



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER CONNECTPOINT

NOVEMBER 11, 2020

CONNECTING ALL PEOPLE WITH  
GOD'S EXTRAVAGANT LOVE

## TOP NEWS INSIDE

- Terri Talk "Loving People First" - pg. 2
- Giving Thanks & Sharing Blessings - pg. 3
- Canceled Events - A Parent's Greatest Christmas Gift - pg. 3
- Your Giving Makes a Difference - pg. 4
- Advent & Christmas Eve - insert

## TRANSFORMING THE CHURCH TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD

- REV. DEBORAH LEMOINE

Very little was clear when we suddenly left our offices this spring, but we set three immediate goals for ourselves as we packed our laptops. First, create the best online worship possible as quickly as possible. Second, feed the people who would rapidly lose access to food in the midst of crisis. Third, and perhaps most important, stay spiritually connected even while socially distanced. The building was empty, but our vision remained intact. We resolved to find new ways to connect all people with God's extravagant love. And you stuck with us.

### As a result, Salem never closed. We transformed.

No one wanted this pandemic, but we have been shaped and transformed by our responses to it. Thanks to continued faithful giving by our congregation, we have preserved the long-term financial integrity of the church while finding an entirely new way to be the church. Your support has allowed us to be bold—investing in the technology and equipment that will shape online worship and the recording of original Christian praise music for the next generation. And it has allowed us to be compassionate—partnering with agencies in vulnerable neighborhoods (and utilizing our own South-City Site) to rapidly expand food programs for children, families, and homeless populations that would have otherwise gone hungry.

### Thank you.

We don't know the pandemic end date yet, but we are confident that we can face what comes together—transforming the church in order to transform the world. We recently mailed third quarter giving statements. Please, reach out to me if you have questions about your statement, how to give online, schedule year-end giving, or best plan your giving for 2021. Even as we look forward to things becoming more "normal" in 2021, we will carry with us the gains of 2020. When we do welcome you back onsite, online worship that reaches a larger audience will continue, and the partnerships that make life better for local kids and families will remain strong. The music recorded here will reach people far and wide. With your help, we will continue to proclaim God's Good News through word, deed, and song.

# LOVING PEOPLE FIRST

- REV. TERRI SWAN



Election season is always a challenging time for the church. The body of Christ is made up of individuals with many differing opinions on every issue imaginable, and when it comes to choosing elected officials this is especially true. It is my personal conviction that no religious leader should ever tell anyone how to vote. I only encourage everyone to be well informed before making voting decisions.

As we all process the results of this past election, I want to offer words of encouragement and reminders of our response as those who follow Jesus Christ.

A few years ago, I preached a sermon on the golden rule of politics, which in part were my thoughts on this matter and I had also gleaned some good advice from other pastors on the subject.

Andy Stanley said once, "The reality is that no one goes to Washington DC when we die!"

In 20 years of ministry no one has ever asked me to read them part of the constitution at their bedside at the time of their transition to heaven. Our identities are found in Jesus Christ, not in any political ideology.

Important issues were impacted by this recent election, and I am not making light of that. It is also important to be engaged in the political process. However, our response to these issues should be built upon our faith. Our hope comes from Someone greater than political leaders.

We have to approach the topic of politics from the spirit in which Jesus approached all things. Jesus did not come to take sides. He came to show us the way! In fact, he said, "I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life!"

The only way to keep faith first is by doing what Jesus did. He did one thing specifically and consistently that shows us how to respond in all things. He put loving the people first.

We can disagree about what's best for people, and we can debate best practices all day long. But we cannot debate what is most important because Jesus modeled for us what was most important.

He said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37)

Jesus taught us an important way of life: Treat people in the same way that you want them to treat you. The

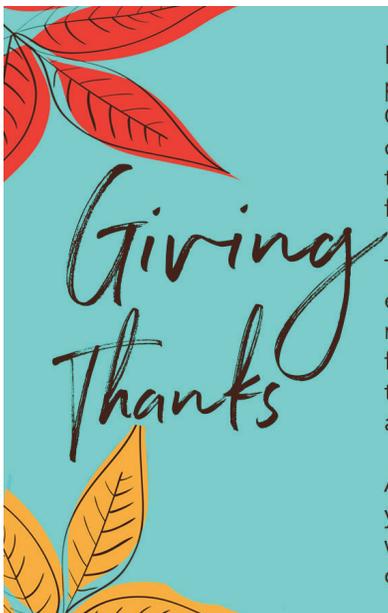
Golden Rule. It sounds so simple, but, as we know, living this out in our daily life is much harder than it sounds.

It is all about loving people—even the people who vote differently than we do. Even the people who see things from a different perspective.

John Wesley, founder of the United Methodist denomination said this back in October 6, 1774: "I met those of our society who had votes in the ensuing election, and advised them: 1. To vote without fee or reward for the person they judged worthy; 2. To speak no evil of the person they voted against; and 3. To take care that their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side."

This good advice of Wesley from nearly 250 years ago is still true today.

The election is over, and now we must move forward in love alongside our sisters and brothers in Christ regardless of how they voted. If your candidate won, be kind and loving to those who are disappointed. If your candidate lost, be kind and gracious, treating others as you would want to be treated. Thanks be to God that He is our ultimate King, and we can trust Him to graciously give us the love we need to serve Him together.



November brings thoughts of good times with family and friends, and we begin to make plans for the Thanksgiving holiday at month's end, when we can express our gratitude to God. Gratitude comes from the same root word as grace—or undeserved merit. We recognize that God's grace is freely given not because of anything we have done. The gift that God the father provides through his son, Jesus, is the cornerstone of the Christian faith.

This is true even when things don't go our way. Over and over again, Paul gives thanks even when he is in jail, or the church across town is not listening to him, or decisions are made that he did not support. Grace, "charis," means gift. "Eucharist," the Greek word for communion, our central practice, means "giving thanks to God." So we see that even though Thanksgiving is not officially a church holiday, it is right and good for us to set aside a special time to give thanks to God.

As we join with loved ones this year for Thanksgiving, it may look different than it has in years past, but we can rest knowing that we are loved by God, and He will make all things work together for our good (Romans 8:28). Praise be to God, and Happy Thanksgiving to our church family at Salem and The Connection!

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\$20 per turkey  
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## GIVING THANKS & SHARING OUR BLESSINGS

- BY REV. SEAN MCINTYRE

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, "I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." - Matthew 25:31-40*

We made it through Halloween, and the holiday season is officially upon us! I think Thanksgiving is going to look very different this year for all of us. As a proper safety measure, many of us will not be able to see the loved ones we are so accustomed to seeing over the holiday. Maybe you won't even be getting a taste of that special recipe that your mom or dad or aunt or uncle or cousin always makes.

But, what if you were in the position to have to choose between having a Thanksgiving meal for your family and paying the gas or electric bill. Salem is committed to connecting all people with God's extravagant love by doing just what Jesus asked: feeding the hungry. On Thanksgiving Day, Salem will be serving curbside traditional Thanksgiving meals at Haven Street. In addition, we are partnering with LifeWise STL to provide full-sized frozen turkeys for members of their community in need. In order to make this happen, we need your help. Please help us to provide on this special day to not only feed the hungry, but also create a happier holiday table. Turkeys are \$20 each and can be purchased on our website or by mailing a check to the Salem church office with "Turkeys" in the memo.

Check our social media pages for updates on the distribution of the turkeys.

## CANCELED EVENTS - A PARENT'S GREATEST CHRISTMAS GIFT

- REV. KATRINA DREW

Fast approaching is a season filled with rushing in and out of stores to find that red or green shirt for the kids' school program, baking Christmas party treats (or purchasing with tags rubbed off so no one knows it's store bought), buying presents, scheduling Santa photos, and on and on and on. But so much of that will be cut out this year. Do you hear that? That's a collective sigh of relief from parents who typically hit the ground running at Halloween and don't stop until after the New Year. Maybe, just maybe, the things we lose this year, the canceled events, and places to be, will actually turn out to be our greatest gift as parents. Think back to your childhood holiday seasons? What stands out most in your memory? Is it the parties, outfits, baked goods, or even presents? Or is it the quality time spent with people you love? This Advent season, I invite you to embrace the loss of scheduled in-person events and use this time to intentionally draw nearer to your children and your God. What if a renewed emphasis on the season of Advent replaced the busyness of the typical holiday season?



Advent is a season of waiting, yet we know, children are the worst at waiting! Let's face it they have no chill and very little sense of time. Yet often children are the best at embracing the holy mystery of "awaiting the already but not yet." It's the idea that we already know the story of Jesus and what is coming, yet we practice waiting each year. Each year we choose to experience the awe and wonder of God incarnate coming into our world. We choose to experience the Christmas story anew.

So, this season I invite you slow down and **actively** wait together as a family. Each family of our Church will receive an Advent wreath. Younger children will receive a crafting kit to make and decorate their own flameless wreath as well. We invite you to place these wreaths in a central part of your home. Each week as we light a new candle in Online Worship, follow along at home with your own wreath. Use the weekly Kid Question on the Worship Discussion Guide to spark a conversation. You'll also receive a clear round ornament. Make it a family activity to discuss prayer requests, write them on slips of paper, and place them inside the ornament. Spend this season engaging in activities that will prepare your hearts for Emmanuel—"God with us." May you be blessed with canceled events as you actively wait for the Christ child, together.

Love in Christ,  
Pastor Katrina

# ONLINE

**NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 27**  
**SUNDAYS, 9:30 AM**  
**Online Worship**  
**Facebook Live, YouTube, & Vimeo**

Don't miss Advent online worship as we explore how we can declare "I Believe, Even When." Jesus, like us, was born into a broken world yet He challenged and called for transformation and reconciliation through hope, love, joy, and peace. Because of Christmas, even the darkest night can be filled with music and light that empower us to exclaim "We believe, even when" we feel discouraged.

**DECEMBER 4, 7:00 PM**  
**Christmas Kick-Off Concert**  
**Facebook Live**

You won't want to miss this fun, festive Christmas concert for the whole family. This online concert features a variety of music styles and special guests Kennedy Holmes, Tish Haynes Keys, Josh Williams, Fresh Heir, Ryan Marquez Trio, the band, Salem United, and a kids' Christmas sing-along!

**DECEMBER 11, 7:30 PM**  
**Holiday Surprises**  
**Facebook Live & YouTube**

Celebrate the sounds of Christmas online with the American Chamber Chorale and Salem Chamber Orchestra. You won't want to miss our "Holiday Surprises" featuring some old and new favorites that will get you in the Christmas spirit. Visit [www.americanchamberchorale.com](http://www.americanchamberchorale.com) for more information.

**DECEMBER 21, 7:00 PM**  
**Longest Night Service**  
**Facebook Live**

Happiness and joy are often expectations of the holiday season. Yet for many of us, the season comes with complicated emotions, especially this year. Feelings of loss, grief, sadness, and even fear surround us. Rather than burying these difficult emotions and putting on a mask that says "everything's fine" why not acknowledge that everything is NOT ok! Join us online for a time of reflection as we seek comfort from God and one another through candlelit music, prayer, and a message.

# IN PERSON

**NOVEMBER 27, 6:00 PM**  
**Christmas Tree Lighting**  
**In Person, Mid-County Site**  
**Facebook Live**

Celebrate the start of the Advent season with Salem's first Christmas tree lighting. Enjoy from your car or join us outside as we light up the night. We'll also have some take-home Advent packets for your family. Experience the season at home with an Advent wreath, devotionals, candles, children's activities, and more.

**DECEMBER 2-23**  
**WEDNESDAYS, 6:00 PM**  
**Advent Mid-Week Worship**  
**In Person, Mid-County Site**  
**Facebook Live**

Experience the journey through Advent together with our special Mid-Week Worship on Wednesdays at 6:00 pm. Worship in-person or on Facebook.

**DECEMBER 20, 4:00-6:00 PM**  
**Starlight Walk (Outdoors)**  
**In Person, Mid-County Site**

Experience the Christmas story like never before during the Starlight Walk at Salem's Mid-County Site. You'll walk from station to station at this family friendly event to see, hear, and feel the coming of the newborn King Jesus. Each station will provide a different experience of prayer, learning, and activities. We will be collecting diapers and non-perishable food items for our mission partners as well. Make your reservation online at [saalemstlouis.com](http://saalemstlouis.com) or call (314) 991-0546.

**DECEMBER 10, 6:00 PM**  
**Socially Distant Christmas Caroling**  
**In Person, South-City Site**

Let's spread some Christmas cheer in our neighborhood. Join us for Socially Distant Christmas Caroling on December 10 at 6:00 pm in South City. Dress warmly, wear a mask, and gather together (socially distant) to sing Christmas Carols before taking a short stroll down the street to serenade our neighbors. All are welcome! Meet outside at the Virginia Avenue stairs - 6701 Virginia Avenue.

**All in-person events will be socially distanced, and facial masks will be required for the safety and protection of all.**

CELEBRATE  
*Christmas Eve*  
ONLINE

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24: CHRISTMAS EVE ONLINE WORSHIP**

**3:00 pm - Kid's Worship:** Families with children won't want to miss this interactive, fun service featuring kid-friendly music, special guests, and a few surprises.

**5:00 pm - Modern Worship:** Enjoy modern Christmas music featuring our band, Salem United, special guests, and an inspiring message.

**8:00 pm - Traditional Worship:** Celebrate with traditional Christmas music featuring the Chancel Choir and Salem Chamber Orchestra, and an engaging message.

**11:45 pm - Christmas Eve Countdown:** Join us as we countdown the minutes until Christmas together.

**WORSHIP ONLINE AT  
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November 11, 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**

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

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

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**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**



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