



# The Scroll



Volume 73, Issue 7 • July/August 2023

## OF CHURCH & MEN

Message from Pastor Linda

**“What are you going to do to bring more men into the church?”** This was one of the first questions ever posed to me as I began my first pastorate as a solo pastor in a small church. To this day, I am not sure if the man who asked was challenging me or simply curious. Perhaps both?

My answer to him that afternoon was two-fold: It is the movement of the Holy Spirit that draws men to the Lord; and it’s the Church’s (not only the Pastor’s) responsibility to equip, encourage, and serve the men who do come to church.

Long after he left my study that day, it was the motivation behind his question that really piqued my curiosity:

- Was he longing for male camaraderie?
- Was he concerned by the imbalance between women and men in the pews?
- Was he uncomfortable with a woman as the pastor?
- Was he searching for innovative ways he, himself, could reach out to more men?

In the weeks and months to follow, he and I had some interesting and provocative conversations about God, faith and church. I came to deeply appreciate and love this friend/skeptic who continued to show up each Sunday morning for worship or in my study with more subjects to ponder and reflect upon.

Now, years later, his question still hangs in the air: **“What are you going to do to bring more men into the church?”** A related question stands close by: **where are all the men?**

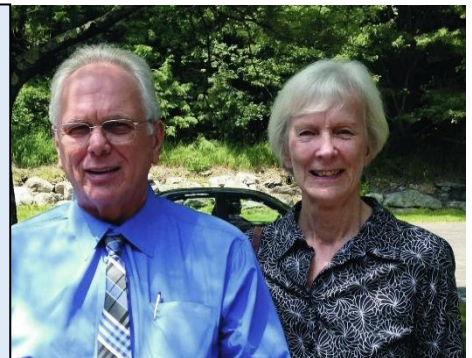
Many churches today, no matter what the denomination or size, have a larger percentage of women attending than men (in general, a

60/40 ratio which seems generous in my estimation). The lonely term ‘pew widow’ – meaning a congregant who is married but whose spouse doesn’t come to worship – is a more common and painful reality than we wish. **What can churches do to encourage more men to participate in the community of faith?**

More specifically, in what ways is Salem serving, encouraging and equipping the men we have in our midst right now? How can we better determine and meet the needs of those who have no interest in organized religion (aka Church), and/or don’t know Christ and His love for them? These are the questions Deb Houldin, Spiritual Formation Chair, and I have begun to explore and dream about.

In recent years, Salem has been intentional in its ministry priorities for the year. We have focused on Prayer, Children, Youth, Seniors, and Women. This coming fall we plan to place the priority upon Men. We want to be prayerful, leaning on and trusting in the Lord to guide us in a manner that is both meaningful and effectual. To this end, this summer, would you join us in praying for this vision for the men we know and love, and for the men we have yet to meet? On the next page is a prayer that Deb has written to unite us as one in spirit as we pray privately and communally for God’s will and His way to unfold in the lives of men. May the Lord hear our prayers!

This issue of the Scroll is dedicated to our beloved brother and sister in the Lord, **Ron and Lillian Ames**. The two have been members of Salem for over 27 years ministering to and among us in numerous ways. We will deeply miss them as they move to Colorado to be closer to their son and his family.





## Prayer for our Men:

God, we see a vision. We can see a community of men in Salem Covenant Church, who are willing to come together and open a conversation geared toward life, Christ and what it means to live in Christ. Bring men to our church through conversations, relationships, games, fun, laughter, joy, healing, and infinite other ways You see, Papa. Father, please stir up the Holy Spirit in men to participate and lead. Prayers of protection, peace and courage for men to come forward and participate and lead. Prayers for men God has already selected to awaken to the Voice of the Holy Spirit and create the time to spend with God and God's sons and daughters. Prayers that as men come to Salem and other churches as well, that God provides the tools, the means and the protection to raise God up in these new relationships.

Together with God, may the Fruit of the Spirit grow in these men as they come together and show up together. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against these things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

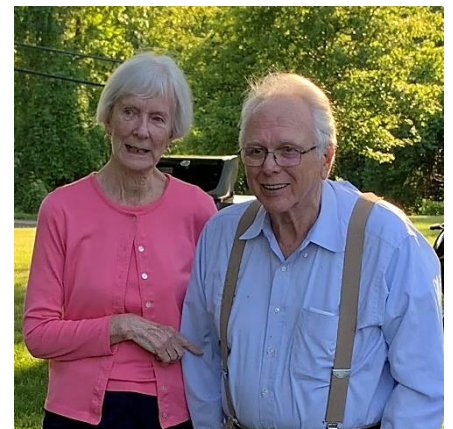
May these men witness and be a witness of those who are in Christ and be able to see the difference between believers in Christ and distinguished from unbelievers. Help them "be fully capable of comprehending with all the saints (God's people) the width and length and height and depth of His love [fully experiencing that amazing, endless love]; (Ephesians 3:18AMP.).

In Jesus NAME we pray, AMEN!

## QUIET HEROES OF THE FAITH AMONG US

We read in Scripture about heroes of the faith: men and women who hold fast to their faith through trials and tribulations, saints who trust in the Lord over the span of many, many years. It is truly a gift to personally know individuals who remain devoted disciples of God as the world continues to change and new challenges arise. Here at Salem, we have been blessed for 27 years by the faithfulness and loving friendship of Ron and Lillian Ames.

Neither Lillian nor Ron was raised in the Covenant. As youths, Ron grew up in an American Baptist Church and Lillian was baptized in a Catholic church and attended various Protestant churches including the Methodist church. From their earliest age, the seeds of Christian faith were planted and nurtured in their lives through their families, friends and the Church.



After they married and as a young couple, they began worshipping at Naugatuck (CT) Covenant Church and became very involved with Body life there, forming lasting friendships with its members. It was at Naugatuck, their son Romney was baptized and confirmed. In 1996, Ron and Lillian made the decision to move to a more rural part of Connecticut. They built a home in New Milford and later downsized to a condo.

When they first arrived in New Milford, they knew they wanted to belong to a church that was both relational and devoted to following Christ. Though there were over a half dozen churches between their home in New Milford and Salem Covenant Church in Washington Depot, Ron was set that he wanted to go to a Covenant church. The Ames arrived at our front doors almost the same year as Rev. Doug Bixby began serving as Pastor.

From the moment they set foot inside, Ron and Lillian became actively involved though they were both still a few years from retirement (Lillian as a Speech Therapist and Ron in Research & Development for Uniroyal). Ron, who had always had a passion for music, became a member of the Choir with his strong baritone voice. He formed fast friendships with the late Vinny Quist and other men in the choir. He loved being a part of Sunday

Worship, and Christmas/Easter concerts and the Cabaret. He has a great fondness and appreciation for Susan, and all the members of the Choir. They are extended family to him.

Though Music was his first love, Ron also served as the Church Chair, and helped Salem maintain a strong connection with the larger ECC. He was Salem's representative at Annual Meetings in the East Coast Conference. He also served as Church Trustee, taking great pride in caring for the church building and property over the years. A light bulb was burned out? Ron took care of it. The timer for the lights needed to be reset? Ron took care of it. The well water needed to be tested? Yup, Ron took care of it.

Lillian had differing gifts of mercy and teaching. She has always had a heart for those with lesser means, and she became a volunteer at the local library and an integral part of Loaves and Fishes in New Milford. For 27 years and counting, she has prepared and served meals once a month to those with food insecurity living in New Milford. She met her dear friend, Sarah Straub, through this special ministry. Within the church, Lillian regularly participated in a number of different Women's Bible Studies and was/is always quick to help with special events including the Tag Sales, Penny Auction, Lenten Lunches, and the Women's Gatherings. She also served a number of years in Christian Education.

Both Ron and Lillian regularly participated in the church's then-existing Book Club, discussing the intersection of faith and life today. One of the most meaningful and relational ministries they were a part of was the Lay Visitation team (now called Congregational Care). It would be impossible to add all the hours they devoted to visiting those who were sick, hospitalized, or homebound over these decades. They could be counted on to offer rides, provide meals, be a listening ear, or extend a warm hug.

To be sure, Ron and Lillian have embodied the genuine love, compassion and sacrificial service of Christ here at Salem and in the community beyond. They have made an indelible impact upon Salem as a whole, and personally upon many, many women and men who have been connected to Salem. Soon they will be moving to Colorado to live closer to their son, Romney and his wife, Jordan and their two children, leaving a lasting legacy and example of Christian love and devotion. They will be dearly missed by us all.

On July 2, we will celebrate their friendship and ministry during Worship. On July 12, the moving van will pull up to their doorstep, and on July 13, they will be boarding their flight to Colorado. Once they arrive, they will settle into their new home and new church.

Their new address is:

Ron and Lillian Ames  
10125 W. 77nd Avenue  
Arvata, CO 80005

May the Lord bless them and keep them. May the Lord make His face shine upon them. May the Lord lift up his countenance and give them peace both now and forevermore. Amen.

#### **A LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

In late 2022, Pastor Linda approached both the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) and the Church Council with an unusual proposal. She asked if they would consider her taking a 4-week *unpaid* Leave of Absence once a year in lieu of her 6-week paid Sabbatical every four years. To cause the least disruption, the LOA would take place during July, the slowest time of the year in the Church's body life. The LOA would provide several significant benefits for both Salem and her.

**For the Church**, it will allow the funds that are dedicated to Pastor Linda's salary to be re-directed to create and begin building up a Restricted Fund for a Pastoral Search in the future. The cost of a Pastoral Search can amount to \$12-15K to cover the costs associated with the search process and for moving expenses. Her health





coverage and pension would remain in place. She would also be available for emergencies or crises arising. The secondary benefit for the church is it will reinforce and strengthen its ability to maintain a strong ministry and smooth operations if/when there should be a vacancy in the pastorate.

**For Pastor Linda**, it will enable her to enjoy extended time now with her husband, Michel (who is retired) rather than waiting until her own retirement which is at least 3-4 years away. In addition, a LOA would build greater resiliency in her for continued strong, energetic ministry with our congregation.

The Church Council and the PRC were in support of this proposal; it was brought to the Annual Business meeting in February and approved unanimously by the Congregation. Therefore, this month, Pastor Linda will be on an *unpaid* Leave of Absence, July 3-31. She may be reached by cell phone in the event of an emergency or crisis arising. During her absence, Pastor Marlon Simpkins will lead worship on July 9 and July 16. Pastor Tamara Ravelo will lead worship on July 23 and 30. Deborah Griesbach will be in the Church Office her usual days/hours and Susan Anthony-Klein will also be here to lead the music throughout July.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the LOA, please reach out to Pastor Linda or Elliott Fisher, Church Chair.

### THANK YOU, TEACHERS AND YOUTH VOLUNTEERS!



**Front Row (left to right):** Christi Guptill, Christine Chase, Suzanne Drapeau, Laura Cannavaro, Amy Julia Becker, Heather Hurley, Peter Houldin, Stephanie Shaw  
**Back Row (left to right):** Jennifer Anthony-Bogue, Michel Williams, Pam Quist, Elliott Fisher, John Spear, Erin Light, Deb Houldin, Peter Becker, Pastor Linda  
**Not Pictured:** Morgen Fisher, Daniel Williams

It was an encouraging and exciting year for Salem's Spiritual Formation classes and activities. Salem was, and is, blessed to have many gifted men and women step up to nurture and teach our congregants, from the youngest to the oldest. Because of such strong volunteerism, Salem was able to offer consistent programs for all ages throughout the year.

Stephanie Shaw has been an incredible part of this; her consistency, dependability, and calm disposition and natural affinity for young children has been immeasurably valuable to our children's ministry. Parents know their children will be safe and well-cared for during the worship hour.

We are so grateful for her partnership in the gospel for **7 years!** It is very rare that a church has such a committed individual in this critical role and to have someone so young makes it all the more rare. Thank you, Stephanie!

On Sunday, June 11, all of our teachers/youth leaders were recognized and appreciated. Christi Guptill, our Sunday School Coordinator sewed beautiful pillowcases, with each person's name embroidered on each. She took the time to especially thank Amy Julia Becker, who has served as our Sunday morning Adult Bible Study leader for 10 years and who was instrumental in building a strong Spiritual Formation program and team. She was presented a beautiful handmade quilt by Christi. To round out our time of recognition, Deb Houldin highlighted Christi's passionate love and leadership for our children's ministry.





Finally, not only were the teachers/youth volunteers celebrated, the children also led a short devotion for the congregation, based on Max Lucado's book, *You are Special*. Each child had a question they posed to the adults and later they each shared one of the truths about God's love for each of us. During the Offertory, Jillian DeRosa sang a solo, with Steve Allison, guitar, Roger Cannavaro, bass, and Jennifer Anthony-Bogue, flute, as her back-up 'band'!



### OH, HAPPY DAY!

Immediately after our celebratory worship service, our church family gathered downstairs for our annual end-of-the-year picnic. It was a beautiful day outside so some enjoyed the delicious grilled dogs and salads outside while some stayed in. Thanks to all of the families that provided the picnic lunch 😊







### **SALEM COFFEE HOUSE**

In both May and June, Salem hosted its first of (hopefully many) Coffee Houses for the local community. Though the evenings proved to be too warm for coffee, it didn't hamper the laughter and friendship that was shared on these two separate evenings. With plenty of water, ginger ale and lemonade flowing, and delicious

homemade cookies and chips and salsa to indulge, young and older adults came together for games, conversation and mutual love for working on puzzles.

It was especially satisfying to see new visitors come in and relax. The younger adults are already asking when the next Coffee House will be! We will be taking July off, but the plan is to resume this Friday night event either in August or September. Hopefully, word will begin to spread that this is the place to come when you don't want to spend a lot of money on dinner or drinks at a restaurant or bar, or when you are just looking for something to do, or want some friendly company.

### **KITCHEN UPGRADE UPDATE**

- Our new Commercial refrigerator arrived! A commercial refrigerator differs from the usual consumer one in that it keeps the temperature inside constant despite how many times the door is open and shut.
- One of the requirements we needed to fulfill in order to acquire a permit for our kitchen upgrade was having our septic tank and leach field inspected. It was learned during the inspection there was a large crack in the pipe and roots of trees were clogging it. The pipe was replaced and the concrete catch replaced.



The leach field is in excellent condition.

- We are presently stalled as we await both the Carpenter to begin his work in the kitchen, and for the Vendor (appliances) to submit drawings of the stove venting system to the Town's Building Permit Department. Please pray these two contractors will make time and intention to provide for these critical steps to take place.

## PROPERTY UPDATE

- A relay for the Well Pump was rusted through and failing. Water, the color of coffee, was showing up in our faucets. Foss Well replaced it and also checked the condition of the pump itself. Problem solved!
- Our fire detection alarm was getting set off repeatedly despite no cause for 'alarm' (pun intended 😊). It turned out to be a failing part associated with our communication service. The part was replaced and the alarm system is working as it should. Problem solved!
- There was trouble with one of the men's urinals flushing continually. It turned out to be an easily replaceable part (the diaphragm) and the plumber had it replaced in an hour. Problem solved!

## VBS – AUGUST 7-10



**2023** SAVE THE DATE!  
**VBS - Chugging Your Way!**  
**August 7-11, 9am - Noon**

Send your children, Grades k-5, on a mountaintop adventure! At Rocky Railway VBS, children will discover Jesus' power can pull through life's ups and downs.

Rocky Railway is filled with great music, creative activities, outdoor games, wonderful Bible stories, and tasty snacks. By God's grace, the children relationship with God and His church will be strengthened.

**Invite family, friends and neighbors!**  
And by the way, this awesome week is free!

**ROCKY RAILWAY**  
JESUS' POWER PULLS US THROUGH



Click [here](#) for the Registration Form.

## JULY CALENDAR

- July 2** – Worship & Communion, 10:30 am  
- Celebration for Ron and Lillian Ames
- July 3** – **Church Office Closed**
- July 4** – **Happy Fourth of July! Church Office closed.**
- July 9** – Pastor Marlon preaching
- July 16** – Pastor Marlon preaching
- July 23** – Pastor Tamara preaching
- July 30** - Pastor Tamara preaching

## AUGUST CALENDAR

- August 6** – Worship & Communion, 10:30 am  
- Lemonade on the Lawn
- August 7-10** – Vacation Bible School, 9am-Noon
- August 16** – Council Meeting, 7:00 pm
- August 23** – 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday Evening Prayer, 7:00 pm
- August 27** – Semi-Annual Business Meeting, following  
Worship

## 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)



# Happy Birthday! JULY BIRTHDAYS

Joe Fredlund	1	Vincent Belanger	19
Ron Smith	4	Spencer Guptill	28
Joan Gauthey	12	Carol Walzer	29
Sallie Stevens	14	Carrie Rowe	31
Eric Johnson	15	Peter Houldin	31
Erin Light	17		

## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Ann Dahl	1	Morgen Fisher	1
Muriel Golembeski	1	Trinity Williamson	18
Inger Pearson	1	Ginny Napolitano	18
Elaine Babiyan	6	Adam Rutz	19
William Becker	7	Jennifer Whittlesey	20
Robin McHan	8	Daniel Williams	21
Laura Cannavaro	13	Connor Fisher	22
Caden Sivick	15	John Varley	29

## IN REMEMBRANCE...

July 3, 2022	George Winter	Lillian Winter's husband
July 4, 2022	Peenee Tripp	Ann Dahl, Dolly Whitney and John Peterson's sister
July 5, 2014	Ronald Waldron	Doris Waldron's husband
July 13, 2022	Jeff McDonough	Jim McDonough's brother
July 14, 2013	Janice Swanson	Diane Swanson's mother
July 15, 2021	Bobby Douskey	Mary Ann Lundberg's brother/Iona Douskey's brother-in-law
July 20, 2022	Janice Anthony	Jennifer Anthony-Bogue and Susan Anthony-Klein's mother
July 24, 2016	David Showalter, Sr	Dave and Mark Showalter's father
July 24, 2022	Ken Carlson	Deb Blank's husband
<hr/>		
August 4, 2017	Shawn Varley	Jim Varley's son/Dolly Varley's grandson, John Varley's nephew
August 15, 2015	Gordon Hansen	Diane Hansen's husband, Elyse Lessa and Andrew Hansen's father