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

NEWSLETTER

March 2025

A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR



When I was around 10 I got into a debate with my dad about the worthwhile-ness of fasting. We were in the middle of Lent and all my friends seemed to be giving up chocolate.

"Honestly," I told my dad, "giving up chocolate as a way to get closer to God is stupid. What's that gonna do? I should be adding in things to help, not just taking away random things I like."

My pastor dad always valued my opinion, so he listened carefully. Then he told me about ancient Christians called "ascetics" who

fasted as ways of protesting unjust systems or as ways of losing the "trappings of this earth" to grow closer to God. Wealthy women in early Christianity had little to control over anything in their lives outside of food.

Extremely holy women would fast from food or give food away as their main way of connecting to God. Some of them even survived only on the Holy Eucharist. (To learn more about this, ask me for the article, "Fast,

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Feast, and Flesh: the religious significance of food to medieval women"). Male ascetics called "Stylites" would live on the top of poles for years at a time (no, that's not a typo!). They would forgo anything they needed other than what their supporters would bring them. Their whole life revolved around trying to get closer to God. Don't believe me? Look it up. These folks were so holy that many of them were made into saints. Their tears and prayers would heal people.

Ten-year-old Emily was not swayed. "That's stupid."

That year I decided to give my allowance to a local homeless shelter instead. Another year I decided to give up TV because I could see how that could keep me from spending time with God. I always needed my Lenten devotion to make sense. If I were to fast from sweets, at the time, it would have been a sneaky attempt at spiritualizing a diet.

"Let's give up sweets and see how much weight we'll lose... oh, I mean how close to God we get!"

This year for Lent our church will be doing a series called "All We Need." We're going to do a deep dive into the things we need, our communities need, and the world needs. We'll also be working on meeting three tangible needs during "mini-missions" after church each week: collecting supplies for Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, packing hygiene kits for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), and then collecting for Olney Help.

I'm not as sassy about Lenten disciplines as I was when I was 10 (thank goodness!). Now, I'll just say you should pick something that will connect with your spiritual life. Have something separating you from God? Give it

up for a while. Have something you'd like to do to get closer to God? Try it out. See a need in the world you can meet? There's no holier way to be God's hands and feet in the world. You are invited to join us to see and meet All We Need.

Blessings,
Rev. Emily

LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE

February's Leadership Team meeting assessed three tenets that are central to its function in the church. They are Goal Review and Accountability, Pastoral Goals, and Generative and Strategic Work.

Goal Review and Accountability is about the current activity of Salem. We evaluated how well we, the Leadership Team, are achieving the goals we set forth at the Strategic Retreat the year before. We agreed then that unity and divisiveness were two compelling issues that could cause us to lose sight of our Mission and Vision. In reviewing to date, the Team and Pastor have met with success in assembling three Braver Angel workshops designed to open lines of understanding, communication and debate between groups who don't all think exactly alike. Reverend Emily's Unity sermon series is structured around the Book of Romans. Unity in the love of God and Jesus and for our neighbors are main points in the series.

Pastor Goals are developed by Rev. Emily and discussed with the Leadership Team. They include ministerial training, sermon writing retreats, hiring church employees and outreach into the Salem congregation and surrounding community. Rev. Emily is taking charge and meeting these goals by attending Financial Leadership training in quarterly

meetings. She has assembled a financial strategy team who receive from her the training she is getting. She has filled the administrative specialist and facility manager positions to take on some duties for the church.

Generative and Strategic work is the forward look at what goals we as a team can develop to encourage participation among our congregants in alignment with Salem's Mission and Vision. We are discussing starting Work Groups. We hope to provide one which will inventory Salem's physical condition and categorize what needs to be fixed now and what major expenses for equipment the church can defer. Salem's current missions are The Lord's Table, Olney Help, Prayer Shawls, Greeting Cards and mini-Missions. A Visitation Ministry plan is in the works. That mission will need team members in the near future. Ideas raised during the Generative and Strategic Goals discussions will become the topics of this year's Strategic Retreat.

As always, you are invited to come and observe our meetings every second Sunday of the month after services.

If you have anything you would like the Leadership Team to consider, please forward to Mark Aebig (aebigm@gmail.com)

Mark Aebig, chair

Members: Quinn Anderson, Chet Babylon, Buck Bartley, Churchill Groves, David Heinbuch, Janice Vieira, Hisashi Yamagata

MARCH SERMON SERIES



To set ourselves up well for the year, we have been doing a deep dive into Romans to see how Paul encouraged early Christians to live in unity even though they have serious division and valid grievances with each other.

I care deeply about loving others. While I don't always like what Paul has to say (which is a story for another time!) his writing is powerful and incredibly helpful in figuring out *what really matters* in following Christ. Join us to start the new year with **hope**.

The final sermon in this series:

March 2 Nothing Can Separate Us: The Love of God in Christ *Romans 8:26-39*

The next sermon series is:



What do you need to survive and thrive? We all know about the basics: air, food, water shelter. What else do you need? Sleep, perhaps? Human contact? An abiding sense of purpose? Prayer?

What do the people in your congregation need? What are they missing and what do

they long for? How about your neighbors, the people beyond your church doors? We need a multitude of different things.

This Lenten season, we're going to talk about it in this worship series, *All We Need*.

Each week, we'll explore what the scripture for the season reveals about our needs, personally and communally. We'll explore needs in our preaching and children's messages, in Sunday liturgy, and in a robust devotional guide. Not every need the series explores is obvious. Inspired by the Revised Common Lectionary, *All We Need* explores topics like the need for sleep, change, and beauty. Each week's scripture will redefine and expand what we think of as needs.

Join us as we explore the intricate tapestry of human needs, and discover the transformative power of Christ and community throughout the Lenten season.

All We Need series © 2025 Barn Geese Worship. Used by permission. [Adapted by Rev. Emily Hart.]

Ash Wednesday, March 5, 7:00 P.M.
Joint service at Wesley Grove United Methodist Church, 23640 Woodfield Rd., Gaithersburg, MD 20882, sermon by Dr. Rev. Nick Works

March 9 1st Sunday in Lent: the need to embrace vulnerability *Luke 4: 1-13*

March 16 2nd Sunday in Lent: the need for sleep *Luke 9: 28-36*

March 23 3rd Sunday in Lent: the need for an advocate *Luke 13: 1-9*

March 30 4th Sunday in Lent: the need for change *Joshua 5: 9-12; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32*

MISSIONS

The Lord's Table

The next Salem volunteer day at The Lord's Table is **Friday, March 7**. The location is Epworth United Methodist Church, 9008 Rosemont Drive, Gaithersburg, MD. Admin Specialist, Michael, is our coordinator. He has set up 2-hour shifts: 1-3 P.M. and 3-5 P.M. To sign up or for more info, email him at admin@salemunitedmethodist.org.

Olney HELP Food Needs

You may leave non-perishable food donations in the box under the table in the sanctuary or in the marked box in the Community Hall. Most needed items are oatmeal, salad dressing, jars of spaghetti sauce, pancake syrup, canned peas, and canned tuna, albacore and chicken breast. Also needed are toilet paper, tissues, paper towels, fruit juices, canned fruit in 100% juice (especially peaches), fruit bowls, pancake and waffle mix, sloppy joe sauce, canned beef ravioli, Poise incontinence pads, grape jelly, and other fruit jelly.

Olney Help has an Amazon wish list where items are listed as Highest Priority or High Priority, making it very easy to shop. [Click here](#) to access "Olney Help Pantry Food 2025" on Amazon.

Any pantry friendly item (everything you're used to seeing on previous lists) can be donated. **Please do not donate expired food – it will only be discarded.**

If you are interested in volunteering or know someone in need, please call their Helpline at 301-774-4334. If you wish to make a financial donation, see their webpage at olneyhelp.org.

A thank you letter sent to Rev. Hart:
February 16, 2025

Dear Rev. Hart,

On behalf of Olney HELP, we sincerely thank you for your generous donation to our pantry in December 2024. As we close out the year, we are proud to share that we made **1,453 deliveries** to families in the Greater Olney area—a **significant increase** over the past few years. This milestone was made possible because of the generosity and kindness of supporters like you.

Your continued support enables us to provide food and assistance to families facing hardship. We are truly grateful for your partnership and commitment to helping our neighbors in need.

With heartfelt thanks,

Christine Nesbitt

Olney HELP

Prayer Shawls

Prayer shawls are available free for anyone to give to someone who is ill or needs comfort. Feel free to pick one up near the coat rack.

Greeting cards

On the table leading into the sanctuary, there's a basket full of greeting cards as well as a directory of addresses. Feel free to find the perfect card to bless someone.

Mini-Missions during Social Hour

Social Hour is a time for fellowship and serving our community. Mini-missions in Lent will include a collection drive of new bedding

for the Montgomery Country Coalition for the Homeless, and then collecting items for personal hygiene bags which we'll assemble for UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief).

There is a sign-up sheet in the sanctuary if you want to sign up to bring food for any of the Social Hours. Nothing fancy. A dozen donuts cut in half is perfect.

FAREWELL TO CAROLE ROBERTS

During a special Social Hour, we joyfully saw Carole Roberts, husband John, and Hero Dogs Sue off in style, as they are about to move to their new home in Florida.



A pot luck was held in their honor – lots of food, love, conversation, well-wishes, and, of course, a little sadness.



Carole has been a long time committed volunteer who spent years keeping our records, in service to our youth, keeping us informed, preparing and printing the bulletins and announcements, raising funds for our Mission work, and so much more! (See the "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants" article in our November 2024 newsletter). We will all certainly miss you. We know you will be a blessing to whatever church you walk into in sunny Florida.

Carole and John's new address is
4637 Flagstaff Ct.
Orlando FL 32820



WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

"Introducing the New Testament"
By Rev. Anne Robertson

"And she wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger." Jesus is the central figure of the New Testament and this third volume in the popular Exploring the Bible series examines Jesus in three distinct ways: A man like other men, a Jewish rabbi, and the Christ of Christian faith.

Then it's on to the cantankerous Paul, the other New Testament authors, and the wild and baffling book called Revelation.

The book can be purchased at Christianbook.com using this [link](#). Or at Amazon using this [link](#).

Join us Wednesday nights on Zoom from Jan. 15 to April 9 for this study.

Date	Lesson	Reading (due at class session)
Mar 5	Off for Ash Wednesday	Suggested: attend an Ash Wednesday service in person
Mar 12	Man of Letters part 2	Session 4, if not yet finished
Mar 19	Leadership part 1	Session 5 and any assigned Bible readings from the session
Mar 26	Leadership part 2	Session 5, if not yet finished

To access the meeting, click on this [Zoom link](#). Fellowship begins at 6:30 P.M. and the study is from 7 to 8 P.M.

BRAVER ANGELS – BLUE & RED WORKSHOP

Salem UMC welcomed back the Braver Angels for our third workshop on Sunday, February 23. Braver Angels is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization whose mission is to help depolarize our politics and strengthen our country through understanding and conversation.

The Red-Blue workshop activities and discussion helped us learn about the experiences, feelings, and beliefs of people on the other side of the political divide. We were encouraged to look for areas of commonality in addition to our differences. Listening to the points of view from both the Red and the Blue participants fostered insights that will be useful in healing the

polarization in our community and country.

Learning the ground rules for the workshop was instructive because it emphasized the importance of not trying to convince others and change their mind on various points of view, but instead to try and understand their values and motivations for what they believe.



Our workshop included participants in the Red and Blue groups, plus Observers. Once we were introduced to the Red and Blue teams, we started with an activity to address stereotypical thinking. The Reds and Blues gathered in separate groups to create a list of what they believe are the most common false stereotypes or misconception of their side. They included information about why they feel these stereotypes are inaccurate, and whether there is a kernel of truth in the stereotype. A reporter for each group was selected to present the information to the whole group. This activity created a lot of insight into the feelings and motivations of each side. Carving out a kernel of truth from an alleged stereotype about yourself is a challenge, but it led to a greater understanding of their point of view.

Following this exercise, we discussed what was learned about how the other side sees themselves and what we have in common.



A bountiful lunch which included some of Rev. Emily's delicious chocolate truffles was served, and then the workshop continued with an activity called the Fishbowl. This required each team (Red and Blue) to discuss among themselves why they feel their side's values and policies are good for the country and any reservations they have about their particular side. There was a great deal of honesty in this activity, which leads to better understanding of each other. We were asked to reflect on what we learned about people on the other side and what we might find in common with them.



During the Wrap-Up, everyone attending shared something valuable that was learned during the workshop. Comments included: Remember that trust is brittle, and we need to value it; Opportunities to talk like this help us all agree on many things; We all have more in common than we have differences; Red/Blue sides often feel the same, but have different ways to resolve issues; Listen more and try to understand the position of those on the other side.

Mark Aebig closed us in prayer, asking that God's shining light will give us a willingness to compromise and love each other, taking these lessons into the world.

Many thanks to those at Salem UMC who made this workshop possible.

If you would like further information about Braver Angels, you can visit their website at <https://braverangels.org>.

Carol Crawford, Observer

VISITATION TEAM – A NEW MISSION

ARE YOU INTERESTED?

Salem's Mission calls for us to express God's love through serving others in the community. That community contains a number of nursing homes and retirement centers. We are exploring a plan to form teams of two to visit church family, loved ones, and the lonely housed in these locations. If you have an interest in becoming part of a visitation team, please contact Vern Schinski at vschinski5@verizon.net

GOD JOBS

If you've been wondering how you can serve our Lord, or our Lord has been equipping you to do something for him, please take a look at our growing list of God Jobs that have become available:

- Scripture reader – to read the scripture during the worship service; frequency approx. five times per year

- Money counter – after the worship service is over, count the money collected during the offering; frequency approx. twice a month
- Substitute usher – greet people, pass out bulletins, light the candles, collect the offering; frequency approx. once every other month
- Person to crochet or knit prayer shawls – make as many as you like; generally meet once a week at JoAnn's home
- Visitation team member – team is currently in planning stages (see message from Vern above)

See Rev. Emily for more info or to express an interest. There is a video about God Jobs on our website under the SERVE tab.

CONNECTIONS CLASS



If you are interested in becoming a member of Salem, a new Connections Class will be scheduled where you'll learn about Methodist vows and discipleship. Contact Rev. Emily with interest or if you have questions.

GLOSSARY OF TEXTING TERMS

Texting often uses abbreviations and acronyms, also known as text speak or SMS language. If you're tech savvy, you may know these. But some of you may not. If you've noticed these creeping into emails from church (or your grandkids) here are some definitions:

1. **:)** Happy, it's a happy face on its side made with a colon and parenthesis
2. **V/r** Very respectfully
3. **LOL** Laugh out loud
4. **IDK** I don't know
5. **K** okay, but in a passive, aggressive way
6. **TBD** to be determined/decided
7. **BTW** by the way
8. **THX** thanks

Other tech terms:

9. **Cloud** Not the thing in the sky. It's where your pictures, emails, and questionable screenshots go when your phone runs out of space. No, you can't see it physically. Yes, it's still "there."
10. **Bluetooth** No, it's not a dental problem. It's how your phone connects to your car or wireless headphones, which is why it's always yelling, "Bluetooth Connected" when you start the car.
11. **Emoji** Tiny pictures we use to express emotions because words are hard. For example, 😊 means "happy," and 🛢️ means "I just saw gas prices."

LUNCH FOR SIX

Would you like to chat with others outside of church while enjoying lunch out? This is the perfect opportunity to socialize during the week. Groups have gone to GrillMarx, Mama Lucia, Silo Falls, Olney Grille, Dempsey's and many more. There is a sign-up sheet for the next group on the bulletin board down the hall from the sanctuary. Consider putting your name on the first space, then you can select the restaurant and date you'd like to go!

CEMETERY NEWS

The price of a cemetery lot is now \$2,000. We have a limited number of lots for cremains only for \$1,000 a lot. See Quinn Anderson or Chet Babylon. You can also call the church and select option 1.

SOCIAL HOUR

Information about Social Hour now appears above in the Missions section.

READING ROOM

The Reading Room shelves are full! We cannot accept any more books. The good news is there are well over 400 books and DVDs. It's located upstairs in the Community Hall and is open on Sundays from 8:30 A.M. to noon.

At one recent Social Hour, books from the **Reading Room appeared downstairs!** We'll do this again so you'll be able to peruse the holdings without having to climb the stairs. Also, **the Reading Room Catalog is now on Salem's website!** Go to the GROW dropdown menu and click on "Reading Room Resources List". Then click on "here".

GIVING

Offerings can be sent to:
Salem United Methodist Church
12 High Street, Brookeville, MD 20833

If you would like to give by app, you can download the "Vanco Mobile" app and search for Salem United Methodist Church or by its invite code R8A63K.

If you haven't been able to access Vanco and would like to give electronically, we now have a PayPal option. You can use this link:
<https://paypal.me/SalemBrookeville>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Church Address:
Salem UMC
12 High Street
Brookeville, MD 20833

Church Telephone: (301) 774-7772

Church Website:
www.salemunitedmethodist.org

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The newsletter is prepared by the Salem United Methodist Church Communications Team. Contact any team member with questions or comments. Thanks!

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