

# Salem Lutheran Church



FOLLOWING JESUS,  
SHARING COMPASSION,  
COVERED BY GRACE



*"Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed." –1 Peter 1:13 (NRSV)*

January is the season for New Year's resolutions. We have long been encouraged to use the start of a new year as a moment to take up intentions for improving our lives. Perhaps we try to lose some weight or reduce our screen time and read more books. Have you ever thought of a new year as a time to make intentions for your discipleship journey in the next year?

I have been encouraging our congregation since I began serving with you last year to make specific connections between church membership and discipleship. Disciples are those who follow Jesus in the way he set out for his followers to live. Membership is our public declaration of the church community in which we live and grow as disciples. We define the discipleship commitments of members at Salem as:

- 1) Worship in person or online every Sunday.
- 2) Pray 5 times a day—perhaps morning and evening and at meal times.
- 3) Grow in faith through intentional bible study or a devotional practice each year
- 4) Serve in and beyond the congregation in volunteer ministry according to your abilities.
- 5) Grow with intention toward giving a tithe of income to the congregation for the sake of its mission in Christ.
- 6) Share your faith 5 times a year by inviting others to worship or events in the life of the congregation

Our aim is to "provoke one another to love and good deeds" under grace, following Hebrews 10:24.

On January 11, Baptism of our Lord Sunday, worshippers will be invited to reflect on intentions they might want to attempt in any (or all) of these areas for the coming year. Each person's discipleship journey is unique. The steps Christ might be calling you toward will be different than anyone else's. But I believe that Jesus is always calling us onward. He continually called his first disciples to deeper faith and service, for it was through such devotion they would find the abundant life God has in store for us. I wish for you a Happy New Year. I pray for you a fruitful year of growing discipleship.

God bless,  
Pastor Jim



## Salem Lutheran Church December 16th 2025 Minutes

### OFFICERS:

**President:** Sandi Sickels **Treasurer:** Barb Kenyon  
**V. P.:** Tim Kenyon **Secretary:** Sherri Nissen

**Members :** Chris Lane, Sandi Sickels, Sherri Nissen, Sherri Boschee, Tim Kenyon, Barb Kenyon, Jewel Baseley, Linda Huffman, Sheila Clausen, Daniel Clausen, and Thom Guzman.

Devotions: Pastor Jim

The meeting was called to order by President, Sandi Sickels with the following members in attendance: Sherri Boschee, Daniel Clausen, Sheila Clausen, Linda Huffman, Barb Kenyon, Tim Kenyon Pastor Jim, Chris Lane, and Sherri Nissen.

Absent: Thom Guzman, Jewel Baseley

M/S/C by Tim Kenyon/Sherri Boschee to approve the agenda

M/S/C by Sherri Boschee/Barb Kenyon to approve the November minutes.

Treasurer's Report: Barb Kenyon

Receive the Treasurers' report: Motion made to accept the treasurers report by: Sherri Nissen, Second by Tim Kenyon. Approved by council.

Approve Expenses: No additional expenses this month.

Pastor's Report: See attached report from Brenna.

### Old Business:

Continuing Resolution: What does membership mean? This would amend the constitution with the following: A25 Member are specifically encouraged to:

Worship in person or online every Sunday

Pray 5 times a day: Morning and evening and at mealtimes

Grow in their faith through intentional bible study or a devotional practice each year.

Service in and beyond the congregation in volunteer ministry

Grow with intention toward giving a tithe of their income to the congregation for the sake of its mission in Christ.

Share their faith 5 times a year by inviting others to worship or events in the life of the congregation.



The practices listed above are not to be used to determine a member's standing, but rather, are a vision of discipleship in which member mutually "provoke one another to love and good deeds" under grace, following Hebrew 10:24.

Action item for Council: To digest and add/change/delete the above language if needed. We will vote on this at the January 2026 council meeting.

Annual meeting – Jan. 25 (ASP meal) Feb 1 Snow date. If ASP cannot do the meal, we will plan a potluck.  
Annual Meeting agenda/new council members: June 2023-May 2026: Jewel Basely (2nd Term), Sherri Nissen (1st Term) Sandi Sickels (2nd Term)

New Business:

January Benevolence: Brenna attached a spreadsheet to the monthly council agenda packet which shows the organizations our benevolence goes to monthly. Pastor/Sherri will also post this spreadsheet on our bulletin board. Sandi would like to provide benevolence to the Creston school district, specifically, the food program. Currently, there is a deficit of \$21,000 in the food program. As a council we began discussions about a plan or idea in which we can help long-term. Motion by Sherri Boschee to use January's benevolence towards the school district food deficit. Second by Linda Huffman, Council approved.

2026 budget – Time and Barb are working on the budget. The 2025 budget was hoping for 125k in contributions. We ended up with a deficit of 11k. This year we are on track for donation being over 130k. Expenses are estimated (year to date) under by 15k. For a full year, our budget will be 140k with about a 10k shortfall. We have a CD that will come due this month for 15k. At some point we will need to discuss raises for staff. Pastor – comfortable with current salary but we need to ensure we are covering cost of living expenses and increases.

Weather plan for services: The following is a proposed protocol for worship services during winter weather:  
The church will conduct worship services during winter weather if the following conditions are met:  
Our facilities are safely accessible, including the parking lot and sidewalks cleared of snow and ice for able bodied people to walk safely.

The pastor can get to Creston.

A qualified person to run the AV system and the YouTube Livestream and can safely get to worship.

An accompanist can safely get to worship.

Will post to the radio, Facebook and text the congregation if services are canceled.

Since we live stream our services on YouTube, it is valuable for the congregation to conduct a worship service even when conditions are imperfect, so that those who should not venture out can be encouraged to worship from home. Members should be strongly encouraged to place their safety first in determining whether to come to the church for worship during winter weather conditions. Note: A simple service of Scripture, Prayers, and Sermon without music can be conducted for the YouTube stream, even if accompanists cannot venture out.

Motion to adopt the above winter weather protocol by: Sherri Boschee with a second by Tim Kenyon.  
Approved by Council.



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Sidewalk cleaning- winter plan. Need a plan to remove snow from our sidewalks. Tim Kenyon and Daniel Clausen volunteered to help with snow removal. Green Valley does the snow removal from the parking lot. Tim will pull and review the contract to see what it says for Green Valley. From this last storm there were pockets of thick ice and snow.

Daniel Clausen – Christmas gifts for employees? Paid employees are:

Brenna  
Jodi  
Brenda  
Elaine  
Pastor

Within special funds there is money to use to create a Christmas gift for our paid employees. Motion was made to pay each of the paid employees a Christmas gift. Motion by Sherri Boschee, Daniel Clausen Seconded the motion, Council approved.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education: The Christmas play went well, and Thank You for all who participated! Pastor – We will be planning a Mardi Gras event, more to come.

Church Property: Fellowship hall air conditioning is complete; sanctuary and office air conditioning is still in progress. They continue to get prices for basement restrooms. Need to have Jerry check the front sliding doors, they do not close properly.

Outreach Ministry: We delivered 41 Christmas gifts to Creston Specialty Care and Accura for their residents on Dec. 14. Thank you to everyone for making this possible.

Worship & Music: Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Salem Oregon has given Salem Lutheran their complete set of handbells, handbell music and tables. Sheila will need to make a trip out to Oregon to pick up! Claudia Peppers purchased candles for the Advent Service, she is submitting a receipt for \$45.63 but does not want to be reimbursed for the cost. Sheila asked Tim/Barb if they would add it as "in-kind" monies towards Claudia's giving to the church. Barb will get it recorded.

Memorial Committee:

Stewardship: Writing personal notes to giving families and will be part of the giving statement.

Endowment: Have tentative plans for a meeting in December and be a little more proactive for 2026.

Long Range Planning: Had to cancel last meeting due to the weather. Have a tentative new date of January 5, 2026, at 6:00 pm.

Other:

The next executive council meeting will be January 6th at 4:00.

Regular council meeting will be Tuesday, January 13th at 5:30 pm. Pastor will lead opening devotions.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted:

Sheila Clausen, Secretary Pro tem



*God of all comfort, our very present help in trouble, be near to me. Look on me with the eyes of your mercy; comfort me with a sense of your presence; preserve me from the enemy; and give me patience in my affliction. Restore me to health, and lead me to your eternal glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Larry Kimball, Dorothy Vanella, Kathy Kendrick, Sue McDonald, Lee Keuter, Gary Kessler, Tim Kinkade, Meyer Mixdorf, Zach Henry, Arlan Biere, Gregory Boschee, Becky Keuter, Carol Ott, Jerry Nissen, Christine Moffitt, Sandy Kessler, Josh Kendrick, Betty Wager.

*We can never thank our military men and women enough for their service and sacrifice to our country and its people. Today we express gratefulness and honor to these military troops, past and present. We pray to be shown ways in our communities, churches, and families to thank and love them better.*

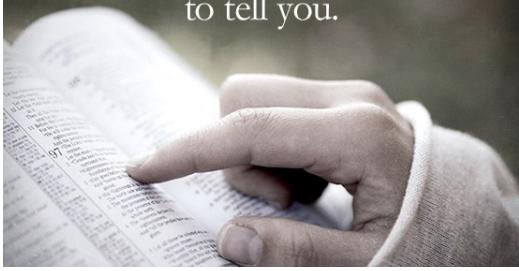
*Keep and protect these heroes and their families. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.*  
Amen.



With the help of the congregation, our outreach committee was able to deliver 41 gifts to residents at Accura and Creson Specialty Care



Reduce your stress level by taking time to unplug from the world, open your Bible, and listen to what God has to tell you.



1st	Genesis 1-3
2nd	Genesis 4-7
3rd	Genesis 8-11
4th	Job 1-5
5th	Job 6-9
6th	Job 10-13
7th	Job 14-16
8th	Job 17-20
9th	Job 21-23
10th	Job 24-28
11th	Job 29-31
12th	Job 32-34
13th	Job 35-37
14th	Job 38-39
15th	Job 40-42
16th	Genesis 12-15
17th	Genesis 16-18
18th	Genesis 19-21
19th	Genesis 22-24
20th	Genesis 25-26
21st	Genesis 27-29
22nd	Genesis 30-31
23rd	Genesis 32-34
24th	Genesis 35-37
25th	Genesis 38-40
26th	Genesis 41-42
27th	Genesis 43-45
28th	Genesis 46-47
29th	Genesis 48-50
30th	Exodus 1-3
31st	Exodus 4-6



Happy  
Birthday

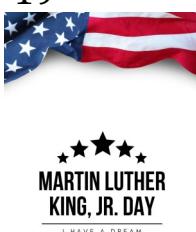
Dick Bergstrom	01/04	Dorothy Vanella	01/17
Sue Bergstrom	01/05	Josh Kendrick	01/18
Ann Levine	01/07	Hunter Sickels	01/18
Brad Abildtrup	01/08	Helen Mosman	01/20
Kyle Shaffer	01/08	Damian Richardson	01/21
Jewel Baseley	01/10	Jeremie Peterson	01/26
Marcia Fulton	01/15		

**Sit in stillness and take a moment to think back over this past year and remember the moments when people did things for you which really made a difference and send them gratitude.** Take a moment to think about the experiences that you have had this year with a clear focus of appreciation. Feel the flow of gratitude.

Life itself is a gift, and our relationship with God sustains us through all of the ups and downs that life may throw our way. **Whether it's been a great year or an extremely difficult one, God got you through it.** That in itself is something so worthy of our gratitude, that we have a God who walks alongside us on our best days, and on our worst.

**Sun****Mon****Tue****Wed****Thu****Fri****Sat**

# JANUARY

			1 Happy New Year's Day	2 	3
4 10am Worship & Communion	5 Christian Ed @ 4	6 Quilting at 1:30 Executive Council Meeting @ 4PM	7 Choir @ 5:30	8	9 
11 10am Worship	12	13 Council Meeting@ 5:30 PM Quilting at 1:30	14 Choir @ 5:30	15	16 
18 10am Worship & Communion	19 	20 Quilting at 1:30	21 Choir @ 5:30	22	23 
25 10am Worship  Congregational Meeting after Worship	26	27 Quilting at 1:30	28 Choir @ 5:30	29	30 

**SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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Salem Lutheran Church Creston IA

