

SOUNDS OF SALEM

A MONTHLY PRINT AND DIGITAL NEWSLETTER OF SALEM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VENEDOCIA, OHIO

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PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

A member of another Christian denomination mockingly made to me the substance of this general remark in about Protestants... *"Since they walk by faith, believe in the Bible as the Word of God, and they believe Jesus is their personal Lord and Savior, why do they not attend church every Sunday. They should be itching to go to church to hear more about God and to do what God commands them to do."*

Around Venedocia, every area small town once had their own vital Presbyterian church. Sadly enough, there are 24 or more PCUSA churches in our Maumee Valley Presbytery ready to close doors for lack of attendance or finances. Sometimes, it is said of children that once their grandparents have passed, church is not so important anymore. Other times, excuses are made that the culture is now secular with Bible reading and prayer taken out of schools, that people need to sleep in on Sundays, that women now work and don't have the same free time, that we don't have the same old population numbers, or that sports are scheduled on Sunday morning. But with church, Jesus is not hymns, Prayers of Confessions and sermons, Jesus is an alive God who wants you to spend time in relationship with Him. Church offers us the Word of God and insights how to live our lives to send us out to do His mission.

Sadly, the church is not growing in North America, Europe or Australia, but it is blossoming in areas of the world where it is most persecuted.

L. H. Appel was a popular revival preacher years ago. He often used one favorite sermon wherever he went. He would announce that toward the end of the revival, he would be preaching on *"Three people in this church I would like to see go to hell."* He would promote the sermon and joke about the title all week long. A crowd would usually show up just out of curiosity.

When the night came for the sermon, he would say something like this. *"There are three people in this church I would like to see go to hell! In fact, there are a lot more than that."*

I would like to see the elders go to hell. And the deacons. And the Sunday School teachers. And many of the parents, too. I would like to see them all go to hell. I would like to see them stay there for about five minutes and then come back.

I know one thing for sure. When they came back, they will never be the same again. They will have a new zeal for sharing the gospel. They will have a new determination to live for Christ. If folks in this church just visited hell or really believed in it, they would never be same again!"

Somehow Protestants think that they are going to heaven without being fully committed to God. They take God for granted. We need a wakeup this Lent season.

Can you imagine the real transformation of the churches if the reality of hell would create a desire to spare our loved ones their fate? What might happen to us and our churches if we had that same kind of a zeal to pray for the lost and make sure our friends and family knew how to avoid eternal damnation? I believe that we would be humbled after visiting hell. In fact, I believe we would all be on board with our time, talent and treasures fully committed to God. God will not take anything less than a full commitment to Him.

I Can Only Imagine by MercyMe



Billy Graham passed into eternity in February culminating his 99-year life with a remarkable witness of living for God. At his funeral, the inspirational song, *"I can Only Imagine,"* was played. Here are the words:

I can only imagine what it will be like
When I walk, by your side
I can only imagine what my eyes will see
When you face is before me
I can only imagine
I can only imagine
Surrounded by You glory
What will my heart feel
Will I dance for you Jesus

Or in awe of You be still
 Will I stand in your presence
 Or to my knees will I fall
 Will I sing hallelujah
 Will I be able to speak at all
 I can only imagine
 I can only imagine
 I can only imagine when that day comes
 When I find myself standing in the Son
 I can only imagine when all I would do is forever
 Forever worship You
 I can only imagine
 I can only imagine
 Surrounded by Your glory
 What will my heart feel
 Will I dance for You, Jesus
 Or in awe of you be still
 Will I stand in your presence
 Or to my knees will I fall
 Will I sing hallelujah
 Will I be able to speak at all
 I can only imagine
 I can only imagine hey ya ah
 Surrounded by Your glory
 What will my heart feel
 Will I dance for You, Jesus
 Or in awe of you be still
 Will I stand in Your presence
 Or to my knees will I fall
 Will I sing hallelujah
 Will I be able to speak at all
 I can only imagine
 I can only imagine hey ya ah
 I can only imagine yeah yeah
 I can only imagine
 I can only imagine ey ey ey
 I can only imagine
 I can only imagine when all I will do
 Is forever, forever worship You
 I can only imagine

Songwriter: BART MILLARD

Help Me to Understand Why Jesus Died

This Easter, have you considered why Jesus died for us? Have you ever messed up in a big way and had someone else cover for you or take the punishment?



Think of a small child who breaks a vase in a store. Would their loving parent demand that they stay there until they worked off what was owed or would they willingly pay the price for the damage done?

This is what Jesus' death does for us. We deserved the punishment, but He took it for us. We are the child and He is the loving parent. We broke the vase, and He paid the price for it. Jesus' death on the cross is known as the atonement. To **atone** for something is to make amends or to reconcile. **Atonement** is the way God repaired the broken relationship between humanity and Himself.

But why did it have to be this way? To understand why Jesus had to die, we have to understand who God is and who we are in relationship to Him.

What Does the Bible Say About Atonement?

For a time after creation, the world was perfect. The first humans, Adam and Eve, lived in a place called the Garden of Eden. Everything was perfect, for a while. In [Genesis 3](#), Satan tricks Adam and Eve into doing the one thing God told them not to do.

In that moment, sin entered the world and everything changed. Sin is the wickedness in each of us that causes us to act selfishly, to rebel against God, and to hurt one another. Sin forced Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. And everyone after Adam and Eve was born into their sin, separated from God.

The Bible tells us that payment for sin is death ([Romans 6:23](#)). In the Old Testament, God told His people to set aside the day of atonement to make sacrifices for their sins. They were to bring an innocent, blemish-free animal as a temporary atonement for their sins ([Leviticus 4:3](#), [Leviticus 16:29-30](#)).

No amount of sheep or sheer effort could remove the sin from the world. God gave a temporary means of forgiveness through the death of animals ([Leviticus 17:11](#)). But no amount of sheep or sheer effort could remove the sin from the world, and God knew it. So when the time was right, He sent His son, Jesus, to be the perfect, spotless, and permanent substitute for us. Just as Adam's disobedience brought sin and death to all people, Jesus' perfect obedience brought forgiveness for all people ([Romans 5:12-19](#)).

Understanding that death is the punishment for sin explains why death was a necessary part of the atonement, but it can sound like just a lot of bloodshed unless we also understand God's character.



What Atonement Teaches Us About God's Character

God is not like us. He is perfect and holy, completely loving and completely just. God doesn't make careless decisions or get surprised, because it's

not in His nature. He tells us in [Isaiah 55:8-9](#), "*My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*"

Relationship with us is what God has wanted all along. But, we are not perfect or holy. And therein, lies the problem.

Just like I can't hug my mud-covered child and stay clean, a perfect God cannot be in relationship with imperfect people. It would violate His holiness and His innate sense of justice.

We are sinners who deserve separation from God. But because God loves us, He made a way to bring us into His presence for eternity. God's great justness that required us to be made right with Him and God's great love for us, caused Jesus to take the punishment for our sins ([1 John 4:10](#), [Deuteronomy 32:4](#)).

Jesus' death was the only possible way to atone for the sins of the world, and Jesus is the only way to a relationship with God the Father.

What Jesus' Death Says About Us

A lot of us may have trouble understanding why Jesus had to die for our sins, not because we don't understand God's holiness, but we misunderstand our own level of depravity. In a world where so much sin is accepted and celebrated, it's easy to believe that we aren't "*that bad*."

Without the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, we would be without hope and without forgiveness. [Isaiah 64:6](#) says even our righteous acts are like filthy rags. Even on our best days and with our best intentions, without the blood of Jesus, we would deserve death as the punishment for sin. "*He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed*" ([Isaiah 55:6](#)).

We did nothing to earn our forgiveness and everything to deserve punishment. But in God's great love for us, He sent His Son and took our punishment upon Himself.

Jesus died, not because we were worthy of it, but because of God's love and mercy. Jesus gave His life for us so that we can live in freedom and be reconciled to God. He redeems us and gives us forgiveness, freedom, and redemption when we put our trust in Him.

Adapted from "Why Did Jesus Have to Die" Modesty Brandley

Saint David's Day

St. David is the patron saint of Wales. Not much is known of his life, but many stories and legends are told of his labors on behalf of God. He lived sometime



between 400 and 600 A.D., and through his journeys and teaching, strengthened the Church in Wales and in Ireland. St. David established churches and monasteries throughout Wales, so that the people would have places to gather to worship and learn more of God and God's great love.

The date of his birth is unknown, but legend and myth has it he died at the age of 82 on the first of March. As his tearful monks prepared for his death St. David uttered these words: "*Brothers be ye constant. The yoke which with single mind ye have taken, bear ye to the end; and whatsoever ye have seen with me and*"

heard, keep and fulfil.” Translated: “Cross examine yourselves for your commitment to Christ.”

All during that morning, the sky was filled with singing angels. Then, as light faded from the evening sky, the ministering angels bore the soul of the great saint to heaven. Throughout the world, people of Welsh descent gather around the first of March to remember St. David and celebrate their Welsh heritage. We are proud to continue that proud tradition.

Short Prayers



Whether you have had a personal relationship with God for years or you are only beginning to discover who Jesus is, we all need guidance when it comes to prayers. It's often hard to

find the words to pray, that's why we put together this collection each month of short prayers on various topics including worry, anxiety, doubt, forgiveness, fear, and other areas of life where we need to ask for God's help. Please use these prayers and allow the Holy Spirit to guide you as you add some of your own words and personalize your petitions to God.

Short Prayer for Peace

Father God, my heart is filled with chaos and confusion. I feel as if I am drowning in my circumstances and my heart is filled with fear and confusion. I really need the strength and peace that only You can give. Right now, I choose to rest in You. In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen. ~ *Mary Southerland.*

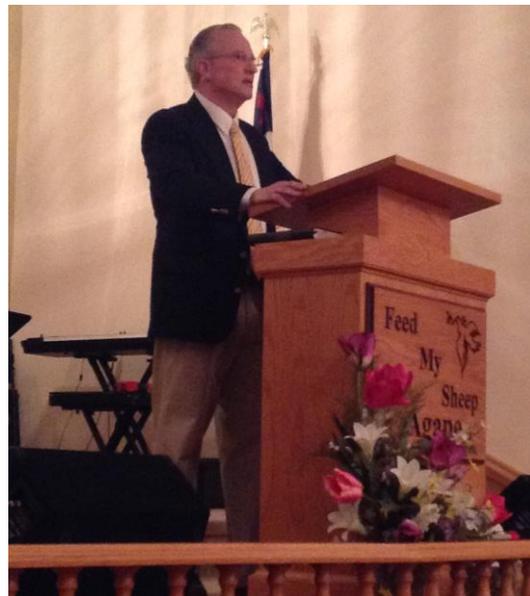
Short Prayer for the Broken-Hearted

Lord, my heart is broken but You are near. My spirit is crushed, but You are my rescuer. Your Word is my hope. It revives me and comforts me in especially now. My soul faints, but you are the breath of life within me. You are my help, the One who sustains me. I am weak, but You are strong. You bless those who mourn, and I trust You to bless me and my family with all that we need. You will rescue me from this dark cloud of despair because You delight in me. In Jesus' Name, Amen. ~ *Jennifer White*

Area Events

Pastor Jim Fletcher will preach for the **Lent Pulpit Exchange** at the March 4th evening service at Salem; light refreshments will be served. The **Lions Club Pancake and Sausage Day** is March 17, 6am to 2pm.

The Van Wert County **Good Friday Service** is on March 30 at noon at the First United Methodist Church; the speaker is Pastor Gary Ginter. The **Venedocia Easter Egg Hunt** is on Saturday, March 31st at 1pm in Memorial Park. The Lima Area **Converge** youth event is April 6 & 7th; see Pastor Tom for tickets. The **Epidemic of Hope Weekend** on April 13-15 has noted baseball player, Darrel Strawberry, as the speaker. **Children of Trauma** continues with part 2 on May 5 9am to 3:30pm at Vantage with the topic of “*Is my family member an addict,*” it addresses the large opioid problem in Van Wert County. To pre-register, see Pastor Tom. The **National Day of Prayer** is celebrated on May 3rd at noon at the Van Wert County Courthouse.



Pastor Tom preaching at Agape Fellowship pulpit exchange



Jan and Carrie Jones singing *Amazing Grace My Chains are Gone*

Church Financial Update February 25th

Needed to Date: \$15,416.00
Received to Date: \$10,508.55



Van Wert Ministerial Association



Military funeral salute of Brendan Poling on church porch



Junior Bell Choir practice



Ash Wednesday informal service



Shonda (Pugh) Marley



Elijah Martz lighting candles before service

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

Remember our elderly members, soldiers, and college students with cards and visits.

Natalie Morgan Wilkins

Vancrest Healthcare
10357 VW—Decatur
Van Wert, OH 45891

Marjorie Rhoades

Hearth & Home
1118 Westwood Dr.
Van Wert, OH 45891

Bob Louth

15113 Main St
Venedocia, OH 45894

Marian Morris

Hearth & Home
1118 Westwood Dr.
Van Wert, OH 45891

Warren Summersett

Vancrest Healthcare
10357 VW—Decatur
Van Wert, OH 45891

David Hugh Evans

PO Box 696
Venedocia, Ohio 45894

Serving our Country

Cory McCollow

(U.S. Coast Guard)
311 Oak Street #109
Oakland, CA 94607

Phoebe Eutsler (Army)

Pete McCollow

(U.S. Marine Corps)
116 HAC Street
Jacksonville, NC 28540

Micah Linger

Grandson of Doris Evans
(U.S. Marine Corps)
Cpl. Linger, Micah
9th ESB 3MLG /H+S Co.
Unit #38430 FPO AP96385

Away at College

Evan Pugh – Aquinas University, Grand Rapids

Andrew Emery – University of Cincinnati

Christina Emery – University of Cincinnati

Condolences

Condolences to the family of Brendan Poling
(son of Charlie & Barb Good)

Birthdays

2 Marilyn Strickler

11 Todd Morris

16 Tom Emery

20 Brian Owens

23 Josh Hoehn

28 Ron Richards

8 John Morris

14 Larry Caffro

20 Johnathon Morris

22 Toby Adkins

23 Joyce Profit

Anniversaries

23 Dean & Nancy Swygart

Prayer Concerns

Tim Adams

Peggy Burnett (cancer)

Aiden Ellerbrock (serious injuries from a fall)

Natalie Ellerbrock (Stacia Profit's niece)

David Hugh Evans

Doris Evans (cancer)

Suzanne Hadley-Himes (recurrent cancer)

Bill Harmon (cancer)

Larry Howell

Linda Howell

Bob Hundley (cancer)

Tim Hurbert (cancer in lungs & pancreas)

Jan Jones (health Issues)

Paula Jones (healing from fall)

Nancy Lautzenheiser (colon cancer)

Carol Lee

Bob Louth

Becky Martz (health problems)

Marian Morris

Ronnie Neate (throat cancer)

Kim Owens (cancer)

Dorothea Plikerd

Walter Poling

Joyce Profit

Mallory Rentz (blood clot in brain)

Randy Richards (mowing accident & loss of wife)

Julie Sheets (lung cancer)

Bobbie Spyres

Thad Summersett (brain tumor, grandson of Warren)

Natalie Wilkins (failing health, 90 years old)

Noah Wyatt (son of Stuart Wyatt)

March 2018

| Sunday | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|-----|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 9:30 Worship St. David's Day celebration 10:45 Sunday School 7 pm Pulpit Exchange & Lenten service & reception | 5 | 6 7pm Teens for Christ | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 9:30 Guest speaker John Zerbe 5:00 Trustee Meeting | 12 | 13 7pm Teens for Christ | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 Lion Pancake & Sausage Day 6 am to 2 pm |
| 18 9:30 Guest speaker Glenn Hux | 19 | 20 7pm Teens for Christ | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 9:30 Worship Palm Sunday 11:45 Session Meeting | 26 | 27 7pm Teens for Christ | 28 Noon-Senior luncheon | 29 6 pm Meal 7 pm Maundy Thursday service & communion | 30 Noon Van Wert County Good Friday service at First UMC Van Wert | 31 Venedocia Egg Hunt at Memorial Park 1pm |

| Week of | Special Music | Nursery | Flowers |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| March 4 | Madison & Isaiah Pugh | Jeff & Kim Coil | |
| March 11 | Jr. Choir-Bells | Todd & Jayne Morris | Doris Evans |
| March 18 | Joyce Morris | Gwenda Blackmore | Doris Evans |
| March 25 | Jr. Choir-Bells | Mark & Missy Zielke | Doris Evans |
| | | | |
| Ushers | Denise, Bob, and Morgan Pugh | Greeter: | Morgan Pugh |

Salem Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 678
Venedocia, Ohio 45894



Extinguishing the Lenten Candle skit

Sounds of Salem Newsletter

Church Phone: 419-667-4142

Church Web Pages: www.SalemChurch.cc
www.facebook.com/salemchurchvenedocia

Secretary E-Mail: Secretary@SalemChurch.cc

Secretary's cell: 419-303-2032

Rev. Thomas Emery's cell: 419-863-9131

Pastor's Email: PastorTomEmery@live.com

| March 2018 REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY YEAR B | |
|--|----------------------|
| 3rd Sunday in Lent – March 4 | |
| Ex. 20:1-17 | Psalm 19 |
| 1 Cor. 1:18-25 | John 2:13-22 |
| 4th Sunday in Lent – March 11 | |
| Num. 21:4-9 | Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 |
| Eph. 2:1-10 | John 3:14-21 |
| 5th Sunday in Lent – March 18 | |
| Jer. 31:31-34 | Psalm 51:1-12 |
| Heb. 5:5-10 | John 12:20-33 |
| Palm/Passion Sunday – March 25 | |
| Mark 11:1-11 | Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 |
| Phil. 2:5-11 | Mark 14:1-15:47 |