



LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE

Salem United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming Congregation

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR APRIL:

April 1 (Maundy Thursday):

Exodus 12:1-14
Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

April 2 (Good Friday):

Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Psalm 22
Hebrews 10:16-25
John 18:1-19:42

April 3 (Holy Saturday):

Job 14:1-14
Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16
1 Peter 4:1-8
Matthew 27:57-66

Week of April 4:

Acts 10:34-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
John 20:1-18

Week of April 11:

Acts 4:32-35
Psalm 133
1 John 1:1-2:2
John 20:19-31

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MARK-ET PLACE

The Church in a Time of Rebuilding

Second Congregational Church in Rockford sustained severe damage from a structural fire that occurred just before Christmas in 1979.

A television station reporting on the fire showed an interview that night with Second Congregational Church's pastor emeritus, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Cleveland. I recall watching that interview and hearing Dr. Cleveland say rather confidently and matter-of-factly, "Oh, we'll rebuild! We'll rebuild!"

Second Congregational Church did rebuild. After I was ordained in 1982 and became a pastor in neighboring Belvidere, I was in Second Congregational Church's building for meetings many times. I was in the sanctuary in 1983 for the rededication of the refurbished building. I got to know Dr. Cleveland fairly well and thought often of is confident, matter-of-fact "Oh, we'll rebuild! We'll rebuild!"

That is just the attitude we need now, isn't it? We'll rebuild! We'll rebuild.

The pandemic has not destroyed our church as a devastating fire or other tragedy might have done. But it has dismantled much that needs to be replaced. Simply re-opening for in person worship is insufficient. We have to rebuild.

What is it about our church that needs to be rebuilt?

For one thing, we will need to work at rebuilding the habit of worship attendance. Attending worship is not simply a matter of habit but it is certainly one. Regular worship attendance, and the benefits that accrue from it, happen when we do not make attending a fresh decision each week. When it is a regular part of our plan and practice attending becomes second nature if not altogether easy.

We have cultivated the habit of non-attendance over the course of the pandemic. We need now something in our spiritual lives akin to the physical therapy that retrains and strengthens muscles after joint surgery. We need to get back the "muscle memory" of our souls that makes regular worship attendance not an odd thing but the very way of our lives.

For another thing, we will need to work at rebuilding participation in worship. I fear we have become rather passive at worship over the course of the pandemic. Many of us have tuned in to the online services. We have watched them. But we

continued on next page...

...Scripture Readings continued

Week of April 18:

Acts 3:12-19

Psalms 4

1 John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

Week of April 25:

Acts 4:5-12

Psalms 23

1 John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 1: Noah Nechvatal
- 2: Gary Aebly, Craig Fitzwilliams, Ellen Bass
- 3: Astrid Swain
- 4: Clifford Hageman, Pat Anderson
- 5: Matthew Reniero
- 7: Kain Hageman
- 8: Kelli Malueg
- 9: Steve Witcraft, Avery Durnen
- 12: Arlene King
- 14: JoAnn Aebly
- 16: Sarah Pundt
- 17: Kaden Nechvatal
- 18: Sue Castle, Alexandra Flood
- 24: Lis Pankonin, Brianna Runnheim, Will Bugenske
- 25: Gladys Hustad, Chris Worley
- 26: Helen Hageman
- 30: Nicolas Flood

UPDATED DIRECTORY

An electronic copy of the updated directory was sent out in mid-March. Printed copies were also mailed to those who requested. You may request one at any time by contacting the church office or sending an e-mail to Cara (cbahr@saalemchurchverona.org).

...Mark-et Place continued

have been viewers more than we have been worshipers. I suspect that the majority of us simply sat and looked on without saying out loud the words that appeared on the screen or attempting to sing the hymns.

Several factors are going to make rebuilding participation in worship difficult, especially at first. One of those factors is that there will not be any congregational singing at all in the immediately foreseeable future. Another is that we people of Swiss and German descents tend to be among what gets called in religious circles “the frozen chosen.” We are not exactly demonstrative people. About as far as we will go to show exuberant emotions in public is to laugh and to clap, but even these are done with restraint when we can help it.

But the worship of God is to be active. A church service is not something others do that we attend in order to view. It is, ideally, something we become engaged in and part of. It is to be our praise of God. So we will have to look for creative ways to rebuild participation in worship as well as attendance at worship.

The key to rebuilding attendance and participation will be rebuilding our sense of the glory of God. This is what fuels worship, supplying the energy that motivates us to attend worship and the fire that kindles passion enough to actively worship. We need to do all we can to work at remembering the goodness of the grandeur of God

Strange to say, the God who is wonderful beyond our imaginations is startlingly easy to forget. That happened already almost immediately after the Hebrew people left Egypt in the exodus. They had seen glory beyond their dreams but soon they started calling the old flesh pots back in Egypt awesome. Soon they were dancing around a golden calf they had made out of worldly treasures.

The thing that will rebuild our church is not our return to Mark Drive but our reawakening to the reality of the glory of God. If we can revel in God’s faithfulness and steadfast lovingkindness; if we can revel in the wisdom that ordained the world and put all the stars in their places; if we can revel in the love that knows the hairs of our heads, the love that welcomes us in spite of our shortcomings and mistakes, the love that knows us full well and loves us anyway – then! – then we shall be well on our way to being a church rebuilt.

And the best way to know the glory of God is to reacquaint ourselves with Jesus whom God has sent. If we can come to see what he is like; if we can come to desire his companionship along life’s way; if we can come to walk with him and talk with him as though he is a most faithful Friend; if we can commit to him in loving service – then! – then there is a chance the church shall rise like a phoenix.

Let’s rebuild in these ways and along these lines.

MEY

SIGN-UP TO ATTEND IN-PERSON WORSHIP

The following link can be used to sign up for in-person worship beginning with Easter on Sunday, April 4. You will need to sign up in advance for each service you plan to attend. If you do not have internet access or would like help signing up, please contact the church office to reserve your spot. The purpose of signing up in advance is to be sure that we can allow for safe distancing within the sanctuary.

<https://rsvp.church/r/6XQIGLk2>

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 1, 7 PM, via Zoom

Salem will hold a live Zoom service at 7 PM on Maundy Thursday, April 1. This service will include Holy Communion and the Office of Tenebrae. Worshipers are asked to have their own Communion elements available. Our ability to see one another partaking lends authenticity to an online Communion celebration. Here is the Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/99340830876?pwd=NTJqckMzeHRSYWera0J0eXVQRklmUT09>

The strange word “Maundy” is derived from the Latin word “mandatum,” which means command. We get the English word “mandate” from “mandatum.” It was on the Thursday of Holy Week in the Upper Room when, according to the Gospel of John, Jesus said to the disciples “a new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you.”

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 4

Our worship service on Easter Sunday and subsequent Sundays will take place in person and under certain restrictions.

- Worship will begin at 10:30 and last until 11:15
- Reserve a seat by using our sign-up app or phoning the church, leaving a message for Mark.
- The sign up app can be found at <https://rsvp.church/r/6XQIGLk2>
As of this writing 7 seats remain available.
- Masks and social distancing will be required.
- There will be no congregational singing, and no food or drink will be served.
- Fellowship and conversation are encouraged to take place outdoors.
- Entry can be gained through the doors beneath the canopy, and only the main level of the building will be open for use.
- We are not providing child care at this time.

ONLINE WORSHIP WILL CONTINUE TO BE OFFERED

Though we are returning to in person worship on April 4 our services will continue to be recorded for remote access through our website. This will help us to reach as many people as possible, especially persons who are as yet not in a position to worship in person. Your patience is requested, however, for these versions of our Sunday services will not be available online until sometime after Sunday morning.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Salem's men's group will meet at 6:30 P.M. on Thursday, April 8. This meeting is planned to be in person around the fire pit at church. Those who plan to attend should bring their own lawn chair.



PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

The next time you are on the church grounds you should be able to see a new swing set with slide situated at the west end of our building. This new equipment is purchased with money donated in memory of Robert Fiez at the time of our remodeling. “Mr. Bob,” as he was affectionately known by the children of the church, was a much-loved Sunday School teacher, a loyal member of the church, and a good friend to all, young and old. We are grateful to Bob's family for this gift and for the delight he will be continuing to bring the children of our congregation and neighborhood. Fittingly, the swing set and slide are located near “Mr. Bob's” Sunday School classroom.

LIVING OUT GOD'S LOVE THROUGH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES & SCHEDULE

PreK-Grade 5 & Grades 6-12

April

- 4 No regular Sunday school classes
- 11 @9am *Jesus' Ascension*
- 18 @9am *Pentecost*
- 25 @9am *Living in Community*

Adult Sunday School:

NEW TIME! Sunday @ 7pm

Our online adult Sunday school class is moving to Sunday evenings @7pm. Please contact Sarah Pundt for the link to join (current participants will automatically receive the invitation).

- April 4 Easter- No Sunday School
- April 11 @7pm *The Case for Easter* (Luke 24)
- April 18 & 25 @7pm *The Lives of Jesus*

The Lives of Jesus Sunday evenings @7pm 4/18-5/23
Who is the real Jesus? And what would Jesus think of the way we define him today? These are two of the questions we will explore during this 6-week study. Each of the four Gospels tells the story of Jesus. Using the *Living the Questions* curriculum, we will examine how each Gospel is written and the different ways they describe Jesus. All are welcome!

SMALL GROUPS ONLINE

Parent's Promise April 22 @ 7pm

This group is for parents of tweens, teens, and young adults. Join this circle of parents for online conversation and fellowship as we support each other in raising young people of faith. Newcomers and visitors are always welcome! Please contact Sarah Pundt for the Zoom link to the gathering.

Koinonia April 15 @7pm

The women of Salem will gather online for fellowship. Current participants will automatically receive a zoom link for the gathering. Newcomers and visitors are always welcome. Please contact Sarah Pundt if you would like the like to join us.

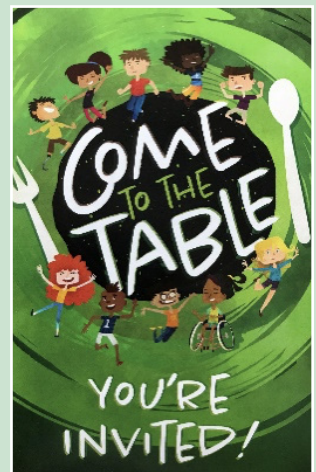
CHRISTIAN ED CALENDAR

Weekly Sunday school available online via Zoom for all ages. Current participants will automatically receive a link to join their group. If you are new and would like to join a group, please contact Sarah Pundt.

- PreK-Grade 5 @9am
- Grades 6-12 @ 9am
- Adults @7pm (new time!)

Important Sunday School Dates:

Easter Sunday, April 4
No Sunday school classes



Save the Date!
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
August 15-19, 2021

WI Conference and National UCC Resources

If you are looking for ways to engage in the work of the church beyond the community of Salem, spend some time exploring the websites for the WI Conference UCC <https://www.wcucc.org/> and National UCC <https://www.ucc.org/>. Reading materials, webinar information, and action steps are available for a wide variety of topics.

You can find information on:

Environmental Justice Ministries
Economic Justice Ministries
Racial Justice Ministries

Disabilities and Mental Health Ministries
Justice Peace and Action Network
Our Faith Our Vote
Programs and Education Resources

Gifts of Joy Journaling Group

April 6th, 7-8 pm



April's visual faith practice of *Devotion/Scripture Journaling* allows you to go beyond reading, pausing to *reflect* on what was shared in your daily devotion, *responding* by jotting down what your application or takeaway is, and then having it for *review* so you can remember. This is a very simple, but meaningful practice to add to your devotions.

In the reading, reflecting, and responding, you are receiving something from God. It may be a reminder of His faithfulness. It may be a focus on His promises. It could be a conviction or call to action. It could be a time of thanksgiving and praise. If you frame it in this way, it is a dialogue – a conversation – with God through His Word. And, isn't that prayer? (from Eden Keefe & Alli Bauck)

We will watch, interact, pause and practice with Eden and Alli as they share how to take time to pause as we read, reflect, respond, and remember. (*Video from Abide Prayer Practice Retreat*) Contact Janet for Zoom link, calendar template, or questions, (jdahl@salemchurchverona.org)

SALEM YOUTH NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2021

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

*I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its produce,
and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. (Leviticus 26:4)*

Dear Youth and Families,

The transition from the winter season into spring always reinforces my faith. I love the snow and cozy darkness of winter and I love the new promise of spring. The flower bulbs, which have remained dormant under the snow, emerge as a promise in the green buds peeking through the partially thawed dirt. They fulfill that promise as they fully bloom. Those first green buds serve as an annual reminder that God is at work in both the seen and unseen. Every season has its purpose and keeps the ecosystem operating smoothly. But as much as I like both the seasons of winter and spring, I don't always love the wet, muddy, rainy days of spring that mark the change between the two seasons. But I know it is a necessary part of the process.

Similarly, our youth program is currently experiencing a leadership transition. As the rainy days of spring tell us, transitions are not always perfect or easy. The "season" before the transition and the "season" after the transition are equally important and necessary for new growth to occur. It is in each of these seasons that the mysterious work of God is taking place whether we realize it or not. As I embark on this leadership journey with our youth, I express gratitude for the leaders who have come before me and the seeds they have planted. Similarly, I pledge to cultivate the ground and plant new bulbs for future leaders who will eventually follow me.

Although, I am just beginning my role as Interim Youth Director, I am not new to the youth program at Salem. I began volunteering with Salem's youth when my son was in 7th grade (11 years ago!). At the time, I participate because it was important to me that the program remained vital for my son and then eventually, for my daughter. Volunteering was my way of "doing my part". Through my role on the Youth Ministry Team, I began to grow and change in ways I never imagined. I realized that the youth were enriching my life in ways I didn't even know it needed improving. (Remember the bulb under the frozen earth of winter?) I also was able to watch our young people grow from tentative 6th graders into high school seniors with a strong faith foundation and ready to challenge the world. (Remember the flower that bloomed from the dormant bulb?)

Remember the verse from Leviticus 26:4 and I ask you to join me in this time of transition. I look forward to learning and growing alongside Salem's youth.

**Blessings,
Sarah Pundt**

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES AT SALEM

Grades 6-12, All Are Welcome!

Sunday School

Curriculum based Christian Education is available for grades 6-12 on Sundays @ 9am. This age-blended class has a dedicated team of 3 teachers. The small-group experience and open discussion provide an opportunity to examine the Bible more closely and discover ways to apply the teachings to daily life. During Covid-19 restrictions, this class is taught online via Zoom. Please contact Sarah Pundt for the link to join.

Confirmation

The Confirmation program is a two-year commitment for grades 8-9 and is led by our senior pastor. Please contact Rev. Dr. Mark Yurs for more information.

Youth Group

Youth grades 6-12 gather twice per month for fellowship, faith, and fun. In addition to social activities (hiking, playing games, movies, etc), this group spends time deepening their faith in the company of peers, and engage in multiple mission experiences during the year. Friends are always welcome! Please visit the youth calendar for the schedule of gatherings. During Covid-19 restrictions, this group has only recently begun to meet in person while taking the necessary precautions. If you would like to receive youth group emails, please contact Sarah Pundt.

Youth Sunday

One Sunday during the school year, the youth plan and lead the congregation in worship. From creating the bulletin to giving the message, the youth do it all! It is a tradition that is one of the highlights for Salem youth.

Service Opportunities

There are many ways for youth to engage in service activities both as participants in the life of the church and in the community beyond our church walls.

Opportunities to contribute time and talent are available for individuals and groups. Please contact Sarah Pundt if you are interested in learning more about opportunities for service at Salem.

Intergenerational Programming

Combined Christian education programming for all ages occurs periodically during the program year. Adults from the congregation also spend time with the youth sharing special hobbies and experiences. Intergenerational relationships are vitally important for the development of our young people. If you have a special interest or hobby you would like to share with our youth, please contact Sarah Pundt.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Upcoming Youth Gatherings

*These gatherings will focus on fellowship, faith, and fun
Monitor future emails for event details.*

April 11 & 25

May 16

June 6 & 20

*Gatherings will take place at Salem
1-2pm unless otherwise noted.*

APRIL 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98 7PM - Maundy Thursday Zoom	2	3
4 Easter Sunday 10:30AM - In-Person Worship 10AM - Worship on VHAT-98	5 6:30PM - YMT	6	7 6:30PM - Confirmation	8 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98 6:30PM - Men's Fellowship	9	10
11 9AM - PreK-Grade 5 Sunday School 9AM - MS/HS Sunday School 10:30-11:15AM - In-Person Worship 10AM - Worship on VHAT-98 1-2PM - Youth Gathering 7PM - Adult Sunday School	12	13 6PM - Finance 7PM - Council	14 6:30PM - Confirmation	15 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98 7PM - Women's Fellowship (Koinonia)	16	17
18 9AM - PreK-Grade 5 Sunday School 9AM - MS/HS Sunday School 10:30-11:15AM - In-Person Worship 10AM - Worship on VHAT-98 7PM - Adult Sunday School	19	20 6:30PM - BoCE	21 6:30PM - Confirmation	22 6PM - Worship on VHAT-98 7PM - Parent's Promise	23 MAY NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE	24
25 9AM - PreK-Grade 5 Sunday School 9AM - MS/HS Sunday School 10:30-11:15AM - In-Person Worship 10AM - Worship on VHAT-98 1-2PM - Youth Gathering Afternoon - Piano Recital 7PM - Adult Sunday School	26	27	28 6:30PM - Confirmation	29	30	

APRIL NEWSLETTER 2021

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 1, 7 PM, via Zoom

EASTER SUNDAY

First In-Person Worship of the Year
see details for how to sign up

Gifts of Joy Journaling Group, April 6, 7-8 PM



Devotional Booklets Available

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

SALEM CHURCH STAFF:

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Minister:

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Music Director:

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Choir Director:

Janet Dahl
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Bell Choir Director:

Carrie Coenen

Church Council President:

Kevin Booth

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Congregation

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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SALEM UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
Living Out God's Love

