

# 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:

Recently I listened to an interview entitled "Finding God in All Things" with Fr. James Martin, a Jesuit Priest, on the radio show 'On Being with Krista Tippett'. (Listen to the show yourself here: <http://www.onbeing.org/program/james-martin-finding-god-in-all-things/7121/>)

Among many other things, they got on the topic of the Christmas Story. Fr. Martin said this, "It's a nice, pretty story about two nice, good looking people, usually white...you know, had a pretty baby in a manger. But in a sense, it's a terrifying story. In terms of what they had to undergo. And it's also, I have to say, it is a shocking story. It's not just a baby. It is God being born in human form. And it's just as shocking as the resurrection. And I think we've tamed it. And in a sense it doesn't demand our belief. We can just kind of look on it, and say, well, that's cute."

Check out the Christmas Story in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2. Reading the story of Jesus birth again with new eyes, it is quite a shocking story! Things that Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus went through are things that no new parents and baby want to go through! Baby Jesus being born is not any ordinary baby either, like Fr. Martin says, "it is God being born in human form!" What a shocking turn of events, that an almighty, all powerful God would love us humans so much that this God would choose to step into human life on earth as a crying, sleeping, eating and pooping little helpless baby.

It is truly a miracle that our God would love us so much as to decide to come to meet us, be with us, and understand us in such a unique way. To come and live a life that each of us lives. This story of Jesus' birth is not just a story of a cute new baby. Its not just a quiet and silent night when Jesus was born. Its a night and a story of God's deep and endless love for each of us. Its a story of God's intense desire to be in our lives, to be in the world and to love and care for each of us. Its the shocking story of God's radical love for the whole world, and of God living and breathing every step of the way in this world with us - bringing all that God is in this baby Jesus and the promises of liberation, forgiveness, salvation, healing, equality, and love that are all centered in this

## Dates for your Calendar

- January 10, 6:30pm Council Meeting
- January 14, 4:30-6:30p - Hoots playing at Luther Sem in St Paul
- January 21 & 22 - Synod Event: Reformation 500 Kickoff
- January 22 - Financial Coffee Conversation with Jody, during coffee hour after worship
- January 29 at approx. 11am - Potluck and Annual Meeting
- February 7 - Soul Sisters Bible Study and Meeting

## Soul Sisters - Meeting

The next meeting of the Soul Sisters will be on January 3. And February 7th. New meeting format begins with Bible Study together (no pot-luck meal) followed by business.

of our congregation give their annual reports. This is a great opportunity to highlight the activities and good work going on at Salem. Second, the church council will present the 2017 budget to the congregation. The congregation votes to accept or reject the proposed budget. Finally, the congregation makes nominations and votes for council members. Council terms are two years and members may serve two consecutive terms. This year we will be electing four council members. Three of those council positions could be filled by current council members. I myself will be leaving the council as I have served on council for four years. At the very minimum, Salem will choose one new council member.

It is important that you attend this meeting. It is crucial for all members of Salem to know the goings on of our church, take part in the budgetary process, and have the opportunity to nominate, vote, and be elected to church council. I hope to see each of you on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

from: Jason Marsh, Council President

## Senior High Youth Group

SKI TRIP - Ski Trip open to anyone of all ages. Lock-in open to 7th-12th grade youth. January 15 (Sunday) /16 9am service at Elim, 10am leave to ski hill. Lock-in with pick ups at 8 am. Sign up FINAL DEADLINE Wednesday January 11. Still need a few drivers if anyone is interested or willing

8th-12th grade YOUTH GROUP Trying new time for January Wednesday's (Jan 11, 18, 25) 630-8 at the church

shocking birth of God in flesh as this baby Jesus. All in that little town of Bethlehem so long ago, and again today.

-Peace and Blessings, Pastor Beth

## Annual Meeting January 29, 2017

In the life of the congregation, each January we gather as all of the members to review the past year and vote on our council members and budget for the coming year. All confirmed and participating members of Salem Lutheran Church are eligible to vote, anyone is welcome to attend.

January 29th, 2017 will begin at Salem with worship at 9:30am with the Hoots leading worship, followed by a pot-luck meal (bring something if you can), and meeting.

The annual meeting is the business side of being church together and doing ministry. It is an opportunity to shape our community for the coming year through how we organize ourselves as a business. The annual meeting is a good chance to see the overall picture of all the wonderful ways that God has been working in and through us as the community of Salem Lutheran Church in 2016 and to pray, discern, and look forward to the ways that God will work in and through us in 2017. - Pastor Beth

## Congregational Annual Meeting

The New Year means many things and among them, it means our Annual Meeting is just around the corner. This year, Salem's Annual Meeting will take place on January 29, 2017 following the worship service. For those new to Salem, our annual meeting serves multiple functions. First, the various groups that are part

## Salem's Sunday School Schedule

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

· Resumes January 8

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.

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)

## Holy Hoots Headlines

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.

## A Note from Chuck Porter

God is at it again. Put a thought in my head and as much as I resisted I can't say no. I reminded him that I have a tendency to ramble on when writing in the Parla Bell, but to no avail. Promise not to be as long winded as last spring!!!!!!

August 22, 2016 a fascinating young lady by the name of Beth Pottratz, officially known as Pastor Beth became our new leader after thankfully accepting our call. (Side note.) I had to take her official name off the message sign because there are 5 t's in Pastor Beth Pottratz and I couldn't put up some messages cause I ran out of t's. Do you think she cares, heavens no. I for one love the scope of her services. Very Lutheran. That's what I grew up with and look forward to her sermons for the next (oh 20 years.)

Listening to the Hoots play, watching so many Sunday school kids head over to the hall and just feeling so good about our church, I really just love it at Salem. Confession! A bit ago I had to attend a different church on Sunday. Don't know what went on at first, spending the first 15 minutes wondering what was going on at Salem.

The mayor of Northeast Town Line Road, you know him as Caleb Anderson, and I were talking on the way home from

caroling. Discussing how attendance has grown a bit. We talked how we have such a vibrant church, a super young Pastor, a very diverse congregation and lots of kids, that we are on our way to being a church to be talked about. That Hootennaners church in Mahtowa.

Here's to 2017. Weather you hoist your cup of cheer or coffee bringing in the new year, lets all do our part to make Salem the best dad-gum, rip shorten' church this side of the Mason Dixon. (Lots of country in me.)

I'll end thanking Pastor Beth for being here to lead us into the future. And I believe we all know that the years ahead are indeed bright.

Aw shoot one more. I sang this song to Beth the other day.(Everybody knows everybody-Every calls you friend-Don't need an invitation-Take off your shoes and come on in-Well we know how to work and we know how to play-We're from the country and we like it that way.) Believe we're on our way making this city gal into a good ole country gal. :)

Chuck Porter

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[hayseedhill4@aol.com](mailto:hayseedhill4@aol.com)

## Synod Reformation 500

There is no cost for this event, however, registration is required. We need to know how many will attend for supplies, set up and refreshments. This event is sponsored by the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA [www.NEMNSynod.org](http://www.NEMNSynod.org) Register at: <https://2017nemnconvo.eventbrite.com> or by calling: 218-724-4424

Pastor Beth will be presenting at the worship on "Lutherans and Immigration".

## Ramblings of a Seminarian: Luke Lekander

### Hermitage

I just returned from my first ever hermitage retreat. I couldn't possibly begin to explain my experience there in one newsletter article. I wrote 22 journal entries while there. I am happy to share that with anyone who would like to read it. I will say this though: being alone with God is a powerful and effective way to re-establish yourself as God's willing servant. It doesn't surprise me in the least that Luther himself got his start in the monastic tradition.

### School Stuff

I finished up Fall semester with more reading than I ever had at one time before. I took two classes that involved reading 17 THICK books and several more articles! I learned a lot but I am glad to put this semester behind me.

Coming up in January, I will be taking part one of Foundations of Biblical Preaching plus Apocalypse: Then and Now (a study of apocalyptic scripture and literature). Then, for Spring Semester, I will finish up the Preaching course along with Biblical Hebrew. Woo Hoo!

### On a serious note

There is a lot of pain and suffering out there. We, as Christians, are called to do something about it but we cannot do anything if we don't first listen to God. A hermitage isn't the only way or place one can listen to how God is calling. Find time to break away from the busyness of life to pray, read scripture, and practice some sort of spiritual discipline. There are many ways to do it. I hope nobody forgot that we have our own prayer labyrinth, thanks to our fabulous youth group. Try that out. If that doesn't work, give Centering Prayer a shot. If that doesn't work, try Lectio Divina. Just keep trying things out until something clicks with you. I personally guarantee that you'll not be sorry if you do.

I pray the Holy Spirit fills your life with the gifts only faith can bring! Amen.

# Reformation 500 Kickoff

<b>Saturday January 21st 2017</b> 1:00pm-4:00pm Our Savior's Lutheran Church 501 E 23 <sup>rd</sup> Street Hibbing, MN 55746	<b>Sunday January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017</b> 2:00pm-5:00pm First Lutheran Church 107 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street SE Atkin, MN 56431
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**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Bishop David Zellmer**  
 South Dakota Synod



"How the heck did we get to the Reformation?"

Choose 2 Workshop Sessions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Lutheran and Creation Care</li> <li>❖ Lutheran and Immigration</li> <li>❖ Lutheran Teaching at School of Lay Ministry</li> <li>❖ Lutheran Theology: God at work in the World (Led by LYO Youth)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ ELCA Today: Grounded and Changing</li> <li>❖ The Global Lutheran</li> <li>❖ Picture the Reformation: Luther, Cranach and the Power of the Visual</li> <li>❖ Faith Outside: Engaging the Future of the Church</li> </ul>
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The Church Reformed, Always Reforming  
 An Educational Offering  
 Attend Saturday, Sunday or both

## Contact information for Salem

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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  
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Mahtowa, MN 55707