

From your pastor...

While yesterday's open forum is fresh in my mind, allow me this moment of reflection as your pastor.

First of all, thank you! Thank you to all who came! The tremendous participation was in itself heart-warming and encouraging. Your concern and commitment to Salem's mission and ministry brought tears to my eyes and a deep joy to my heart.

And you did speak with one mind and heart to preserve (and possibly even expand) the ministry we carry out as a congregation. To do that, it was pointed out, will take an \$8-\$10 increase in offerings each week from each giver. Some of us may be able to increase more than that. Others of us because of our financial situation may be compelled to give less. But in any case, the strong consensus was to work at increasing offerings before contemplating cutting staff, salaries, benefits, etc. I am grateful to all of you for taking that approach since, as some wise voices stressed at the open forum, making cuts would prove extremely detrimental to our mission and future. Recent history has proven the validity of that concern.

But going forward, I do have a concern – one I did not express yesterday at the meeting. It is this: Time is NOT on our side. Every year, every month, we are a little weaker, a little less healthy as a congregation. My one main statistical evidence is the steady decline in church attendance year after year. In 2008 we had an average attendance of 354 and in 2017 an average attendance of 255. We cannot afford (in a spiritual sense and even in a financial sense) to continue that pattern of

decline much longer without it inevitably impacting our mission and ministry and our future as a church and school.

Though time is not on our side, God is! So, pray! I have been wrestling with the Lord in prayer that He opens some door to expand our pastoral ministry at Salem sooner rather than later. I don't understand why our ten calls for an associate pastor went unanswered in 2017. But we shouldn't abandon the Ministry Plan nor give up on God granting an answer to our fervent prayers according to His good and gracious will and His perfect plan and timing.

The Lord bless and keep you and Salem congregation in His tender care!

Pastor Bare

**Church Council News:
Our financial report – as of December 31, 2017**

	Month	Year to Date
Budget Requirements	\$47,415.17	\$568,982.00
Offerings	\$66,361.73	\$489,190.55
Tuition/FEF/ Reg	\$ 723.77	\$ 23,959.39
Other	\$ 7,719.51	\$ 7,721.60
Total Receipts	\$74,805.01	\$536,676.68
Actual Expenses	\$45,644.65	\$581,422.78
Difference	\$29,160.36	-\$44,746.10

Owed to Internal Line of Credit: \$56,615

Lent begins on February 14. We will have services each of the 6 Wednesdays at both noon and 7pm. Remember, we do not have Thursday night services during Lent.

This year's theme is

***“JESUS CHRIST IS
OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST”***

Feb 14 **Pastor Bare** **Hebrews 1:1-3**
Jesus Is Our Great High Priest

Feb 21 **Pastor Johnson** **Hebrews 5:7-9**
Jesus Is Our Perfect High Priest

Feb 28 **Pastor Kunde** **Hebrews 4:14-16**
Jesus Is Our Compassionate High Priest

Mar 7 **Pastor Voss** **Hebrews 10:5-12**
Jesus Is Our Self-Sacrificing High Priest

Mar 14 **Pastor Franck** **Hebrews 13:10-16**
***Jesus, Our Great High Priest,
Serves at a Great Altar***

Mar 21 **Pastor Bare** **Hebrews 10:19-25**
Jesus, Our Great High Priest, Makes Us Priests

Our Sisters' Serving Christ Organization will be hosting the Ash Wednesday Soup Supper at 5:30pm. Everyone is invited.

Our Salem School PTO will be hosting the February 21 soup supper at 5:30pm. Everyone is invited.

Volunteers Needed: On Thursday, May 17, Salem's Junior Choir and Cardinal Band will have the opportunity to participate in the Lutheran School Music Festival. The festival will be held at Valley Lutheran High 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 9:00am and can go until 5:00pm (usually most rooms finish before 5). 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 8. 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.

Thank you!

Our school's computer and technology fund just received a check from the BOX TOP PROGRAM for \$198.30. Thank you for clipping!

Thank you to those who support Salem through Kroger. We just received a check for \$77.70. All proceeds from Kroger go into our faculty's continued education fund to help our teachers attend classes and seminars to keep their education current.

If you shop at Kroger and have not yet signed up to support your school, visit their website at www.krogercommunityrewards.com for more information. SALEM'S ENROLLMENT NUMBER IS 84268.

Open Form – Thank you for participating

On behalf of the Church Council and other Boards and Committees that have been struggling with the Church and School finances over the last several months, as President of the congregation, I would like to thank all that attended the Open Forum on Sunday, January 28, 2018.

The comments, suggestions, and your prayers on this very urgent matter is greatly appreciated. If you were not able to attend but have thoughts, ideas, or just questions, please do not hesitate to let any one of us know of your input, it is encouraged.

Over the next couple of months we will monitor our situation very closely. We will be looking very closely at all the suggestions/ideas/thoughts that were brought forward to decide how to best evaluate their benefit and implement those that we determine are necessary. We take all the information seriously and will thoroughly discuss our options.

Thank you,

Rick Freeman

President

Thank you
very much
for the kind
gift. Mr. Perry



Thank you
all very much.
☺
Mr. Fuller

Thank You!
Pam Perry

Thank you for
the gift.
Mr. Voelz

We appreciate
your thoughtful
gift.
Kelly Lattaine

Thank you, not only for your
gift, but for the prayers and
encouragement. It is a blessing
to be part of the Salem Family!
Tonya Aschenbrenner

The Bare family
is thank ful to all
of you for your faithful
care throughout the
year and for your
special Christmas gift
Love in the Lord
Pastor Bare

Thank You
Cd Perry

Thank you!
Eotler
Matthies

We are grateful
for your
generous gift.
Ms. Millath

Your generosity is
greatly appreciated
♥ Daisy Blaha