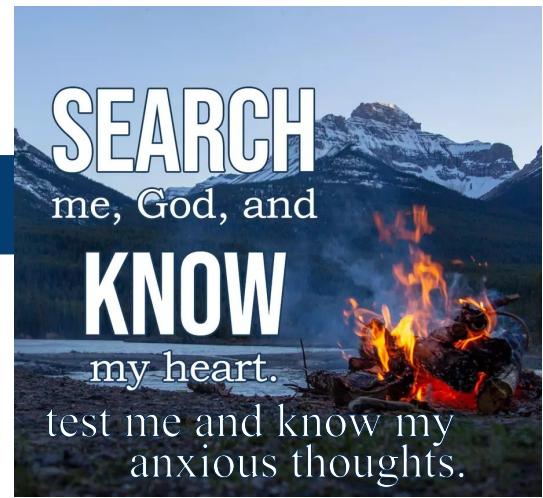


## *Thoughts from Pastor Paola...*

Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.  
See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting. -Psalm 139:23-24



As we enter 2026, considering the darkness in this world, everybody is wondering what next year holds. What will the economy do? How will our country deal with all the problems we are facing? We are all wondering what our lives, our health, and our family will be like. Many of us had a rough 2025, and our hearts are filled with anxiety and fear for the future.

Our anxieties and fears can easily get the best of us and steal our lives away.

One way to deal with that is to shun away from reality. We can try to stay away from the news, from people who cause us anxiety, and retreat into a rose-colored little world. I think sometimes it is necessary to protect ourselves from too much news or constant negativity. It is important to take time away. Nevertheless, none of this will actually remove the causes of fear from our lives.

There is another way, a better way to deal with our anxieties. It is the way we find in the Psalms. The psalmist lifts his/her anxieties to God, embraces them, names them, and recognizes the causes. In so doing, he remains firm in God's love, centered in His power, presence, and guidance. God is present in the dark places. He is present in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. When we live in the divine center within us where God abides, we can find the strength we need in dealing with our fears.

New dark things will happen and happen again, but we can always return to that divine center, to the inner light within, where God holds us. I found it helpful to pick a sentence like *Peace be still*, or *The Lord is my Shepherd* when dark comes over me. I repeat that sentence until I can go back to the divine center within me.

The invitation for you and me in this New Year, no matter what is happening in the world and our lives, is to embrace our fears, give them to God, and go back to the place where God is holding us and keep us safe.

And I know Salem will be one of your divine centers. Here, you will be surrounded by a spiritual family that will sustain you in love and carry you in prayer, reminding you we are not alone.

New Year Blessings,  
Pastor Paola



December 28<sup>th</sup> 1st Sunday after Christmas  
Carols Service

*This, This...* - *Isaiah 63:7-9, Matthew 2:1-23*



*Stand Alone - Pastor Pete - Communion*  
January 4th **Epiphany Sunday**



Led by the story of the people in the desert, we will dedicate the beginning of the New Year to discovering what we need to do to live the Good Life that God created us to have.

**January 11th Step into the Unknown**  
*Exodus 14: Crossing the Red Sea*

**January 18th Take Care, Body and Spirit**  
*Exodus 16: The Manna*

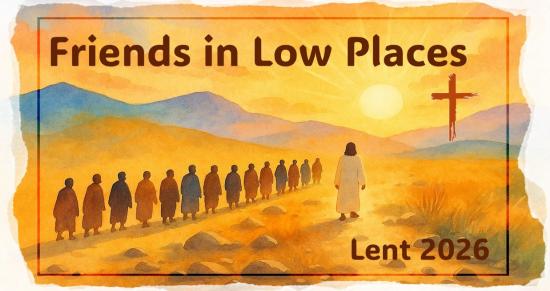
**January 25th Live With A Purpose**  
*Exodus 17:1-7: Water Out of a Rock*

**February 1st Communion**

**Surround Yourself With A Great Community**  
*Exodus 17:8-16: Moses is Supported*

**February 8th Slow Down in a Hurry Up World**  
*Exodus 35:1-3; Exodus 40: Rest and Worship*

**Stand Alone Sunday**  
Pastor Pete - Communion  
February 15th  
**Transfiguration Sunday**



*Jesus loved and welcomed outsiders.  
So why is it so hard for us to do the same?*

We are dedicating this Lent to learn from Jesus' example of how to welcome and love all our neighbors as ourselves.

**February 22nd: First Sunday of Lent**  
***Haiti Malnutrition Fundraiser***

**March 1st: Second Sunday of Lent – Communion**  
***Samaritan Woman, The Impure Stranger***  
*John 4:4-15*

**March 8th: Third Sunday of Lent**  
***Leper, The Unclean Deformed***  
*Luke 5:12-16*

**March 15th: Fourth Sunday of Lent**  
***Centurion, The Non-Believer***  
*Luke 7:1-10*

**March 22nd: Fifth Sunday of Lent**  
***The Woman of Poor Morality***  
*Luke 7:36-50*

**March 29th: Palm Sunday**  
***Zacchaeus, The Dishonest Official***  
*Luke 19:1-10*



**April 3rd at 7:00 PM: Good Friday**  
***Travel with us on***  
***The Way of the Cross***



**April 5th: Easter Sunday**  
***I Have Seen the Lord***  
*John 20:1-18*



Chapel Service  
**Next Door**

**January 21, 2026**

10:30 AM Hymn Sing  
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Come worship with our neighbors at New Perspective! Pastor Paola will lead worship in the chapel on the 3rd floor. Communion will be served.

*Future services: Feb 18th and March 18th*

# Handbell CHOIR

Does your New Year's resolutions include learning something new? Maybe you would like to learn how to play Handbells! Salem's Handbell group practices every Wednesday night at 6:30, and we play one Sunday a month. For more information contact Brenda Lindsay.



Contact Michelle at (630) 336-2317 if you are interested in joining the Salem CHOIR.

***We welcome all those who are interested!***



A big thanks to Mary Jo Martin, who led the kids service and provided a pancake breakfast for all to enjoy. Thanks to Kelsy Brookins, Katie and Larry Martin, who provided great help and support. We also appreciate everyone who donated food and their time.



## Confirmation Class

Please continue to pray for the confirmation class of 2025/26: Maura, Ava, and Josephine.

Next meeting is on Jan 11th at 10:30 am

***Why Do We Worship The Way We Do?***  
Understanding Worship



Congratulations to **Jonalee Feller** for graduating on December 14th from UW LaCrosse with a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science. She is planning on continuing her education by applying to Physician Assistant Grad programs this Summer.

Congratulations to **Mason VandeYacht** for graduating from the University of Iowa on December 20th. He double majored in Finance and Risk Management and Insurance (both Bachelor's) He will be moving to Chicago in August to work for BMO bank as a credit analyst.



**SAVE  
THE DATE...**

**Sunday, March 15th - 10:00 am Brunch  
10:30 am - 12:30 pm Program**

Join us for a special intergenerational event featuring guest speaker Mrs. Pattycake! The Bible can often feel like one giant jigsaw puzzle—but Blast Through the Bible brings all the pieces together. This engaging, hands-on experience will help both young and old see the BIG picture and understand the Bible as ONE connected story from beginning to end. Come be part of this fun, interactive learning adventure!

## Salem is Amazing!

The Outreach Ministry team would like to say **THANK YOU** to our generous members here at Salem! We want to highlight some of the projects that Salem's support has made so successful over the last year.

- **Food Pantry Support**- ongoing monetary support and volunteers
- **Hadfield School**-snack program and supplies
- **Healing Hearts**- Outreach meals and monetary support
- **Haiti** clinic support-salaries and supplies
- **Mujila Falls Agricultural Center**- financial support and salary support for our missionary, Temba
- **Hope Center**- building fund support, Outreach meals, and Undie Sunday
- **ERAS**- Holiday Giving support
- **Christmas Clearing Council** Toy/gift card collection

Thanks, Salem!



Save the date! On **Sunday, February 22nd** we will be hosting our annual fundraiser to support the St. Joseph Clinic in Haiti.

During the church service, we will learn about the ongoing work at the clinic and the programs it supports including the **Child Malnutrition program** that provides Medika Mamba to enrolled children, a fortified peanut butter substance that has been shown to restore 90% of severely malnourished infants to health.

After the service, we will be having our annual bake-off fundraiser! This year's theme is "International Desserts". Thanks to our mystery bakers who have signed up so far. [We are still looking for a few more bakers so please reach out to Amanda Rogers if you'd like to join in the fun!](#) Any treats from any countries are welcome, so consider bringing a family favorite or a new recipe you want to try!

We look forward to hopefully seeing you all on 2/22!



## Results are in!

Salem's love and generosity has provided much comfort and joy to so many in our community! A special thanks to the all who participated in our "Blessing of the Gifts," including the youth, children, and Santa!

Thanks to Salem's generous support, we were able to provide for **ERAS Holiday giving**:  
22 gift cards 15 books of stamps  
**Total monetary value of \$476!**

For the **Christmas Clearing Council's Toy Shop**, we collected:  
\$170 in gift cards, 29 books, 267 toys,  
21 hats, scarfs, and mittens

**Thank you all for making these projects a success and spreading Christmas joy this season!**





## Hadfield School Outreach

Thank you all for keeping an eye on the student snack basket and making sure it is filled. This project started about three years ago when we became aware of the school's need for snacks. Also, for the past three years we have used grant money from the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation to help supply Hadfield School with other student and classroom needs. With our last grant money for the school, we purchased 20 pairs of socks, 18 pair of waterproof gloves/mittens, 4 pair of winter boots and 36 classroom items from the wish list of the special education teachers.

We are so grateful to the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation for partnering with us in support of our neighborhood school.

***A special thanks also goes to Kermit Bohning who encouraged the start-up of the project and helped the outreach team on this journey.***

Our grant money has come to an end, but our support for Hadfield has not. Hadfield School really appreciates those snacks for hungry kids.

# 1201

SNACKS DONATED THIS SCHOOL YEAR!

Thank You SALEM!!!!!!

## COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Please check out our **Community News** bulletin board located next to the United Women in Faith board in the Narthex. It is filled with Community Events and various Outreach Opportunities including new opportunities for those in need and also information about the Lake Area Free Clinic. Please check it out!!



### **Giving All Year Long: Undie Sunday & Christmas Clearing Council**

Did you know you don't have to wait to give? **Donations for Undie Sunday and Christmas Clearing Council are welcome all year long!**

We encourage everyone to keep these ministries in mind when you're shopping. If you spot a great sale, clearance rack, or special deal, consider picking up a few extra items. Your smart shopping helps stretch our outreach dollars and helps those in our community.

#### **What to Donate:**

New underwear and socks (all sizes) for Undie Sunday, New toys, blankets, and winter clothing for Christmas Clearing Council.

#### **Why Donate Year-Round?**

You can take advantage of sales and clearance prices and allow us to store items safely until they're needed.

#### **How to Give:**

Simply bring your donated items to the church office during regular office hours. We will gladly store them until Undie Sunday and our annual Christmas Clearing Council Toy Drive.

Thank you for your generosity, thoughtfulness, and commitment to serving others throughout the year. Every item makes a difference!



**The FOOD Pantry**  
SERVING WAUKESHA COUNTY

If you wish to give toward our Special Christmas Offering for The Food Pantry. You can still do that. Please specify in the memo of your check.



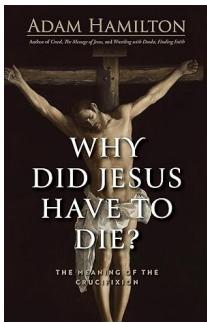
## ARE YOU ABLE TO HELP?

Join us on **Saturday, January 10th at 10:00 am**  
to help take down the Greens.  
Hope to see you there.



Thank you to everyone who brought your Nativity sets to Salem for everyone to enjoy during ADVENT. Please remember to take them home after the first of the year.

## Looking Ahead... Lenten Bible Study



Please join us during the month of March for a Lenten Bible Study. "Why Did Jesus Have to Die?" The Meaning of the Crucifixion by Adam Hamilton. Books will be available to purchase. \$24.00 per book.

## HOSPITALITY



Please consider signing up to be a greeter and/or to serve fellowship snacks during the winter months. Signing up is easy—just stop by The Happening Center and snack counter to add your name to the list.



## United Women in Faith

### *Please mark your calendars...*

There will not be an **Esther Rachel Circle** meeting in January. We will resume on Monday, February 2nd at 1:00 pm. Looking forward to seeing you there.



## Snowball Cranberries - SO YUMMY!!!!

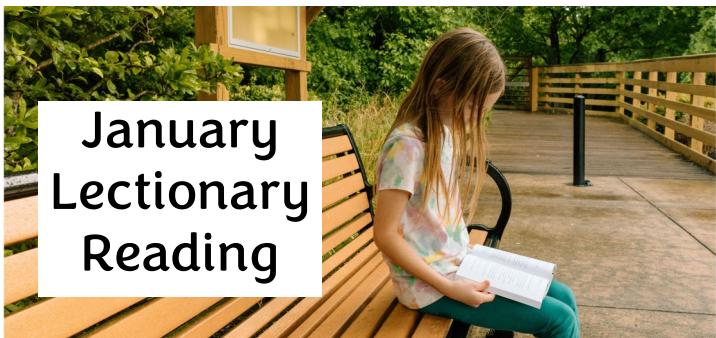
**Thanks Kristin Hintze for the recipe...**

2 cups of fresh (not frozen) cranberries

1 cup of orange juice

1 cup of Sprite/7UP or whatever lemon lime soda you like

Soak cranberries overnight, making sure they are covered. Drain well. In a large Ziploc, add 1 cup of powdered sugar and shake the cranberries until they are covered. Dump onto a baking sheet and bake at 200 degrees for five minutes.



## January Lectionary Reading

### January 4

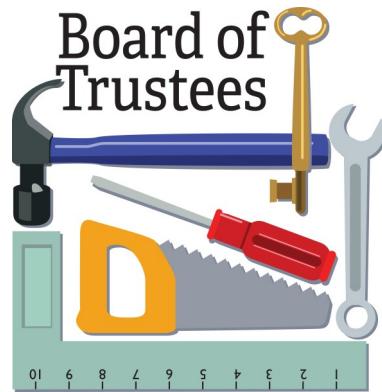
Jeremiah 31:7-14  
Psalm 147:12-20  
Ephesians 1:3-14  
John 1:1-9, 10-18

### January 11

Isaiah 42:1-9  
Psalm 29  
Acts 10:34-43  
Matthew 3:13-17

### January 18

Isaiah 49:1-7  
Psalm 40:1-11  
1 Corinthians 1:1-9  
John 1:29-42  
January 25  
Isaiah 9:1-4  
Psalm 27:1, 4-9  
1 Corinthians 1:10-18  
Matthew 4:12-23



## News and Thank You's

### *Holiday greetings from the Board of Trustees*

The exterior light above the east entrance door to the Narthex has been replaced and does a very nice job in lighting the door and entrance.

**A big thanks to Jim Seeger** for taking care of the light installation as well as diagnosing the door opener and resolving those issues.

The building heating system was again the focus this month. We had TEKO Mechanical come in for a system review. The system was not operating very well and the technician found that the filter screens were plugged. He flushed the system which cleans the screens, they were plugged with contaminant from the water source. We identified an annual service need which will be addressed going forward, **Thanks to Kermit Bohning for his assistance.**

Now to the roof leakage issue. **A big thanks to David Pauly for being the roof monitor.** Dave has addressed ice issues which were blocking the roof drains resulting in standing water and leakage into the Narthex. Dave then took it to the next level, as a preventative measure Dave has installed heat tape into the roof drains. which will help, **thank you David Pauly.**

**Thanks to Caryn Adair** for being Dave's support person making sure the leakage buckets were emptied eliminating the potential of a mess.

Respectively submitted,  
Jeff Seeboth



### SAVE THE DATE...

We will be serving NACHOS during fellowship hour after church.

A sign up sheet will be available in the Happenings Center in January.

See Sharon Seegers if you have any questions.