



**THIS MONTH**

Stuffed Animal Collection	3
Faith Formation	4
Birthdays	5
Outreach Ministry	6
Church Happenings	7
Prayer Requests	7

# In the heart of winter,

we bid farewell to 2024 and anticipate a fresh set of months yet to be explored. As we move forward, the daylight hours slowly lengthen and even though cold winds blow, we know spring will follow and the pattern of new life begins yet again. This brings to mind one of my favorite Christmas songs from the 19th century.

*In the bleak midwinter,  
frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron,  
water like a stone;  
snow had fallen,  
snow on snow,  
snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter,  
long ago.*

*Heaven cannot hold him,  
nor earth sustain;  
heav'n and earth shall  
flee away  
when he comes to reign;  
in the bleak midwinter  
a stable place sufficed  
the Lord God almighty,  
Jesus Christ.*

*What can I give him,  
poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man  
I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him—  
give my heart.*

**C. Rossetti**

In the church, the year's journey is defined by a liturgical calendar, so the story of Christmas does not end with darkened December but rather continues into a new year of hopeful expectations as we join the curious magi guided by a star who made great efforts to arrive in Bethlehem to honor a child with offerings fitting for a king. Just as the magi leave the house empty handed so we empty our hearts so that they might be filled with all the hope, love, joy and peace of a season past and a future before us.

*Love has come, love lives among us,  
may the love of Jesus fill the year before us with  
wonder as we journey together, following God's  
light for the world in Jesus.*

**Blessed New Year!**

*Pastor Craig*





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## BUILD-A-BEAR SERVICE EVENT

for Cuddles with Kindness®

**Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>**

The Build-a-Bear Store at Northwoods Mall

Salem children and youth are invited to an open house event from 2-4 p.m. on Monday, **January 20<sup>th</sup>** at the Build-a-Bear Store in Northwoods Mall. Families can come by the store anytime between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. to make stuffed animals for Salem's Cuddles with Kindness collection. We appreciate the generous donation of funds from a Thrivent action Team grant and noisy can collection that will help fund this stuffed animal making event. Please sign up at the welcome Center by Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup> if your child/youth will be participating in this service project. This will help the Build-a-Bear store plan for our event. If you have any questions, please contact Gretchen Petrakis, or Kelly Brinkman, for more information. We look forward to seeing you there!

*More ways to help* →



## Cuddles with Kindness® Stuffed Animal Collection

### In Memory of Lori Reimer

This year, the Salem family lost a dear friend and loved one, our Parish Nurse Lori Reimer. A mission dear to Lori's heart was her annual Cuddles with Kindness® collection. Since 2015, Lori collected teddy bears for patients at the Children's Hospital of Illinois in memory of her daughter Allison. Lori's largest collection was almost 500 teddy bears in a single year!

This January, the Salem youth will be collecting stuffed animals in her honor to carry on her mission.

### Cuddles with Kindness® Core Values

- C** – Compassionate to others
- U** – Understanding of all backgrounds and situations
- D** – Dependable to the community and those we serve
- D** – Dedicated to service of others
- L** – Leadership
- E** – Ethically minded
- S** – Spread kindness



### Cuddles with Kindness®

During January, learn more about Cuddles with Kindness®. Cuddles with Kindness® is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to providing comfort to kids in need. Their mission is to comfort children facing traumatic situations while inspiring kindness and compassion. With help from Salem Lutheran Church and others, Cuddles with Kindness® hopes to collect thousands of stuffed animals for the thousands of kids who need those extra snuggles for when they might be going through a hard time. Founder, Taylor Larson spent 9 days in the OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois when she was a child. During her stay, she received a bear on Valentine's Day. It changed her forever. Today, Taylor and the Cuddles with Kindness® organization delivers thousands of stuffed friends to children each year. Children receiving the cuddly teddy bears could be sick in the hospital, kids who have lost everything in a house fire, are in a children's home or maybe have been through a natural disaster. The need for these fuzzy friends is endless. It may be something small, but it can mean a lot. Help us in our mission of "kindness."



### The Marvelous Mission

The teddy bear collection will be from Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. A Noisy Can Offering will take place on Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup>. Many of the children Cuddles with Kindness® serves have compromised immune systems, so to keep them germ-free and as clean as possible, all stuffed animals must be new with the tags still attached. A collection bin will be in the atrium, and monetary donations to Cuddles with Kindness® are welcomed.

## The Attributes of God:

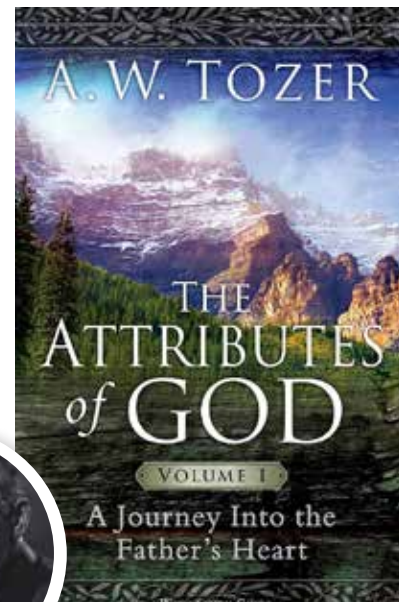
(VOLUME 1)

A JOURNEY INTO THE FATHER'S HEART

by A.W. Tozer (231.4 TOZ)

For A. W. Tozer, no question is more important than, "What is God like?" The desire to know God consumed his entire life and ministry. That's why those who read him come to know God more intimately.

Tozer's book is an inspiring journey into the Father's revelation of Himself. In this first of two books on the subject, the author invites us to look more deeply into God's grace, mercy, justice, holiness and goodness, among other things. Each chapter is centered around appropriate Scripture and enables the reader to refocus on the essential character of God.



## How to Overcome Worry:

EXPERIENCING THE PEACE OF GOOD IN EVERY SITUATION

by Dr. Winfred Neely (248.8 NEE)

Do you struggle with worry or anxious thoughts on a regular basis? Does your mind get fixated on the same concern over and over? Do you know you should stop worrying but repeatedly fail to do so?

How to Overcome Worry presents a biblical and practical strategy for this exact problem. Dr. Winfred Neely, who has experienced his fair share of anxiety-inducing circumstances, walks you through Philippians 4:6-7 to help you:

- Understand the difference between concern and worry
- Use prayer as a means of grace to overcome worry
- Cultivate gratitude and thanksgiving as an antidote to worry
- Navigate changing seasons and circumstances without falling into worry
- Employ practical strategies for experiencing the peace of God

Worry is one of the top issues in our world today, even among Christians, and this concise and biblical approach will offer real solutions. In His Word, God tells us to stop worrying, pray about everything, and expect His peace. This is a true promise of Scripture, and this book will help you to lay hold of it.



To access and view the library collection, visit: [salemofpeoria.com/salem-lutheran-library](http://salemofpeoria.com/salem-lutheran-library)  
 Questions? Please contact: Karen Swenson 309-258-5708 | [klswen@hotmail.com](mailto:klswen@hotmail.com)

## Happy Birthday!



### WOMEN'S CIRCLES

#### REBECCA CIRCLE

Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM.  
 This will take place at Salem this month.

#### LYDIA CIRCLE

Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:00PM  
 SLC Conference Room



### SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES

#### January 5<sup>th</sup>

Children and youth, ages 2-year-old through high school, are always welcome to join Sunday School classes. The Education Hour is from 10:15am-11:15am and we would love to see you!

Bill Ligon leads an adult Bible Study for parents and young adults that compliments the Sunday School lessons. This group meets in the Lounge on the second floor – right near the classrooms. They will begin their group on **January 12<sup>th</sup>**.

We hope to see you soon!

**JAN 1**  
 Gregory Aubrey  
 Chris Johnson  
 David Mills  
 Kylie Swanson  
 Jennifer Wallstedt

**JAN 17**  
 Erinn Ambrosch

**JAN 18**  
 Anitra O'Connor  
 Andrea Roberts

**JAN 2**  
 Eleonore Hansen

**JAN 19**  
 Brent Salverson  
 Jason Sterr

**JAN 4**  
 Robert Arehart  
 Adam Oertley  
 Maryanne Rastatter

**JAN 20**  
 Gwyn O'Day  
 Lauren Swanson

**JAN 5**  
 Matthew Wiesehan

**JAN 21**  
 Quincy Ashby  
 Sharon Mollenhauer

**JAN 8**  
 Dorothy Strickler

**JAN 22**  
 Matthew Grebner  
 Dennis Gustafson

**JAN 9**  
 Jacklyn McKinty

**JAN 24**  
 Betty Bennett  
 Rachel Gonzales

**JAN 11**  
 Liam Cochran  
 John Petrakis

**JAN 25**  
 JoAnn Misselhorn

**JAN 12**  
 Lynette Davis  
 Dean Doughty  
 Margaret Onyun  
 Meghan Onyun  
 Nathan Onyun

**JAN 28**  
 Jackie Ripper  
 Kaylee Stenzel

**JAN 30**  
 Donald Swanson

**JAN 13**  
 Lesly Baumgartner

**JAN 31**  
 Gary Snider



# OUTREACH MINISTRY

## SALEM OUTREACH MINISTRY TASK GROUP

The task group discussing the future of Salem’s outreach service ministry will begin meeting via zoom on Sunday, **January 26<sup>th</sup>** at 6:30 p.m.

We will meet the following two Sundays, **February 2<sup>nd</sup>** and **February 9<sup>th</sup>** also at 6:30 p.m. As previously mentioned in the November Bugle, it was determined last year by an exploratory task group and confirmed by the Salem Council, that outreach service ministry is vital to our mission as a congregation and as followers of Christ. However, we are currently without a long-term plan for organizing and implementing this ministry work. Therefore, the task group meeting in January/February will be seeking, through discernment and decision making, a path forward for our outreach service ministry that they can recommend to the council.

Please join us and share your thoughts and insights regarding outreach ministry as we clarify our outreach purpose and focus as well as consider how to best organize the planning and implementation of outreach ministry at Salem. If you feel God is calling you to this short-term commitment, or would like more information, please contact Kelly Brinkman, or the church office. We look forward to sharing in this vital ministry work with you.



### Save the Dates BREAKING BREAD

The dates for the winter session of this midweek meal and activity have been set. Gatherings will take place on the following Wednesdays:

**February 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>**

Cross-generational music will begin at 5:45 p.m., followed by the meal at 6:00 p.m. and a short activity afterward. A sign-up sheet will be available at the Welcome Center for each Wednesday to assist with planning. Everyone is encouraged to mark their calendars and invite a friend.

# CHURCH HAPPENINGS



## FAIR TRADE SALE January 5<sup>th</sup>

Supporting fair trade ensures that producers in developing countries receive fair wages and work under ethical conditions, empowering communities and promoting sustainability. Thank you for your support! If you are in need of items, you are welcome to contact:

**Jennifer Gallas**  
(309) 256-5862  
pew117@aol.com



## Welcome, Danielle!

### SLC Office Administrator

With 15 years of experience in office administration and accounting, she brings a wealth of knowledge and dedication to her work. A proud mother of four—Hailey (15), Kendal (13), Connor (8), and Johnathon (7)—she balances her professional life with the joys and challenges of motherhood. Married for 15 years to her husband, Jason, she is deeply committed to both her family and career. Excited for new opportunities, she is eager to give her best and contribute wholeheartedly.



## MEN’S KITCHEN CLEANUP & GATHERING

**January 20<sup>th</sup> | 6:00 PM**

The Salem’s men will meet for a kitchen cleaning project. Following the cleaning, there will be a brief meeting and pizza at 7:00 PM at Double A’s [7716 IL-91, Peoria, IL 61615].

## MIDWEST FOOD BANK VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

**January 29<sup>th</sup> | 9:00-11:00 AM**

9005 N Industrial Rd, Peoria, IL 61615

Salem’s volunteer team at Midwest Food Bank is growing, and we’d love to have a few more hands! If you’re interested, please register online <https://portal.goldenvolunteer.com/timeslots/KMWigaHP0t> (link also available through the Bugle Blast). Volunteers should plan to meet at the Peoria location. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers! For questions, contact:

**John Grabel**  
iron\_man\_46@yahoo.com

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Future dates for volunteering at the Midwest Food Bank:

**March 26**  
**May 28**  
**July 40**  
**September 24**  
**November 19**



# PRAYER REQUESTS



Jocette and Salih Arbeyi missionaries through CRU

**Prayers for:**  
Dennis Rhoades

### CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR:

- Luan Borquist
- Butch Conard
- Joanie Creager
- Ron Hipple
- Maddy, friend of Julia Wallstedt recovering from a liver transplant
- Mike
- Tim, Jessica, Daniel Peterson
- Linda Peterson
- Sheryl Sattler

### PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY...

Stateside: Ian Borquist, Gibson Gonzalez, Emily Graff, Barry Joyce, Talon Maki, Greg Miller, Ashley Owen, Lucas Owen, Jim Sterling, Jason Sterr



**Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.”**

- Matthew 19:14