



The Scroll



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FINDING YOUR WHY

Message from Pastor Linda

Church attendance is continuing to decline.
 Giving is shrinking.
 Costs are rising.
 More young people than ever are claiming “None” as to what faith they affiliate with.
 The old model of church – programs and place – is no longer effective.
 For many, what once was a burning drive to serve God has burned out.

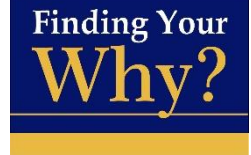
Here’s the hard truth: our own humble church is experiencing the impact of all of the above. Church, as our parents and grandparents knew it, is slowly fading. It’s clear we are in midst of a massive paradigm shift for the Church universal.

What does this mean? How do we respond? Is the Church no longer relevant in today’s world? These are the types of questions that churches and pastors like myself are wrestling with today. In order to not only survive but thrive, we cannot afford to bury our heads in the sand or close our eyes to our rapidly changing world. We cannot cling to what we have always done.

For souls’ sake, we need divine imagination and inspiration, honest reflection, and courage to not only ask the hard questions, but to listen and respond to the hard answers. The world needs to hear the good news and to see it lived out practically in our lives, for one truth remains essential for all churches: ‘Faith expressed through acts of love’ is what will gain the world’s attention and trust.

I humbly call upon you, Salem, to gather as the body of Christ, to listen and learn from each other, and for the Spirit’s guidance, teaching and empowerment for us. To this end, Brothers and Sisters, **I urge you to set aside one day – just 5½ hours - February 17, 9am – 3pm**, to come and

participate in our all-church workshop, **Finding Your Why.**



With a seasoned Presenter guiding us, we will spend the day hearing each other’s stories, listening intently to each other to how and where God is active among us, and communally discerning our true calling – our ‘why’ – our primary purpose God has called this particular people to this particular time in this particular place. At the end of this day, our prayer is to have a clearer picture of our specific mission and ways we can organize around it, using our energy and resources purposefully to fulfill it.

Keeping it real, this is not a one-day elixir or ‘fix’ to make everything ‘better’, but rather a critical catalyst to live into God’s call for us more effectively. I believe God is faithful and will honor our time together in ways that we cannot imagine. I daresay, I believe *you* will be blessed personally for making this day with Salem a priority.

Finally, at this year’s Annual Midwinter Conference for the Covenant, our President, Rev. Tammy Swanson-Draheim had these inspiring words to share, *“God is not bound by the constraints of our finite minds, or our sometimes dwarfed spiritual imaginations, or the limitations of the content of our prayer. God delights to surprise us with immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine!* May it be so, Lord, may it be so!

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024

Edited by Julie Fredlund

The Annual Meeting was held immediately following Worship. The following items of interest were discussed and Motions passed:

YOUTH LEADER

Pastor shared that as much as she enjoys working with our youth, she feels they would resonate with someone younger and so the Spiritual Formation Committee will enter into a Youth Leader search in May for someone who could begin the 2024-25 year. This would need to be someone local as housing accommodations are not an option.

CFO REPORT FOR FY 2023

Donna Alex reviewed the Finance Report as of December 31, 2023. The year ended with a deficit just under \$8K and per Council approval, we will use a partial amount of the Employee Retention Credit to offset the deficit and begin 2024 with a fresh start.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Elliott and Pastor Linda recognized three (3) departing Council members whose terms are up as of January 2024. Robin McHan (Fellowship), Susan Swanson (Diaconate), and Julie Fredlund (Secretary) each received a card and thoughtful gift card from the Church for their years serving on the Council.

2024 BUDGET PRESENTATION AND VOTE

Church Chair Elliott Fisher presented the 2024 Budget and explained the Council is charged to do the best it can to be good stewards of the Church's financial gifts from its people. The harsh reality is, he shared, it is not cheap to keep Church doors open and doing God's work with operating costs increasing each year. Elliott shared that Pastor Linda generously offered to freeze her salary for the year in an effort to offset the pay increases for our other staff members.

While salaries will increase by 3% and buildings maintenance by nearly 5%, the Total Budget will increase just over 1% over last year. The 2024 Budget projects a **deficit of \$-54,357**. Interestingly, though, if giving levels remain the same as 2023 levels, the projected deficit could decrease to \$-19K. After a time for questions and feedback from the Congregation, the Council's Motion to approve the 2024 Budget was presented and passed unanimously.

After the Budget was passed, discussion continued relative to how we might as a Church family keep apprised of how we are doing financially. After discussion, monthly updates will be made available in The Scroll, Sunday Bulletin and Monday's Weekly E-News. Further, everyone was encouraged to take on the role of Trustee and be sure things are shut off, shut down, locked, etc. before leaving the building in an effort to cut down on electrical and heating costs.

KITCHEN UPGRADE

Michel Williams presented a verbal update and was happy to report that after a long gap of no activity due to permitting processes, some headway is being made. It is hoped that the process will begin to go fairly smoothly once the Sanitation Department and Zoning Commission sign off during the building review process. The project still needs our prayers as Michel has never seen a project like this take quite so long.

AIR CONDITIONING UPDATE

Pastor Linda reported that Council continues to research A/C options for the Sanctuary and has obtained a 2nd proposal which is almost \$30K less than the first. Because a Capital Campaign would be necessary, those at the Meeting discussed whether or not to postpone a Campaign given the Church's anticipated deficit for 2024.

After conversation, it was agreed that the Council will continue working on the final proposal, but anyone wishing to contribute to the cause is welcome to at any time. This may help create momentum if it is communicated from time to time, where the goal stands. It's important, however, people are aware any contributions to this project are not counted toward pledges. Elliot reminded people that while there is no time frame to this project the reality is, costs may rise over time. As an aside, someone at the meeting reminded everyone that our parking lot pavement project was \$75K and we raised the money in six (6) months.

OTHER MATTERS

The Associate Membership Application of Milly Silencio was approved unanimously.

Cathy Greiner's nomination to serve on the Council as Fellowship Committee Chair was passed unanimously.

Council Secretary and Diaconate Positions remain vacant. The Council requested approval from those present at the Meeting to be able to appoint Members in the positions, and then subsequently present a formal vote at a Congregational Meeting once they have people in those positions. A Motion was presented and passed unanimously.

Three smaller Restricted Accounts (CHIC, Camperships, and Playground) which have been inactive for some time were approved to be moved to the Spiritual Formation Account (Youth and Children).


The meeting ended at 1:00 p.m.

MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT



Per request of the congregation at January's Annual Business Meeting, a monthly budget report will be included in the Scroll, and once a month in our weekly e-news. It does take some time to gather the figures to accurately reflect in real-time where the church is financially. You may expect the report beginning in our March issue. Thank you for your patience!

UPCOMING EVENTS




CRESCENDO
Lives of Lasting Purpose

CRESCENDO, Spring session
For Adults, 55-100

Joyful

6 Sessions
Thursdays, Feb 1 - Mar 14
10:30 -11:30 am

Come join in a lively conversation/encouragement with friends and neighbors, exploring the multi-dimensions of our lives, or what has been creatively dubbed for this second session as JOYFUL: Journey, Opportunity, Young at Heart, Faith, Understanding and Legacy.

 Light refreshments provided. No technology required!
For more information contact Carol, 203-417-2126

LEARN • SHARE • GROW

Food for the Body, Food for the Spirit



Lenten Lunches Wednesdays @ Noon

Food for the Body:

A midday meal of hearty, homemade soup, bread, light dessert and beverages.

Food for the Spirit:

Short Lenten devotionals presented by our local clergy to guide us and inspire us in this holy season in Lent.

February 14 • February 21 • February 28 • March 6 • March 13 • March 20

Come as our guest to one, some, or all the lunches.



Ash Wednesday Service February 14, 7:00 pm

"God never tires of forgiving us;
we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy." ~ Pope Francis

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



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16
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.

Finding Your Why? WORKSHOP



February 17 | 9:00am - 3:00pm

Join the church family for this inspiring day of discovery and discernment. Together we will listen and learn from each other's stories. We will discover and discern why God has placed this people, at this place, in this time. We will gain a greater clarity to our collective calling, to **why** we do what we do. With this knowledge, we will be better able to align **what** we do with **why** we do it.

Light Refreshments and lunch will be provided.

'Finding Your Why' church-wide Workshop, Saturday, February 17, 9am-3pm

The entire church family is invited to come and participate in an exciting all-day workshop, *Finding Your Why*, led by Rev. Mary Hendrickson. The workshop is based on the book, *Finding Your Why* by Simon Sinek, which offers practical and effective guidance in helping organizations discover and discern their purpose. Working together, our church will explore why are we doing what we do? As we listen to each other's stories in the context of life together here at Salem, we will begin to shape with greater clarity how and what we want to do in the coming months.



Look!



For children & youth!

Thank You!

Thank you, Salem family, for the lovely send-off acknowledgement as my Fellowship Chair position on the Council has ended. The gift certificate to Aspetuck Gardens was quite a surprise and will be used as soon as Spring thaw happens.

I truly appreciate all who have supported the Fellowship committee. As Julie put it, "We aren't going anywhere!"

Robin McHan

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

February 1 – Crescendo (Spring Session) begins! 10:30 am

February 2 – Loaves and Fishes, 3:30 pm

February 4 – Worship & Communion

- Family and Fellowship, following Worship

February 14 – Lenten Lunches begins, Noon- 1:00 pm

- Ash Wednesday Service, 7:00 pm

February 16 – Salem Coffee House, 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

February 17 – Find Your Why Workshop, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. Refreshments and lunch provided.

February 18 – Salem Movie for Youth, Noon-3:00

February 19 – President's Day - Church office Closed

- NO Hangout Haven

February 21 - Council meeting, 7:00 pm

February 28 – Evening Prayer, 7:00 pm

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Peter Becker	1
Jane Light	10
Matt Hoeniger	15
Kristen White	18
Zachary Guptill	21
Marie Pettibone	23
Nya Butts	23
Lily Marie Chase	24
Frannie Caco	27

FEBRUARY REMEMBRANCES

February 3, 2022 – Betty Johnson (Joel and Jeff Johnson's mother)

February 4, 2021 – Jim Bixby (former Pastor Doug Bixby's father)

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

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

February 12, 2023 – Michael Douskey (Iona and Adam's son, Jill Douskey's husband, Mary Ann Lundberg's nephew)

February 23, 2013 – Harold Peterson (Ginny Napolitano and Elaine Babiyani's uncle)

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

Finding Your Why?



Guiding Scripture

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).

Presented by Missional Vitality

www.covchurch.org/vitality

For more information, contact Mary Hendrickson, interim director of Missional Vitality, at:

mary.hendrickson@covchurch.org,
or 253-906-2512



Introduction to “Finding Your Why”

Based on Simon Sinek’s book *Find Your Why: A Practical Guide for Discovering Purpose for You and Your Team*, this workshop focuses on discovering the ultimate reason a specific congregation exists. Some congregations exist primarily to provide care, others to feed the poor. Some focus on international mission, others on neighborhood outreach. Whatever God’s reason for the existence of a particular church in a particular location in a particular time, it is imperative to discover that purpose and then to organize everything else around it. Frederick Buechner wrote: “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” The same is true with the “why” of a congregation. This experience is deeply satisfying as congregations realize how actively the Spirit of God is moving among them, and as they work to discern their calling.

Format

“Finding Your Why” is a 5 ½ hour workshop with a one-hour meal break. It is designed as an in-person experience but can be adapted to offer virtually. The workshop includes extensive small group work, large group brainstorming, video, facilitator instruction, visuals, and storytelling to empower multiple learning styles.