

# PARLA BELL NEWSLETTER

Salem Lutheran Church | Home of the Holy Hootenanners | Mahtowa, MN

*Energetic Christian community of all ages called to love, accept, and grow through Discipleship  
Our vision at Salem Lutheran is to be a stable foundation and vibrant hub for disciples new and old.*

## Weekly Activities at Salem

### Worship - Sunday 9:30am, Coffee and treats following worship

#### Sunday

- Sunday School (PreK-6th grade): 10:15-11:15am at Salem's Hall
- Sr. High Youth Group (8th-12th grade): 10:45-11:45am at Salem's Hall

#### Wednesday

- Men's Club: 9-10am  
Coffee, 10-11am Bible Study at Salem Church
- 7-8th grade Confirmation Class: 6-8pm at Salem's Hall

#### Monday

- AA - Alcoholics Anonymous: 6pm at Salem Church. The only requirement is the desire to quit drinking. (This group functions independent of Salem Church but meets in the building)

## Thoughts from Pastor Beth:

One of my favorite things about a freshly fallen snow is that the light that reflects off of the snow seems to brighten up the whole world. I love that light especially this time of year when the days are getting shorter and darkness seems to come so quickly in the late afternoon. This is the time of year when we start to light more candles at church. Each week of Advent leading up to Christmas, we light one more candle on the Advent Wreath until on Christmas we light all four candles plus the Christ candle in the middle. Each week we have more and more light, reminding us that Christ is coming soon.

Its the light that reminds me of hope. Its the light that gives me hope. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)

In a world, and in a time, when there can be so much reason to see darkness all around us. When the news is covered with reasons to be afraid, of tragedy and war all over the globe, of people throwing hate at one another. When in our lives we have illness, death, trauma, accidents, frustrations, and stress. Its easy to look around and only see darkness.

But as we turn on the lights around our house in the early evening, as we light the candles of the Advent Wreath, as we see the light reflecting off of the newly fallen snow. We are reminded that Jesus comes as the light in the darkness. The light of Jesus overpowers and shines through all the darkness in the world. Jesus comes to us with a message of hope and new life for us.

Soon we will again celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, the savior of the world. Who flips upside-down the world and shows us a new way to live. Who comes unexpectedly as a baby in a manger, not as a king or military leader. We celebrate the birth of the one who brings new life. Who overcomes death and gives us hope of everlasting life. Who comes to bring justice and peace through God's love for each of us and for the world.

When Mary is pregnant with Jesus, she sings her song praising the Lord and praising the name of the God by telling all about

## Christmas Services

Christmas Eve: 4:00pm - Saturday  
December 24th

Christmas Day: 9:30am Lessons  
and Carols Service - Sunday  
December 25th

## Blue Christmas Worship Service

The Holiday Season is filled with lots of happiness and joy, but what if you're not feeling it? For those dealing with sadness, grief, life struggles we offer a time to come together in worship.

Join us this month... date to be determined. Watch the weekly announcements or contact Pr. Beth

## Soul Sisters - December Meeting

The next meeting of the Soul Sisters will be on Dec. 6 at 5:30PM with potluck, followed by 6 PM meeting with Christmas Cookie packing following the meeting. There is always plenty of food so don't feel like you can't come if you don't have a dish to pass.

God and who God is. Mary sings of the many ways that Jesus is light that shines through the darkness. "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." (Luke 1:46-55)

May you find peace and joy this Advent season. May the light of Christ shine in the darkness around you. May you find comfort and hope in the birth of our divine baby Jesus. May you be wrapped in God's grace this Advent, throughout Christmas, and always.

-Peace and Blessings, Pastor Beth

## Budget 2016

This week in the life of a pastor included sitting down to take a look at our finances, budget, and other things related to the financial realities of ministry and being church together. To say that a lot has happened at Salem in this past year is an understatement! All of the ministry that happens inside and outside of Salem needs money to back it. In this past year we had multiple youth step into adult roles in the church as they affirmed their faith at the confirmation service, we've had a couple baptisms, parsonage update, a new organ, called a new full-time pastor, welcoming hospitality through sharing our spaces with the larger community, we've studied scripture, shared the Gospel, and welcomed new people in our midst.

Taking a look at what money has come into the church through offering collections and other sources of income, and comparing that to the expenses that this congregation has...if December looks like the rest of the year has, we predict that we will end the year \$8,000 short of what we need. While this amount in any personal household budget is a lot, for our church budget this is not a reason for anxiety or great concern, but something that we do need to be aware of and proactive about.

My challenge to you all as people belonging to the Salem community, is to help us break even at the end of the year. If each family-unit is able to give an extra \$80 as a Christmas offering on top of their regular monthly offering, we will reach our goal. For some families though, \$80 extra is difficult to find,

## Salem's Sunday School Schedule

**10:15am (approx.)-  
11:15am**

- December 4th, 2016
- December 11th, 2016
- December 18th, 2016
- December 25th, 2016 - No Sunday School, Christmas Day
- January 1st, 2016 - No Sunday School, New Year's Day

If you have any questions, feedback or would like to help please let me know.  
 Angie Korpela - 389-0325 (home), 218-565-1773 cell,  
[angiekorpela@yahoo.com](mailto:angiekorpela@yahoo.com)

## Prayer Chain

Requests can be submitted to Pr. Beth via email, phone, in person, or anonymously through leaving a note in Pr. Beth's mailbox. Prayer Chain Email will be sent weekly. If you are not on email, contact Pr Beth to receive prayers another way. The Prayer Chain is a wonderful way that we can keep each other in prayer throughout the week.

and for other families that is not a problem. For each dollar that the church receives, we are always grateful because we know that it was hard work earning each dollar. So I am asking you to search within your hearts to see how God is asking you to share what you have with the church.

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” 1 Peter 4:10

## Christmas Play



Salem Lutheran Church presents an Eldridge Publishing Company Production

# Christmas on Prosperity Lane

A Family Finds It's Christmas Spirit

Salem Lutheran Church  
 2702 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
 Mahtowa, MN 55707  
[www.Salemmahtowa.org](http://www.Salemmahtowa.org)

Special Music by Holy Hootenanners



**ADMISSION IS FREE**

Saturday, Dec 17<sup>th</sup> - 2:00 pm and Sunday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> - 9:30 am

\*A freewill donation will be collected for the senior high youth group



## Senior High Youth Group

First we would like to thank everyone for their support during our “Emerging Adults” December mailing project. We will be hosting a Youth Group Christmas Party on Dec. 11th at 12-4 at the Lekander’s residency.

## Dates for your Calendar

- December 3, 3-7pm: Joey Krog's Fundraiser
- December 6 - 5:30 Soul Sisters' Potluck, 6:00pm Soul Sisters' Meeting
- December 11th at 2pm - Christmas Caroling
- December 17th at 2pm, December 18th at 9:30am - Christmas Play
- December 24th at 4:00pm - Christmas Eve Worship
- December 31 - Hoot Year's Eve Party
- January Annual Meeting - To Be Announced

## Women's Bible Study

In January the Soul Sisters will begin a monthly Bible Study for the women of the congregation. We would like your input in helping decide what day and time would work for the majority of people interested. Email Jean Hendrickson at [jh2cattle@gmail.com](mailto:jh2cattle@gmail.com) or call 218-485-8946

We will also be doing a Christmas play again this year with shows on Dec. 17 at 2 pm and Dec 18 during church service. All proceeds from the free will donations will go to the youth group's fund.

We are planning a winter ski trip details to come out in middle December. We will be taking a break during December from hosting ongoing weekly small group discussions with topics including: dating and relationships, reducing stress, and being happy. They will resume the first week in January.

If you have any questions, please contact Donna Lekander at 218-565-8137 or emailing her at [donna.lekander@gmail.com](mailto:donna.lekander@gmail.com)

## Ramblings of a Seminarian..... Luke Lekander, November 28, 2016

Going to Luther Seminary gives me more than a classroom education. It also gives me opportunities to partake in faith building experiences, join initiatives, and hear where the ELCA stands on various topics. Recently, I signed up to go on a retreat for faculty and staff of Luther Seminary. I will be attending the Advent Hermitage Retreat in Silence and Solitude at Pacem in Terrace. It will be a sanctuary of silence and solitude. I will stay by myself in a private hermitage hut. A hermitage is a simple but comfortable prayer cabin that enables those on retreat from the burdens of everyday life to be more fully attentive to the Presence of God.

I am also a supporter of a new movement within Lutheranism called #decolonizeLutheranism. This movement has given me opportunities to see Christianity, specifically Lutheranism, from the point of view of people much different than myself. What I am learning isn't always easy to accept but it is helping me to grow more fully and richly in understanding God's vision for all of creation that I otherwise wouldn't experience. I find that stepping out of my comfort zone and listening to the narratives of people who have been marginalized by the Lutheran church is going to make me a better pastor, celebrating all peoples.

Also, Bishop Eaton recently issued a statement on Standing Rock. You can read the whole statement online at <https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/7865>. One part of this states, "This past August, the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed a resolution repudiating the doctrine of discovery. In it we pledged 'to practice accompaniment with Native peoples.'" As such, I am interested in practicing accompaniment with Native peoples by supporting the Water Protectors at Standing Rock. I will be accepting donations to help keep the peaceful protesters warm, healthy, and safe. You can find a list of needs here: <http://sacredstonecamp.org/supply-list/>. There are a number of people

making trips to the camp so we can send most anything off this list.

Finally, I always knew that taking this path wouldn't be easy but, admittedly, I have been surprised at the reasons why it hasn't been easy. It isn't because of the many hours of reading and writing papers, the financial burden, or the time taken away from my friends and family. It is because of the deep empathy I have developed for all of God's peoples and for all of Creation. I often feel helpless seeing all the unnecessary pain and suffering that is caused by Sin. I ask for your prayers and support now more than ever. I am half way through Seminary but my life is already forever changed. I thank you again, Salem, for this wonderful, scary, beautiful, painful, loving path you have had no small part putting me on. Shalom.

## Confirmation Corner

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This past month the 7th and 8th grade confirmation students along with the newly confirmed 9th graders took an overnight trip to Cragun's Resort in Brainerd for the synod-wide middle school gathering. The theme was "iBelong" - about belonging to God and as a community to one another. It was a weekend full of lots of fun for all! Thanks to the adults who made it possible by taking time out of their weekend to volunteer to drive the kids and spend the night with them. The month of December brings a study of the Lord's Prayer according to Martin Luther's Small Catechism and a Christmas party for the class.

## Holy Hoots Headlines

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After performances at Braham Covenant Church and the House of Mercy in St. Paul at the end of October, the Hoots have enjoyed a quiet November. After our brief respite, we've been getting geared up for the **Salem Christmas play**, "Christmas on Prosperity Lane," which will be performed by our student (and adult) actors on Saturday, December 17 and Sunday December 18.

We'd also like to invite everyone to the **4th annual "Hoot Years Eve,"** which is Saturday, December 31 from 6:00 P.M. to midnight at Salem's Mahtowa Hall. We'll be playing a couple sets worth of our music, but we're also inviting other musicians to take part in open "jams," so if you're interested, or know someone that would be, please let us know.

After the New Year's party, January finds us **at Luther Seminary for a show on Saturday, January 14.** We'll also be returning to the Twin Cities the following weekend for a concert at **Bryant Lake Bowl on Saturday, January 21,** and a church service in **Blaine on January 22.**

Lastly, we are excited to announce that we're working on new songs for our **forthcoming third album.** We're set to record at Pachyderm Studios in Cannon Falls, MN from February 17-19.

## Joey Krog Benefit

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The Joey Krog Fundraiser event was a great success and a very fun evening. Approximate first count totals leave the fundraised amount close to \$6,000 to go towards purchasing Joey's new handicap accessible van. Thank you to all those who made this event possible and a great success!

## Contact information for Salem

2702 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Mahtowa, MN 55707 [salemmahtowa@gmail.com](mailto:salemmahtowa@gmail.com)

[www.salemmahtowa.org](http://www.salemmahtowa.org)

[www.holyhoots.org](http://www.holyhoots.org)

**Pastor Beth Pottratz** – [pastorbeth16@gmail.com](mailto:pastorbeth16@gmail.com)

(651) 328-1834 / (218) 380-7013 (call or text both numbers)

**Church Council:** Jason Marsh, President (218) 355-0459  
Brent Speldrich Dave Eller Zach Langhorst  
Caleb Anderson Jeff Gilbertson Donita Korpela

Parish Nurse: Joanne Bislow (218) 428-7696

Custodian: Chuck Porter (218) 260-7553

Church Secretary: Pat Butcher (218) 341-2147, [mncharley@aol.com](mailto:mncharley@aol.com)

Organist: Jean Hendrickson (218) 485-8946

Luke Lekander, Seminary Student

To Rent Salem's Mahtowa Hall - contact Brent Speldrich (218) 839-2760

To schedule the Holy Hootenanners - contact Caleb Anderson (218) 393-7677

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From: Salem Lutheran Church  
2702 - 1st Street  
Mahtowa, MN 55707