



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER CONNECTPOINT

OCTOBER 21, 2020

CONNECTING ALL PEOPLE WITH  
GOD'S EXTRAVAGANT LOVE

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## NEW YEAR - NEW PLAN?

- REV. DEBORAH LEMOINE

Old Testament Professor Walter Bruggemann talks about the Psalms as presenting us with a pattern of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. I know I have been feeling disoriented this year. I picked up my desk calendar last week, a beautiful blue floral book I purchased in January, and laughed out loud at how far off course this year has veered. Things I had confidently written in pen never happened—at least not as planned. A high school graduation. A trip with dear friends. Easter.

As a planner, I am disoriented. In my disorientation I have tried to get myself, and the church, “back on schedule” many times to no avail. The year 2020 has defied scheduling! And yet, it is the very disorienting nature of the year that challenges us to look deeply at who we are and what really matters. What is essential to us as individuals and as a community of faith? It’s a question best asked when we are a bit disoriented.

Bruggeman says that the church has too often set aside the Psalms of disorientation because the lament and anger and fear and dismay they express make us uncomfortable. We don’t like to feel this way. But these emotions should be embraced as a part of our human experience and as a path toward reorientation. Only in accepting our disorientation and trusting it to God can we begin to reorient, to move toward something new.

It is nearly Advent, the beginning of a new church year. Time to start shopping for a new planner and to make new plans. 2020 has left me less confident in my ability to control my schedule, but also more willing to embrace new ways of doing the things that matter most to me. It is a good lesson for a new year. I may write my plans in pencil this time, but I’m still going to write in hope. I invite you to join me on the journey. After all, we worship a God of new beginnings.

# THE LAND BETWEEN

- REV. TERRI SWAN



Moses spoke to the people: "Don't be afraid. Stand firm and watch God do his work of salvation for you today." - Exodus 14:13

If you were with us at our outdoor worship on Sunday, October 11, you heard me preach about something called a "liminal season." The word liminal means "transition space." Spiritually, a liminal season is a time when we know we have left something behind but can't yet see what God has ahead for us. Jeff Manion describes this well in his book, *The Land Between*, published a decade ago with a message that is still timely in 2020.

If you were writing your life story, how would you describe the chapter of 2020?

Some of us might say that 2020 needs to go on and get gone! Some might say 2020 has been a deepening time of prayer and devotion to God. Some might say it has been a time of growing closer to family or renewing their marriage, or gaining better understanding and love for neighbors.

We have experienced a plot twist in the narrative of our lives in 2020, after which, things will never be the same. We are definitely in "the land between." The Good News is that time and time again, the Bible provides examples of God's people living through liminal seasons, showing how they navigated the "land between" in their journeys.

Sometimes we see that the people of God didn't manage the land between

well. In Exodus Chapter 6, the newly freed Israelites followed Moses into the desert on a journey toward the promised land of milk and honey where God rescued them from their captors, but they were hungry! Even when God provided manna—special bread falling from the sky--the people still complained. They would have chosen to go back to slavery, what they knew as normal, rather than struggle through the difficulty of the desert and the monotonous day-in and day-out taste of manna on the unknown journey ahead. The "land between" does not always bring out the best in us.

And yet, there are also stories of liminality where we see God's people rising above their doubts and complaints. Consider the story of Joseph who was thrown into a pit by his own brothers and then sold into slavery. This event signified an end to his identity as his father's favored son, and he began a new journey in the "land between." Years later after many detours and plot twists, in the dramatic conclusion to his story, Joseph became a royal advisor and a redeemer of his people. He could have let the worst moment of his life, being betrayed and sold into slavery by his own brothers, define his entire life story. Yet, instead Joseph continued to seek God and to ask God to guide him.

With God, our worst moments do not have to define our lives. The stories of God's people show us that the "land between" is fertile ground for our trust in God to grow. This is where transformation happens.

Now, I do not believe God causes things like COVID for us to learn this trust. However, I do believe God uses the struggle of our

human circumstance to draw us close. In the struggle of this pandemic, God is present, and, if we learn to lean into God, we can learn to trust that God is with us through all things.

God will use all things for the good of those who love him, as Paul promises in Romans 8. Consider how Salem/The Connection has used a horrible pandemic to do good: feeding people who are hungry, reaching people through online worship we might never have reached, using our technology as a tool for good to stay connected. Who knew at the beginning of the year what we would accomplish together?

You know, the whole Christian story is an invitation into the "land between" the land where life overcomes death; where light overcomes darkness; where hope overcomes despair.

Where, on the third day, the tomb was empty! We have been redeemed in Jesus Christ! We have been given new life—eternal life! And yet, we wait for the full redemption when Christ comes again in glory! We see glimpses of it all around us, and yet, we are not quite there! We live in the "land between"— somewhere between Exodus and Easter!

So what story are we going to tell? Are we going to let this season—this "land between" bring out the best in us? Are we going to take this plot twist and let God do something new in us and through us? I pray so.

In this season with you,  
Pastor Terri

## THE CHURCH UNLEASHED

- REV. TIM POWER



@SALEMSTLOUIS

"When is church going to re-open?" I have been getting this question a lot, as I am sure all our pastors, staff, and lay leaders are. My response is this: Our church isn't closed; it's unleashed! We have expanded our online presence in the time of Covid-19 and we do not have fewer ways to worship and serve; we have more!

If you have not yet done so, please join us each Sunday morning online for worship. You can do this on a variety of platforms (Facebook live, Vimeo, Youtube). Also, our Wednesday evening Mid-Week Worship is available both online and in-person. (If you join us in person, bring a mask, or pick one up at the door).

In addition, we are introducing a number of new online small groups that meet via Zoom. These groups are a great way to build personal relationships, even in our socially distanced new reality.

These are strange times, and because of that, church looks a little different. But God is always reaching out to us no matter where we find ourselves.

Romans 5:6 we read: "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." This is just the right time for our church to be sharing the amazing love of Jesus. See you online!



## WINTER CLOTHING DRIVE

### HELP KEEP OTHERS WARM THIS WINTER

- BY REV. SEAN MCINTYRE

"Don't forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices." --Hebrews 13:16

Jesus said that the people who are part of the Kingdom of God are people who feed the hungry, give the thirsty something to drink and provide clothes for those who are without. Out of Our Bounty, Salem's ministry of accepting clothing and other essentials for others, is doing just as Jesus asked by providing clothes to those in need. After several months of being out of operation, Out of Our Bounty is beginning to accept donations and sort clothing and other essentials to provide them to our mission partners and others in need. Donations are accepted in the rotunda (glass entrance near the office) on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10:00 am-4:00 pm, and on Wednesdays from 10:00 am-7:00 pm. Your extra new or gently used clothing is passed on to our mission partners at Epworth, LifeWise STL, Haven Street, and others.

Our Haven Street ministry in South City works to do just as Jesus asks as well by providing food to the hungry and clothing to those in need. But we need your help. We all know the weather is starting to bring cold temperatures, especially overnight. Haven Street is continuing to provide well-rounded meals to the South-City community, but as temperatures continue to drop, many people who utilize Haven Street's ministry will need to find a way to stay safe and warm. This is where we need you. Please bring gently used or new winter jackets and blankets to Salem during the hours listed above or to The Connection during Haven Street hours. You can also help by shopping online using our online wish lists. All this information can be found on the outreach portion of our website: [salemstlouis.com/outreach](http://salemstlouis.com/outreach).

## SMALL GROUP GROWTH AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- REV. KATRINA DREW

As seasons change and we begin to approach colder days with less sunlight, we often find ourselves dealing with stress differently. The noise of the world can become overwhelming especially with the pressures of planning family gatherings, travel, and gift buying for the upcoming holidays. What will any of that look like this year in the midst of a pandemic? Should we even talk about the stress that will come with the presidential election, no matter what the outcome? There's no doubt that these are unsettling times. So how do we as Christians prepare our hearts and our minds? We're excited to offer two NEW short-term studies that will help you stay centered in God's peace.



"Searching for Stillness" is a mid-week, midday, study led by Lindsay Walter, a licensed professional counselor, and Salem member who attends our South-City Site. This study will help you learn to slow down and quiet yourself in the midst of your noisy life in order to better hear God speaking. So, join Lindsay and others on Zoom to take a break and explore ways to be still and know God during difficult and busy times.

**Searching for Stillness--Short-term study**  
**Wednesdays Noon-1 PM \*Beginning November 4**  
**Facilitator: Lindsay Walter, LPC**

The book of Psalms is a great source of comfort. It's the book of the Bible where we find that our voice can truly dialogue with God's voice through any emotion or circumstance with experience. The entrance to the Psalter in the United Methodist Hymnal states the following: "At the heart of Judeo-Christian worship and prayer, the psalms express the rich spectrum of human emotions, attitudes, and needs in relation to God, God's family, and the world." This study of the book of Psalms will include a basic understanding of the Psalms, the spirituality involved, praying the Psalms, and how they apply to our lives.

The facilitator for this study, Prescott Benson, has been a member of Salem for several years, and worships at our Mid-County Site. Prescott has been working in the non-profit field for over 15 years. He has taught and lectured in the areas of psychology, the Old Testament, and leadership.

**The Book of Psalms in a Stormy World--Bible Study**  
**Thursdays at 6:30 PM \*Beginning November 5**  
**Facilitator: Prescott Benson**

I believe the timing for these two studies couldn't be better! Connect Groups (small discipleship groups) are also forming and ready to welcome new members. You can find more information by visiting our website. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I can help you find the study or small group that fits you best as you continue growing in faith through this changing season.



1200 S. Lindbergh Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63131

Phone: (314) 991-0546  
Fax: (314) 991-1242  
Web: [www.salemstlouis.com](http://www.salemstlouis.com)  
Email: [info@salemstlouis.com](mailto:info@salemstlouis.com)

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October 21, 2020



## YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Your ongoing giving helps us continue to be the church in our community. Together we can make an impact in the lives of our neighbors and continue the ministry of spreading the extravagant love of God to all people.

### **Give Online // visit [salemstlouis.com/give](http://salemstlouis.com/give)**

Secure, quick, and easy. One-time and recurring gifts may be set up using a bank account, debit, or credit card.

### **Text-To-Give // Text "Give" to (314) 888-9160**

### **Salem App // Search Salem Church - St. Louis**

**PayPal //** Go to your PayPal account and send your donation to the email address: [info@salemstlouis.com](mailto:info@salemstlouis.com).

**Mail //** Send checks by mail to the Salem church office

### **NEED HELP? LET US KNOW.**

**INFO@SALEMSTLOUIS.COM // (314) 991-0546**  
**VISIT: [WWW.SALEMSTLOUIS.COM/GIVING-HELP](http://WWW.SALEMSTLOUIS.COM/GIVING-HELP)**



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### **MID-COUNTY**

1200 S. Lindbergh Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63131  
(314) 991-0546  
[salemstlouis.com](http://salemstlouis.com)

### **SOUTH-CITY**

6701 Virginia Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63111  
(314) 256-0545  
[theconnectionstlouis.com](http://theconnectionstlouis.com)

**PLEASE SEND ALL MAIL FOR BOTH SITES TO  
THE MID-COUNTY ADDRESS. THANK YOU!**

## **ONLINE WORSHIP**

**SUNDAYS AT 9:30 AM OR ANYTIME that works for you.**

**Facebook or YouTube Live: Sundays, 9:30 am**

**Vimeo, App & Website: Available Sundays, 6:00 am**

**SmartTV: Facebook Watch, YouTube, or Vimeo App**

## **FACEBOOK LIVE MID-WEEK WORSHIP**

**6:00 PM ON WEDNESDAYS @salemstlouis**

## **FACEBOOK LIVE PRAYER TIME**

**10:00 AM ON TUESDAY @theconnectionstlouis**



**@SALEMSTLOUIS**