



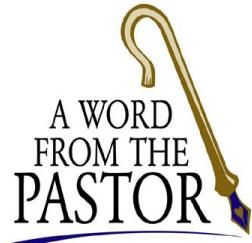
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

The Salem Life

Newsletter of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sandwich, Illinois

April 9, 2026

VOL. 53, NO. 4



Dear friends in Christ,

On the first Sunday after Easter, we hear the story of Jesus appearing to the disciples. They are locked in a room for fear of those who crucified Jesus, yet he appears in their midst, showing that it is him by the marks of the nails and spear in his hands and his side. Thomas isn't there among the disciples that day, and when the others try to tell him that Jesus is risen from the dead, he will not believe it. "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side," declares Thomas, "I will not believe."

A week later the disciples are again gathered together in one place, and Thomas is with them. Jesus appears in their midst again and confronts Thomas. He tells him to touch the marks in his hands and his side, and Thomas responds by confessing him as "My Lord and my God." Thomas does come to believe, but because he insists on proof that he can touch and see, he has been labeled ever since as "Doubting Thomas."

Thomas is not the only one to doubt the reality of Easter. Many people have doubted whether Jesus is really risen from the dead, and whether that means anything to us now. Even believers often have seasons of doubt, when they have trouble holding onto the certainty of faith. This is a normal part of our journey of faith, sometimes meandering, but always seeking for Jesus.

Yet for us as Christians, the truth and power of Easter is at the core of our faith. Christianity is not about nice people or beautiful buildings, but about faith in our Lord who died and rose again to conquer sin and death once and for all. Because Jesus is risen, we too will be raised, from every sin and oppression that crushes us, and from our physical death one day. His victory is ours as well, and our deepest hope for the future.

It is easy, even fashionable to be a doubter in our world today. Like Thomas, we haven't seen Jesus risen, so we could easily doubt everything. In the same way, we haven't seen God's kingdom fulfilled, so we could doubt whether God will actually make our world new. But as Jesus said to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have come to believe."

Just as Thomas heard the witness of the other disciples, we hear the witness of the Bible and of other people of faith. We believe that witness to be trustworthy and true, a firm foundation to base all of our life on. Setting aside doubt requires a leap of faith, a trust in our God even if we don't have all of the answers and proof that we would want. I pray that God will help each of us to make that leap of faith this Easter season, so that we may each confess Jesus as "My Lord and my God."

Yours in Christ,

Pastor John

Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church

Serving Christ!

1022 North Main Street - PO Box 105 - Sandwich, IL 60548

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Staff

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pastorjohnrothfus@gmail.com	Traditional Worship Coordinator	Nancy Rex	nancy@wearesalemlutheran.org
	Director of Contemporary Worship	Libby Welsch	libby@wearesalemlutheran.org
	Organist/Pianist	Gloria Gilbertson	
	Organist/Pianist	Connie Hanson	
	Maintenance	Nancy Hayes	

Staff Office Hours: Tuesdays - Thursdays, 9 AM-2 PM; Fridays 9 AM-12 noon

Happening this week...

Sunday, April 12

- 9:00 am Worship/Kids Church
- 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship
- 10:15 am Sunday School
- 10:15 am Fellowship Committee

Monday, April 13

- 9am—noon Quilting

Tuesday, April 14

- 9am—noon Quilting
- 5:30 pm Outreach Committee
- 6:30 pm Finance Committee

Wednesday, April 15

- 10:00 am Methuselah Coffee Group
- 10:00 am Member Support @ Cedarhurst
- 6:30 pm Confirmation at Salem

Thursday, April 16

- 8:30 -10:30 am Our Sharing Pantry Distribution
- 5:00 pm Praise Team
- 6:00 pm Handchimes
- 7:00 pm Salem Choir
- 7:00 pm AA

Friday, April 17

- 7:30 pm AA

Saturday, April 18

- 2:00 pm Sandwich Community Choir Concert

Sunday, April 19

- 9:00 am Worship/Kids Church
- 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship
- 10:15 am Adult Bible Study/Sunday School

In Our Church Family.....

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

- ⇒ Jeff Urban (*brother of Michele Farley*)
- ⇒ Todd Claxton*
- ⇒ Paula Mueller
- ⇒ Craig Cunz (*son of Ron Cunz*)
- ⇒ Brett Gilbertson (*husband of Gloria Gilbertson*)
- ⇒ Verdell "Ace" Hanson*
- ⇒ Tanya Kimmey (*daughter-in-law of Mick & Donna Kimmey*)
- ⇒ Bonnie Longwell (*neighbors of Ruth & Dale White*)
- ⇒ Nicholas Kulbartz (*son of Paul Kulbartz*)
- ⇒ Stan Benson* *Indicates Salem member



APRIL "DIAMOND PLUS" BIRTHDAY

- 4/14 Stan Benson
- 4/20 George Webster
- 4/27 Joanne VanPelt

Scripture Readings for:

Sunday, April 12: Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16;
1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

Sunday, April 19: Acts 2:14a,36-41;
Psalm 116:1-4,12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35



April 7, 2026 Salem Congregation Council Meeting Highlights

The Congregation Council met at Salem on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, starting at 6:28 p.m. Council members Jacqueline Beverage, Ron Cunz, Alan Deaton, Walter Farley, Bonnie Guyer, Connie Hanson, Durk Hellinga, Sharon Wallis, Bryan Wernli, and Pastor John Rothfusz were present.

The council voted to accept the minutes of the March 3 Congregation Council meeting, as prepared by Bonnie Guyer.

The financial reports for January were examined. These are the current balances as of the meeting.

General Fund:	\$ 17,953.61	Designated Fund:	\$ 32,169.07
Capital Fund:	\$ 65,059.29		

Council members heard monthly reports from Pastor John Rothfusz and from council members representing Salem's committees. They reviewed the calendar to highlight events coming up and to look for conflicts.

The sign project is paid for, and moving forward. The council discussed plans to begin demolition of the old sign the next day.

Bryan Wernli will make a presentation on the QR codes in our bulletin and online giving after worship on May 17 for all who would like to know more about that.

The church internet is switched to Frontier fiber optic, with better speeds. We will discontinue our Comcast service once we are confident that people are receiving the new office emails. Some people continue to have problems receiving email from the church office, which are ending up in spam folders. Please reach out to Kelly if you have problems with this.

The America 250 Committee for Sandwich is making plans for this anniversary year. If anyone has ideas for a time capsule, please let us know. We are also talking about a national potluck day for the town.

The Endowment committee will review its bylaws to see if they are clear enough. The Memorial fund balance is \$6875.

The group heard council comments from each member.

The meeting was closed at 7:31 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.



Thank you to everyone who helped with the Easter Egg Hunt and Easter Brunch. What a festive morning!

Thank you to all who participated with Wednesday services, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday, especially the singers in the Community Choir who sang the cantata, "Wondrous Love".

Thank you to Pastor John Rothfusz and also the Ministerial Association for leading our Lenten Journey.

Thank you to the people who planned, prepared, served and cleaned up after Soup Suppers.

Thank you to everyone who bought lilies, Cheryl Carls, and Nancy Hayes and Mickey Farley for decorating our worship space for Easter.

Sign Updates

The Sign Team and Property Committee are now coordinating plans with Aurora Sign Co for the building of the new sign. The City of Sandwich gave permit approval to Aurora Sign Co. Dean Lundeen, Alan Deaton, and Durk Hellinga demolished the old sign in less than a day.

Aurora Sign Co continues to work towards the finished project, tentatively scheduled for June.

Your offerings to the sign are still coming in. We definitely will not need to allocate \$10,000 from the Renovation Fund to the sign, which leaves money there for other needs in our future. Thank You!!

(Picture of sign illuminated at night.)

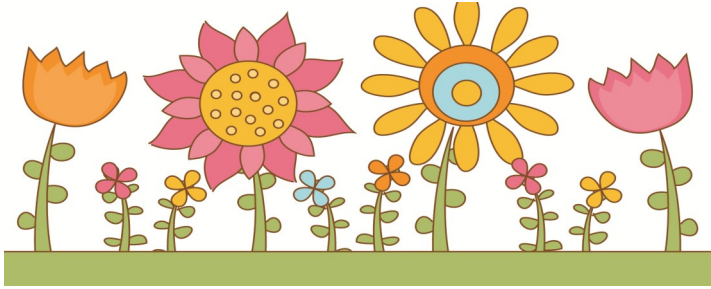


Yard Projects

Would you like to help with an area around the church, or with the flower garden across the road? We have a beautiful and eye-catching spot to share with our community, and it takes many hands to make it happen.

There's a sign up board in the Coffee Fellowship area. If you have an hour or 2 to spare, please talk to Pastor John, Bonnie, Dean, or Jan if you have any questions or to discuss how you would like to help.

Recently, some garden elves came to clean up the "bean garden" in front of the church on Main Street. Thank you so much for trimming the grasses and bushes!



Who are Salem's graduates?

**Call the office at (815) 786-9308 or
email Kelly at**

**Office@wearesalemlutheran.org
so we can congratulate our
graduates next month.**

Our Sharing Pantry Report

By Michelle Henson, Director

Thank you so much for your ongoing support to helping those in need in our community! In the first three months of 2026, we have already provided groceries for 280 households (approximately 784 individuals)! This includes 211 children under 18 and 182 senior citizens! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

In addition, we provided a ham and side dishes for 95 families. We also distributed 86 Easter baskets for children.

Thank you for your continued kindness and generosity!

April/May Items of greatest need:

- Small box of sugar
- Small vegetable oil
- Bottle of juice (any kind)
- Loaf of bread
- Instant pudding, jello
- Pancake syrup
- Boxed pasta (not spaghetti)
- Ramen noodles/Cup of Soup
- Boxed hamburger helper, Suddenly Salad
- Other ready to prepare meals

Personal Hygiene products are needed

- Toilet paper rolls
- Box of Kleenex
- Toothpaste
- Paper towels
- Bars of soap

Salem delivers Meals in May

Laura Caupert is coordinating volunteers to deliver Meals on Wheels during the month of May. There are two routes, north route and south route. Meals are picked up from Fox Valley Community Services.

See Laura to confirm days you would like to volunteer as a driver or substitute driver.

Adopt-a-Plant

The Fellowship Committee will be hosting an Adopt-a-Plant Day on Saturday, May 2 at 9:00 am. You can come to Salem and choose a plant or 2, or 3, or more. You may bring plants from your yard or indoor plants you want to trim back. Start planning now and we will meet in the parking lot to donate plants and pick plants to take home.



Northern IL Food Bank volunteers made a trip to Geneva in March to pack 9,665 apples to feed our hungry neighbors!

Those who have signed up already will pack again on April 21, 2026. The next date is May 19. Please sign up in the narthex.



History of Salem's Partnership with Northern Illinois Food Bank

On April 9, 2015 Salem Lutheran Church sent the first team of 12 volunteers to the Northern Illinois Food Bank in Geneva, Illinois. A list of the names of those volunteers is not available, but we are sure that Lyle Anderson, Ron Cunz, Walt and Mickey Farley and Dale and Ruth White were among them; and they are still regular participants today. During their first shift, they sorted and packaged 10,930 pounds of potatoes.

Salem was first introduced to NIFB by the group at St. John's Lutheran Church in Somonauk under the leadership of Dennis and Beverly Heaney. Some Salem members accompanied the Somonauk team a few times and then decided it was time to form a team of their own. Our March, 2026 volunteer shift marked the end of our eleventh consecutive year of monthly shifts, missing only one month due to winter road conditions and a few months during Covid. A total of 18 volunteers are registered to begin our twelfth year of volunteering on April 21. Through the years we have added some friends of Salem, members of other congregations, who regularly participate with our group. We have also made friends with groups from other congregations who volunteer on the same day of the month as Salem does.

During the last eleven years, working approximately 5,650 volunteer hours, our group has processed 700,694 pounds of food. If you think of that number as tons, it would equal over 350 tons of food. This is the equivalent of 565,777 individual meals. We have worked with frozen foods, fresh produce (oranges, apples, potatoes, sweet corn, cabbage, sweet potatoes, onions, and more), canned vegetables, holiday boxes, school backpacks, granola bars, fruit snacks, dry pasta and more. Never underestimate the importance of a few hours of volunteer efforts.

Salem Lutheran Church was honored as Volunteer Organization of the Year in 2017. Our team was also spotlighted in the January, 2025 issue of the Northern Illinois Food Bank Helping Hands Volunteer Newsletter.

Salem's regular volunteer shift is the third Tuesday morning of every month. New volunteers are always welcome. Please speak to Team Leader Walt Farley for more information. This is **God's Work. Our Hands.**



Salem is starting another season of cleaning up ditches along West Sandwich Road. Meet Mickey Farley in the parking lot of Prairie View Elementary School (1201 Castle St). Mickey has the vests and garbage bags for the job. It is suggested that you wear boots or sturdy shoes and gloves.

Dates for your calendar are (all Saturdays):

April 18 June 20
August 22 October 24



Calling all Piggy Banks!

It's time to turn in your piggy banks on the marble table in the Narthex if you still have one. Thank you for helping the ELCA Good Gifts Global Barnyard.

The Sunday School youth will soon be choosing which animal(s) they will be donating to change a family's life.



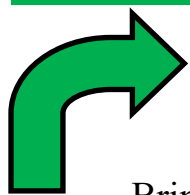
FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Methuselah Coffee Group

Come for coffee and a donut at 10:00 am on Wednesday morning at Salem with the Methuselah group. All are welcome!

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch meets the second Wednesday of most months. The group traveled to Plano to enjoy food and fellowship at Two Partner's Café. Plans are to go to The Office in Wedron on Wednesday, May 13.



Sunday, June 14

Styrofoam Recycling Day

Bring clean Styrofoam to Alan's Green Machine.



Salem Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 105

Sandwich, IL 60548



UPCOMING EVENTS

Lutheran Identity/Salem New Member Class

Are you interested in becoming a member of Salem Lutheran? Or are you a member, but would like to know more about the faith that we share? If there is an interest, Pastor John will lead a class to go over some basics about our Lutheran faith and who we are as God's church. Please let Pastor John know if you are interested in taking part.

Saturday, May 2: Adopt-a-Plant

Bring plants to adopt in the Parking Lot at 9:00 am or come choose plants you'd like to take home.

Saturday, May 2: Mother's Day project with Libby

The Fellowship Committee is hosting a painting on glass party and you're invited! Come paint a glass mug, teacup, or clear plate or mason jar with lights. Join us in the Fellowship Hall at 1:00 pm on Saturday, May 2. Kids can paint a gift for Mother's Day and adults may come too. All the materials you will need will be provided. Cost \$5.

Sunday, May 17: Bryan Wernli will discuss Salem's QR code after worship. Come learn what a QR code is and how to use them.

Sunday, May 17: You're invited to the Sunday School picnic at 11:00 to celebrate the end of a successful Sunday School year.