



The Scroll



Volume 71, Issue 2 • February 2023

BELONGING

Message from Pastor Linda

February has become the month that our culture is saturated with pink and red streamers and balloons, glittery hearts and all sorts of ‘sweet’ deals. Love, some might say ‘is in the air.’ Commercials and the Hallmark channel are a never-ending flow of romance. But as we enter into the month, the word on my heart isn’t love, but its close cousin, *belonging*. Sadly, there are many today who don’t feel like they belong anywhere or to anyone; it is awful and lonely experience for them. It’s no wonder.

Belonging is that inherent, God-given emotion which resides in every human heart. From the moment we take in our first breath, we all need to be part of something greater than ourselves, an accepted member of a group. “Nearly every aspect of our lives is organized around belonging to something.” (Mayo Clinic Health System) We all have a deep-seated need **to belong** to someone or something. We all need to be connected to another.

So, what exactly does it mean to ‘belong’ to God, or to one another? How is this lived out in the Church, in our day-to-day lives? I did some digging and found a helpful article describing the *five pillars of belonging**. They are: **Feeling welcomed - Known – Included – Supported – Connected**. Thumb through Scripture and we find all of these in God’s relationship with us.

Feeling Welcomed – [Matthew 11:28-30](#); [Revelation 22:17](#) – Come who are weary, thirsty, hungry, lonely, hurting, weak – Christ is continually extending an invitation to come.

Known – [Psalm 139](#); [John 10:27](#) – O Lord, you have searched me and known me; I know my sheep

Included – [Ephesians 2:4-6](#); [Matthew 28:19-20](#) – We are seated with him; we are included in his family and partners in his mission

Supported – [Isaiah 41:10](#); [John 14:12-14](#) – God Himself is supporting and empowering us

Connected – [Isaiah 49:15-16](#); [Romans 8:37-39](#) – Nothing can separate us from God. We are engraved on His heart.

The Apostle Paul was keenly aware how significant it is that every person knows in his or her heart that they belong. He wanted those he met in his travels and as he preached, to know we are never alone. God has invited all of us into His family. In Christ, we have a safe place where we are fully known and loved and accepted. The Apostle Paul presses the point even further: Not only do we belong to God, we belong to one another! Paul couldn’t stress this truth enough. God understood we need to experience belonging through relationships – through flesh and blood. Tangible. Concrete. Personal. He writes in Romans 12:5 “*so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.*” (emphasis mine). We can’t function without each other.



Feeling welcomed - Known – Included – Supported – Connected These are the concrete actions our church family seeks to extend to everyone who comes through our doors. We don’t get it right or do it well every time, but we give it our best effort. By the grace of God, we want every individual to experience a true spirit of belonging the moment we meet them. Like Paul, I cannot stress enough, brothers and sisters, **you belong** to God and you belong here. (continued next page)

Yes, sometimes in life we may not feel as if we belong anywhere. There are some days when doubt creeps in and people, or circumstances or our own self-talk try to convince us we don't have a place. There are those moments when a thought crosses our minds, that snidely declares, "Who invited you?!" It's precisely in those moments, we confidently declare, 'Why, He did!' as we hold fast to Jesus. You belong to God. He gave up His life for you. You belong to Salem. You belong to me. And we belong to you. To close in the words of Brené Brown, *"You are imperfect, you are wired for struggle, but you are worthy of love and belonging."*

OUR THANKS TO PASTOR MARLON!

What a gift to Salem to have Chaplain/Pastor Marlon Simpkins preaching four weeks this past month. It was his first time preaching a sermon series so he was thrilled with the opportunity and we were grateful for his preaching. Pastor Marlon serves full-time as a Chaplain at the Regional Hospice Center in Danbury, CT. (Regional Hospice Center is opening a satellite center right here in Washington Depot!) He also is on staff at New York Covenant Church in New Rochelle, NY. Over the four weeks Pastor Marlon led us through the Psalms, preaching upon Psalm 8, Psalm 13, Psalm 137 and the oh, so familiar and beloved Psalm 23. Ask anyone who was in worship on January 22, and they will express, without a doubt, his most stirring sermon was on Psalm 137 and the power of lament. On his fourth Sunday with us, we had the joy of listening to his wife, Valerie (vice-principal at New Rochelle High School) give the children's message too. The two make for a power duo – we laughed, we cried, we learned, we grew. Our thanks to Pastor Marlon and Sister Valerie for their Spirit-filled ministry among us



Left: Pastor Marlon preaching
Right: The Simpkins family
Mecahia, Mishael, Valerie,
Pastor Marlon, and Manasi

YOU ARE SPECIAL, BY Christi Gupstill, Sunday School Coordinator

Hello from Winston Salem, North Carolina!

I want to take this opportunity to **THANK** "My Salem Church Family" for the most awesome picture book and card you sent my family. The card has been glued into the book as a constant reminder of the Salem Family we have. The package came in the mail on a Saturday when we were almost all together. Zack was back in Connecticut working.

The book is called **You Are Special** by Max Lucado and, I seized the moment in the lounge area of our apartment building to read it aloud to Olivia in hopes everyone including Lindsay, Ani, and Spencer would listen.

The message in the book shouts out to all who hears it that **we are all special because we were made in the image of God.**

It does not matter how the world sees us.

He made us the way we are.

HE LOVES US JUST THE WAY WE ARE.

We are special because of who we are,

Children of the Most High.

We are not special because of

how we look,

how we act, or

what we can do.

Wow!

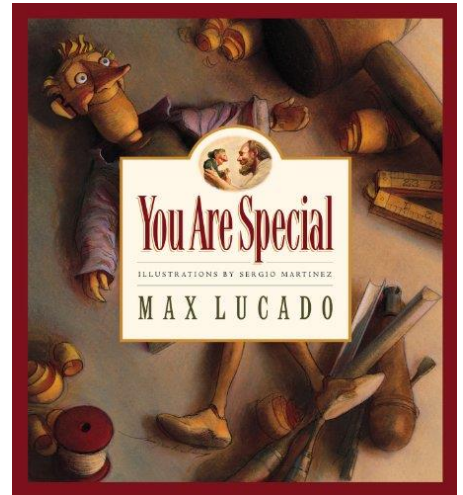
Is there any message more important than that?!

I encourage everyone to take the time to listen to this book and read it to whoever will listen.

February 5th I will be in church, and I will be teaching Sunday School and Dive Deep. My hope is that every child will be present. I will be reading this book, and we will be making a craft to remind us of this important message.

Until then God bless you all and remember...

you are special just the way you are.



ACTS OF LOVE

On the last Sunday of every month, children and youth alike come together and put their faith into action. In January, under the guidance of Laura Cannavaro and Deb Houldin, the children made Valentine cards for all our 'shut-in's'. This card ministry will surely help our church family bound to home feel included and connected!



Happy Valentines
Day.mov

Here is their special video greeting to Salem!

FEBRUARY – BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Back In September, we were reminded of the wonderful diversity within the Body of Christ. The LORD in his infinite wisdom, designed the Church with immeasurable breadth of people, languages, ethnicities and cultures. It is this very diversity that makes the Body of Christ so rich and beautiful. Thus began our efforts to integrate in our worship services the wisdom, contributions, and creativity of others different than ourselves to help us grow in our faith, and more deeply appreciate God’s colorful kingdom.

In September we focused on Hispanic heritage, including songs composed by Latino artists. Our children and youth learned to make tortillas and our neighbor Jorge Criolla provided an amazing latino lunch after worship.

If you recall, October we celebrated the contributions of those who have Down Syndrome. Penny Becker and Grace Lombardo both shared words of witness, and Mike Mason informed us about the breadth of opportunities and services Special Olympics offers.

Then November our attention turned to Indigenous Peoples and probably most noteworthy is we used the First Nations Version of the New Testament for our Scripture reading. This past month, we sought to acknowledge and honor Martin Luther King, Jr. through prayer and song.

This month we turn to Black History Month. February offers a special opportunity to listen and learn, and celebrate and honor the contributions of our African-American brothers and sisters — both those who have gone before us and those today. It was Carter G. Woodson who first created Negro History Week in February of 1926. He wanted to ensure school children be exposed to and familiar with black history. He chose the month of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Fredrick Douglass – both key figures in the emancipation of enslaved black people. This year’s theme is *Resistance – Journey to Equality*.



Our worship services may be enriched by songs, poems, quotations, writings and more composed by black artists, writers, activists and preachers.

Here are just a few books and movies suggestions:

Movies:

Just Mercy
Hidden Figures
12 Years a Slave
13th
I Am Not Your Negro
The Hate U Give

Books:

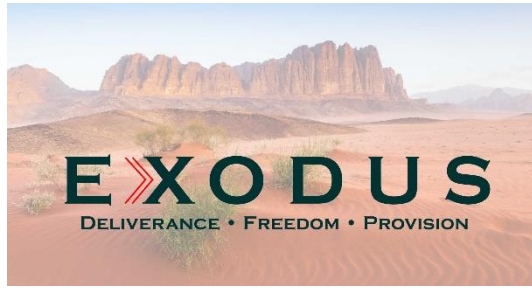
Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption
The Color of Compromise
Dear White Peacemakers (by Osheeta Moore, a Covenanter)
White Picket Fences (by Amy Julia Becker)
The Strength of Love
The Cross and the Lynching Tree
All-American Boy



PROPERTY UPDATE

It won't be long until the warmer months arrive and we will have to start running our fans or Air Conditioning. Many have asked about the current status of installing Air Conditioning in the Sanctuary. Watch for upcoming details for a congregational meeting to discuss our options.

UPCOMING EVENTS



*****NEW*** Monday Evening Bible Discussion on the Book of Exodus, 7:00 pm via Zoom.** Pastor Linda leading. Email Pastor Linda for more information. The study will go for eight weeks.

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88102791118?pwd=eXhjZytsNi9TcWh1O DBjdTk2WGDsdz09>

Thank You!



Thank you to Susan Anthony-Klein for the generous gift of a new 10' pre-lit artificial Christmas tree from Balsam Hill, which replaces the loved but very tired and worn-out tree that has adorned our sanctuary each Christmas season, and was donated by Scott and Patty Parker many, many years ago.

Over the last several years, branches have had to be creatively propped up as hinges gave way, 1000 pre-lit lights that blew out strand by strand each year were cut off the branches so lights could be strung in their place, and several hundred needles dropped each year while putting up and taking down the tree.

Based on the tree's continued deterioration, and with the Parker's blessing, the conversation among those decorating this past holiday was that it was perhaps time to replace the tree. But the reality was, this was not a cost the Church could absorb, and how do we go about paying for a new tree? Upon hearing the conversation while decorating this past holiday, Susan quietly and graciously approached someone and offered to purchase a new tree for the Church.

Thank you, Susan, for this wonderful gift that will have its debut next December and will be enjoyed for years to come!

To our fellow church members,

How caring to help us obtain a generator. As most of you know there have been many times in the past years that we were without electricity including a nine-day stint. So this lovely generator will make a big difference. We will especially thank you all when the hum of the machine comes on in the middle of a storm.

Love, Char and Joan

Dear Salem Covenant Church,

On behalf of the students, residents and staff at Ädelbrook, thank you for your generous donations in the months of August and November, totaling \$627.86.

At Ädelbrook, we specialize in extraordinary kids. Because of donors like you, our organization has been able to promise our students and residents a future filled with achievement, happiness, and hope. From our individualized education services to residential and therapeutic supports, we aim to provide a quality continuum of care and meet the ever-changing needs of the amazing people we serve.

Your gift will be used to enrich the lives of our individuals and to enhance the programs we provide. Once again, thank you for your kindness and we look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,
Alysa Goduti
President and CEO

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

February – Black History Month

February 1 – Spiritual Formation Team Meeting, 3:00 pm

February 3 – Loaves and Fishes, 3:30 pm

February 4 – Memorial Service for Nancy Pickett, 1:00 pm

February 5 - Worship & Communion

- **Annual Business Meeting** following Worship

February 8 - Council meeting, 6:00 pm

February 11/25 – Youth (Grades 6-12) Saturday Soul Talk & Supper

February 15 – Open House & Blessing for The Center for Hope and Healing (see flier)

February 20 – **Presidents Day**, No Hangout Haven

February 22 – Ash Wednesday

- Ash Wednesday Stations – available all day to walk through
- Ash Wednesday Light Supper, 6:00 pm – tentative
- Ash Wednesday Service, 7:00 pm

February 26 – **First Sunday of Lent**

Also....

March 4 – Women’s Integrative Health Seminar, 10- Noon



Jane Light	10	Frannie Caco	27
Matt Hoeniger	15	John Swanson	27
Kristen White	18	Lillian Bogue	28
Zachary Gupstill	21	Dolly Whitney	28
Lily Chase	24		

IN REMEMBRANCE...


February 3, 2022 - Betty Johnson (long time member/ Joel and Jeff Johnson's mother)

February 4, 2021 - Joyce Bresson (Erin Light's mother)

February 7, 2020 - Donnie Camp (Holly Camp's husband)

February 23, 2013 - Harold Peterson (former member / Jim Marggraff and Marcia (Marggraff) Mitchell's step-father / Ginny Napolitano's and Elaine Babiyan's Uncle)

February 24, 2021 - Bob Golembeski (Muriel Golembeski's husband and David's father)



REGIONAL HOSPICE
Celebrating 40 Years of Grace & Gratitude
Please join us in celebrating The Center for Hope & Healing


OPEN HOUSE & BLESSING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023
11:00AM Continental Breakfast | 12:00PM Brief Remarks & Blessing

THE CENTER FOR HOPE & HEALING
2 Green Hill Road | Washington, CT 06793

Regional Hospice's Center for Hope & Healing will offer a variety of services including caregiver and grief counseling support groups. The sessions are an extension of the organization's Healing Hearts Program which specializes in bereavement services for families coping with the death of a loved one.

Spiritual renewal sessions will also be offered through prayer, meditation and sound healing. All sessions will be led by Regional Hospice's expert team of licensed social workers, chaplains and therapists, as well as their dedicated team of hospice and bereavement trained volunteers.



RSVP by February 6, 2023
Rachel Petersen | 203-702-9130 | rpetersen@regionalhospicect.org