



**THIS MONTH**

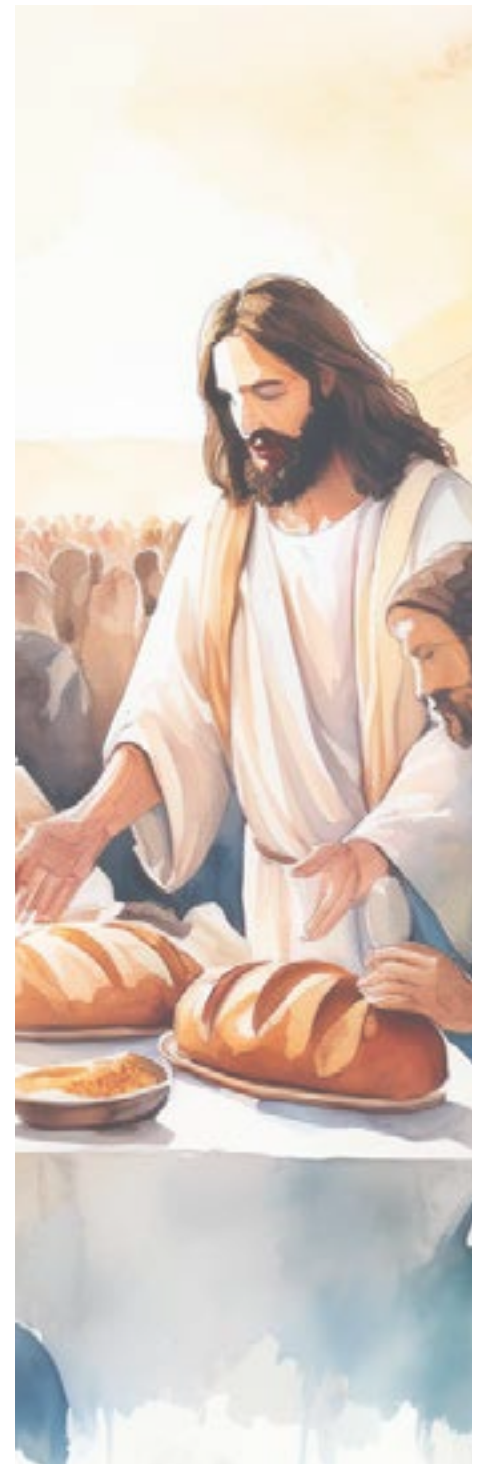
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**W**hile, the date for Easter always falls on a Sunday it is not always on a particular date on the calendar. Unlike Christmas always on December 25, Easter is calculated using a formula that coincides with the lunar calendar allowing Easter to be as early as March 22 and late as April 25. Lent then is the 40-day season preceding Easter (not counting Sundays). This means that Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is March 5 this year. An article on page 3 of this issue highlights an outreach ministry project around the gospel stories of Jesus’ “Feeding the 5,000.”

In John’s version of the story, Jesus sees a crowd coming toward him and said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread enough for these people to eat?” Don’t misunderstand, Jesus had a plan. He was asking so as to test the disciples to see if they could imagine a plan. Four chapters earlier, Jesus was informed by his mother that the wedding banquet ran out of wine. She then said, “do whatever he tells you.” It is the first of Jesus’ signs as he began his public ministry and as a result of turning water to wine, the disciples believed in him. Would they believe him this time? Philip replied that it would take 200 days’ worth of wages to buy enough for each to have only a little. Andrew discovers a boy with a lunch of 5 loaves of bread and two fish and declares, “what are they among so many?” Clearly each of these disciples had forgotten the significance of the wedding banquet experience in Cana and how that sign instilled faith. Jesus calmly instructed the crowd of people to sit down. After giving thanks, he distributed the loaves and so also the fish and there was enough, more than enough, 12 baskets of leftovers-enough. Story after story, the bible shows that the disciples were amazed and pleased while the leaders amazed and enraged. Yet, God acted through the amazement and many were blessed.

The same is true in our day. We might ask, “what is one can of soup or a few dollars in a coffee can among the challenge to collect 5,000 items? The challenge seems too big.” I have heard it said, “Don’t tell God how big your challenges are. Tell your challenges how big your God is.” This Lent, I encourage you to join me in pondering the miraculous feeding stories and see how Jesus works to bring wholeness to many even when we have a hard time envisioning abundant blessings coming from scarcity. Five loaves, two fish, what can they be among so many? Come and see, dear church. Come and see.

*Pastor Craig*





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## Wednesdays in Lent

(March 12, 19, 26, April 2, April 9)

**11:00 AM**  
Worship in the sanctuary with light meal to follow in the Social Hall.

**6:30 PM**  
Worship simultaneous with a light meal in the Social Hall.

### Special Lenten Events

- **March 4** - Shrove Tuesday Pancake and Sausage Supper 5:30-7pm
- **March 5** - Ash Wednesday Worship 11am, 7pm
- **April 17** - Maundy Thursday Worship 11am, 7pm
- **April 18** - Good Friday Worship 11am, 7pm



### Easter Sunday

April 20th

#### Worship Times

6:00 AM - Outdoor Sunrise  
8:30 AM and 10:30 AM - in Sanctuary

#### Breakfast

7:00 - 8:30 AM  
9:30 - 10:30 AM

### NOISY CAN OFFERING March 16

A special offering will be received in worship toward the purchase of food items for the Lent "Feeding the 5,000" service project.



*More ways to serve* →

## Feeding of the 5,000

*We're doing it again!*

### Collecting 5,000 canned goods/non-perishable items during Lent!

Beginning on **Ash Wednesday**, you are invited to bring canned goods and non-perishable items. We will collect items through Easter. At the conclusion of this project, we will donate our canned goods to various food pantries, including Bethel, in our community. There will be a noisy can collection one Sunday during Lent for your participation if you would prefer to help out in that way.

Please remember if you are bringing canned goods, that if you would not eat it then our neighbors would not eat, either. Please check the expiration date also, as we cannot donate food items that are expired. This is not the time to clean out your pantry – our neighbors who will be receiving our items need our love and respect.

There is another very important component of this activity than just collecting food for local food pantries and that is the discipline of helping others. After we reach our goal of 5,000 cans, Salem still needs your canned goods. We have a collection area in the Conference Room year-round to help those who are hungry in our community. The practice of bringing of food items each week during Lent to meet our 5,000 can goal will help us to continue the discipline of bringing food items all the time. There are people who are hungry in our community year-round.

We will be collecting these 5,000 items in the area next to the Nursery. Watch for signs with directions and a barometer to track our progress!



### Feeding of the 5,000 and canned food collection

We have done this service project a few times over the years where we collect 5,000 items for local food pantries. This service project started many years ago as a way to help us think about how many 5,000 people are and the miracle story of the Feeding of the 5,000. This miracle story is found in all four of the Gospels. It's an important story to know and reflect upon as we wonder about the ministry of Jesus and what that means for us. What can we learn about from this story of how we are to love our neighbor? This will be our Lenten focus this year.



*"...the crowds followed Jesus; and he welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured...The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, 'Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are in here in a deserted place.' But he said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' They said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish...' And taking the five loaves and the two fish, Jesus looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces."*

**Luke 9:11, 12-13, 16-17**



# CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Cuddles with Kindness®

## Thank you from Salem High School Youth

The Salem High School Youth would love to thank everyone in the congregation for your generous donations. Through contributions of stuffed animals and monetary offerings, we reached and surpassed our goal of 500 stuffed animals for Cuddles with Kindness. We are extremely grateful to the congregation for donating \$959.22 through the noisy can collection and donations. All the youth at Salem are thankful for the Thrivent grant and generous donation that helped our children and youth build 30 bears at the Build-a-Bear store on January 20th. Our donation was added to the collection started by Lori at the beginning of 2024 and completed by her family and friends. With both collections combined, our grand total is a whopping 1,222 stuffed animals to be donated for this extraordinary cause.



The Cuddles with Kindness project called the Salem youth to fulfill the mission to serve, and we happily took it upon ourselves to spread the joyous word of God. Salem is blessed to have such a kind and generous congregation, and the high school youth cannot thank all of you enough for your goodwill when growing people in Christ to love and serve.



## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper to Benefit ELCA World Hunger

Please join us on **Tuesday, March 4th** for our traditional pancake supper to celebrate Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras). Come join us **any time between 5:00 PM and 6:30 PM**. We ask that you sign up at the Welcome Center to help with planning. (Please note that the signup sheet will list time slots of 5:00-5:30 PM, 5:30-6:00 PM, and 6:00-6:30 PM to make sure our kitchen crew is extra prepared to serve you fresh pancakes.)

A free will offering will be accepted on behalf of ELCA World Hunger. We are participating in an Epiphany challenge asking congregations in the Central Southern Illinois Synod to raise \$10,000. If the synod meets this goal, they will receive an additional \$5,000 for World Hunger from a generous donor. (Please make checks payable to Salem with World Hunger Challenge in the memo.)

From the ELCA World Hunger website: "For 50 years we have joined together as Lutherans to address the root causes of hunger and poverty around the world through ELCA World Hunger. Part of our church's long tradition of meeting human needs, ELCA World Hunger testifies to our hope for and commitment to God's promise of a time when we will hunger and thirst no more."

Thank you for supporting ELCA World Hunger, and we look forward to seeing you on March 4th.

# FAITH FORMATION



## WOMEN'S CIRCLES

### REBECCA CIRCLE

Tuesday, **March 11th** at 10:00AM.  
This will take place at Salem this month.

### LYDIA CIRCLE

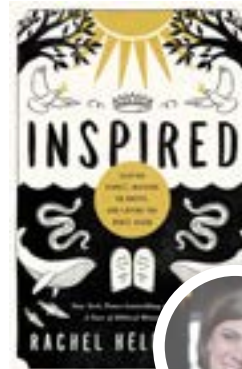
Wednesday, **March 12th** at 2:00PM  
SLC Conference Room

## SALEM BOOK CLUB

*Inspired* by Rachel Held Evans

Salem's Book Club will meet on **Wednesday, March 26th at 8:00 PM** (time change due to Lenten evening service) **on Zoom**. You are always welcome to join for a specific book or start joining each month! All are welcome. The book this month is ***Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again*** by Rachel Held Evans.

Undaunted by the Bible's most difficult passages and unafraid to ask the hard questions, Evans wrestles through the process of doubting, imagining, and debating the mysteries surrounding Scripture. Discover alongside Evans that the Bible is not a static text, but a living, breathing, captivating, and confounding book that can equip us and inspire us to join God's loving and redemptive work in the world.



Please join us for discussion on Wednesday, March 26 at 8:00 PM.



# Happy Birthday!

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>March 1</b><br>Madison Bradle<br>Taylor Bradle<br>Janice Lambie<br>John Ryberg III             | Matthew Macrchesi<br>Ava Salverson  |
| <b>March 2</b><br>Kyle Graves   | <b>March 17</b><br>Vicki Johnson<br>Veronica Reimer<br>Patricia Stearns<br>Noah VanLanningham |
| <b>March 3</b><br>Garrett Bridges<br>Jason Ripper   | <b>March 18</b><br>Mia Doty<br>Clifford Shoemaker<br>Pastor Craig Swenson                     |
| <b>March 4</b><br>Emily Arnold  | <b>March 19</b><br>Melissa McCord   |
| <b>March 6</b><br>Shawna King<br>Thomas Oertley<br>Matthew Zapf                                   | <b>March 20</b><br>Danielle Bilerbeck<br>Drew Runkel<br>Mason Runkel                          |
| <b>March 7</b><br>Tera Backlund<br>Benjamin Cooper<br>Donita Purcell                              | <b>March 21</b><br>Ann-Marree Anderson<br>Todd Kelly<br>Ward Ricketts                         |
| <b>March 9</b><br>Matthew Bennett<br>Allan Perry<br>Jennifer Zapf                                 | <b>March 22</b><br>Ora Coates   |
| <b>March 10</b><br>Randall Blum<br>Gary Geick<br>Linda Sedgwick                                   | <b>March 23</b><br>Sarah Gonzales<br>Karen Holmes   |
| <b>March 11</b><br>Brandon Dowell<br>Billie Lehmann   | <b>March 24</b><br>Albert Holocker  |
| <b>March 12</b><br>Joan Creager<br>Dustin Lowery<br>Priscilla Lowery                              | <b>March 25</b><br>Kelsey Bastian   |
| <b>March 13</b><br>Tanya Grabel<br>Ronald Hartman<br>Felicia Mayon<br>Benjamin Owen<br>Jacob Owen | <b>March 26</b><br>Colette Conard   |
| <b>March 14</b><br>Julie Rogie<br>Joan Creager  | <b>March 27</b><br>Natalie Breidel  |
| <b>March 16</b><br>Nicole Breidel<br>Nancy Bridges  | <b>March 28</b><br>Audrey Aprahamian<br>Michael Friberg                                       |
|   | <b>March 30</b><br>Ruth Bock<br>Michael Swanson   |
|   | <b>March 31</b><br>Michael DeGood<br>Heidi Hainline<br>Howard Knobloch                        |



# OUTREACH MINISTRY

## YOUTH SERVICE PROJECT

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, **March 16th** at 10:15 a.m. as we invite 6th-8th grade youth to join us for our grocery shopping trip service experience to benefit our "Feeding of the 5,000" nonperishable food item collection at Salem.

We will be using donated funds to purchase items that will be distributed to local food pantries in Peoria. (High school youth helpers would also be appreciated.)

Please watch your email and Bugle Blasts for more details, or contact Kelly Brinkman for more information.



## Greater Peoria Honor Flight

*Mark your calendars!*

The GPHF organization has announced the 2025 flight dates: **April 1st, May 6th, July 1st, & October 7th**. Thanks to generous donors a fourth flight has been added this year.

Please share this information with neighbors, family and friends. Even if you do not sign up for the flight or volunteer to be a Guardian, greeting the returning flights at the Peoria Airport is a very moving event. It is wonderful to see Salem members and families enjoy this experience.

To apply, volunteer or learn more, please visit: [greaterpeoriahonorflight.org](http://greaterpeoriahonorflight.org)

# CHURCH HAPPENINGS



## FAIR TRADE SALE March 2<sup>nd</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



## Easter Flowers!

**Orders needed by April 14th**

Salem is purchasing Easter Lilies for the Easter services. Donations of \$11 will be accepted to help offset the cost of the lilies and to allow people to honor, memorialize, or celebrate their loved ones. Your order must be in the church office no later than **Monday, April 14, 2025**.



## 1st Communion

First Communion instruction for children in 3rd grade and older is scheduled for **Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM**. If interested in participating, please contact the church office to express interest.



## MIDWEST FOOD BANK VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

**March 26<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 Gabel**  
iron\_man\_46@yahoo.com

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Future dates for volunteering at the Midwest Food Bank:

**March 26**  
**May 28**  
**July 30**  
**September 24**  
**November 19**



## PRAYER REQUESTS

### CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR:

- Dennis Rhoades
- Luan Borquist
- Butch Conard
- Joanie Creager
- Ron Hipple
- Maddy, friend of Julia Wallstedt
- Mike
- Tim, Jessica, Daniel Peterson
- Linda Peterson
- Sheryl Sattler

Jocette and Salih Arbeyi missionaries through CRU

### 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





1700 W. War Memorial Dr. • Peoria, IL 61614-6724

The Bugle  
USPS 477-460



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

# COOK ISLANDS *I MADE YOU WONDERFUL*



## 2025 WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday, March 7th, 2025 at 10:00 AM

University United Methodist Church | 2818 N University St, Peoria, IL