



Salem-Zion Mennonite Church

“Christ among us, Repent and Believe”

February 18, 2024

GATHERING TO PRAISE

Prelude Cadence Hofer

Welcome and Call to Worship (from Psalm 25) Lillie Eisenbeis

L: Teach us your pathways, O God – our eyes and our souls are trained on you.

P: For you are the greatest guide, and your map is always good.

L: Other paths have left us lost; other ways have left us confused.

P: You guide us along the trail of your mercy, drawing sinner and saint down this well-worn way.

ALL: All your paths are love, made smooth by your faithful walking.

We are led into your truth by following the tread of your feet.

Lighting the Peace Lamp

Opening Prayer

* Hymn of Praise – *There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy* VT #156

* Greeting each other

Children’s Story Genesis 9:8-17 Beth Bontrager

Offering – Deacon Sharing Fund
Offertory Reeslyn Hofer

HEARING GOD’S WORD

New Testament Scripture Reading I Peter 3:18-22

Prayer of Confession (screen)

* Gospel Reading Mark 1:9-15

Sermon – “In the wilderness” Corey Miller

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

Song – *O God, You Search Me* VT #199

Testifying to Christ among us: Repenting and Believing

Congregational Prayer

SENDING

* Song – *Take Thou My Hand* VT #631

* Blessing

Postlude Maria Paff

Church Calendar

Deadline for bulletin submissions is 8:30 p.m. Wednesday; salemzion@gwtc.net

TODAY

Our journey toward God leads us on a path. Though the road is sometimes difficult, especially in the wilderness, God is always with us, gently guiding us back. As we look for how Christ is Among Us, we repent and believe in the Good News of Jesus. Welcome to everyone on this first Sunday of Lent.

The offering that we are celebrating today is for the **Deacon Sharing Fund**.

9:30am – Sunday School for all ages

10:30am – Worship Service

2:00pm – Fuente de Vida church service

THIS WEEK

Sanctuary stage expansion project begins

Feb. 19 (Mon) – Board of Education meeting; time TBA

Feb. 20 & 21 – Kitchen/Fellowship Hall reserved during the day

Feb. 21 (Wed) – Children’s Choir practice, 6:00-6:30pm

Feb. 21 (Wed) – Feeding Our Faith – Report from the 150th Anniversary Committee and Conversations

Feb. 22 (Thurs) – Deacons meeting at Gwen’s house at 7:00pm

Feb. 23 (Fri) – Fuente de Vida church service at 7:00pm

NEXT SUNDAY – Feb. 25

Next Sunday continues our Lenten season’s theme, “Christ Among Us.” The focus of the morning is “Show us Faith.” The texts are Genesis 17:1-17, Psalm 22:23-31, Mark 8:31-38, and Romans 4:13-25. Consider reading and praying over these texts throughout the week as preparation for worship. Jill Hofer will be preaching.

The offering will be for **Bienvenidos**.

Salem-Zion Prayer Requests & News

Happenings over the past week:

- Gwen Ortman had successful knee surgery on Tuesday morning and was able to return home on Wednesday. Praise God for this good surgery and prayers for Gwen as she recovers.

- Marian Gering moved last weekend from Salem Home to Oakview Terrace. Pray for Marian in this season of adjustment to her new living space.

Remember to praise God for:

- the gift of these 40 days of Lent to fast, listen, confess, and experience Christ among us in our lives.

- the many ways our deacons are able to help people, spiritually and financially. We praise God for the resources the deacons continue to share and offer our church!

Remember to pray for:

- those who cannot be here today: LaVonne Schrag.
- Gwen Ortman as she recovers from her knee surgery.
- Marian Gering as she adjusts to her new living space.
- our sister churches in Southeastern Iowa: First of Iowa City, West Union, Wellman, East Union, Kalona, Washington, Wayland, Sugar Creek, Pleasant View, and Zion Mennonite Churches.

Lent is a forty-day season of reflection and preparation for the commemoration of the death and resurrection of Jesus at the center of the Christian year and our Christian life. Purple is often the color associated with this season as it draws us into the life and passion of Jesus. During this season, we are encouraging everyone to ponder how **Christ is Among Us** in this forty-day adventure. We encourage you to read the scriptures, pray the prayers on Tuesday and Friday (sent out on email), and come to worship with heightened expectation. God is ready to meet us in these special days.

During the next quarter of adult Sunday School (March-May), we will be offering two **elective book studies**. Today is the last Sunday to sign up if you are interested in attending one of these classes. Book descriptions are on the sign-up sheets in the narthex.

The 150th Anniversary of the Swiss-Volhynian Mennonites in South Dakota – September 7-8, 2024: Save the date! Share your stories! The 150th Anniversary committee (Corey Miller, Marnette Hofer, Polly Waltner, Gwen Ortman, Everett Waltner, Rudy Brockmueller) is very excited about this upcoming commemoration! We will be filling you in on our many ideas and plans as the year progresses. One thing that we would like from you right now is your family stories—stories of your grandparents and great grandparents—people who shaped our church and community. We are looking for short stories that could be shared as children’s stories, in Sunday School classes, in newsletters, and possibly a booklet that we hope to compile. We are looking for stories of adventure, of hard times, of celebrations, and especially stories of faith. Please give or send your written stories to Gwen Ortman or Marnette Hofer. Thank you!

Stage expansion project: Starting this week (February 19), two to three people are needed to help with the stage expansion project. Contact Lindy Graber if you are interested or if you have any questions.

Community Connections

Cheese Pocket Making Days Planned for Schmeckfest: Cheese pockets for the 2024 Schmeckfest Country Kitchen will be made on Friday afternoon and

Saturday, Feb. 23 & 24, in the Pioneer Hall Dining Room. Plans are to begin at 3:30 pm on Friday and 9:00 am on Saturday. Please bring a sack lunch on Saturday. Join the volunteer crew for a great time of work and fellowship and learn how this ethnic favorite is made. Watch the *Courier* or Freeman Academy websites for weather cancellation.

Rural Revival will meet on February 26 at 8:00 p.m. at the Freeman library. All are welcome to attend.

Kuchen for Schmeckfest will be made in the dining hall Friday and Saturday, March 1-2, starting at 9:00 a.m. Please bring a sack lunch and join us for all or part of the day. If you have glass pie plates we can borrow, please bring them, clearly labeled. Thank you!

Is a world without poverty possible? We invite you to join us for a look inside MEDA, where compassion meets creativity to solve some of the world's toughest problems through agriculture and innovation. Come to **Salem Mennonite (South Church) Fellowship Hall on Sunday, February 25th, 2:00 p.m.** to enjoy some coffee and dessert while Clalude Clodomir from MEDA shares MEDA's vision for a world without poverty. Claude demonstrates how this happens through strategic investment in entrepreneurship and agricultural development. Clodomir is the Chief of Party for the ATTAIN project, a USAID-funded initiative by MEDA. With over 20 years of experience in international development, Claude specializes in implementing USAID-funded projects and believes in the transformative power of incentives. We welcome you to join us!

Every year the Justice and Peace Task Group awards a **peace mug** to a Central Plains peacemaker. This year we are looking for a special person who has seen the plight of immigrants and responded. As God's people, we are called to welcome the stranger. Look around your congregation and community. Think about people who have found ways to bring peace and justice by welcoming immigrants. We need nominations for this special *Welcome the Stranger Peace Mug Award*. Send names and a brief description of why you are nominating them to Jane Y-S (wilmajane17@gmail.com). We need them by Monday, March 18.

God's Peace in Lent: "There's something about it that makes sense, Lent. You give something up, and everything's more joyful." – Elaine Stritch

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