

# The SEER

DECEMBER 2021



## Services for Advent, Christmas Eve, First & Second Sundays of Christmas

### Sunday, 9:30 am

December 5- ELW, setting 5  
Steve Haseley

December 12- ELW, setting 5  
Congregational Meeting

December 19- ELW, setting 5  
3rd Sunday Food Offering  
Hanging of the Greens

December 26- Lesson & Carols  
No Adult Discussion Class

January 2- 2nd Sunday in Christmas

### Friday, 8pm

December 24- Christmas Eve

### Wednesdays, 7pm

December 1, 8 & 15  
Advent Evening Prayer

### The Child Care room

is available during all services  
for children and their parents.

## Schedule and Notes for December



### Saturday, Dec. 4

Annual **Bake/Craft/Quilt Sale** from 9-noon  
Bring a friend!

### Sunday, December 5

**Pr. Sally's 15th Year Celebration!**

### Sunday, December 12

**Congregational Meeting**  
after the service

### Sunday, December 19

### **Third Sunday Food Offering**

Food, bags, and 12 ct. egg cartons can be left in  
the baskets under the south coat rack.  
Contributions can be placed in the Offering Plate.

### **Hanging of the Greens**

Help decorate for the Christmas Eve service  
All are welcome - no experience necessary!  
Directly after the 9:30 am service.

### Friday, December 24

**Christmas Eve Service at 8pm**

### Sunday, December 26

**No Adult Sunday School Class**

There will be no December **Book Club** meeting.

**Newsletter Articles, Calendar Items  
and Volunteer lists** are needed by Wednesday,  
December 29 for the January SEER.

**December 23 - January 3, there are no set office  
hours. Please call ahead if you need assistance.**

## From the Pastor:

“Ready or not...

....here I come!” I’m guessing that you also used these words when playing Hide and Seek, after hiding your eyes and counting while everyone else scrambled to find a hiding place. (Do children still play this and yell it out – or is there a video version now for Hide and Seek?) Well these are Advent words, too. Not Advent in the ‘frantic preparations for Christmas which is coming whether we are ready or not’ way, but in the ‘God is coming in Christ Jesus whether we are ready or not’ kind of a way.

And how could we ever be ready? We fail so often to live generously and love unconditionally – or even to think about God’s purpose as we go about our daily tasks – that we are never ‘ready’ to receive our Savior. This is the somber side of Advent—Watch! Awaken! --a gentle but firm reorienting to consider and prepare our hearts for a God who comes to us. Even if we can never truly be ready, we can be ‘readier’.

But ‘Ready or not, here I come!’ is also the hope and good news of Advent as well! For it is not only the God of the end times calling us to sober reflection and expectant living but a tiny babe who comes – as babies do – whether we are ready or not, to bless our lives with purpose and joy. “Ready or not, I come, with forgiveness and grace and peace that passes understanding.”

In our baptisms Christ has long ago ‘found’ us and claimed us, after all. When we wander off into hidey holes of despair or disillusionment or depression or... (insert your hidey hole here) we hear his voice, once again, calling out to us in love – ‘Ready or not, here I come!’ Or maybe, more to the point: ‘All-y All-y In Free!’

*Pastor Sally*



## Advent Evening Prayer: Wednesdays in Advent: December 1, 8 & 15 at 7pm

A Donkey, an Ox and a Sheep Walk Into a Barn...

Yes, that is the theme for our Advent Evening Prayer messages this year. I’ve decided that it’s time to let the animals most often pictured at the manger scene speak. What is the salvation story according to a donkey, an ox and a sheep? All three have rich biblical traditions, after all! (Has the pastor lost her mind? Join us and find out!)

Advent Evening Prayer is back, in-person and live-streamed, with our beloved Holden Evening Prayer. Sadly, with Covid back on the rise we will not be having our soup supper, or choir – but a chance to ‘take a breath together’ (even if masked) during the busy holiday season will be a treasure. As usual, you can worship with us in person, on our Facebook page (Salem Lutheran Church) or later also on our YouTube Channel (Salem ELC Stillwater OK).

*Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing!*



## From Your President

As I write this I am preparing for Thanksgiving and as you read this Advent will be our focus. Such a busy time of the year and still so exciting. Dave and I will become great grandparents next spring and on Thanksgiving Day there will be a Reveal and we will find out if it's a boy or a girl. Made me think the first Reveal was to Mary as she was told she was to give birth to a son. I always celebrate the Advent/Christmas season with the knowledge of this baby that we know about and feel that any decorating or baking I do is in preparation for that special day. So as you prepare, enjoy it! Try not to get overwhelmed or so tired.



Before Christmas Day though we have exciting things to get accomplished. First, on December 4<sup>th</sup> Salem will have the Bake, Quilt and Fair Trade Sale. I know several people in our community will be so happy to see it back again. Great time to get some wonderful goodies. Make sure you have your calendar marked.

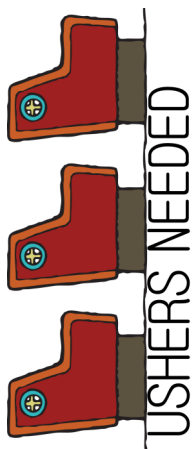
Then on December 5<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate Pastor Sally's 15 years of Ministry at Salem. We are so blessed that she has shared her love, her prayers, her caring, her time and talents with us. THANK YOU, PASTOR SALLY!! And as we all know with Covid still in our midst, we can't have the celebration for her that we would like.

On Sunday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:45 am we will have our Semi-Annual in-person congregational meeting. This is the meeting where we vote on the budget, vote on constitutional updates that will allow congregational and council meetings to be held electronically when necessary, and we will elect a female delegate to Synod Assembly.

As I am preparing for Thanksgiving I give thanks to all of you for giving generously during the past year and have enabled Salem to do the work of our ministries and support our staff. Also, thanks to all of you that have returned your pledge for the next year. Council gives serious thought to the budget and always has to wrestle with the wants/needs of Salem and the pledged money we have to work with.

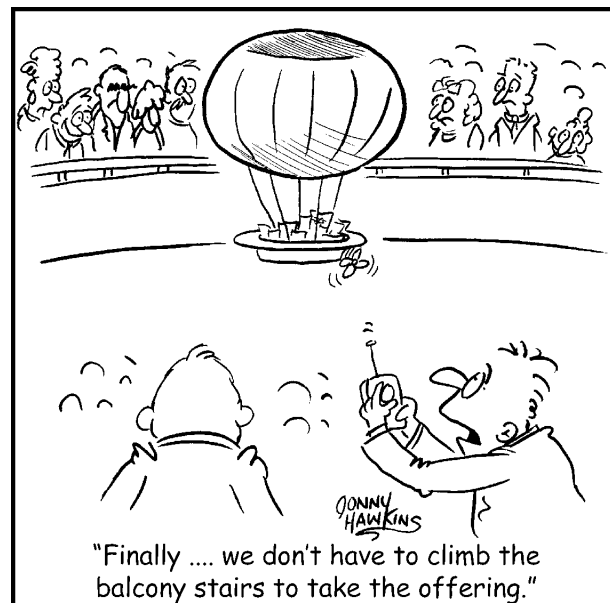
As we prepare for the birth of Jesus, enjoy the preparations, be safe and stay well.

Hugs, *Judy Lewis*



We need to expand our list of ushers for Sunday morning services. If you are willing to add your name to the list, please contact me- [rick.beier@gmail.com](mailto:rick.beier@gmail.com)

Thanks. Rick Beier

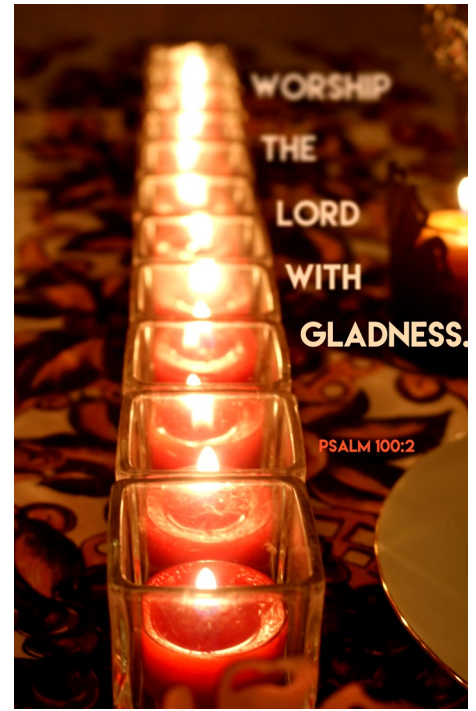




## Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion: 8pm

Unless things change dramatically pandemic-wise, we plan to have one service Christmas Eve at 8:00 pm. It is a joy to anticipate coming together in person plus having the capacity to gather online as well. Although the risks have changed a good deal from last year, gathering indoors with others for a length of time, especially with singing, is still one of the highest-risk situations for viral transmission. We will still mask and have our Parish Hall social distancing seating. The service will be live-streamed and archived on our Facebook Page and on YouTube.

Making a change and taking a chance are so hard when it comes to traditions close to the heart. Please know that those who weigh in on the decisions of when and how to worship together struggle mightily and do the best we can for the community of faith that we love. The important thing is for each of us to allow the Good News, the 'wonders of his love', to be born once again into our hearts and lives.



## ADULT DISCUSSION CLASS



During Advent, the Adult Discussion class will discuss the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts in preparation for this year's lectionary. The materials will be based on The Great Courses "Jesus and the Gospels by Professor Luke Timothy Johnson. The topics for the discussions will be:

- November 28<sup>th</sup> – "Luke-Acts – The Prophetic Gospel"
- December 5<sup>th</sup> – "Gospel of Luke – God's Prophet"
- December 12<sup>th</sup> – "Gospel of Luke – The Prophet and the People"
- December 19<sup>th</sup> – "Acts of the Apostles – The Prophet's Movement"
- December 26<sup>th</sup> – No Class

The Class will continue as a Zoom meeting at 11:00 AM on Sunday mornings following in person worship at 9:30 AM. The address for the Zoom meetings can be found in the Sunday Service E-Mail. Join us for something to think this Advent.





**Saturday,  
December 4  
9am~noon**



## LESSONS & CAROLS

December 26th, the day after Christmas, at 9:30am, come to hear The Story told in readings and song.

## Why Advent?

Waiting can be hard, and not just for children. But I do love Advent: this four-week time when the Christian church prepares for Christmas.

Maybe I like Advent so much because it involves active waiting, not thumb-twiddling. It is a gift the church offers the world, to be active (which isn't the same as busy) in ways that open our hearts — and the hearts we touch — to the true meaning of Christmas.

Mother Teresa said, “At this Christmas when Christ comes, will he find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God’s own love and concern.”

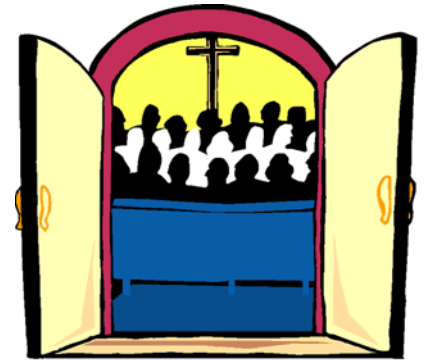
When I take time during Advent to remember in prayer and with gifts of money and time those who have less than I do, those who are lonely, those without a home; when I pause to share love with a child or an elder, or gratitude for a pastor, healthcare worker, or teacher; when I wait for justice to replace oppression but, while I wait, find ways to work for that result ... the Spirit’s warmth fills my waiting heart. I am ready to welcome Jesus.

—Heidi Mann



Come help decorate the church for our Christmas Eve service!

We need helpers of all skill levels directly after Worship on Sunday, December 19.



## Congregational MEETING

**Semi-Annual**

**Sunday, December  
12 at 10:45am**

We will vote on a budget for 2022 and hear about the needs and opportunities which we hope to address this coming year.

Your presence is important.

## MINISTRY STAFF

Pastor ~ Sally Houck  
 Director of Music ~ Krystal Hennessey  
 Choir Director ~ Elizabeth Albright  
 Office Coordinator ~ Lisa Murray-Francis  
 Parish Nurse ~ Cindy Pennie  
 Media Specialists ~ Olie Weaver, Olen Weaver  
 & Jeremy Hennessey  
 Peer Minister ~ Sydney Ulrich

## CHURCH OFFICE

**Hours:** Monday -Thursday 8-1pm,  
 Friday 8-11am

**Telephone number:** 405-372-3074  
 (leave a message)

**Email Address:** [salemelc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:salemelc@sbcglobal.net)

**Church Website:** [salemstillwaterok.org](http://salemstillwaterok.org)

## *The Sharing*



### Contribute to the Oaks Mission Christmas Gift Fund!

Due to Covid and transportation issues, we won't be taking wrapped gifts, but sending gift cards for the children at Oaks Mission. We'd like to send \$50 per child so they can shop for what they'd like most. Please memo your check "Sharing Tree" as soon as possible.



*May the Christ child dwell in  
 your hearts and home!*

From the Staff of  
 Salem Lutheran  
 Pastor Sally, Krystal, Lisa, Cindy,  
 Elizabeth, Olie, Olen, Jeremy  
 and Sydney