



SALEM LIGHT

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. —Matthew 5:14

May 2021

4/22/2021

Dear Beloved Salem Sojourners and Friends, After much prayerful consideration and trusting in the Holy Spirit's guidance, I have made the decision to resign as Pastor of Salem. For a long while, I have sensed God leading me to a different opportunity to continue growing and serving Christ in an organization with a focus in social justice, equality, diversity and inclusion.

The decision to resign from Salem was difficult, especially during the pandemic disruption. Over the last four-and-a-half years, it has been my humble privilege to be in ministry with you. From Sunday morning worship and fellowship to Spaghetti Suppers and Thanksgiving Meals (and pie!) to journeying with you in Confirmation and at times of illness and death, together we have listened to God's Word and done our best to live together as God's

Beloved Community. Thank you for being faithful. Thank you for being steadfast. Thank you for helping me grow as a pastor, leader and child of God.

The Congregational Council will meet soon to begin discussing the transition. Bishop Bryan-Wee or Bishop Assistant Yee will be meeting with the Congregational Council in the near future to discuss the next steps for pastoral leadership. As soon as those details are finalized for my last Sunday at Salem, we will make that information available to you.

Thank you again for your faithfulness and partnership in God's ministry at Salem. You have been a blessing to Jerilyn, Levi, Selah, Gabe and me. May God's presence be with you always.

In the Expansive, Inclusive, Liberating Grace of Jesus Christ,
Pastor Marc



SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
2529 N. LaVenture Rd., Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360)336-3600 www.slcmv.org

Men's Breakfast Back on the Calendar!

Monthly Men's Breakfast resumes the 1st Tuesday of the month, May 4. Join us for good breakfast and good conversations at Curious Chef at the Outlet Mall, 7:30 a.m. Any questions, contact Dale Ragan 360/708-0975.



Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study for April is scheduled for the fourth Wednesday, May 26, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

We will be using the Gather Magazine's Bible Study. All are welcome to join us in our Zoom meeting for fellowship and discussion.

ZOOM: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81754719021?pwd=MURKVkRGNIJ2MEY3MnQ5Zo1Vd2ttUT09>

Contact Kat Clark at 630-222-1970 for assistance or information.

SEWING FOR OTHERS

Sewing for Others will meet on the first Wednesday of May (5th). We plan to start putting together and tying LWR quilts. If you have a favorite needle, thimble and scissors — bring them. Otherwise, you can use our equipment. Questions — Linda Dunlap (253)548-6439 or (253)863-8627

BLOOD DRIVE

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH Multi-Purpose Room



You can register for an appointment by calling 800-398-7888 or online at <https://schedule.bloodworksnw.org/DonorPortal/Default.aspx>

Below are the scheduled dates and times.

May 4	10:00 am--5:00 pm
May 7	9:00 am—5:00 pm
May 8	8:00 am—4:00 pm
June 4	10:00 am—5:00 pm
June 5	8:00 am—3:00 pm

Due to increased usage of type O Negative by hospitals, some appointment slots have been reserved for this blood type. If you are O Negative and can donate in the immediate future, please call us at 800-398-7888 or schedule@bloodworksnw.org for a special reservation time.

ANN UNCEMENTS

I am writing to submit my resignation as the Director of Student Ministries at Salem Lutheran Church. I have truly loved developing relationships, serving alongside our children, youth, and families, and deepening our understanding of ourselves as God's loving family.

I am so grateful for the time we've spent together. To students and families: We have traveled near and far, served our Skagit neighbors, spent time in creation, created art and music, learned from each other, broken bread and worshiped together. These are just a few of the fond and meaningful memories I take with me as I go. Students, it is my privilege to know you. Families, you are the number one influence on your child's faith life - thank you for showing up to the challenge! To my colleagues, collaborators, and teammates along the way, I am deeply humbled by your love for God, passionate commitment to God's beloved children, and courage to serve God by sharing your gifts. I'm thankful for your listening ears, your creativity, and your generosity of spirit. I am so very grateful for you.

To the whole congregation: Thank you for your support of children, youth, and families. You have made formative experiences possible for so many young people - living into baptismal promises. I will continue to keep you all in my prayers and know that the Holy Spirit will be with you in your service to God by serving neighbor.

Between now and April 30th, I'll be working to say goodbye, document our history together, and be available to help lay the ground work for whomever God calls next. I appreciate your support and understanding and wish nothing but the best for the future of Salem Lutheran Church. Please let me know if I can provide any other assistance during this transition.

Sincerely,

Allison Ross



ANN UNCEMENTS

After an extended period of discernment, prayer, and discussions with my family, I feel that I am being led to the conclusion of my ministry here at Salem. Just prior to the beginning of the pandemic, I was starting to feel like a juggler with too many balls in the air. We were approaching my first Easter since Claire had gone back to work, and it was a particularly busy season at the high school, with a concert, festival, and tour all in set to follow one after the other. I was beginning to feel that my lack of time and energy was evident in my work – both at MVHS and at Salem, and it was clear something would need to change before I was no longer able to meet my obligations. Suddenly, everything changed overnight. Schools were shut down, events were cancelled, and the juggling act felt more achievable for a while.

This spring has seen even more of a thaw than usual. In addition to the expected turn toward sunnier weather, we are also seeing the trickling of a return to normal. As I write this letter, I am partway through my first week of teaching students face-to-face in over a year, which is both exhilarating and exhausting. As our world slowly becomes more “normal”, the typical demands of my time will return once more. Concerts, rehearsals, school events, and other obligations will become the norm, not to mention the need to be present in my role as a father and husband. Given that my vocational calling is to serve our community as an educator and artist, that leaves me with only one way to make the necessary time to be a fully-present father, attentive husband, and top-flight educator: to resign my position as Director of Music and Worship at Salem Lutheran Church.

As I know Salem is in what is likely an unprecedented position of staff turnover, it is my intent for my last day to be Pentecost Sunday (May 23rd), to give a little time for plans to be made so the music ministry at Salem may continue without obstruction, especially as the day where we sing together again approaches swiftly. I have an archive roughly 40 or 50 recordings I made last summer that could be used if an immediate solution is not available, and I am happy to provide them to help facilitate the transition. Claire and I are so grateful for the opportunity to serve at Salem: we have always felt welcomed and appreciated – never more so than when you helped us to welcome Elsie as our first child – and I feel that I have learned as a follower of Christ, a father, and a husband by the wise and faithful examples of so many of you. While we feel it is important for us to give space for the new team God is preparing for this place, we are happy that we will still get to see many of you, as it is our continued blessing to call Mount Vernon “home”, and it is still a dream of mine to bring both my professional ensemble and school choirs to sing in this beautiful sanctuary. Thank you for all of your support and faithfulness, and I cannot wait to see what plans God has for Salem in the coming years.

Your brother in Christ, Jesús Gomez

We continue to hold the following people in our prayers, asking for God's healing mercies:

Mel Huynh
Bridget Pratt Luvera
Barb Schlagel

Nelson & MJ Bender
Dan Mitzel
Rick Benson



Council News

4/22/2021

- Approved parking lot paving repair work.
- Accepted resignation from Director of Worship and Music, effective 5/23/21
- Graduating Seniors will be presented with their quilts during worship on 5/23/21
- Council president with arrange for lawn service to get our grass situation back under control while we await the return of our mower from shop.
- Accepted resignation from Pastor Marc, effective 5/30/21.

ADDENDUM: Council met again on Monday, April 26, at which time we approved May 30 as Pastor Marc's last Sunday for worship, with compensation for unused vacation time thru June. We will be meeting with Bishop Shelly on Wednesday, May 5 for planning our next steps.

We are very excited for this opportunity to "get together"
and enjoy some fellowship, learn something new,
make a craft and share scripture
with each other.

Come join us and invite a friend!
Only \$10



**Synod Women's Organization
Spring Retreat (virtual!)**

CHOOSE JOY
with keynote speaker: **Stacy Kitahata,**
Co-Executive Director of Holden Village
Saturday, May 22, 9am-12noon

[Register HERE](#) by May 10!

NW WA Synod News



In the book *Anxious People*, the author, Fredrik Backman, crafts a humorous, poignant, and wise story of a group of people thrown together because of a bank robbery. But the bank robbery is the least interesting part of the book. The characters, who seem flighty and weird and strange or just unlikeable at the beginning of the book, change into complex humans with such rich inner lives that you love each of them by the end of the story. This was one book that I was sad to see end because I wanted to continue with each character in their journey.

I finished this book during Holy Week. And I couldn't help but reflect on the flighty, weird, strange and unlikeable people that surrounded Jesus that we get to know in the Gospels. These men and women who leave everything to follow Jesus – and who end up leaving Jesus after his arrest – only to once again connect with Jesus after his death and resurrection – are (we must admit) flighty, weird, strange and unlikeable.

Thomas who is skeptical throughout the Jesus story and who won't recognize Jesus until seeing his wounds.

Mary Magdalene who can't recognize Jesus until he calls her by her name.

The disciples locked in a room, afraid to go out, and finally just going back to fishing until Jesus shows up once again.

I mean, ask yourself:

Would we really have wanted John the Baptist over for a barbecue?

Would we really have accepted a woman who washed Jesus' feet as being justified when she extravagantly wasted an expensive bottle of perfume?

Would we have embraced the woman who bled for over a decade and invited her to our book club even after she assured us that she was cured and clean?

I finished this book during Holy Week. And I couldn't help but reflect on the flighty, weird, strange and unlikeable people around me – on the news, on social media, in my neighborhood – and how I have judged them based on a very superficial understanding of who they are and what makes up their story. I call them ignorant or lazy, bigoted or uncaring, dirty or smelly or unclean in some way.

But as I continue to reflect on Backman's compelling story of seven "idiots" (as he calls them), and, as I continue to reflect on Holy Week, (even though it is now way past Holy Week), I see Jesus kneeling down and washing feet. I hear Jesus saying, "Peace be with you." I experience Jesus embracing disciples on a beach, offering them fish, and saying, "Feed my sheep." Loving and caring and forgiving – even though these humans are flighty, weird, strange and, at times, unlikeable.

None of us are Jesus. None of us can embrace the other as Jesus did. And yet, we are called, as sinners and as beloved children of God, to hear another's story. To listen. To reflect. To forgive. To ask for forgiveness. To engage. To be silent when needed and speak when necessary.

For my part, I repent. I repent for my judgment, for my verdict that I render without knowing the complexity of another's story, for my blindness to my complicity, for my withholding forgiveness in the name of self-righteousness, for my refusing to acknowledge my need for forgiveness, and for my judgment on who God loves and who God does not love (because, as I have been taught, if God only loves those I love, than I have remade God in my image).

So I ask you, dear Beloveds of NWWA Synod, with all of your stories, how may your stories be joined into the One Story? How may your hearts be open to the flighty, weird, strange, sometimes unlikeable (but always God's beloved) people that we are called to love? What are your thoughts, feelings, explorations, attempts, experiments? I'd love to hear how you are living into God's Holy Community of love, grace, compassion, justice and peace.

As for you, you are called. By name. Embraced, loved, and cherished – in all your flighty, weird, strange, sometimes unlikeable ways. And always, always, God's beloved.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee



The New Normal. How often have we heard that phrase recently? It seems like it is showing up everywhere, even in the funny pages. In the March 21, 2021 comic strip “Frazz,” the punchline was: “By the time we know something is normal, it won’t be new.” That made me stop and think. How true is that? I think one thing the last year has taught me is how quickly we adapt and how quickly things begin to feel normal. Thoreau, in his book *Walden* comments, “It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves.” That kind of adaptability can help us cope with the kind of upheaval we’ve had the past year, but it can also allow us to normalize things that should not be considered normal. When our response to the question “Have you heard about the latest shooting?” is “Mass or police?” we might want to stop and reflect on what track we have beaten for ourselves.

During this Eastertide, I’ve thought a lot about that first Holy Week and Easter. What upheaval the disciples experienced! They went from entering the city cheered on by the crowd, to the cries of, “Crucify Him!” in less than a week. Then came the very public execution and the miraculous resurrection. I’ve wondered what the disciples thought of *their* new normal as these events unfolded. We know there was fear and denial and doubt. Who should they believe? What should they do in this world turned upside down? They had to sort through all the fake news of the day, all the rumors and whispers, to decide who to believe. They sure didn’t believe Mary Magdalene nor the others who brought the first reports of the resurrection: “But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them” (Luke 24:11). Even once they saw with their own eyes, some doubted (Matthew 28:17). Called to proclaim the Good News of the risen Christ, first they had to believe. According to the book of Mark, Jesus even upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness before sending them forth in His name. It took a while for them to adapt to their new normal.

As I help plan for a return to in-person school and worship, how do I go forward in faith and adapt to the changes that have happened and continue to happen? How do I push for a new normal that is better than the old normal? How can I normalize love, justice, forgiveness, and peace? Like those first disciples, I will probably do so with both fear and great joy (Matthew 28:8) knowing that Jesus is going ahead of me and it is His beaten track I follow.

Here are a few things I or the Synod Council have been up to:

Continued work on Synod Assembly Planning

The Synod Vice Presidents met on April 10 by Zoom. The agenda included assembly planning and anti-racism work and resources.

Executive Committee met on April 15.

The COVID-19 Relief Grant team met to award grants.

I would be happy to visit and worship with you— online.
Please don’t hesitate to contact me: veep@lutheransnw.org.

See you at our online assembly on May 15!

Kay Edgerton, Vice President
NW Washington Synod/ELCA



May 1	Joel Pratt	May 14	Linda Frizzell
May 2	Marcia Pratt	May 15	Connor Nelson
May 6	James Nichols	May 15	Alex Ragusa
May 7	Alyssa Nelson	May 16	Mary Anderson
May 9	Susan Meyer		Glen Springer
May 10	Ann Klitzke	May 17	Marge Hamburg
	Irene Pass	May 24	Lisa Hanger
May 12	John Mitzel		Kathy Hartnett
May 13	Emily Hanger		Richard Traband
	Karen Kimsey	May 29	Sergio Johnson
	Jace Swanson		

March Financials:

Total Income:	\$24,675.78
Total Expense:	<u>\$26,261.27</u>
Net Income:	\$(1,585.49)



May 26 John & Candy Johnson 42 years

Year-to-Date Financial Comparison for Salem

	Jan Through to March	Jan Through to March	2021 to	BUDGET	Act 2021 to Bud 2021
	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	2020	<u>2021</u>	<u>2021</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$80,142	\$66,264	-17.3%	\$73,760	-10.2%
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$21,436	\$18,212	-15.0%	\$20,550	-11.4%
TOTAL STAFF EXPENSES	<u>\$66,727</u>	<u>\$57,711</u>	-13.5%	<u>\$59,535</u>	-3.1%
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$88,163	\$75,923	-13.9%	\$80,085	-5.2%
RESERVE FOR CHURCH OPERATIONS	-\$8,021	-\$9,659		-\$6,325	

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA
2529 N. LaVenture RD.
MOUNT VERNON, WA 98273
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



MAY NEWSLETTER

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

It is our mission as members of this congregation to share the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ with all people, and to serve God by serving others.



CHURCH COUNCIL:

Roger Ragusa
President

Vice President

Susan Ragan,
Treasurer

Laurie Benson,
Secretary

Lynne Rittenhouse

Bob Ruby

Nancy Raschko

Carl Bruner

Barb Gurney
Past President

SALEM STAFF:

Rev. Marc Hander,
Pastor
prmarc@slcmv.org

Jesús Gomez,
Director of Worship & Music
jgomez@slcmv.org

Jim Bowers, Custodian

Church Office
office@slcmv.org

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Building Use Requests
building_use@slcmv.org

OUR WORSHIP SCHEDULE:
Worship Sundays, 10 a.m.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:
9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Thursday

WEBSITE:
www.slcmv.org

"Salem ELCA" App
(Apple & Google Play Stores)

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