

# 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

#### 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
- Sr. High Youth Group (8th-12th grade): 6:30-8pm at Salem Church

#### 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:

This month you will find the first article in a series I'm starting entitled "How Salem Makes a Difference in my Life." I hope that this series will be a chance for people to share stories of how Salem makes a difference in their lives, and for all of us to hear stories from other's lives that we might not have heard before on why Salem is important to them.

I will start with sharing a story from myself personally on how Salem makes a difference in my life. As of the beginning of February, I have been at Salem for just over 5 months. I feel incredibly blessed to be at this congregation, with each of you people, and living in this little town of Mahtowa. When I look at what God has given me here - the ministries, joy and excitement going around Salem, the wonderful people that I am getting to know - I don't think that God could have placed a better first call and a better congregation to serve as pastor than Salem Lutheran Church.

Some of my most formative faith experiences and times that I have felt closes to God come when I am with a community of people. There is something about the vibrancy of people who are gathered together by the Holy Spirit that always adds sparks to my faith. Salem makes a difference in my life because of the people who belong with Salem. The welcome and love that I have felt from individuals and the congregation as a whole makes me feel God's love too.

Salem is part of what gives me joy and enthusiasm for ministry. Salem energizes me and gives me hope that God's love and God's church on earth will live on for generations to come, even if the church looks different over time. Salem is full of life and is a light for me when I feel surrounded by darkness.

This is part of how Salem makes a difference in my life. My story at Salem has just begun, the ways in which Salem will make a difference in my life is just beginning. I look forward to seeing just how many things God has in store for myself and for all of Salem in the years to come.

-Peace and Blessings, Pastor Beth

## Budget Update

**On average, we monthly need \$8,456 to make our budget.**

**December Offering: \$9649**

**January Offering Est. Total: without Jan29: \$5847**

God gives us the goal to give 10% of what we earn for the worship of our God. This can be a great challenge when we balance our income with all the demands on our money. If you're not tithing 10% try to challenge yourself to give a little more than you did before.

"Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. Then you may turn it into money. With the money secure in hand, go to the place that the Lord your God will choose." (Deut. 14:22-29)

## Dates for your Calendar

- February 1-3 - Pastor attending Continuing Ed Conference
- February 4 - Hoots Concert at Barnum High School
- February 7 - Soul Sisters Bible Study and Meeting
- February 18-20 - Hoots Recording CD, Cannon Falls
- February 26 - Kettle River Conference Assembly, 2pm at Hope in Moose Lake
- March 1 - Ash Wednesday with evening worship service
- TBD Church Council Meeting

## How Salem Makes a Difference in my Life

*This article is part of a series that shares peoples' stories from around the life of our congregation. To share your story, email it to Pastor Beth for next month's newsletter.*

- Tammy Schleret -

I first started attending Salem in 2002 shortly after we built our first home and moved to the Mahtowa area. My Dad, Harry Olsen, grew up in Mahtowa and attended Salem until he joined the military and began his career serving our country. My Dad was baptized and confirmed at Salem and it was home for him. He and my mom, Beverly, had also recently returned to the Mahtowa area so we started attending together. Both my kids, myself and my husband, Joe, were all baptized at Salem and I took great pride in becoming a member of my Dad's church and felt a connection immediately. Not long after, in November of 2003 my Dad unexpectedly died, as many of you know, and I have struggled with it ever since. I leaned on Salem, and God, to help comfort me through this, one of the most difficult things in my life. The people of Salem were very supportive and helped me learn to cope with my grief. There wasn't a time that I attended that I wasn't greeted with many hugs, smiles and genuine care and concern for not only me but for my entire family. This meant so much.

When my kids, Makenzee and Parker, were old enough I started helping with Sunday school and taught a class every other week. I enjoyed spending time with all of the children so much that I also started volunteering with my sister, Candy, at confirmation, even before my own kids were old enough to attend the program. It was very rewarding to me to be able to continue to walk in my faith journey alongside her. I felt such a closeness to God and felt as though this was where I belonged. This is my sixth year of confirmation. Finding time for everything can be a struggle for me with sports and school activities, work and family. However, it is very rewarding to spend the time that I have with the kids at Salem on Wednesdays and to be able to mentor them and help them in their faith journey. I love hearing their stories each week, their highs and lows, who won their sporting events, who got a new puppy or how their new baby sister or chickens are doing, when they are moving into their new house, and also when things are not going so well for them either. All of these experiences are what make them grow and become who they are and I'm very honored to be a part of their life for a short while.

## Congregational Annual Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting took place at Salem Lutheran Church in Mahtowa on January 29th, 2017. If you were not present at the meeting and would like an annual meeting

## Salem's Sunday School Schedule

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

- February 5th
- February 12th
- Feb 19th-No Sunday School
- February 26th

- March 5th
- March 12th
- March 19th
- March 26th

- April 2nd
- April 9th
- April 16th - No Sunday School (Easter Sunday)
- April 23rd
- April 30th

- May 7th
- May 14th
- May 21st - Last Day of Sunday School

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)

## Snow Shoveling

Still recruiting members for Salem's Super Sweet Sidewalk & Snow Shoveling Squad! Sign up at church, or at this link:

[signupgenius.com/go/4090448a5ad2da3fa7-salems](http://signupgenius.com/go/4090448a5ad2da3fa7-salems)

report, please contact the church to receive one at [salemmahtowa@gmail.com](mailto:salemmahtowa@gmail.com), 218-380-7013, or by picking one up when you are at Salem.

Our newly elected council member is Marie Nyblom re-elected council members are Brent Speldrich, Zach Langhorst, Donita Korpela, and Jeff Gilbertson; and staying on for the second year of their term is Dave Eller and Caleb Anderson.

## Soul Sisters - February Meeting

Our February meeting will be on Tuesday, February 7th beginning with a Bible Study at 5:30 followed by the regular meeting at 6:30. Remember there is no Potluck. Treats will be provided by Jean and Nancy. Hope to see you then!

## Confirmation Class: Bible Story Time



## 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. 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.

## Worship Music: February

- 1st and 2nd Sundays:  
Hoots Worship
- 3rd and 4th Sundays:  
Classic Worship

## Reformation Bookstore

Augsburg Fortress Press has an opportunity for a Bookstore to be at Salem! Look for a table of books at the end of February and beginning of March! Books will be available to look at and order your own copy with free shipping from Augsburg Fortress. Books for children through adults.

## March Madness: Food Edition

It's time to think about March Madness again. Basketball, and food shelf awareness month. During the Month of March, all food and money donations received are matched with the same dollar donation. It's a great 2 for 1 deal for the food shelf. Last yr our goal was 200# of food and we surpassed that easily. I propose a 300# goal this yr. Maybe the Sunday School kids could help keep track (like last year) when they kept track of donations and had a chart so we could keep track of what we brought.

Thanks for all your donations!!! -From Jean Hendrickson

## Holy Hoots Headlines

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.



*The Hoots at Luther Seminary, Jan 15, 2017*

## Reformation 500 Synod Event

I was able to attend the Synod meeting on Sun. Jan. 22 in Aitkin. I enjoyed listening to the opening speech by the Bishop from the South Dakota Synod. He talked about some of the history of the time frame that set the stage for Martin Luther. The printing press was one of the tools that allowed Martin Luther to share his ideas with more people.

As the group split into different topics, I first choose Lutherans, Grounded and Changing with the speaker Bishop Thomas Aitken. He is always an interesting speaker. He talked about a lot of the focus on Jesus Christ and the Gospel, embracing diversity united in Christ and all are welcome in our ministries, no exceptions!

The 2nd topic I went to was about Earth Stewardship presented by David M. Carlson. We talk of Stewardship but sometimes we forget that Stewardship also includes our earth. Some congregations start "Green Teams" in their congregations. We think recycling starts at home, but it is important to include that in all parts of our lives including our churches. The afternoon went by very fast. -Jean Hendrickson

## Pastoral Care and Visits

Reminder that Pastor Beth is available for pastoral care and visits: if you are sick, in the hospital, in jail, or otherwise just need a listening ear. If you wish to talk with her or have her visit you, let Pr. Beth know. If you don't tell her, she won't know! Don't assume that Pr Beth will just find out or guess that you want to visit. You can contact her in case of emergency by calling. Otherwise, you can contact her via text message, phone call, or email and she will get back to you as soon as possible.

## Ramblings of a Seminarian: Luke Lekander

**January 23, 2017** Every January and June that I spend with my Cohort at Luther Seminary is a blessed time. It is a time of connection and joy. It is a time of mutual growth. It is a time of love. We are watching the first member of our Cohort graduate next May. It is bittersweet. While we want her to be ordained and bring her unique love and faithfulness to a faith community, we will also miss her. It is also a wake up call for me. I don't know where God will call me but the reality of eventually leaving Salem is also bittersweet. While I fully embrace my call to ministry, I will miss all of you greatly. I will miss playing with the Hoots. I will miss worship and fellowship together. I will miss meatball suppers, pie socials, movies in the park, the Hootenannies/Hoots-years-eve's, and all the other special times that we work hard at being together and creating community. Salem will always be the place that took me in and lifted me up. No, that's not quite right. Salem will always be the PEOPLE that took me in and lifted me up. I don't say it enough: Thank you and God bless Salem Lutheran Church

## Creation Care Team Event: NE-MN Synod

### Save the Date

**A Watershed Moment:  
Reformation for the Next 500**  
March 25, 2017  
9:30 am-2:30 pm  
St. Andrews Lutheran Church,  
Grand Rapids



*A Creation Care Summit hosted by the  
Leadership Team of the N.E. MN Synod EcoFaith Network*

A "watershed moment" is defined as a critical turning point in time that marks an important, often historical change. A moment in time when nothing after it will ever be the same! The phrase is derived from the hydrologic term "watershed," which is a boundary—or turning point—that causes waters to flow in different directions; a crucial divide.

As a society we are at a critical turning point—a watershed moment—to protect the water on which all aspects of our lives depend. As Christians, we have a stewardship responsibility to protect and improve our waters. The waters within the Northeast Synod/ELCA are generally of high quality. How can we as Christian stewards protect the future quality of our waters?

Come and learn more about the state of our waters and how Lutheran congregations can be effective watershed disciples.

For more information contact  
[ecofaith@nemnsynod.org](mailto:ecofaith@nemnsynod.org)  
or call Paula West at 218-838-5010

## Parenting in the Pews: Meaning of Worship

**Petticoats and Passing Notes.** I was a Sunday-morning dropout in my late teens, contributing to a documented trend noted in church-attendance studies. One reason for quitting was that I had never been trained to worship. I had only been told to be quiet in church.

During my childhood, my dear parents did not know the difference. Mama and Daddy did the best they could with what they knew. Mama grew up "going to church", but not to worship, while Daddy had not gone to church for any reason as a youngster.

## Mpls Institute of Art Exhibit

I was fortunate to be able to attend the recent exhibit of Martin Luther: Art and the Reformation. It was an outstanding exhibit. It helped me understand what the times were like 500 yrs ago that helped set the stage for Martin Luther. Looking at some of the robes the priests of the time wore helped me understand how the common person could get a little frustrated with amount of money the church used for what the church of the time deemed necessary. Once Martin Luther penned his concerns and the printing press was available to share printed info, all the peasant unrest was blamed on Martin Luther. He got blamed for many things. And it was nice to see the original penned version of A Mighty Fortress, even if I couldn't read the German it was written in! It was also interesting to see and hear about the large crowds from many different countries. What a privilege to have such a great collection of works available in Mpls. -Jean Hendrickson

When I was 4 we were involved in a car accident. Some people who were kind and helpful at the scene of the accident became our friends, and it was they who encouraged my parents to begin attending church and Sunday School. My mother looks back now and muses, "We knew we needed something in our lives." So we went.

As I sat by them, the difference between "going to church" and "going to worship" was something they were just beginning to discover. All I was taught was to "be quiet and be good."

"Be still and know that I am God" is more biblical (Psalm 46:10). This verse begins to define the difference between "going to church" and "going to worship". Going to worship requires a life-transformation and happens out of a new heart, not an old habit. Going to church can be nothing more than smart time management with good intentions. It may not have much at all to do with *worship*.

**Worship B.C. and A.D.** There is a big difference between worship B.C. and worship A.D. - worship "before children" and worship "after diapers"! I have heard more than a few parents confess, "I used to get more out of church before I had kids."

But the bigger issue is, What does God get out of worship? Worship is goof for God. Worship concerns itself with his pleasure, his benefit, his good. Worship is the exercise of our souls in blessing God. In the Psalms we read or sing, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" However, our chief concern is usually "Bless my soul, Oh Lord!"

Encountering the Lord. Meeting Jesus. Hearing his voice. Knowing God. These expectations of worship are met in hearts that are intent on his blessing. But the Lord's benefit is too



seldom the thirst of our hearts, the work of our souls, the focus of our attention.

We sing “Breathe on me, breath of God,” but what would we do if he did? We pray, “Come, Holy Spirit,” but don’t prepare for his visitation. We harmonize beautifully “Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me,” but never expect anything new. “When we’ve been there ten thousand years” can seem like anything but “amazing grace” if we just go to church rather than to worship. And this holds true “B.C.” or “A.D.”

Children can infringe on our worship experience. I know more than a few parents who have resented the distractions ushered into the pew by the presence of their children. Many just give up. However, children do not have to interfere with God’s experience of worship! Worship is first a blessing to God, and he values the presence and praise of children. (Matthew 18:14, Mark 10:14, Luke 18:16)

**Meaning of Worship.** Worship is not a refueling to get us through another week. Worship is not a system of traditions built up over many years of congregational life until everyone feels comfortable. Worship is not a time to unwind and relax, tune out or take a mental vacation. Worship is not an hour of Christian entertainment. It is not what makes us good people, faithful Christians, or successful parents.

Worship is the surrender of our souls to a God who is jealous for our attention, time, and love. Worship is a challenge. With children its a bigger challenge. It has been said that modern people: worship their work, work at their play, and play at their worship. We need to work at our worship. With children, we often have to work harder.

Baseball and ballet are taught through participation, practice and patience. Children learn best by doing. Great baseball players are not made in the bleachers. Dancing is not learning by remote control. Children learn to worship by worshipping - through participation, practice and patience.

The task that can be overwhelming if you take it seriously. Training children to worship is a zenith of sacred trust. Unlike baseball or ballet, however, worship is best taught by parents, not “professionals.”

Worship, ballet, and baseball are all learned by example as well. A good trainer/teacher can hit the ball or demonstrate a pirouette. And parents in the pew can show by example what it means to seek God, to love his Son, and to respond to the Holy Spirit in worship. Children learn that prayer is important when they see their parents make it a priority. Children learn to give generously when their parents do. Children dress, sing, participate by following example as well as instruction. When worship is an obvious joy to parents, children will expect to experience the same.

- Book: Parenting in the Pew by Robbie Castleman, (excepts found on pages 17-26). For more conversation or to borrow the book see Pr Beth.

## Camp Vermillion Updates

For details go to: <http://www.vlmcamps.org/>

**Elementary and Jr. High Rejuves!** Each session is 23 hours filled with games, worship, learning, meeting new friends and simply being at camp. It's a great introduction for first-time campers! March 10-11, 2017 - Camp Hiawatha (Gr. 3-6), March 17-18, 2017 - Camp Vermilion(Gr. 3-6), March 31-April 1, 2017 - Camp Vermillion (Gr. 7-9). Cost: \$50/camper (includes program, lodging and meals, \$15 deposit due with registration)

**Paddle Building Workshop.** Friday, February 17 to Sunday, February 19 at Camp Vermilion. Come to Camp Vermilion and learn how to build your own canoe paddle! You’ll select your pieces of wood, then glue and clamp your paddle together. Then you’ll sand, sand, and sand some more until it’s just the way you want it. All are welcome! Bring your spouse, friends, or family and spend a weekend in the northwoods, with a beautiful piece to take home at the end. Parent/child or grandparent/grandchild participants can build a family heirloom together!

**Register for Summer Camps!** Camps for all ages, including Family Camps and speciality camp experiences like a BWCA trip and Hockey Camp.

## 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)

<b>Church Council:</b>	Caleb Anderson	Jeff Gilbertson	Donita Korpela
	Brent Speldrich	Dave Eller	Zach Langhorst
			Marie Nyblom

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

Articles and announcements for the Parla Bell Newsletter due by the 25th of the previous month.

Announcements for the Weekly Announcements due by noon on Monday for that week.

---

From: Salem Lutheran Church

2702 - 1st Street

Mahtowa, MN 55707