

Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> 9:00a.m.

at Heartwood

Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> 1:30p.m.

## PREPARE

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH  
21276 ARCHIBALD ROAD  
DEERWOOD, MN 56444



# Financial Updates

## Salem Lutheran Church

### Profit & Loss

October 2025

	100 Church	150 Building	TOTAL
<b>Income</b>			
4000 · Offerings	25,707.74	0.00	25,707.74
4100 · Building Fund	0.00	5,528.41	5,528.41
4900 · Other Income	920.77	119.25	1,040.02
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>26,628.51</b>	<b>5,647.66</b>	<b>32,276.17</b>
<b>Expense</b>	<b>26,574.43</b>	<b>8,710.00</b>	<b>35,284.43</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>54.08</b>	<b>(3,062.34)</b>	<b>(3,008.26)</b>

## October Benevolence

Synod ELCA \$1,314.41  
YAGM Support \$225.05  
VLM Support \$225.05

\$1,764.51 Total

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

Thank you for the continuous generosity!

## Salem Lutheran Church

### Profit & Loss

YEAR TO DATE: Jan. 1 - Oct. 31, 2025

	100 Church	150 Building	TOTAL
<b>Income</b>			
4000 · Offerings	266,228.05	0.00	266,228.05
4100 · Building Fund	0.00	73,710.55	73,710.55
4900 · Other Income	27,711.03	7,717.72	35,428.75
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>293,939.08</b>	<b>81,428.27</b>	<b>375,367.35</b>
<b>Expense</b>	<b>308,200.15</b>	<b>94,378.73</b>	<b>402,578.88</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(14,261.07)</b>	<b>(12,950.46)</b>	<b>(27,211.53)</b>

## Poinsettia Orders

**Poinsettia Orders are available  
through December 9th!**

Order Forms are available in the office as well as on the Usher Stand. Order a Poinsettia in Honor or in Memory of a Loved One OR Sponsor and Gift a poinsettia for an individual experiencing grief during this holiday season.

Poinsettias purchased in Honor or Memory of individuals will be available for pick-up after being displayed in our Sanctuary during the Holiday season!



## Area Caroling

### 2025 Cuyuna Area Christmas Sing

Sunday, December 21st @4:30p.m.  
Raferty's Pizza in Crosby

Come and Sing together from the great  
Christian Christmas songbook!

*Sponsored by Lifespring Reformed Baptist Church*



# Message from Council

Thank you to those of you who accepted nominations for leadership this year. We had many wonderful people willing to serve. We hope that those who were not elected this time will be available again in the future. We are still looking for Voyagers Lutheran Ministry delegates for our Synod's camps.

We appreciate all of the volunteers who helped with the Thanksgiving meal and set up for Taste of Christmas at the Mustard Seed. Additional help is needed to decorate the church for Christmas. Please talk to Pastor Amanda if you are able to help.

December is such a wonderful time in the church year with special music, decorations, worship opportunities, poinsettias in honor and memory of loved ones, helping out with the jail Christmas party. Check the calendar so you don't miss any of these events.

Have a blessed Advent and Christmas season.

The Salem Lutheran Church Council

## Honduras Mission Clarification

*Here I Am, Lord*

*Refrain*

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

A group of volunteers from Salem, our local community, the Bay Lake Fellowship, and North Star Methodist in Alaska want to respond as the refrain from the hymn, **I, the Lord of Sea and Sky**. We have seen people living in a home consisting of a PCV pipe frame with quilts for the sidewalls and a plastic tarp roof and a dirt floor. The homes that we constructed on the last trip had cement floors, painted wood walls, corrugated tin roof, and a door that has a padlock. We have watched children run with joy to playground equipment, jump into the creek to cool off in the water, seen their intense eyes as they experience Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross, and their curiosity as they sit in the tomb and see the stone rolled away.

This fall the Church Council and Outreach Governing Board voted not to support a mission trip in 2026. There are people who feel that mission support takes away financial support for the church. Our Mission Statement says: We exist to **Welcome** people to Jesus Christ, **Equip** them with a faith that works in their lives, and to **Send** them into the world in Jesus' name. A group of people intend to continue the longtime practice of serving those in need and are planning a trip to Honduras in 2026.

The volunteers on the Honduras Mission Team pay for their own airfare, lodging, and food so our church is not paying for those expenses. The Honduras Team holds two fundraisers allowed in the Salem Fundraising Policy. Attending the fundraisers is optional. The money raised goes to bring children to Bible Camp at Kids Ark, provide food for children at feeding stations, and to buy materials to construct homes. Many members of our congregation have been part of previous Mission Teams and continue to support this work even if they are not able to go. We appreciate being a part of such a generous community of caring people so that we are able to be Jesus' hands and feet in Honduras.

We are thankful for your continued prayer support. If you are able to support this mission without reducing your support of the church and the capital appeal, we appreciate your help. We always welcome new members to our team if you are feeling the Lord's calling.

- Submitted by Don Hales and Lynn Hansen

## **Salem Outreach Governing Board – October 21, 2025**

Present were: Jason Kempthorne, Mark Boike, Cathy Aykens and Nancy Tighe, Kay Bendorf, and Pastor Amanda Kempthorne.

Absent: Randy Sykes, Linda Sudman

Guest: Jake Walker

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

Opened with a prayer by Pastor Amanda

Secretary's report was emailed to board members. Cathy Aykens motioned to approve the secretary's report. Kay Bendorf seconded the approval. MSC

The financial report was approved. MSC. Motion of approval was made by Kay Bendorf and seconded by Mark Boike. MSC

Mustard Seed: Mustard Seed sales for September 2025 were \$54,032.

Salem West Impact Report for September: 48 referrals and 54 completed orders. A total of 143 individuals were helped. Total volunteer hours for August were 1238.

There has been \$333,425 in goods delivered to the community YTD.

The in-kind impact is \$712,624 YTD.

Mustard Seed Report: Jake

Taste of Christmas planning is well underway; we are looking for additional volunteers to pull off the annual event. Setup is November 17-18, and the store is open Nov 19 – 29. Radio and print advertising is already in the works

The new LED sign is installed and looks good. Jake and Jason are trained to update the information.

We have new hires. A cashier and a driver. Still looking for a delivery helper to catch up on the workload.

Facebook followers continue to grow. We are at 3575 followers on Facebook and 571 Instagram followers.

Customer round-up of sales is up 145% over last year, and average ticket sales are \$17.40. Our price per piece remains similar to last year. Men's clothing sales have also increased over the last year due to better merchandising.

New Business:

2026 Budget was discussed. Since lack of quorum at the end of the meeting the changes were made and emailed to the board. Motion to approve the budget by Cathy Aykens second by Mark Boike. Voting will take place by email.

Holiday store closure was discussed. Motion was made to close Dec 22 – Jan 4. Motion made by Cathy Akens and seconded by Mark Boike. MSC.

Old Business:

Next OGB Meeting will be on November 11, 2025

Closing Prayer by Pastor Amanda

Adjourn – Kay Bendorf & Mark Boike. MSC

Respectfully Submitted Kay Bendorf.



# Salem Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

October 23, 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, Sylvia Hoge, Tina Royer, Julie Fritz, Alan Niemann

Opening Prayer: Pastor Amanda

SOS announcement: None

## Approval of the Agenda:

- Motion to approve the October 23 agenda **MSC**

## Approval of minutes:

- Motion to approve September 25, 2025, meeting minutes. **MSC**

## Approval of Financials:

- Paster Amanda passed out a Summary Statement of Activities YTD for Restricted Funds supplied by finance manager Aimee. In the future, these funds will be included in our dedicated balance sheet. (As money from restricted funds are spent, they will be listed first as income and then expenditures)
- Motion to approve the September 2025 financial report. **MSC**

## Pastor's Report – Pastor Amanda:

- Still need one male mentor for the Confirmation Class
- Office manager coverage- Oct 27-Nov3. Grace will be gone for two Sundays. She has things prepared for those Sundays. Pastor Amanda may need assistance and will ask if needed.
- Fielded request to honor Charlie Kirk. This was handled in the prayer intentions on Sunday and was addressed on Facebook at the time.
- Fielding request for outside fundraising for missions  
Policy states that Council does not have to be involved in decisions for missions. Can have two fundraisers per year.
- Trunks for Treats- Connecting with Deerwood Legion. They will have presence in the parking lot and will have a dinner at the Legion after. Deerwood Legion got a grant of \$400 for candy

## Outreach Report –Mark

- Increasing audience on Facebook
- Looking for help setting up for taste of Christmas Nov 17 and 18. Taste of Christmas start November 19. Closed on Thanksgiving
- New LED sign is up
- Staffing- new CDL driver. New cashier till January.
- Working on budget

*(continued)*

### Committee Reports:

- Worship and Music:

Cantata name has been changed to Songs of the Season. There was much advertising for singers. Practice began on Oct 19.

Praise Team practice: Wednesday night at the end of Choir practice there will be a short run through of songs. Then on the first and third Sundays, practice will be at 8am before the service.

\*\*\*Remind all Committees to prepare for Annual Report in January\*\*\*

### Old Business:

- Nominating Committee: full roster for each area. (If there are 3 openings, there are 4 people listed so it is an actual election). Exec committee decided to have only 2 people go to synod assembly instead of 4 since it is difficult to get 4 people to volunteer. This also saves money on the budget. Ballot counters have been secured
- Budget: Motion made to approve the budget and present to the congregation in preparation for the annual meeting. **MSC**

### New Business:

- Welcoming New Members: Jason and Sarah Brunko (Signy and Binny), Nathan Grunzke, Denny Langsworthy, David and Gina Frank, Jerry and Toni Cassady  
Motion to accept new members. **MSC**
- Annual Meeting - November 9, 2025  
Lynn will work with Pastor Amanda to have the agenda ready
- Thanksgiving Meal- November 12 noon-2  
Encourage members and community to sign up  
Need volunteers to set up, serve, and clean up- 4 for set up, 4 for serving, 6 for cleanup. Sign up is on the kiosk
- Policy/Bylaw Update  
Reviewed the by-law for term of officers. No change is needed.
- Designate Christmas Offering  
Council has decided that all Christmas offerings will go to the benefit of Salem Lutheran Church
- Christmas Eve Schedule  
3:00pm and 5:00pm

### Announcements:

Council thanks Lynn, Tina and Sherri for their great contributions in their 3-year term on Council.

Executive Team Meeting: Tuesday November 18, 2025, at 3:00pm

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday November 25, 2025, at 6:30pm

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:39pm.

Closed in Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Fritz



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>30</b> <b>Advent</b> 9:00am Worship 9:50am Sunday School 3:30pm Songs of the Season Practice	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 9:00am Piecemakers 5:00pm Worship and Music Meeting	<b>3</b> 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Salem Ringers 6:00pm Confirmation 6:15pm Choir Practice 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	<b>4</b> 11:30am Catholic Charities Meal Distribution	<b>5</b> 8:00am Men's Bible Study	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 9:00am Worship 9:50am Sunday School <b>10:15am Church Decorating</b> 10:15am Facilities Meeting 1:00pm Worship at Heartwood 3:30pm Songs of the Season Practice	<b>8</b> 1:00pm Bible Study at Heartwood	<b>9</b> 9:00am Piecemakers 3:00pm Executive Team Meeting	<b>10</b> 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 3:15pm Kids Club Make-and-Take 5:30pm Salem Ringers 6:00pm Confirmation 6:15pm Choir Practice 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 8:00am Men's Bible Study	<b>13</b> 9:00am Serpent Lake Association Meeting 3:30pm Songs of the Season Performance
<b>14</b> 9:00am Worship with Songs of the Season 9:50am Sunday School 1:30pm Songs of the Season at Heartwood	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 9:00am Piecemakers Party 1:00pm Outreach Governing Board Meeting 6:30pm Council Meeting	<b>17</b> 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Salem Ringers 6:00pm Confirmation Party 6:15pm Choir Practice 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	<b>18</b> 6:00pm Cuyuna Range Lions Meeting	<b>19</b> 8:00am Men's Bible Study	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 9:00am Worship 9:50am Sunday School	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 3:00pm Christmas Eve Worship 5:00pm Christmas Eve Worship	<b>25</b> <b>Christmas Day</b> Office Closed	<b>26</b> Office Closed	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 9:00am Worship	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 9:00am Piecemakers	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b> Office Closed	<b>2</b> 8:00am Men's Bible Study	<b>3</b>