

The SEER

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2022



WINTER WORSHIP

Jan. 2- Second Christmas
Jan. 9- Baptism/Epiphany
Jan 16- Light of Christ
Jan. 23- Light of Christ
Jan. 30- Light of Christ

We are currently worshipping with masks, and provide socially distanced seating in the Parish Hall. The nursery is open for parent and child to use.

We have open communion. All are welcome at the Lord's table!

Our Sunday Morning Service is at 9:30am followed by Adult Discussion at 11am on Zoom

Our on-line services continue at 9:30am on Facebook at Salem Lutheran Church or anytime on YouTube Salem ELC Stillwater OK

Friday Morning Bible Study at resumes January 14 at 10am via ZOOM. Newcomers are welcome. Pre-reading not required!



Salem's staff greatly appreciates your cards, notes and generous gifts. The ministry we share with you is a treasure. We thank God for the opportunity to serve with you.

Have a blessed 2022!

Pr. Sally, Krystal, Elizabeth, Lisa, Cindy, Jeremy, Olen & Olie

Margaret Redburn, our generous card maven, is not well at the moment and will be taking a break from sending cards for the time being. Please keep her in your prayers.

Campus Ministry will be starting up mid-January. If you can help provide a Thursday evening meal, please sign up in the Parish Hall

The 2022 **Flower Calendar** has been posted. Please sign up for any special dates, you'd like to commemorate or if you just enjoy the flowers.

Lisa, in the office, would like to thank all of you for your prayers, visits and notes. She hopes to be in the office as much as possible, but feel free to call ahead if you are coming by the office later in the morning in case she's run out of steam.

If you are interested in reading the on-line articles from our Lutheran magazine, please check out their website www.livinglutheran.org- there is no password. If you would like to have the magazine read to you, scroll to the bottom and pick "Audio Issues".





The first week in January includes the last days of the Christmas season. My daughter, Deacon Mary Houck of Church of the Redeemer, Atlanta GA, is my 'guest' columnist with a devotion she wrote in December. It also offers a direction for the New Year: an invitation to create community from need.

"Joseph, Dearest Joseph mine, Help me cradle the Child divine.
God reward thee and all that's thine,
In paradise," so prays the mother Mary.

Originally, this hymn came from 16th century German 'mystery' plays (plays by traveling actors that told Biblical stories interspersed with songs). The character of Mary as portrayed in these plays sung it as a lullaby to the baby Jesus.

I have to admit, when I sing it I can't help hearing Mary's verse of the song in an exasperated or even sarcastic tone: "Joseph. *Dearest*. Will you PLEASE help me with this baby!! I'm so exhausted from giving birth in a barn that eternal rewards in paradise seem like an even trade if you will just take him off my hands for a few minutes. You *know* I can make that happen for you."

Although this version gives me a smile as I picture the scene of the holy family in a slightly different way, it also brings into focus the full meaning of the incarnation. When Amy Grant spoke at the Wild Goose Festival in the summer of 2018, she said something that stuck with me: "need creates community." She went on to give examples of how when we ask for help with anything from putting up a tent to dealing with depression to escaping poverty, it becomes an invitation to know and walk alongside each other which we would otherwise miss out on.

Our culture, on the other hand, teaches us to almost worship self-sufficiency. It is usually considered weak and shameful to be vulnerable in any way or need help of any kind. But our God knows better. God created us to be interdependent. The first human, Adam, was incomplete alone. Even God, Godself, is a trinity. In Jesus, God came to us in the most vulnerable way- as an infant who needed community just to survive his first few years as his parents hid him from the fury of Herod.

Need can bring out the best in us, and also the worst. When we give in to the idea that need is shameful it can harden our hearts, leading us to blame our neighbors for their suffering or to prolong our own suffering, using self-destructive behaviors to mask our real needs. The incarnation, the baby in the manger, is an invitation to respond to Jesus' vulnerability by walking alongside our neighbors. It's also an invitation to acknowledge our own and give others the gift of supporting us.

Mary's verse in the hymn ends on a bit of a cliffhanger, and you have to wait all the way through the chorus to find out how Joseph replies. He accepts the invitation:

"Gladly dear one, Lady mine Help I cradle this Child of thine."
"God's own light on us both shall shine,
In paradise," as prays the mother Mary.

From Your President

We're still in the Christmas Season although as I write this December, 2021 is gone and it's now 2022. So I am wishing all of you a Happy New Year and hope that you were able celebrate Christmas with family and friends safely and all travels went well.

The Covid virus continues to be the headlines and so we move forward with caution, fear and fatigue. Encouragement to be vaccinated and boosted is still the most recommended advice I hear and read about and Salem continues the policy of wearing your mask in the building. It was exciting to see so many you and your families at the Christmas Eve service, even though Dave and I watched it from our easy chairs. But with the cold weather and the Covid numbers I realize many of you may choose to also watch from home and am so thankful we have the option.

I have never been big on New Year Resolutions though I always know what changes and improvements I want/need to make in the new year. But this year I continue to wonder what resolutions would we make for Salem? Obviously, Salem doesn't need to lose weight or get more exercise, but what would make us feel more connected, more energized, more hopeful and strengthen our faith in the baby we just celebrated and the gift we were given.

What resolutions/wishes do you have for Salem? I would love to hear from all of you. My email is judyLewis@suddenlink.net or you can call or message me at 405-747-9116. You can stay anonymous even though I would like to share your responses. Thanks.

Stay well, stay safe and hugs to all of you. Judy

Salem Family:

Thank you for your kind thoughts and prayers during my sojourn with my hip. From my perspective, your kind thoughts and prayers are a demonstration of God's grace. Thank you. David Lewis



"He's today's greeter."



No matter how firm our resolutions, we can't make ourselves better people *all by ourselves*. God empowers our good works when we rely on his aid. H.P. Nichols, a 19th-century poet, wrote:

If I resolve, with the new year, a better child to be,
'Twill do no good at all, I fear, but rather harm to me,
Unless I try, with every day, no angry word to speak;
Unless, each morn, to God I pray to keep me mild and meek.
Then let me try with all my might, and may God help me too,
Always to choose the way that's right, whatever act I do.



Evangelical Lutheran Church

101 S. Duck St., Stillwater, OK 74074

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
(please leave a message)

Email Address: salemelc@sbcglobal.net

Church Website: salemstillwaterok.org

ADULT DISCUSSION CLASS

During January the Adult Discussions Class will complete its discussions of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts in preparation for this year's lectionary. Following the discussion of the Book of the Acts, of the Disciples, the class will return to its discussions of "Biblical Wisdom Literature" based on lectures from The Great Courses course with the same title by Professor Joseph Koterski.

The topics for January's discussions will be:

- January 2nd— "Acts of the Apostles – The Profit's Movement"
- January 9th— "The Poems of the Book of Proverbs"
- January 16th— "The Relation of Proverbs to Covenant"
- January 23rd— "Interlude – Some Wisdom Psalms"
- January 30th— "Job and the Suffering of the Innocent"

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 or by contacting Pr. Sally (pastorsally@sbcglobal.net).



Join us for thoughtful discussions on the Biblical foundations of our faith.