



Mark-et Place

The UCC is at Work in Central America

The plight of immigrants and the controversy over their treatment at the southern border of the United States overtake nearly every news cycle in our land.

You may feel powerless to help.

But you are doing something you may not realize. You are helping through the Global Ministries division of the United Church of Christ.

The UCC is present on the border, to be sure; it is also at work beyond the border to address some of the root causes of the problem at the border.

Many of the immigrants have come up to the U. S. through Mexico from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. These three countries are often referred to as the Northern Triangle of Central America. They are nations of deep distress, stricken by poverty, plagued with violence, and rife with corruption.

The murder rates in Honduras and El Salvador are among the highest in the world, according to an article that appeared in *The Washington Post*. The practice of extortion – demanding people pay protection money to thugs – is also rampant.

Law enforcement in the Northern Triangle is often complicit in the crimes committed there. Where it is not complicit, it is largely ineffective.

No wonder people are desperate to leave. The lack of a culture of peace and safety threatens men, women, and children. So they flee their country and hope to find asylum in our land of the free and the brave.

Our United Church of Christ's Global Ministries is present in the Northern Triangle to help nurture conditions that can promote a culture of peace to develop where there is violence.

It is not our practice to start United Church of Christ congregations outside the United States. Instead, we work with partner churches in host countries and support the work they are doing and best understand.

Our partners in El Salvador, for example, include the Lutheran Church of El Salvador and the Emmanuel Baptist Church. Both of these organizations stress service and advocacy on behalf of the poor and they press for the recognition of basic human rights. They use a variety of programs, including ones particularly for youth and others particularly for women, to address violence, injustice, and the reasons for migration.

A partner in Guatemala is the Ecumenical Christian Council of Guatemala. This agency sees great promise in using ecumenism – cooperation between churches – to promote democracy, tolerance, respect for persons, and peace. This group, too, has programs for women and for youth that aim to create better living conditions.

In Honduras one of our partners is the Association of Evangelical Institutions of Honduras. One of their programs captures my interest in particular. This agency has what it calls the Teacher Sustainability Project of CEVER. CEVER is an acronym for Center for Evangelical and Reformed Vocational Education.

Those who administer the Teacher Sustainability Project have identified that one problem in Honduras is a need for vocational training. But there is a shortage of vocational teachers. Thus this program hopes to develop teachers in the trades ranging from the trades of woodworking to welding to culinary arts and to everything in between. Many students in the program walk up to 1 hour each way to attend class.

Salem United Church of Christ supports the United Church of Christ's Global Ministries through a portion of our yearly operating budget called "Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)."

So it can be said a portion of every dollar you contribute goes toward efforts to address the problems that lie at the root of the crisis at the border. You, then, are in the Northern Triangle doing something to help.

I am beginning to explore avenues along which we can provide further help, perhaps but not necessarily with the Honduran program in particular. From what I can gather, scholarships to enable students to attend the vocational education program are needed, and these can be surprisingly low.

I want to do more research on the programs for women and for youth elsewhere in the Northern Triangle.

There is much we cannot do, of course; but there is much we can do, and I want to help us find the opportunities to make a difference that are within our reach.

In the meantime, thanks be to God for UCC Global Ministries and for our common work for justice and for peace!

Pastor's Vacation

Mark will be taking the rest of his vacation July 29 through August 18. If you need to reach him during that time because of a pastoral emergency, please call or text him at 608-577-6949.

The pulpit supply pastors who will be leading worship while Mark is away are all ones you will enjoy hearing and greeting. The schedule of supply pastors is as follows:

August 4:

Mary Gafner, retired Authorized Lay Pastor in the Southwest Association

August 11:

Rev. Dr. David Moyer, retired Conference Minister for the WI Conference

August 18:

Petra Streiff, retired Authorized Lay Pastor in the Southwest Association

Please help fill the sanctuary on these dates and warmly welcome these visitors.

Men's Group

Salem's Men's Group will meet at 6:30 PM on August 22 at the home of George Adams for a time of discussion, refreshments, and a light supper. This group is open to all the men of the church.

Biking | Two Opportunities

We will meet at the Depot in New Glarus at 9:00am on August 10th. We plan on eating at the M&M in Monticello then back to the Depot.

We will meet at Terri Fiez's house at 8237 Mill Creek Drive in Madison on August 31st at 10:00am. After a ride to Verona we will have pizza/sandwiches ordered from Glass Nickle for lunch.

July Blood Drive Results

Salem hosted a Red Cross blood drive on July 13th. Twenty four units of blood were collected that day. Thank you to all who helped set up, unlocked doors, provided refreshments, greeted and checked-in donors, and donated blood.

Salem Book Group Selections

| | |
|----------|--|
| Aug. 26 | <i>Being Mortal</i> by Atul Gawande |
| Sept. 23 | <i>The Library Book</i> by Susan Orlean |
| Oct. 28 | <i>Where The Crowds Sing</i> by Delia Owens |
| Nov. 26 | <i>Girl In A Blue Dress</i> by Gaynor Arnold |

Salem book group meets at 7pm for casual conversation and lively literary discussions. If you enjoy a good book, join the fun and fellowship. Please come even if you didn't like the book as it is good to have other perspectives.

Sunday Ministers of Hospitality

Our Ministers of Hospitality for the month are as follows. Please let the Church Office know if there are changes.

WELCOMERS - Welcomers should arrive by 8:45am on Sunday mornings.

August 4th Karen & Guy Williams

August 11th

August 18th

August 25th

COMMUNION SERVERS:

2nd Sunday, August 11th

Cindy Remus, Rhonda Blake

FELLOWSHIP HOUR

Please consider hosting fellowship hour in the month of August!

LITURGISTS

August 4th

August 11th Cindy Remus

August 18th Joan Gering

August 25th Judy Skupien



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 4: Colleen Bass
- 5: Madeline Moll
- 7: Debbie Bass
- 8: Owen Luginbuhl
- 12: Karen Steele
- 13: Gladys Schmid
- 14: Blake Adams
- 15: Isaac Bahr
- 16: Katherine Shubak
- 17: Michael Fiez
- 22: Dawn Lingard
- 23: Verlis Luchsinger
- 24: Laura Kolden
- 27: Lena Woodis
- 29: Melissa Remus
- 30: Heidi Hodel
- 31: Krista Nechvatal

Living Out God's Love through Christian Education

Sarah Pundt, Director of Christian Education
608-692-3239 or spundt@saalemchurchverona.org

Be still and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:10) One morning, I sat down to plan my day by writing a “to do” list. I looked at all the things I had to do, felt completely overwhelmed, and struggled to prioritize the list. I decided to rethink my approach because I am not a human “doing”, but rather, I am a human “being”. So I made a new list for that day: a “being” list. How and who did I want to “be” that day? Which action items on my “to do” list supported who I wanted to “be”? I still had a lot to accomplish but reframing the tasks in this way made it feel more purposeful and positive. Spending time in Christian fellowship and Faith Formation activities help anchor our sense of “being” so that our “doing” is more productive and satisfying. Would you like to cultivate a stronger “being” list and get off the treadmill of “doing”? Join us for any or all of our programs and spend time with your fellow Christians as we practice prioritizing our lists in this way.

INTERGENERATIONAL SUMMER PROGRAMS

Flat Jesus: Keep the pictures coming! Contact Sarah Pundt for more information on Flat Jesus and keep sending her photos of your adventures with Flat Jesus.

- Jesus is our companion everywhere we go.
- Jesus is not just for Sunday mornings. Jesus needs to leave the confines of our church walls and go out into the community.
- Salem UCC is our home and the people here are our family. Even when we travel and go our separate ways for the summer months, we still want to stay connected with each other.

August 11 **General Synod Reflection** **10:15am**

Immediately following worship, Anna Pundt will be in the conference room to provide an overview and reflection of her experiences representing Salem UCC and the WI Conference at General Synod. Two years ago she served as a delegate in Baltimore, MD and earlier this summer she served in Milwaukee. She will explain what it is like to be a delegate at General Synod. She will also share her reflections on the Synod process, her committee work assignments, the protest marches, meeting other UCC people from around the country, and how her faith was challenged and grew through the process. Grab your coffee and some refreshments after worship and join Anna in the Conference Room.

August 18 **Salem Summer Fest** **5-8pm**

Join us for a summer celebration!

- Potluck picnic, campfire, outdoor games, and great fellowship.
- Dedication of the new labyrinth and fire pit.
- Guided labyrinth walks and resources.
- A special backpack blessing for students returning to school (students, bring your backpacks!).
- Culmination of our school supply drive and campaign.*
- This event is for all ages. Invite your friends and show them what Salem is all about!
- Weather contingency: we will still gather inside for the picnic, games, and a movie.
- To help with this event, please contact Sarah Pundt.

Christian Education Calendar of Events

July 28-Aug. 18 School Supply Drive

August

- 11** General Synod Reflection 10:15am
- 15** *Koinonia*
- 18** *Salem Summer Fest* 5-8pm

September

- 15** *Rally Day* 9am
- 19** *Koinonia*
- 22** First Day of Sunday School 9am

***School Supply Drive**

The BocE and mission committee will be sponsoring a school supply drive beginning Sunday, July 28 and concluding at the Salem Summer Festival on Sunday, August 18th. The school supplies will be donated to our neighbors in the VASD. A collection bin and shopping lists are located in the fellowship hall. Needed items include: **backpacks, headphones, composition notebooks, markers, crayons, colored pencils glue, notebooks pencils and pens.**

September 15 Rally Day 9am

Rally day is our new kickoff event for the program year. This event will include a potluck breakfast and an opportunity to learn about everything Salem has to offer. Committees and groups will be on hand to provide information on their individual programs and help you get better acquainted with the different ways to be involved at Salem. Sunday school and youth group registrations will be processed as well. This event is replacing our traditional Sunday school kickoff breakfast and is a way for the whole congregation to be involved in all aspects of our church. *Please note: we have adjusted our calendar so that our kickoff event will no long conflict with the challenges of Ironman Sunday traffic.*

If you participate in a Salem group or committee, please contact Sarah Pundt for information on how your group can participate in this church wide event. This is an opportunity to showcase the work you do and invite others to join you in that ministry.

Sunday School News

We will have Sunday school registration available at the Rally Day event. Sunday school classes for all ages begin September 22.

Sunday School Teacher Meeting: Please watch your email for a Sunday school teacher orientation and planning meeting in late August or early September.

Koinonia (Women's Fellowship)

All the women of Salem are invited to gather for a time of spiritual reflection, renewal, and fellowship. This group meets the third Thursday of each month at 7pm. Visitors welcome! Please contact Cari Bass (cari.bass.cb@gmail.com) or Sarah Pundt if you have topic ideas you would like to explore or if you would like to host the group. Cari or Sarah will lead the program if you are not comfortable doing that.

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|--------------|------------|-----------|
| August 15 | Topic: TBD | Salem UCC |
| September 19 | Topic: TBD | Salem UCC |



KEEPING FAITH

Living in a Fellowship of Promise

Our church's stewardship drive for 2020 is set to begin and we hope you will be eager to keep faith with the good work that was started among us earlier this year.

If you are wondering why we are coming to you with a stewardship drive so soon after our recent capital campaign, the answer is simple. Regular stewardship drives are necessary if a congregation is to maintain its effectiveness and grow in its influence. We fell behind shortly after our 2010 campaign largely because we quit asking, and we do not want to fall victim to the same error.

So Salem's leaders have developed "KEEPING FAITH: Living in a Fellowship of Promise" as our congregation's method for seeking pledges from our people to support the work of our church in 2020. There is no "capital" or "building loan" side to KEEPING FAITH; the emphasis now is solely upon our operating expenses for 2020.

The recently completed GLAD PRAISES! campaign provided input to the Council, who adjusted the current (2019) budget to be consistent with the amount pledged. This current campaign will be used by the council in setting our 2020 budget.

KEEPING FAITH builds on the tremendous success of the GLAD PRAISES! capital campaign conducted in early 2019, but it follows a different path toward continued success. While the previous campaign relied heavily upon individual face-to-face visits at which pledges were requested, 2020's KEEPING FAITH will draw upon small group meetings at which presentations will be made and pledge cards completed.

You are invited to attend one of the planned small group meetings. There are four to choose from, and you are free to choose whichever you prefer. All will be held at the church and will include light refreshments along with a brief presentation and a time for conversation. The five dates are as follows:

- Sunday, July 28 after worship
- Wednesday, July 31 6:30 PM
- Sunday, August 4 after worship
- Monday, August 5 6:30 PM
- Wednesday, August 14 6:30 PM

We hope these small group settings will be useful in strengthening our fellowship with one another as well as in receiving pledges for the coming year.

Please respond to Cara Bahr in the church office to indicate your preferred small group meeting. Cara can be reached at 608-845-7315 or cbahr@salemchurchverona.org.

We are looking forward to these meetings as we hope to build upon our recent success and keep faith with God and one another in taking hold of the work that awaits our church in 2020.

The Stewardship Committee



SALEM UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
Living Out God's Love

Youth Newsletter | August 2019

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

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.

--Philippians 1:21

What do you fear?

When I was a teenager, my friends and I loved horror films. Friday nights often found us in somebody's basement den with a stack of videos and a bag of Doritos. The movies that truly terrified us were those that drew us into their fictional world, then made us imagine things far worse than anything they could have shown on screen. Somehow that artificial fear made us all feel better. Maybe it was just the rush of relief as we remembered that the danger wasn't real. Nowadays I have lost my taste for horror movies. I can't even watch crime shows on TV: they are too violent and disturbing for me. If I need a rush of endorphins, I will settle for a roller coaster ride!

Unlike scary movies and roller coasters, real fear touches all of us no matter how we try to avoid it. There are fears that are familiar and easy to name, like heights, closed-in spaces, and spiders. But then there are fears that are harder to name and even harder to talk about with other people. Fear of failure. Fear of rejection. Fear of other people. Fear of death. We may not share these fears with others, but we can certainly share them with God. One of the most-repeated phrases in the Bible is the one we need to hear most often: be not afraid.

I don't think God expects us to eliminate all fear from our lives. We are human. Evolution bred fear into us over thousands of years to make us get us out of danger quickly. But Jesus came and lived among us with a life-changing mission: to bring us freedom from all the things that hold us down, like sin, death, and fear. Jesus is our role model for living without fear.

Someone who lives without fear is a dangerous person. Jesus was dangerous that way. He threatened the powerful people of his time. They could break his body, but they couldn't touch his soul. He went willingly to his death on the cross, already living in victory over sin and death. And we--with all our fears and failures--are dangerous too, because we have inherited his victory. The theologian C.S. Lewis* said that as Christians we are to be "Little Christs" in the world. However imperfectly, we are bringing heaven into the world by following in his footsteps. Both the Bible and human history are full of stories of people who followed God instead of giving into fear. To name one: Daniel was a hero to the Hebrews during their long and brutal exile in Babylon. He refused to stop praying to God, even when the Babylonian king threw him into a den of lions to be torn apart. If you want to find out what happened next... read the book of Daniel in your Bible.

We find ourselves in a very different world than that of Daniel, or of Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 7). Our culture in the United States may not be thrilled with Christians, but we are not threatened with death for praying to God or sharing the gospel. Most of us experience a lot more fear about deadlines at school or work than about praying to God.

Yet, if you think about it, making a commitment to pray each day comes down to the same act of will whether we are under the threat of being a lion's lunch or just under pressure to be busy all day long. Either way, God is asking the same thing of us: to give our lives to God whatever the consequences may be. The choice to place God ahead of all other things takes courage no matter what. But fear not. Be not afraid. Jesus, who couldn't be silenced and couldn't be tamed, is living inside you and me.

One with you in Christ,

~Youth Ministry Team~

(Janet Dahl, Cara Bahr, Nathan Bahr, Sarah Pundt, and Cathy Kwilinski)

*You may know him as the author of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, along with the rest of the series called *The Chronicles of Narnia*. If you liked those books, and you're ready to take it to the next level, try his unforgettable classic [The Screwtape Letters](#). It kind of defies description, but it's about a demon-in-training.

Upcoming Events

Youth Trip to Blue Mound State Park **Sunday, July 28 10:30 AM - 4:30 PM**

All youth (including rising 6th graders!) are welcome to join us for a fun, relaxing, and uplifting trip to nearby Blue Mound State Park. If you ever met Al Swain at Salem, he had a special love and concern for this beautiful park. He died recently, leaving his wife Astrid who also treasures Blue Mound State Park. In his memory, let's spend the day appreciating the glory of God's creation in Al's favorite place! The group will leave Salem at 10:30 AM and return by 4:30 PM. We will bring a sack lunch, have a short time of worship, and enjoy hiking, swimming, and outdoor games. If you come, remember to bring a sack lunch, water bottle, sunscreen, hat, swimsuit, towel, flip-flops, money*, and (optional) outdoor games to share.

*Swimming costs \$2 -- you won't need any more than that

Salem Summer Fest **Sunday, August 18 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

Join us for this all-ages celebration of summer! Weather permitting, we'll officially inaugurate Salem's lovely new labyrinth and fire pit. There will also be a backpack blessing for all those who will be heading back to school. Check the Christian Education news for more details!

Youth Nite **Sunday, September 15 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM (then 1st Sunday of each month)**

Discover or rediscover Youth Nite, the best way ever to start your week! We'll kick off youth events for this year with a gathering 6:30 - 8:00 PM featuring fun, fellowship, and Salem's first-ever World Drumming Ensemble! All youth and their friends (rising 6th graders and older) are welcome to come and be part of this special time. What's special about it? It's a relaxed, welcoming place to come as you are, get to know other young people, and enjoy light-hearted fun as well as deep exploration of your faith--sometimes at the same time! After September 15, Youth Nite will be held on the first Sunday evening of each month from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM.

Youth Calendar

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| July 28 | 10:30 AM - 4:30PM | Trip to Blue Mounds State Park |
| Aug 18 | 5 - 8 PM | Salem Summer Fest |
| Sept 15 | 9 AM | Rally Sunday (Sunday School kickoff event) |
| Sept 15 | 6:30 - 8 PM | Youth Nite Kickoff (Including World Drumming Ensemble!) |
| Sept 29 | | Drumming Ensemble |
| Oct 6 | 6:30 - 8 PM | Youth Nite* |

*Youth Nite will be held 6:30 - 8 PM on the first Sunday evening of every month (unless it conflicts with a holiday or other major event).

Social Justice Corner

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

--Deuteronomy 10:17-19

Remember elementary school? One of the earliest lessons you may have learned from your teachers was how to end bullying: walk over and stand next to the person being bullied. That simple, quiet act shows the victim that you are on their side. What was true in elementary school is also true for people around the world who are trying to escape from harsh, repressive, or deadly conditions in their home country. Those who flee from their homes to get protection in a different country are called asylum seekers. And they need our help.

First, it's important to understand a few terms. **Refugees** are people who escape from one country and seek protection in another country because of war, violence, or persecution. Persecution means being abused just because of who you are: for example, your race, religion, or beliefs. **Asylum seekers** are just like refugees, except that they have not yet been officially classified as refugees by a government or an international body like the United Nations. **Immigrants** are people who leave one country with a plan of settling in a different country. They might be fleeing mistreatment like asylum seekers, or they might just be seeking opportunities to support their families. **Migrants** are people who move from place to place for some purpose such as seasonal farm work.

All of these groups are people worthy of dignity and respect. As Christians, we believe that refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and migrants are dear to the heart of God. Just read the Bible verses above to see how strongly God defends them!

One thing that is special about asylum seekers is that they have specific rights guaranteed to them in both international and United States law. International law means rules that have been agreed upon by multiple countries, such as the Geneva Refugee Convention passed after World War II. The U.S. Congress adopted important parts of the Geneva Refugee Convention when they passed the Refugee Act of 1980. For example, any person who arrives in the United States or at a port of entry has a legal right to seek asylum.

The Trump administration is trying to take away some of the rights of asylum seekers. President Trump recently signed an executive order to force asylum seekers from Central America to relocate from the U.S. to Mexico. This is illegal. According to the Refugee Act, the U.S. may in certain cases relocate asylum seekers to a third country, but only if we have a formal agreement with that country. The U.S. has no such agreement with Mexico. Mr. Trump has also moved to deny asylum to people who travel through a third country as they make their way from their home to the United States. This restriction obviously targets asylum seekers from Central America, who must move through Mexico to get to the U.S.

This month's Social Justice Corner urges you to do two things:

1. Learn more (so much more!) about refugees and asylum seekers from a human rights organization like the International Rescue Committee. Check out their website at www.rescue.org.
2. Contact your Wisconsin Representative Mark Pocan and Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson. Let them know that you care about the rights of asylum seekers. You can contact them directly from their official websites (easily found using Google!)

Remember: our teachers were right! It's time for us to get up, walk over, and stand in solidarity with people who are being bullied. No matter where they come from.

AUGUST 2019

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| | 29 Mark on Vacation July 29-August 18 | 30 | 31 6:30PM - Keeping Faith Stewardship Meeting | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 9:00AM - Worship 10:15AM - Fellowship 10:15AM - Keeping Faith Stewardship Meeting | 5 6:30PM - Keeping Faith Stewardship Meeting | 6 | 7 6:30PM - Eagle Scout Court of Honor | 8 | 9 6:30PM - Eagle Scout Court of Honor | 10 9AM - Biking |
| 11 9:00AM - Worship 10:15AM - Fellowship 10:30AM - General Synod Reflection (Anna Pundt) | 12 6PM - YMT | 13 6PM - Finance 7PM - Council | 14 6:30PM - Keeping Faith Stewardship Meeting | 15 7PM - Women's Fellowship (Koinonia) | 16 | 17 2:30PM - Piano Recital |
| 18 9:00AM - Worship 10:15AM - Fellowship 5-8PM - Salem Summer Fest! | 19 Mark Returns from Vacation | 20 6:30PM - Board of Christian Education | 21 | 22 6:30PM - Men's Fellowship at Geroge Adams's SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE | 23 | 24 |
| 25 9:00AM - Worship 10:15AM - Fellowship | 26 7PM - Book Group | 27 6:30PM - Mission Committee 6:30PM - Music in Worship | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 10AM - Biking |

AUGUST NEWSLETTER 2019



SALEM Summer Fest!

Sunday, August 18, 5-8PM
Potluck dinner, labrinth and fire pit
dedication, backpack blessing

Scripture Readings for August

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|--|--|
| Wk of Aug 4: Hosea 11:1-11 Psalm 107:1-9, 43 Colossians 3:1-11 Luke 12:13-21 | Wk of Aug 18: Isaiah 5:1-7 Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19 Hebrews 11:20-12:2 Luke 12:49-56 |
| Wk of Aug 11: Isaiah 1:1, 10-20 Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23 Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 Luke 12:32-40 | Wk of Aug 25: Jeremiah 1:4-10 Psalm 71:1-6 Hebrews 12:18-29 Luke 13:10-17 |

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