

NEWS RELEASE

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Salem English Lutheran Church

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Minneapolis Church Celebrates Living Legacy of Rev. Livdahl and 50 Years of ELCA World Hunger

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota – Leaders and members of Salem English Lutheran Church have agreed there is no time like the present: they won't wait another minute to honor the legacy of beloved longtime member and retired minister Rev. Roger Livdahl.

Beginning Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024, Salem is launching a storytelling and fundraising campaign event in celebration of Rev. Livdahl's six decades of ministry and the 50th Anniversary of ELCA World Hunger and its predecessor organizations. Spanning seven weeks, the event will feature remembrances from his 65 years of servant leadership—including his ministry with ELCA World Hunger—during Salem's Sunday worship services and through online channels as well as an effort to raise \$5,000 for ELCA World Hunger in honor of Rev. Livdahl.

Contributions to the fundraiser can be made through the online Team ELCA website or directly to Salem English Lutheran Church designated "Hunger". The campaign will culminate on Sunday, May 19 in a celebratory 9:30 am worship service and 11:00 am reception at SpringHouse Ministry Center in Uptown Minneapolis. All are welcome for this morning of celebration.

The idea for the campaign event sparked after Salem pastor Rev. Rhonda Hlavinka left a visit to Rev. Livdahl and his wife, Barb, stunned at learning even more about the depths about his ministry than she had gathered in seven years of being their pastor and friend. "We were in our monthly church council meeting, and Pastor Rhonda had this idea that we should record and share these stories while Roger can still tell them," said Salem Council Secretary Sarah Sinderbrand. "Then more ideas started rolling, and we decided what we wanted most was to make Roger feel how much respect and love this community has for him by sharing his stories and doing something good for an organization he cares deeply about in his honor."

Rev. Livdahl has contributed his life's work professionally through parish ministry, Church World Services, and ELCA World Hunger, as well as volunteering in myriad ways, including at Global Health Ministries and for the Salem congregation he calls home today. In 1987, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was being formed through the merger of predecessor denominations, Rev. Livdahl was one of the instrumental people gathered to help imagine what the ELCA hunger ministry would look like. He would go on to serve as director of ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeals from 1990 to 1998.

"We were inspired to choose ELCA World Hunger as the recipient of gifts in honor of Roger because he played a vital role in shaping and leading that organization," says Rev. Hlavinka. "During 2024, the ELCA is celebrating 50 years of Lutherans coming together to address hunger and poverty around the world through ELCA World Hunger and its predecessor bodies. It is in conjunction with this year-long celebration that we lift up Roger's ministry, of which a big part was his work addressing hunger and poverty around the globe."

Rev. Livdahl will celebrate his 90th birthday in June and still volunteers at Global Health Ministries as often as he can. His humble spirit finds big and small ways to continue working for the gospel wherever he is. Several years ago when spotted doing the dishes after a congregational event, he was told he had probably earned the right at least not to have to do the dishes. His response? "I like doing the dishes, because nobody ever let me do the dishes when I was the pastor."

Whether he is welcoming visitors, making lefse, handing out popsicles at neighborhood events, or simply having a conversation over coffee, Rev. Livdahl lives out his call as a disciple.

To support fundraising efforts in honor of Roger, go to the Livdahl's Legacy Team ELCA page at:
<http://support.elca.org/goto/Roger>.

About ELCA World Hunger: As a long-standing presence in communities in nearly 60 countries, including the United States, ELCA World Hunger is deeply relational and rooted in listening. Gifts to ELCA World Hunger support tailored solutions – in areas like health, water, income, education, food security, and more – that can put an end to hunger for the long term. ELCA World Hunger steers clear of “one-size-fits-all” answers and has enormous respect for local context, local expertise, and local ingenuity.

ELCA World Hunger is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States with more than 3.8 million members in 10,000 congregations across the nation and the Caribbean.

About Salem English Lutheran Church: Founded in 1890 as one of the first English-speaking Lutheran congregations west of Chicago, Salem English Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) located in the heart of Uptown Minneapolis, Minnesota at 610 W 28th Street. Spirit-led, welcoming, and rooted in its neighborhood, Salem is part of the ecumenical SpringHouse Ministry Center that is home to three unique congregations who—united in God's love—serve together and strive to live faithfully in our community and world. Salem is a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation.

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