



July 2020

Volume 32, Number 7

# Salem

United Methodist Church  
Forecaster

## Re-Entry Update

### The Church Is Getting Smaller on Purpose

The Leadership Board decided at its June meeting that we will continue online worship with no in-person worship for the time being. We will continue to pay staff members. The church office will not be open regular hours, though staff members continue to be there, as necessary. Salem isn't closed. We are open but in a different way for a while longer.

Our priority now is working diligently to bring many small groups together as quickly as possible. While we don't have to gather in-person in a larger group for worship, we do need one another and need to be together digitally or in-person for our life and growth in Jesus. The recent survey indicated many different possibilities for gathering in small groups. Our Director of Discipleship, Tim King, is overseeing the facilitation of those groups now.

We also talked about having a "Stand Around" at Salem on some evening in July, when we would gather in the parking lot and stand around to physically see one another to have some fellowship. We haven't made a final decision about this yet, and we would still need to follow mitigating practices such as wearing masks,

keeping six feet of distance between us, and keeping the gathering less than fifty people.

In the meantime, there is a smaller group of Leadership Board members who will begin figuring out details for such a time when we do offer in-person worship again and have people in the building. If you're interested, our re-entry guidance from the Annual Conference is available online at <https://www.iaumc.org/123churchreentry>.

By 1953 all Protestant missionaries had been expelled from China by the communist government. While Christians couldn't meet in the open, in large gatherings, in public buildings, they gathered in secret, in smaller groups, in their homes. And Christian growth exploded in China.

That's a helpful parable for us today. In-person worship in larger groups doesn't have to occur for us to grow as Jesus' followers and make new disciples. We have a similar opportunity to grow in our faith in smaller groups. How will you connect with a small group?

## In This Issue:

- Re-Entry Update
- In Memoriam Austin Adeyemi Smith
- Summer Worship Series — *Genesis: The Beginning of Our Story*
- Connecting with One Another
- Finance Update
- Mission Focus: UMCOR School Kits
- United Methodist Women News
- Leadership Board Report

due to the COVID-19 pandemic  
we will continue to offer  
online worship only

## In Memoriam Austin Adeyemi Smith



John Louk, Pastor

Bye  
for  
Now



We had another death in the congregation, the first from COVID-19. Because it had to be a small, private funeral, I want to share some of Austin Smith's story to celebrate his life.

Austin always had a big smile, and he dressed sharply. One of the things he enjoyed most was getting dressed up to go outside simply to go for a stroll. For me that sums up his enjoyment of life.

Austin, Elizabeth, and their family came from Sierra Leone, a country torn apart by civil war in the 1990s. Austin worked as a machinist and supervisor for a tobacco company there. Elizabeth was an accountant for the government. Everyone who worked for the government was at risk. In fact, the risk became so great that their family had to escape. They left at midnight to meet a boat that would take them away. But when they arrived, there wasn't enough room for everyone in the boat. Austin stayed behind.

He put Elizabeth and their children on the boat and told them to go ahead. He thought he'd be okay since he had nothing to do with the government. They ended up being separated for 5 years.

While Austin stayed in their house in Africa, he had friends who were killed when rebels broke into their homes and shot them. Then someone got word to him that rebels were coming to burn down their area.

Austin escaped their house and went to hide in a church. After the rebels were done burning homes, they went through the church looking for people. Austin had to escape from the church and walk 10 miles to the other side of town where the government was still in control. He stayed there while Elizabeth worked in America for their family and for Austin too. She put money together to get Austin out of the country and into a refugee program. Finally, he got asylum to the United States and was reunited with his family.

After enduring all of that, Austin felt as though he couldn't ask for anything more. He was satisfied and grateful to God that he didn't have to bury his wife or any of his children. He'd say, "If I die, don't cry. I've lived the life I was meant to live." So Austin took time to enjoy his life and his family and the good gifts from the Lord. He'd dress up and go for a stroll.

One day Elizabeth got sick from her work as a nurse. She tested positive for COVID-19, this terrible virus that has killed more than 120,000 people in our country and 450,000 people around the world. Austin was so concerned about Elizabeth. He told God that he wanted to trade places with her so she could go home and be okay. Elizabeth recovered. Austin tested positive for COVID-19.

On the Friday Austin died, he told his daughter, Austina, that he was just about done with his medical care and he would be home on Saturday or Sunday or Monday. Even so, he told her the family knows well enough to care for one another.

Austina asked Elizabeth why everyone thought Austin was so sick. He'd told her he'd be home soon. And Elizabeth said, "The only home he's going to is the one with his heavenly Father." And that's what happened, because Jesus went ahead to prepare a room for Austin in our Father's house.

Therefore, we need not be troubled. Because of what God has done in Jesus Christ, we don't have to say good-bye, perhaps just, "bye for now." That's the farewell from Sierra Leone. It means, we're going to meet again, in life or in death. We may be absent for now, but not for always.

Austin, bye for now.

Grace and peace to you,

John Louk

## Summer Worship Series — *Genesis: The Beginning of Our Story*

In July we continue in Ordinary Time. Our summer worship series focuses on scripture readings from Genesis, the first book of the Bible. “Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

Worship services continue to be offered online only. Go to [www.facebook.com/salem.cr](https://www.facebook.com/salem.cr) for our Live Video at 9:20 AM or anytime later. You can also access our worship videos at [www.salemchurch.life](https://www.salemchurch.life) or at [salemchurcr.com](https://salemchurcr.com).

Please note: If you need or prefer, just let us know and we will provide you with a DVD of online worship or a paper copy of the sermon and prayers.

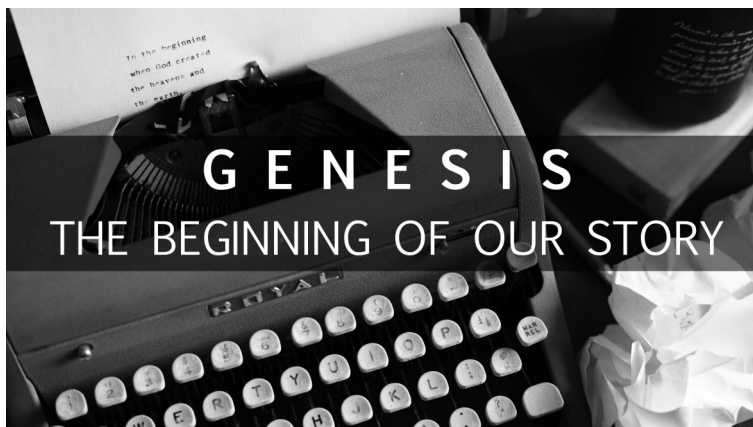
Because our bishop has given us permission, we will share in Holy Communion online the first and third Sundays as usual. You are invited wherever you are watching to gather some bread and juice, if you have it. It’s fine if you only have bread. For centuries bread alone was used. Come and worship!

- July 5    Genesis: The Beginning of Our Story  
          Genesis 24:34–67      The Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah  
          Holy Communion
- July 12   Genesis: The Beginning of Our Story  
          Genesis 25:19–34      The Birth and Youth of Esau and Jacob
- July 19   Genesis: The Beginning of Our Story  
          Genesis 28:10–19a      Jacob’s Dream at Bethel  
          Holy Communion
- July 26   Genesis: The Beginning of Our Story  
          Genesis 29:15–28      Jacob Marries Laban’s Daughters

**Come and Worship!**

***Sundays***

***9:20 AM—Online***



## July Birthdays and Anniversaries

### Birthdays:

- 1 Angela Stransky
- 3 Bud Carnahan
- 3 Orrin Ward
- 3 Nancy Rawson
- 5 Sue Person
- 5 Nate Houstman
- 6 Stephanie Meyer
- 7 Dave Clark
- 12 Diane Talbott
- 12 Warren Holst
- 12 Cooper Thomas
- 13 Scott Shaffer
- 15 Charles Martinec
- 17 Donna Borntrager
- 18 Peggy Rosenkranz
- 21 Fran Martinec
- 21 Jacob Hansen
- 22 Christine Mudanya
- 26 Marilyn Schade



### Anniversaries:

- 3 Orrin & Marilyn Ward
- 5 Jeff & Melinda Gipple
- 8 John & Carol Thompson
- 10 Gene & Sue Mihal
- 19 Dave & Deb Fritz
- 21 Mark & Sandy Minger
- 24 Gary & Roberta Sweet
- 28 Larry & Betty Vondracek

## Connecting with One Another

As we continue our physical distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have persons in the church intentionally making phone calls to connect with church members. Of course, even more people are doing that simply on their own because that's who we are as the church! If you need any help or support, you are welcome to contact the church at (319) 362-6178 or [office@saalemchurchcr.com](mailto:office@saalemchurchcr.com) or contact Pastor John directly at (319) 538-5145 or [johnlouk@saalemchurchcr.com](mailto:johnlouk@saalemchurchcr.com). Additionally, our Staff would be delighted to connect with you. Go to [www.salemchurch.life/staff](http://www.salemchurch.life/staff) and send an email to the person with whom you'd like to connect. Physical (social) distancing doesn't have to mean social loneliness.

## Would You Like Sunday's Sermon Mailed to You?

For those who don't have access to join us online for worship, Salem could mail a paper copy of Sunday's sermon and prayers weekly, or provide you with a DVD of online worship and/or the *Upper Room* devotional bi-monthly. Just call the church office (319) 362-6178 to let us know. You will likely have to leave a message but we are monitoring the phone messages and mail regularly while the church office is closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Finance Update

Salem Finance Update as of May 31, 2020	
<b>Operating Income (Annual Giving):</b>	
Offering Income	\$140,735
PPP Income	25,003
Total Operating Income	\$165,739
Budgeted Income to date	127,496
Amount Actual over/(under) Budget	38,243
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	
Expenses to date	\$114,807
Budgeted Expenses to date	128,614
Amount Actual over/(under) Budget	(13,807)
<b>Net Amount of Actual Income over Actual Expenses</b>	
	\$ 50,932
<b>Building Fund</b>	
Offering Income	\$33,325
PPP Income	2,986
2020 Mortgage payments (5 months @ \$7,192.25)	35,961
Net Amount Income over/(under) Expenses	350
<b>Building Fund Reserve amount (6 months)</b>	
	\$43,513



Thank you for your continued generosity to Salem. Offerings for the month of May for Operating Expenses totaled \$22,955. We also drew \$20,609 from the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP). This income has allowed us to build up a balance that will help support us through the upcoming months of uncertainty. With the PPP funds paying the mortgage interest in May, the building fund reserve is now at the recommended 6-month level.



## Mission Focus: UMCOR School Kits

Joni Salazar

Salem has collected school kits in July for many years. This fall we might have class in school or a virtual class. Whichever way we have school in our community, students will need assistance with school supplies. The Mission Team is requesting monetary donations at this time. If giving by Text, code is Skits. We will be sharing the supplies with our neighboring Van Buren Elementary School. The list has been changed to include the needs of the local school. If you chose to buy the supplies, please hold on to them and contact Joni Salazar at (319) 573-3943 or [kenwvol@crschools.us](mailto:kenwvol@crschools.us).



- Package of thick markers
- Package of thin markers
- Colored pencils
- Package of pencils
- 4 glue sticks
- Pink eraser
- Elmer's glue
- Blunt scissors
- 2 spiral (wide ruled only) notebooks
- Ruler
- Box 24 crayons

## United Methodist Women News



**Rachel Circle** will be having a Zoom meeting on Friday, July 10, at 1 PM. The Zoom meeting invites will be sent by email. Questions? Contact Doris Holst at (319) 396-6329 or [wdholst1@msn.com](mailto:wdholst1@msn.com).

Our Salem UMW Unit was given the opportunity to apply for a Be Bold Grant for a mission project. We submitted the application for a \$500 grant for The Days for Girls Cedar Rapids Chapter. We received the letter from the Iowa Conference United Methodist Women to congratulate us on our mission work, and a check for \$500. In the application we said that if we were to receive the grant, we would dedicate to Rev. Joan Erbe. Joan was instrumental in bringing this project to our unit.



## Report of the Leadership Board

Due to social distancing restrictions with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Salem Leadership Board met off site via Skype at 5:30 PM. Those attending the virtual meeting were Troy Bergmann, Don Kamara, Brian Schooley, Amy Schilling, Dave Clark, Dave Davis, Donna Sanders, Jeremy Hague, Billie Shaffer, Linda Curson, Pastor John, and Tim King.

**Budget & Stewardship** - Salem continues to do well during the Covid pandemic due to the gratuitous support of the parish. Year to date, Salem is \$50,000 ahead of budgeted expenses and our reserve for the building fund is back to approximately 6 months worth of mortgage payments. Due to our current finances, Salem will not be pursuing additional PPP funds and will begin work to have the PPP loan received in April to grant status. Additionally, the Board has recommended to continue to pay staff during the pandemic closure.

**Trustees** - No items to discuss at this time.

**SPRC** - No items to discuss at this time.

**Covid-19 Discussion** - The Board was joined by Tim King, Director of Discipleship, to discuss results of a recent survey sent gathering information about connecting people to small groups as well about comfort with returning to in-person worship. Hearing information from Tim, as well as looking at data and information from the Iowa Conference, county and state health data, the Board determined that we would not yet begin in-person worship but have asked Tim to begin small group work as soon as possible to allow for people to get and stay connected while we remain to not meet in a large group setting. Knowing there is a desire of some of our parishioners to meet as soon as possible, a small group of the Board will be meeting to determine how to plan a gathering, as well as develop plans for what measures will need to be in place once in-person gatherings begin. We appreciate the patients of our worshipers during these times and encourage everyone to look for those small group opportunities.

## Meeting Notes 6-16-2020

### Additional Discussion -

The Board discussed calendar events scheduled at Salem for June and July and have determined that those events will unfortunately not be able to be accommodated. Troy Bergmann gave an update from the first town hall meeting of the Iowa Annual Conference. The next meeting will be held on July 21, 2020.

Meeting Closed at 8:30 PM.





## July 2020 Forecaster

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Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404

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www.salemchurchcr.com  
www.facebook.com/salem.cr  
salemchurch.life

**RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED**

**Salem's mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.**  
**"connecting people, building community, transforming lives through Jesus"**

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## Salem's Sunday Morning Schedule (Online Worship Only)

9:20 AM                      Online Worship  
www.facebook.com/salem.cr  
www.salemchurch.life  
www.salemchurchcr.com

Church Office closed in July

