

SOUNDS OF SALEM

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

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Pastor's Thoughts

When I was little, I would pause when I saw a manger display. It looked so out of place in this world. Older in life, as I grew in my faith, I pondered the same deeper questions and sought answers.



If the Bible is true, as it is, why did Jesus leave the splendor, the beauty, and the perfection of heaven to come to the earthly dirt and smells of a cold stable with the sin and trouble and sadness of our world? Even still, His birth was

proclaimed by the angels.

It is a most crucial question, "Why did Jesus come to earth?" Wrong answers could lead us to some awful eternal ramifications. The disciples wrote of Christ after His death and resurrection. They came to understand this mission, and they echoed it in their writings. Luke 19:10 tells us: "For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

The lost means the same thing as sinners. He is not seeking and saving "perfect people with their act together," but people who are drowning in life's sinking ship, those overcome with life-threatening conditions, and those with real desperate problems with seemingly no way out. Regardless of how we look, all of us on the inside are sinners. Let's be real, the Bible says you are weak, ungodly, and an enemy of God. These words are not flattering. They are Truth!

Suppose you contracted some rare disease with no known cure, and you went to see your physician. The doctor astutely diagnoses that this virus is the cause of your ill-health. Now, which would you prefer? For your physician to simply say, "Take some aspirins," or for him to tell you the truth: "Make plans for you are soon going to die?" Most of us would want the plain sober truth!

Yet, the public is offended by the news that they are God's enemy, and many have missed Christ's amazing offer to save them because of this offence!

This Jesus, who came to earth to save sinners, will not save anyone until they can without excuse see their sin for what it is and see their lostness for what it is!

There is a cure! Jesus was offering His own life in the place of ours by dying on that cross on Easter. That is why He can claim that He came to save the lost. Not only is He drawing men to God, but He is providing the way for them to get there!

This holiday season makes known this same Good News that "Christ the Savior was born!" He was as much the Savior of the world in that Christmas manger as He was on that Easter cross.

The entire reason of His coming was to save people like you and me from our sins and the eternal punishment for our wrongs. What more can Jesus do for you than He has already done? Jesus has provided the way of escape from death itself! He proved it by being raised from the dead before hundreds of witnesses. Why won't you ask Him into your heart to save you?

Maybe, you think that there are many paths to God, but the Bible says there is only one way to God. And that one way is Jesus Christ. You need Jesus Christ, and you need Him right now. Why not turn to Him now and be saved!

Pastor Tom

P.S. I often think about the lyrics of the song, "[Here I Am to Worship](#)." Perhaps, you can understand the Christmas story better with it. I pray that you open your heart to receive His offer of forgiveness.

(1) Light of the world,
You stepped down into darkness.
Opened my eyes, let me see.
Beauty that made this heart adore you
Hope of a life spent with you.

Chorus:
Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down,
Here I am to say that You're my God.

You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy,
altogether wonderful to me.

(2) King of all days, oh, so highly exalted,
glorious in heaven above;
Humbly You came to the earth You created,
all for love's sake become poor.

Chorus again

Bridge: 2X

Well, I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross.*

*Michael W. Smith, "Here I Am to Worship" lyrics © Capitol Christian Music Group

Blue Christmas Isaiah 40

Here is God's Word for your life right now in the form of a fictional story. If you are in pain this Advent season, God is here to comfort you. Perhaps you are in grief over the loss of a loved one. Perhaps this was not the kind of year financially you had expected. It could be the economy. We live in a prosperous country, but not everyone shares equally in it, and that can be



particularly painful this time of year. It's tough not to be able to do for our children all the things we would like to do. Of

course, some people can't even put food on the table. Or perhaps you received a bad medical prognosis for yourself or someone in your family. Perhaps your marriage is coming apart. What an awful season to deal with family problems. Whatever your heartbreak this day, God wants to offer you His comfort.

Advent says, first of all, that God cares about a broken world. Isaiah 40 was speaking to a broken nation. Much of the nation of Israel had been carried away into exile. They longed to return to their home land. Isaiah assures them that God has not forgotten them nor forsaken them. Their suffering is almost over. God will build a vast highway over which they can travel through the wilderness from Babylon back to their home, the Promised Land. In the New Testament, John the Baptist cries that soon God will build an even more important highway linking humanity and God. The

message is the same. God cares about a broken world. God cares about broken people.

Brian Abel Ragan's father used to tell him a story every Christmas when he was growing up. It was about a little boy who was very poor. His widowed mother struggled to make ends meet. The little boy had only one toy--a sad little car in awful condition. It had only one window and two wheels. The roof was smashed in. But the boy loved that car.

It was almost Christmas and the boy knew there would be no presents. But he was excited anyway. It was the first year he would be allowed to go to midnight mass on Christmas Eve. He couldn't wait. He knew that, before mass began, people brought gifts to the Christ child. He had been told the gifts were magnificent jeweled chalices for the altar, new clothes for poor children like himself, and envelopes full of money.

The little boy wanted very much to give the Christ child a present. And so he set out to earn enough money before Christmas to do just that. On the afternoon of Christmas Eve, he sat at the kitchen table counting out what he had earned. He had enough money to buy a fine present for the Christ child. But before he could put the money back in his pocket, his mother returned home. "Oh, son," she said, "What a good boy you are! Now we can have a real Christmas dinner!" And she scooped up the money and hurried off to get to the market before it closed. The little boy was heartbroken. What was he going to do now? You've already guessed, haven't you? On his dresser he saw his broken toy car. He knew it was the only thing he had to give the Christ child, so he put the car in his pocket and set off for mass.

When he arrived the church was filling up. He walked timidly to the manger scene which was set up before one of the side altars. Magnificent gifts were already piled up before the Christ child. The little boy laid his broken toy car amid all the treasures. He squeezed into a pew close by just as the organ began playing the prelude.

About this time one of the ushers took a last look at the manger scene to see if everything was in place. Suddenly he spied the car. "Who would leave a piece of trash like this at Our Lord's crib?" he said loudly enough for the boy to hear. The usher picked up the toy car and threw it across the church. The little boy was crushed. There was no time for him to retrieve his gift. The organ was playing and the procession had begun.

Then suddenly, everything came to a dead stop. To the amazement of everyone present, the baby in the manger came to life and crawled across the stone floor. He crawled until he reached the broken car. Then carefully he tucked it under his arm and crawled back to the manger. By this time all the people had fallen to their knees. At this point the priest rose and approached the manger. There, just as before, was a plaster child with a halo, but now he smiled and his arms were folded tight around a broken toy car.

Brian Abel Ragan remembers hearing his father tell this story and he resented it. He didn't like his father. His father had problems with alcohol. The song "Please Daddy (Don't Get Drunk This Christmas)" could have been written for him. When his father wasn't passed out drunk, he was a foul-mouthed terror. Ragan had a difficult time forgiving his father. He felt his father was trying to use this story to manipulate him into being a more obedient son. With time, however, Ragan came to put this little Christmas story into perspective.

"As I think of my father's Christmas story now," says the grown-up Ragan, "I realize that I cast him in the wrong role. My father was not the good little boy who gave his last plaything to the Lord. My father was the smashed . . . car . . . He was a wreck. But despite or because of all this, he clearly longed to be cradled in his Savior's arms, to have Christ still seek him after he had been rejected by everyone else."

Here's why we call the story of Jesus "Good News." God cares about a broken world. God cares about broken people. That's what Advent and Christmas are all about. "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God."

Adapted from King Duncan's adaptation of "Matthew and the Matchbox Car," by the Rev. Barbara K. Lundblad, Day 1, 1996.

Christmas Giving

By Iris W. Bray

Christmas is for giving
And for showing that we care,
For honoring the Christ Child
With the loving gifts we share
The wise men gave of riches;
The shepherds, faith and love.
Each gift, in its own measure,
Was smiled on from above.
Let every gift be treasured;
Not always size or price
Determines the extent of love
And willing sacrifice.

Handsome gifts with festive trim
Brings smiles of sweet content,
But modest gifts of humble means
Are oftentimes heaven sent.
Whether it be large or small
Each gift will share in part
The message of true Christmas joy
If given from the heart!

Thank You and Updates

The **David Hugh Evans family** would like to thank his church family and the Venedocia Community for all of their cards and visits for the past few years and during his time in rehab. He loved his church and the people of this community. Thank you for your support this past year.

David J Williams passed away on October 30th in Louisville, KY. He was 88 years old. He and his wife met at the Gymanfa 63 years ago, and they were married for 61 years. He was born in York Twp. and lived on the family farm on Thomas Road. He attended Ohio Northern University and became a Civil Engineer. He worked for Burgess and Niple his entire career. David wrote a book "A Compilation of Information About Its Graduates from 1924 to 1960". The link to this book is on the Venedocia website and is: <http://www.venedocia.org/Yorkhigh.pdf>.

OUTREACH PROJECTS

Salem is collecting packets of gravy for the **Salvation Army Christmas baskets**. Our goal is 400 to 500 packages. Gravy packets are being collected on the inside table next to the elevator.

Thanks to everyone that packed a shoe box. We ended up with a total of 26.



The new Venedocia corner park at Main Street and Bebb Streets

The well-attended November 6 Election Day Supper photos



Harvest then heavy rains



Salem Manger scene



Pies and Venedocia Sausage served



Salem Christmas service decorations

Venedocia Christmas street lights turned on by the Lions Club



November 11 Veterans Day Senior Choir



Nov. 4 Dave Lusk and Nov. 25 Stacey Rife Special music



November 13 Van Wert County prayer gathering



November 6 Congregational singing



November 21 Thanksgiving Eve prayer gathering

Church Financial Update

Needed to Date: \$90,569.00
Received to Date: \$91,089.25

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

Dorothea Plikerd

418 East 4th Street
Spencerville, OH 45887

Away at College

Evan Pugh – Aquinas University, Grand Rapids

Andrew Emery – University of Cincinnati

Christina Emery – University of Cincinnati

4/C Madison Pugh- U.S. Coast Guard Academy
15 Mohegan Ave
8785 Chase Hall
New London, CT 06320

Serving our Country

Cory McCollow

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

Cpl. Linger, Micah 2nd

Grandson of Doris Evans
MEMES Support Battalion
PSO Box 20085
Camp Lejeune, NC 28542

Phoebe Eutsler (Army)

Birthdays

5 Dave Owens	8 Paige McClure
9 Jason Lloyd	13 Marilyn Stockton
17 Jeremy Morris	23 Jeff Owens
24 Marry Ellen Lloyd	30 Isaiah Pugh

Anniversaries

16 Kent & Heather McClure
30 Doug & Marilyn Stick

Condolences

Condolences to the families of **David Williams, Jerry Agler, and Sharon Raney.**

Prayer Concerns

Kylee Ball (surgery)
Peggy Burnett
Jim Davis (cancer)
Mark Davis
Aiden Ellerbrock (serious injuries from a fall)
Betty Ellis (failing health)
Doris Evans (cancer)
Daniel Fisher (rectal cancer)
Judy Foust
Suzanne Hadley-Himes (recurrent cancer)
Bill Harmon (cancer)
Jeff Hines (kidney transplant)
Bob Hundley (cancer)
Tim Hurbert (cancer in lungs & pancreas)
Jan Jones (health issues)
Paula Jones (healing from fall)
Nancy Lautzenheiser (colon cancer)
Barbara Lewis (heart attack)
Linda Lissey (cancer)

Larry Lloyd
Bob Louth
Becky Martz (health problems)
Carol Matthews (Lou Gehrig's disease)
Sarah Miller (health issues)
Gwen Montez
Marian Morris
Kim Owens (cancer)
Dorothea Plikerd
Walter Poling
Joyce Profit
Mallory Rentz (blood clot in brain)
Marjorie Rhodes
Julie Sheets (lung cancer)
Shelly (vertigo)
Bobbie Spyres
Natalie Wilkins (failing health)
Noah Wyatt (son of Stuart Wyatt)

December 2018

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 9:30 Worship-Christmas Joy Offering 10:45 Advent Breakfast	3	4 7pm Women's Bible Study	5 Noon-Senior Luncheon	6	7	8
9 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 4:00 Trustee Meeting 5:00 Christmas Caroling 7:00 Manse Open House	10	11 7pm Women's Bible Study	12	13	14	15
16 9:30 Worship & Christmas Program 10:45 Sunday School Noon Session Meeting	17	18 7pm Women's Bible Study	19	20	21	22
23 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School	24 10:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service & Communion	25	26	27	28	29
30 9:30 Worship w/guest Speaker John Zerbe No Sunday School	31					

Week of	Special Music	Nursery	Flowers
December 2	Connie O'Neil	Bill & Ruth Evans	Carla Breese
December 9	LaDonna Allenbaugh	Eric & Jenny Pugh	Carla Breese
December 16	Christmas Program	Rex & Lisa Lloyd	Joyce Profit & Gloria Leiter
December 23	T.B.A.	Nursery avail-not staffed	Joyce Profit & Gloria Leiter
December 30	T.B.A.	Tuzz & Liz Hobbs	Joyce Profit & Gloria Leiter
Ushers	Eric & Jenny Pugh Family	Greeter:	Bob McCollow

Salem Presbyterian Church
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Sounds of Salem *Newsletter*

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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

December 2018 REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY YEAR B

1st Sunday of Advent – December 2

Jer. 33:14-16	Psalm 25:1-10
1 Thess. 3:9-13	Luke 21:25-36

2nd Sunday of Advent – December 9

Mal. 3:1-4	Luke 1:68-79
Phil. 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6

3rd Sunday of Advent – December 16

Zeph. 3:14-20	Isaiah 12:2-6
Phil. 4:4-7	Luke 3:7-18

4th Sunday of Advent – December 23

Micah 5:2-5A	Luke 1:46b-55
Heb. 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

1st Sunday after Christmas Day-December 30

1 Sam. 2:18-20, 26	Psalm 148
Col. 3:12-17	Luke 2:41-52