

The Great Parade
October 28, 2012

Pastor Diane:

We are here today to celebrate God's action in creating and re-creating human history.

We know that God acts by sending the Holy Spirit to men and women to carry out God's will on earth.

These men and women respond faithfully to God's call and reveal God's grace in word and deed.

We recognize that God's grace and greatness are carried out by each one of us in different ways.

Today we celebrate and recognize just a few of the people who have let God work through them over time.

When a name is read the person with that placard is asked to stand.

A statement about that person will be read.

Please remain standing, while other names are read and when the refrain starts (insert in bulletin), come forward and form a line facing the congregation and then moving to the side aisles.

We will begin with some of the saints who received God's spirit in the time before the birth of Jesus.

Laura Flores:

NOAH God told Noah to build an ark because God was going to destroy the earth. God chose Noah because he was a righteous man. God made a covenant promise never to flood the earth again.

ABRAHAM God told Abram He would make him the father of a great nation. Later his name was changed to Abraham when he made a covenant with God, acknowledging that he believed in the Lord as his only God.

SARAH Sarai was the wife of Abram. She was not able to have children. God promised that she would bear a son. She gave birth to Isaac, in her old age. Her name was changed to Sarah.

JACOB Isaac's son Jacob was the father of 12 sons and one daughter. His name was changed to Israel. His sons formed family groups which became known as the 12 tribes of Israel.

MOSES Moses led the Israelites out of captivity to the Promised Land. Moses received the Ten Commandments from God which formed the basis of the Mosaic Covenant.

RUTH Ruth found friendship and received a blessing from God because she showed compassion and was kind to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Ruth married Boaz and is the great, great, great, great grandmother of Jesus.

HANNAH Hannah was distressed because she couldn't have a child. She prayed hard. God heard her prayers and she bore a son, Samuel who became a great leader.

DAVID David became Israel's most revered king. He established Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. We remember him as the ancestor of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

MICAH Micah was a prophet who preached against the wrongs of the Israelites and told them to "do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with their God.

ISAIAH Isaiah was a prophet who preached to people about God's holiness and God's love for all. He foretold God's plan to send Jesus Christ as a Savior.

JEREMIAH Jeremiah warned that Israel would be destroyed if they did not honor their covenant with God.

(Choir sings verse 1. Congregation and Choir sing refrain as those holding posters move to the front.)

Pastor Diane:

The New Testament contains the stories of many men and women who revealed God's will. Here are some examples:

Ron Jones:

MARY When Mary learned she would be the mother of the Son of God, she was grateful and praised God.

JESUS Jesus was sent into the world to show God's love. He was the Messiah, God's special Son, who lived and died so that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

PETER Peter was one of Jesus' most faithful disciples, but he asked a lot of questions. After he came to realize that Jesus was the Messiah he became the leader of the apostles and the early church.

ANDREW Andrew was a disciple who brought many people to Jesus.

JAMES James, who some say was the brother of Jesus, was the first disciple to die as a martyr.

WOMAN AT THE WELL She met Jesus at a well and was surprised when he treated her with kindness and respect. She believed in Jesus and told her people about him.

JOHN John helped spread Christianity by telling the world that Christ had come to show God's love for all people.

MATTHEW Matthew was a tax collector who answered Jesus' call to "Follow"

THOMAS Thomas doubted the resurrection of Jesus until he had seen and touched Jesus, the risen Christ.

MARY MAGDALENE Mary was a friend of Jesus who was with him through his ministry, his crucifixion and resurrection. She was the first person at the tomb on Easter morning.

MARK Mark wrote down what the Apostle Peter told him about Jesus' life and teachings in the Gospel of Mark.

PAUL Saul opposed the followers of Jesus. After the risen Jesus appeared to Saul he became an ardent follower. Later he became a disciple and changed his name to Paul. He helped start the early church and wrote many letters which are in our bible.

(Choir sings verse 2. As congregation sings refrain those holding posters move forward. First group moves to the side aisles.)

Pastor Diane:

God did not stop sending His spirit to women and men after the time of the New Testament. We will now hear about a few of the thousands of people who have served as faithful ministers who build up the Body of Christ.

Sarah Zarbock:

WYCLIFFE John Wycliffe was an English theologian who challenged the religious and political practices of his time and, with a group of friends, translated the Bible into English so more people could read it.

LUTHER Martin Luther began to reform the church by demanding that members follow God's law as found in the Bible.

CALVIN John Calvin was a French theologian. He preached in Geneva where thousands came to hear him. He was one of the most important Protestant reformers of the 16th century.

BACH Johann Sebastian Bach was one of a long line of German composers. As musical director in Leipzig, he wrote music for the churches. He influenced other musicians for centuries to come.

MOTHER TERESA Mother Teresa of Calcutta established a religious order called the Missionaries of Charity who are committed to serving the poorest of the poor. She saw Christ in the faces of starving children and dying men and women.

SOJOURNER TRUTH Sojourner Truth was born a slave in 1797. Five of her children were sold as slaves. She worked and spoke out for women's rights and for the abolition of slavery.

BARTON Clara Barton was an American woman who spent her life caring for others, including soldiers wounded from the Civil War. She founded the American Red Cross to aid wounded soldiers. This organization continues to help people in distress to this day.

BONHOEFFER Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian, fled to America in 1939 to avoid serving in the Nazi army. He returned to Germany after a month to be true to his Christian beliefs. He took a stand against Hitler that cost him his life.

POPE JOHN XXIII Pope John 23rd invited Protestants and Orthodox Catholics to the Vatican to discuss the possibility of all the people of the Christian church to be one church.

KING Martin Luther King, Jr. was a minister who worked for equal rights for black people through non violent means. He was assassinated. His message of hope and love is still heard today.

JONATHAN LEE Jonathan Lee was the first pastor of this church. He worked tirelessly to bring God's word to the people of Salisbury.

ALDEN TYROL Alden Tyrol was the director of Silver Lake Conference Center – the outdoor ministry of the CT UCC for 30 years. He touched countless lives with his kindness and deep faith. He was a member of this church for many years.

CHARLOTTE REID Charlotte Reid was the first woman to serve as first selectman of Salisbury. She dedicated her life to making our town a better place. She was a member of this church for many years.

NANCY SILLS Nancy Sills was an active member of our church's choir for many years. She also served on the Fellowship committee, making sure that an extravagant welcome was extended to all who visited our church.

NANCY BRIDGE Nancy Bridge served this church in several capacities over the years. She was best known as a careful steward of our beautiful church buildings.

HEATHER SCHAUFFLE Heather Schauffle's spirit, talent and energy enhanced our church community in many ways. She was an active member in committees and shared her musical gifts in both the Bell Choir and the Adult Choir.

Pastor Diane:

CONGREGATION You, the congregation of the Salisbury Congregational Church are the saints of today. You hold the promise of God's covenant with the people of the Old Testament, the hope of the followers of Jesus in the New Testament and the Spirit of our Still Speaking God today.

We rejoice in the presence of God's Spirit in our time. We are thankful for the inspiration and rich heritage of those who have gone before. We look forward with hope and faith to the new leaders that God will call.

(Choir sings verse 3. As congregation sings refrain everyone joins in the Great Parade.)

Benediction

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord and may the blessings of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon you this day and forevermore. Amen.