

**Salem Lutheran Church
Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, January 28, 2024
11:45 a.m.-1 p.m.**

[2023 Congregational Meeting Minutes](#)

[Bishop's Report](#)

[Synod Assembly](#)

[2023 Pastoral Report](#)

[Salem Council Strategic Planning](#)

[Council President Report: Dave Leitzman](#)

[Foundation Report](#)

[Ministry Reports](#)

[Parochial Report](#)

[Salem Staff List](#)

[2024 Proposed Budget / Salem Lutheran Church](#)

[Dedicated Accounts 2023 Year End Summary](#)

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023 Congregational Meeting Minutes

January 29, 2023, 11:50 AM - 1:20 PM

Hybrid – Zoom and in-person

- 11:50 Gathering & Song Dave Leitzman, President
A Mighty Fortress is Our God
Dave noted that this is the 140th anniversary of the organization of Salem by Swedish and Norwegian and Finn immigrants and that at their first meeting they sang this hymn in Swedish. 2 verses were sung today in English.
- Opening Prayer Pastor Kirsten Nelson Roenfeldt
- 11:55 Call to Order Dave Leitzman, President
Declaration of Quorum
Need 36 voters, 56 are present
Appointment of Tellers
Kathy St. Martin & Deb Campbell appointed
Meeting Ground Rules
Vote to approve Agenda (*Motion by Emily Fisher, 2nd by Scott Campbell, passed unanimously*)
- Introduction of Speaker Dave Leitzman
Guest Speaker Pastor Naomi Mahler
She spoke on the process of transition. Pastor Kirsten is the interim pastor until we make several steps. We must do a self-study to define our needs, both for ministry type and number of pastors. We can do it internally and/or we can hire a consultant. Pastor Kirsten will not take part in this phase; the Council will lead and Pastor Naomi will help with ELCA resources. If Salem decides Pastor Kirsten is right for a call we must vote on it and then Synod would need to approve it. Resources can be found at SWMNELCA.ORG
- 12:10 2023 Election Nominating Committee
Presentation of Candidates *by Emily Fisher*
See attached ballot for a list of nominees
Call for Nominations from the floor
Chris Ann Johnson, Kathy St. Martin, and Stefanie Jussila were nominated to be Synod Assembly Voting Members
Election Balloting
Online and in person; ballots gathered by tellers
Resolution of Thanks to Dave Leitzman, President
Outgoing Council Members
Janet Tilstra and Micah Stoeckel were recognized
Recognition of Salem Staff Micah Stoeckel, Vice President
The staff members were listed on page 25 of the information package attached to the Agenda
Recognition of Salem Volunteers
(Acknowledgement made during the Ministries Report below)

12:30 Reports

2022 Financials

Jody Illies, Treasurer

A printed report was included in the information package attached to the Agenda;

Q: by Linda G. Tenneson: where did the funds for the new live streaming technology come from? Answer: dedicated funds

Ministries

Pastor Kirsten Nelson Roenfeldt

Printed reports from many teams were included in the information package attached to the Agenda. Pastor Kirsten invited team leaders to say a few words about their ministry efforts. These were made by Emily Fisher, Deb Anderson, Joan West, Linda G. Tenneson, Lori Potter, Carolyn Tobiassen, Jane Leitzman, Juliet Bambrink, Judy Ampe, Susan Shobe, Josh Smith, Pauline Bratt, Joyce Wilson, Steve Roenfeldt, and Darlene Nastrom, each in reference to their various ministries. Each person shared a blessing in their year, the meeting acknowledged our collective ministry work with applause.

Salem Foundation

James Ringwald, Foundation Chair

A printed report was included in the information package attached to the Agenda

12:45 Old & New Business

Update on Ministry Strategic Plan

Janet Tilstra, Past-Secretary

A brief written report was included in the information package attached to the Agenda and a full description of the Plan is on the Salem website; she went over the goals of the Plan.

Q: by Sandy Logeman: if & when will we have a new church directory?

A by Pastor Kirsten: unknown, but there may be an opportunity for an online directory which could be dynamic and include pictures and more through our database program Shelby Next.

Q: by Stefanie Jussila: are there current efforts to increase Salem's membership?

A by Janet: not directly, but we would expect it to be an indirect outcome of our connecting to the neighborhood. Further A by Pastor Kirsten: The Council looked back 18 years at our average worship attendance (AWA) and one can see that there is a downward trend. Our current attendance is approximately on the extrapolation of that trend across the abnormal Covid years. This pattern is not unique to Salem, but appears across SWMN (Pastor Naomi agreed). The question becomes, what do we, as a congregation, want to do about our trend looking forward? We have the opportunity to consider what "membership" means to our neighbors and potential participants today.

Q: by Josh Smith: Does "attendance" mean physical in-person only?

A by Pastor Kirsten: yes, there is no official way to count for live-stream attendance, but we do estimate this on the annual parochial report to the ELCA. We consider our online worshippers valuable participants in Salem!

Q: by Susan Shobe: does the team look at demographics?

A: yes, there is a great deal of data on local demographics available as part of the reports through the TLC (Transformational Learning Community Team).

Q: by Justin Hauer: does ELCA do anything to try to retain younger people?

A by Pastor Kirsten: yes, various things, particularly in campus ministry like LuMin. Ultimately, this is a matter of style for individual pastors. Pastor Naomi added that this is a personal matter and attendance of young people may manifest itself in non-traditional ways and emphasized that outdoor ministries can be a powerful way to reach young adults.

Budget

Jody Illies, Treasurer

A printed report was included in the information package attached to the Agenda;

A motion by Nick Johnson to accept the budget as proposed; 2nd by Jan Hallan; passed unanimously

Election Results

Council: Justin Hauer, Rene Kaluza, Emily Fisher, Jan Hallan

Foundation: *James Ringwald*
Nominating Committee: *Wayne Anderson, Lori Potter, Janet Tilstra*
Synod Assembly: *Chris Ann Johnson, Kathy St. Martin, Stefanie Jussila*
All nominees received sufficient votes
Motion by Emily Fisher to accept, 2nd by Kathy Jeninges, unanimous

1:20 Adjournment

Closing Prayer and Benediction

Pastor Kirsten Nelson Roenfeldt



*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.....
Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. – 1 Cor. 12.*

One of the great joys of my call is to visit the congregations across this synod. Our territory includes vast plains, rich agricultural land, hilly vistas, quiet lakes, and powerful rivers. God planted our congregations in cities, open farmland, and towns. We are very different from each other; yet in Jesus Christ, we all are one.

As we've journeyed together this year, we have been united by focusing on the WORD: Jesus - the Word-made-flesh, and the word of Scripture – as the source and center of our lives.

- **Embody the Word.** Synod Assembly 2023 brought over 365 voting members together in-person for the first time in 4 years! We rejoiced to sing again in Christ Chapel, passed the 2025 budget, and elected new leaders. And plenary speaker Matt Bloom helped us consider wholistic wellness in daily life.
- **Serving the Word Today.** Rostered ministers gathered for the Fall Theological Conference and considered how the Word is served (our calling to serve Christ) and how we deliver or serve-up the Word to people in our presiding and preaching. Presenter Jason Moore provided insights that can transfer in some way to all of our congregations, as we serve the Word both in-person and online in our both/and world today.
- **Living the Word Today.** Equipping Congregations Day 2023 gathered participants at Vinje Lutheran in Willmar to discover ministry resources – from stewardship to hospitality – to take back home. Luther Seminary Professor Rolf Jacobson led participants to look for the gifts of the Holy Spirit who is at loose in our world today.

Those actions – *Embody, Serving, and Living the Word Today* - provide the framework for reviewing this year and leaning into the next.

Embody the Word

Thank you for the way you, as beloved children of God, embody the word in your congregations and daily callings. You are engaging in ministry that is vital to the lives of your participants and the larger community. Although many of us are still exhausted from pandemic adaptations, congregations are emerging from these difficult years with a clearer sense of who we are and what God is calling us to be and do today. The dedication of our church leaders to ministries of word and sacrament and serving, to compassion, mercy, and justice - has never been greater.

As we review the past year, one place to turn is the numbers. No, it's not all about the numbers, but trends do tell a story, whether in our households, businesses, or congregations. A synod's responsibility is to note the trends occurring among our congregations because these numbers represent real people, hearing the story of God's love in Jesus Christ.

The most recent statistical summary for congregations comes from the annual reports you completed for 2022. Of the 229 congregations in the SW MN Synod in 2022, 166 filed an annual report; 63 filed no report. When the annual report information comes to you in January, please direct the info to others in your congregation who can assist. Talk with your Church Council about the trends you are seeing. Return the form. And then know you have helped us reach a target of 100% responses this year! Thank you!

For numbers-lovers

	2021	2022
Baptized members:	100,421	97,689
Ave. baptized/cong.	439	428
Baptisms age 16+	13	24
Affirmation of Faith	290	353
Transfer in	862	1093
Baptized Received	2,207	2,594
Active Participants	48,944	48,875
Ave. wkly worship on-site	10,662	12,918
Ave. wkly. worship online	14,326	9,554
Ave. att. per cong. on-site	55	64
Ave. att per cong. online	103	70



What stories do those figures tell? There is the cultural trend of fewer people connecting with a faith community. But these numbers also represent stories of outreach as adults are welcomed through Holy Baptism as hospitality is extended and new members are received, and as people are drawn to worshipping together both in the room and online.

Generosity

We know there is great generosity in our congregations! Although earned income for congregations was challenged last year everywhere, regular giving and other receipts increased. Over the pandemic years, many congregations held special appeals to upgrade technology – what a gift!

You have an impact on human lives every day. Each week in the announcements, try telling a brief story about one of your ministries. Share a photo on a screen. Thank people for their generosity and the difference they are making. If you are looking for resources to help affirm your people’s generosity, check out the synod website under the “Generosity” tab!
(<https://swmnelca.org/congregations/generosity-stewardship/>)

Thank you for the generous Mission Support you shared in 2022. Although current 2023 figures won’t be known until after the fiscal year ends January 31, we have seen a significant decrease in Mission Support this year. Why? We know that the cushion of PPP money is used up. Everything costs more. Some of our congregations’ most generous givers are passing away or face high costs for elder care. And there is the tendency that when faced with financial challenges, congregations choose to direct funds close to home. Whatever the reason, we will continue to wisely steward the resources we receive and are committed to prioritizing providing pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers. Like you, we know that challenges can also lead to doing things in new ways, and we trust in God’s creative Spirit as we plan for the future. Thank you for your generosity.

If you have not yet sent in a Mission Support contribution for this year, will you please consider a gift yet in January? And if you have not yet returned a Mission Support Intent form for 2024, please do so. We are deep in planning the 2026 budget that will be presented at the 2024 Synod Assembly, and your planning will help us do our best planning, as well. Thank you!

Serving the Word Today

Thanks be to God for all the Lay and Rostered Ministers leading our congregations today. They are serving Jesus and serving the Visible and Spoken Word to people in worship in this synod and far beyond. Our synod includes 300 rostered ministers, half of whom hold active calls in congregations, specialized calls, and synod calls.



This year, we celebrated the ordination of 5 new pastors: Rev. Chad Duffy, Rev. Mort Meyenberg, Rev. Stefan Swanson, Rev. Bob Ossefoort, and Rev. Sarah Zender. We consistently welcome more rostered ministers to this great synod than we see move away.

One of the greatest challenges for congregations and synods today is securing rostered minister leaders who can “serve the Word” in their context. Today, seminaries are seeing approximately half the number of enrollments they did 15 years ago. The good news is that congregations are embracing the gifts of their people and becoming less pastor-dependent than we were. The other piece of good news is that more lay leaders are sensing the Holy Spirit nudging them to consider part- or full-time ministry – often as a second career; and they are bringing incredible skills and life experiences into these new callings today.

TODAY, I pray that God will “send laborers” into this new and changing vineyard of ministry. My mentor, Rev. Dick Vangerud, often spoke of an initiative of our predecessor church body (The American Lutheran Church) called, “Men for the Ministry.” Yes, back in the 1960s, the initiative was only about “men” for the ministry! But back then, congregations prayed that God would raise up new leaders. Pastors encouraged those they knew to consider ministry as a life calling. Since we can’t grow pastors on trees, this is what I ask you to do:

- Pray in weekly worship and in your own devotions that the Holy Spirit would move hearts for people to consider part- or full-time ministry.
- Notice the people of any age in your church who might have the faith, temperament, and gifts for ministry. Affirm their strengths. Ask them if they might pray about and consider ministry in their future.

We are grateful for the ministry of Gifts of Grace that helps rostered ministers reduce the debt from their seminary training, and for the scholarships that are available from so many sources – including this synod, our seminaries, and the ELCA church-wide. Thank you!

For congregations who have rostered ministers leading you, please take care of them by providing appropriate compensation (see our synod compensation guidelines) and benefits. Encourage them to take sabbath time away from work and make use of continuing education growth. Got a concern? Talk to them, not about them. Give them a word of thanks for their ministry, which they serve 24/7.

Whether there are lay or rostered leaders serving the word with you today, strive to live together as the body of Christ. Nothing is more draining of leadership or destructive of Christian community than behaviors which tear apart the body of Christ. At the end of chapter 12, St. Paul tells the Corinthians, “And I will show you a still more excellent way.” And that is the way of love - the way of Jesus.

Living the Word Today

These are interesting times to be called and sent by the Triune God to live the Word today! The territory of our synod is described by the state demographer as including areas that are entirely Rural, Town/Rural Mix, Urban/Town/Rural Mix, and Entirely Urban. "Cities, farms, and towns together." As demographic trends continue, the report asks, and we as the church can ask:

- How will we support the many older adults who are part of our communities who may live farther from services and family support?
- How will we respond to labor force shortages as more Boomers move into retirement?
- How can our churches help our distinct communities to be more attractive to new residents?
- How can churches make a difference in communities with growing racial and cultural diversity, and create connections and belonging?

Those gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12) will lead the way as God continues to reform us to live the Word today.

This fall we celebrated the reactivation of our relationships with our friends in the South Eastern Diocese of Southern Africa. Four guests came to be with us here in Sept. -Oct., and then five leaders from SW MN made the journey to South Africa and were blessed by warm hospitality, joy in our friendships, and new opportunities to accompany one another in Christ. Another gift!



I am grateful for the leadership of our Synod Council, taking seriously its responsibility to be faithful stewards of our resources of staffing, facility, and funding. I am excited to work together with them on the Council's commitment to "empower Christian communities to join in God's mission of reconciliation: listening intentionally, loving unconditionally, serving others authentically, and faithfully healing creation." They have been focusing on the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results they see in this commitment, and are eager to live out this vision with you in the coming year.



I conclude this report by expressing my sincere **thanks and gratitude** to the synod staff who embody, serve, and live the Word each day:

Rev. Heather Culuris – Synod Minister, Tammy Schacher – Executive Assistant, Kristin Bakeberg – Communications Coordinator, Maggie Berggren – Administrative Assistant, and Rev. Dr. Troy Pflibsen – Director for Evangelical Mission. They walk beside you in ministry with wisdom and joy. We are grateful for the ministry of Youth Ministry Coordinator Rev. Nikoli Falenscheck, who served with us for the past year. And we continue to grieve the passing of our colleague and friend, Pr. Naomi Mahler, who brought energy, courage, and faith to her many ministries and lived out + *SOLI DEO GLORIA!* each day.

Thank you for the privilege of embodying, serving, and living the Word together with you as the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA.

Holy God, we praise you for calling diverse people into your church and its ministries. Uphold all leaders with your strong and loving arms. Empower ministers to serve your people with the word of scripture, the water of life, the meal of grace, and deeds of love and mercy and justice. Equip them with both beloved traditions and fresh ideas; grant them joy in their tasks; and renew them daily by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Word among us, now and forever. Amen. (adapted from ACS, p. 46).

+ with grace, peace, and love,



Rev. Dee Pederson, D. Min
Bishop, Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Synod Assembly



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

2024 Synod Assembly

Where: Gustavus Adolphus College

When: June 7-8, 2024

This will be a hybrid Assembly. This means voting members will have the opportunity to participate online or onsite.

Rev. Dr. Aaron Suomala Folkerds is the keynote speaker; Executive Director for Christian Community and Leadership, Phil Hirsch is the ELCA representative; and Bishop Myaka from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa will also be attending.

What congregations need to know when electing Synod Assembly voting members:

- Online voting members will need to have:
 - their own device (cell phone, tablet, iPad, or a laptop).
 - their own personal email address that is checked on a regular basis.
 - the capability to log into Zoom and participate in voting using Zoom Polling.

A hybrid voting member must meet the criteria above.

- On-site voting members will have:
 - their own devices (cell phone, tablet, iPad, or a laptop).
 - opportunities to network in-person.
 - on-site worship, workshops, and presentations.

Whether you attend the Assembly hybrid or on-site, it promises to be equally engaging and filled with new ways to participate.

The Assembly will begin on Friday around dinnertime with hors d' Oeuvres, networking, and inspiring programming. Saturday morning will begin at 9 am with worship in Christ Chapel. Plenary Sessions, with official Assembly business, will begin on Saturday morning. The Assembly will recess on Saturday no later than 5 pm.

The chart on the back of this page will help your congregation determine how many voting members to elect at your annual meeting. If you have questions, please contact Tammy Schacher, Assembly Manager, tammy.schacher@swmnelca.org or 507-627-9041.

Other important registration information will be sent out in late January.



Voting Members Chart

Congregation Size*	Voting Member #	Gender (as near as possible)
0 – 174	1 or 2	If only one registers, either male or female.
175 – 500	2	1 male, 1 female
501 – 1,000	3	1 male, 1 female + 1 either male or female
1,001 – 1,500	4	2 male, 2 female
1,501 – 2,000	5	2 male, 2 female + 1 either male or female
2,001 – 2,500	6	3 male, 3 female
2,501 – 3,000	7	3 male, 3 female + 1 either male or female
3,001 – 3,500	8	4 male, 4 female

**Numbers represent BAPTIZED membership.*

More than 3,500 baptized members, add one voting member for every additional 500 baptized members.



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

175 E. Bridge St., P.O. Box 499, Redwood Falls, MN 56283
Email: swmn.elca@swmnelca.org

Phone: 507-637-3904 Fax: 507-637-2809
Website: www.swmnelca.org

+ Engaging Leaders + Equipping Congregations + Serving in God's World +
Bishop: Rev. Dee Pederson, D. Min.; Synod Minister: Rev. Heather Culuris,
Director for Evangelical Mission: Rev. Troy Pflibsen, Ph.D.

2023 Pastoral Report

140 years! On February 6, 2023, Salem marked her 140th Anniversary. The power and history of this congregation in this neighborhood is legendary. There are many events to mark the passage of time and the ongoing movement of God's mission in this place...

Did you know... that the granite altar in the chapel is a memorial to the founders of Salem? Salem was founded in 1883, a time in which Swedes were flooding into the United States, and trained stone cutters found work in the exploding industry of granite quarries. The first of these was in East St. Cloud, just outside of the present-day prison (granite) wall.

Salem was started by immigrants who came with little to nothing, who may have even started by living in a shanty-town outside of the quarry, but eventually built homes and had families, often with five children. As they became stable in the area, they replicated the community they knew from their home country and started a Swedish Church, a Lutheran church.

Did you know... that the six stained glass windows that now reside at the back of our sanctuary have a theme? "A Light unto My Path." Can you guess which window is central to that theme? (Hint: The Light is the Word of God, in written form). The other five extend from it by representing five major elements of *Luther's Small Catechism*: Baptism, Holy Communion, Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments and the Apostle's Creed.

These core faith elements are still taught at Salem today in confirmation and Sunday school and Milestone Blessings. While everything has changed, nothing has changed ... God's gift of life for us is still the gift we grapple to understand and live out faithfully.

Did you know... that parents have been the primary faith formers of their children for all of eternity? Or at least since 1913, when Salem's then-pastor celebrated that half of the Sunday School was made up of children whose parents were not members of the congregation. "We are thankful to be able to sow the seed of the Word in noble children's hearts." And yet, he insisted that parents were still responsible to pray and encourage their children.

I hope that we empower parents now to have faith conversations that allow for curiosity and encourage trust in the God who names and claims us as Beloved.

Did you know... that East St. Cloud was once a city in its own right? It was known as the gateway to St. Cloud. Not only that, it was the gateway to the Mississippi River and the heartbeat of the area with the arteries and veins of transportation centered here, on the same side of the river as Minneapolis and St. Paul. From river ferries to wagon caravans, the merging of major railroad lines and eventually car-friendly streets, East St. Cloud was the access point to everything when Salem was built.

Over the almost century and a half that Salem has been a haven here, immigrants have populated East St. Cloud. From Swedes Hollow to Lutheran Social Services - Refugee Services storing furniture here for our Somali neighbors, Salem has been and will be a place of refuge. For "God is our Refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." - Psalm 46:1, NRSV

Did you know... that in the 1990s a church conflict took place at the Presbyterian Church across the river. I doubt if anyone could distill the whole story into a couple of sentences, but the reason this matters to Salem's history is that we were blessed to become a refuge and church home for 200 people at that time, mostly from that congregation. And while many of them stayed for a good long time, the upending of all our lives in the pandemic of 2020 gave many people an opportunity to reassess ... lots of things. And one thing that some of those families discovered is that they missed their roots. And who can blame them?

We love our roots too. For a while, maybe we were really a Lutheran and a Presbyterian church! I think that's cool. We had the grace to create a big open space for lots of theologies, and sometimes that created conflict for us, and for our ability to create a safe space for our LGBTQ+ siblings. While we will always keep space for diversity of thought, when it comes to who God loves and accepts for who they are, we are called to be very clear: Everybody.

Did you know... the story continues with you. Salem's Story and God's Sacred Story are intertwined and continuing to dance and weave together a new future of promise and hope. And so as we enter another year of Salem's ongoing history, we get to pause and reflect here at Annual Meeting time about what we are doing ... and more importantly, what God is doing through us.

What is God doing here and now through this place? What do we see God might do that we are ready to try? What do we see God doing in our Story that will bring new life, God's life, God's resurrection, God's way near?

2023 was the Year of transition. We have welcomed Thell Grant to our maintenance position, and Juliet Brambrink as our new administrative assistant, and said farewell to our beloved Viv Kloskin and Stephanie Anderson-Smith. This will be one more year for the history books, not to mention the last few years of pandemic readjustment. So keep your prayers going, Salem! God isn't done with us yet, no doubt.

- We are the witnesses to generations of faith, from people who brought over their prayer books in trunks to we who look up scripture passages on our smartphones.
- We are the gateway for our city for our immigrant neighbors, a source of pride for us who wouldn't be here without the legacy of immigrants forming this very community.
- We are the windows of our community, we get to reflect that light for the path to our neighbors, wherever they might live, close to the building or close to your house.
- We are a congregation with a big, gracious space for people who don't think just like we do, and we want that space to be truly welcoming and warm for those who don't have another place to go.

In 2024, if God calls me to be your settled pastor, I see us focusing together on your spiritual gift of hospitality. We will welcome people during building hours with more intention. We will form a hospitality team to discern the best way to welcome newcomers and build fellowship among us. We will focus our invitation for our 10:30 worship service as we identify the unique niche we are filling in the area.

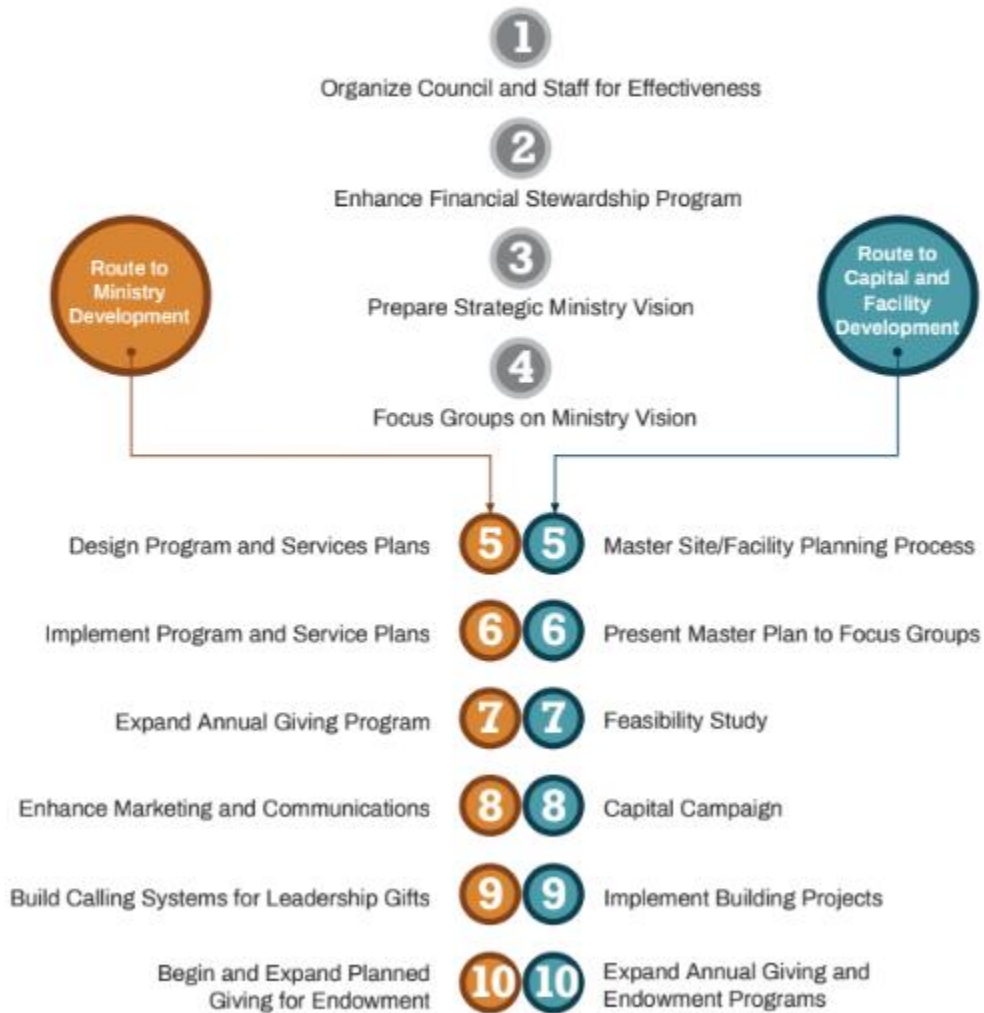
God bless Salem, the church named and claimed for peace and light for the last 140 years, and for this year, 2024.

Pastor Kirsten Nelson Roenfeldt

PS: If you feel deeply in grief, please see my [Annual Report](#) from last year.

PPS: I am including a graphic from our Mission/Stewardship Consultants about starting over after the pandemic. Let me know where you see Salem on this path toward newness.

Ten Steps to Success for Congregations



Salem Council Strategic Planning

Key Action Updates

Summary Following:

Sept 12, 2023 Council Meeting

Facilitated by: Janet Tilstra

Purpose of Sept 12 planning: Review workshop framework from July 2023 and identify key actions to support strategic goals for 2023-24

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

How might we be good neighbors?

STRATEGIC GOALS identified by Council 5/28/2022 (summary):

1. Build community within and outside of Salem
2. Pilot innovations for being the (relevant) church in this time and place
3. Clarify team and volunteer processes

Our Values (From Feb 2022 Marketing document):

At our core, we care about...

- **Diversity**
- **All-Generations Community**
- **Serving God**
- **Music**
- **Warmth**

Explanation: In July 2023, a sub-group of Salem Council members participated in a workshop for one evening (facilitator Janet Tilstra). Here’s what was done in that meeting. The team:

- Reviewed and validated existing strategic goals (generated by council in 2022)
- Generated possible tasks/actions to move towards those goals

The Salem Church Council reviewed the tasks developed in July by the Exec team and identified the top 3 priority actions for each goal area for the coming year (Sept 2023 to Sept 2024).

Goal 1: Build community within and outside of Salem

- a. Strengthen bonds and unity of identity among members; we are in this together.
- b. Communicate effectively with members & neighbors about who we are and how we partner.
- c. Partner with neighbors to improve our sense of connection for those in the local area.

Priority tasks to move us towards this goal in the coming year

Task	Objective	Who's responsible	Timeline	Importance/ Difficulty Level
1. Continue to host events that promote social connections (coffee hour; ice cream/pie events). a. Related: host adult education events that promote connection and understanding of our community	1a; 1c	Note: related to improving volunteer recruitment processes	Continue	High/Easy
2. Make space available for community needs (e.g. Lutheran Social Services Storage for new immigrants; partnering with LuMinn; exploring possibility of Community Outpost with Public Safety Foundation	1b; 1c			high/high
3. Review the need for external signage changes to increase visibility and promote welcoming to community.	1c	FI team; Council; Property Committee *Faithful Innovations team is writing a Salem Foundation Grant for the \$.	Fall/Winter 2023/24	High/Easy to medium

Goal 2: Consider innovations for being the church in this time and place

- a. To exercise our awareness of the Holy Spirit, try experiments regularly, ready to fail or succeed, taking time to reflect and assess periodically.
- b. Seek to make new connections in our neighborhood.
- c. Improve our connections on the web via livestream worship and other communication methods.
- d. Be willing to have difficult conversations across differences (Matthew 18:15-21).

Priority tasks to move us towards this goal in the coming year

Task	Objective	Who's responsible	Timeline	Importance /Difficulty Level
1. Continue to increase connection and innovation in 2 nd service worship. Recruit team of people to commit to attending 10:30 worship 3x/month and help plan the culture of 10:30 worship. a. Train 10:30 worship participants to tell their faith stories in worship	2a; 2b; 2c; 1a			Medium High/Easy
2. Have a booth at neighborhood events with information about Fare for All and Salem (possible)	2b; 1b; 1c	*Impacted by volunteer processes	Good weather months 2023/24	High/Medium
3. Gather data on how people are using Salem's online options (e.g. Youtube viewings of our services)	2c			Low to medium/High

Goal 3: Clarify team and volunteer processes

- a. Invite the congregation and staff into a culture of church that focuses on team ministry and trying new things.
- b. Create responsive roles & team structure to changing paradigms of volunteerism.
- c. Nurture a culture of gratitude for gifts and volunteer time.

Priority tasks to move us towards this goal in the coming year

Task	Objective	Who's responsible	Timeline	Importance/ Difficulty Level
1. Hire lead pastor	3a; 3b	Transition team; church council; call committee; synod	Fall 2023	High/High
2. Define and organize a hospitality team to coordinate volunteer efforts/recruitment.	3a; 3b		Fall/Winter 2023/24	High/Medium

Updates prepared by Janet Tilstra, Sept 30, 2023

Council President Report: Dave Leitzman

Greetings to Salem's Members and Friends:

During the past year, much of our work as a church council was concerned with guiding and supporting the management of Salem through the work of our pastor, employed staff, and our committee volunteers. Drawing guidance from Salem's Strategic plan, the twelve Salem council members elected by our congregation to serve their church found and pursued ways to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all of your mind... and love your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27)

- To do so we invited our consultant, Professor Janet Tilstra, to help us clarify our understanding of how Salem's strategic plan might better reflect our goals, values, and objectives revealed through acting on emerging opportunities.
- We supported the design and implementation of a stewardship campaign to ease anticipated financial challenges during 2024.
- Guided by the Synod minister assigned to assist our search for a senior pastor, a team began that search by first completing the required Site Profile in the summer of 2023.
- The Council invited Salem members to consider serving as our Call Committee to advance what we learned through our Site Profile for our search for a senior pastor.
- We have guided our church toward being a good neighbor in East Saint Cloud by building community within Salem and our neighborhood, by piloting innovations that are relevant for our time and place and by clarifying and focusing the work of our congregation as we all strive to help Salem advance its mission. (2022 Salem Strategic Plan)

Are we finding ways to love our neighbors? Leaving Salem through the "back door" on the northside of our building, a photograph on a bulletin board reminded me that we have striven to do so in many ways for many years. The picture revealed a home designed by Habitat for Humanity and funded through community contributors. The home was constructed with the help of many Salem women who were guided by Pastor Kristin Anderson. It is one of many such homes constructed or remodeled in past years by volunteers from Salem working with other area churches and civic organizations.

That picture reminded me of how our church members are helping Salem to be a good neighbor in East Saint Cloud by building a sense of community within Salem that can support our work with our neighborhood. We have piloted innovations that are relevant for our time, resources, and location, and by clarifying and focusing the work of our congregation as we all strive to advance our shared mission (2022 Salem Strategic Plan). Our continuing exploration of how we might work with other community agencies to provide resources for a new kind of "home" to advance the health and welfare of our neighbors affirms the continued pursuit of our mission.

exploration of how we might work with other community agencies to provide resources for a new kind of "home" to advance the health and welfare of our neighbors affirms the continued pursuit of our mission.

I conclude my observations with a passage borrowed from the winter 2023 edition of *Story*, Luther Seminary's institutional magazine (p.4). The president of Luther, Robin Steinke, offers a foundation for pursuit of "faithful Innovation" which she describes as "inspiring, life-giving, and often challenging. Most importantly, we do it together, learning in community with our siblings in Christ. 'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. Now, you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.' " (1 Corinthians 12:12, 27)

I end my report as well as my term as a council member with the challenge offered in my previous year's report. Do the people of Salem have the will, the knowledge, and the talent to encourage Salem's continuing growth into a future that can achieve God's vision of a church which supports its neighbors with what they need? Let us pray and hope that we do. Dare we ask less of ourselves?

Salem's future "is not the choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created. Created first in the mind and will, then created next in activity. The future is not someplace where we are going, but one we are creating." (John Schaar, as noted by Doug Pagitt in *Church in the Inventive Age*." 2014, Abington Press, Nashville, TN, p. V)

Dave Leitzman

Foundation Report

The Salem Foundation was established in 1983 to provide support for the charitable, educational, and religious purposes of Salem Lutheran Church.

Karen Fuglie shares with you as her term ends in 2024 –

Thank you for the privilege of serving as the president of the Salem Foundation. It has been an honor to serve on the board over the years and to see the positive impact it has had on the mission of our church, local charities, and the world as a whole. It is my hope that the Foundation will continue to be a positive force.

Thank you also to the members of the congregation who have come forward to serve on the Salem Foundation board. Your commitment has been amazing, and I hope you will consider remaining involved in this sustaining ministry. The members of the Salem Foundation Board are James Ringwald, Linda G. Tenneson, Mick Terhaar, Gregg Zastrow, Deb Campbell, Micah Stoeckel, Greg Nastrom, and Pastor Kirsten Nelson Roenfeldt. Please thank them.

As many of you know, the bonds that were graciously given by Evelyn Tutch to Salem will all be redeemed by October of 2024. The Foundation would encourage you to consider making contributions to continue and expand the reach of Salem Lutheran Foundation into the future.

Gifts

The total gifts received into the Foundation in 2023 totaled \$1,000.

Andy H. Anderson Trust

The Trust annually contributes 10% of its assets to the Foundation. Total 2023 contributions were \$16,500.

Investment Portfolio

Our primary investment manager for our Bremer account is Kimberly Eggebraaten.

Beginning Balance - 1/1/2023	\$ 1,391,288.10
Interest and Dividends	37,628.33
Capital Gains	5,886.58
Proceeds from Security Class Action Settlement	193.56
Market Changes	201,391.77
Fees	(14,171.70)
Ending Balance - 12/31/2023	<u>\$ 1,622,216.64</u>

Bank Account

Ending cash on December 31, 2023 was \$111,876.34.

Bonds

The Foundation holds bonds that were originally contributed by Evelyn Tutch. Bonds totaling \$69,972 were redeemed in 2023, and a total of approximately \$82,202 mature in 2024.

2023 Highlights

Awarded three \$1,000 Ruth Betts scholarships to graduating senior high school students attending Salem Lutheran Church. There were no applications for the Ramona Mohs scholarship.

The financial markets improved in 2023 resulting in an increase in the amount approved for benevolences from \$66,200 for 2023 to \$80,000 for 2024. This reflects approximately 4.75% of the managed account value in September 2023.

2024 Grants

Mission and Ministry

Salem Library	300
Salem Library Chairs	1,000
Santa Lucia	1,500
Salem Music Ministry	3,000
Pastor Sabbatical	2,000
Awesome Beyond Age 55 (ABA55)	1,000
Faithful Innovations/Property - Signs	10,000
Faithful Innovations - Prayerboard	400
Salem Personnel Committee	6,800
Salem Seminary Assistance Fund - K Leitzman	1,000
Salem Youth Group	5,000
Bell Choir Conference	1,000
Salem Service Expenses at Place of Hope	500
Total	<u>33,500</u>

Local Benevolence

Salvation Army	1,100
LSS St. Cloud Crisis Nursery	4,000
Central MN Habitat for Humanity	4,000
Anna Marie's Alliance	1,000
St. Cloud Stand Down	800
NAMI St. Cloud	800
Food Boxes for Veterans	800
SCSU-MLK Service/C.A.R.E.	1,000
Big Brothers-Big Sisters	3,000
Terebinth Refuge	3,000
Lumin Campus Ministry	1,500
Adult Lutherans Org. for Action (ALOA)	100
Place of Hope	1,500
Catholic Charities - Outpatient Day Treatment	1,000
Boys & Girls Club of Central Minnesota	1,000
Central MN Youth Orchestra	1,000
Youthset - Higher Works Collaborative	1,000
Total	<u>26,600</u>

International Benevolence

LWR School Kits (Salem)	2,000
Orongo Widows and Orphans	1,050
Ministerio Ramas Vivas Internacional	2,000
ELCA Central Europe Teachers	1,100
YWAM - Benoit Willer	1,100
Global Health Ministry - Salem Bandages	1,150
Total	<u>8,400</u>

Capital Improvements 5,000

Designated Funds Student Scholarships

Mohs Scholarships	500
Betts Scholarships	6,000
Total	<u>6,500</u>

Grand Total 80,000

Ministry Reports

ABA55

ABA55 (Awesome Beyond Age 55) is a ministry that began in 2019 to minister primarily to members of age 55 and over.

Programming for 2023 included:

- January: Maruta Ray, who now lives in St. Cloud, was invited to speak about her childhood experiences as a refugee from Latvia. The dinner represented foods of Latvia.
- February: Valentines Party with a chili cook-off and trivia in Salem's Fellowship Hall.
- March: DJ Mike Henry of Minneapolis presented a program of popular music of the 1950s and 1960s with music and videos. Pizza was served.
- April: St. John' Tour of the Great Hall and Abbey Church with Brother Paul. Lunch was with students in the Refectory.
- April: ABA55 members read stories to Salem's Sunday School.
- May: A tour of the Avon Hills Folk School and Primrose Gardens. Lunch was at Fisher's Club in Avon.
- July: An ice cream and pie social was hosted for the entire church family and Eastside neighborhood. Ice cream was also served after worship on the two Sundays following.
- August: The Antique Car Run in Kingston. Cars are models of 1908 or older and the Run is from New London to New Brighton with a stop in Kingston.
- September: We participated in the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge annual festival in rural Zimmerman.
- October: Bonfire/weiner roast at Municipal Park, Sauk Rapids.
- November: American Red Cross blood drive at Salem. Members were encouraged to give blood and/or to assist with hosting or snacks. Due to lack of participants, the blood drive was canceled.
- December 1: Due to popular demand, DJ Henry was invited back for a program of Christmas music of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Dessert and coffee followed.
- December 29: A catered dinner of beef tips in Hunter sauce was enjoyed followed by holiday games and a used jigsaw puzzle exchange.

Upcoming Events for 2024

- January 26: ABA55 at Country manor to share an event with Salem members living there.
- February 9: Potluck dinner and trivia.

- Pauline Bratt

Caring Ministry

The Salem Caring Ministry Team continues to connect with members and support Pastoral care, primarily during times of sickness, during the first year of grief and by providing a supportive connection and Communion to those unable to attend worship. I am very grateful for

the help of the three new Friendly Visitors who joined our Team this year. Their caring visits have been appreciated so much. I am also thankful for the help and support of Pastor Kirsten who made most of our hospital visits and many facility and home visits as well. It was a busy year.

In August, Pastor Kirsten and I began meeting monthly with the group of Salem members that reside at the Country Manor Community where Pastor Kirsten provides a time of reflection and Holy Communion. That time together has been a blessing and it has been well received, so we plan to continue that through this year as well (second Monday of the month).

We appreciate your encouragement, the donations of greeting cards, the partnership with Prayer Keepers, Salem's Prayer Shawl & Prayer Square Ministry, the Santa Lucia Committee and the Salem staff.

If you can join us as a Friendly Visitor or you feel the need for Caring Ministry support, please contact Deb (deb@saalemstcloud.org) or Pastor Kirsten (pastorkirsten@saalemstcloud.org), or leave a message for us in the church office at 320-252-1625.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you in this way.
Deb Anderson, Caring Ministry Coordinator

Prayer Keepers is a small group of members who meet once a week to pray for our members, our community, our world and whatever is on our heart. We welcome your prayer requests and your participation. We currently meet 11:00 AM, Tuesday morning at Salem. Please join us if you are able.

Children & Family Ministry

Salem's children and families had another busy year in 2023! Here's a look back:

- Weekly Sunday school continues, with a lesson that complements the preaching texts of the week. The kids use Bible study, art, reenactments and other activities to learn the Sacred Stories.
- Our Christmas storytelling program was a great opportunity for the kids to share what they have learned with the congregation.
- Also for Christmas, the kids learned a lesson about Santa Lucia, and many of Salem's Kids had the opportunity to be part of the program.
- Salem's Kids learned about the Orongo Widows & Orphans program and took part in the Thanksgiving Eve noisy offering to support their ministry.
- The academic year kicked off with God's Work, Our Hands Sunday. This year, the congregation had the chance to participate in five different ministry projects and learn more about ways Salem supports the community and the world.
- We partnered with Bethlehem Lutheran Church to hold Vacation Bible Camp during the summer for kids in kindergarten-fifth grade.
- The VBC week kicked off with a congregation-wide outdoor potluck, a great chance for intergenerational fellowship.
- Several Salem kids attended camps at Luther Crest over the summer, growing their faith through a variety of outdoor activities.

- All kids were invited to an Easter egg hunt on Easter Sunday.
- We support a year-round Milestones program for kids to have a chance to advance in their faith with special events and blessings.

Thank you for your continued support of Salem's Kids! We welcome all members of the congregation to share your talents and faith with our kids, let a member of our committee know if you would like to share with the kids.

Respectfully,

Julie Willman, Emily Fischer, Micah Stoeckel, Julie Stoeckel, Steve Roenfeldt, Juliet Brambrink, Pastor Kirsten

Community OutPost Task Force

On September 18, the task force met with the Public Safety Foundation, who worked on the south side COP house. They knew they wanted to have a Community OutPost on the east side with a different focus. They had already looked at the Kwik Trip space, the bank in front of our church and other areas, but they really liked our location and joining forces with us. We continued to meet September 27 and November 1.

On December 3 we held an adult forum for questions and answers. Their focus here would be a medical clinic open only Monday-Friday daytime hours. Their plan is also to have a police presence when the clinic is open.

We plan to have another forum at the end of February or beginning of March to discuss the latest information.

This is our hope for the future. We want to remain open to the congregation and hope you will converse with each other so we are well informed to vote in 2024.

-Nick Johnston, Jan Hallan, Cathay Jenniges

Faithful Innovations Team

Salem's Faithful Innovation team currently has had up to 7 participants who were trained by Southwestern MN Pastors in the Faithful Innovations process. This team has been meeting monthly.

Within this training the Faithful Innovations team learned that "the church must pursue faithful innovation as it seeks to connect God's presence and reality to the everyday lived experience of the people in congregations and communities."

The process involves the following phases:

- **Listening** – Tracing God's Movement in our lives and in our neighbor's lives. The goal for these practices is to help the participants begin to answer the question "What might God be up to?"
- **Acting** – Using Action learning to Discover God's Leading. Simple learning experiments will be tried and congregation members will be encouraged to participate.

- **Sharing** – Sharing Stories about what we have learned.

In the past year the Faithful Innovations team has been involved in listening sessions with Salem members and individuals and groups in the community. This group has tried some successful processes and updated the congregation through temple talks.

- Observations and conversations were had with individuals who attend Fare for All and with volunteers, which occurs at Salem. This program runs smoothly. The Faithful Innovations team came up with ways to help with hospitality. Fliers and pamphlets were shared with neighboring apartment complexes, signs were made giving directions to restrooms, a Welcome sign was made inviting children to use the playground to play if desired. Salem activity schedules were run through on screens in Great Hall.
- There are now signs up in bathroom stalls with monthly activities listed.
- This team helped the community Public Safety Team come up with questions for an East Side Survey. Salem offered the building as a place for individuals completing surveys to take a break, use restrooms.
- Recommendations were made to Salem's Property Committee and funding sought for better signage so that people in the community know who we are.
- A small prayer board is being tried within Salem and a larger one outdoors for Salem and the neighbors to leave prayers of need, gratitude and hope. This can be taken to events in the community as well.
- A meeting has been held with local Somalis who utilize a building on the East side. They provide a community center, after school classes, citizenship classes, and rental advocacy. We learned that they are not familiar with potential options of help within our community and helping them with contact information could be useful to them.
- This past year was Salem's 140th year as a church in St Cloud, MN. Together with student's at St Cloud State University, history is being gathered.
- This past summer the Faithful Innovations team invited Salem members to join them to enjoy as a group activities the St Cloud Community Sponsors such as Music in the Park at Musinger Gardens (which was canceled due to weather); along with the Salem Council and Family and Children's Committee, Faithful Innovations helped plan a potluck at Salem. East Side neighbors were invited to this event.
- Twelve Salem members came to Rockin' the Riverside in Sauk Rapids in August.

We look forward to more such opportunities in the future.

Kathy St Martin
Faithful Innovations Member

Global Health Ministries (Helping the Hands that Heal)

Global Health Ministries was formed in 1987 in Bloomington to support any Lutheran group that offers support to medical work overseas. It provides funds for overseas Lutheran health care projects to gather and ship medical supplies and equipment and to recruit long and short term health care workers. Bandages are badly needed in these clinics, primarily in Africa and India.

The Salem bandage makers meet each Thursday at 9:30 a.m. to make bandages from donated

white sheets. In 2023, the group donated over 13,000 bandages! These bandages are stored at the Global Health Ministries warehouse Minneapolis before they are sent overseas.

Our weekly team is a faithful and hardworking group, and we welcome new members to join us Tuesday mornings.

- Judy Ampe

Handbells

This year we continue with our multi-generational group. This has allowed us to continue ringing 3-5 octave music.

In addition to full choir ringing, we have also rung smaller 4-7 ringer ensembles with piano accompaniment.

We played during the summer as well this year featuring our small ensembles.

We played for the annual Santa Lucia Celebration again this past December.

Three of our ringers rang with a St. Cloud area combined group under the direction of Jordan Goodwater, the Area 7 sub-area chair.

I continue to catalog and update the handbell music using Excel spreadsheets and file cabinets.

As a director, I am blessed to have such dedicated ringers and parents. Thank you to all of them and to the congregation for all the support and appreciation of our hard work.

Ring to the Lord!!

Lori Potter
Salem Handbell Director

Lutheran World Relief Quilts

During the 2023 year, quilts were tied on Wednesdays during the six weeks of Lent, and again on Tuesdays in October, completing 90 during Lent and 52 in October. On Palm Sunday, quilts were displayed on the sanctuary pews, with 18 being purchased for \$60. These funds went toward shipping costs, with remainder given to the Hogenson family for care of Blake. Members also contributed to this cause. In all, \$1,800 was gifted to the family.

Many of our members give of their time, efforts, and money to support this project. That along with a combination of fabric and thread, we are able to reach out to people in their time of need. They may use the quilts to protect against cold and rain, as well as warm bedding. The quilts are also useful as simple tents, floor coverings, or a wrap to hold a baby on mother's back.

During the 2023 year, quilts were shipped from the LWR warehouse in St. Paul to Georgia, Guatemala, Angola, Mali, and Tanzania. In Tanzania's chilly Njombe region, children were not only hungry, they were also cold. Instead of using every calorie to grow, they were burning energy to keep warm. Quilts help keep them healthy!

The quilts are made with members sewing 60x80 tops at home, using sheets(64x84), for back

and filling with poly batting. This makes for a warm yet lightweight quilt. Our largest expense is for the fill. Funds are accessed from the Foundation and Thrivent action funds, as well as donations.

“Comfort, O Comfort my people, says your God.” Isaiah 40:1

- Joan West

Marketing & Publicity Team

As great things happen at Salem, we want to make sure the entire congregation and the wider neighborhood know about it. Here’s some of the things we did this year.

- Supported the *Why Church?* stewardship campaign with videos of members’ “why” and other marketing materials.
- Used flyers and social media posts to promote the Bluegrass worship in partnership with LuMin campus ministry and the Great River Conference of ELCA congregations.
- Helped make Salem a welcoming place with new signage and slideshows during Fare For All.
- Set up a photo booth for Easter and confirmation (also available for other events) to help attendees show Salem on your own social feeds.
- Purchased shirts and car window clings for the congregation to share the Salem story as you interact with the community. (Watch for these to be available soon.)
- Monthly fliers help keep everyone in the building informed about upcoming events.

Our greatest promotional tool is our members. Thanks for all you do to support and share Why You Salem!

– Lisa Hauer, Phil Rogholt, Juliet Brambrink

Nominating Committee

Nominating Committee members Wayne Anderson (chair), Cathy Jenniges, Lori Potter, Kathy St Martin, and Janet Tilstra, met two times and communicated via email between November 2023-January 2024 to discuss potential nominees for church council and other church committees. Potential candidates were gathered from church member submissions and the committee. Requests were presented to church members representing a range of age, gender, and backgrounds. Candidates were recruited from regular attendees of both services. Thank you to the nominees for 2024 Church Council, Salem Foundation, and other standing committees at Salem. We appreciate your willingness to serve!

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee has been active this year. We have had two changes of the Maintenance position and the Custodian position as well. Job descriptions have been updated. The Maintenance position has been filled.

Salem was blessed with an Administrative Assistant who was with Salem for more than 30 years. With her notice of retirement effective at the end of December 2023, it was decided to combine the Administrative Assistant role with the role of Finance Clerk (6 hours a week) and

Faith Formation Administrative Assistant Role. The Finance Clerk had given notice to end her time at Salem as well. The Personnel team worked on the job description, interviews were completed and the position of Administrative Assistant/Office Manager was filled in December 2023.

The Music Director also gave notice this year, and the current Sanctuary Choir and Praise Team Director has taken on the role of Music Director.

The Personnel Manual for Salem was also in need of updating, and after close review by the Personnel Committee and Salem's Council it was approved. The main area of update was regarding Personal Time Off (PTO) versus Vacation time as used in the past and some wording updates.

Reviews of current Salem full-time and part-time staff were completed this year as well.

Kathy St. Martin
Personnel Committee Member/2023 Council Liaison

Property Committee

Some of the problems cached by the Property Committee in 2023 were old, Long Standing problems. Last Winter as well as prior Winters we dealt with flooding in the church basement especially after we had warm weather causing snow melt. Volunteers were utilized to mop up flooded areas. Our Committee decided to contact area landscaping companies to give us a bid to add soil close to the building particularly on the N side of the church which would move snow melt water and gutter drain water away from the building.

Our new Property Manager, Thell Grant, has reported that we have a leaky roof causing problems in many areas of the church. This is not something new but has not been addressed properly before. Our insurance provider has been contacted and their adjuster has surveyed the roof and found many areas where hail has damaged the roof. The adjuster also toured the inside of the church. She has sent her report to the Insurance agency who will be sending us an estimate of what it will cost to repair the roof. We have \$2,500. deductible on our policy.

It is important that we resolve these problems before we enter into a contract with the Community Foundation who want to use part of our church to provide health and other services to the greater Eastside community.

- Nick Johnston

Santa Lucia

The Santa Lucia Festival of Lights celebrated its 75th Anniversary with the crowning of Eva Stoeckel as St. Lucia and Carl Shobe as St. Knut. Our speaker was longtime member Debra Carlson who gave us a wonderful look at a "Journey to Salem: An Immigrant Story." 2022 Santa Lucia Lily Rogholt joined us and shared her lesson on walking in the footsteps of Lucia. The service was enjoyed both in-person and via web stream for those not able to attend. Over 170 people enjoyed our early morning breakfast of Swedish sausage, lefse and cookies as well as coffee and saft. We also served and delivered cookie tins to over 30 shut-in and neighborhood friends. Thanks to the many delivery volunteers and a special thank you to Santa Lucia Eva Stoeckel and tarmor (Lucia's escort) Hudsyn Gessner for delivering cookies to the neighbors.

To help commemorate the 75th Celebration, we gave an ornament to each family attending. We even had to order 100 more! We give thanks for the wonderful music of Salem: soloist Chris Ann Johnson and her special singing of St. Lucia in Swedish, pianist Patty Jensen, the Hallelujah Handbells, as well as violinist Michael Zellgert, along with two of his students, Arriana Schwab and Drew Zahasky, in a trio serenading us during the meal. Music has always been so important to this special Christmas service.

We would also like to thank the following people who helped in many ways to make it successful again this year, including Deb Carlson, Rick Witwer, and Chris Ann Johnson and family for decorating the Sanctuary Tree. Thank you to our fabulous committee members of Joy Palmquist, Kathy St. Martin, Deb Carlson, Julie and Micah Stoeckel, and Nancy Street who make so much happen behind the scenes. Thank you to the Salem Youth for the many hands whenever needed. Thanks to the many bakers who donated their cooking talents, everything is always so tasty! Lastly thanks to all the Salem Staff for helping in many ways to make this year possible.

Looking forward to many more Celebrations to come!

Susan Sandvig Shobe, Santa Lucia Chair

Stewardship Committee

Fellow Salem members, I am honored to share this report on behalf of the 2023 Stewardship committee consisting of Paulette Schwegman, Denny Douma and myself (with unofficial but considerable assistance from Susan Douma and Pastor Kirsten).

The theme for this year's appeal was Why Church? Preparation included in-person meetings as well as Zoom presentations by a national organization which assists churches like ours in formulating and executing successful appeals. They were helpful in encouraging us and also in providing numerous template documents including letters and promotional materials that were used in the appeal.

The formal appeal kicked off on Sunday, October 22 with a short temple talk by me during both services. In the following weeks similar temple talks were given by Jackie Fallon and Jan Hallan. Pastor Kirsten naturally included in her sermons during these weeks the theme Why Church.

Thanks to Pastor Kirsten's efforts we were able to work with the St. Cloud Vocational School's marketing class and at no cost received their students' help in designing our stewardship materials. These materials included the rack cards that were used to introduce each week's particular theme. In addition they designed the intent cards which included the form by which our members could provide Salem with their household's intended donation for 2024. There was also an online means to provide that information that was made part of Salem's website.

As part of the incentive for the congregation to return the intent cards by the anticipated deadline of November 19, the Salem Church Council agreed to a "challenge" that involved making individual one-time donations if a goal of 80 intent cards were returned by the deadline (in 2022 a total of 67 such cards were turned in, and therefore a 2023 goal of 80 was established). There was also a very well-attended meal between services on November 19

overseen by Denny and Susan with additional help provided by various members of the congregation. It was a joy seeing so many members back in church on that Sunday to join in the celebration!

As of the deadline, a total of 56 cards and 2 additional online intents were received. Since that time additional cards have been returned and as of the date of this report we are at close to 70 total cards returned. Despite not reaching our goal the church council nevertheless honored its challenge with a total year-end donation of \$4,250.

In summary, the stewardship committee is grateful for the opportunity to take on this responsibility on behalf of Salem and deeply appreciates the contributions of Pastor Kirsten, Jackie Fallon, Jan Hallan, Viv, the Salem church council and all members of the staff and congregation for their help and prayers throughout the process.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike LaFontaine

Youth Ministry

We are just starting the second half of the Youth Group calendar. We are off to a great start. We only lost one senior last year but have gained four new youth. We are very excited about that. Our goal has been not only to keep youth group going but also to make it grow. We continue to encourage our youth to ask friends to join us (which they have), especially on our fun nights, as a way to bring them in the door.

We continue with the same rotation of activities that we have used for the past two years. The youth seem to like it, and it is working well. Each month, we do a devo night, a life story night, a fun night, and a service project night. Things sometimes get mixed up due to schedules, etc., but for the most part, we keep that plan.

This year, we are doing something a bit different with the Devo nights. We are using what's called Visio Divina. It is where Pastor Kirsten, or one of the leaders, reads a chosen story from the Bible while the youth do art work. They are able to do artwork of what the story is or what they feel while the story is being read, either with pastels, paint, chalk, or markers. Since not everyone likes to do art, some choose to use markers and color in adult coloring books. It almost has a meditation feel to it as they listen. We then discuss the story in more detail. So far, it has been successful. The youth have very much wanted to work on social skills and personal growth, so after Lent, we are going to work on stress management and some specific social skill issues.

Our "Fun Night" is just that: fun. We usually let the kids choose. Examples are Hide and Go Seek (yes, teenagers still like to play that), our Christmas party, where we had snacks, music, and decorated gingerbread house, and a night of board games. It's just where we have fun and fellowship.

Life Story Night is where we have someone, usually from the congregation (but they don't need to be), come in and tell their life story. They talk about whatever they feel moved to talk about. They are usually sent a sheet or guide to help them sort it out if they need it. They can follow that completely or take bits and pieces from it. Whatever they feel comfortable with. We are always looking for people to help in this capacity.

Service project nights, or God's work, our hands nights, are a favorite. These we do along with the confirmation students. So far this year, we have done personal care item kits for Lincoln School in Salem's neighborhood. The youth packed shampoo, conditioner, hair ties, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, brushes, body soap, etc. in individual packages. Then we did our historically favorite, leaf raking. Raking leaves in yards around Salem. We also helped decorate the church for Christmas and Santa Lucia. We made care packages for last year's seniors. They always love receiving those from their Salem family. We looked forward to January's project to go back to FACT (Feeding Area Children Together). We love this night and this organization. We pack food bags for kids to take on nights and weekends when there aren't any for them at home.

We are currently working on a plan for the summer trip. We are working on decisions that work for the leaders as well as the youth. More answers will be given regarding this in the next month.

Please continue to pray for our youth, our leaders, and our ministry. Please pray that God's grace will help us not only keep our youth group alive but also help us grow it.

Peace and Blessings,
The Salem Youth Group Ministry Team
Micah Stoeckel, Phil Rogholt and Teri Zastrow

Parochial Report

Baptisms: 5
New Members: 8
Confirmations: 3
Funerals: 5

Marriages: 1
Dismissals/Transfers: 23
Average Weekly Attendance: 124

Salem Staff List

Pastor Kirsten Nelson Roenfeldt - Interim Senior Pastor

pastorkirsten@salemstcloud.org

320-200-9295

Deb Anderson, Caring Ministry Coordinator

deb@salemstcloud.org

320-224-8607

Juliet Brambrink, Administrative Assistant

juliet@salemstcloud.org

320-252-1625

Theell Grant, Maintenance Technician

maintenance@salemstcloud.org

320-291-8991

Josh Smith, Sanctuary & Praise Team Choir Director; Worship & Music

josh@salemstcloud.org

952-923-6040

Charles Echols, Organist (Primary)

cechols@stcloudstate.edu

259-9303

320-260-1830

Mark Frohland, Organist (Secondary)

merkamerk@hotmail.com

320-761-3545

Lori Potter, Handbells Coordinator

ljpotterr@yahoo.com

320-248-3020

Patty Jensen, Accompanist Sanctuary Choir & Praise Team

pljensen519@yahoo.com

320-237-4905

2024 Proposed Budget / Salem Lutheran Church

Category	2023 Budget	2023 Final	2024 Proposed Budget
Contributions			
General Contributions	\$524,000.00	\$451,674.54	\$452,600.00
Loose Offering	\$3,500.00	\$4,199.26	\$3,500.00
Lenten/Easter Offerings	\$4,000.00	\$2,825.00	\$3,000.00
Thanksgiving Offering	\$1,000.00	\$764.56	\$1,000.00
Christmas Offering	\$3,500.00	\$2,460.00	\$3,500.00
Radio Fund Receipts	\$4,000.00	\$2,170.00	\$3,000.00
Communion, Bulletins, Flowers	\$1,500.00	\$1,340.00	\$1,500.00
Total Contributions	\$541,500.00	\$465,433.36	\$468,100.00
Other Income			
Church Usage	\$1,500.00	\$1,105.00	\$1,500.00
Reimbursements	\$0.00	\$149.00	
Personnel Grant / Foundation			\$6,800.00
Other Receipts	\$500.00	\$589.37	\$500.00
Total Other Income	\$2,000.00	\$1,843.37	\$8,800.00
Grand Income Total	\$543,500.00	\$467,276.73	\$476,900.00
Administrative Expenses			
Office Expense	\$13,500.00	\$10,610.32	\$10,000.00
Telephone/Internet	\$4,500.00	\$4,415.04	\$4,450.00
Postage	\$2,000.00	\$2,071.56	\$2,000.00

Technology Support/Shelby	\$7,500.00	\$7,204.14	\$7,000.00
Payroll Service	\$1,750.00	\$4,279.00	\$1,775.00
Category	2023 Budget	2023 Final	2024 Proposed Budget
Pledge Envelopes	\$1,200.00	\$1,049.32	\$1,050.00
Miscellaneous	\$1,500.00	\$1,284.68	\$1,500.00
Background Checks	\$250.00	\$23.50	\$100.00
Total Administrative Expenses	\$32,200.00	\$30,937.56	\$27,875.00
Education and Family			
Confirmation	\$500.00	\$612.39	\$1,000.00
Youth & Family Ministry	\$6,000.00	\$341.57	\$2,000.00
Children's Ministry (pre-school)	\$2,000.00		\$1,000.00
Adult Education	\$1,000.00	\$175.78	\$1,000.00
Library/Archives	\$300.00	\$68.23	\$100.00
Generations/Young Adult Ministry	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00
ABA 55	\$1,000.00	\$356.29	\$350.00
Total Education & Family	\$11,800.00	\$1,554.26	\$6,450.00
Missions and Outreach			
Synod Benevolence	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Local Benevolence	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$3,000.00
Radio Broadcast	\$4,800.00	\$4,320.00	\$4,700.00
Media Outreach (publicity)	\$2,000.00	\$1,040.59	\$2,000.00
Global Mission	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$1,730.00
Synod Assembly	\$1,000.00	\$848.00	\$1,000.00
Great River Conference	\$500.00	\$426.00	\$500.00
Stewardship	\$1,000.00	\$461.10	\$1,000.00

Women of ELCA Conference	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Eastside Story	\$1,000.00	\$57.39	
Total Missions and Outreach	\$41,300.00	\$38,153.08	\$33,930.00

Category	2023 Budget	2023 Final	2024 Proposed Budget
Personnel Expenses			
Salaries & Wages	\$246,141.00	\$260,071.32	\$231,589.28
FICA	\$13,407.00	\$12,080.53	\$17,814.58
Medical/dental/life/disability	\$35,128.00	\$35,718.88	\$31,324.80
Employer Retirement Contribution	\$12,500.00	\$13,547.08	\$13,523.76
Travel/Reimbursement Allowance	\$2,000.00	\$3,396.02	\$2,000.00
Staff Continuing Education	\$2,000.00	\$2,698.16	\$2,000.00
Casual Labor	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,400.00
Other Ministry Support	\$750.00	\$3,059.56	\$750.00
Sabbatical Fund	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Personnel Support	\$36,179.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Personnel	\$350,105.00	\$330,571.55	\$301,402.42
Property Expenses			
Insurance	\$14,500.00	\$13,625.69	\$13,000.00
Special Assessment Pmt.	\$6,500.00	\$6,092.29	\$6,100.00
Parking Lot Loan	\$8,145.00	\$8,145.24	\$8,145.00
Electricity	\$25,000.00	\$22,439.99	\$25,000.00
Water/Sewer/Refuse	\$5,750.00	\$5,922.67	\$5,750.00
Property Maintenance	\$24,000.00	\$28,960.20	
Building Maintenance			\$14,000.00

Snow Removal			\$14,000.00
Supplies			\$3,500.00
Property Improvements	\$5,000.00	\$995.00	\$5,000.00
Total Property Expenses	\$88,895.00	\$86,181.08	\$94,495.00
Category	2023 Budget	2023 Final	2024 Proposed Budget
Worship and Music			
Worship Supplies	\$5,000.00	\$5,994.67	\$5,000.00
Organ/piano Maintenance	\$2,000.00	\$1,430.00	\$2,000.00
Sanctuary Choir	\$1,500.00	\$903.85	\$1,500.00
Handbell Choirs	\$500.00	\$309.96	\$500.00
Praise Team	\$5,000.00	\$173.15	\$1,000.00
Music Support	\$4,500.00	\$50.00	\$2,000.00
Handbell Maintenance	\$700.00	\$0.00	\$700.00
Total Worship and Music	\$19,200.00	\$8,861.63	\$12,700.00
Total Expenses	\$543,500.00	\$496,259.16	\$476,852.42
Difference	\$0.00	(\$28,982.43)	\$47.58

Salem Dedicated Accounts 2023 Year End Summary

	Balance December 2022	Income 2023	Expenses 2023	Balance December 2023
Dedicated Fund				
31305 Capital Improvements Fund	\$4,944.76	\$10,900.00	\$2,050.00	\$13,794.76
31310 Children's Camp Fund	\$5,234.00		\$5,234.00	\$0.00
31311 Coffee & Fellowship Fund	\$3,822.29	\$1,134.28	\$304.18	\$4,652.39
31322 Festival Flower Fund	\$692.58	\$1,276.00	\$1,842.50	\$126.08
31324 Funeral Lunches Fund	\$2,202.44			\$2,202.44
31334 Invest Our Youth Fund	\$727.98	\$5,109.00	\$50.00	\$5,786.98
31337 Library Fund	\$2,272.17	\$1,300.00		\$3,572.17
31340 Kitchen Fund	\$0.00			\$0.00
31342 Memorial Gifts Fund	\$4,548.73	\$120.00		\$4,668.73
31345 Missions Fund	\$181.53			\$181.53
31345-1 Crisis Nursery	\$85.00			\$85.00
31345-2 Disaster Relief	\$200.00		\$200.00	\$0.00
31345-3 Adult Ed	\$436.64		\$400.00	\$36.64
31345-4 Fair Trade Coffee	\$76.91			\$76.91
31345-6 Cremation Boxes	\$170.13			\$170.13
31345-7 Lutheran World Relief School Fund	\$742.25	\$2,770.00	\$2,624.70	\$887.55
31345-8 Lutheran World Relief Quilting Fund	\$1,903.23	\$2,291.00	\$2,724.10	\$1,470.13
31345-9 Lutheran World Relief	\$2,128.02		\$2,128.00	\$0.02
3134510 Salvation Army Fund	\$87.95	\$4,100.00	\$2,500.00	\$1,687.95
3134511 Undesignated	\$1,908.77	\$1,599.00		\$3,507.77
3134512 World Hunger	\$71.52	\$7,570.00	\$6,500.00	\$1,141.52
3134513 Orongo	\$27.01	\$12,713.12	\$12,740.00	\$0.13

3134514 FACT	\$0.00			\$0.00
3134515 Lutheran Social Services reset	\$173.51			\$173.51
3134516 Global Health Bandages	\$1,091.00		\$400.00	\$691.00
31513 Habitat For Humanity Fund	\$0.00			\$0.00
31346 Music Fund	\$9,181.56	\$2,750.00	\$1,688.86	\$10,242.70
31301 10/30 Praise Team	\$427.01		\$237.29	\$189.72
31333 Handbells Fund	\$4,886.06	\$800.00	\$261.45	\$5,424.61
31351 Organ Fund	\$0.00		\$500.00	-\$500.00
31524 Sanctuary Choir Fund	-\$602.00	\$1,000.00	\$239.99	\$158.01
31358 Debt Reduction	\$2,471.06	\$2,735.00		\$5,206.06
31366 Salem Samaritan Fund	\$1,860.64	\$2,600.00	\$2,600.00	\$1,860.64
31371 Santa Lucia Fund	\$5,033.05	\$2,355.00	\$714.76	\$6,673.29
31372 Seminary Assistance Fund	\$5,000.00			\$5,000.00
31377 Wednesday Evening Fund	\$3,468.97	\$278.00	\$152.27	\$3,594.70
31382 Working Capital Reserve	\$101,294.07	\$240.00		\$101,534.07
31501 Caring Ministries	\$3,801.20		\$348.79	\$3,452.41
31504 Community Meals	\$2,897.43			\$2,897.43
31505 Sunday School Offering	\$0.00			\$0.00
31507 Continuing Ed Fund	\$0.00	\$750.00		\$750.00
31510 Disaster Relief	\$0.00			\$0.00
31516 Senior Ministry ABA55	\$1,790.56	\$2,000.00	\$1,044.78	\$2,745.78
31522 Prayer Shawl Ministry	\$610.32			\$610.32
31531 Vacation Bible School Fund	\$10.00			\$10.00
31533 Children's Ministry	\$729.10		\$490.00	\$239.10
31534 Women's Ministries (WELCA)	\$175.00	\$500.00		\$675.00
31535 Youth and Family Fund	\$17,063.80	\$1,235.62	\$4,900.41	\$13,399.01
31538 Eastside Mission	\$3,837.00	\$69.00	\$800.00	\$3,106.00

31539 Pastor Sabbatical	\$3,800.00	\$2,500.00		\$6,300.00
31540 Personnel Support	\$22,000.00			\$22,000.00
Totals	\$223,463.25	\$70,695.02	\$53,676.08	\$240,482.19

