

The SEER

Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church February 2024



SUNDAY SERVICE
AT 9:30AM

February 4 - Light of Christ
February 11 - Light of Christ
February 18 - First Sunday in
Lent
February 25 - Lent, ELW,
setting 9

You can find our services on
Salem Facebook Page: "Salem Lutheran
Church" or Salem YouTube channel:
"Salem ELC Stillwater OK"

ASH WEDNESDAY
AT 7PM

February 14- Pr. Peter Olson

MID-WEEK SERVICE
AT 7PM
(SOUP SUPPER AT 6PM)

February 21 & 28- Priscilla
Gerfen will lead our service



Lisa will be out of the office
from March 6 - April 29.

After discussion with Lisa
and the Church Council,
we contacted Meridian
Technology Center. They
have a business technology
program that teaches

computer skills and office management. We asked the
instructor, Melody Johnston, if she had a student she would
suggest. She recommended Jocelyn Aguilar.

Last week, Pam, Lisa and I interviewed Jocelyn.
Although Jocelyn has not completed her studies, we were
impressed with her skills and personality. We offered her the
temporary administrative assistant position. During her time
here, there will be several changes to our normal procedures.
We will do our best to regularly communicate those changes,
so please stay tuned.

A couple of changes we know as of today:

Beginning March 7, Jocelyn's office hours will be Monday-
Thursday from 0730-1130.

All exterior doors will be locked at all times. If you have a
key, let yourself in and call or stop by the office so Jocelyn
knows you are in the building.

If you are a member and need a key, contact Lisa before
she leaves. Jocelyn will not be checking out keys.

If you do not have a key but need access to the church,
call and speak with Jocelyn so she is aware you are coming
and can let you into the building.

We are temporarily suspending aid to people who stop by
the church requesting assistance.

Pam and I will check in with Jocelyn daily to answer
questions and problem solve as needed .

If you happen to be at Salem, please extend a warm welcome
to Jocelyn. I will be Jocelyn's primary contact person. If you
have a question or concern, contact me via phone, text or
email so we can discuss. There will be more changes and
we'll let you know via the monthly and weekly newsletters and
in person discussion. Please feel free to contact me with your
questions or concerns.

Elaine Ackerson
405-612-4087, elaine.ackerson@gmail.com

Message from a council member:

February is the month of love. The verse that comes to my mind when I think about love is Matthew 22:37-40 – *He said to him, “You shall love the Lord our God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”*



Over the last few months, some of Salem’s loving members cared for a homeless woman who was staying on our porch. They gave her food, clothing, and shelter. They welcomed her and took care of her. This experience with just one homeless person has brought our congregation together asking what we can do to help the homeless in our community.

I was scrolling through Facebook one evening and found a post on the Stillwater Community Page from Hope for the Homeless. This post was about finding as many homeless people as they could and bring them to La Quinta Inn to shelter them from the extreme cold. They asked for donations of warm clothing and food, and the Stillwater community delivered. They were able to shelter 24 people and provide meals for several days thanks to donations from the community.

This touched my heart so much that I joined their Facebook group and reached out to the founder of Hope for the Homeless, Tessa Robnett. She told me their goal is to provide resources and support to the homeless to help them get off the streets. She went on to say that not all homeless people have mental illness or drug problems. Many of them are on the streets due to unfortunate circumstances such as being evicted after loss of income, losing their home due to fire, loss of a loved one, etc. This could happen to any one of us.

Many of us have looked at the homeless and thought, “Why don’t they get a job? Walmart and McDonalds are hiring.” It’s not that simple. Some can’t read. Some don’t have valid IDs. They don’t have an address. To get a job, they need to fill out applications, provide a valid ID, and have an address. Because of this, Hope for the Homeless will be helping them learn to read, obtain an address, and obtain an ID.

For those who do have mental illness or alcohol/drug dependency issues, Hope for the Homeless has partnered with Grand Lakes to get them the help they need. Volunteers also provide transportation to AA and other meetings.

Hope for the Homeless provides hot meals every Saturday from 2pm-4pm at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 516 W 3rd St. Clothing and food donations can be dropped off during this time. They cannot take monetary donations. For more information, or if you’d like to show your love and volunteer, please contact Tessa Robnett at (405) 747-4613 or Justin Boger at (405) 747-7320. You can also join Hope for the Homeless on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/360145103217970/>

Matthew 25:35-36,40 - *For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.*

Michelle Ratzlaff

Office News:

As many of you know, I will be out of the office March 5 thru April 26.
We have found a substitute! Yeah!

I know when I was new that everyone was really good to keep me in the loop. I hope you'll do the same for my temporary substitute. Anytime there is a meeting or a calendar change, or you are in the building, please notify her. We want her to feel safe and in the loop.



I hope you don't mind my sharing some thoughts on the homeless/poverty situation. I've been here 16 years and with Pr. Sally's guidance, I've dealt with it regularly.

Basically, you have to meet the person where they are. What the average person would think they need, is generally not what they want. Often, what they want is an immediate fix to that day's problem. They want a hotel room but what they need is an home. And you have to decide if what they want is reasonable and something that you can afford - motel rooms are expensive. In an ice storm you want to see them in a warm bed- either in the motel or at the shelter. But on a regular day, the question is should the money be saved to help fix a long-term need- help someone make their deposit on an apartment or pay a utility bill? For me the answer is almost always yes.

It can also be really easy to make someone else's problems, yours. You have to keep in mind that while you want to help them, you aren't in charge of their life. If they choose not to take your hopefully, good advice, then they don't. And if they suffer consequences because of it, that is their choice and you shouldn't feel badly about it.

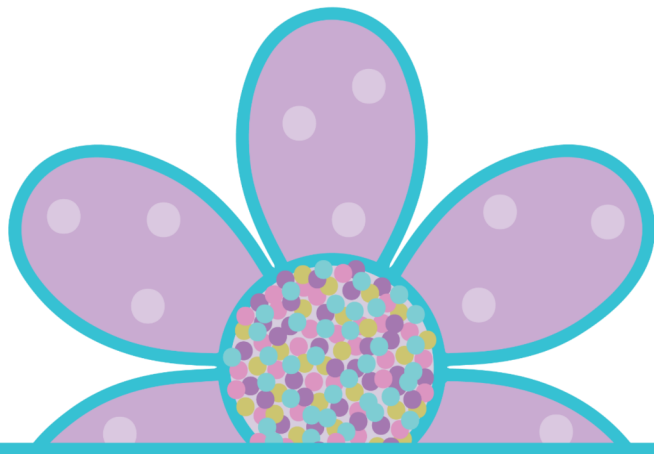
The shelter is a very good example. The Stillwater Mission of Hope is very strict about who they will help. If you have any kind of police record, drug or alcohol problem they will not take you unless it's a weather emergency. If you can get in, they are a wonderful resource. Individuals/families can stay for months, while they find a job, save money, get counseling, and find a new home. But the homeless are funny about shelters. Often they think there is a stigma in using a shelter. (Less stigma in being homeless?) And pets are not welcome. At one time the Humane Society let me set up an emergency pet drop off. The owner was supposed to come by and see the pet to play, clean the cage and feed it. The HS would keep it as long as needed (we offered to make a donation to cover shots and food), but when it came down to it the person couldn't do it. Again, their choice and their consequences.

We also have what I call frequent flyers. People who have a home, but no resources if anything goes wrong in their life. It can be hard to parse if it's a one time disaster or if they spend all their money on all the wrong things, or if they just don't think about where their money is going. (Is every light on in the house, the heat turned up to 80, do they take advantage of the food bank). It takes time to talk to them and find out where they need to go. For people who come in time and time again, I've made getting help contingent on going to Salvation Army for their Getting Ahead class. The class helps with budgeting, and looking ahead, so they don't wind up repeatedly needing help. I've never had a person come back with a help request after the class.

We do also have access to Charity Tracker. It is a computer program that allows us to confidentially post about needs that we can't help with and it also allows us to note any assistance that we give. It came about because we had people who were a little too savvy about going from church to church getting assistance. Now, when someone comes in I can see exactly what they have been given-if anything- and when. It helps that we can spread the assistance to meet more need.

To everyone who is joining our new Taskforce for the homeless, I wish you a good journey. The need out there is heartbreaking.

Lisa



February

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

- 4 Ava Claire Haar
- 7 Joanna Gipson
- 12 Joshua Haar
- 13 Bruce Ackerson
- 17 Seth Headrick
- 20 Amanda Goeringer
- 21 Katarina Lavery
- 22 Jan Bartels

Anniversaries

- 14 Margaret & Larry

Thank you from Your President, Council, Ministries and Auxiliaries

The council would like to thank everyone for making our Ministries and Auxiliaries Pot Luck a successful adventure. We had approximately 43 people attend and as usual the food was delicious. A huge thank you to all the speakers. All the presentations were informative and showed how passionate the members of our congregation are in each ministry.

We also thank everyone that has signed up to join in the ministry of their choice. If you signed up, you will be hearing from someone soon. We will leave the sign-up sheets out in case you are interested in working in one of the groups and did not get a chance to sign-up. This event has reinforced the council's belief that the Salem family has a great desire to move forward.

On another note, Pastor Kara Farrow let us know that Fellowship Lutheran in Tulsa voted overwhelmingly to become a Reconciling in Christ Congregation on Sunday, January 28, 2024. Congratulations!!

Pam Talley

Salem Lutheran Congregation,
Thank you so much for your kind words and the Mexico Joe's gift card! Both were very appreciated and the gift card was very generous to be included! Thank you for thinking of me!
Best Wishes to you all,
Claire Tipling

GRADUATION INFORMATION

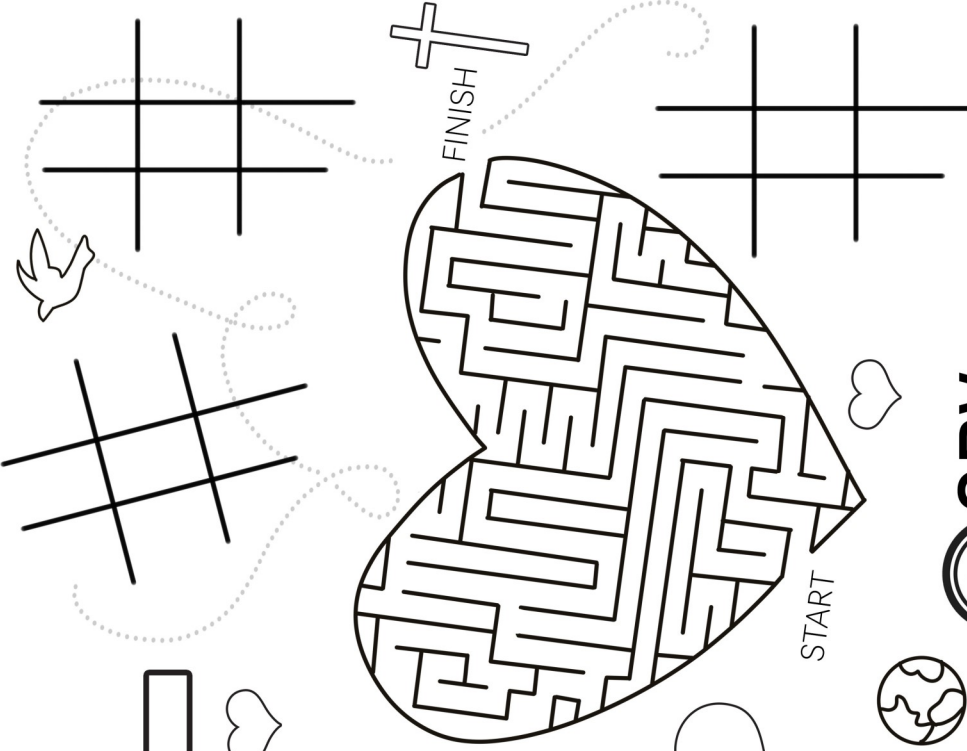
Every year we like to celebrate and congratulate all of our graduates from high school through PhD. If you, your son or daughter are a member of Salem and graduating this spring, please send us a paragraph with information on the degree and any future plans AND/OR send a picture, with full name, degree and anything else you'd like to share to salemelc@sbcglobal.net no later than April 29.

JESUS
LOVES
HOME

THINGS
I LOVE...

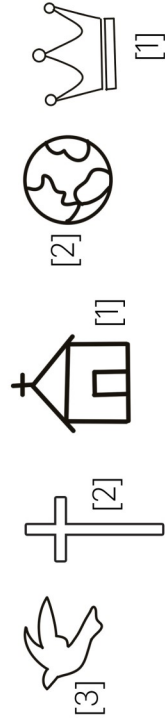
REJOICE
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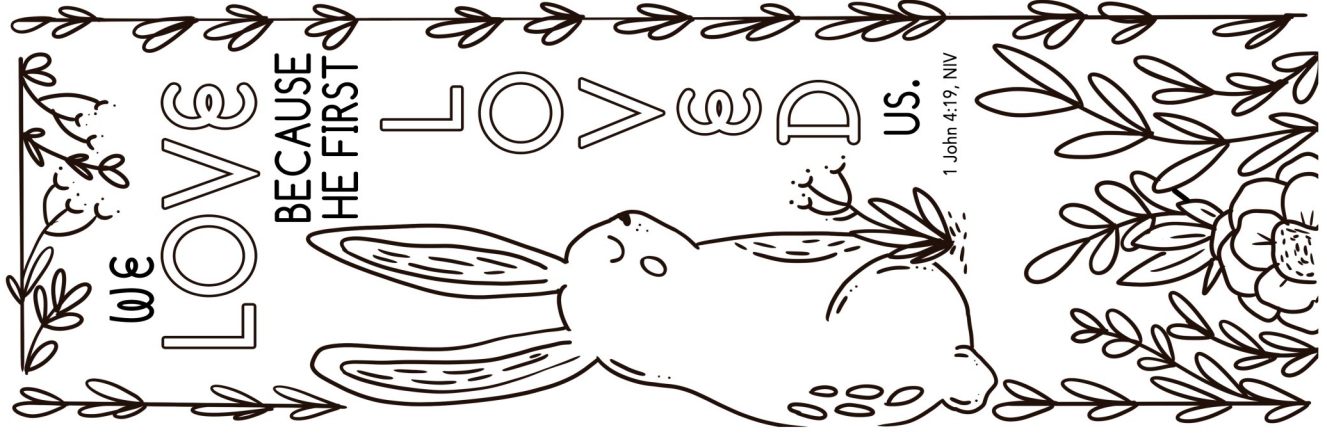
SPY...

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Evangelical Lutheran
Church (ELCA)
101 S. Duck St.
Stillwater OK 74074

MINISTRY STAFF

Director of Music ~ Krystal Hennessey
Choir Director ~ Elizabeth Albright
Office Coordinator ~ Lisa Murray-Francis
Parish Nurse ~ Cindy Pennie
Media Specialist ~ Olie Weaver

CHURCH OFFICE

Hours: Monday thru Thursday 8am-1pm
Friday 8am-11am

Telephone numbers: 405-372-3074,
372-0879 (please leave a message!)

Email Address: salemelc@sbcglobal.net



**Third Sunday
February 18**

Be a Valentine to the less fortunate!

All donations of any kind are appreciated. (Cooking oil, salt & pepper, mustard, ketchup and mayo are rarely found at ODB and are requested.) Checks, food and hygiene items go to Our Daily Bread. If you would like to contribute meat or fresh items, please take them directly there- 701 East 12th, (East side of the building facing the City pool.) For more information- 405-533-2555 or info@ourdailybreadstillwater.org

If you would instead like to donate to Our Little Pantry, please place your smaller, self serve items in the north entry. Thank you for all you do!