

# The SEER

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2022



## SUNDAY SERVICES 9:30AM

- Feb. 6 - 5th Epiphany, Light of Christ, setting 4
- Feb. 13 - 6th Epiphany, Light of Christ, setting 4
- Feb. 20 - 7th Epiphany, Light of Christ, setting 4
- Feb. 27- Transfiguration, Light of Christ, setting 4

The nursery is available to small children and their parents. Snacks and bottled water are available.

We recently received a letter from the City about water line work on Elm Street. Their plan is to begin the project in February. Part of the time the road may be closed, so we may need to use the Duck Street entrance to go in and out of the back parking lot. Water outages may also occur. For more information, there is a project webpage at [www.stillwater.org](http://www.stillwater.org).



Thank you so much for your help in providing food for the first group of families to arrive from Afghanistan. Priscilla Gerfen and her group were instrumental in making our new neighbors feel welcome and supported.



We appreciate your generosity.

Meredith Woodruff  
Food Coordinator for Stillwater's Afghan Project

During February the adult class will continue with discussions of "Biblical Wisdom Literature" based on lectures from The Great Courses with the same title by Professor Joseph Koterski.



The topics for February will be:

- February 6<sup>th</sup> – "Job – The First Cycle of Conversations"
- February 13<sup>th</sup> – "Job – Deepening the Conversation"
- February 20<sup>th</sup> – "Job – Second & Third Conversation Cycles"
- February 27<sup>th</sup> – "Job – The Wisdom Poem & the Conclusion"

The Class will continue as a Zoom meeting at 11:00 AM on Sunday mornings following in-person worship at 9:30 AM. To be included in the Zoom link, please contact Pr. Sally (405-372-3074 or [PastorSally@sbcglobal.net](mailto:PastorSally@sbcglobal.net))

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

# From the Pastor

Not long after I moved to Oklahoma I wondered to someone why I basically saw either winter wheat or winter wheat in the farming areas –why is there not more truck farming and crop variety I asked? Well, came the answer, there are soil issues, but even more – Oklahoma has one of the highest (if not the highest) freeze-thaw cycles in the country. You have to be a particularly hardy plant to thrive here. “The sign of spring in Oklahoma”, I was told, “is a frozen daffodil.”

I don't know how true that is, but I have certainly seen that fickle freeze-thaw ratio in action in the 31 years I've lived here, and it has certainly been in view the last few weeks. And frankly, the pandemic has taken on that same feel! We're finally on our way to a 'thaw' cycle after December and January's Omicron freeze. Barring another troublesome variant, we are moving closer and closer to that time we long for when we not only gather in the Nave for worship but in the Parish Hall for Coffee Hour. And no iced coffee allowed, just steaming hot liquid and warm conversation with friends in the faith.

We are subject to the vagaries of nature, whether it is freeze, thaw or viruses. Through it all, though, we have a God who is faithful to us without wavering. It brings to mind the words of a familiar hymn (by Thomas O. Chisholm):

*Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love  
Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

(No apologies if that hymn gets stuck in your head today!)

Pastor Sally





# ARKANSAS-OKLAHOMA SYNOD

*God's Grace In Motion*

## Bishop's 2021 Annual Report (partial)

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. –Psalm 46:1*

Dear Friends:

2021 has been another difficult and challenging year for our synod, our church, our nation and our world. COVID continues to disrupt plans, schedules and, most of all, lives. Many of our congregations have wrestled with when and how to return to in-person worship and other programming, then when to re-institute COVID protocols as first Delta and then Omicron swept across our region. Pastors, Deacons and congregations leaders I have spoken with are exhausted. Added to that is all the economic turmoil in the world around us, the ongoing plagues of racism, violence and divisiveness. It has been quite a year! Still, ministry continues as congregations reach out to those in need, find creative and adaptive ways to share the Gospel and give thanks and praise to the God who is our refuge and strength, especially in times like these.

### Transitions

In the synod office, a lot of our attention this past year has been focused on transitions. On the one hand, eight (20%) of our congregations are currently at some stage of the call process. Some have been waiting for a very long time, as the current “pool” of candidates is fairly shallow. The lack of available interim and supply pastors has only made these transitions harder. On the other hand, in July, we were excited and happy to welcome Pastor Becca Middeke-Conlin as our new Director of Evangelical Mission and Associate for Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Trinity in Clinton, OK brought it’s ministry to conclusion in July. Ascension, Del City, Redeemer, Oklahoma City, and St. Mark’s, Midwest City are nearing the end of a consolidation process. And, sadly, we lost Pastor Don Marshall, the executive director of Oaks Indian Mission, when he died unexpectedly at the end of the December so that ministry is in transition as well.

### Building Bridges

At the end of May, Building Bridges, our synod Anti-Racism team, co-hosted a digital ELCA panel on Race and the Church held in conjunction with the John Hope Franklin Symposium for Racial Reconciliation as part of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre. We also joined Prince of Peace in Tulsa for a Unity Walk, which was very meaningful and fun. The Team continues to work to provide resources for congregations doing anti-racism work in the synod and to sponsor programming to support these efforts.

### Reconciling in Christ (RIC)

At our Assembly in May, we passed a resolution calling for the synod to consider becoming a Reconciling in Christ Synod. In response, a task force was assembled and have been meeting regularly since the summer. Working with Reconciling Works, we have been participating in trainings and workshops so we might better lead our synod as we move toward becoming more open and welcoming to our LGBTQIA+ siblings and to walk with congregations as they consider joining us on this journey. Reconciling Works has helped us to understand that this is a process that people and congregations start in different places and that we need to meet people where they are and listen to one another care-fully as we move forward. There will be a report and workshop at our Synod Assembly in May. We currently have three RIC ministries in our synod: Good Shepherd, Fayetteville, Lord of Life, Edmond, and Servant’s Table in Tulsa. A few others are considering entering this process. I encourage you to join us on this journey and get involved in the conversation in the months ahead.

### Thanksgiving

Finally, I want to say a HUGE thank-you to our congregations and ministries for your support of synod ministry. It has been a rough year financially for many congregations, and yet, we have still received almost 90% of what we expected! That’s an amazing blessing! Two of our smallest congregations have already told me they intend to *increase* their support for 2022! God bless you all for your generosity! Working together as a synod, I am convinced we will continue to put God’s grace in motion in the coming year.

Please join me in praying that 2022 will be brighter and better than 2021, that COVID will finally back off, that the world becomes a more just and peaceful place, and that the Good News of Jesus’ love and grace continues to be proclaimed, shared and heard. May the God who is a very present help in times of trouble be with us all in 2022.

Peace, Bishop Michael Girlinghouse

## From Your President

January has been a hard month personally so I am looking forward to February, good health and full mobility for Dave and myself. I also want to thank all of you who have had us in your prayers, sent a card, an email or shared some very good food. We feel very blessed and are so grateful for our Salem family.

Last month I meant to thank all of you that were able to attend our Semi-Annual meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup>. We passed a Constitutional change that will allow virtual meetings when necessary, elected Pam Talley as our Female voting member at Synod Assembly and passed the 2022 Budget. As Scott Wolff, our Treasurer, explained our budget does not include the Parish Nurse or Media Staff. These positions are listed in the budget and we have money for them, but anticipated income was not enough to include them in the budget amount. Our goal for this next year is to make them permanent items. In the meantime, Scott has figured out that if every giving unit added \$25 each month to their pledge, we would meet these expenses. I know not everyone can afford another \$25 a month, but give as you are able. Thanks.

No one shared with me any New Year Resolutions/Wishes for Salem. My own wishes are for a return to worship services where masks are not needed and coffee hour is enjoyed. Another wish I have is for us to become "A Reconciling in Christ Congregation" so that everyone that comes through our doors regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, family structure know they are welcome and safe at Salem. Have you thought of your Resolution/Wishes for Salem? I'd still like to hear from you.

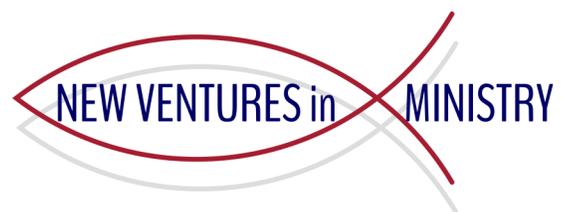
February is going to be an exciting, fun and busy month. Altar in the Garden will begin on February 13<sup>th</sup> at the OSU Botanical Garden from 10 -11:00 am. It will be a 4 week experience offered 4 times a year. A wonderful opportunity for families to spend some organized outdoor time, exploring, singing, having fun while enjoying God's creation. Spread the word, it's open to the Stillwater community. Then the following Sunday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, the Sunday Evening Service will resume with music, inspiration and fellowship. Young adults have indicated this is a better time for them to worship but all are welcome to attend. We are so fortunate for a Pastor with vision that includes many.

Be well, stay safe and stay in touch. Hugs, Judy



### **Altar in the Garden, Sunday, February 13 10am in the OSU Botanic Garden**

We are finally ready to launch our outdoor worship experience aimed for families who currently do not have a faith community and yet want a creative faith formation experience for their families. You can participate by signing up for a Sunday to simply welcome participants warmly and assist Director Amie Haar and the planning team in any way needed – no special knowledge or prep on your part. Contact Pastor Sally for more information or to sign up for a Sunday (Feb 13, 20, 27, March 6)



### **Sunday Evening Re-Launch, February 20, 5pm in our Nave**

This is a 're-launch' of the service we began two years ago, cut short by Covid. We hope it will serve the needs of young adults in particular who would like a half hour devotional worship experience at the end of the weekend/beginning of the week—but of course is open to anyone. We have acoustic music (piano, flute and guitar), gentle, lyrical hymns, scripture and thoughtful application to life, and candle-lit prayer time. Perhaps one day it might provide faith community for those who do not currently have one – who knows? We plan to see where the Spirit leads.

We are grateful to the Memorial Funds and Gifts from Andrew Monlux and Jean Shipman for providing funds for these ventures.

*Birthdays*

- 4 Ava Claire Haar
- 7 Joanna Gipson
- 8 John Houck
- 12 Joshua Haar
- 13 Bruce Ackerson
- 14 Brandon Hearp
- 17 Seth Headrick
- 20 Amanda Goeringer
- 21 Katarina Lavery

*Anniversary*

- 14 Margaret & Larry Redburn



"Er, I don't think there is a patron saint of the internet ..."



# FEBRUARY

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

# Puzzle!

Answer each statement (based on Matthew's gospel) True or False by circling the letter in the correct column. Then write each circled letter on the appropriately numbered line below to discover why Jesus died.

	TRUE	FALSE
1. Jesus healed Peter's wife <i>(Matthew 8:14).</i>	E	<b>(N)</b>
2. Jesus fed the 5,000 with two loaves and five fish <i>(14:17).</i>	R	A
3. At Jesus' Transfiguration, Peter saw Jonah and Elijah <i>(17:3).</i>	M	S
4. The rich, young ruler decided not to follow Jesus <i>(19:22).</i>	T	C
5. Jesus said the temple had become a "den of robbers" <i>(21:13).</i>	I	G
6. Famines and earthquakes are signs of the end of the age <i>(24:7).</i>	V	D
7. Jesus tells a story of the six wise and six foolish maidens <i>(25:1-13).</i>	F	A
8. Judas betrayed Jesus with a secret handshake <i>(26:48).</i>	P	L
9. The Roman governor Polonius interrogated Jesus <i>(27:11-14).</i>	W	O

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3    2    8    6    7    4    5    9    1



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church (ELCA)  
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

**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:** [saalemstillwaterok.org](http://saalemstillwaterok.org)

***A Note of Thanks.***

Thanks to all from Salem who helped and supported my Eagle Scout Project, an outdoor food pantry that will provide free goods to the local Stillwater community that are dealing with food insecurity. I hope that this project will serve as an ongoing service ministry by Salem in meeting the needs of the hungry. As Christians, we are to feed the poor and help people who are in need. Why not use our wealth to help someone that really needs it?

As Pastor Sally has mentioned, you can contribute by bringing nonperishable items and either stocking the pantry yourself or placing the items on the shelves at the Elm Street church entrance. Pop-top cans are encouraged, and item suggestions include canned fruit, veggies, meals, soups and proteins, plus peanut butter, jelly, granola bars and trail mix.



Nate Sahs

**Our Daily Bread**

Daily Bread has put out a call for paper towels, toilet paper and 64 oz shelf stable juice.

If you can help with any of these, please drop them off at their warehouse, 701 E 12th (by the City Pool). Or place the items in our Third Sunday Food Offering, (under the South coatrack).

We are still collecting the usual items- food, 12 slot egg cartons, both paper and plastic bags. Checks can be made to Salem and memo'd ODB.

Thanks for sharing!

