

Hello, All. It is summer-time – a time of growth and sunshine. May you have both with grace-filled growth and lots of Son-shine. Salem will be growing this summer as well, though – honestly – the growing has been happening pretty much non-stop. We are growing personally/individually as well as a community. Let me tell you...

This winter, we have had two bible studies going – a women’s study that was led by (teaching) Pastor Ellen Erdman on the Book of James and a men’s study, led by (retired) Pastor Paul Fiske, on the Book of Jonah and now on the parables. Recently, another bible study has been started on Christian discipleship and is being led by Mark Scherer. We also had the Lenten Wednesday night studies on Church History which I led. Through these studies, I know that the participants are growing personally and that the community has been blessed by their growth.

In addition to the communal studies, I have been told by many members of our community how they are personally growing due to their own, individual deepening prayer lives, scripture reflections, and service/outreach opportunities (like supporting Natasha’s mission trip to Haiti, the Lex Pregnancy Resource Center, Family Pathways Food Shelf, and about a half-dozen programs through our parish benevolence). How can this growth NOT affect the growth of the community-at-large? We can feel the vitality, witness the increase in faith, and watch the fruits of personal growth when we see our community grow in number, participation, and strength. This is SO exciting for me and all of us!

If you are one who has been experiencing this growth, let’s praise God together. If you are one who has yet to take part in any of these opportunities, I once again invite you to come and take advantage of these opportunities to grow.

Here are some new and upcoming opportunities for your growth and to witness our parish’s growth (mark your calendars and make plans to attend):

- Wednesdays, at 7pm: discipleship bible study.
- July 2nd, during the service: Military Bible Sticks presentation and support opportunity.
- July 15th: communion Sunday.
- July 28th (Sat), 10:30: baptism of Leo Anderson.
- July 29th, during the service: baptism of Kylar and Lilly May Egan as well as Tate Nechal.
- Aug (throughout): school supply donation drive for Family Pathways.
- Aug 4th (Sat): picnic set-up.
- Aug 5th, at 10:30: annual outdoor service, potluck picnic, and games (see flyer).
- Aug 11th (Sat), 11am: baptism of Mabel Tauer at Anderson Park Pavilion.
- Aug 12th, during the service: Gideons presentation and support opportunity.
- Aug 19th: communion Sunday.
- Aug 26th, during the service: baptism of Brody and Brielle Jones.
- Aug 26th, 3pm: Cully Wilson’s baptism.
- Sept 9th: Sunday School kick-off.
- Sept (every-other Wed): Women’s Bible Study.
- Sept (date tbd): kick-off of Operation Christmas Child.
- Sept 16th: communion Sunday.
- Sept 23rd, during the service: baptism of Tyler Wargal.
- Oct (date tbd): pack food bags at Life Rice – international food relief project.

- Oct 7th: Feast of St. Francis/Blessing of animals.
- Oct 20th (Sat): fall clean-up.
- Oct 21st: communion Sunday.
- Oct 28th: All Saints and possible Halloween celebration.
- Nov 18th: Communion Sunday.
- Nov 28th (Wed), 7pm: thanksgiving evening service and pie social.
- Dec (Wednesdays), 7pm: Advent learning sessions (the Church in the Modern World).

Additionally:

- a new shed was added in the beginning of June...we now will have additional storage space – one for the lawnmower and outdoor ‘stuff’ with the existing shed used for indoor ‘stuff’. Thank you to Duane Bengtson for coordinating this and donating a used lawnmower.
- Heritage Day was celebrated on June 14th. Thank you to Lois Kline for her work in coordinating this day and Jeff Thole for his participation. We celebrated the Parson and Humble families this year. If we did not have this strong root (heritage), we would not be able to grow today. We give thanks for those who have gone before us.
- we have more baptism dates to be set – it is *amazing* at how many babies and children are being baptized this year at Salem – 12 altogether! We baptized Arthur Negen back on May 19th. Sylas Akason and Korben Jones are yet to be baptized before the end of the year. These many baptisms are another sign of growth and are blessings to our community.
- make plans to attend this year’s picnic (flyer enclosed). Feel free to make copies of the flyer and hand them to your friends and family, inviting them to come and share in the fun!
- for our fall clean-up on Oct 20th, please make plans to participate. We need to broaden the level of involvement in the care of our building and grounds beyond those who have (for many years) dedicated their time to this, especially among our younger members.
- we are still interested in offering ‘date nights’ for folks to leave their children at the parish to be watched while they go out for a date...we need to have volunteers to provide this service.
- special thanks to Anita Ryberg for her many years of dedicated service playing the organ.
- welcome to Becky Fiske who is now serving as organist for our community.
- welcome to the Deb and Jeff Stenberg family as well as the Jenny and Jeremy Anderson family who have become members this spring. A number of folks (non-members) are also regularly joining us at worship on Sundays and other events whose presence is greatly appreciated. All people are always welcome.

I am simply amazed at what is happening at Salem. I am honored and blessed to be a part of this awesome growth in God. My goal and mission in life has been and still is to help all people grow in the relationships they share with God, with themselves, and with others. I am so thankful that I get to do this with you at Salem Lutheran Church of Oxford. May Almighty God be praised!

In Christ, I remain yours. Rob.

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