



The Scroll

CELEBRATING
134
YEARS
1888-2022

Volume 75, Issue 11 • November 2023

I CONFESS

Message from Pastor Linda

I have three confessions to make.

Confession Number One: *I didn't pray a whole lot this past week.* Yes, you read this right. Your pastor who is called to lead by example, to put it simply - didn't. Through the night of my mom's recent emergency, through the myriad of conversations with medical specialists, RNs, Social Workers, Hospice nurses, Caregivers, and sitting there by my mother for many hours, I found praying hard. My body was spent from a 30 hour stretch of no sleep. My mind was so consumed by the mountains of information and the speed it was all coming to me, the quick decisions that had to be made, and the phone calls to members of my family to be made, I barely had the bandwidth to throw up a "hail Mary" prayer to God.

I know many of you have been in similar circumstances. It can be easy, especially in Christian circles, to judge ourselves harshly, to question our faithfulness when we don't live up to certain expectations. But this leads to me share confession number two.

Confession Number Two: *I believe God understood me in my weakness and frailty.* He knew that I was experiencing a profound depth of fatigue and heartache. He wasn't there wagging his finger, tsk-tsking me, telling me I should know better, but rather the Spirit was lovingly and tenderly bringing my heartfelt, wordless petitions before the Almighty.

Let me assure you, what is true for me, is true for anyone and everyone else who finds themselves in times that they can't muster a word of prayer. God knows our hearts. The Holy One is always interceding for us.

Which leads to **Confession Number Three: *I trust my sisters and brothers in Christ were standing in the gap for me.***

In Ezekiel 22:30, the Lord says, "I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one." "The word picture painted in this verse is that of a wall with a gap in it. A wall was the best means of protection in ancient times. A breach in the wall would let the enemy through. If there was a breach in the wall, defenders would have to swarm to that location and hold the breach. The gap would need to be repaired as soon as possible. If a breach was left unattended or unrepaired, the city would fall." (GotQuestions.com)

This past month the people of Salem have 'stood in the gap' not only for my family, but many others in our congregation and in our community who are treading in deep and troubled waters. Prayers have been lifted up for those who are weary, discouraged, and/or hurting. Salem has been living into the charge the Apostle Paul gave the people of Galatia (6:2) long ago: **Share each other's burdens.** It is the way we love each other well. The hardships that life brings are so much easier, and the circumstances are far less lonely when we help each other carry the heavy burdens. None of us were ever meant to carry our loads by ourselves.

This day if you are grieving, tired and worn out, or feeling hopeless, let your church family 'stand in the gap' for you. Rest in the knowledge that God sees, hears, understands and is interceding for you.

As we prepare to celebrate thanksgiving, please know dear Salem that I give thanks for this church family. Enjoy a happy Thanksgiving!

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." ~ Jeremiah 29:11



It happens more often than we realize, especially in a society fixated on pursuing the fountain of youth. As people grow older, reaching their 60's, 70's, and 80's, it's easy to believe that one no longer has a purpose. One no longer has a mission or an impact on this world. People question how God can possibly use them at this age, in building His kingdom on earth.

This fall, Carol Allison, took the initiative to lead a small group called Crescendo to challenge these falsehoods head

on. Read further to hear what she has to share of this amazing community experience...

CRESCENDO, By Carol Allison

For the last 6 weeks, my heart has steadily expanded as I've drawn closer to the people attending the Crescendo meetings. Our Thursday mornings, designed for seniors, included refreshments, fellowship, personal stories, reflection, mutual support, and prayer.

Our framework was S.P.I.C.E.S., which provided a topic for each week: Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Community, Emotional, and Service. Lively discussion ensued. For example, at one point we worked in pairs to come up with a definition of "Community". Another time, we brainstormed as a group how we might use our lives to serve others.

Overall, each person came away with a broader sense of value in Christ, in ourselves, and with each other. In fact, the feedback has sparked an idea to plan another set of Crescendo sessions in the new year! Stay tuned!

ENJOYING THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF THE COVENANT



There are many benefits to being a part of a larger body of churches that make up the East Coast Conference. One of these benefits is being able to call upon gifted men and women to come lead worship and share the Word when Pastor Linda is away.

The last Sunday of October, Salem was blessed to have not one clergy but two(!) Covenant Clergy come and be a part of our Worship experience. Pastor Marlon Simpkins offered a Children's message which was very fitting for the Halloween weekend and led us in communal prayer. Pastor Sandi Lee (an out-of-town member of our congregation) brought the morning message. It was wonderful to have them here, partnering in the gospel!

PLANS FOR AIR CONDITIONING

At the September Special Business meeting concerning Air Conditioning, the Congregation delegated the work of identifying what the scope of the Air Conditioning project should include and how a project of this size should be funded to the Council. They also asked the Council to get further information about the impact air conditioning would have on the utility bill when in operation.

The Council committed the bulk of its time during the last Council meeting to discuss these details. A motion was made, seconded and passed to recommend to the Church at-large for the installation of Air Conditioning for

only the Sanctuary. A second motion was made, seconded and passed to recommend to the Church the project be funded through a Capital Campaign.

In addition to these two actions, the Council was also provided the information below, regarding added utility costs for cooling. These numbers could readily change, but they do provide a rough idea of the costs.

Cooling

- Key Assumptions
 - o Assumed that cooling season is April to September (5 months)
 - o Assumed that cooling will run for 6 hours on Sundays throughout the season
 - o Assumed that there are (2) events a month that will last 6 hours as well
 - § This equates to 180 hours of run time, we'll round to 200 hours to give you a conservative estimate
- All (6) units running at once will require 20.25 kW of power per hour
- Cooling season will use approximately 4,050 kW over the entire 5 month period
 - o This means approximately 810 kW per month
- Assuming an electric rate of \$0.24/kW, you're looking at
 - o \$195/month
 - o \$975/cooling season

There is still further information to collect before we present the project at a church Business Meeting.



UPCOMING COUNCIL VACANCIES

Our Church Council is comprised of nine members who serve for a term of three years. They may serve up to two consecutive terms, and then they must step down. To maintain continuity, the Council positions are staggered in such a way that each year only three positions become vacant. In January 2024, the three positions that are opening up are: Secretary, Fellowship Chair, and Congregational Care. If you know someone who is a member of Salem that is gifted in any of these areas, or if you yourself are interested in serving in one of these positions, please reach out to Susan Swanson, Elliott Fisher, or Pastor Linda.

ON GIVING, by Deborah Griesbach

In my life, I have been greatly and wonderfully blessed in both the giving and receiving of wonderful gifts. When I walk around our home, I smile at certain gifts that are layered with memories. For instance, I have a little side table that my mother commissioned as a gift for my college graduation, a table created to frame nine tiles with painted pictures of Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales. Those tiles were given to my mother by her mother, my mormor. However, the pleasant memories prompted by that particular gift are as nothing compared to the joy in my heart and the smile on my face when I remember a gift that I once gave.

The Gift that Gave - In my 20s, I gave a gift of \$1,000 to a lady that I had met only once, and briefly. She was a very tiny, very old woman from a small town in Mississippi, a lady that I had met through happenstance, or more plausibly, through grace. She was one of those proverbial “faith of a mustard seed” people. I was moved to send her this check, and I very consciously did not put any conditions on it at all, simply saying that she should use it as she thought best. Never in a million years would I have had the imagination or vision to apply it as she did.

To begin with – this part will not surprise you – she assembled a group of like-hearted women from her church and they got down on their knees to pray about it. Having prayed, here’s what they did. They arranged a field trip for ALL the



students at their local elementary school, who by the way had never been on a field trip. They hired a fleet of school buses and took the children on a full day expedition to a historically black college. The college rolled out the red carpet for the kids, assigning each one to a big brother or big sister college student for the day, feeding them at a bountiful picnic, and – more than all else – giving them a vision of a larger and different world, one that they could aspire to join. You should see the smile that grows on my face when I remember learning what these old ladies had chosen to do with their manna,

Life Happens - Jumping ahead by four decades When I first started coming to Salem, I did not tithe. I contributed financially, but as a newly single parent in the chaos of getting divorced, with uncertain finances, I was hesitant to add a set commitment to Salem on top of a challenging list of fixed obligations.

At that time in my life, I spent more time on the receiving end of gifts than on the giving end. In particular, I remember – as I have witnessed to you in the past, standing in front of all of you to witness to these acts of grace – how June, Vinnie and Margit Quist ministered to me emotionally, helping me to explain to then three-year-old Maya why I had left her father and how our life was going to be different. I remember Gaylin Fast taking us into her home, saying “You can stay as long as you need to, and you can pay me what you can afford. If that is nothing, that’s OK.”

I was also helped by the staff at Susan B. Anthony House in Torrington. They helped me in the week before I left, as I made a plan to leave secretly. They helped me on the day that I left, giving me the paperwork to file for a protective order. They helped me in the year after I left, as I participated in a group therapy program with others who had been in abusive relationships.

Thoughts on Giving at my Current Age - At my current age, and in my current circumstances, I am still blessed to have a giving heart. I am not entirely happy about every aspect of my being, but I do love that part of myself. I continue to find joy in giving of both time and money. I do wish that I had more money to give. Actually, I have a very specific and joyful plan about how and what I would give if I ever came into a vast sum of money! In the meantime, among our giving, I do make an annual commitment to Salem Covenant Church. I commit to an amount that our family can manage, so that we will not give less than promised. If we are able to give more, we give more. I divide my pledge between a commitment to operations, to keep our lights on, and a smaller pledge to missions, so that we can support organizations that spread the good word and good works beyond our doors. And that gives me joy.



MISSIONS: YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION! By Kiersten Marich, Chair of Outreach and Mission

As you consider your annual pledge to the church, please consider a portion of your support to help fund Salem’s Mission work. Below you will find a description of the community partners that we support throughout the year. Every quarter the council allocates a % of money raised towards mission work. Below you will see the organization we support through your support of Missions and the most recent allocation of funds. In addition we support Covenant Kids Congo and details of that are below.

Missions as of 9/30/23 - \$3,693.00

Covenant World Relief (20%)

The mission of Covenant World Relief & Development is to join God in loving, serving, and working in relationship together with the poor, oppressed, traumatized, and marginalized. In 2022, we specifically allocated a percentage of the missions received by the congregation to Covenant World Relief Ukraine.

Covenant World Missions (20%)

The mission priorities are what guide everything that is done. From church planting, and social justice to global missions, leadership development, discipleship and racial reconciliation, Covenant World Missions seeks to build a holistic body of Christ.

Pilgrim Pines (15%)

Pilgrim Pines invites all people from their routines into opportunities to grow, experience renewal, and enjoy recreation and relationships, so that they will experience God through Jesus Christ.

New England Seafarers (10%)

New England Seafarers Mission is an outreach ministry of the local church that serves the international seafarers of the maritime business community. Their goal is to bring the comforting presence of God onboard the ships that are visited, offering spiritual and physical assistance wherever possible. The ordained chaplains and trained lay ship visitors reach out in the ways of advocacy, companionship, support and prayer.

Ädelbrook (10%)

Ädelbrook provides hope and healing to children and families in a Christian environment. Meeting the developmental and behavioral challenges of children, young adults and families through a range of professional, educational, residential and therapeutic options, Ädelbrook aims to continue its growth in order to provide a continuum of care and meet the ever-changing needs of those we serve.

Loaves & Fishes (15%)

Loaves & Fishes is a gathering place centered around the community, offering food and clothing to our neighbors.

Susan B. Anthony (10%)

Susan B. Anthony Project promotes safety, healing, and growth for all survivors of domestic and social abuse and advocates for the autonomy of women and the end of interpersonal violence.



COVENANT KIDS CONGO

We partner with the Covenant Church of Congo and World Vision to create community transformation through clean water, healthcare, education, agriculture and nutrition, economic development, and child protection, so that children can grow up with a brighter future. Salem Covenant currently supports 8 children in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This has operated as a separate line item in our budget due to the Fixed cost.

Every month we pay \$40 per child that we sponsor. This year we have 8 individual students. Our monthly payments are \$320. Yearly expenses are \$3,840 (these numbers will fluctuate as we have sponsored children who age out. In 2022, we had a surplus of funding and made a \$150 donation to each of our sponsored children. A portion of all donations goes to the individual family and also to the local village.

Covenant Kids Congo as of 9/30/23 - \$5,208.59

COVENANT ORIENTATION CLASS

Are you interested in learning more about the history and mission of Salem Covenant Church and/or the denomination as a whole? Are you curious about how to become an active member of Salem? Have you wondered what happens behind the scenes to keep our church going? Or how things get done around here? Pastor Linda will be leading an Orientation Class in the Lydia Room on Sundays, November 12 and November 19 following worship. If you are interested in coming, or would like to know more, let Pastor Linda know.



ALL SAINTS DAY - REMEMBERING THE SAINTS BEFORE US



Every year the Church Liturgical Calendar includes All Saints Day. This Sunday our church will observe All Saints Day during the Worship service. It is a time remembrance for the servants/saints that have gone before us to their eternal rest. It is “an opportunity to offer thanksgiving for the spiritual companionship of the saint in the face of the discouraging forces of evil and violence, grief and pain in our own time.” (Covenant Book of Worship, p.299).

Since last year’s All Saints Day, our church family has mourned the death of Dolly Whitney (1934-2023), a beloved saint. We give God thanks for her life and the legacy she left for us.

This week and on Sunday, you are invited to bring a framed photo of the special people you have lost in your life to the church. We will have a table of Remembrance set up especially for them on Sunday.



COMMITMENT SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, FAST APPROACHING

Dear Salem Covenant Members and Friends:

Year after year, you have been faithful in supporting Salem’s mission and ministry through your annual pledge. Because of your generous commitments, Salem has had the ability to share the love of Christ in a multitude of ways to people both within our church family and beyond our doors. Thank you!

Giving is intended to be a joy and a blessing with physical stewardship making your skills available to serve God and humanity and financial stewardship investing towards the expansion of God’s kingdom. Our church council will soon be entering the time for planning and preparing the 2024 church budget. We cannot accomplish this without your help. We humbly ask you to consider your pledge for the coming year; be it time, talent, financial, or treasure. Your pledge itself is extremely important, regardless of the amount, so that we can accurately budget our time and finances as stewards of God’s will.

Sunday, November 19, is our Commitment Sunday. Please bring your completed pledge cards to worship. You can also mail the cards to the church office. All pledges received will be presented as a communal offering to God’s work at Salem, and we will use your pledges to carefully guide us in our fiscal planning. Thank you for your partnership in God’s work and service.

Elliott Fisher, Chair and Donna Alex, Chief Financial Officer



COVENANT WORLD RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

Each year we receive a Thanksgiving Offering for Covenant World Relief & Development (CWRD) on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. This gift is an expression of our gratitude toward God for the rich blessings we have received all year. From our abundance, we share with those who have far less due to circumstances out of their control. This past year the monies we gave to [Covenant World Relief & Development](#) were used directly for aid provided to Ukrainian refugees fleeing for their lives, and aid to the many people in Alaska and Florida who sustained severe flood damage to their homes and their livelihoods. CWRD has been doing work like this for almost 70 years now. May we continue to partner with the Lord in helping the least!

GRUBBY SUNDAY



Sunday, November 19, 8:00 am

KITCHEN UPGRADE UPDATE

There is not much new to report except that all the information required by the Sanitation Department and the Building Department has been submitted for their approval.

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

November 3 - Loaves and Fishes

November 4 – Women’s Gathering, 9am-2pm

November 5 – **All Saints Sunday:** Worship & Communion Service, 10:30, Family and Fellowship

November 6/13/27 – Hangout Haven begins, 2:45 pm, for Youth, Grade 6-12

November 12/19 – Covenant Orientation Class, following worship

November 13-15 – Clergy Retreat @ Pilgrim Pines

WONDERING WHAT TO DO ON A FRIDAY NIGHT
THAT DOESN'T COST MONEY?



FRIDAY, November 17
Open 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm

PING PONG	REFRESHMENTS	CARD GAMES
FOOSBALL	CONVERSATION	BASKETBALL
BOARD GAMES	PUZZLES	MOVIES

For Adults, 18 years and over.

In the Fellowship Hall

For more info, call 860.868.2794

November 15 - Council Meeting, 7:00pm

November 17 – Salem Coffee House, 7:00pm – 9:30pm

November 22-24 – **Happy Thanksgiving! Church Office Closed**

November 25 – Sherman Chamber Ensemble

November 22/29 – 4th Wednesday Evening Prayer, 7:00 pm

November 26 – **First Sunday of Advent**



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Gustavo Griesbach	2
Cheryl Rutz	5
Lilly Hoeniger	7
William Marich	8
Ken Williamson	14
Eric Quist	22
Mark Showalter	26
Charlotte Johnson	28
Sue Rowe	28

REMEMBRANCES

November 4, 2017 - June Quist (mother to Margit and Gunnar Quist)

November 7, 2020 - John Peterson (brother to Ann Dahl and Dolly Whitney)

November 18, 2017 - Ed Zumpf (father to Holly Haas, Peggy Powers, and Tim Zumpf)