



Zion Lutheran Church
308 Lambert Street
PO Box 56
Oklee, MN 56742
218-796-5128

Oklee Lutheran Parish

August 2025

Marijo Vik, SAM
931-203-4106
Parish Secretary Bonny Cote
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Salem Lutheran Church
29531 180th St SE
PO Box 56
Oklee, MN 56742

Check out our website: OkleeLutheran.org

As August, the last month of summer vacation, appears on our calendars, the 130th Anniversary Celebration at Salem is now behind us, and we're looking ahead to having all the children together again for Vacation Bible School.

And then, of course, it's Labor Day in September with school starting, and we'll kick it off with a blessing of school backpacks, the start of Sunday School, First Communion and Confirmation classes, children's story time during worship, and more.

Church will be back to "normal," right? Or will it?

If we were a business, we might ask the following questions: Why are we here? What is our purpose? What needs are we filling? Who are we serving? What are our goals? How do we measure our success? What could we do better? Will we survive?

In business, you value what you measure, and you measure what you value. A company might measure its market share, revenue growth, or return on investment. Businesses look at customer satisfaction: how do our customers see us? Are they satisfied with our products and services? And are they "loyal" customers?

We're **NOT** a business, but as a church, our very first question should be,

"What does God value?" We know God's idea of success goes beyond counting attendance or balancing a budget. Numbers alone don't tell the entire story of how God is working. There are also qualitative levels of faithfulness that matter, and they might be divided into three themes: Nurturing, Sending, and Leading.

Are we a **NURTURING** church? What is our worship experience? How do we connect with our communities? What is our prayer culture? Are we Bible-centered? How are we helping the spiritual formation of our congregants, both young and old? What is our level of trust in our church leadership and the clarity of our communications?

Are we a **SENDING** church? Do we equip our congregants to talk about and share their faith in

Jesus? How do we serve "others"? Do we address injustice and make a social impact? How can we help our congregants discover and use their unique gifts and callings within worship and beyond? Are we preparing individuals, especially the next generation, for leadership?

Are we a **LEADING** church? Can we measure our clarity of vision and the priority we place on the next generation? Do we have financial optimism and confidence in our volunteers and leaders? Does our leadership have clarity of roles and internal trust among themselves? Do we have systems in place to make well-informed decisions?

We observe the disturbing changes in churches all around us, marked by declining attendance and closures. Both large and small churches are struggling. The data gathered by the ELCA suggests that in just a few more years, churches as we know them will be a thing of the past. Change is inevitable.

You cannot ignore what is happening. The decisions made here in the following months may make the difference between a vibrant life or the slow demise of Zion and Salem Lutheran Churches. I know you are already doing so much, but are you willing to invest additional focus, energy, and time in helping others encounter Jesus's love?

You were made by God and for God. You were made for more than today and so much more than yourself. He works through people, and you are "his people." Christ has no body, no hands, no feet on earth but yours. **Yours** are the hands that He uses to bless others. **Yours** are the feet with which He goes about doing good. **Yours** are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ looks out to the world. Ask God how you can serve.

Pray for an understanding of God's plan for your life. Pray for your church, your pastor (current and future), and each other. When you pray, God listens. When you listen, God talks. When you believe, God works. Amen? Amen.

AUGUST

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

1: Norman Nelson
 Richard Hendrickson
 Aubrey Halverson
 Teagan Lee
 9: Stephanie Bakken
 10: Kyle Vettleson
 11: Calvin O'Neill
 15: Les Hofstad
 17: Ted Linder
 20: Lochlyn Garthus
 21: Eric Mickelson
 23: Jon Smith
 24: Kayla Olson
 26: Chelsey Vettleson
 28: Avaeya Vettleson
 31: Lavonne Brown
 Watson Vettleson
 Layla O'Neill

Anniversaries

17: Les & Alice Hofstad

If you would like to add a birthday or anniversary, contact Bonny Cote at 218-796-4688 or email: bcote@okleelutheran.org



August 3:

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23; Psalm 49:1-12;
 Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

August 10:

Genesis 15:1-6; Psalm 33:12-22;
 Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16; Luke 12:32-40

August 17:

Jeremiah 23:23-29; Psalm 82;
 Hebrews 11:29—12:2; Luke 12:49-56

August 24:

Isaiah 58:9b-14; Psalm 103:1-8;
 Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17

August 31:

Proverbs 25:6-7a; Psalm 112;
 Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16; Luke 14:1, 7-14

August Services

The Parish Board has decided that for the Month of August we will continue having joint services.

In September we will go back to the regular schedule.



• Zion's next council meeting is **Wednesday, August 6th** at 7:00 p.m.

• Salem's next council meeting is **Tuesday, August 12th** at 6:30 p.m.

• The Parish Board meeting will be on **Tuesday, September 9th** at 7:00 p.m.

Please attend your meetings!
It is important to be there to support your church & community.

HOME VISITS

Marijo Vik would like to have a visitation schedule for every other Sunday after worship starting May 4th.

Dates for August would be August 10 and 24.

Please call Marijo Vik at 931-203-4106 if you want to schedule a visit from her on the dates listed.

If a family member is calling for a loved one, please let them know what day Marijo is coming to visit.

okleelutheran.org

It works on your phone or computer web browser. Our website is updated every Sunday night. Check on Mondays for new announcements.

We encourage you to sign-up on our website for emails. Stay informed about upcoming events and special posts to our website. Go to the bottom of any page and look for Subscribe to our emails. Complete the form. We promise no more than 3 emails a month will be sent.

There are links to our Facebook page and YouTube channel.

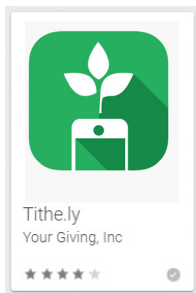
~ Parish News ~



Current leaders have stepped down effective Jan 1, 2025. If interested in serving as Youth Group leaders, please reach out to the Parish Board.

Update: You now have six choices to choose from to make your donation:

- Oklee Lutheran Parish
- Salem Church
- Parish Youth Group
- Zion Cemetery
- Zion Church
- Salem Cemetery



Please continue to be generous in your support!

Use the Tithe.ly app

The Link is on our website:
okleelutheran.org

or
Try our QR Code

Thank You!!



**Thank You
For Giving
This Summer**

Salem News

Salem WELCA Meets

This month the meeting is set for Wednesday, **August 13th** at 7:00 p.m. at the Church. Ginny Stoneouse is the Bible Study Leader and the Hostess is Stacey Hofstad. All ladies of the congregation are encouraged to attend.



Salem Ushers List

Sun. August 3:	None
Sun. August 10:	Josh Vettleson
Sun. August 17:	None
Sun. August 24:	Ginny Stoneouse
Sun. August 31:	None

Zion Ushers List

Sun. August 3:	Cheryl O'Neill
Sun. August 10:	None
Sun. August 17:	Jami Hendrickson
Sun. August 24:	None
Sun. August 31:	John Pendelton

***** Remember, if you are not able to usher the date you are assigned, it is your responsibility to find your replacement.*****



2025 Zion Altar Schedule

August: Ione Nelson/Amanda Nelson
September: Kaye Munt
October: Sheryl Fore/Jo Ann Lerohl
November: Diane Hanson
December: Patty Mickelson

2025 Salem Altar Schedule

August - Holly Spong
September - Stacey Hofstad
October - Paula & Kendra Christianson
November - Jill Kolstoe



**VBS will be held at
Salem Lutheran Church
starting on Monday,
August 4th until
Thursday, August 7th
at 6 p.m.
The theme is True North.
All kids are
welcome to attend**

Severe Weather Contact System

The system will use your cell number if it was provided or else we will use home number on record in directory. It works best with cell phone numbers because if you have Garden Valley's option (press 8) it won't go through.

Also have noticed some numbers need to be updated.

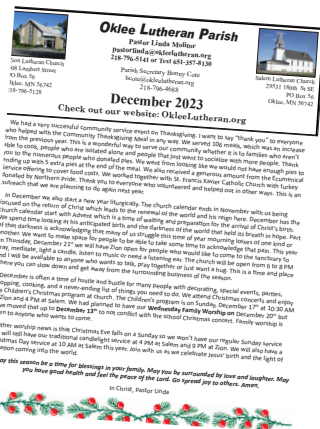
Please text your name to Bonny at 612.840.9401 to add cell information to the system.

This service will also be used for meeting notices and church service cancellations or other urgent situations.

Update: In order to keep the cost of postage down, Oklee Lutheran Parish's Mailing Permit needs 200 people on the list to qualify for the cheaper rate.

So, if you know someone who would like to get the newsletter or should be added to the list for the newsletter, please contact Bonny Cote at 612-840-9401 or email her at bcote@okleelutheran.org to add them on to the list.

Thank you for the new names
I've added to the list.



Time, Talents & Treasure

During this time of transition, remember that without a permanent leader, it is important for others to step up and do what needs to be done. The SAM and Pastors we have been hiring do not know all the stuff that needs to be done at our individual churches and how we have done events in the past. Please step up and use your time and talents to keep everything running smoothly and know that you all are a treasure!



**** UPDATED ****

Follow Oklee Lutheran Parish on
FACEBOOK & YouTube
The Worship Service airs on Channel 35
on Wednesdays at 1 pm
and Sunday at 10 a.m.
Facebook and YouTube are first
available at 1 p.m. on Wednesdays.



**Pictures are Appreciated for
the newsletter.**

**Please consider taking and
sharing pictures of special
services and events.**

Salem Celebrated 130 years on July 13, 2025



Pastors present at the Salem 130th celebration paused for a photo after the afternoon program. L-R: Linda Molitor, Kirsten Frantsvog, Rolf Wangberg, and Marijo Vik. Kirsten is a chaplain, Rolf is retired, and Linda is in North Dakota. Marijo, of course, is currently serving our parish.

Salem Lutheran Church celebrated its 130th anniversary on July 13, 2025. The 10am worship service was a full house with former members and former family members in attendance. Rev Rolf Wangberg and Rev Kirsten Frantsvog, both former pastors were in attendance. Pastor Rolf read the first reading and Psalm, and Pastor Kirsten read the second reading. Both pastors assisted Marijo Vik, SAM, with communion which was done in a continuous style. Pastor Vik led the worship service and delivered the message on the story of the Good Samaritan which happened to be the gospel text for the Sunday. Erica Motteberg sang a solo and enough children were in attendance for a children's sermon. Hymns for the service included: A Mighty Fortress is Our God, Blessed Assurance, Great is Thy Faithfulness, and Borning Cry. After the service a hotdish style dinner was served.

A new history book was available for purchase as well as a magnet depicting the church. Stationery and cookbooks from 1995 were also available.

At 1pm a program was held. The program opened with some fun awards--who came from the longest distance – Richard & Karen Mathson (Florida), who is the oldest --Don Stenberg, who is the youngest—Calvin O'Neill, who was married the longest—Don & Alma Stenberg, and who was the most recently married—Erica & Chris Motteberg.

Alice Hofstad, WELCA president, welcomed everyone and the group sang *What a Friend we have in Jesus*. Following the song a video greeting from Bishop Bill Tesch was shown. He congratulated Salem on 130 years of faithful service and wondered what those forefathers would have envisioned if they could have seen 130 years ahead.

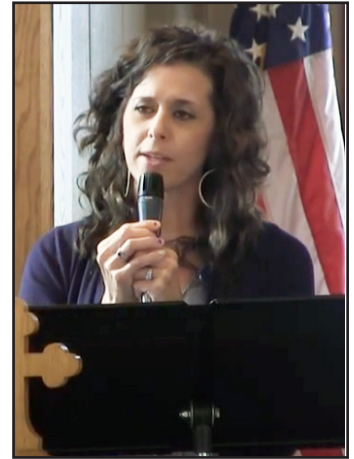
Next there were greetings from former pastors. Pastor Frantsvog, Pastor Wangberg, and Pastor Linda Molitor were present in person. Pastor Linda mentioned that coming here as a city girl, we taught her much and she fell in love the rural area. She is continuing to serve as an interim pastor to a 3-point parish in the Mayville, ND area of which 2 churches are small rural congregations. She said, "I love it."

Written greetings were read from Pastor Forsberg who really wished he was here but had a prior commitment, Pastor Bob Paulson, and Pastor Christy Klemz. The greetings were followed by a video history of Salem created by Alice Hofstad. Marijo had some final comments and the program closed with Pastor Kirsten leading us with the final blessing from the Holden Evening Prayer. She was the pastor who introduced the Holden Evening Prayer service to our parish back in the early 1990s. Coffee and bars and visiting concluded the day.

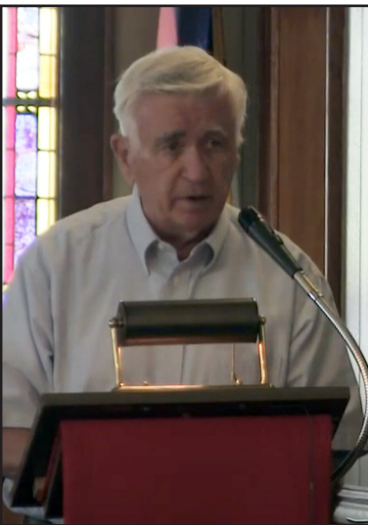
A few photos from Salem's 130th Anniversary Church service



Marijo Vik, SAM, welcomes everyone to the 130th Anniversary service on July 13th, 2025.



Special music was sung by Erica Motteberg



Readings were done by former pastors Rolf Wangberg and Kirsten Frantsvog.



The service ended with a blessing from Marijo Vik.

Pastor Dan's greeting had a story about Ingvald Larson that was too long to read on Sunday, the 13th. I mentioned that we would publish it in the newsletter. Below is the part of Pastor Dan's greeting that was the Larson story.

There are so many glorious stories to tell, but please indulge me with one experience I had with that dear saint and bachelor, Engvald Larson, who took such good care of Salem Lutheran Church.

Engvald was a gentle old soul who had such a great ease about him and spoke with that strong Norwegian brogue. His small, humble home was within walking distance of the church where he made sure the lawn was cut and the cemetery was up to snuff. In the winter, he made sure the boiler was working, that the church was warm and cozy for worship, and the sidewalks shoveled. In the Spring, he kept watch over the sump pump that sometimes worked and sometimes didn't.

Keeping that little country church clean and well maintained was his spiritual endeavor. At home, however, he lived like your stereotype of a bachelor. The first time I went to visit him it was Summer. He was sitting outside on an old rusty chair in the shade of an incredibly huge Boxelder tree (correct me if I'm wrong).

The Boxelder seemed to hover over everything, including an overgrown crab apple tree and an ancient plumb tree. Next to Engvald sat his best friend, that beautiful but very old Black Lab.

I drove up the dirt road leading to his house, parked my VW Rabbit right next to his green pick-up truck that was next to his tool shed that looked like it was ready to cave in on itself. Engvald could sit under that great Boxelder for hours upon hours, his eyes raised, but not too high, for Engvald always said it was a waste of time to occupy yourself with things too great or too marvelous to understand. Engvald had an ageless smile and was the picture of peace, sitting calmly, a quiet soul before God.

That day Engvald asked me if I knew what 1 Timothy 5:6 said in the Bible. I said that I would have to look it up. Engvald handed me his Bible. I read it out loud, "There is great godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content." I learned quickly that this passage summed up his philosophy

Continued on next page...

about life. Engvald never spent much on himself, and that too was obvious....but the door to his house was always wide open.

One day, all 3 of us walked in together....Engvald, the Black Lab and me. I sat down at his kitchen table where he asked me if I wanted a cup of coffee. Before I could answer, he reached over to a cup that I was sure had been used several times before. He wiped the edge of the cup off with his sleeve and poured me the blackest cup of coffee I'd ever had. I took my first sip with much fear and trepidation! Engvald took out a picture from his wallet that he'd been carrying for over 40 years. It was an old black and white photo, it's edges badly worn from being taken in and out many times.

It was a picture of a young boy, begging in the streets of Calcutta, India. Engvald told me this boy's story, how he had been intentionally crippled from birth by parents who broke both his legs to ensure that he would be part of the begging caste system. Engvald had taken a picture of this little beggar and spoke of the unbelievable poverty he saw in Calcutta when he was stationed there for a time in the Army, a stint in the service that took him all over the world during WWII.

He told me of the Strait of Gibraltar, crossing the North Atlantic where his ship had been lost at sea, the New York Times reporting them lost forever. There on the Atlantic, during a terrible and violent storm, he shared how they came across a sinking American ship to hear the cries of soldiers begging for help as their ship disappeared into the abyss, the violent upheaval of the ocean leaving no chance to save them.

There at Engvald's kitchen table I had emptied my coffee cup without even remembering drinking it. He filled it again. Engvald spoke of wonderful things too, of a poor, kindly old woman in Australia who insisted that he take some of her apples and oranges for nothing, fruit she was trying to sell to support her

own family. Engvald spoke of how he got to dance on stage with the Hollywood actress, Marlene Dietrich, with 500 other soldiers watching enviously from the Hollywood canteen.

Engvald spoke of boyhood friendships, and how planting and harvesting always came before school, a one room country schoolhouse where the Norwegians had to learn English, and on Sundays read to the minister for Confirmation. Engvald spoke of how he lost his dad when he was just a little boy, and how he took care of his mother in their home for 30 years who had been paralyzed by a stroke. The more I learned of Engvald, the more I saw the irony of a man who had lived through so much, and yet could sit under a Boxelder tree, with little to nothing....and yet, be the picture of contentment.

The day Engvald died I went out to his humble abode and there sat his best friend, next to that empty folding chair underneath the Boxelder tree. As I approached him, he got up and started searching diligently for any sign of his master and companion. We walked through the open door of the house, and he began looking for that gentle old soul, longing for his smile, his laugh, his touch and that familiar voice calling him by name.

In the eyes of the Black Lab, I saw the longing that nothing else in the world could satisfy but Engvald; eyes that reached down into a heart that loved unconditionally and longed to be re-united with his loved one. With all my heart I believe that they are together again, Engvald and his Black Lab. I've even thought that perhaps God planted an especially large Boxelder tree for these two companions to sit under together. And I'll bet I know who the first child that gets to sit in his lap underneath that great Boxelder tree in heaven, both legs now as straight and long as corn stalks, exchanging stories of how they first met on the streets of Calcutta, India.....another world now.




The Community Block Picnic was held on Tuesday, July 15th at the Oklee Hall due to the weather. There was a good turnout even with the damp weather. As usual, potluck has a way of working out, with enough food and lots of variety. Thank you to all that came, brought food and hope everyone enjoyed visiting.

Coloring Page

Isaac is born.

Genesis 15:1-6; 17:1-8; 18:1-15; 21:1-7



August 2025							September ▶
◀ July	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Salem Ushers Aug. 10: Josh V. Aug. 24: Ginny S.	Zion Ushers Aug. 3: Cheryl O. Aug 17: Jami H. Aug. 31: John P.	Salem Altar Holly Spong	Zion Altar Ione Nelson Amanda Nelson		1	2
	3 Joint Service 10:00 a.m. Zion	4	5	6 Zion Council Meeting 7:00 p.m. Salem WELCA 7 p.m. at Church	7	8	9
	10 Joint Service 10:00 a.m. Salem	11	12 Salem Council Meeting 6:30 p.m.	13	14	15	16
	17 Joint Service 10:00 a.m. Zion	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24 Joint Service 10:00 a.m. Salem	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31 Joint Service 10:00 a.m. Zion	Sept. 1  MEMORIAL DAY					

The Newsletter deadline will be the first Saturday after the 15th of the month.
Please send your contributions to Bonny by email to bcote@okleelutheran.org.
Or call or text Bonny at 612-840-9401. Thank you!!



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Newsletter

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