

Salem's



Good Newsletter

January 2026



Pastor's Corner

Below you will find a list of gospel-based resources. Here you will find something for everyone that will provide encouragement throughout the week. There are multiple podcasts, blog articles, and videos, all pointing you to the promise of Christ for you.

- Lutherhouseofstudy.org
- 1517.org
- pastormarkanderson.org
- Mbird.com

Check them out while commuting, working around the house, or if you're looking for something different to scroll through instead of the same old thing.

As we barrel into the new year, it's occurred to me that I've been thinking about history quite often the past few months. I've had several conversations with different members concerning the background of this congregation, and also the different families I meet in town and how they connect. I've also been doing a little bit of family genealogy research, trying to answer some personal questions and connect some dots.

A lot of the information on both accounts is interesting, generating more curiosity. Some of the information is delicate, better left alone right where I found it. Like the remnants of an explosion from decades ago, with enough sensitive material laying around that if it's disturbed the only outcome would be more damage.

The thing that keeps coming to mind when I encounter some of the wreckage of the past is that because of Christ, this is not my identity, it's not your identity. Long ago Jesus clothed us in His righteousness in our baptism. That garment is appropriate for all occasions.

Whether it's a celebrated moment in life befitting of a black tie celebration, or when we get near a place that's still smoldering from an explosion of grief, anger, or betrayal. Some of us may feel like we're sitting in the midst of an active house fire where everything around us is burning and we're just trying to find the survivors. That garment covers us there too.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 8 that because we are in Christ Jesus, there is no more condemnation. He goes on to say that because Christ has given us His Spirit we await in hope. He also tells us, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

He closes the chapter telling us, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?" The Apostle says, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

Christ has put His garment on us, and He meets us in the cross. In all of these things He is with you! Our history does not define us, Christ does, because our history is His-story.

In baptism Christ has claimed us, and one day these temporal things will pass away and Jesus will make all things new!

Go in peace.

For the sake of Christ all of your sin is forgiven.
Christ died FOR YOU!

January 2026

Church App

Download the
TITHE.LY
Church App

Then, search for
Salem Lutheran Church

► Google Play Apple App Store



Check out our website at
www.salemlutheranponca.org



Find us on Facebook /
Salem Lutheran Church



Communion: will be on Sunday, January 4th, 2026 and Sunday, January 18th, 2026
(Communion will be on the first and third Sunday's of the month)

“Coffee Hour” Fellowship: will be on Sunday, January 11th, 2026

(“Coffee Hour” Fellowship is on the second Sunday of the month @ 9:30am during Sunday School. Coffee will be provided, but treats will not. If you wish to provide treats, there will be a sign-up sheet on the welcome desk to do so.)

Sunday School: is every Sunday at 9:00am.

Confirmation: is every Wednesday at 6:00pm.

Bible Study: is every Thursday at 9:30am. All are Welcome!

Gifts & Offerings through December 21st, 2025

- General: \$14,424.00
YTD: \$155,725.36
2025 Budget: \$187,481.00
- Mission Share/World Hunger: \$1,757.00
(2025 Budgeted Line Item #5780 for \$17,000.00)
Mission Share: \$585.50
World Hunger: \$1,171.50
YTD: \$16,461.48

Total: \$16,181.00

**Please note: these totals are before online giving fees have been assessed and are specific to the only two above noted budgeted line items (General and Mission Share/World Hunger—it does not include Lent/Christmas offerings that also go towards Mission Share)*



Our 2025 Offering deadline is Wednesday, January 7th, 2026,
any funds received after the 7th will be reconciled in 2026.





Salem Lutheran's 2026 Mentor Program

Is scheduled to meet on January 25th, 2026 @ 9:30am. Sixth grade students will choose a mentor and they will spend time together over a period of three months. During this time, the Mentor and student will study the book of Luke and share their faith journeys with each other. They will also create a cross that they will present to the congregation in late April.

Salem's 6th grade students are: Wayde Duerksen, Ethan Schweers, and Jase Uthof. Prayers are welcome for these students as they choose their mentors and enter into this part of their faith journey.

If you have any questions, contact Saumbra Hall.

Church Council Vacancies

If you are interested in being on the Church Council, please talk to a current member.

There will be vacancies for those members whose term is expiring in February 2026.



Annual Congregational Meeting

is scheduled for Sunday, January 18th, 2026 following our worship service.

**Please have your Ministry Team reports to Katie by 1/10/26*
We will be voting on the NALC Ratification of Amendments at this meeting as well. Please see the December 10th, 2025 Church Council Meeting Minutes>New Business. If you would like a copy of these Amendments, please see Katie in the church office.



2026 Offering Envelopes

Are available for you to pick-up on the welcome desk.

If you give on-line and would prefer not to get envelopes or if you have not received envelopes in the past and would like some, please let Katie



Time & Talent and Ministry Team sign-up sheets

are on the welcome desk. There are lots of spaces to fill, if you are able please sign-up.

If you have any questions, please contact Katie.



Congratulations to Rosie Marie Eads on her Holy Baptism!



*beyond
grateful*

THANK YOU SO MUCH

We are truly BLESSED!

THANK YOU to everyone who has helped with:

- Decorating for Christmas
- Preparing & Delivering Christmas gift to our home bound's
- Sunday School Christmas Program
- Soup & Christmas Caroling
- Youth Group Christmas Party
- Music, Technology,
- Christmas Eve Service,
- Preparing the Altar, Cleaning, Office Duties, and so much more—we couldn't do it without you!

Salem Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes December 10th, 2025

Attendance:

Salem Lutheran Church Council met on Wednesday, December 10th, 2025, at 7:00pm. Those in attendance included: Cortni Krusemark, Kevin Dohma, Katie Uthof, Mark Bau- man, Kenton Book, Lindsay Burrell, Rick Schweers, and Pastor Larry Wright.

Call to Order/Devotions/Approve last month's meeting minutes:

Co-President Cortni called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and Cortni led everyone in a devotion.

Mark made a motion to approve last month's meeting minutes with the revision and was seconded by Lindsay. MCU.

Treasurer's Report:

Saumbra was not in attendance of the meeting, but she provided everyone with a copy of November's financial reports. A motion to approve the financial reports was made by Mark and seconded by Kevin. MCU.

Correspondence:

Katie reported that we received a thank you note from Pastor Neal Anthony.

Pastor's Report:

Baptisms:

Confirmation:

They will be starting a new curriculum from Luther House of Study at the first of the new year.

First Communion:

Funerals:

Membership:

They had to reschedule Russel McLean's membership and is now set for January 4th, 2026, during our Worship Service.

Visits:

Pastor is doing weekly visits to our homebound members and delivering Christmas gifts.

Weddings:

Misc:

Pastor has taken over the social media postings on Facebook and plans to polish up the website. Jennifer left to go get Madi and bring her back to Ponca. Has had meetings with his mentor and have lunch planned and as of now Larry's graduation would be sometime in the Spring of 2027. The Salem Mentorship Team is planning to meet monthly after the first of the year.

Old Business:

2026-2027 Church Council Members
3-year term ending February 2026:

Cortni

Koni

Lindsay

Dan

Cortni shared how there has been communication with previous Youth Representatives and they were "burned out/overwhelmed" by serving on the Church Council and they also felt guilty for not being able to

make the monthly meetings frequently. Something to think about...

Continue to discuss options and move to next month's agenda

Sunday School Christmas Program is scheduled for Sunday, December 21st during our worship service.

Teacher appreciation is also done during this worship service. A motion was made by Rick and seconded by Kevin to withdraw \$4,000.00 cash for Christmas bonuses/thank yous. MCU. Katie will let Saumbra know and Cortni will pick up the cash and Cortni and Koni will put the cards together.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service is on Wednesday, December 24th at 5:00pm.

2026 Mission Share/World Hunger Commitment Recommendation. As per the handout that was previously provided from the Mission Support Team, Mark made a motion and was seconded by Kevin to approve their recommendation, except for the Money received for "Receive Bread, Give Bread" offering or designated for hunger to be as follows:

UMC Ponca Food Pantry 30% of funds

UMC Dixon County Food Pantry 30% of funds

Hope 4 Kids International: Food 4 Kids program 40% of funds

MC.

New Business:

Constitution Review Committee Recommendation. Michelle and Cindy were present at the meeting and provided everyone with a copy of their recommendation – see attached.

A motion was made by Kevin and was seconded by Linday to accept the recommendations noted in red on their recommendation. MCU.

A motion was made by Mark and was seconded by Kevin to approve a temporary constitutional addendum allowing a current Church Council member who has completed a three-year term to serve an additional fourth year in 2026 and a fifth year in 2027. This extension is intended to support continuity and a smooth transition between the Church Council following the pastoral hiring process, and to realign the rotation of Church Council members moving forward. Cortni abstained.

MC.

A motion was made by Kenton and was seconded by Rick to create a ballot to be used at our Annual Meeting in January as per the NALC guidelines regarding Amendment One – voting yes, Amendment Two – voting no, and Amendment Three – voting yes. MCU.

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for the third Sunday in January which is Sunday, January 18, 2026, following our Worship Service.

Council will provide desserts and drinks. Cortni will bring the lemonade and everyone else a dessert.

We will take down the Christmas decoration following Epiphany Sunday on Sunday, January 4th, 2026.

A motion was made by Kenton and was seconded by Kevin to approve the proposed 2026 Budget with the following adjustments:

Line Item 5500 Continuing Education, increase to \$6,000.00, which increased the total proposed budget to \$519,954.00.

MCU.

Additions to the Agenda:

Cortni shared that the Ponca Band requested funding to host the Battle of the Pep Bands. After discussion, the request was politely declined.

Ministry Team Reports:

Budget and Finance:

Chairperson: Mark Bauman

Council Liaison: Koni Lamprecht & Cortni Krusemark (Always the Co-Church Council Pres.)

Report: Mark reported that they just met and we've discussed the proposed budget

CALL Committee:

(Ministry Site Profile)

Chairperson: Koni Lamprecht

Council Liaison: Koni Lamprecht

Chaplin: Michelle Rinas

Report: N/A – this team is not being utilized currently.

(Constitution Committee):

Cindy Anderson, Todd Anderson, and Michelle Rinas are on this committee

Report: See new business.

Cemetery:

Chairperson: Julie Sydow

Council Liaison: Kevin Dohma

Report: Kevin reported that we need a new door on the shed, as the mice are getting in and destroying items in the shed.

Communication:

Chairperson: Barry Krusemark

Council Liaison: Katie Uthof

Report: Katie reported that they have begun using Sola Publishing and it is going really good.

Endowment:

Chairperson: Brian Burrell

Council Liaison: Duane Boyle

Report:

Faith Formation:

Co-Chairperson: Saumbra Hall and Michelle Rinas

Council Liaison: Lindsay Burrell

Report: Lindsay reported that Olivia has agreed to lead the Sunday School Christmas Program this year and they will start practicing soon during Sunday school. Pastor noted the new Confirmation curriculum again and the Confirmation class was not able to do a float for the Hometown Holiday Parade, thus they purchased Hot Hands and put a Salem Lutheran Church on them and passed out to the crowd during the parade.

Memorial:

Chairperson: Saumbra Hall

Council Liaison: Dan Schweers

Report:

Mission Support:

Chairperson: *Need to assign

Council Liaison: Lindsay Burrell

Report: See old business.

Music & Worship:

Co-Chairperson: Bruce Ericksen and Diane Smith

Council Liaison: Koni Lamprecht

Report: Katie reported that they are meeting on 12/17/25 @ 4:45pm and will use the new materials from Sola.

Mutual Ministry:

Chairperson: Rick Schweers

Council Liaison: N/A

Report: N/A – this team is not being utilized currently

Property:

Chairperson: Doug Bauman

Council Liaison: Mark Bauman and Kenton Book

Report: It was noted again that the door for the parsonage was approved at last month's meeting and to have Todd order the door. It was decided to have Orkin spray the church and parsonage quarterly moving forward. Kenton is going to look into the toilet in the master bathroom at the parsonage and will probably have to replace.

Salem Mission Team:

Chairperson: Michelle Rinas

Council Liaison: Lindsay Burrell, Cortni Krusemark, and Michelle Rinas (as per their guidelines)

Report: Lindsay reported that they put together Christmas gifts for the homebound members, Michelle passed out the angel tree cards, and they are collecting hats/ mittens/scarves until December 31st.

Thrivent:

Chairperson: Michelle Rinas

Council Liaison: Duane Boyle

Report:

Worship Leading Team:

Chairperson: Nicole Ericksen

Council Liaison: N/A – this team is not being utilized currently

Report:

Youth Group Ministry:

Co-Chairperson: Lisa Balvantin, Codi Hrouda, and Barry Krusemark

Council Liaison: Mia Krusemark

Report: Cortni reported that they are doing a service project with Heartland Counseling Services and then having their Christmas party at Krusemarks home. Mark mentioned that the Good Ol' Boys may need help delivering meals sometime in January/February and that the Youth Group could help them deliver.

Announcements:

The next Church Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 14th, 2026 @ 7:00pm. Lindsay made a motion for adjournment, and it was seconded by Kevin. MCU. The Church Council closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 9:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Uthof, Salem Lutheran Church Council Secretary

January 2026



Salem Mission Team,

Wishing you a JOYFUL Christmas
and a New Year full of wonders

Thank you so much for the
most wonderful Christmas gift, I am really
thankful.

God Peace,
Orie Conrad

thank you

Thank you so much for the
token of appreciation. I am the
one who has been blessed with
a church family that is so warm
and inviting. And I enjoy every
part of the Salem Congregation.

Thanks Again~

Julie

is my church family,

I
It was so nice of you
to remember me
in such a thoughtful way.

Thank you for the lovely
Christmas basket, it was
very thought full of you.

I put the snow flakes
on the Christmas tree, and
looks nice.

Best Wishes, and Peace
be with you all -

Maeine

January Worship Assistants

(If you are unable to be a worship assistant, please find a replacement and email salemponca@gmail.com)

Council Person of the Month: Lindsay Burrell

Communion Assistants: Lindsay Burrell & Rick Schweers

Communion Set-up: Lindsay Burrell

Sunday Morning Set-up: John Street

Ushers/Greeters: Todd Anderson

Scripture Reader:

4th: Jennifer Wrights

11th: Cortni Krusemark

18th: Cindy Anderson

25th: John Street

Acolytes:

Nora Krusemark

Brielle Hogan

Saylor Schweers

Jett Taylor

Proclaim Slides:

Saylor Schweers

Jett Taylor

Audrey Burrell

Brinklee Heineman

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 No Bible Study 	2	3
4 No Sunday School Worship Service (Communion) @ 10:30am Take down Christmas décor, following our Worship Service	5	6	7 Confirmation @ 6:00pm	8 Bible Study @ 9:30am	9	10 Annual Reports DUE to Katie
11 Sunday School @ 9:00am “Coffee Hour” Fellowship @ 9:30am Worship Service @ 10:30am	12	13	14 Music & Worship @ 4:45pm Confirmation 6:00pm Church Council @ 7:00pm	15 Bible Study @ 9:30am	16	17
18 Sunday School @ 9:00am Worship Service (Communion) @ 10:30am Annual Meeting, following our Worship Service	19	20	21 Confirmation @ 6:00pm	22 Bible Study @ 9:30am	23	24
25 Sunday School @ 9:00am 6th Grade Mentor Meeting @ 9:30am Worship Service @ 10:30am	26 Newsletter Item Deadline	27	28 Confirmation @ 6:00pm Salem Mission Team @ 7:00pm	29 Bible Study @ 9:30am	30	31