

Salem United Methodist Church

December 2020 Newsletter

«187 Years and Still Loving, Serving and Celebrating»



SALEM Methodist Protestant Church 1833



SALEM United Methodist Church 2020

12 High Street, Brookeville, Maryland 20833

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

TO THE SALEM UM CHURCH COMMUNITY



Rev. Emily and Chris Hart along with their 4-legged babies. Teddy and Misha

How is it December already? By the time you read this, Thanksgiving will be over, and the season leading up to Christmas will be beginning. As I write this, I am thinking about a new pumpkin pie crust recipe I will try (a yummy gluten-free crust made from pecans!), where I'd like to put our Christmas tree in the parsonage (probably in the dining room that now hosts my sewing machine and our piano instead of a table), and what the Advent season might look like in a new church during a pandemic. Will we be able to light the Advent candles together? Will it need to be virtual? If so, does that mean you'll only see me in each service, rather than seeing the beauty of our extended community? And what about our

candlelight service where we close in Silent Night? What will that look like?

This December is beginning with so many questions that I'm positive I'm missing important ones!

The only thing that I know for sure is that no matter what this season will bring, God will be with us. You've already heard that Christmas isn't about the gifts, it's not about the decorations. (It's not even about pumpkin pie!) Many of us will say it's about together-ness. That's true, but it's even more true than we can imagine. This is the time we celebrate God eternal, intense, un-remitting *with-ness* with us. If you missed that sermon, check out the replay on YouTube or Facebook! God so deeply wants to be with us that God created a new possibility out of the impossible. God became a human. Full God became full human and yet both at once. It's enough to make your head spin. The point is that God is within us evermore.

Even cooler, God makes this amazing incarnation with ingredients that shouldn't work together. A young, engaged woman, the Holy Spirit, political unrest, and a compassionate stepfather. This recipe shouldn't have worked out, but it did. Our God loves to take the impossible and create possibilities. God's desire to be with us cannot be bounded by our expectations.

So, no matter if my pie crust works out, the tree is in the "right" place, or who lights the Advent candles, God will be with us. God will be creating possibilities for connection, growth, and compassion if only we would be awake to look for it.

As you prepare for this holiday season, take some time to wonder about the miracle of God's with-ness. What does that mean to you?

A prayer for our community: Creative, Creator God, create in us clean hearts, expectant spirits, and readiness to follow when you call. While we want to follow you, we are getting so, so tired. Let us rest in you, oh God. Let us lean on your strength. Fill us with your spirit of hope. As we enter the Advent season, help us to prepare our hearts and minds to receive your ultimate gift of "with-ness" in Jesus, our Emmanuel. Amen.

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Worship Services:

December 21—Blue Christmas, 7:30 P.M.

December 24—Christmas Eve Worship:

- 5:00 P.M. ONLINE only (no in-person service). Watch on Facebook or YouTube!
- 7:30 P.M. in the sanctuary
- All welcome to join in the parking lot at 8:45 P.M. to sing Silent Night with candles (distanced, masked)

December 27th (the Sunday after Christmas) will be online only with the Bishop and Cabinet again. Join on Zoom, Facebook, or YouTube. No in-person service.

Worship every Sunday at 9:30 A.M. in-person, or on Zoom with Myron and Kim, or on YouTube or Facebook.

A WARM WELCOME



On November 8th we were honored to have as our Guest Speaker Rev. Dr. Sandi Johnson.

We left service with one image in our heads; of God's picture on our refrigerators! What would He look like to you? Little children with their ribs showing? Ministers preaching to empty churches in faraway lands? Men and women standing on the side of the road hoping someone will hand them a dollar? Furniture piled on the side of the road where the law enforcers just dumped it?

Or, are the Thanksgiving/Christmas baskets over-flowing and the Snowmen quickly picked up. Was that a \$5.00 you placed in that open hand? Were those coats, shoes, other good clothing to pass on to those without!

Yes Rev. Sandi, we listened and we responded, God's picture is, if not physically, on our

refrigerators, but it is in our hearts! Thank you and please come again.

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

November 29th, on YouTube, The First Sunday was presented by the Staff of the Washington Council. It was an inspiring service and the message of HOPE very encouraging.

DECORATING THE CHURCH Saturday, December 5 10:00 A.M.



On Saturday, December 5, Rev. Emily, Suzanne, Debbie A., Kathryn, Anne, Velma and Fred met to give our sanctuary the joyful look of Christmas. Suzanne worked in the yard, after bringing everything up from storage: Below is her handiwork:



Everyone else was trying to fit everything else in to be seen by the camera for our video services.



Suzanne Friis submitted a poem about the history of the Christmas tree. Very interesting: Enjoy!

History of the Chrismon Tree

Each Christmas we have a Chrismon tree in our Sanctuary. But do you know what a Chrismon tree is?

Here is a little history.

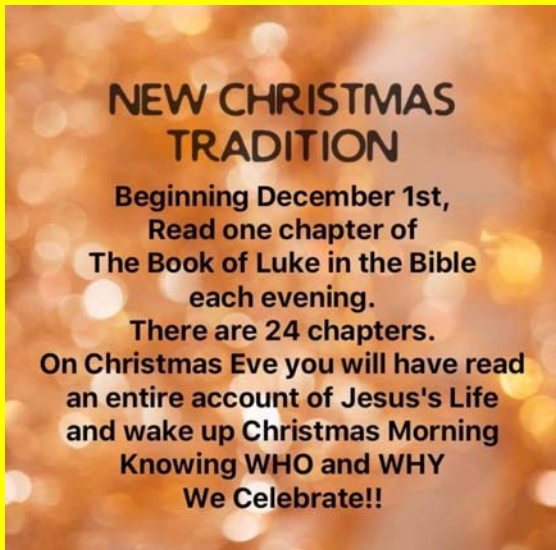
The Chrismon tree began as an offering to God in the Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Danville, Virginia in 1957. It has become a symbol of praise and thanksgiving. Mrs. Frances Spencer, the originator of the Chrismons, said, "I realized Christmas was the birthday of the Christ Child. Let us honor the Child, the Person He is." After many weeks of research, Mrs. Spencer came across some drawings of designs called Chrismons. "Chrismon" (Kriz'mon) is a combination of parts of two words: Christ and MONogram. A Chrismon is just that, a monogram of Christ. The sketches found were copies of Chrismons designed and carved or drawn by some of the earliest Christians. The monograms were found in many places – some on jewelry and utensils, others on doors or in catacombs or in buildings. Early Christians used them to identify themselves to one another, to designate meeting places of the church, and sometimes, to show unbelievers where they stood. The designs were quite beautiful and would make lovely tree decorations. Mrs. Spencer said, "It occurred to me that by using these early symbols of our faith to decorate the tree, we would bring out distinctly the real reason we celebrate this day of the year. I hoped such a tree would not only be worthy of being placed in the Lord's house but

would also contribute to the spirit of worship in this holy season.” All Chrismon are made in a combination of white and gold. White, the liturgical color for Christmas, refers to our Lord’s purity and perfection, the gold, to His majesty and glory. The evergreen tree, which symbolizes the eternal life which our Savior has won for us, is background for the tiny white lights. There are some 35 Chrismons including a variety of crosses, a lamb, ship, butterfly, lamp, rooster, star of David, crown of thorns and chalice

Taken from an article from published by gloptbaptist.org

FROM 2019

I posted this last year and thought it might be a good reminder for this year



HOW ABOUT A GLANCE OF CHRISTMAS PAST?

Can you name them? I can't! If so, send me the names and I will publish them in January.



And another



A NOTE OF THANKS

Our family would like to thank everyone at Salem for their cards and notes of sympathy at the passing of my mother, Charlotte Gehr. A special thank you to Rev. Emily and those who made the video of condolences. I was deeply touched as I saw your faces and heard your voices. My mother would have loved the fact that she was remembered so fondly. She enjoyed attending worship, helping in the kitchen, visiting with you, and being present at a variety of events at Salem. Often, she would ask me about certain individuals. Mother did not forget the relationships she made there.

Many of us have taken this journey of grief, especially this past year. As our hearts ache from our losses, our hope remains in the Resurrection and the Life Everlasting. Thank you, Salem, for ministering to our family once again in our time of need.

Your former pastor,
Rev. Sue

*For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given and the
government shall be upon his
shoulder and his name shall be
called Wonderful, Counsellor,
The mighty God, The everlasting
Father, The Prince of Peace.*

-Isaiah 9:6-7 (KJV)

FROM THE CONGREGATION

Gratitude

By Buck Bartley

As I look out across our rear deck at our gorgeous birds excitedly feeding at our bird feeder framed by the beautiful stand of woods in the background, I am reminded of a story in a recent devotion in the Upper Room, by Bob LaForge of New Jersey. Bob wrote that daily he passed a forest of trees which he paid little attention to, until one day with traffic at a standstill he noticed a walking path into those woods. So, the next weekend he hiked that path. And said the following: "I saw many varieties of mushrooms, elegant ferns, complaining squirrels, and scampering chipmunks. When I looked up, I saw beautiful rays of sunshine through the canopy of leaves. It was tranquil and stunning."

How often do we take for granted the beauty that surrounds us? So, everybody let's wake up and pay attention to everything that is happening around us. In this Thanksgiving season let us be grateful to God for the privilege to be alive as part of God's glorious creation. As our dear departed friend, Randy Kennedy, said to us all, "Remember every day is a good day on God's beautiful Earth." Thanks be to God!

Peace and love to all, Buck

P.S. Take a moment to read the 100th Psalm.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

If your name should be on one of these lists, please contact: velma_durant@yahoo.com. We don't want to leave you out. Thank you.

Our December Birthdays are:

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Groves, Lexie | 12/10 |
| Achstetter, Barb | 12/11 |
| Shorb-Sterling, Sue | 12/21 |

December Anniversaries

There are no Anniversaries this month.

THANKSGIVING BASKETS

Salem Congregation would like to take this moment in our reading to offer a word of thanks and express our gratitude to our faithful Missions Director of MANY YEARS Elizabeth (Libby)

Wright. We could make a list of all the different projects she has chaired but there would be no room for any other news. So, when you see Libby, just stop and say thanks for all your hard work and faithfulness.



Above is a picture of the food baskets being loaded in the car to be delivered to St. Peters Catholic Church for distribution.

We are pleased to announce that Salem has once again supplied 4-Dinner baskets for those who might not otherwise have Thanksgiving Dinner, together with St. Peter's Catholic Church (who coordinates the effort) and other churches in the area, we team together to make sure families are able to celebrate.

Y.M.C.A. SNOWMEN



Each year Salem participating in the Y.M.C.A.'s Snowman program, providing gifts for underprivileged children who are enrolled in their special program. Thank you, everyone who helped these children not to be forgotten this year.



Above is a picture of the gifts; below pictured is Libby turning over the gifts to the Y.M.C.A representative'



A word from ME, whatever my title is:

First, let me thank you for allowing me to produce your newsletter. I know this year I have missed several months, but I was in no condition to think. This has been a rough year for all of us; getting used to wearing a mask, washing our hands wasn't so hard (that was normal!) but adding a time limit was a little hard. We all have an internal wash-time in our heads that's hard to break! What is more challenging is the distancing! As you know, I am a hugger, can't hug six-feet apart! (Here is where I would add a smiley face). I *lost count of how many families* in our church have lost someone near and dear to them. John 14 (please read it—I'm old fashion—I like King James Version), these words have been a great comfort. I find myself quoting scripture when my spirits start falling, and God's peace slowly fills that empty spot, and the smile comes back into my life.

Now, just a few days after Christmas, we will be entering a New Year. Is this the year the Lord will come? No one knows the day or hour, but as John said in Revelations, "Come quickly!" However, even

if He gives us another year, we **MUST** live the Beatitudes, live as God directs. God will provide; there are now more vaccines for this COVID-19, and I have seen ads for people to test some of them. There is a light at the end of the tunnel! Please remember 2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV) 'For God hath not given us the spirit of fear but of **POWER** and **LOVE** and **A SOUND MIND**!' This does not give us the liberty to remove our mask or throw a huge Holiday party. God gave us a spirit called common sense. Follow what our Governor ordered, isolate/distance/wear your mask, wash your hands. I was told that saying the Lord's Prayer is a good way to time your hand washing. Try it! **MERRY CHRISTMAS!** Velma

OUR COMMUNITY

Eyeglass Collection: Salem continues to collect used eyeglasses, cell phones and hearing aids to donate to Lions Club. Please leave in the designated box in Salem Community Hall.

THE LORD'S TABLE

The Lord's Table is now at Epworth United Methodist Church, 9008 Rosemont Drive, Gaithersburg. Volunteers from Salem serve the first Friday of the month from 1:00–5:00 P.M. Please consider serving.

OLNEY HELP NEEDS HELP

Olney Help, our local food pantry, is always in need of Help itself. It relies on your gifts of foods, grocery store gift cards, or checks. With the effects on the economy because of the pandemic, they "run out" of supplies quickly. Their address is:

Olney Help
P.O. Box 430
Olney, MD 20830–0430
Telephone No. (301) 774–4334

***"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."
(Luke 2:7)***



10When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

11On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:10-11)

Our Yvette Thurston made all of these Scarves, called "Sisters Scarves," to be given to people who are living in subsidized housing. You can purchase scarves and a gift card for the women and families to receive these gifts of love. Yvette feels she has been given so much and wants to support people less fortunate than she is. Contact Yvette to find out how you can help!

CONTACT Information

Reverend Emily Hart takes a Sabbath day on Friday for rest and renewal! She also honors time with her husband and dogs in the evening. Please contact her on Friday and after 8:30 P.M. only in an emergency (or a scheduled meeting!).

Church Telephone No.: (301) 774-7772

Reverend Emily's e-mail:

pastor@salemunitedmethodist.org

Reverend Emily's cell phone: (443) 846-5110

Church Website: www.salemunitedmethodist.org

Newsletter: velma_durant@yahoo.com

[NOTE: There is an underscore between my first and last name. My cell phone (240) 328-4810 .]

PRAYER SHAWLS



Know someone who could use some spiritual comfort? Give them a prayer shawl.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)



A GIFT OF LOVE



The Salem Newsletter is assembled and published by Velma Durant, and edited by Rev. Emily Hart.