



The Scroll



Volume 76, Issue 3 • March 2024

EASTER PEOPLE

Message from Pastor Linda

Several weeks ago, our church choir sang the oft-sung hymn, *Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley*. It was beautiful to listen to. (You may listen to it [here](#).) Then during this past week's Lenten Lunch, Rev. Dr. Robyn Gray, our guest clergy, led our luncheon group in singing the same song. I was surprised by how many people knew the lyrics and sang along. Again, it was beautiful to listen to the faith community sing as one.

With the recent passing of our long-time, faith-filled members, Ann Dahl and Muriel Golembeski, combined with this season of Lent, life and death have been on my mind more than usual. For all who have kept vigil as their loved ones faded physically, we understand that dying is, indeed, one long and lonesome valley. Dying is hard work for both those who are in the process of dying and for those who remain steadfast beside their beloved. It's a grueling and exhausting journey for everyone involved. The weariness is real. The grief is heavy.

During Lent, we remember Jesus' own journey to the Cross, to his own moment of death. If anyone understands the reality of pain, suffering and death, it is our Lord. It was agonizing for Jesus. Excruciating for his mother. Unbearable for his friends. There would be no last-minute miracle. As Jesus exhaled his final breath, all heaven and earth were silent. Death had won...or so it, seemed.

But thanks be to God, this was not the end of the story – far from it! Three days later, Jesus triumphed over death, once and for all, through His resurrection. The Apostle Paul confidently declared, (2 Corinthians 15:55)

Death swallowed by triumphant Life!
Who got the last word, oh, Death?
Oh, Death, who's afraid of you now?

As Frederick Buechner wisely reminds us, "*Resurrection means that the worst thing is never the last thing.*" Pope John Paul II exhorts us all, that we need "*not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song.*" We have a living Hope!

Over these remaining weeks of Lent, we have the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' life and how He carried the Cross for us ... all the way to Calvary. He endured pain unimaginable because of love for each of us. His life, death, burial, and resurrection ushered in a new plan of Salvation for humankind so that we could enjoy abundant life with Love Himself now and always.

It gives me great peace to know, without a shadow of a doubt, that Ann, Muriel, and countless others before them, are no longer in pain, or suffering. They are no longer bearing sorrow or tears. Life and Joy is their new and present reality. (Revelation 21:4)

But lest we slip into the misguided idea that Jesus' death and resurrection is only about our life after death, I resonate with the words of Pastor Rick Warren: *Jesus did not die on the cross just so we could live comfortable, well-adjusted lives. His purpose is far deeper: He wants to make us like himself before he takes us to heaven. This is our greatest privilege, our immediate responsibility, and our ultimate destiny.*

As Easter people, Christ followers, we are called to take up our crosses and follow Him, surrendering our lives to God: loving God, and loving others as Christ loved us. Happy Easter!

This month's issue of the Scroll is in memory of Muriel Edith Johnson, Aug. 1, 1957 – Feb. 20, 2024 and Ann Peterson Dahl, Aug. 1, 1929 – Feb. 22, 2024. What loving and caring sisters in the Lord! Rest in peace, dear Muriel and Ann.



FINDING YOUR WHY

What an amazing day! The Finding Your Why Workshop far exceeded everyone's expectations. Though, it was a tremendous amount of work, it was infused with genuine joy, enthusiasm and loads of affirmation and encouragement. Our Presenter, Rev. Dr. Mary Hendrickson was a seasoned and gifted leader/teacher. It was evident that she has been blessed with the gift of teaching and leadership training.

After Rev. Dr. Mary provided our initial introduction to the day, she divided us into three groups and began to lead us through three stages as we fleshed out our 'why'. First, each of the members and friends present shared a story of one of the occasions they were most proud to be a part of Salem. The stories were widely varied in terms of when these moments happened and what happened. There was laughter and tears. As we leaned and listened to each other, the Spirit's presence was palpably present as it weaved us together as one in the Spirit.

After the stories we identified and listed verbs – action words – that Salem did as a church in these stories. For example, words such as welcomed, loved, served, hoped. Once the three groups' lists were posted, each person had to put a sticker next to the three words they believed best fit Salem.

The next stage was we had to write impact statements, using these words. The statement had to begin with "So that..." Again, each person was asked to put a sticker (this time two stickers) to the impact statements they believed most accurately reflected our church. Trust me, the choices were hard to make!

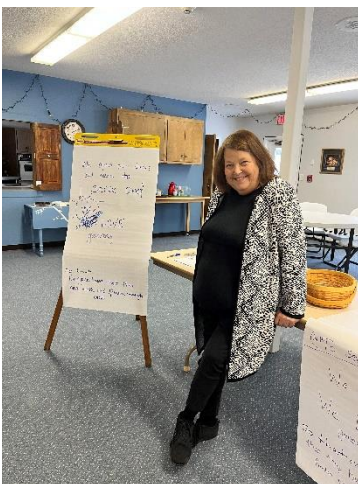
We stopped for a relaxed and healthy lunch break, and then we were back to work. Pastor Mary then made two groups out of the three. Each group was tasked with coming up with two statements that were to stand as our WHY. What was most remarkable is that both groups came up with the same verb and the same modifier, 'love generously.' In the dozens of workshops she has conducted, Pastor Mary remarked this has never happened before!

All throughout our time, Pastor Mary was continually helping us identify our many assets. She sincerely and lovingly affirmed our church in so many ways.

Our final WHY was this:

"We open our doors and hearts to serve, and we love generously *so that* everyone may know their worth and freedom through Christ!"

It was a beautiful day and time well spent with one another. All who participated were very grateful for having been a part of this.



Rev. Dr. Mary Hendrickson

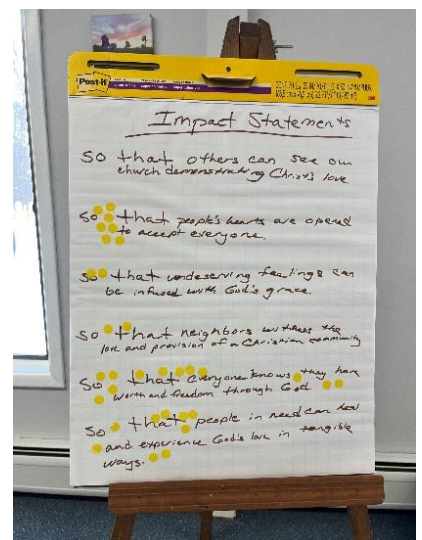


Our participants:

Front row: Deborah Griesbach, Joan Gauthey, Deb Houldin, Carol Allison, Starr Evans

Back row: Kiersten Marich, Pastor Mary, Nancy Grover, Steve Allison, Susan Swanson, Charlotte Johnson, Robin McHan, Cathy Greiner

Not pictured: Elliott Fisher, Pastor Linda



ASH WEDNESDAY/LENTEN LUNCHES



It seems fitting that this year's Ash Wednesday landed on the same day as Valentine's Day. Rather than focusing upon chocolates, glitzy cards, or red and pink bouquets, our service centered on the true meaning of love – Love Himself. We were reminded that after Jesus' baptism and the Father proclaiming His love for his Son, he was surprisingly led from the muddy shores of the Jordan into the harsh landscape of the desert. It wasn't some cruel punishment but instead an invitation for Jesus, stripped of all distractions, to meet intimately with His Father, to become attuned to His voice, and to more deeply realize who He was and what His mission was to be. It was in these 40 days, the Tempter did all he could to disrupt God's plan. He failed to thwart God's plans and purposes, as Jesus resisted the wily ways of the evil one.

We are now halfway through this sacred season of Lent – a time to acknowledge our sin and to reflect on our own mortality, on life and death, and in particular, how Jesus lived his life and then gave it freely for all of us. Jesus, in obedience to the Father, and out of unconditional love for us, went the way of Cross so that we may have life abundant – both NOW and forevermore.

In addition to our Ash Wednesday service, we resumed our Lenten lunches, a simple meal of soup and bread open to the community to share together, and to hear a short devotional related to Lent. People are delighted to be back and the turnout has been strong. Thus far, Pastor Linda, Deb Houldin and Rev. Dr. Robyn Gray (1st Congregational Church of Washington) have been our guest devotional leaders. Pastor David Peters (1st Congregational Church, Roxbury) and Pastor Stephanie Nelson (Covenant Church of Thomaston) will be speaking the next two weeks.



A huge thank you to Robin McHan who has been making the tasty soups each week, and to the many who have contributed homemade cookies and breads for the lunch or helped with set up/clean up each week.

Deb Houldin introduced us to a new meaning for the acronym, ASAP – Always Say a Prayer.

Rev. Dr. Robyn Gray, in addition to her devo about being light to the world, led us in singing, Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley and There is A Balm in Gilead.



SALEM'S CHILDREN & YOUTH – ALWAYS MOVING!

Sometimes it's hard to keep track of how many children and youth are actively engaged in the life of our church. They seem to be coming and going, here and there and everywhere! The Spiritual Formation team

regularly meets once a month to pray for our young people and to plan and prepare for numerous ways for our youngest members to be involved with Salem, and to hear as often as possible how much God loves them!

Every Sunday morning, we have women and men prepared and ready to teach stories of the Bible and lead engaging discussions around the meaning of the stories and the ways their own lives intersect with God's overarching story. They have crafts or games to help support the lesson and keep weekly prayers. It's not all about how much they know about the Bible and Jesus; each month, one Sunday is devoted to Acts of Love where faith is put into action. In late February, they made Easter cards for our shut-ins. Our Confirmands meet three Sundays a month to enjoy breakfast together and learn foundations of the Faith.

On Monday afternoons, we have a solid core of 7 youths who come for Hangout Haven. During these hours, our youth sometimes bake, sometimes play board games or Four-Square outside, and always Hide 'n Seek! For the teens that come, this has become a true oasis for them to relax with their peers and just be. At our last Saturday Soul Talk & Supper, we had a record number of 20 youths show up! That night we enjoyed Minute-to-Win-It Challenges, Hamburgers/Fries/Shakes, and a devotion about Christ and the topic of worry.



Just recently, Deb Houldin and Stephanie Shaw teamed up to plan a fun afternoon after church, eating pizza, watching Taylor Swift's new movie, Eras Tour, and working together on Friendship bracelets. It was so special to see the camaraderie shared with our younger girls and older teens. It was special too, when the youth had their own 'pop up' worship service later in the Sanctuary. It's heart-warming to see them 'at home' in their spiritual home!



PROPERTY

For several years now, the heating valves (original!) have been the cause of disruptions with our heat in the building. The valves would either seize open, meaning the heat was constantly on and keeping different areas at a tropical 85 degrees, or they would seize closed, and the rooms would become ice boxes. This past month, the first phase of updating our valves began. The valves controlling heat in the Offices and the Lydia room were



replaced. The next phase will happen in late spring when we will be able to shut off our heat for several days.

A second repair that was addressed was a leaky vent on the roof of the parsonage. It was causing damage to the second-floor bathroom's ceiling. The cold weather snapped, allowing a crew to get up on the roof and repair the leak.



Finally, our men may notice that they no longer hear a loud fan going when they turn on the lights in the downstairs Men's room. After almost 50 years, the fan motor gave out. Since there is no suitable fan on the market today to retrofit it, we are looking to have the motor rebuilt to hopefully go another 50 years!



MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT

An update report for the month of February, and a year-to-date budget report will be coming soon. Because of the way our financial cycle works, these reports are generated in the third week of the month for the previous month. Watch the weekly e-news for the most current financial picture.



Order your Easter Flowers. By Diane Swanson

Happy Spring! Ok! Not yet but Easter (March 31) is approaching soon and that means flowers too. Yes, folks it is time to sign up for Easter Flowers. Sign up sheets are in the Narthex. You have until **March 8** to order/pay. Please make sure you indicate whether they are *In Honor of* or *In Memory of*. Choose your choice of color for hyacinths and azaleas. Please note you may order daffodils or mini daffodils. Any questions, please contact: Diane Swanson, 860.868.7801 (H), or swanson12151959@gmail.com.

MARCH CALENDAR

March 1 – Loaves and Fishes, 3:30 pm

March 3 – Worship & Communion, 10:30, Church potluck after worship

March 7 – Memorial Service/Celebration of Life for Ann Dahl, 11:00 am

March 4, 11, 18, 25 - Hangout Haven, 2:45-5:30 pm

March 6, 13, 20 – Lenten Lunch, Noon-1:00 pm

March 14, 21 – Crescendo, 10:30 am

March 20 – Council Meeting, 7:00 pm

HOLY WEEK

- March 24 – Palm/Passion Sunday, 10:30 am
March 27 – Evening Prayer, 7:00 pm
March 28 – Maundy Thursday Service, 5:30 pm
March 29 – Good Friday/Tenebrae Service, 7:00 pm
March 31 – Easter Sunrise Service, Stone Church,
New Preston Hill, 6:30 am
- EASTER SERVICE, 10:30 am
followed by Easter Egg Hunt
No classes.



READINGS FOR HOLY WEEK

Over the years, people have requested Scripture readings they may read as a part of their Holy Week reflections. The Gospel of Mark devoted half of its book to the final week of Jesus' life among us, marking the events of each day. Below, you will find the readings for each day.

Sunday – Mark 11:1-11

Monday – Mark 11:12- 19

Tuesday- Mark 11:20 – 13:37

Wednesday - Mark 14:1- 11

Thursday – Mark 14:12 - 72

Friday – Mark 15:1-41

Saturday – Mark 15:42- 47

Easter Sunday – Mark 16:1-8

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Erik Quist	1
Leo (Linnea) White	2
Michel Williams	4
Dax DeRosa	6
Amy Hoeniger	7
Matt Light	8
Mike Marich	9
Diane Hansen	10
Addyson Cannavaro	13
Starr Evans	13
Roger Cannavaro	18
Ingrid White	25
Julie Fredlund	31
Diann Buro	31

MARCH REMEMBRANCES

- March 3, 2022 – Josefa Gil Ravelo (Michael Ravelo's grandmother)
- March 4, 2018 – Robin Williams (Clint, Lori, Melissa, and Ellen's mother)
- March 15, 2018 – Virginia Gustafson (Ginny and Elaine's mother)
- March 15, 2018 – Arne Pearson (Inger Pearson's husband)
- March 20, 2012 – Vinnie Quist (June's husband, Gunnar & Margit's Father)
- March 20, 2016 – Bobby Lundberg (Mary Ann Lundberg's son)
- March 22, 2022 – Richard Gauthey (Joan Gauthey's brother)