

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

December 2020

A Word From Pastor Russ

One of the beautiful aspects of Christmas during a pandemic is that it challenges us to rethink things. It pushes us to rethink our priorities by making us realize what really is most important in our lives: relationships with family, friends and God.

Or so I thought. The other day—It is still November as I write this—I went to a big box store, and was floored. The entire, gigantic Christmas section was gutted to the size it normally is in January, but without “Clearance” signs. People had bought out all that Christmas stuff, even before December!

Back in WWII when supplies got tight, people in the U.S. rationed, went to work to help the war effort, and bought bonds to support the troops. Today when there's a world crisis, people respond by buying copious stuff... most of which they don't need (1,000 rolls of toilet paper anyone?). And now COVID-weary people want to celebrate something—anything—so badly that the Christmas decorations they already have aren't enough—so they clear out the stores before December.

The real Christmas gift has always been the birth of Jesus, the birth of a new relationship with God. Advent—waiting for Jesus' birth—is a time of anticipating the restoration that comes with that new relationship. In 2020—more than ever—we need restoration more than a hundred ornaments or a thousand rolls of TP.

May the Christmas gift this pandemic brings us be this: that we truly do rethink our priorities and work to realize what really is most important in our lives: relationships with family, friends and God. In doing so, we will find restoration.

Join us all this month as we explore “Restoration Jobs” each Sunday leading up to Christmas Eve. December 6th we will tackle “Restoring Peace.” December 13th we'll look at “Restoring Love.” And December 20 our focus will be “Restoring Joy.”

We'll also meet on Christmas Eve, December 24th, 6 PM for Candlelight Worship on Zoom (bring your own candle and something to light it with!). We look forward to seeing you there for this special service, especially in these tough times.

Until then, I wish you a blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas!

Pastor Russ



Moderator Moments

Happy Season of Advent as we begin the month of December! Have you thought of some new and creative ways to celebrate Christmas and the holidays this year? I challenge everyone to put together at least one Advent Goodie Bag (or Advent Goodie Box) to share with a friend or neighbor -- especially for someone who may need some extra love and care during this month. You may include some items such as a note or Christmas card with a simple prayer, favorite Bible verse or lines from a special Christmas carol; a package of hot chocolate, tea or popcorn; a candy cane, cookie, treat or fruit; an ornament or candle. The possibilities can be truly unique and meaningful. These bags (or boxes) may be given any time before Christmas, which is the end of Advent. I hope this will become a new tradition for our Salem church members and friends as we continue to explore ways to connect with others in our community!

God bless, Polly Fumagalli, Moderator

UCC Christmas Events

Please note that the United Church of Christ's National Setting will provide the following special events for Christmas this year:

1. A "Lessons and Carols" pageant service will be streamed on Christmas Eve (Thursday, December 24) at 1:30 pm MST. You may find this on the UCC's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/uccvideos>).
2. "A Very UCC Christmas: 2020" full movie with four scenes and music tracks will be streamed on Sunday, December 27 at 8:00 am MST. Again, you may find this on the UCC's YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/uccvideos>.

In case these dates and times do not work well for you, these events will be available afterwards for your viewing enjoyment -- at your convenience!

Discussion of Annual Meeting Items

Please save the following date on your calendar as Salem UCC will hold a "Discussion of Annual Meeting Items" event via Zoom on Sunday, January 24, 2021 at 10:30 am following our worship service. Stay tuned as more details will be in the January newsletter!

Stay the Course - Vision 2021 Stewardship Campaign

As with everything during this 2020 Covid Pandemic year, our Stewardship Campaign was very different! We held it virtually through our Sunday Zoom Worship service and by mail with the 3rd quarter giving statements. Our Theme - Stay the Course - Vision came from the feeling we need to hang on, support each other in any way possible - Stay the Course and from Rev. Russ' challenge to our Salem Family to think about and consider what Salem's Vision is to be, based on God's direction and our own assets which he identified as our Campus, what we could be doing and offering through it; our Location in SE Denver - No matter who you are or where you are on Life's Journey, You are Welcome Here - and in our Love that we so willing share with everyone we come in contact with - neighbors, members, friends and our rental family - In All Things Love!

You, our Salem Family have once again come through by mailing, calling and texting your 2021 pledge amount to Chris Johnson or Nate Reiser as if we were all in person and I thank you! At the writing of this article we are behind in our goal of \$50,000 but closing in on it. If you have not turned in your pledge card please get it sent, called or texted in so that the Budget Committee can finalize the 2021 budget before the holidays!

Thank you so much for your love, time, talent and commitment to Salem!

Proposed Church Re-Opening Date

The Covid-19 task force has proposed Father's Day, June 20, as being our target date to have our first in-person Sunday service. We used science, our medical knowledge, discussions and the Ouija board to select this Sunday as being the most likely date to aim for. Of course, if conditions improve faster than expected, we will open earlier and it's also too early to determine what kind of service we'll have, let alone if there will also be the annual BBQ. As time passes, we'll keep you updated as to any changes in our prediction. Stay Positive and Stay Safe!!

Missions Moments

Salem will have two December missions: 1) The UCC Christmas Fund and 2) The Heifer Project. Please indicate on your check which mission you would like to donate. The Heifer Project not only helps those learn to be financially independent in 3rd world countries but also aides families in the USA.

A BIG THANK YOU to Salem for your participation in the food drive that we held on November 14th. There was enough food to supply TWO food banks - FISH at Wash Park UCC and Archway. Interesting was Archway Housing, for those with mental illness or Vets, liked the canned goods and the housing for immigrants liked the packages of rice and beans.

A special THANKS to Sunflower Day Care Center for contributing to the canned food drive!

The sock drive went well and we have a supply of socks to give to the homeless by Christmas.

Coming Soon in Worship!

A trombone ensemble from Denver University records Christmas Music in our sanctuary December 1st for Salem's worship.



FYI

A note about our wonderful renters, the Denver Coin Club and The Art Class folks: Tom Infantino, an officer with The Denver Coin Club, called me and let me know that they decided to donate \$100.00 to Salem. Mr. Infantino says the Coin Club wanted to make this donation to help the church during this difficult time. He also calls on a regular basis to check in with us and make sure we are ok.

The Art Class also has given money to Salem for paper towels as they know we are using much more of these at this time. They also regularly check in on us and ask to help out when they can. They greatly appreciate Salem so very much.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Thursday, December 24, 6:00 pm on Zoom we will hold our annual retelling of the Christmas story through scriptures and songs. You're welcome to invite family and friends to join us, no matter where in the world they live. Be sure to have a candle (LED or wax) ready, and something to light it with if it's wax. Join us!

December Calendar:

Worship Sundays, 9:30 am on Zoom*

Bible Study Tuesdays, 10 am on Zoom*

Virtual Community Social, Wednesdays at 6 pm on Zoom*

Tuesday, December 8th 7 pm: Council Meeting

Thursday, December 24th, 6 pm: **Christmas Eve Candlelight "Lessons and Carols" Service on Zoom***

*to join by Zoom, sign up on our website at SalemUCCDenver.org



- December 1 ▶ Nate Reiser
 - ▶ Jewell Traudt
- December 18 ▶ Ellie McHenry
 - ▶ Carrie Cox
- December 24 ▶ Jason Morrison



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DENVER

Visit Us Online:

- Go to SalemUCCDenver.org to:
 - Keep updated on COVID-19-related info
 - Sign up for Zoom worship and gatherings
 - See our Calendar of Events
 - Download bulletins and newsletters
 - Learn more about Salem UCC
- Like our Facebook page: facebook.com/uccsalem

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Photo by Craig Wilderman

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