



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER CONNECTPOINT

MAY 2020

CONNECTING ALL PEOPLE WITH  
GOD'S EXTRAVAGANT LOVE

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## MOMENTS WITH PASTOR MARVIN

I am the old clergy dude on the Salem staff. One of my tasks has been to assist Pastor Terri in visiting church members who no longer can participate in the life of Salem as they once did. One of my goals was to visit Molly Weedman about once every 3 weeks. So, the week before Christmas I met Molly in the lobby of the facility where she lives. When I was leaving I told her I'd see her again in January. However, on January 3, I stumbled, fell and broke my right femur. So, no visiting for 6 weeks while I healed after surgery. Then, came the Covid-19 stay at home order.

On one great December day I left Molly Weedman expecting to be visiting with her again . . . soon. My plans were to be foiled. Maybe it's my advanced age, but I find myself being more aware of the value of life and its limits. I had my life planned in December. Yet, my plans were a train wreck in just a few weeks. No matter if we're 12, 23, 40, or 80 . . . our future can only be anticipated. It can't be guaranteed.

My life's adventures since January 3 has reminded me, with some violence, that living is a privilege. Making our own decisions is a privilege. Christian baptism is a privilege.

We all have a rather peculiar responsibility. We are personally responsible for living our life well . . . however, we are not completely in charge. There is our work, and there is God at work.

Prayer: O Lord, we are a responsible people. Yet, we often forget that we have been born to live on a terrific oasis in space, the planet earth. Our home planet, on which we were born is filled with beauty, resources, and opportunity. Thank you for this world and for allowing us the joy of being grateful for it. As followers of Jesus the Christ, we have been conversing with you. Thank for you for hearing. AMEN.

- Rev. Marvin Pyron

# STORIES OF LOVE AND HOPE

- REV. TERRI SWAN



Reflecting back to the Top Ten List that often opened "Late Night with David Letterman," I present the Top Ten Things I am Learning During COVID19!

#10 My co-worker, Millie, finds any excuse to bark at me; the rest of the time she is asleep on the job!

#9 Much to my surprise, I do remember how to cook!

#8 Alexa and I are developing a relationship, and I've discovered she doesn't know as much as she thinks.

#7 I miss my massage therapist, or at least my shoulders do.

#6 My workout pants have become acceptable office attire.

#5 I'm measuring weeks of quarantine by the number of my gray hairs.

#4 When Joe and I finally retire, he will need to go somewhere every day—without me.

#3 The camera really does add 10 pounds—or maybe that's the ice cream.

#2 Our staff are the most creative people in the world! (I really knew that already).

AND . . . the #1 thing I am learning during Covid 19 is that Salem/The Connection does not let a crisis stop the mission of the church!

Kidding aside, when St. Louis began to experience huge increases in unemployment and food insecurity from the pandemic, I knew Salem/The Connection would help in any way we could. We partnered with Epworth, and LifeWise as they help communities each week, and we continue to distribute between 120-140 hot meals each week through Haven Street at The Connection. I have been blessed to serve meals often and to receive words of gratitude to the church. Last week at Haven Street, I offered a man an umbrella, and he asked me what I wanted in return. I responded, "just a smile and a thank you." He grinned from ear to ear, and, of course, thanked me. Then, as he left, he said, "Love you all." In these difficult times, we all experience God's love in many ways – notes, texts, meals, financial donations, flowers, songs, pictures, videos, and yes, even umbrellas.

God's story is a one of hope. Our mission is to tell that story. As we continue to worship online, we will explore stories of the Bible to consider how they offer God's message of hope for today. I

encourage you to share with us how you have experienced God at work in this unusual season. With your permission, we will pass on some of these stories to encourage us all, to help us deepen our faith, and to remember God's grace.

It is said that character creates the unique fingerprint of the soul. This season is a time for deepening those grooves of that fingerprint. Consider these words from Romans 5:1-4:

*Therefore, since we have been made righteous through his faithfulness, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand through him, and we boast in the hope of God's glory. But not only that! We even take pride in our problems, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. This hope doesn't put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

As the love of God is poured out in our hearts, we too pour out our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit, and that is a great story to tell!



## CONNECTING WITH ZOOM GROUPS

- REV. TIM POWER

The last few months have been very lonely for many people. The COVID stay-at-home order has vastly diminished social interaction. Even the introverts among us are experiencing that deep human desire for connection with other people.

This is why Salem's online gatherings or "Zoom Groups" are so important. Groups meet throughout the week at various times, so we can welcome all people. There is a group for everyone!

I have done my best to take part in many of these groups. On Sunday mornings, after Salem's online worship, I join Rev. Marvin Pyron's Zoom meeting. I so appreciate the wisdom Marvin shares regarding God's word, but even more, I appreciate the fun and fellowship of the group. Not only do we learn, but we laugh, and we share, and most importantly we connect.

If you have not already, I would encourage you to join one of our online groups today. Connect with us. We need each other to get through the pandemic and to encourage one another through all life's trials and joys.



## MEETING NEEDS IN JESUS' NAME

- PASTOR SEAN MCINTYRE

When circumstances are at their worst, it is time for the Church to rise up and declare the name of Jesus even louder. I'm proud to say that Salem is doing just that! It might look a little different than before, but we continue to provide for those in need. Our partner agencies in mission: Epworth, Haven Street, LifeWise STL, and St. Louis Public Schools have rallied to serve the St. Louis community in this time of crisis, and we are privileged to come alongside them.

Not only have we continued to provide food for Epworth's Drop-In Center in North County, we have INCREASED the amount given significantly to meet a larger need as Epworth is feeding thousands in that area. We are partnering to help our friends at LifeWise STL who are feeding literally thousands in downtown St. Louis. Haven Street at the Connection is partnering with LifeWise to feed hundreds more, filling a great need in South St. Louis. This is cause for great celebration: good job church! BUT, the need is still there, and is, in fact, growing. Let's "press on" (Philippians 3:14) friends. If you would like to make a difference with us, head to [salemstlouis.com/outreach](http://salemstlouis.com/outreach) to find ways to participate in this outreach to our community.

I am honored to join each of you in doing Kingdom work!

## SELFISH PRAYER

- BY KATRINA DREW

As this pandemic drags on, it's no surprise that many of us are losing our cool. We're losing our patience. Things we were taking in stride are now really taking a toll. If we're really honest, we may have reached our breaking point. What started out as valuable family time, increased couple togetherness, or much needed alone time for projects, turned into: get me away from them, or if home alone, get me out of this house and around other people—NOW! Though none of us are in a rush to put ourselves or others in harm's way, we want this to pass as quickly as possible. We want the sickness, the dying, the job loss, the fear to be gone! Yet, how often do we express to God just how upset we really are? As a pastor I often hear, "I feel guilty praying for myself. So many people have far greater concerns than I do." But even Jesus, the Son of God, Prince of Peace, Savior of the World, prayed for himself!



We often forget that Jesus was not only fully divine but also fully human. He struggled with the same human emotions and needs that we do. He too, wanted suffering to pass. As he sat alone in the garden just hours before his arrest and crucifixion, he cried out to God saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." Jesus modeled for us that prayer is NOT selfish.

The divine side of Jesus knew that his prayer would not be answered the way he wanted. Yet, he prayed anyway. He prayed for strength and inner peace for what he would soon face. He prayed seeking an honest, open relationship with God. As the famous C.S. Lewis quote about prayer goes, "I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me."

Prayer changes us! It sustains us! Though our sermon series, "Essential Prayers," has come to an end, our focus on prayer lives on. As the Apostle Paul writes we are to pray without ceasing. So, take advantage of this unusual time to deepen your prayer life. Join me on Facebook Live at 10:00 am on Tuesday mornings for prayer. Each week we explore a different prayer practice. Join Pastor Tim on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 pm for our prayer service on Facebook Live.



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### 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](mailto:INFO@SALEMSTLOUIS.COM) // (314) 991-0546  
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**SALEM**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

#### **MID-COUNTY**

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#### **SOUTH-CITY**

6701 Virginia Avenue  
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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 PRAYER SERVICE**

**6:00 PM ON WEDNESDAYS** on both Facebook pages or anytime that's convenient for you!

*Need help? Let us know (314) 991-0546 or [info@salemstlouis.com](mailto:info@salemstlouis.com).)*



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