UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SALEM UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHAPEL CHIMES NEWSLETTER

"Sharing faith, lifting up, reaching out and growing together."

FEBRUARY 2021



FIRST NOTES

As we enter the second month of the new year, I find it a good time to both reflect on where we have been and where we are likely to be headed.

First, I want to thank all of those who participated in the worship services that made up one very unique Advent/Christmas season. The year may not have been the way we would have wanted it or planned it, but I thought that we made wonderful use of the opportunities put before us, and I will take away memories of the dozen cars of people that worshiped in the parking lot (via radio) on Christmas Eve and the participation of so many of our people in the Service of Carols and Readings, which was pre-recorded for Christmas Day.

Second, I want to thank, in advance, those of you who will have participated in the hybrid form of the Annual Congregational meeting, scheduled for January 31st. Obviously, it is impossible for me to say much about a meeting that hasn't happened as of this writing, but I appreciate the creativity and hard work that went into preparing for it.

Now, on to the things that lie ahead.

February 17th will mark the beginning of the Lenten season with the celebration of Ash Wednesday. Lenten worship will be live-streamed, only, and will focus on the theme of "Holy Vessels." This year's theme recognizes that last year was a time where there has been much destruction of what was normal and expected and looks for ways that we can restore the broken elements in our lives. The following themes will be explored on these Wednesdays: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 – Ash Wednesday "Shattered;" Wednesday, February 24, 2021--"Treasure;" Wednesday, March 3, 2021--"Keeping Safe;" Wednesday, March 10, 2021--"Stories;" Wednesday, March 17, 2021--"Different Pictures;" Wednesday, March 24, 2021--"Restoration." Services will be conducted at 7:00 p.m. live on Facebook.

At our most recent Worship Team meeting (January 11th), we discussed the possibility of resuming in-person worship on Sunday mornings. When we suspended in-person worship on October 12th, we did so because COVID infection rates in both the state and county were rising rapidly and it seemed to be the prudent thing to do. At this point, the rates have been on a downward trajectory and are approaching the numbers we had when we closed in-person worship back in October. The recommendation of the Worship Team that was brought to the Consistory was for a resumption of in-person worship starting on March 7th. We will follow the same precautions (masking, social distancing, no vocal music) as we did before.

Perhaps it is fitting to resume in-person worship on March 7th: it is the day after Salem's 125th anniversary. Obviously, we can't do much in the way of a celebration at this point, but it is hoped that sometime before the year is over, we will be able to do justice to this milestone.

Like everything else, the timetable for much of this year depends on how the pandemic runs its course. When

significant portions of the population get vaccinated, we will be closer to a return to life as we knew it before. That remains the unknown. Until then.

Shalom aleichem—Peace be with you.

Rev. Jim Hoppert

Lectionary Readings

Sunday, February 7, 2021
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm: Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

Sunday, February 14, 2021
Transfiguration

Hebrew Scripture: 2 Kings 2:1-12
Psalm: Psalm 50:1-6
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Gospel: Mark 9:2-9



Wednesday, February 17, 2021
Ash Wednesday

Hebrew Scripture: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
Psalm: Psalm 51:1-17
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Sunday, February 21, 2021
First Sunday in Lent

Hebrew Scripture: Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm: Psalm 25:1-10
Epistle: 1 Peter 3:18-22
Gospel: Mark 1:9-15

Sunday, February 28, 2021
Second Sunday in Lent

Hebrew Scripture: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
Psalm: Psalm 22:23-31
Epistle: Romans 4:13-25
Gospel: Mark 8:31-38