



THE SALEM TIDINGS

SEPTEMBER 2020

No matter who you are, or where you are in life's journey, you are welcome here!

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Pastor: Rev. Russ Kirby

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A Word from Pastor Russ

I'm a planner by profession, but Ean is a natural planner. He wakes up each morning and automatically goes into "planner mode," mentally going through his calendar, creating a checklist, and staging items to take to work. When he leaves, he knows his goals for the day and exactly what it will take to accomplish them.

But then the pandemic came along. All his best-laid plans were suddenly laid to waste. It sent him into the most uncomfortable of places: uncertainty and chaos. How should he plan for a day that may be disrupted by the pandemic?

In my last sermon of August, I talked about Ambiguity in the Wilderness. In this pandemic we—like the people of Israel wandering in the wilderness for 40 years after escaping Egyptian slavery—live in ambiguity because we have no solid answers. We have no solid answers about the virus, the pandemic or the vaccine. Our Church Council didn't receive enough answers from our congregation's survey and postponed our September 13th opening (you can still send in your surveys!). Every day we live in ambiguity and anxiety because *we simply don't know enough*.

What do we do with this?

In John 15:5, Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."

We are the branches to Christ the (di)vine; we are *connected* to Christ. When the storms of life are raging, we're connected to Christ. When we find ourselves forever wandering in wilderness, we're connected to Christ. Even when facing the stressful ambiguity of this pandemic, we're *still* connected to Christ.

If you, like many of us, find yourself in uncertainty and chaos... STOP. Take a deep breath... and remember one thing that is certain:

You are still connected to Christ.

You're still connected to the Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, and Holy One. When all else is ambiguous, when best-laid plans have vaporized, know that Christ is still connected to you, and *abide* in Christ's love. You may not know anything else for sure in these times, but you can know that. And believe.

And just like grapes, hang in there on that vine!

Pastor Russ Kirby

In-Sanctuary Worship Postponed

Our tentative return to worshipping in our sanctuary on September 13 has been postponed. We did not receive enough responses to our congregational survey to have adequate input from you, our community, to determine whether opening on that date is agreeable or appropriate, so Church Council voted to wait while our COVID-19 Task Force tackles the issue.

If you have not yet completed the survey, which was mailed (by regular mail) to every member in the congregation, please do so ASAP and return it in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope. You may also complete the survey online at <https://salemuccdenvver.org/survey>. Your responses help us determine whether we as a community are ready to try a safe return to in-sanctuary worship.

We will keep you posted about opening at SalemUCCDenver.org

Moderator MomentsPolly Fumagalli

We are now entering September as Salem's Covid-19 Task Team and Council continue to evaluate the criteria, recommendations and congregational input to open our church safely. **Please note that we are not yet ready to re-open our sanctuary to worship in person on September 13.** Please complete and return the Re-opening Survey via mail or email if you have not done so already. The technology team is also working on a digitized version of the survey which hopefully will be available soon on Salem's website. We need a broader representation of our congregation to help guide our decisions. There may also be some sound system upgrades that will be necessary if we decide to conduct our future in person worship services in tandem with online worship. We will keep you updated via Salem's website, announcements during our online Zoom worship services, as well as upcoming newsletters. For now, we are so very grateful for our wonderful online worship services, Bible Study sessions and community fellowship times.

As I write this article, Hurricane Laura has just made landfall near Cameron, Louisiana. This is in contrast to the hot and dry weather in Colorado, and many other states, which has contributed to devastating fires. Many people have been affected by these tragic weather events, in addition to those who continue to battle with the Covid-19 pandemic, racial profiling and social injustices. Remember to take some deep breaths during each day and also before you go to sleep at night. Care for and be good to yourself so that you may in turn be a light for your family, friends and others. Please pray and take action now, more than ever, as together we must pour out our love to heal those in need throughout our community and across the nation and world!

God Bless.....Polly Fumagalli

MISSIONS MOMENTS

September's mission is The Denver Hospice. During the Pandemic they are still doing home visits and caring for their patients and their families. Masks and gloves are especially needed and are an additional expense. Even if insurance does not pay for hospice care or someone does not have insurance Denver Hospice still provides quality care to everyone.

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who gathered school supplies for Archway Housing despite the challenges of this pandemic. A very special THANK YOU to Beth Hansen for two large boxes of school supplies and backpacks. If you donated money, Salem will issue a check to Archway once we have the total. The supplies were picked up from June's house on August 24th.

***Since September has always been our "Rally Sunday" month let's rally by reaching out to each other via a phone call or a card

BIRTHDAYS IN SEPTEMBER

Take a moment to send a card or to make a phone call to those celebrating their birthdays this month.



9/18 Kurt Freiburghaus

PLEASE NOTE.....

Address Updates:

Ruth Thoning (in care center): Brookdale Greenwood Village, 6450 South Boston Street, Greenwood Village CO 80111; 303-224-9455.

Linda Eggleston (in rehab following surgery): The Center at Lowry, 8550 East Lowry Blvd #245, Denver CO 80230; 303-676-4000.

Harriette Mauter (in hospice care): 2225 South Jasmine Street #202-B, Denver CO 80222.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

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)

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

Thursday, September 17th 7 pm: Council Meeting

Visit us Online:

- Go to SalemUCCDenver.org to:
 - Keep updated on COVID-19-related info
 - Sign up for Zoom (online or phone) worship and gatherings
 - See our Calendar of Events
 - Download bulletins and newsletters
 - Read the Pastor's blog with sermon summaries and reflection questions
 - Learn more about Salem UCC
- Like our **Facebook** page: facebook.com/uccsaalem