SALEM UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHAPEL CHIMES NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2020



JANUARY LECTIONARY READINGS

Sunday, January 5, 2020
Second Sunday after Christmas

Hebrew Scripture: Jeremiah 31:7-14
Psalm: Psalm 147:12-2
Epistle: Ephesians 1:3-14
Gospel: John 1:1-18

Monday, January 6, 2020
Epiphany

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm: Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Epistle: Ephesians 3:1-12
Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

Sunday, January 12, 2020
Baptism of Christ

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm: Psalm 29
Epistle: Acts 10:34-43
Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

Sunday, January 19, 2020
Second Sunday after Epiphany

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 49:1-7
Psalm: Psalm 40:1-11
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9
Gospel: John 1:29-42

Sunday, January 26, 2020
Third Sunday after Epiphany

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-4
Psalm: Psalm 27:4-9
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18
Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23



FIRST NOTES

During our most recent weekly staff meeting with the pastoral team and our office manager, we were reviewing the schedule for month of January before the newsletter would be printed. Day by day we looked at each spot on the calendar and filled in the blanks. When the task was finished, I remarked, "Well, there went January." The purpose of our meeting was to look ahead: the things that concern us most at this moment (as I'm writing this page) --the Christmas services—will be in the rear-view mirror, for better or worse. Yes, those events will be subject to review and evaluation, but they can't be changed once they are in the books. We will be looking at the next thing.

January always seems to be about the business of the next thing. This time around it will not just be a new year, but a new decade that will come into being.

This business of being about the next thing will also be part of Salem's life this January, too. Over the past year we have been shifting the business of decision making of the church's ministry into a team approach and encouraging members of various ministry teams to take control and responsibility for the direction of ministry. Rather than seeking approval from a church governing body before it can act, these areas of ministry have assumed a more active, independent role. That sort of things has happened in Christian education, worship, mission, and the use of special gifts (formerly the Memorial Committee) during the past year and without a lot of fanfare.

However, the bigger question of how church governance will look under this approach is still unresolved. Salem's Consistory has come up with a plan for how to examine what church governing structures might look in such a format and that plan is described in a letter than appears in this issue of the newsletter. I encourage you to read the letter carefully. Over the next weeks, we will have opportunities to discuss these matters more fully, but the letter is a start to getting the process rolling.

What I would like to stress to everyone is this: no matter what the Consistory may look like or how it might function down the road, certain things in the life of the church—the ones that you see week in and week out—will not change. We will still worship as a church. The good news will be preached and the sacraments administered. We will still provide the same opportunities for Christian education. The sick will be visited. We will still have opportunities to break bread and share fellowship. We will continue to reach out in love to the community around us. None of that changes.

Keep looking for more information as the days roll on.

In the meantime, may the start of a new year be a time of growth and blessing for each of us and for our life together.

Your servant in Christ,

Rev. Hoppert

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST