



NEWSLETTER | JULY 2020

# LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE

*Salem United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming Congregation*

## SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR JULY:

### **Week of July 5:**

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

Psalms 45:10-17

Romans 7:15-25a

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

### **Week of July 12:**

Genesis 25:19-34

Psalms 119:105-112

Romans 8:1-11

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

### **Week of July 19:**

Genesis 28:10-19a

Psalms 139:1-12, 23-24

Romans 8:12-25

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

### **Week of July 26:**

Genesis 29:15-28

Psalms 105:1-11, 45b

Romans 8:26-39

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

## MARK-ET PLACE

I like to recite The Apostles' Creed out loud each morning as part of my daily devotional exercises. Reciting the Creed, when I remember and take the time to do it, situates my day in the larger and over-arching story that gives my life its resources, meaning, and purpose. It tells me I am part of an enterprise that is eternal.

There is a line in The Apostles' Creed that I am not sure how to hold. I am ready to sign on the dotted line of every word and phrase in the Creed except one. I sign it, too, but my hand trembles when I do. I say this part of the Creed not because I believe it wholeheartedly and with understanding, but because it is the testimony of the historic church. The centuries have believed it and so I do not surrender it. I am referring to the line which confesses "I believe . . . he will come again to judge the living and the dead."

The phrase points to what is known as the Second Coming of Christ, a time when Christ will come in glory, ostensibly to bring an end to history. The thought has some prominence in the New Testament but no one, clear, uniform description. Some branches of Christianity major in this bit of doctrine, as you know, and attempt to calculate when the Second Coming will take place. I concur with Swiss theologian Emil Brunner who said this kind of "apocalyptic long division has nothing to do with Biblical faith." When it comes to imagining when Christ will return triumphantly I take my stand on Mark 13:32 (and par.): "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

I still hold to that, but another thought entered my mind when I recited The Apostles' Creed in my devotions several mornings ago. It occurred to me that the "will come again to judge the living and the dead" may not be restricted to the coming again in glory at the end of time, but can refer to his presence now in the midst of time. Isn't it true that Christ comes now and stands in judgment of what is happening in our midst?

I believe Christ comes now to judge the racism that is rampant in our country, both the covert systemic racism and the overt hatred that is spewed in ugly word and uglier deed. Surely Christ stands in our midst now and judges that! Racism in all its forms is contrary to his ethic of love. There is nothing in the life and work and word of Jesus to sanction it. Everything about him judges it.

I believe Christ comes now to judge the violence that is rampant in our country. Surely Christ stands in our midst to condemn it. Open the New Testament. Thumb through the Gospels. Where was he violent against anyone? Where did he lift a finger to harm any person? His gentleness even when he was treated roughly passes judgment on belligerence today.

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## NEW LOOK

If you hadn't noticed, this month's newsletter design has been changed up a bit. Most of our newsletters are now received electronically, so I wanted to take advantage of that and make it a bit more interesting visually.

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I believe Christ comes now to judge the greed that is rampant in our country. Turn over the pages of scripture. You will not find Jesus advocating anywhere that we live to amass and accumulate. He comes to us now in his call to selfless living and every such call is a judgment against selfish living.

And before I close I will admit that when Jesus comes again to judge those living today, he comes to judge me. I am not immune. I cannot escape the searchlight he uses to probe to the depth of the soul. The line from an old hymn pertains: "on all, the judgment of the cross falls steady, clear, and sure."

Christ comes now – even here, even today – to judge the living. God help us all.

MEY

## THE LAY ACADEMY AND THE DAMASCUS PROJECT JOIN FORCES!

*Register now for Faith Foundations 1 or Leadership Skills*

Starting this fall the Lay Academy is finding a new home and a new name under the umbrella of The Damascus Project. Much about Lay Academy's structure will remain the same. There will continue to be four years of learning opportunities geared toward UCCers throughout Wisconsin. However, each former Lay Academy year now has its own name: Years 1 & 2 are known as Faith Foundations; year 3 is now called Leadership Skills and year 4 is called Ministry Skills. Each year of learning will still have five six-week units evenly spaced between September and April. We will work with the same amazing instructors to offer the transformative learning opportunities Lay Academy has become known for. Participants will continue to deepen their learning through independent reading and at home activities and we will continue to meet together and with the instructors using Zoom and the new Damascus Project Network (think Facebook but with a UCC flair and no ads).

If you've never heard of the Lay Academy or have been thinking of participating for years, I hope you will consider joining Faith Foundations 1 to deepen your faith, expand your knowledge and grow in your understanding of your place in the body of Christ. Additional information and registration is available at [www.the-damascus-project.org](http://www.the-damascus-project.org).

**Contact Rev. Tisha Brown, [tbrown@wcucc.org](mailto:tbrown@wcucc.org) with questions.**



## JULY BIRTHDAYS

4: Monica Fiez  
5: Ann Nelson, Frank Westphal  
6: Paul Wieland  
7: Robert Zurbuchen  
8: Chris Wilbricht  
9: Oliver Tennyson

11: Jon Pundt, Theresa Bass  
14: Zoey Shaw  
17: Kylie Hageman  
18: Sabrina Jacobus  
26: Craig Rhiner  
27: Dale Yurs

## JUNE GUILD MEETING REPORT

The Guild officers met on June 4, 2020 to finalize some items that were discussed at our March Guild meeting. We had voted to purchase new chairs for the fellowship hall, with Mary Cutler to provide color samples and other specifications of the chairs for our next meeting. The chair we wanted has a double bar in the back, but will be discontinued the end of June, which prompted our action. We chose a blue color for the seat and back, and a gray metal frame which will match the existing chairs. With the uncertainty of our future fund raisers due to the coronavirus, we decided to order 50 chairs instead of 100 which was previously planned. We will have 114 good matching chairs with this purchase. Mary Cutler will place the order. The chairs should arrive in 3-4 weeks, at which time we'll request men at Salem to help unload the truck.

There will be a virtual VBS in July which will require materials, so we voted to give \$100 to help them with the expenses. We also agreed to give \$50 to the Flags for Food program which is due in June. Other summer expenses will not occur this year (church camps, mission trips, nursing home birthday parties, etc.).

At this time, it is uncertain when the Guild will be able to meet for a regular meeting. We will keep you posted.

Lis Pankonin, Judy Skupien,  
Mary Cutler, and Debbie Bass  
*Salem UCC Women's Guild Officers*



## HONORING OUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

We had a wonderful turnout for our car parade and outdoor program to honor this year's high school Graduates. Congratulations again to Drew Adams, Henry Butzlaff, Morgan Moll, Jared Price and Anika Quade. Thank you to Janet Dahl and Sarah Pundt for coordinating this event and all those who participated.

### **Drew Adams**

Drew was baptized at Salem as an infant and this church is a big part of who he has become as a person. His mission trip experiences stand out as influential to his worldview and spiritual growth. He has been active in the Sunday school and youths programs and has fond memories of VBS, Christmas Programs, Youth Sundays, pie auctions, and more. In his scholarship application Drew shared that Salem "is a generous, supportive church family and I am blessed to be part of it." Drew graduated from Madison Memorial High School and plans to attend UW-Whitewater this fall.

### **Henry Butzlaff**

Henry and his family have attended Salem since he was a child. He feels the support of the Salem church family and that became important to him as he was making his college decision. Deciding to attend college four hours away from home seemed daunting. However, he gained the necessary confidence realizing that his church home and family will always be there cheering him on. He also knows that God will be with him, no matter where his path leads. Henry graduated from Oregon High School and is attending Iowa State in the fall to study Agricultural Business.

### **Morgan Moll**

Morgan began attending Salem when she was 5 and has fond memories of Sunday school. She was very excited on her confirmation day to become a full adult member of the church. Morgan feels passionate about advocating for others and speaking out on issues of importance. She knows God has a plan for her and how she can use her many ideas for the benefit of others. As she pursues

her education and goal of becoming a news anchor, she hopes to be a voice for the causes she believes in. Morgan graduated from Verona Area High School and will attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to study broadcast journalism and political science.

### **Jared Price**

Jared and his family began attending Salem about 8 years ago when they moved to Verona. Serving others is an important part of Jared's life and he has grown to realize the true joy of helping others. Through his loving family, scouts, and church, he has observed and experienced the joy of giving to others and contributing to his community. Jared dedicated his Eagle Scout project to helping Salem as he rebuilt and improved our fire pit area. He hopes to make an impact and improve the lives of others by using his talents as a mechanical engineer. Jared graduated from Verona Area High School and plans to attend UW-Madison this fall to study mechanical engineering or computer science.

### **Anika Quade**

Ani was baptized at Salem and credits her family and church for a strong foundation of faith. At a young age in VBS, Ani grew to love the scripture she chose as her confirmation verse. It guides her heart toward loving and following God no matter what path her life takes, while also pointing her toward the loving care for others. Ani has grown to appreciate the lifelong process of gaining knowledge and deepening one's faith and knows that her faith foundation has prepared her for the new experiences ahead of her. Ani graduated from Verona Area High School and will pursue a pre-dental or pre-med track at UW-Madison this fall.



# LOCAL RESTAURANTS TO SUPPORT FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL MISSION PROJECT

One of the highlights of our annual intergenerational VBS is the community meal. Since we are unable to physically gather for our meal, the BoCE would like to encourage the people of Salem to patronize local restaurants. These businesses have struggled during the pandemic and we would like to be good neighbors and support them. Our goal is for everyone to support at least one restaurant per week during VBS (July 12- Aug. 9). Below are some local options to choose from but feel free to patronize your favorite establishments (please focus on locally owned businesses).

## **El Charro**

Curbside or delivery within 10 miles  
Hours 11:30am-7:30pm  
608-497-0165  
[elcharromexicangrillrestaurant.com](http://elcharromexicangrillrestaurant.com)

## **Jordandal Cookhouse**

Curbside- daily lunch and dinner special menu  
Hours 12-6:30pm Tues-Fri  
Dinner orders must be placed by 2pm  
608-352-0408  
[jordandalcookhouse.com](http://jordandalcookhouse.com)  
Check Facebook for daily updates

## **Dragon City**

Carry out  
Hours 12-8pm Monday thru Friday  
2-8pm Sat-Sun  
608-845-3398  
[dragoncitychinese.com](http://dragoncitychinese.com)

## **Sugar River Pizza**

Delivery or curbside  
Hours 11am-8pm Mon-Thur  
11am-9pm Fri- Sat  
Closed Sunday  
608-497-1800  
[sugarriverpizza.com](http://sugarriverpizza.com)

## **Avanti's Italian Restaurant**

Curbside  
Hours 4-8pm Wed-Sat  
608-848-3315  
[avantisverona.com](http://avantisverona.com)

# LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE THROUGH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sarah Pundt, Director of Christian Education

608-692-3239 or [spundt@salemchurchverona.org](mailto:spundt@salemchurchverona.org) *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. - Matthew 7:7(NIV)*

The adult Sunday school class recently discussed this text as we were focusing on the topic of prayer. Prayer is a conversation with God, and it is important to note that a conversation requires two parties to engage. This text reminds us that it is our job to show up for our half of the conversation. I encourage each of you to find new ways that you can be present with God.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL ONLINE

The current social distancing guidelines are keeping us apart, but we can still be together online. Please join our online gatherings to enjoy fellowship and grow in faith. Sunday school will continue online for all ages indefinitely. Please note that although we usually break from classes in the summer, we are continuing to gather via Zoom on Sunday mornings this summer. Please contact Sarah Pundt if you would like to receive an email invitation to join one of our Zoom groups. Technical help is available as needed.

## SUMMER SUNDAYS

### PreK-Grade 5

Sundays @ 9am

Every Sunday morning, we gather with prayer, music time, and a Bible story.

### Middle/High School

Happy Summer until September!

This group has decided to follow our "normal" schedule take a summer break. Janet Dahl is still offering Friday Night Fun gatherings for middle school and high school youth. Please see the youth news for full details.

### Adults

Sunday @ 10:15am

Join Sarah Pundt via Zoom for our Sunday morning adult class. All are welcome.

## SMALL GROUPS

### Parent's Promise

Parent's Promise is a discussion & support group for parents of tweens, teens, and young adults. We explore topics pertinent to the ambiguities of parenting this age group and provide a faith-based, caring environment of support. We have recently reconvened this group by meeting virtually but have not yet set a July meeting date. Please contact Sarah Pundt if you are interested in participating.

### Koinonia

Our women's fellowship group will meet online on July 16 @ 7pm. All women are welcome. Please contact Sarah Pundt to receive an email invitation to the gathering.

# Vacation Bible School

## *Great Big Beautiful World*

Sunday Mornings July 12-August 9

VBS will look a little different this year but we still have exciting plans in the works! Every Sunday from July 12-August 9, we will enjoy some traditional VBS activities online and then families and congregation members will have activities to complete throughout the week. In A Great Big Beautiful World we will explore the beauty and wonder of creation together, learn to notice the ways that we impact the natural world through our choices and actions, and join in caring for all of creation.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:** VBS begins with the creation story in Genesis 2 and includes Psalms, stories of Jesus, and the vision of a new heaven and new earth in Revelation. This comprehensive look at the biblical story reveals God's deep love for all of creation, including each of us. A Great Big Beautiful World invites us to see the ways God cares for the earth and challenges us to be part of caring for and preserving the created world.

**DATES:** July 12-Aug. 9

**ONLINE FORMAT** Children: Sundays @9am  
*Music, Bible Story, Worship & Drama, Activities*  
  
Adults: Sundays @10:15am  
*Bible Study using the VBS curriculum*

**AT HOME** Children: *Every child will receive a VBS Kit including Art/Science Supplies & instructions, Creation Connection Workbook, Creation Care Challenge Cards, T-shirt, & music CD.*  
  
Adults: *Each week will feature a different Creation Care challenge.*

**ACTIVITIES AT CHURCH** Multiple activities will be available on our church campus for families and individuals to enjoy on their own throughout the week: outdoor scavenger hunt, Psalm hike, labyrinth activities, Flat Jesus, parking spot decorating, VBS finale with outdoor movie and pizza night (all socially distanced, of course!).  
(All Ages)

**MISSION PROJECT** Support Local Restaurants (in lieu of our traditional community meal)  
Weekly Creation Care Challenges

**\*\*Please contact Sarah Pundt to receive your Zoom link, VBS kit, Creation Care Challenges, and restaurant information.\*\***  
spundt@salemchurchverona.org

# SALEM YOUTH NEWSLETTER

July 2020

*Wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!*

*And I am not saying this because I feel neglected, for I have learned to be satisfied with what I have. I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.*

–Philippians 4:11-13 (Good News Translation)

The end of a school year always used to leave me with a lot of mixed feelings. I worked hard in school. I put a lot of pressure on myself to succeed in school. I often felt tired and burned out. The start of summer meant more time for playing and relaxing with friends. It meant relief from nine months of stress. Yet sometimes the joy of vacation didn't quite live up to my anticipation of it.

I didn't have a name for that feeling back then, but I do now: discontent.

The feeling is familiar to everyone. Sometimes we add up the positive things on one side of the ledger and the negative things on the other, and no matter what the sum is, it fails to satisfy us. That's discontent.

Discontent sounds like a bad thing, doesn't it? It sounds like disappointment, disenchantment, dissatisfaction, and discouragement. Merriam-Webster's dictionary says that the prefix dis- means "to deprive of". Discontent is being deprived of our contentment. Whatever our expectations may be, when life fails to meet them, we are left with bitter feelings inside.

What deprives you of contentment? Is it something that you wanted, but it failed to satisfy your heart: a purchase, an accomplishment, or a relationship? Or is it something you didn't want: a problem, a failure, a betrayal by someone you trusted? Whatever causes your discontent, you're not in it alone. God wants to lift you up and out of that pit, into a radical freedom like the one Paul describes above in his letter to the Christian church in the Greek city of Philippi. In his letter, Paul shares with the Philippians how grateful he is that they helped him to deal with hardships like being thrown into prison for preaching the gospel. In the middle of expressing his thanks, Paul makes a remarkable statement that he has learned to be content in all situations. In other words, it would have been nice to have all of his needs met, but he was equally content to be in prison. How he felt was not a result of his circumstances but of his trust in God.

That is post-graduate-level faith, and I'm nowhere near that level yet. I can only see it on the horizon, when I read about people like Paul. He learned to be content in the school of hard knocks. Nobody wants to go through what he endured. But in the tough times that come to each of us, we can learn his secret, that God's grace for us is far greater than our discontent.

Praying that all of us may find our satisfaction in the living God,  
Cathy Kwilinski, on behalf of the Salem Youth Ministry Team:  
Janet Dahl, Cara & Nathan Bahr, and Sarah Pundt

*The world and everything in it that people desire is passing away; but those who do the will of God live forever.*  
–1 John 2:17

## Social Justice Corner

...and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

--John 8:32

Is anyone else out there feeling “stuck” like I am right now?

Black America has been trying to talk to White America for a long time. I’m part of White America, so no matter how much I try to listen to what life is like for people who aren’t white, it’s still way too easy for me to ignore, or shut down, or be silent, or feel defensive.

Most months when it’s time to write the Social Justice Corner, it’s not too hard to find a concrete action that a person could do to move things in a direction toward justice, even if it’s only an inch at a time.

But then along comes Spring 2020 to remind us that racial discrimination is still—after all these years of our nation’s history—an open wound that time has not healed. We are reminded that it’s not enough to condemn a single event like the killing of George Floyd. It’s not enough to want equality and justice, or to wish that things were better. If those things are not enough, then what is enough?

I don’t know. But here are some of the things I believe. All people are children of God and share a common light of holiness within them. God, who is vast beyond all human understanding, cannot be grasped by only one group or one culture. We need to cherish each other so that we can begin to cherish the variety and greatness of our God. We need to defend each other whenever anyone or anything threatens the dignity of another person. I don’t know all the times I have failed to stand up for other people in the face of ugly comments, jokes, or stereotypes. I’m sure there have been many.

Let’s try to help each other to get unstuck. There is no shortcut to understanding the truth. Let’s listen, read, discuss, and open our minds to what other people have to say. When someone tells us that they have suffered from racism in our society, before we do anything else, let us lay down our arguments and just listen. Let’s weigh what we see and hear on the scale of what Jesus has taught us about justice.

Someone at work recently shared with me a list of ways to be a part of the solution to racism. It was a great list, but there were about 75 different items on it. It was overwhelming, and I didn’t even agree with all of the things. So I am not in a position to weigh anyone else down with a list of actions that I think are the right ones. Instead, what if we each decide on one thing at a time that we can do to make a positive difference? For myself, first I want to do some reading. I love teen and young-adult literature, and I’m going to start there. A few fiction titles I’ve found that are relevant to racial justice are:

*Genesis Begins Again*, by Alicia D. Williams

*A Good Kind of Trouble*, by Lisa Moore Ramee

*Ghost Boys*, by Jewell Parker Rhodes

If you’re interested in reading these—or other books about race in America—and would like to discuss them with other youth and adult leaders at Salem, let one of us on the Youth Ministry Team know. Whatever we choose to do for justice, may God bless our efforts and multiply them for the good of God’s people.



# JULY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> 9AM - Pre-K-5 Sunday School 10AM - Adult Sunday School 10AM - Worship on VHAT-98	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Wedding Eric Hauser & Maddy Farrel
<b>12</b> 9AM - Pre-K-5 VBS 10AM - Adult VBS 10AM - Worship on VHAT-98	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 6PM - Finance 7PM - Council	<b>15</b> 6PM - YMT	<b>16</b> 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98 6:30PM - Men's Fellowship 7PM - Women's Fellowship (Koinonia)	<b>17</b> 6PM-8PM - Youth Hike (with safe social distance!)	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 9AM - Pre-K-5 VBS 10AM - Adult VBS 10AM - Worship on VHAT-98	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> AUGUST NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE	<b>23</b> 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 9AM - Pre-K-5 VBS 10AM - Adult VBS 10AM - Worship on VHAT-98	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98	<b>31</b> 7PM - Youth Nite	

# JULY NEWSLETTER 2020



## Devotional Booklets Available

Our Daily Bread, These Days and The Upper Room Devotional Booklets are available in the information box located next to the outdoor labyrinth. We can also mail them upon request.

## *Great Big Beautiful World*

Virtual Vacation Bible School  
Sundays July 12-August 9  
All Ages

Look inside for more information and how to sign up

## SALEM CHURCH STAFF:

PH: 608-845-7315

[www.salemchurchverona.org](http://www.salemchurchverona.org)

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Dawn Lingard

### Choir Director:

Janet Dahl

### Bell Choir Director:

Carrie Coenen

### Church Council President:

Kathy Hauser

An Open  
and Affirming  
Congregation

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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SALEM UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
*Living Out God's Love*

