

*The Salem*

# *Stimulus*

A Publication of Fishing Creek Salem UMC

December 2020

Vol 48/Issue 12



*Merry Christmas*

## **Office Hours**

Monday-Thursday

8:30am—3:00 pm

Closed 12/25/20—1/3/21

## *From Pastor Les*

Merry Christmess! I read a story of how one mother wanted to keep the living room clean and orderly, as the packages were unwrapped on Christmas morning. Her children had other plans. They tore open their packages so that wrapping went everywhere. The kids ruined the nice, orderly room and made it look like Christmas exploded all around them! As the mother started to scold her kids her five year old said, “But Mommy, isn’t it wonderful? It’s a Christmess!”

Christmas is a mess. Crowded stores, bumper-to-bumper traffic, bright lights, packed schedules, and of course all the gifts. All these things add to the mess at Christmas. This mess can drive us crazy or it can remind us of the first Christmess.

Bethlehem was full of people because of the census. Mary and Joseph where frantically looking for room in an inn. Jesus was born in a barn and laid in an animal trough. All of this was a very messy situation to say the least.

Yet in the midst of this mess, a plan older than time itself began to unfold. God looked down at a broken world messed up by sin and knew that a Savior was needed to clean it up. The Creator Himself physically

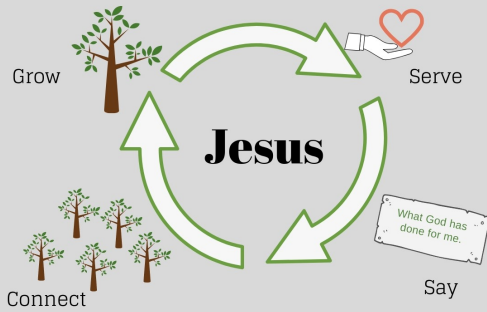
### **In This Issue:**

- ◆ Advent Devotionals
- ◆ Worship Night
- ◆ Live Nativity
- ◆ Stargazing!
- ◆ Activity Updates
- And More!



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## Discipleship Path



***Disciples: Get Closer to Jesus & Become Like Jesus***



The Salem Stimulus  
December 2020  
Vol 48 No 12

### **Contact Information:**

Les Towsey, Lead Pastor ([ltowsey@fcsalem.org](mailto:ltowsey@fcsalem.org))  
Jenny Thomas, Community Pastor ([jthomas@fcsalem.org](mailto:jthomas@fcsalem.org))  
Sandy Herman, Office Manager ([office@fcsalem.org](mailto:office@fcsalem.org))  
Stacey Wilkinson, Office Assistant ([assistant@fcsalem.org](mailto:assistant@fcsalem.org))  
717-938-1928—[www.fcsalem.org](http://www.fcsalem.org)

### **Staff:**

Gina Curtis, Director of Salem Community Nursery School  
Michael Hayes, Building Coordinator  
Jess Husman, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries  
Vicki Inscho, Kitchen Coordinator  
Tracey Michelsen, Director of Children's Ministries  
Tracey Michelsen, Michelle Rich, Bonnie Gruver, Church Sextons  
Jeannette Payne, Child Care Coordinator  
Kelsey Robertson, Director of The Gathering Worship, Keyboardist  
Susan Ryder, Director of Communications, Small Groups Coordinator  
Derek Sandstrom, Director of Worship Ministries

### **Service Schedule:**

Sunday Worship at 8:15am in Sanctuary, 9:30am (Live Stream) in Fellowship Hall,  
11:00am service in Fellowship Hall



*"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*John 1:14 (NIV)*

Please lift-up the following in your prayer time during the month of December:

- Neighbors, co-workers and other community members that they might live in love, forgiveness, and unity.
  - Those who are separated from family during the holiday season—either in distance or broken relationships.
  - Our church and community during the Advent season as we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Jesus.
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*Pastor Les and Salem Friends,*

*Thank You for the many prayers, calls and cards from Pastor Les and the Salem Family that have kept me moving forward (even if I am confined to a wheelchair) after my extensive foot surgery in October. Your support has kept me from being discouraged during this long journey since August. Hopefully I will be able to walk by myself back into Salem Church to worship in the future. God Bless all of you with Blessed Holidays and Be Safe.*

*Fay Brown*

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## *December Birthdays*



Ellie Carlisle  
Michael Carlisle  
Sophia Foland  
Jackson Hedden  
Davis Holland

Abigail Johns  
Levi Marakovits  
Carly McClure  
Ethan Misiti

Colin Mudrick  
Megan Sechrist  
Zakary Snyder  
Riley Temple  
Caleb Wert

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



## Year End Giving

Fishing Creek Salem always appreciates the financial gifts that are given to support and grow our ministries of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ! God bless you for your faithfulness and generosity again this year. Please note that the Internal Revenue Service has rules on when taxable year donations can be counted. The IRS says that charitable donations to the church must be **received and/or postmarked** by 12/31/2020 to count as a donation in 2020. Following these IRS regulations, donations received and/or postmarked after 12/31/20 must be counted as donations in 2021 (no matter what date may be associated with the gift).

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**A Card Shower-** is being held to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> birthday of Rev. John Halderman, Salem's associate pastor from 2000-2006. Send cards to: Rev. John Halderman, 681 Deer Rd., Boiling Springs, PA 17007

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There is an Advent Worship spotify playlist for Salem. It is accessible to anyone through this link. If you don't pay for a Spotify subscription, you'll just hear ads. <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0mUZDQHUmtrcli4hXzjg0?si=pzUqLaNnSEqSHTEKNM14Qg> or you can search for "FCS Advent Worship" in Spotify.

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**Salem and Friends Serves 350+ dinners!** "Thank you for doing this ... This is great what you're doing!" These were just a few comments repeatedly given as Salem along with several neighbors served Thanksgiving Dinners take-out style on Saturday, November 21st to our neighbors. Some friends who drove through offered donations. 40+ persons donated, carved, prepped, bagged meals with a spirit of true hospitality. Both givers and receivers were blessed in doing God's work!

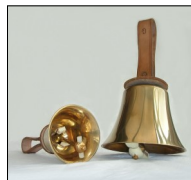


The **Egg-Making Team** (Easter Eggs) has made the hard decision to not produce and sell their famous eggs in 2021 due to COVID. They want to do all they can to protect those that produce the eggs. We can all agree that is a wise decision. Thank you egg makers for ALL your hard work over the years and we hope 2022 will allow you to again bless so many with your efforts! We appreciate you!

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We have been blessed recently by the newly formed **Bell Choir**. Director Charles Kelley wants us to know that the bells are a generous gift from Calvary United Methodist Church. Thank you Calvary!

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**The year 2020 has posed financial challenges to everyone.** The church is no exception. Salem's income is down by over \$104, 00, resulting in the decision to reduce the budget. 2021 will be the year of the volunteer. As we make adjustments to staff hours, we will ask members to fill in the gap. We would also ask you to evaluate your present financial commitment to Salem and its ministries, recognizing that you too may be feeling financial pressure. Salem continues to be the hands and feet of Jesus, in our community and to one another. Our financial situation will hopefully improve in the near future, and when that happens we can adjust our staff and ministry budgets once again.

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**Winter weather** is upon us! In the event of winter weather, the church office will follow the West Shore School District's (WSSD) delay & cancellation schedule. Sunday service cancellations will be broadcast on WHTM 27

& WGAL 8. **The closings for the church will only be broadcast on the stations' apps and websites.** Church closures will no longer be broadcast on the tv stations. If the WSSD cancels all evening activities, the church will cancel all evening activities as well. If the School district does not cancel evening activities, all group cancellations will be at the discretion of each group leader and he/she will be responsible for contacting the members of the group.

# SERVING OPPORTUNITIES EVERYONE HAS A PLACE

**Food Pop-Up**—Salem will again distribute non-perishable food boxes on Thursday, December 3rd from 4pm – 6pm. Please contact Pastor Jenny if you would like to help at [jthomas@fcsalem.org](mailto:jthomas@fcsalem.org) or 717-938-1928.

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## Are you ready to “shine God’s light to someone this Christmas?”

For Christmas this year Salem will be working with the WSSD and local elementary schools to assist in gift giving. We encourage anyone with children to contact their child’s school to be included in our outreach this Christmas season. Watch the announcements for more information on you can assist with gift giving.

**The link for the Hillside Angel tree** is: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C044EAEA92BAA8-hillside>

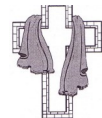


There is also a **limited giving opportunity within our church family**. Contact the office for details.

**Gifts can be placed** in the Welcome Center near the church office.

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**Did you learn to knit or crochet** while home over the last several months? Consider making a Prayer Shawl. Find out more by contacting Susan Huntsberger at 717-554-9321.



**A REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR???** **What is that?** A reverse Advent calendar centers our hearts on giving something rather than receiving something behind a small card board door each day. Pick up a box in Fellowship Hall or the Welcome Center to collect items that will be distributed at the Food Pop-up on January 7th. More details are included on the brochure attached to the box.



**Christmas Elves Needed!** — Church mailboxes have been used to distribute Christmas Cards for years. It saves on postage and is such a fun treat for Salem's Family. This year, many people will not be able to bring their cards in and/or pick up their cards from their mailbox.

If you would like to send cards to your church friends but cannot come in, we invite you to bring your cards in during office hours or contact the church office to request an elf to pick them up from you. We will do our best to help! The last day to schedule a card pick up is December 15<sup>th</sup>.

The deadline to request to have cards delivered to you from your church mailbox is December 10<sup>th</sup> so we can schedule the elves!

If you would like to sign up as an elf to sort cards into the mailboxes (with COVID, we don't think this is a safe project for our Youth Group this year), pick up cards from those unable to come to church or deliver cards a little closer to Christmas contact the office or sign up on the Connection Card. Card delivery will be December 16<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup>.

Maybe you can help out your neighbor! Offer to drop off their cards for them or deliver the goodies from their mailboxes.



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## SALEM'S 7th ANNUAL COMMUNITY TAKE OUT CHRISTMAS DINNER

Saturday, Dec 19th, 2:00pm to 3:30pm

**The Community Christmas Meal will look different this year.** It will be served as a takeaway meal on **Saturday, Dec 19th from 2-3:30pm.**

**VOLUNTEERS** needed for food donations, food prep, handing out meals and clean up. Keep an eye on the *Blast* and the announcements for specifics.

**RESERVATIONS are Required** and reservation details will be announced soon.



## HOLIDAY EVENTS

### **Advent Worship Night** - Friday, December 18th @ 7pm

Join the Gathering Band (and friends) to conclude your week with a sweet evening of worship to stop, breathe, kneel at the feet of Jesus & lean into the reason for the season. Christmas hymn favorites, contemporary worship, and a few surprises along the way! Worship will be held in Fellowship Hall. Child care will be provided.

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### **Stargazing Venture** – Sunday, December 13th @ 6:00pm

Our Advent theme calls for an outing of stargazing! Possible destination: Big Flat Tower/AT, Rt 234, Biglerville. Bundle up! Bring a chair, a blanket and a star-seeking spirit as Pastor Jenny guides you to a stargazing spot. A few astronomy points and spiritual meditation point will be offered.

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**Live Nativity! Live Animals! Live Stories!** – Salem’s outside space will hold a live nativity on Sunday, December 6th at 4:30pm. The Nativity is complete with the Holy Family, shepherds, and goats, cows and miniature horses from Fisher Farm! Listen to the story of Jesus being born, as well as a story of Saint Nicholas. Bundle up and warm up at the Hot Cocoa Bar and the Bonfire. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy an early evening of outdoor fellowship!

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**Advent Devotion videos**—Starting in December—watch Salem members as they offer reflections on the Season. In these twice-weekly videos, they will talk about:

- Being in awe & wonder of God at Christmas
- Drawing closer to God at Christmas
- Keeping Christ the Focus of Christmas
- Preparing your heart to celebrate Jesus Birth

Watch for the video links in the weekly *Blast*, on Facebook and Salem’s YouTube channel— [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_edajFklfNmfy4AqGKSyvg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_edajFklfNmfy4AqGKSyvg)



## Christmas Services

Salem has many opportunities for worship this Christmas! Everyone's comfort level with COVID-19 is different, and we want to respect people's diverse thinking, as well as follow rules set forth by the CDC. So, we will hold more services than usual this season, with one outdoor option, the Drive-in Church; two options on December 23rd; and a prerecorded service.

The services will all be similar with the exception of Drive-in Church, where folks can sit in or outside of their cars and listen through a FM station; and 11 p.m. worship where we will offer communion. We ask that folks RSVP for worship, so that we can plan for the number of folks attending. Links to that sign-up will be available soon.

Christmas is a time when people seek the "Holy Hush" and are drawn toward God and church, even if not regular attenders. Remember to invite people this Christmas or direct them towards the website, [www.fcsalem.org](http://www.fcsalem.org) for our prerecorded worship option.



**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**

12/23 6:30 & 7:30 p.m.

12/ 24 4:30 p.m. "Drive-in"

6:30 p.m.

7:30 p.m.

11 p.m. Communion

RSVP: [www.fcsalem.org](http://www.fcsalem.org) or 717-938-1928

Salem staff considers these many services a gift to the Salem community and beyond, which have experienced a very hard year.




**STAR GAZING**

LOOKING UP  
TO  
FOCUS  
ON  
CHRISTMAS

Advent Sermon Series

Advent Series—Have you ever gained a sense of wonder looking at a starry sky? Have you ever been in awe of all the worlds God had made? This Advent and Christmas Salem church desires to recapture this sense of awe and wonder.

**Our theme is *Stargazing*...**

To Our Salem Church Family,

The Towsey family wants to wish the congregation of Salem Church a very Merry Christmas. We are thankful for the warm hospitality we received and the grace offered in this time of transition. May God richly bless you and your loved ones this Christmas season.



Serving Christ Together,  
Pastor Les and Family

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### Youth—High School Group Update

Starting Dec. 2, Wednesday night high school group will now meet from 5-6:30pm. If transportation is an issue because of the time change, please contact Jess for rides!

We will be separating guys and girls so we can dive deeper into discussions more relevant to each of them. Both groups will meet at the same time. Kevin Fickel will be heading up the guys group.



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(Continued from Page 1)

entered our world through the supernatural birth of a tiny baby born in a humble smelly stable. "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us,'" Matthew 1:23. I'm so grateful for our God who sent His Son in our mess at Christmas.

Two thousand years have passed, but the world hasn't really changed all that much. People still make a mess of things. The suffering of this world is everywhere. Yes, this world still stinks. So, as we experience the messes of Christmas again this year, may it remind you of our Savior who came into our mess to be Savior. Thanks be to God, Amen!

## LIBRARY NEWS

submitted by Kathy Alford

Christmas 2020 looms right around the corner, and what a unique holiday it will be this year. With our socializing being mostly with our nuclear family, there will much time for games, music, movies, and reading. Please don't forget about our library and how it can enrich your family's holidays.

There are three different locations at our church to check out holiday materials. First of all, the library table in the welcome center displays a plethora of Christmas items. Also, in the coat room, you will find a “nursery school cart” that also holds various holiday materials that anyone can check out. In addition, please come upstairs and visit our library that is also filled with holiday fare! Help your family remember that Jesus is the reason for the season.



The UMW will not have a meeting in December, but will have our Christmas party on Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm at Culhane's Steak House.

Please contact Heidi Stahl by

December 1st to make your reservation. We will be collecting gifts for UM Children's Home. Check the UMW bulletin board for gift cards. We are also blessed to be able to help a young lady in our Community welcome a new baby and celebrate Christmas with her Children. In January, we will help collect items for the pop-up food drive. Our meeting will be on Thursday the 14th at 6:30 pm. Officers will be installed and we'll make tentative plans for 2021. As you can see, we are very busy, but have lots of fun! We would love to have you come and “check us out!”



402 Valley Road Etters, PA 17319

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**