Salem Forecaster

December 2023 Volume 35 Issue 12

Salem United Methodist Church



JOY TO THE WORLD THE LORD IS COME

REPEAT THE SOUNDING JOY

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM YOUR SALEM STAFF AND LEADERSHIP TEAM





facebook - salemchurchcr instagram - salemchurchcr youtube - salemchurchcr tiktok - salem.umc.cr

www.salemchurch.life - office@salemchurchcr.com

ADVENT AT SALEM

11/26 - Hope
God's Gift to Us
11/28 - 7 PM
Unrelenting Grace Study
12/3 - Peace
Connect Us to Each Other
12/5 - 7 PM
Unrelenting Grace Study

12/10 - Joy
God's Way of Life in the World
12/12 - 7 PM
Unrelenting Grace Study
12/17 - Love
Healing of Our Churches
12/17 - 10:10 AM
Children's Christmas Pageant
12/19 - 7 PM
Unrelenting Grace Study

12/21 - 7 PM
Blue Christmas Service
12/24 - 10 AM online only
Conference message
Unrelenting Grace
12/24 - 5 PM
Candlelight Christmas Eve
12/24 - 11 PM
Candlelight and Communion
Christmas Eve

ACTIVATE... PARTICIPATE

Be part of our worship at Salem!
There are many ways to serve
and to get involved... like being an
usher, a greeter, an online host
(while still in your pajamas) or a
reader. We invite you to share in
and celebrate the warmth of the
community we've grown and
cultivated and help continue to
nurture that spirit.

Usher Mark Minger Sorieture Ro

TO SERVE, CONTACT...

Greeter Gerry Wheeler
office@salemchurchcr.com
Connie Warnell
cl.warnell@mchsi.com

mark Minger
markminger38@gmail.com
Doug Whitmer
GreeterGerny Wheeler

Mark Minger
Scripture Reading Jan Johnson
janbe2680@aol.com
Brian Schooley
financeoffice@salemchurchcr.com

Online Host or Greeter -Nicole German n.german@salemchurchcr.com



UNRELENTING GRACE

register at www.salemchurch.life/group-studies

After all that has gone on in these last months and years, don't you yearn for healing. I do. Then, let's embark together on this journey toward healing as we engage a conference-wide Advent Study of Bishop Carter's new book. I invite you to explore the unrelenting grace of God with friends and colleagues from around our conference. The study will remind us of who we are as United Methodists, build unity, and maybe, help us heal. It will last for just four sessions, on Tuesday evenings at 7pm Central, and will be entirely online. The dates are November 28, December 5, 12 and 19. I hope you will join us. Blessings.

Bishop Kennetha Bigham Tsai

PASTOR MATT'S MONTHLY MINUTES

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHRISTMAS



When I went into the ministry, no one really explained to me that Lent and Advent were some of the busiest times of the year for clergy. In my first year as a pastor, I reached the end of the advent season and had to take a week and a half off because I was sick. My body was run down due to extra meetings, worship services, and special events that take place in the church during this time of year. Since I didn't have the discipline to pace myself, my body forced me to stop. On top of being a pastor, I am also a husband and a father. During the first few years as a pastor my family would say that they didn't get the best of me during this time of year because I gave my best to the church. I missed several family opportunities that I can never reclaim again. On top of over extending ourselves with our time, we celebrate the birth of the most non-materialistic person to walk the earth with an orgy of materialism. The average American household spends approximately \$1,000 a year on Christmas with 71% of that going towards gift giving. US holiday sales have grown year-over-year for over a decade. The highest spending Americans over the winter holidays are aged 45-54 and 48% of Americans begin Christmas shopping before the end of October. How do you feel at the end of the Christmas season? Broke? Tired? Defeated? I came to a conclusion several years ago that arriving at New Year's Day in this condition is not what Jesus had in mind for us to celebrate HIS birthday well. Sometimes in the hustle of the season to maximize the experience we too quickly forget, Christmas is not our birthday. You can say no to going into debt. You can say no to using your time in ways that do not bring you joy. You can say no to commitments that leave you depleted. When you say no to these things, you start saying yes to the Christmas Christ intends. What will you give your yes to this Christmas? Is it calling that friend or family member that needs a relationship repair? Will it be serving those who are lonely, tired, and hungry these winter months? Will it be taking on new spiritual disciplines so that you can grow in your knowledge and love of our Savior? How will you honor the Birthday Boy this year? I invite you to join me in enjoying the fullness of what this season has to offer. But as we do that, let's celebrate a different kind of Christmas. As we arrive at New Year's Day, I pray that you feel filled with joy and connected to those that you love. Have a merry Christmas!

ADVENT WORSHIP

In his new book entitled "Unrelenting Grace", Bishop Ken Carter says, "Healing came come to our church as we center ourselves in grace, holiness, and connection." As he writes, "We must trust that grace, connection, and holiness are our paths to healing. Perhaps our own healing, the healing of our congregations, and surely the healing of the United Methodist Church."

After all that has gone on these last months and years don't you long for healing? I know I do! So let's embark together on this journey toward healing as we engage in a conference wide advent study of Bishop Carter's new book. I invite you to explore the unrelenting grace of God from friends and colleagues from around our annual conference. There are already 400 United Methodists from across the state of Iowa registered for the bible study lead by our very own Iowa Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai. That will be held on Tuesday evenings at 7pm over zoom on Nov. 28, Dec. 5, Dec. 12, and Dec. 19... If you go to Salemchurch. If e you can find the registration links there under group studies.

This study will be held entirely online.

This study and Sunday morning teaching series will remind us of who we are as United Methodists, build unity, and help us heal. What better way to celebrate the incarnation of Christ who came to preach good news to the poor and release to the captives? As we reclaim our United Methodist heritage, theology, and doctrine, we can look forward to vibrant future of hope as United Methodists practicing a

Wesleyan faith here at Salem. The very best is yet to come!

November 26: Unrelenting Grace as God's Gift to Us

December 3: Unrelenting Grace Connects Us to Each Other

December 10: Unrelenting Grace is God's Way of Life in the World

December 17: Unrelenting Grace and the Healing of Our Churches

December 17: Blue Christmas @ 7pm

December 24: 10:00am---ONLINE ONLY (Facebook/YouTube) Final message from Unrelenting Grace 5pm: Christmas Eve family friendly worship with candlelight

11pm: Christmas Eve traditional worship with communion and candlelight

Be Bold, Be Strong,

Rev. Matt German

GOLDEN LINKS

All Golden Agers Welcome!
Golden Links will be meeting on
Wednesday, December 13 at 12 PM at
16th Avenue Grill (3130 16th Ave SW).
Everyone is welcome! Contact

Marlene Anderson for more detail.

To share church wide information - such as, but not limited to, announcements, social media posts, or events...
Please email all pertinent s.daniels@salemchurchcr.com, n.german@salemchurchcr.com, AND office@salemchurchcr.com by 4 PM Monday of that week.



Articles for January's Forecaster are due Monday, December 18 (to same emails previously mentioned).

CHILDREN'S CORNER



The children of Salem will be voting on what animals, insects, or seeds to purchase to help feed families and assist them to earn a living. Bring your quarters and let's support our Salem kids as they impact the world in a mighty and giving way!







Don't forget to stop at the Welcome Center and receive a blessing from the Salem Students' Blessing Basket!

Greetings! As planned at the end of December, our 1st set of teachers and assistants will be ending their current commitment in Children's Sunday School. The children will need a new set of teachers and assistants for the 2nd semester of this Sunday School year (which is January 7 through May 19.).

Would you please pray and ponder whether you should teach or assist for the 2nd half of the year? I ask that you pray and think about encouraging someone you know to consider this to also volunteer! For more information, to volunteer or for any questions, please contact Evelyn Prasil at evelynkp47@gmail.com.

HIRTY THRE

December 6th will be a Christmas celebration for League 33! We will be having hot cocoa, watching a Christmas movie and passing out small gifts for our students. If you'd like to join our celebration, we'd love to have you! If you'd like to contribute to our celebration, we'd greatly appreciate it (please contact Nicole German at n.german@salemchurchcr.com).

We're hoping to add more volunteers to our team to help lighten the heaviness of the ask, especially for those who are wearing multiple hats at Salem and also to allow our volunteers the opportunity to participate solely as parents, should they appreciate the option.

League 33 December 6, 5:30 PM in Fellowship Hall



MEET THE TEAM

Sandra Daniels, Deb Black, Momodu Kamara, Dave Higdon, Jackie Sweet, Sandy Andreason, Sandy Minger, Marcia Humphrey, Gerry Wheeler, and Pastor Matt German. If you are interested in supporting shut-ins, hospital visits, or being a part of our Salem prayer team, please contact Sandra Daniels at (319) 362-6178.



Looking for a way to support our Salem family?

I am looking for those who are willing to be on a list to cook a meal for a member when they have returned from the hospital and are not able to get back into cooking right away. This is something that I will line up once I get a call from the Home Care Team. I usually try to do every other day for a couple of weeks if possible. If you can send me your email address or phone number, I'll put you on the list. Please reach out at sandykmin@gmail.com.

Thank you. Sandy Minger

CHRISTMAS CARDS AND MORE



With the holidays quickly approaching, many have started to send out their Christmas greetings to family, friends, and loved ones. Would you like to include some of our Salem family, specifically our shut-ins and those in nursing homes/care centers?

Contact Nicole German, Sandy Minger or Sandra Daniels (who are collectively working on an ongoing list and further opportunities).

Thank you to the group of guest musicians that led the modern service Thanksgiving weekend, allowing our Salem Praise Team a well deserved weekend off and offering them the opportunity to worship with their families or extend their holiday travels/festivities.

Thank you to the lovely ladies who decorated our Sanctuary (and beyond) for the Advent season! It's truly beautiful and brightens the space for the season!

CELEBRATION CENTER

Thank you to Julia Titus who spent countless hours on Thanksgiving week working tirelessly to get the organ updated to integrate the sound into our livestream!

What a way to enter the season!

Watch your email inbox for a special celebration announcement from the leadership board!



12/1 SHARON LINDO STEELE
12/2 GINNIE CLARK
12/3 SAFFIE KAMARA
12/4 EVELYN FRAME
12/7 CATHY HALSTEAD
12/8 DIXIE BURG
12/9 HOLLY MARA
12/12 KATHY MILLER
12/13 LEE BORNTRAGER

HAPPY

12/13 CINDY MACLEOD
12/16 SHARI KENDALL
12/19 SUSAN LILLARD
12/20 SANDY MINGER
12/21 LYNN RICHARDS

12/25 GREGORY JOHNSON 12/26 MARLENE PRIMROSE 12/28 DIANNE REDDEN 12/29 LARRY VONDRACEK 12/30 ROBIN BROPHY



12/3 BILL AND SUSIE HEALD
12/9 SKIP AND JANET BOTHWICK
12/22 MIKE AND MELINDA WEAVERLING
12/26 TIM AND LINDA NOLAN
12/29 RON AND SANDY ANDREASON

On behalf of the United Women in Faith,
On October 18, Sandy Minger and myself presented
Dustin Peterson, Director of the Linn County Veterans
Affairs, a check in the amount of \$2561.97 from our
garage sale fund raiser. The UWF would like to thank
everyone for donations, help and support for setting up
and those who helped with the sale.

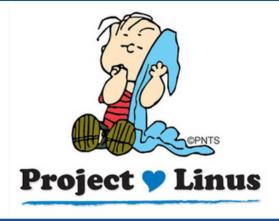
It was greatly appreciated.

-Doris Holst



All are invited to join! Saturday, December 9, from 11 AM—3 PM for a Blanket Making Party for Project Linus.

We encourage you to bring some NEW fleece to help make blankets with. The minimum is 1.5 yards per piece and you need TWO pieces. Please have them pre-cut. Typically, a solid colored bottom piece and a matching fun print for the top. These blankets go for all age ranges so any design is welcome. The only thing that's not allowed is that super cozy soft fleece - it makes a mess when cutting. The best type is called "no pill". You can find fleece at Walmart, JoAnn Fabrics, Hobby Lobby, Michaels, lots of places! Some even have kits you can purchase. Bring a snack to share if you're able, a pair of scissors if you can (we'll label them so you get them back if they get moved around), and bring a friend or two! Come for as little or as long as you'd like. For more information, please contact Joni Salazar at (319) 573-3943 or jsalazar412@gmail.com.



Project Linus is a nationally recognized non-profit with a local chapter that serves Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, and Waterloo area.

All of the blankets are handmade and stay here locally to children in need. They go to different facilities and hospitals like Four Oaks, shelters, University of Iowa children's hospital, Ronald McDonald House, Covenant and Waterloo etc.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT





The youth at Salem have been hard at work preparing a Christmas play.

They've been practicing since October to bring you a truly remarkable show (and let's not forget how hard our adult volunteers are working to make this happen!).

Their presentation will be December 17th at 10:10 AM for the congregation to enjoy.

They will also be performing at Stoney Point on the 16th.

Please join us to show them how much we appreciate them as they showcase.

Please join us to show them how much we appreciate them as they showcase their hard work, dedication, and presence!

In order to set the mood, show our support, and share in the excitement; everyone is invited to wear an "ugly Christmas sweater", your finest, comfiest and most festive pajamas or deck yourself out with as much red and green as possible!





LEADERSHIP NOTES

In attendance: Donna Sanders, Matt German, Ron Campbell, Tim Reisen, Jan Johnson, Tim Sweet. On Line: Deb Fritz.

Superintendent report: On November 11 Tim Reisen, Ron Campbell, Matt German and Mark Minger cut down the Emerald Ash trees along the road and replaced the metal and side panel back on our sign. Some lights are still out in the sanctuary but there haven't been any new ones. Radon testing is in progress. The kitchen range hood was cleaned and inspected. Schumacher Elevator called about our annual inspection; we will wait until we have an administrative assistant so someone will be here for it. The elevator has been making a noise and they will check that too. The men's canoe trailer is now stored in the garage for use if needed in the future. Carpets will be cleaned on November 28 & 29th. Finance Report: We took in \$16,380.00 for the month of October and spent \$22,866.00, we were short \$6,485.00 for the month. For the year so far we have been short \$35,982.00. Our reserve is holding steady at this point. Our insurance for next year is going up.

We started our regular meeting at 6:00pm with prayer and then we talked about our favorite holiday traditions. After that we went into the loving and learning part led by Pastor Matt, he talked about how our interruptions during the day can be God calling you to take time out to be with someone or stop what you're doing at the moment and spend the time with God. Finance: Budget task force met and they recommended that we hold off on our 2023 bonuses because of our finances. We talked about the salary increases of 6% for the staff in 2024(they have not had a raise in 2 years) we decided to trust God will provide and gave them a much-deserved raise. We also said we would look at the bonuses after we saw how much comes in the month of December.

We talked about the Church Secretary position and if we could reduce the hours. It was decided that with the help that would work. We had a member of the church who said they would take the position until we can hire someone. We all agreed to hire them as a temporary position.

A big thank you to Tim and Jackie Sweet, The Men's group and Mark and Sandy Minger for all their help and the Fall fundraiser. It was a wonderful time! Those nominated for the 2024 leadership board have been contacted and have been asked to get back to Matt. Thank you to Tim Reisen, Ron Campbell, Mark Minger, and Matt German for repairing our sign and cutting down the trees.

Our next fifth Sunday is December 31st we will again have one service at 10:00 am and then at 11:30 have a New Year's Sparkling Celebration Pot Luck plan to join us please!

Pastor Matt brought forward a proposal to purchase ear monitors for all of the praise team for \$600.00 from memorial funds. Tim Sweet motioned to accept and Tim Reisen seconded it all approved. We received a \$20,000.00 undesignated memorial gift today. Pastor Matt also proposed the purchase of 2 laser projectors for the sanctuary with memorial money and a grant that he will apply for to help with the cost, the TV's we are using are pretty small for our area. The projectors and equipment will cost \$14,433.00 but he is hoping the grant would pay for the actual projectors. Tim Reisen motioned to accept and Tim Sweet seconded all approved.

Our next meeting will be on December 19th at 5:30. We closed with prayer at 7:30.

ANNUAL GIVING

BUILDING FUND

	YTD	October		YTD	October
Offering Income	\$211,625	\$16,380	Offering Income	\$44,988	\$7,459
Operating Expenses	\$247,608	\$22,866	Mortgage Payments	\$53,720	\$5,372
Net over/(under)	(\$35,983)	(\$6,486)	Net over/(under)	(\$8,732)	\$2,087

Average monthly deficit (under) \$3,598

Remaining mortgage balance \$542,877 Building Reserve Fund - 5.23 months,



Thank you to Tim Reisen, Ron Campbell, Mark Minger and Pastor Matt for your hard work on a very cold and windy Saturday morning, doing extra yard work and fixing our sign!

We appreciate your dedication to our church.





NOW WHAT

a 4 week brainstorm for the "now what..?'s of church

At Salem we've had some adjustments over the years...

some not all of us were present for, some not all of us wished for, some not all of us thought could happen, some we inherited, some just amazing that only God could have done.

No matter where adjustments fall on the scale, there's always the transition... the "now what...?"s. And that is exactly what we're examining in this brainstorm.

There's the old Methodist phrase "but we've always done it this way" and there's the response of "but if we want to...". But what's the real answer? The real answer is the "why" behind the "what". Why are we here at Salem? Why are we inviting guests? Why are we volunteering for children's programming? Why do we have to make goals for Church Conference every year?

Jesus. He's always the answer.

Our mission is to transform the world and to grow disciples. We know that, right?

But have we committed that into our hearts and our actions? Have we made that our why?

How can we reflect our why, Jesus, in all that we do as a church

so that we may truly be the INTENDED and INTENTIONAL Church?

Join us! We have 2 more brainstorm sessions left before Christmas - but the questions, actions, and effects don't stop there! We also have a Google chat everyone is welcome to be involved in and we'll be examining the follow-up class option of the book "4D Impact" by Olu Brown that will be led by Pastor Matt and Nicole German.

Please join our conversation, we'd love to hear your voice, your passions, and your why.



Join us for Now What...? on Zoom!

a 4 week brainstorm for the "now what..?'s of church

Meeting ID: 822 0563 1698

Passcode: 024962

MISSION FOCUS CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY



Our congregation is helping "Change a Child's Story." We are accepting book and monetary donations to buy books for students in need. You're never too young for books. Reading to babies as young as six months of age leads to stronger vocabularies and better early literacy skills four years later, just as the children are getting ready to go to school. Only 53% of children ages three to five are read to daily by a family member. Children in families with incomes below the poverty line are less likely to be read to aloud everyday than are children in families with incomes at or above poverty. It all starts by giving a book as a gift to a child. A child can learn from a book read to them or by them reading a book to their family. Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus who transform the world. We can transform the world when we help a child read a book. Read a book to a child, grandchild or friend on FaceTime or Zoom or video. It makes a huge difference in their lives. Will you help us Change a Child's Story this year? Your involvement can make all the difference in a child's future. If you have books to donate, please place them at the foot of the Lord's table in the sanctuary. If giving by text, code is Books. Questions, contact Mission Team Leader Joni Salazar at jsalazar412@gmail.com.



Our Mitten Tree is in the Narthex, ready to be decorate d with hats, gloves, mittens and scarves.

Please donate these warm items for our local elementary schools. Kids are happy to receive handmade, gently used, or new items to keep them warm. Many students don't have the appropriate items for the winter weather. Let's keep as many kids warm this winter as we can!



CHRISMON TREE



The word Chrismon is a contraction of the two words—Christ and Monogram. A Christmas tree decorated with symbols from Christian history tells a story of the true spiritual meaning of Christmas. Christian monograms or Chrismons have been used throughout the ages as signs of the Christian faith. Chrismons are gold and white, representing majesty and purity. Ideas for fashioning them are developed from early Christian symbols, the Bible and church histories. The ornaments on our Chrismon tree in the sanctuary are all lovingly and beautifully handmade by the UWF.

WINTER WEATHER

With winter on its way, and the potential for snow, ice, and severe cold making travel treacherous, we offer this reminder:

If events are canceled at Salem due to safety concerns, it will be posted on our website (salemchurch.life), Facebook page (facebook.com/salemchurch.cr), as well as on local news stations (KCRG, KWWL, and KGAN).

In general, when the Cedar Rapids Public Schools and/or College Community School District cancel due to dangerous weather conditions, then Salem will also cancel activities.

Please call, text, or email the office or any of the staff before potentially putting yourselves at risk - your safety is important!



Der	Sep	Bes	~ 20	123	Dec 1 World AIDS Day	2 ● 8am UM Men's Breakfast
3 First Sunday of Advent - Purple or 9 arm Worship (Modern) 10am Fellowship Time 10:10am Children's Sunday Schor 10:10am Now What 3 more	4 • 12pm Recreation for Seniors • 6pm Soul Sisters	5 • 9:30am Prayer Room • 7pm Unrelenting Grace	6 9 9am Circuit Pastor's Meeting 10am Wednesday Morning Bible: 5:30pm Christmas Program Pract 5:30pm League 33	7 11am Options of Linn Co. 12pm Recreation for Seniors 3:45pm Salem Servants Serve at	8 • 1pm UWF Rachel Circle Meeting	9 • 11am Project Linus
10 Food Bank Sunday Second Sunday of Advent - Purple 9 am Worship (Modern) 10am Fellowship Time 10:10am Children's Sunday School	11 • 12pm Recreation for Seniors	12 11am Red Hat Ladies Christmas I 1pm Staff Meeting 7pm Unrelenting Grace	13 10am Wednesday Morning Bible: 12pm Golden Links 5:30pm Christmas Program Pract	14 • 9:30am UWF Sarah Circle Meetin • 11am Options of Linn Co. • 12pm Recreation for Seniors	15	16
17 Third Sunday of Advent - Purple or 9 am Worship (Modern) 10am Fellowship Time 10:10am Children's Christmas Pro 11am Worship (Traditional)	18 Charles Wesley's Birthday (1707) Forecaster Articles Due to the Chu 12pm Recreation for Seniors	19 • 9:30am Prayer Room • 5:30pm Leadership Board • 7pm Unrelenting Grace	20 • 10am Wednesday Morning Bible :	21 11am Options of Linn Co. 12pm Recreation for Seniors 1pm UWF Executive Board Meetin 7pm Blue Christmas Service	22	23
24 Christmas Eve - White or Gold Fourth Sunday of Advent - Purple c 10am Online Worship 5pm Christmas Eve Worship 11pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 Christmas Day - White or Gold	26 Church Office Closed	27 • 10am Wednesday Morning Bible :	28 9:30am Dignity for Girls Worksho 11am Options of Linn Co. 12pm Recreation for Seniors 3:45pm Salem Servants Serve at	29	30
31 First Sunday After Christmas Day - New Year's Eve 10am All Together Worship 11:30am Potluck						



DECEMBER 2023 FORECASTER SALEMCHURCH.LIFE

