



# The Scroll



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## BUDS ONLY, MESSAGE FROM PASTOR LINDA



While recently perusing a florist's website, I looked at pictures of gorgeous bouquets: bright yellow sunflowers, delicate pink orchids, robust Gerber daisies, colorful tulips and more. When at last I landed on my choice and began the ordering process, there - splashed in the corner of the webpage - was an eye-catching, gold ribbon. It said, "**Buds**

**Only.**" These splashy photographs that grabbed my attention were the *promise* of what was to come. In essence, the bouquet I selected for my friend was an 'already, but not yet' flower arrangement. The company was expecting me to bank my order on the *hope* these buds would yield blooms. The proof of my *faith* would be the free-will offering of my credit card information. Knowing the risk, I placed my order.

*Already but not yet.*

Riding on the joy of Easter's festive celebration, the theme of "*already but not yet*" continues to envelop me as pungently as the hyacinths just outside my study. We sing songs of Eastertide: Christ has risen! He is Alive! God, through Christ, has crushed evil, conquered sin, forgiven our sins, and *alleluia!* - defeated death!

Yet, truth be told, it's often hard for us to reconcile – honestly within ourselves and before God – this amazing truth with what we see and experience around us. How can we sing of joy, hope and promise as our world still writhes in pain and injustice, sickness and death?

Christ has overcome. *Already but not yet.*

It is hard to live in this in-between reality. It's hard to "be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer" (Romans 12:12) when we attend another friend's funeral,  
sit outside the oncologist's office,  
stagger through a ruptured relationship  
or learn of another bombing or mass shooting.

Christ is victorious... *Already but not yet.*

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## APRIL 1 - HOLY HUMOR PRAYER

Written by April Fiet

Lord, giver of joy and laughter, we thank you for giving us these gifts.

For the moments of laughter and unbridled joy you give to us:  
for opportunities to laugh at ourselves,  
for the belly laughs of children,  
for friends and family who love us because of our quirks,  
and not just in spite of them,  
for artists who give us the opportunity to see the world  
through the surreal,  
for the courage to smile even when difficulties arise,  
for those who have hope even when others think there is  
no hope,  
for saints in the Lord who overflow with laughter and  
spread your joy to all of us.

For the words of Jesus that defy our logical minds;  
for teaching us that we can be born again,  
for the woman who finds a lost coin and calls her  
friends and neighbors to celebrate,  
for the absurdity of a camel  
trying to fit through the eye of a needle,  
for the father of the Prodigal Son who is willing to look  
like a fool as he runs to greet his son,  
for the generosity of the landowner who will pay  
workers a whole day's wage when they only worked one hour,  
for tiny bits of faith that can move entire mountains,  
for the reality that nothing can live unless it first dies.

For the great reversal of the Gospel:  
that the last shall be made first,  
that the rejected stone became the cornerstone,  
that those who wish to become great must serve,  
that the lost will be found,  
that the small will become great,  
that though you are Wisdom,  
you choose to forget our sins,  
that when we are weak, your strength shines through us.

O Lord, giver of joy and laughter,  
we thank you for giving us  
these gifts.

Thank you for the gift you give us  
that allows us to enjoy these things to the full.

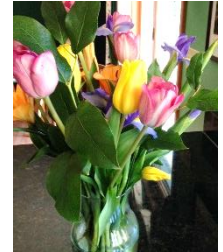
We can laugh because of the most amazing thing of all –  
that you conquered death,  
that the tomb is empty,  
that light shone so bright  
that it overcame the darkness.

Thank you, thank you, thank you! Amen.

God, in His infinite wisdom, knew we needed a compelling picture of what the future will look like when His kingdom is finally consummated – a vision to carry us through the dark times and difficult days of waiting. Far better than glitzy photos of flowers, He gave us His Son, the image of the invisible God, the first born over all Creation. And as we are reminded each year at Easter, *He is the firstborn from the dead*. We need only to look from the Cross, to the empty tomb, to the room in which Christ startled his disciples with the words, “Peace be with you” to be assured one day, “*He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.*” (Revelation 21:4). We can look throughout His Word (Isaiah 11; 65:17-25 to name a few) to see a picture of what is to come.

For now, in the tension of the deep mystery of ‘*already but not yet,*’ are we willing to stake our lives on this Promise? Willing to trust God is true to His Word? Willing to carry on Christ’s work of compassion, love, mercy, generosity, forgiveness, and justice with the hope He will one day make all things right?

I should tell you: A few days after my friend received the “buds only” bouquet, she sent me this picture to the right. The “*already, but not yet*” came to fruition. Thanks be to God who keeps His promises! †



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## EASTER GIVES US A PROMISE

By Trevor Stillin, Pastoral Intern

Spring is one of my favorite seasons. The season reminds me of God’s faithfulness; the trees that have been dormant since the fall bud and put out new leaves. Hyacinths, crocuses, daffodils, tulips, all sprout and start growing. What was once a snow-covered lawn becomes green again as the grass starts growing. And, my favorite from back home in Michigan, the fruit trees blossom. Spring is one of my favorite seasons because it is a reminder of the resurrection.

The resurrection gives us hope that death does not have the final word. It seems that for months, winter has the final say. The world is cold, and covered in snow, but then changes happen. The sun stays out longer, the temperature gets warmer, and life sprouts up through the dirt. When Jesus died on Good Friday, no one expected Easter to happen. The women were going to anoint the body of Jesus. They expected Jesus to remain in the tomb. The ancients knew full well that once a body dies, it does not just get up and walk around. Yet, the good news is that Jesus did not remain in the tomb.

Easter gives us a promise, and the promise is this: That we can expect that we ourselves will be resurrected as well. This teaching was hard for some Christians to believe in. The ancient world believed in an afterlife but it was only meant for the spirit of the individual who died. Christianity turned this around and said that body itself will be raised again. Jesus’ resurrection is proof of this. Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians explaining to ancient Christians the importance of the resurrection.



Paul knows that if the resurrection did not happen, his preaching is in vain “*And as for us (Paul and the rest of the apostles,) why do we endanger ourselves every hour? I die every day — I mean that, brothers and sisters— just as surely I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely reasons, what have I gained? If the dead or not raised.*” It was the resurrection that allowed the apostles to risk everything and proclaim the good news of Jesus.

The resurrection allows us to proclaim with confidence a phrase that we sing every year at Easter, “Where O death is your sting, Where your victory O grave?” There - gone. Death and the grave have no power over us anymore. We wait in anticipation for the day when the faithful will be resurrected. This is the good news of the Easter message that God shared in our weakness by dying, and used it to be our strength, through the resurrection of Jesus.

The seasons remind us of God’s promises. I invite you as the season of spring begins to take hold to meditate on the resurrection. The bareness of winter has given way to the life of spring. The sting of death has been destroyed by the resurrection.

Thanks be to God. †



## LENTEN LUNCHES

It's been a long-standing tradition at Salem Covenant to host Lenten lunches during the six weeks of Lent. Not only are those in our own church invited, but others in the broader community as well. This year about 40 people came each week and enjoyed homemade soup, sandwiches and desserts along with lively conversation around the table.

Behind the scenes are people who make it happen: setting tables, prepping sandwiches, making soup, and then washing all those dishes! No paper in the landfill here! We couldn't do this much-loved and anticipated event without the help of our dedicated volunteers. Thank you to all who made the cakes, donated food items, and/or worked in the kitchen. It wouldn't happen without all the hands to help.

We also are grateful for the area clergy who added to this mealtime with rich devotions for our spiritual appetite. This year our newest clergy in the region, Father Speer of St Andrews (New Preston) and Pastor Brad Bergfalk, and his wife, Roxi, of First Congregational Church (Litchfield) were able to join us.



Rev. Brad and Roxi Bergfalk



## CLASSICAL CONCERT OF SACRED MUSIC WITH CHRISTIAN ART MISSION

By Grace Mele

*"Words cannot express"....it's a phrase we often hear when we are unable to describe or articulate the emotions of our hearts, minds and souls. This is the condition in which I found myself while attending the "Classical Concert of Sacred Music" presented by Christian Art Mission on Saturday, March 19th at the Salem Covenant Church. Being fond of both Classical and Sacred music, I was sure that I would thoroughly enjoy this event, but it far exceeded my expectations!*

The group gave a powerfully moving performance of their God-given gifts and talents which delighted all in attendance. In my limited and finite mind, I can perhaps only compare their performance to what may be perceived as God's "Heavenly Host" of angels: I've not heard nor experienced anything that compares to it. It was truly a blessing to have had the privilege of being in their presence and feeling the Touch of our Creator, the Giver of all Good Gifts (James 1:17). I look forward to their return in the near future and would encourage all to avail themselves of the opportunity to witness this outstanding professional group. You won't be disappointed!



## UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION, FINDING HOPE – PART II with Debbie Calafia

In late February, Debby Calafia, a certified Substance Abuse Counselor, presented a seminar on the impact of addiction within families. As too many of us have witnessed, addictions affect the people physically, mentally, and spiritually. Despite the many negative life consequences, an individual will continue to engage in the

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behavior. Families are often burdened and pained by the devastating outcomes for both the person they love and the family unit as a whole. Debby offered helpful counsel for those who are trying to help and/or impacted by their loved one's addiction.

In March, Debby facilitated Part II of the seminar, turning the focus from the family now to the person him/herself engulfed in addiction. She described the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous in order to demonstrate how they act as a corrective to undo the devastating character damage of addiction. The first steps address the person's powerlessness over the drug or behavior and the need for God's help in overcoming the addiction. The next steps are the "housecleaning" steps, which help the person look at the acts that have hurt others and are causing guilt and remorse. By telling God and another human being the things that weigh down the conscience, the person is able to move forward. The next steps are action steps – making a list of the actions that caused harm to others and making amends. In this way, broken relationships can be restored and healing can take place. The final steps include taking a daily inventory of one's actions. In Step 12, the person attempts to reach out to others who need help, which overcomes the self-centeredness that is a byproduct of addiction.

There are many resources for help with addictions, including AA, Al-Anon, Alateen, and self-help groups for every conceivable addiction. For referrals to treatment programs, call **1-800-662-HELP**, or visit the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration online at [findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

### PROPERTY UPDATE: THINGS ARE LOOKING BRIGHTER



Just as the days are getting long, things are looking brighter around the church – Literally! Nearly all of our outdoor lighting fixtures now have energy-efficient LED flood lights. This will allow us to light up our parking lot, driveway and building perimeter more economically *and* brighter on those evenings when there are nighttime events at the church. The two main flood light fixtures for the lower parking lot were updated, allowing broader coverage and brighter visibility making it safer for people going to their cars. In addition, a timer controlling all the outside perimeter lights was installed so no one no longer needs to go up and down the stairs to turn these lights on/off.

### BAKE AND BOUQUET SALE – ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR!

By Julie Fredlund



For the second year, the Bake & Bouquet Sale was held in the Church's Narthex. It seems to be just as successful as standing outside the Washington Market all those years in the early morning, with the frigid early spring temperatures. This year's Bake & Bouquet Sale netted over \$600 with 10% of the proceeds being

donated to Loaves and Fishes, a New Milford non-profit organization that provides a hot meal 365 days a year for those in need. In the past, the profits have been designated toward our Children's Nursery and Childcare, to encourage, care for, and support our young families.



Haleigh, our youngest volunteer, showcasing her contributions.

Our thanks to everyone who did their part either baking, canning, helping price, plate, wrap and arrange flowers Friday night or donating to the cause in lieu of a food donation. All of this combined with a good turnout from the Church and Community on Saturday confirmed that this Sale is an annual event that many look forward to. Thanks to everyone for your continued support of our Church programs!!

## THANK YOU NOTE

To Pastor Linda and all Church Members,

I just wanted to thank you all for the beautiful flowers in remembrance of my mom. All of your kind words have really helped me and my family during this difficult time. Words cannot truly convey my appreciation for all you have done for not only me but the Anthony Family as well.

All my love, Art Bogue

## EASTER OFFERING BENEFITS PROJECT HOPE

Our church, through Project Hope (Covenant Kids Congo), sponsors 14 children in the poorest province in the Republic of Congo. These funds provide education, health care, clean water, food, and teaching for healthy hygiene for these children and other children in their community. This year, as our special Easter offering, we received \$750.00. Thank you for your generous gift that will help to improve the living situations and the quality of life for these little ones in Jesus' name.



### PHOTOS OF MOM OR GRANDMA?

In anticipation of Mother's Day, Pastor Linda is putting together a special presentation for that day. If you have a favorite photo of your mother/grandmother (with you or without you) that you would like to include in honor of her, please submit it by email or in hard copy by April 30 to Pastor Linda.

### DELEGATE FOR EAST COAST CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING, APRIL 29/30, NEW ROCHELLE, NY

Each spring, delegates from our East Coast Conference churches (comprised of well over 80 Churches from as far south as Virginia and as far north as Maine) gather in one place. In this time, stories are shared of how God is working through our churches and her people. Decisions are made for the direction of our conference. Ballots are cast to fill the vital positions on the different ministry Boards within the EastCC including the Executive Committee, New England Seafarer's Mission, the Board of Nominations and Pilgrim Pines.

Those who participate in these two days (Friday night/Saturday) not only learn the breadth and depth of what the Holy Spirit is doing through our churches, but they come back encouraged, excited, and inspired with fresh ideas. This year, **Salem is looking for 1-2 individuals to go and serve as our representatives.** If you are interested in being our delegate, please contact Pastor Linda.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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# TRAINING

April 10, 12:15 pm

with Certified Instructor, Mo Vaughn  
American Heart Association



## Men's Breakfast



Saturday, April 23, 10:00 am

## IMPORTANT APRIL EVENTS & DATES

- April 1 – Loaves and Fishes, 3:30-6:00 pm, New Milford  
April 3 – Worship with Holy Communion, Family and Fellowship following  
April 10 – CPR/AED Training, 12:15 pm  
April 12 – Council Meeting, 7:00 pm  
April 17 – Prayer Buddies’ Gathering, following Worship  
April 23 – Men’s Breakfast, 10:00 am  
April 28 – East Coast Conference Ministerium  
April 29-30 – East Coast Conference Annual Meeting, New Rochelle, NY



## April Birthdays

April	
Sandy Nelson	6
David Golembeski	9
Elliot Bogue	10
Katie DeWitte	13
Teddy Alex	14
Steve Haas	14
Hillary Kelly	15
Mary Ann Lundberg	16
Emily Anderson	17
Sara Taylor	19
Holly Haas	22
Kat Stevens	23
Spencer Tillman	23
Deb Blank	26
Greg Alex	28

### SALEM COVENANT’S CORE VALUES

We, the members and friends of Salem Covenant Church, are committed  
... to loving God through *worship and praise*,  
... opening ourselves to *His Word*, and  
... visiting God in *prayer*.

**We are SALEM.**

**Showing compassion to those in need as God gives us grace and ability.** (Matthew 9:46)

**Accepting one another in grace and love as Christ has accepted us.** (Romans 15:7)

**Lending a hand to those around through acts of service in Christ’s name.** (Matthew 20:28; Romans 15:1-2)

**Engaging in life together.** (Acts 2:42-47)

**Moving in one accord.** (Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:2-6)