

# 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

**May 2021**

## **A Word From Pastor Russ**

When I think about the beginning of spring, I think about...[crocuses](#). My mom planted some around the yard probably before I was born, and every year when I was growing up in Oklahoma, they were some of the first plants to pop up and flower when spring came around. Most were yellow, some were purple, and all were beautiful. If it is possible for a flower to smile, crocuses smile. (At least I think so!)

Maybe it was because they were the first flowers to herald the spring. Maybe it was because they sometimes broke through the snow on a cloudy, cold day. Maybe it was the yellow ones that brightened the brown grass around them, I don't know. But to me, they smiled.

We've been through a long winter.... A REALLY long winter. A winter of a pandemic, of social distancing and mask-wearing, a year-long winter away from friends and family, from gathering in our church, from going out to eat, to a movie, or to a concert.

But vaccinations are well underway these days and hope is in bloom like those spring Oklahoma crocuses. It's like a spiritual spring after a long, dark winter. We still need to be careful, but as things ease up, it's easier to smile, easier to hope, easier to believe. The spiritual crocuses are blooming!

*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus 2 it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.*

Isaiah 35:1, NRSV

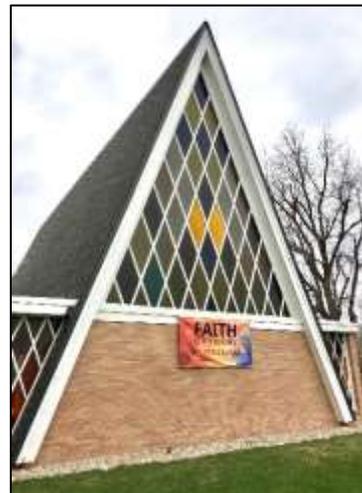
We live in Colorado; we know how spring can be: hot, cold, sunny, cloudy, snowy, rainy... all over the place! And it's going to be like that for us in this spiritual spring: 4<sup>th</sup> coronavirus wave, maybe not, wear masks, maybe not, are you vaccinated?, maybe not...

But spring always leads to summer. We will get there! With patience, perseverance, hope and time, we will get there!

We will worship again in person one day soon, singing the praises of Jesus. We will share after-worship coffee and goodies, Wednesday fellowship meals, and holiday gatherings at church. We will eat out, hang out, and go out for movies and concerts. We will talk with one another without masks muffling our voices. We will, as this day is coming, for the crocuses *are* blooming and the winter is almost over. May it be so!

Looking forward with joy,

Pastor Russ



## Moderator Moments

Earlier this month, I had the privilege of attending the *Healthy Congregations* workshop offered through the Rocky Mountain Conference of the UCC. The workshop was developed and presented by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. A total of eight members of our congregation were able to attend, and we all send a big Thank You to Polly Fumagalli for her efforts and support in making this workshop available.

Some of my key takeaways from the workshop were:

- Healthy congregations have a vision – and focus on that vision;
- Healthy congregations welcome diverse personalities and styles of communication, and work to be inclusive;
- People in churches are “in relationship” with one another; understanding how those relationships work (and do not work) together is essential for a church to move forward;
- When churches move forward towards their vision, there will be conflict – not everyone sees the path forward in the same way. Healthy congregations keep their focus on where they are going, and are able to adjust their path to their destination as needed.



Others from Salem who attended the workshop are Norma & Beth Hansen, Deborah Barnard, Jim Dean, Polly Fumagalli, Kathleen King, and Pastor Russ. If you'd like to hear more about the workshop, please reach out to any of us!

As I said the last three months, and now think I will say every month, we are truly blessed to have such wonderful leadership in our congregation at Salem!

## Personnel Ministry Update

In April, Personnel Ministry welcomed our newest staff member – Interim Administrative Assistant Kerry Mayhew. Former Administrative Assistant Debbie Gordy has accepted the position of Finance Assistant at Salem, so we continue to be blessed with her talents.

Currently, Kerry is working at Salem on Monday afternoon and all day Tuesday; Debbie is in the office on Friday of each week. Over the next two months, Kerry and Debbie will continue to “sort out” the jobs of the two positions; Chris Johnson and Personnel Ministry will finalize the Finance Assistant job description, and Pastor Russ and Personnel Ministry will finalize the Administrative Assistant job description.

As we move forward building our new staff team, remember to take a moment to appreciate all they do for you and for our church! Personnel Ministry is working to offer regular appreciation to our team – and in April, arranged for the Easter Bunny to deliver “Easter Gift Bags” of appreciation. While that was nice, a kind word from you – as a member of our congregation – is even nicer. So take a moment in May and appreciate!

Change can bring confusion, conflict, and misunderstanding, but more importantly, it can bring improvement. Changing our staff model has and will bring improvements, but we're also experiencing some confusion, conflict, and misunderstanding. For example, there has been some confusion at Salem regarding “who supervises who” – so here's your cheat sheet in case you need to talk with anyone's supervisor:

- Pastor Russ – reports to Moderator
- Admin, Assistant (Kerry Mayhew) – reports to Pastor, Moderator
- Finance Assistant (Debbie Gordy) – reports to Treasurer, Moderator

- Music Director (Chappell Kingsland) – reports to Pastor, Moderator

And when might you need to speak with someone's supervisor? There's no absolute list of when to speak to a supervisor, but here are some examples:

- An employee has been helpful to you, or done something you'd like to have "noticed"- it's always a welcome word to a supervisor, who can include a word of praise the next time they meet with the employee, and can include it in the employee's next review. Of course, please do this in addition to telling the employee that YOU appreciate them – we all like to hear a kind word.
- You need more than a few minutes of an employee's time to help with something you are doing at Salem - a mailing your Ministry is preparing, for example. It's OK to check with the employee, but also check with the supervisor. It's a thoughtful way to interact, it respects "boundaries," and helps with planning workload.
- You are having any kind of problem with an employee – or you have observed or have been told of something you consider problematic. The first action to take is to share that information with the employee's supervisor. Barring any immediate health and safety concerns, share that information **only** with the employee's supervisor. Our employees deserve our respect and consideration, even when we may think there is an issue with their work or behavior. Their supervisor also deserves our respect and consideration – so talk to the supervisor, not to all your "friends and neighbors."

In May, Personnel Ministry will move forward with Chappell Kingsland's review. With that, we'll be "all caught up" on our annual employee reviews. We will continue to support our evolving staff model and our staff members. As we said last month, we appreciate your support of our work and of our

hard-working employees. We are truly blessed to have Pastor Russ, Kerry Mayhew, Debbie Gordy, and Chappell Kingsland. We hope you'll take a moment this month to let each of them know how much you appreciate them!

Please feel free to reach out to either Polly or Kathleen with questions.

*Personnel Ministry*



## Christian Education News

The Christian Education Ministry Team was pleased to distribute May Family Resource packets to six Salem families. These packets include weekly Sunday School lessons, a seed growing activity, and scripture and activity resources to help families celebrate Holy Communion, Mother's Day, Pentecost, and Memorial Day. Extra packets are still available at church for anyone to pick up and share with family or friends.

Youth participation in worship is a goal for the C.E. Ministry Team. April saw the invitation for children to join their families in Holy Communion. Reverend Russ has begun a weekly "Children's Time" in worship. In May we hope to invite our youth to participate in worship through the reading of scripture and prayers, and the presentation of skits. If any families and youth would like to participate in worship please contact our Team chair, Chuck Wright- [wrightrev@aol.com](mailto:wrightrev@aol.com).

We continue to plan for the return of in-person Sunday School on June 30. We are exploring opportunities to participate in multi-church fellowship groups for middle school and high school youth. In this newsletter is a list of in-person summer camp opportunities for youth at our U.C.C. Camp La Foret.

Our next C.E. Ministry Team meeting will be Sunday, May 16, 1 p.m., at the church. We will be looking at facility resources and program ideas for the return to in-person Sunday School. You are invited to join us!

*C.E. Ministry*

## Finance Update

By the time you read this newsletter you should have received your 1st quarter Giving Statement in the mail. I want to Thank all of you for your continued support during this Pandemic which has made it possible to keep things running here at Salem. At the end of the first quarter we had 7 pledges who were ahead of their pledged amount, 6 who were right on and 8 who were behind. I am looking forward to a time, in the near future, when we can once again greet each other and be together! I also hope you all are healthy and eagerly awaiting our reunion!! Thank you again for all your support! One last reminder - if you are making a donation to the Concert Series and sending a check to Nate, please be sure to write Concert Series on the memo line so the money will get to the correct account!

*Chris Johnson, Treasurer*

## Back to Almost Normal

Salem is opening up the Community Room to our long-term renters. New COVID 19 regulations have been formulated and all three groups (Art Club, Coin Club, and Child Care) are eagerly looking forward to resuming their regular meetings (following the new regulations).

The official opening for our Sunday's services is still Father's Day and the way this weather has been this April, hopefully it won't be snowed out. If COVID 19 conditions change dramatically either way, which could affect our opening, we'll keep you updated either at Sunday's service or on our website.

*Building and Grounds*

## Missions Moments

May's Mission is one of UCC's 5 for 5: Strengthen the Church

Plan ahead - the last two Sundays in June, 20th and 27<sup>th</sup>, Salem will be collecting clean, gently-used clothing to support Archway New Clothing Store. Start now cleaning out those closets.

## Wild Beautiful Concerts

Did you attend Chappell's show this month? If you didn't, you missed a great playlist of familiar tunes that got me singing out loud! (Thank goodness for the mute button) His next show will be May 21st, so clear your Friday night and invite your friends! We are also asking if there are members interested in learning the technical side of our Zoom Sunday morning services? It would be nice to have a group that could relieve the duties from Michael and Craig during our Sunday morning workshops. If this sounds like you, please email me: [kristenmarieneumann@gmail.com](mailto:kristenmarieneumann@gmail.com)



## May Calendar:

**Worship** Sundays, 9:30 am by Zoom\* (online or by phone)

**Bible Study** Tuesdays, 10 am by Zoom\* (online or by phone)

**Virtual Community Social**, Wednesdays at 6 pm by Zoom\* (online or by phone)

**Council Meeting** Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 7 pm: on Zoom\*

**Mother's Day** Sunday May 10<sup>th</sup>

**Wild Beautiful Concert Series at Salem UCC Denver**, Friday May 21<sup>st</sup> 7pm: on Zoom\*

\*to join by Zoom, sign up on our website at [SalemUCCDenver.org](http://SalemUCCDenver.org)

## La Foret Summer Camps—Enroll Now!

Nestled in the heart of the Black Forest, [La Foret Conference & Retreat Center](#) is located just North of Colorado Springs, minutes from Highway I-25. Please note that *registration is open and space is limited.*

**Grand Camp July 2-4, 2021** Open to grandpersons and grandchildren ages 5 to 11 years old. Enjoy fun summer camp activities and create lasting memories together.

**Pioneer Camp July 11-17, 2021** For first-time campers entering grades 2-4, first-time campers will play, swim, hike, sing, eat, make crafts, hear stories, and make new friends in the Black Forest at La Foret!

**Explorer Camp July 11-17, 2021** For campers entering grades 4-6, campers will explore the Bible, faith, nature, friendships, and their own beliefs. Enjoy campfires, swimming, arts and crafts, games, and more!

**Voyager Camp July 11-17, 2021** For campers entering grades 6-8, expect fun, music, reflection, self-exploration, and don't forget the ropes course. Youth will form lifelong memories and friendships!

**MADD Camp July 18-24, 2021** For campers entering grades 9-12, Music, Art, Drama, and Dance (MADD) Camp is where we can get in touch with God through the arts. All artistic skill-levels welcome!

[Register Here.](#)



### May Birthdays:

May 1: Ean Oliver

May 22: Pastor Russ Kirby

May 5: Heidi Wilderman

May 23: Jim Dean

May 7: Pamela Neumann



**SALEM** Visit Us Online:

- Go to [SalemUCCDenver.org](http://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](https://facebook.com/uccsalem)

SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST DENVER

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**Pastor: Rev. Russ Kirby, M.Div.**

**Music Director: Chappell Kingsland**

**Administrative Interim Assistant: Kerry Mayhew**

**Financial Assistant: Debbie Gordy**