

SALEM CHIMES

Volume 62 Issue 10

March 2014

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Dear Friends,

For so many weeks we have all looked for the hope of spring after the winter storms we have endured. Now that the snow is melting I am aware of how many broken limbs and other debris are laying around. With each storm, public safety officials ask everyone to please clear out the broken limbs and other debris blocking the storm sewers.

I ponder how frequently the small unnoticeable debris collects in our hearts and lives. I call these our "pet sins." Pet sins are the ones that have become such a part of daily life that we are unaware of them: an unkind look or phrase, a minor obscenity, *etc.*—small daily habits that are a part of us. And yet, over a period of time, the accumulation of this debris from our pet sins can clog our spiritual life and shut it down, leaving a noxious spiritual environment that poisons our relationship with God.

If the limbs and debris are not cleared away there will be flooding and the infrastructure will crumble. We need to keep our spiritual lives from crumbling or, just like Jack and Jill, we shall come tumbling down.

Remember when our steeple was crumbling? Over the years the mortar that held the bricks in place crumbled in some spots, enough to allow outside light to penetrate. Without repair the chimney would be in danger of collapsing, bricks caving in as well as dropping on someone near the chimney at that wrong moment.

Jesus is the cornerstone of faith, but even that cornerstone needs to be anchored. Those pet sins not only clog our spiritual lives, they also eat away at the mortar that binds the bricks to the cornerstone. When our spiritual mortar crumbles and is allowed to erode away, even the cornerstone can fall. Like the chimney bricks that fall where they will, our sins implode on us, choking off our relationship with God, and they explode on others, harming our relationship with others.

Grace is a wonderful thing! But grace does not mean we can ignore the sinful debris that clogs our relationship with God. Lent is a time to repent our sins. Lent is the time to ask God to remind us of our pet sins and for us to focus on removing the debris of our pet sins from our lives.

Peace,

Pastor Bonnie



Join us in the Fellowship Hall on **Wednesday** nights during Lent for our annual SOUP SUPPERS. Supper is served from 6:00 – 6:45. This allows the kitchen crew to clean up before the 7:00 Worship Service. Please sign up to bring soup, bread or dessert and to take a turn in the kitchen.

Thanks to Nina Agbota for organizing this year's suppers.

President's Page

New Facts About Hunger

While spending the winter in Arizona, I enjoy reading the *Arizona Daily Star*, the excellent newspaper printed here in Tucson. The *Star* has a wide variety of news, from local to national and international—more diverse than the news I'm used to seeing in Indianapolis. More often than not, I'm especially drawn to articles that deal with issues relating to the ministries we pursue at Salem, and as part of the ELCA. One of the most troubling of those, and one that I've written about before, is hunger.

In an article from the Associated Press, reporter Hope Yen states that, based on analysis done for the AP by economists at the Center for Poverty Research at the University of Kentucky, for the first time, working age adults, those between the ages of 18 and 59, make up more than 50% of the U.S. households receiving nutritional assistance through the food stamp program, or SNAP, as it's formally called. Prior to 2009, children and the elderly were the main recipients of food stamps. Currently, 1 in 7 Americans receive food stamps, and the SNAP program annually costs 80 billion dollars, twice what it did five years ago.

Even more disturbing was another new statistic that says that since 1980 food stamp participation has grown the fastest among families headed by workers who have some college education. In fact, the share taken by these households has grown by more than 300%, from 8% to 28% of participation.



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Because of a slow economic recovery with high unemployment and the increasing gulf between low-wage and high-skill jobs, many middle-class workers have been forced to apply for food stamp assistance. When you include families headed by high-school graduates as well as those headed by college graduates, the percentage of families participating in SNAP jumps to 72% of the total enrollment.

This is probably the most shocking statistic for me, because I grew up in a time when having a high school diploma meant that you should be able to find a job that would support your family. Now, with the proliferation of low-wage jobs, both parents in two-parent families are forced to work and if you're a single parent, you may be out of luck even if you do find a job. And this situation won't improve any time soon. According to the AP article, the government estimates it could take 10 years before food stamp rolls begin to decline.

If you have the thought that living on food stamps is the "free ride" that some people would have you believe, I urge you, once again, to see the documentary film *A Place At The Table*, that puts a face on those of our neighbors struggling every day with hunger. As Christians, we have been commanded by Jesus to help the poor. Please call our church office at 291-5004 and find out what items are needed by the food pantry at Abundant Harvest Methodist Church that Salem supports regularly. You can also donate to ELCA World Hunger by writing a check to Salem or you can donate online at www.ELCA.org/giving.

Charles Rader

Charles Rader, Council President

Daylight Saving Time Begins

Don't be late! Turn your clocks forward one hour on Saturday night/Sunday morning, March 9.



sight line - noun

1 : a hypothetical line from someone's eye to what is seen

Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus.

- Hebrews 12:1

Lent is often a time for individuals to focus on their spiritual life by (re)establishing spiritual disciplines like prayer, fasting, corporate worship, or generous giving for the poor. Congregational ministries during Lent often support these disciplines through additional worship opportunities, Bible classes, prayer groups, World Hunger coin boxes, and the like. In some ways, such disciplines provide opportunities to check our "sight lines" by asking questions like these:



Bishop William O. Gafkjen

- **To what have I been giving most of, or the best of, my attention?**
- **Are the people, things, and situations that I have been looking to helpful or hurtful?**
- **Does what I look at empower or equip me for serving others or is it just self-serving? Does it move me to give my life away or cause me to hoard it?**
- **In other words, do my sight lines point me toward Jesus crucified and risen and beckon me further down the way of the cross? Or do they point me away from Jesus toward someone or something else that distracts or harms, disempowers or disappoints myself or others?**

Of course, I am referring here to literal sight lines. It is important that we be discerning about what we look at with our physical eyes. What we look at changes us in powerful ways and influences how we interact with the world. For the moment, however, I am primarily thinking about our spiritual sight lines. What are we looking to in hope that it will provide meaning or excitement or peace or power or whatever else our heart seeks? As it turns out, many of the things we look to cannot deliver on the promises they make.

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So many of them, even the best looking ones, lure us down endless, dark, distracting rabbit holes of self-absorption and self-justification.

The scripture and liturgies of Lent call us to reassess our spiritual sight lines. They call us to repent, to allow God's Spirit to turn our sight lines back toward Jesus, the one who actually delivers on God's promises and who enlists and empowers us to be means by which those promises cross into the sight lines of others.

But this is not just true for individuals; it's true for the church as a body as well. I wonder what Lent – and the consequent celebration of Easter – would be like if each congregation and its leaders also spent forty days in a sort of communal recalibration of the congregation's sight lines. Truth be told, nearly every aspect of congregational life – congregational meetings, committee planning, council agendas, youth events, choir rehearsals, staff meetings, fellowship gatherings – can suffer from sight line drift. We start looking primarily at what we don't have: not enough

money or people or young people. Our sights focus on change for the sake of change, or the next great innovation that promises to get people in the door. Our sight lines are directed toward disagreements and power struggles or inward on ourselves.

If we are not careful, over time we drift away from our core mission to simply be the body of Christ in the world, to shine the light of Jesus, to make Christ known. Without even noticing it we "major in minors" and focus our attention and energy on non-central (even if alluringly important) concerns that simply cannot bring life to us or the world if Jesus crucified and risen is not right smack dab in the center of them.

Just as each baptized person is called to turn away from – to repent of – unhealthy, sinful, or otherwise life-snatching sight lines, so is every congregation. Every gathering of the baptized is called to realign its sight lines in order to participate more fully and faithfully in God's cross-shaped mission of healing and hope in the world.

This Lent, dear sisters and brothers, may God's Spirit grant that we, the body of Christ in the Indiana-Kentucky Mission Territory, will turn away from distracting and destructive sight lines "and the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God" [Hebrews 12:1-2]

+ Bishop Bill Gafkjen

CHIMES

Published monthly

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Worship Schedule:
Sunday School 9:00 am
Sunday Worship 10:30 am

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Happy Birthday!

March 11

Laura Morgan

March 17

Ismay Broomes

March 23

Naphy Chibvongodze

March 25

Lee Kolumbus

March 30

Rosemary Gregg

March 31

Chris Cozmanoff

We're Almost There!



Thrivent Matthew 25 Matching Grant

Received to date

February 23 \$2620

Goal \$2668

Thrivent will match 50 cents for each dollar we contribute toward Salem's ESL program before March 31.

More matching funds are available. Please mark your envelope or memo line for the Thrivent Matthew 25 Match.

Daily Lenten Devotions

The I-K Synod is offering daily devotions in your email box.
Sign up at www.iksynod.org.

Salem Ministry Teams

Worship and Music Ministry Team

Midweek Lenten Worship
Desert Fathers and Mothers
 Wednesdays at 7:00

The theme of this year's Midweek Lenten Services is the Wisdom Literature from the Desert Fathers and Mothers. Desert fathers and mothers were ordinary Christians who lived in solitude in the early Church. Their writings consist of spiritual advice, parables, and anecdotes focusing of such themes as charity, patience, prayer, and self-control. These writings became the Wisdom Literature of the Christian Church.

Join us each Wednesday in the conference room. Service begins at 7:00.

Dr. Edward E. Curtis, IV
 March 23

Due to the weather Dr. Edward Curtis, IV was unable to visit us for Worship in January. He will join us on **March 23**. His sermon will be "A Christian's Journey with Islam." After Worship he will have a time of Questions and answers when people are invited to share questions and thoughts about our neighbors. Read more about Dr. Curtis below.



Dr. Edward E. Curtis

Baptized Roman Catholic and confirmed Presbyterian, Edward Curtis is today a leading expert on Islam in America. He is Millennium Chair of the Liberal Arts and Professor of Religious Studies at IUPUI. Curtis is author or editor of seven books, including *Muslim in America: A Short History*, named one of the 100 best books of 2009 by *Publishers Weekly*.

Continued on next page.

Christian Education Ministry

Sunday School
Book of Job

The Book of Job is another piece of Wisdom Literature from Hebrew Scripture. It is the story of a good, innocent man who suffers terrible loss. The Book of Job is a meditation on the problem of undeserved suffering.

Join us in the conference room at 9:00 for a cup of coffee to discuss such questions as: "Why do the innocent suffer?" and "Where is God in my suffering?"

The Art of He Qi (And a Special Invitation for Salem)



Servants of Christ Lutheran Church is hosting a 24-piece exhibit of He Qi's paintings, now through Easter.

He Qi started his work in China after he was drafted into creating Maoist posters and propaganda. Ironically, that is also where he came into contact with Christianity through an art teacher, who secretly showed him biblical art. His fascination with Raphael's well-known "Madonna and Child" led him to learn more about the Bible, and eventually brought him to faith in Christ.

Since that time, he has evolved a unique style of biblical art that speaks directly to the people of his country. He uses Chinese colors, a traditional Chinese style of painting, and an amazing, vigorous creative vision to portray the wonderful old stories of the faith. Editors and publishers worldwide have used He Qi's paintings in visuals of all kinds to bring alive the Bible's story which transcends all cultures. The subjects are from classic Old Testament and New Testament stories.

Pastor Al Rider has offered to host us with a special tour and refreshments. We shall let you know what date works out.

IK Synod Needs Volunteers

The Indiana Kentucky Synod Assembly will be held in Indianapolis June 5 – 7, 2014. The Synod needs willing volunteers to help out during Assembly. Look over the list and see what you might like to do.



1. **Greeters** Thursday 1-5:30 p.m.; Friday 7:30-9:30 a.m.
2. **Registration** Thursday 1-5:30 p.m.; Friday 7:30-9:30 a.m.
3. **Pages** Friday morning and afternoon plenary sessions, Saturday morning plenary session
4. **Camera Operators** Plenary sessions and banquets
5. **AV Help** Wednesday afternoon set up and Saturday afternoon tear down
6. **Mission Fest** Set up help Thursday 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
7. **Page/Teller**

The Synod telephone number is 317-253-3522.

Game Night on the Ides of March

Celebrate the change of seasons and join us in the Fellowship Hall on March 15. Bring your favorite game, a snack or just yourself. The food begins at 5:45 p.m.

Name Tag Sign-Up

The Salem office is printing up **new name tags**. Tell us how you want your name to be written and what area of congregational life you want to be listed as. A sheet will be at the back of the sanctuary and in the conference room. **Example: Charles Rader, Council President**



Remembering Eddie Hightshue

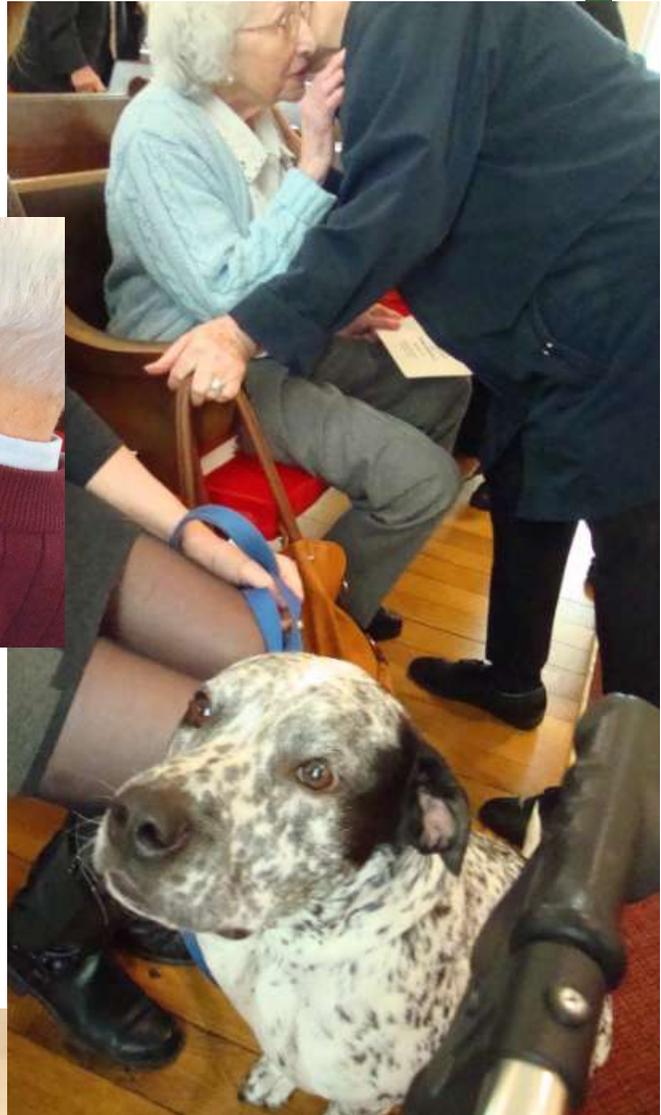
James Edmond Hightshue entered Life Eternal on January 27, 2014. Salem joined Madge and family and friends on Sunday, March 2 at Salem for a memorial service.



Above: Burt Hall reads about Eddie as the table displays wedding photos and a model of one of his boats.

Right: Sam, a member of the Hightshue family, sits attentively as someone shares words of consolation with Madge.

Below: Family and friends gathering at Salem for the memorial service.



Annual Meeting

Salem celebrated our accomplishments of 2013 during our annual meeting on February 23 in the Fellowship Hall. Congregation President Charles Rader chaired the event and Rosemary Rader took the official minutes from warm, sunny Tuscon, Arizona. Thanks to all who provided the great meal and filed reports on Salem's various ministries.



Above: Payton and Stephanie talk to Tom Alexander. Below: The joint recipients of the annual Harry Bowden Service Award. Congratulations to Payton Karanja & Tom Alexander.



MARCH 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 The Transfiguration of Our Lord 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Brown Bag Youth Sermon	3	4 ESL Class 6:30-8:30 in Conference Room	5 7:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship in sanctuary. Imposition of ashes.	6 ESL Class 6:30-8:30 in Conference Room	7 Perpetua and Her Companions, Martyrs at Carthage, 202	8
9 Move your clocks ahead one hour for DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME. 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	10 Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth	11 ESL Class 6:30-8:30 in Conference Room	12 6:00 p.m. Soup Supper in Fellowship Hall until 6:45 7:00 p.m. Lenten Worship in Conference Room	13 ESL Class 6:30-8:30 in Conference Room	14	15 5:45 pm Salem Game Night Bring a snack or dish to share.
16 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Council Meeting 12:30 p.m.	17 Patrick, Bishop, Missionary to Ireland, 461	18 ESL Class 6:30-8:30 Location to be determined. Cyril, Bishop to Jerusalem, 386	19 6:00 p.m. Soup Supper in Fellowship Hall until 6:45 7:00 p.m. Lenten Worship in Conference Room	20 <i>Spring Begins</i> ESL Class 6:30-8:30 Location to be determined.	21	22 Jonathan Edwards, Teacher, Missionary to the Native American, 1758
23 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship with guest Dr. Curtis Question & Answer session follows Worship. More on page 7.	24 Oscar Arnulfo Robero, Archbishop of San Salvador, Martyr, 1980	25 ESL Class 6:30-8:30 Location to be determined. The Annunciation of Our Lord	26 6:00 p.m. Soup Supper in Fellowship Hall until 6:45 7:00 p.m. Lenten Worship in Conference Room	27 ESL Class 6:30-8:30 Location to be determined.	28	29
30 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	31 John Donne, Priest, 1631	March 2: John Wesley, 1791; Charles Wesley, 1788; Renewers of the Church	March 12: Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, 604	March 19: St. Joseph, Husband of Mary and Guardian of Our Lord.	March 23: Gregory, the Illuminator, Bishop of and Missionary to Armenia, ca. 332	

MARCH 2014

CHURCH CLERGY & STAFF

Rev. Dr. Bonnie Sparks, Interim Pastor
Rhunell Gruender, Music Director/Organist
Devoe Slisher, Office Manager

2014 CHURCH COUNCIL

Nina Agbota
Richard Budach
Connie Alexander
Joseph Chibvongodze
Stephanie Kahuri
Payton Karanja
Laura Morgan
Charles Rader
Rosemary Rader
Devoe Slisher

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday
2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
317-291-5004

www.salemELCA.com

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