



# The Scroll

CELEBRATING  
**130**  
YEARS

Volume 48, Issue 6 • June 2019

## THE DISCIPLINE OF GRATITUDE

A Message from Pastor Linda

Several months ago I heard a strange turn of phrase that caught my attention and has been ruminating within me since. Since then, I have learned the phrase is not all that strange and certainly not new. The phrase is this: *the discipline of gratitude*. For centuries, Christians have sought to practice gratitude as a ‘discipline’.

Like many of you, I have read numerous magazine articles and scientific studies on the quantifiable, positive impact gratitude can have in our physical and emotional well-being. But I can’t say that I’ve understood it as a *discipline* – even less so as a *spiritual discipline*. I’ve never considered expressing thanks as something I ‘must’ practice or as a discipline ‘vital’ to my soul and my faith. Yet, in light of God’s Word, the truth of this stands out all over the pages! Over and over again, there is it is: Give thanks! Give thanks in all things!

On the surface, most people – Christian or not - find countless reasons to give thanks. There are many occasions in which words of thanksgiving, appreciation and gratitude flow naturally from us. We don’t have to stop and think about it; we simply express it using our words, facial expressions, body language, cards, gifts and more. So, why the need for that ominous word: *discipline*? Why the imperative to thank God, or for that matter, thank others? Wouldn’t this take the joy out of it – making it seem more an obligation?

Most people recognize when they feel grateful when good things happen around them or in them. Yet, if it means the only time we give thanks is when we *feel* good, or when we *experience* something extraordinarily wonderful then the impetus for gratitude is based solely on present circumstances and/or our feelings.

In contrast, for the Christian, “*the spiritual discipline of gratitude is an action. It is not just experienced, but expressed. The spiritual discipline of gratitude is practiced not just because it feels good, but because it’s the right thing to do – not just for one’s own good, but for the good for one’s family, community, and society.*”

If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is ‘thank you’, it will be enough.

– Meister Eckhart

*The discipline of gratitude is in fact not a feeling at all, but a moral virtue.”* (Brett and Kate McKay)

God has called us to give thanks in all circumstances. (1 Thess. 5:18). The Apostle Paul wrote, “*Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*” Why? Because, “*...the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*” Giving thanks each day, in every situation, keeps our focus on God and what is He is doing and able to do. It keeps us from getting bogged down by worry, discouragement or despair. It guards our hearts from envy, complaint, and particularly from taking life and lives for granted.

True, life is tough in many places, in many ways, on many days. There are some things in life not going so great; in fact, what we are dealing with may be downright terrible. Yet, as the McKay’s write, “*While gratitude recognizes the dark corners of existence which readily attract our attention, it also notices the Beauty, Joy, Goodness, and Truth that is typically overlooked. In this, gratitude in fact opens one’s eyes to a more expansive view of reality. It is like putting on a pair of long-needed glasses for the first time: “Oh, wow, here’s what I’ve been missing.”*”

Thanksgiving to God lifts us above our present circumstances, no matter good or bad. It is the truest lens for which to look at life. Our gratitude and appreciation is not ruled by events outside us; it isn’t shaped by our feelings. Rather it is a choice - a surrender if you will - to recognize God’s hand, His goodness, and His ability to bring good out of any situation, or use our trials and challenges for our good and His glory.

If giving thanks in all things was easy, it wouldn’t be a spiritual discipline. But because it is, as we practice it, our gratitude muscles will grow stronger, and our faith, hearts and minds, and yes, even our bodies will be better for it. We will be gifted with a whole new, godly perspective and discover even more to be grateful for!

## MAY'S GUEST PREACHER, SANDI LEE



Here at Salem, we are blessed to have gifted preachers come visit and preach in our Sunday morning services now and again. Last month we listened as Rev. Sandi Lee (member of our church, and East Coast Conference Office Manager) preached an intriguing and encouraging sermon on the Old Testament character, Samson, and a strange story of a fresh donkey's jaw bone. Does it make you wonder how she connected his story and that jawbone to our lives? If so, you are invited to listen to it on-line at this [LINK](#). Sandi will be back to preach at Salem on June 30!

## TONIGHT!! CLARINET RECITAL



This evening, Saturday, June 1, at 5:00 pm, Daniel Williams (Pastor Linda and Michel Williams's son!) will perform a Clarinet Recital with Susan Anthony-Klein, accompanying him on Piano. Susan and Daniel have been planning and talking for several years about the possibility of one day playing together here. Now, after six months of preparation and practice, they will have the opportunity. The two will play music by well-known composers, Donizetti, Pierne, Poulenc and Saint-Saëns.

There will be a brief intermission and the program will be followed by a light reception. Come, sit back, and enjoy this special evening of classical music.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO STEPHANIE SHAW!



Many in our church may not be well-acquainted with Stephanie Shaw, our Nursery Care Provider. For two years, Sunday after Sunday, Stephanie has been a stable, dependable, and compassionate caregiver in our Nursery. This May, Stephanie graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Communications from West Conn State University! She began college believing she would study Education, but as she puts it, "Communications found me."

Her hope is to work with a radio or TV broadcasting company. One of the major highlights of her college experience was interviewing different politicians on the school's TV program, Election Connection, and going behind-the-scenes of Good Morning America, in NYC. Looking back over her four years, she really appreciates the many new people she met.

This summer, she is employed as a Director at one of New Milford's summer youth camps and she will continue to serve our youngest children here at Salem. But it won't be all work for her! She plans to visit RI and make some daytrips to NYC and elsewhere. Lastly, some of what she appreciates most about serving here at Salem is its small, warm and welcoming community, and seeing the children and families each week. Congratulations Stephanie!

## PASTOR'S SABBATICAL BEGINS THIS MONTH, By Jeremy Chase, Church Chair

As most of you know, Pastor Linda will begin a six-week sabbatical on Monday June 17<sup>th</sup> that will last through Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>. She will return on Monday July 29<sup>th</sup>, and jump right into leading VBS. On Sunday August 4<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Steve Cushing, of New England Seafarer's Mission will preach and Linda will lead our Sunday service.



This sabbatical is something stipulated in her contract, and Pastor Linda has worked diligently with the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) to plan it. More importantly, it is an integral part of pastoral development, necessary for her spiritual and personal development and renewal. I think it is fair to say that our entire congregation has great appreciation for Pastor Linda's intense, tireless dedication as our leader. Allotting an extended block of time for her to rest and reflect, while focusing on personal renewal and theological study will help make her an even better leader for our church. I am confident it will make Salem a stronger church in the intermediate- and long-term.

There are several logistics that the Council and PRC would like to make you aware of regarding the six weeks that Pastor Linda will be away.

- Any questions or concerns (pastoral or otherwise) that arise can be directed to me, Caitlin Cannavaro, or Spencer Guptill. Any of us can help answer the question or direct it to the appropriate person.
- Rev. Tim Olson of The Covenant Church of Thomaston has agreed to be available for urgent matters requiring pastoral care, such as severe injury or illness, or a death in the family.
- Questions or concerns specifically relating to building maintenance can be directed to our Trustee, Mark Showalter.
- During the six Sundays starting on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, we will have sermons from six different guest preachers. These six services will be led by three volunteers (Spencer Guptill, Taylor Cannavaro, and I each will lead two).
- Our choir will follow its normal, lighter summer schedule for the summer, participating in the service only on the first Sunday of July and August.
- The church office will be open Monday and Thursday from 9 am to noon.

We are all accustomed to Pastor Linda's steadfast leadership and we pray that God will watch over us as we embark on this, our first extended time without her. It is vitally important that we collectively address any issues or challenges that arise, and do not interrupt Linda during her time of renewal.

To that end, our hope is that our church family will participate and support each other during this period. As Pastor Linda would say, "our church is our people, not just its pastor." This will be a time for our congregation to prove her right.

In His Name,   
Jeremy Chase, Church Chair

#### **SUMMER PREACHING/WORSHIP LEADER SCHEDULE**

June 23 – Preacher: Rev. Jessica Carter; Worship Leader: Spencer Guptill

June 30 – Preacher: Rev. Sandi Lee; Worship Leader: Taylor Cannavaro

July 7 – Preacher: Rev. Howard Burgoyne, Superintendent; Worship Leader: Taylor Cannavaro

July 14 – Preacher: Rev. Mary Putera; Worship Leader: Spencer Guptill

July 21 – Preacher: Rev. Marlon Simpkins; Worship Leader: Jeremy Chase

July 28 – Preacher: Ms. Amy Julia Becker; Worship Leader: Jeremy Chase

August 4 – Preacher: Rev. Steve Cushing, Exec. Director of New England Seafarers' Mission; Worship Leader: Pastor Linda

On-Call Pastor: Rev. Tim Olsen, Covenant Church of Thomaston

## PROPERTY UPDATE

Some of our trees were pruned! – Our thanks to Mike Alex, Vincent Belanger, Roger Cannavaro, Adam Reale, and Mark Showalter for their arbor skills ☺



## CHURCH WISH LIST (in no particular order)

- Scrape and paint Kitchen ceiling – no quote available yet
- Upgrade Phone system (APEX Communication) - \$3622
- Replace large Mixer/Amplifier, Sanctuary, +/- \$1000
- Carpeting, Sanctuary – no quote available
- Walkway to Parsonage Front door, \$5720 (if we do prep work of removing stones, excavate 8”x 4’ path)
- Hearing devices in the Sanctuary for those who hearing impaired
- Replace Carpeting, Parsonage Master bedroom, \$1650
- Replace Carpeting, Parsonage Guest bedroom, \$840
- New seating for Fellowship Hall - \$40-\$100/chair

## UPCOMING EVENTS

June 2 – Children and Youth Sunday, Teacher Recognition, and Picnic following Worship

June 5 – Pastoral Relations Committee, 5:30 pm

- Council Meeting, 7:00 pm

June 7 – Women Helping Women Gathering, 5:30 – Light supper and packing baskets for the Susan B Anthony Project of Torrington.

June 9 – Pentecost Sunday!

June 16 – Father’s Day

Special Guest: Rev. Barbara Ettinger, Associate Supt of East Coast Conference to lead the Blessing and Sending for the time of Sabbatical.

June 17 – Pastor Linda begins 6-week Sabbatical

June 23 – Rev. Jessica Carter, Guest Preacher

June 30 – Rev. Sandi Lee, Guest Preacher

July 7, August 4 – Sundaes Sundays are back!!

What a treat!

SUNDAES  SUNDAYS!



**Summer Vacation Bible School** for children, K-5!

July 29 - August 2, 9am -Noon

Download Registration forms [here](#).

Youth volunteers, Grades 6-12 welcome!

## ON-LINE GIVING IS AVAILABLE



In 2016, Salem began an option for on-line giving in order to provide a convenient way for those might be away during a weekend, on vacation simply appreciate not having to remember their checks for church. Contributions can be debited automatically from one’s checking or savings account or processed using a credit or debit card. It is flexible in that one can schedule to give weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly. If travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis. Just follow this [link](#) if you are interested.

## LOVE MERCY, DO JUSTICE

From our inception the Covenant has been concerned with helping hurting people (love mercy), and addressing the causes of that hurt (do justice). The mission of Love Mercy Do Justice (LMDJ) is to "Join God in making things right in our broken world."

For many years, I've wanted to do something more than send money, which of course is also important, to the Susan B. Anthony Project, located in Torrington CT. Their mission is very close to my heart.

From now until June 7, Salem and Warren Congregational Church will be collecting items for personal care which will be put into baskets and delivered to the Susan B. Anthony Project. We will invite the women from the Warren Congregational Church to an evening with refreshments/meal on a date TBA, in June.

Please consider donating one or more of the items on the list. For any questions, please contact Robin McHan. Thank you!

- |                                       |                           |                        |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| o Body and Hand lotions               | o Dental Floss            | o Shampoos             |
| o Brushes                             | o Deodorants              | o Soaps or shower gels |
| o Cloth covered hair elastics         | o Feminine Products       | o Toothbrushes         |
| o Combs                               | o Hair pick combs         | o Toothpastes          |
| o Conditioners                        | o Head bands              |                        |
| o Cotton balls or swabs (sample size) | o Mouthwash (sample size) |                        |
|                                       | o Razors & shaving cream  |                        |

Please place items in the marked container in the Narthex/Library area.



Friday, May 10, 2019  
Dear Friends of the Salem Covenant Church,  
It was so very kind of you to send me the lovely birthday card that I received from you today! I appreciate it so much and want to let all of you know also that I was so happy to be able to attend your beautiful service, along with other members of my family on Easter Sunday. The service was beautifully carried out service-wise and the choir, with several young people taking part, also was outstanding! But above all it made me so happy to be

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So warmly welcomed by many of the church members who I don't even know that I wasn't a Salem Church member but welcomed me anyway.  
And to have signed your lovely Birthday Card as from your "Salem Family" meant the most of all!  
With love,  
Fran W.

## June Birthdays

Chris Carlson	1
Sarah Fredlund Mathews	1
Tim Meeker, Jr.	3
Seth Caco	6
Jennifer Fox	10
Caitlin Cannavaro	11
Max Klein	14
Aaron Klein	14
Bob Golembeski	14
Christine Chase	15
Patti Anderson	21
Art Bogue	21
Dorine Boesel	22
Dawn Tillman	23
Don Camp	25
Taegan Sivick	27
Ron Ames	29

### **CHURCH STAFF**

Pastor – Reverend Linda Williams  
Music Director – Dianne DeMarco  
Administrative Assistant – Caitlin Cannavaro  
Nursery Care Provider – Stephanie Shaw

### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

Chair– Jeremy Chase  
Vice-Chair– Spencer Guptill  
Treasurer/CFO– Caitlin Cannavaro  
Secretary – Julie Fredlund  
Trustee – Mark Showalter  
Spiritual Formation – Amy Julia Becker  
Fellowship – Robin McHan  
Diaconate – Charlotte Johnson  
Ex-Officio – Pastor Linda Williams

### **Financial Secretary**

Starr Evans

### **PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Jeremy Chase  
Spencer Guptill  
Peter Becker  
Amy Hoeniger  
Holly Camp