

# SALEM TIDINGS

*No Matter Who You Are, Or Where You Are On Life's Journey, You Are Welcome Here.*  
Salem United Church of Christ, 5300 E. Florida Avenue, Denver, CO 80222

## August 2022



As I write this, I am preparing to preach tomorrow at the Evergreen Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The service is part of the Evergreen Jazz Festival that runs during the last weekend of July. This is the third time I've been invited to do this, and it always is a challenge. How do you draw a connection between music (and jazz in particular) and God's Gospel? For that matter, how do you draw a connection between any art form and the proclamation of God's good news? Let me share a little about what I have come to believe.

For tomorrow's sermon I selected a text from Mark's Gospel, chapter 7, and verses 31-37. I urge you to read it for yourself but here it is in brief. Jesus is near a place called the Decapolis expanding his ministry beyond the familiar territory of Galilee when a group approaches him with a man who has a speech impediment, due to severe hearing loss. We don't know why they bring the man to Jesus. Are they his friends concerned about his impairment? Or are they some of Jesus' antagonists, seeing if this Jewish rabbi would heal a Gentile? The story doesn't say. What it does tell us is that Jesus pulls the man away from the group and in what looks like a private ritual, heals the man of his impediment, thus restoring his wholeness and his ability to fully participate in the social life of his community.

In the center of the story are Jesus' words: Be Opened! The message is clear—that God through Jesus has the power to open up the ears of a deaf man so that he can hear and speak well. For the first ones to listen to this story, this was a fulfillment of Isaiah's vision of life in God's Realm— "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy!"

What might this mean for us? I believe the story invites us to recall those moments when someone opened our (metaphorical) "ears" to new life, new loves, new depths of insight about our relationship to one another and to God. Since this sermon will be in the context of a jazz festival, I will tell the story of my first experience of jazz music. I was taking guitar lessons from two brothers who lived down the street from me. Billy and Bobby Bradley were a little older than me; both of them were afflicted with muscular dystrophy and were confined to their wheelchairs. They were very talented musicians in their own right and owned one of the biggest record collections in town. When I came early to my guitar lesson one day, they were sitting in their living room listening to some kind of music that I found strange and unsettling— "what is THAT?" I asked over the noise. "It's jazz! Do you like it?" "No, not really, what is it?" When Fats Waller was asked that same question he said, "If you have to ask, you'll never know!" The Bradley brothers said simply, "Just listen". So, I did, and tried to understand why people liked it. I started to get it when Bobby said, "Don't worry about it. It's just God messing with your ears".

I certainly understood that. Sometimes God just needs to 'mess with our ears'. Jazz explores the full range of human emotion---lament, 'the blues, or anger then turns it towards deep reflection, even joy! I think discernment can be a time when God 'messes with our ears' by removing whatever it is that blocks our ability to hear then speak our truth. God does this with compassion for us and with concern for our community of faith. God is still speaking! Let's pray that God's Spirit will unblock our ears so that we can hear what God's good news is for us!

*Pastor Richard*

## Reverend Buchanan

### Listening to the Voice of God

I think these words from Richard Rohr's daily meditation last Friday are quite timely as we continue our spiritual discernment process together. I share them with you below: Richard Rohr reminds us that when we listen to the voice of God, we are given the grace to "pass it on" to others. If something comes toward us with grace and can pass through us and toward others with grace, we can trust it as the voice of God. Richard tells us:

*One holy man who came to visit me recently put it this way, "We must listen to what is supporting us. We must listen to what is encouraging us. We must listen to what is urging us. We must listen to what is alive in us."*

*If we can trust and listen to our inner divine image, our whole-making instinct, or our True Self, we will act from our best, largest, kindest, most inclusive self. There is a deeper voice of God, which we must learn to hear and obey. It will sound like the voice of risk, of trust, of surrender, of soul, of common sense, of destiny, of love, of an intimate stranger, of your deepest self. It will always feel gratuitous, and it is this very freedom that scares us. God never leads by guilt or shame! God leads by loving the soul at ever-deeper levels, not by shaming at superficial levels.*

I'm delighted to be on this journey with you and am encouraged by what is unfolding as we listen together to Spirit. Let us keep listening, and sharing with one another what we hear, sense, and experience, with grace...

*In the Promise of Christ,  
Rev. Joanne*

## Building and Grounds

After much frustration we are completing the work of removing fallen branches and trees from the church and Parsonage grounds. We are working to get straight with the city of Denver on our sewer backflow testing. We have accepted a bid to strip and wax the Community Room and hallway floors and look forward to that work being completed soon. We have talked with Christ the King church about holding a joint community garage sale at Salem on Saturday, September 10. Finally, we are working with the SLC and Chris Johnson to improve the church financial reports to the congregation so that they are accurate, understandable, and timely. We thank everyone who cares about our Salem facility. If you see a problem or issue with our building or grounds, please let us know.

*Building and Grounds Ministry  
Roger Neumann and Chuck Wright*



### Mission Moments

It was hoped Salem could do a hands-on mission in August - but to mingle with strangers at this time does not feel safe- so during August, create your own mission. Perhaps give an extra gift to a favorite charity. Take a neighbor a treat or some flowers. Pay for a stranger's coffee or lunch. Use your imagination. We would love to hear your feedback on your experience. Also, if there is a particular organization you support and feel passionate about and would like Salem to consider it for future missions, talk to Beth or June.

*Missions Ministry  
June Seppa*

## August Calendar Highlights

**Bible Study** – Join us via Zoom at 10 am on Tuesdays.

**Worship** - Sundays, 9:30 am. Join us in person or online!

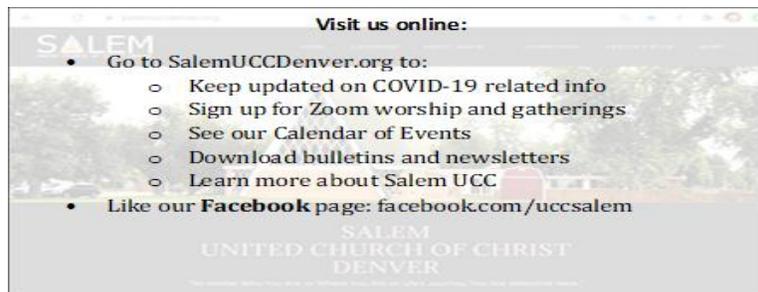
**Romeo Coffee Club** - Meet at Salem on August 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am, please join us for coffee and conversation!

**Discernment** – Meetings held after worship service at 11:00 am. August 14<sup>th</sup> & August 28<sup>th</sup>.

**September Newsletter** - Items are due on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Happy  
Birthday!**

Bev Gibson  
August 27<sup>th</sup>



### Salem United Church of Christ

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Administrative Assistant - Lisa Thomas

Discernment Minister - Joanne Buchanan

Pastor - Richard Ward

Financial Assistant - Ani Martinez

Music Director - Isabella Ashton



# August 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>7 9:30- Worship Communion 3-7-CHK</p>	<p>8 7- Boy Scouts</p>	<p>9 9- Twinkle Music 10- Bible Study Zoom 7- Cub Scouts</p>	<p>10 9- Twinkle Music 9- Men's Coffee Chub 9-30- Art Class 6- Community Meal</p>	<p>11 9- Twinkle Music 7- Child Care Providers</p>	<p>12 9- Twinkle Music 9-30- Art Class</p>	<p>13 9- Twinkle Music</p>
<p>14 9:30- Worship 11- Discernment 3-7-CHK</p>	<p>15 7- Boy Scouts</p>	<p>16 10- Bible Study Zoom 7- Cub Scouts</p>	<p>17 6- Community Meal</p>	<p>18 7- Child Care Providers</p>	<p>19 Newsletter Articles Due</p>	<p>20 9- Twinkle Music 7- Classical Swing Concert</p>
<p>21 9:30- Worship 3-7-CHK</p>	<p>22 7- Boy Scouts</p>	<p>23 10- Bible Study Zoom 7- Cub Scouts</p>	<p>24 9- Men's Coffee Chub 6- Community Meal</p>	<p>25 7- Coin Club</p>	<p>26 Newsletter Articles Due</p>	<p>27 Ben Gibson</p>
<p>28 9:30- Worship 11- Discernment 3-7-CHK</p>	<p>29 7- Boy Scouts</p>	<p>30 10- Bible Study Zoom</p>	<p>31 6- Community Meal</p>			



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
4 9:30- Worship Communion 3-7-CTK	5 7- Boy Scouts	6 10-Bible Study Zoom 7-Cub Scouts	7 9-Men's Coffee Club 6-Community Meal	8 7-Child Care Providers	9	10 8-11-CTK/Salem Garage Sale
11 9:30- Worship 3-7-CTK	12 7- Boy Scouts	13 10-Bible Study Zoom 7-Cub Scouts	14 6-Community Meal	15	16	17
18 Kurt Freiburghaus 9:30- Worship 3-7-CTK	19 7- Boy Scouts	20 10-Bible Study Zoom 7-Cub Scouts	21 9-Men's Coffee Club 6-Community Meal	22	23	24
25 9:30- Worship 3-7-CTK	26 7- Boy Scouts	27 10-Bible Study Zoom	28	29	30	
	7- Boy Scouts		6-Community Meal	7-Coin Club		