

From your pastor...

Happy 150th Anniversary year! I'm looking forward to celebrating the grace God has shown us here at Salem with all of you!

Last week, as the New England Patriots were crushing his playoff dreams, Chargers quarterback Philip Rivers took the field in the fourth quarter. Before joining the huddle, he paused and crossed himself. I can't tell you what Philip Rivers or another athlete might mean when they cross themselves, but I can explain why we do it so frequently in worship, and what it means there.

The sign of the cross simply reminds us of our Savior, which is the same reason we why have a cross in the front of church, on the steeple, and why you might have cross artwork in your home. Making the sign of the cross on ourselves or on others is an especially personal way to be reminded that you belong to Jesus and are set apart because of what he did for you.

We often make the sign of the cross in church when we say "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." When we say this, we're confessing that the Triune God of the Bible is the one true God. The sign of the cross accompanies it, showing our faith in Jesus as our Savior.

One such time is at a baptism. When someone is baptized, they are baptized in the name of the Trinity and into faith in Jesus as the Savior. They receive the sign of the cross on their head and heart, as a sign that they now belong to Jesus. When we see the sign of the cross in church, it reminds us of our baptisms and the forgiveness, peace, strength, and eternal life, God promises to each of us at our baptisms.

Isn't making a sign like this sort of superstitious? Like anything, it can be, but only if we make it so. Sometimes people might treat it almost like a good luck charm, but that takes away from what it really means. Crossing doesn't give us any special blessings. Instead, it reminds us of the blessings Jesus won for us on the cross.

Crossing ourselves is not a particularly common practice in WELS, but there is nothing wrong with it. In fact, it might be worthwhile

for you to try it yourself. You can start out by crossing yourself during church services when your pastors make the sign of the cross. You could also cross yourself in private when praying or facing temptation. If you find it is a worthwhile reminder of your baptism and that you belong to Jesus, you can make a habit of it.

Whether or not you do, remember why we fill our worship and our lives with crosses: the message of the cross is central to our faith. It's because of Jesus' work on the cross that undeserving sinners like you and I get to call ourselves dear forgiven children of God and await the fulfillment of his heavenly inheritance!

- Pastor Wilde

**Church Council News:
Our financial report – as of December 2018**

	Month	Year to Date
Budget Requirements	\$48,793.38	\$585,521.00
Offerings	\$66,298.90	\$537,397.19
Tuition/FEF/ Reg	\$ 1,010.00	\$32,911.32
Other	\$ 107.06	\$ 3,065.50
Total Receipts	\$67,415/96	\$573,438.01
Actual Expenses	\$45,954.94	\$569,184.02
Difference	\$21,461.02	\$ 4,253.99

Owed to Internal Line of Credit: \$37,000

The Council approved Elders recommendation of the transfer out of Rod Schmidt to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (WELS) Midland, MI.



SEWING CLASSES

Salem Lutheran Church is offering FREE sewing classes for adults

Classes stated on Monday, January 14th and will run through Monday, March 25th. These Classes will be held in the basement of Salem Lutheran Church from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.



-Volunteers Needed: On Friday, May 17, Salem's Junior Choir, Cardinal Band, and Fifth Grade Ensemble will have the opportunity to participate in the Lutheran Schools Music Festival. The festival will be held at Peace Lutheran School in Saginaw. There will be about eighteen schools involved. Each school is asked to provide a couple of volunteers to act as room monitors or runners to move judging sheets from performance rooms to the headquarters. The festival starts at about 9:00 a.m. and can go until 5:00 p.m. (usually most rooms finish before 5:00). If you, or someone you know, can do this for the entire time or half the day, please have them contact Mr. Milbrath on or before Thursday, February 7. We need to submit names of volunteers with our registration materials which are due at that time. If there are any questions, please contact Mr. Milbrath. We are hoping to get volunteers other than band and choir parents, so they are free to watch their child's performances.

Open Forum – January 13, 2019



Thank you to those who came for the Open Forum. A good discussion of our church was had. The council will go over the items members brought up and will keep the congregation updated on progress as the year progresses.

THANK YOU to the many who volunteered their time and talents on our new library at school



2019/01/15/in [Together](#)

The Conference of Presidents held its winter meeting last week.

Topics for discussion and decisions made include:

- The COP will work with the Commission on Congregational Counseling to develop guidelines for congregations that are beginning the process of closing or merging. Guidelines will be made available upon request from the district president.
- The COP is developing a tool to assist congregations that are exploring alternative approaches to congregational structure and polity.
- The COP expressed support for the plans of Congregational Services to offer two programs to replace Mission and Ministry Sunday in fall 2019. One program, the 10 for 10 stewardship program, will offer a ten-week emphasis on whole life Christian stewardship. The work we do together as a synod will be highlighted as one part of the program. The other, the Welcome Home initiative featuring a “Welcome Home Sunday” on Oct. 27, will help congregations to seek to regain those who have strayed from active congregational membership.
- The COP expressed support for a WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership being planned by Congregational Services for Jan. 21-23, 2020, in Chicago, Ill. The conference will emphasize leadership that is rooted in the beliefs of confessional Lutheranism.
- The COP discussed the importance of encouraging congregations in their efforts to increase Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO). The continuation of vital synodical ministries depends on increasing CMO support from our congregations.
- The COP has begun an effort to review the synod’s bylaws dealing with discipline of called workers and congregations, as well as the appeals process. The COP will complete its work in time for the revised process and bylaws to be reviewed by the 2020 district conventions.
- The COP Doctrine Committee will schedule regular meetings with the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical

Lutheran Synod and with the faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

- The COP expressed support for plans to form an Institute of Lutheran Apologetics (defending the Christian faith and teachings).
- The COP reviewed the pastoral vacancies and noted that the overall vacancy rate has remained about the same since its last meeting.
- The COP has received questions about whether the housing/furnishings deduction allowed by the IRS to members of the clergy (Tax Code Section 107) can be made available to female teachers. Since the entire matter addressed by Section 107 is currently being challenged in federal court, the COP determined to wait until the legal matter is settled before exploring the matter further.
- The COP expressed its support for an effort by Congregational Services to assemble a “Rural Ministry Task Force” that will provide ministry resources for rural and small-town congregations.
- The COP approved changing the calling window for teachers. Beginning in the fall of 2019, the time in which teachers can be called will be from the first Sunday in October to the first Sunday in April.

Serving in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder



From the Church Office

Many of our members and friends receive this newsletter via mail. If you'd like to receive it via email, please let the church office know (church@salemowosso.org).

Our newsletters, bulletins and sermons are on our website www.salemowosso.org. Go to the church page and click the button that says Bulletins Newsletters Sermons.

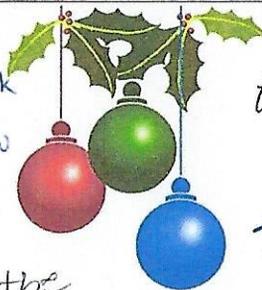


Our sermons are also uploaded onto the church's facebook page **Salem Ev Lutheran Church**, each week. If you missed a Sunday or would like to hear a sermon again, you can find the video of it on facebook or the audio on our website.

Our website also has a school section. The school calendar and newsletter are available on their page as well.

Our school also has a facebook page **Salem Ev Lutheran School**.

I am so grateful
to be teaching
here at Salem. Thank
you for the gift.
Blessings on your new
year! Tonya
Aschenbrenner



Thank you
for the gift!
Eddie Voelz

Thank you for the
gift and many
blessings at Salem.
Kelly Lathaine

Thank you
all for the
gift!
Mr. Fuller

Thank you
for the gift!

- Mr Perry
Your kindness and
generosity is greatly
appreciated!
Greg Milbrath

Thank you all for
the gift and your
love, support and
prayers for us.

Esther
Matthies

Thank you for your
loving + generous
gift at Christmas!
We are blessed by
the Lord through you!
Pastor + Pat

Thank You
for your generous
gift.

Ed Perry

Thank you all so much
for the gift! I am so
blessed to call Salem
my new home!
Pastor Wilbe

Many thanks!

Daisy Blava

Thank you for the
gift. It is very
appreciated! Happy New Year!