



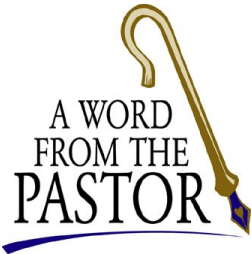
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

The Salem Life

Newsletter of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sandwich, Illinois

February 5, 2026

VOL. 53, NO. 2



Dear Friends in Christ,

The season of Lent is quickly approaching. On February 18, with Ash Wednesday, we will enter into this holy season of repentance and recommitment to our walk with the Lord. I invite each of you to take time apart to make this a significant season of faith in your life.

In particular, I invite you to share with us in our Wednesday Lenten services, each Wednesday at 7 p.m. We will share in the Holden Evening Prayer service, lifting up our prayers in peace and beauty to God.

Our theme for these Lenten services will be a focus on the five promises that we (or our parents) make in our baptism. We repeat these promises when we affirm our baptism at Confirmation or when someone joins the church.

You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,

to hear his Word and share in his supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus,

and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Each person responds: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

How do we live out these promises in all of life? How can we engage more deeply in what God is up to in the world, joining faithfully in the work of God's coming kingdom?

Our baptism sets us on a lifelong journey as disciples, defined by our relationship to God, our relationship to our church, our relationships with those in our neighborhood, work, and community, and our relationship with the wider world. We live as citizens of heaven, calling for God's justice and peace in the world around us. In all of these relationships, we strive to live as children of God, following our savior, Jesus. We want to become the people we were created in our baptism to be.

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Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church

Serving Christ!

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

Phone: (815) 786-9308

Email: office@wearesalemlutheran.org

Web site: www.wearesalemlutheran.org

Staff

Pastor	Administrative Assistant	Kelly Clason	office@wearesalemlutheran.org
Pastor John Rothfus	Financial Secretary, Etc.	Gina Carlson	financial@wearesalemlutheran.org
Phone: (779) 901-0803	Bookkeeper	Karen Wesson	bookkeeper@wearesalemlutheran.org
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, February 8

9:00 am Worship/Kids Church

10:00 am Coffee Fellowship

10:15 am Sunday School

10:15 am Fellowship Committee

Monday, February 9

Tuesday, February 10

5:30 pm Outreach Committee

6:30 pm Finance Committee

Wednesday, February 11

10:00 am Methuselah Coffee Group

11:30 am Lunch Bunch

Thursday, February 12

8:30 -10:30 am Our Sharing Pantry Distribution

5:00 pm Praise Team

5:45 pm Handchimes

7:00 pm Salem Choir

7:00 pm AA

Friday, February 13

7:30 pm AA

Saturday, February 14

Sunday, February 15

9:00 am Worship/Kids Church

10:00 am Coffee Fellowship (downstairs) with
Sunday School Mardis Gras Party

10:15 am Sign Presentation

SEE BIRTHDAYS ON PAGE 7.

In Our Church Family.....

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:



⇒ Paula Mueller

⇒ Deanna Park (*girlfriend of David Boczko**)

⇒ Paul Kulbartz*

⇒ Nicholas Kulbartz (*son of Paul Kulbartz*)

⇒ Stan Benson*

***Indicates Salem member**



Thank you

Thank you to all who expressed their condolences so warmly at the death of Mari Eklund, my mother-in-law. She was a good mother to Elise, and a blessing in our lives. We will miss her, and give thanks for all that we shared. We will travel to Tucson at a later date for a memorial service.

With Sympathy

Scripture Readings for:

Sunday, February 8: Isaiah 58:1-9a[9b-12];
Psalm 112:1-9[10]; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12[13-16];
Matthew 5:13-20

Sunday, February 15: Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2;
2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9

The promises of our baptism challenge us to live out our faith practices each day. These faith practices are the ways we respond to God as we *pray, study, worship, invite, give, serve, and encourage*. These faith practices:

Draw us to God;

Shape and form us;

Nurture us in faith;

Conform us to Christ;

Deepen our relationships with God, our faith community, and our world;

Align us to the pursuit of God's will and God's kingdom.

How can you more deeply claim the promises of your baptism, and live them out regularly in your life? These faith practices will bless you and shape your heart to live out deeper faith in relationship to God and your neighbor.

Come share with us as we claim the gift of faith together in this Lenten season!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor John Rothfus



February 3, 2026 Salem Congregation Council Meeting Highlights

The Congregation Council met at Salem on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, starting at 6:30 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 Rothfus were present.

The council voted to accept the minutes of the January 6 Congregation Council meeting, as prepared by Alan Deaton.

The financial reports for December were examined in January for year end results. These are the current balances as of the meeting.

General Fund:	\$ 7,415.83	Designated Fund:	\$ 37,922.26
Capital Fund:	\$ 45,088.72	Loan Balance:	\$ 369,003.08

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

Bryan Wernli has created QR codes to speed access to online giving in worship or on our video recording. He also made a code to help access to the church WiFi network.

Summer Youth Trip planning is proceeding, with a mission trip planned to Louisville, Kentucky.

The council approved a motion to approve the fundraising plan for the outdoor sign. It will kick off on February 15th.

Lyle Anderson was appointed to the Audit Committee.

The Lenten Soup Suppers were planned and assigned to committees. Those offerings will go to Our Sharing Pantry. Special Lent offerings will support our Synod Benevolence commitment. Easter Sunday envelopes and loose offerings will support the general budget.

The group heard council comments from each member.

The meeting was closed at 7:24 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

Progress on the Salem Sign!

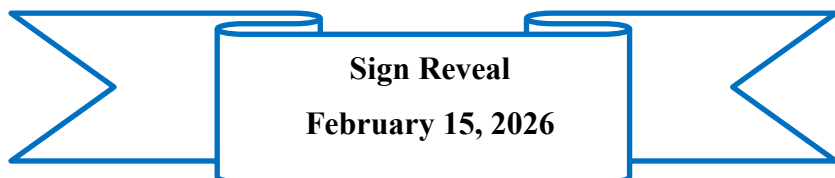
Alan Deaton, Sign Committee Chair, will make a presentation to everyone on **February 15, 2026** after worship.

*Please come! Learn how you
can help make this happen.*

The Sign Committee has been meeting and researching for years. We took the time we needed to ask questions and get informed about all the choices and costs involved. We gathered pictures of church and school signs from all over the state on our individual travels.

The Wait Is Almost Over!

- The Sign Team agreed to a design.
- The Council approved the design.
- The Team requested funds from the Memorial Fund.
- The Team requested funds from the Property/Renovation Fund.
- It is time to present the design to the congregation and invite you to help us give special gifts to make this happen.
- After 100% of the funds have been raised, demolition of the old sign and construction of the new sign can begin, weather permitting.



Coffee Fellowship

The Christian Education Committee invites you to a Mardi Gras Party after the Sign Presentation on **Sunday, February 15** in the Fellowship Hall. Sunday School students will be making masks and parading around as if they were in NOLA (*New Orleans Louisiana*)!



Annual Congregational Meeting Report

The Salem Lutheran Annual Meeting was held Sunday, January 25th at 10 a.m. After devotions and calling a quorum, we saw a video from the Northern Illinois Synod, celebrating the ministry that we share together as a synod. We approved the resolutions of thanks and appreciation for so many people who serve faithfully at Salem. The audit report and the Annual Bulletin of Reports were received and accepted.

The proposed budget for 2026 was discussed and adopted, with thanks to our treasurer and finance team who put it together.

The following members of the nominating committee were elected: Donna Fraley, Dean Lundeen, and Kelsey Mattson. The voting members for the Synod Assembly were elected as well: Nancy Rex, Durk Hellinga, and Marilyn Wouda. Nancy Rex was elected to the Endowment and Memorial Funds Board.

The meeting was adjourned for a delicious potluck lunch.



What is Lent?

It is forty days of stripping down
 To the living essentials;
 It is forty days of facing truth
 About one's self-indulgent evasions;
 It is forty days of fellowshipping
 With Christ in the desert;
 It is forty days of rejoicing
 in God's mercy and forgiveness.



ELCA Good Gifts Global Barnyard Sunday School Lenten Project

Salem Sunday School will be collecting donations for ELCA Good Gifts Global Barnyard throughout the Lenten season.

You are invited to join them in their effort. Watch for little piggy banks that you can pick up to help save your spare change to alleviate world hunger.

Our Sharing Pantry

The pantry is hosted at St. John's and supported by 10 area churches, plus donations from local businesses, individuals, and civic and professional organizations. Families are eligible to receive food once a month, and distributions are made on Thursdays (8:30 to 10:30 am) and every third Monday of each month (4:00 pm to 6:00 pm). A photo ID is all that is required.

- Checks can be written to Salem Lutheran Church, write on memo line: Our Sharing Pantry. Money is sent onto the organization monthly.
- A basket is in the narthex to accept food donations. Current Pantry needs are:

Tuna	Rice
Cereal	Baked Beans
Kleenex	Diced Tomatoes
Toothpaste	Bar Soap
Paper Towels	



Blessing Box Donations

Supplies are always welcome for the Blessing Box. If you see any good sales while you are shopping and want to show your generosity, these items are what seem to go quickly.

Cereal	Canned Meats
Crackers	Soup
Prepared Pudding cups	

There is a plastic tote under the Sign up Table to add your food donations. **THANK YOU!**

Fat Tuesday

The Worship Committee invites you to join them for a supper of pancakes and toppings on Tuesday, February 17 at 5:30 pm to help celebrate Pancake Day, otherwise known as "Fat Tuesday". This is an old European custom practiced on the day before Ash Wednesday to use up ingredients forbidden during the fasting of Lent.



Salem Worship during Lent

Ash Wednesday Worship is on
February 18 1:00 pm and 7:00 pm

You are invited to 6:00 pm Soup Suppers served by these committee members followed by 7:00 pm Lenten Services on:

February 25 - Fellowship

March 4 - Worship

March 11 - Finance/Property

March 18 - Christian Ed/Outreach

March 25 - Ruth Unit/Member Support

A dramatic painting of the prophet Jonah being swallowed by a large, dark fish. The fish's mouth is wide open, and Jonah is falling into it. The scene is set against a dark, stormy background.

Lent with Jonah

NAVIGATING A SEASON OF
REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

LENTEN BREAKFAST SERIES, 2026
Wednesdays, February 18th - March 25th, 9AM-10AM
Hosted at The Federated Church of Sandwich
Presented by The Sandwich/Somonauk Ministerial Association



Volunteers made a trip to Geneva to pack food for our hungry neighbors in January. They provided 3,826 meals (4,592 pounds of canned goods).

Those who have signed up already will pack again on February 17, 2026 and the next date is March 17. Please sign up in the narthex.



Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch met at Sidetrack'd in January to enjoy food and fellowship. We chose to stay close for February and meet at the Somonauk Pancake House on Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 11:30. Come join us!



FEBRUARY "DIAMOND PLUS" BIRTHDAY

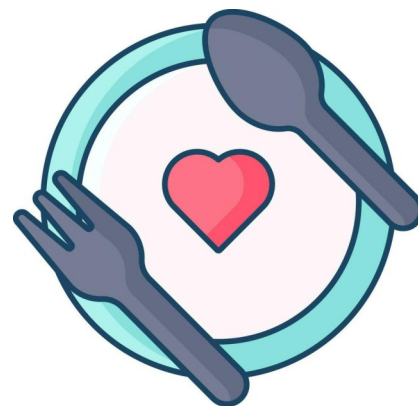


217 Pastor Steve Mindrup



Youth Mission Trip

St. John Lutheran in Mendota is planning a summer youth mission trip to Louisville, Kentucky in late June, led by YouthWorks. Pastor Elise will be taking part. They offered to let High School youth from Salem Lutheran share with them in this trip. Salem has a long and meaningful history of sending young people on service trips, and we are excited for this chance. Last year Pastor John went on this trip with two youth. It is also good to find ways to share in ministry with St. John Lutheran in Mendota.



Community Fellowship Feast on February 24

Marilyn Wouda is coordinating the meal at Salem. We will serve fried chicken for the main entree and donations to buy the chicken would be appreciated. Please give donations to Marilyn or put in the offering plate clearly marked for Fellowship Feast. There will soon be a sign up sheet for volunteers for the evening. Please add it to your calendar and join in this meal with our neighbors.

Salem Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 105

Sandwich, IL 60548



Holy Week is March 29, 2026 to April 5, 2026

Please complete this form and return to Salem to reserve Easter lily plants to help decorate the sanctuary for Easter worship services. Order deadline is Sunday, March 29, 2026.

NAME _____ How Many? _____

How shall we list in the bulletin?

Given by _____

Given in memory of _____

Given in honor of _____

I will pick up my plant(s) after Easter: YES _____ NO _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Please enclose payment of \$12.00 per plant with your order.

