

SOUNDS OF SALEM

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

Volume 24 Issue 12

December 2022

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! (Luke 2:10-11 NLT).

I remember listening to contemporary songs on the radio before I became a Christian. How about Simon and Garfunkel's song, "Sound of Silence."

"Hello darkness, my old friend; I've come to talk with you again; Because a vision softly creeping; Left its seeds while I was sleeping; And the vision that was planted in my brain; Still remains within the sound of silence."

The writer, Paul Simon summed the meaning as "the inability of people to communicate with each other, not particularly intentionally but especially emotionally, so what you see around you are people unable to love each other."

It depicts a society without loving relational connection, a world of loneliness.

Also like the song, "Behind Blue Eyes" by The Who. "No one knows what it's like to be the bad man, To be the sad man, behind blue eyes, And no one knows what it's like to be hated, To be fated to telling only lies."

The songs were hit multi-million record sales because they nailed the culture and defined the times we were living. But behind the scenes, not broadcasted in the mainstream media, the church offers hope, a hope of a better world with the birth of Christ. "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee," "Joy to the World," and "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" give the joy, hope and meaning of a world that is better than this empty world. This occurred with the Christmas birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Why continue in despair seeking meaning in this world, when we can have a hope in our Risen Savior who came to reconcile us with the God who wants to love us as His children? Why not receive "the Reason for the Season?"

Pastor Tom Emery

Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" is a 1744 Advent and Christmas carol common in Protestant hymnals. The text was written by Charles Wesley. The hymn is considered an enduring classic in Christian churches



Come, thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee
Israel's Strength and Consolation
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation
Joy of every longing heart

Born Thy people to deliver
Born a child and yet a King
Born to reign in us forever
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne

[Song link sung by the Petersons](#)

Advent of the Savior

The weeks preceding Christmas can be one of the most difficult times for us to focus on God. We feel the weight of buying gifts, preparing for guests, putting up the Christmas tree and stringing the lights, baking cookies and fitting in parties all alongside our regular daily responsibilities. Sometimes it feels more like work than celebration.

It takes great intentionality to make space for Christ during the Christmas season. Maybe that's why the Scriptures offer so many angles from which to view the birth of Christ – the perspectives of his parents, his aunt and uncle, shepherds doing a day's work, far-off Magi and nearby despots – even the perspective of the prophets who preceded him by centuries.

When we allow ourselves to enter into it, Scripture reminds us that Christmas is not a task to be done but a celebration to be marveled.

The season of Advent begins on the Sunday directly following Thanksgiving and continues for a total of four Sundays. Christmas day is then celebrated as a separate “week” in liturgical tradition. Epiphany is the celebration of the coming of the Magi. The Feast of the Epiphany is January 6.



Meeting Christ in the Season of Advent

Below are some ideas adapted from *Living the Christian Year* by Bobby Gross for meeting Christ during the seasons of Advent and Epiphany. Pick one or two that are realistic for your life and an encouragement to you.

- Spend some time in silence rereading the Christmas narrative in the Gospels – whether for a short time or a day of retreat.
- Emphasize Christmas decorations that remind you of Christ, such as manger scenes.
- Get outdoors to enjoy the creation hallowed by Christ's incarnation.
- Buy or make an Advent wreath and light the appropriate candle(s) at dinner each night.
- Light a candle and sit in silence for five minutes each day.
- Sit somewhere that allows you to enjoy your Christmas tree or manger scene.
- Participate in an opportunity to give to someone in need through church or school.

- Plan one or two special activities to do with your children or your friends – such as a concert or play.
- Keep your tree and decorations up until the end of the season on January 6.
- Save some of your gift-giving for the twelve days of Christmas, especially, perhaps, for the Feast of the Epiphany.

May this Advent be one in which you are blessed with a renewed sense of the miracle of Christmas in the coming of the Savior.

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of His ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will make this happen (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Adapted from [LifeGuide Bible Studies](#) by Cindy Bunch, Editor. Used in the Women's Bible Study at Salem Church.

Why Is Advent Important?

Advent is important because it is a good for us to learn to wait. In the ESV, the word “wait” or “hope in” appears 100 times in the OT and 32 times in the NT. In numerous places in the Psalms, we are encouraged to wait. The songbook of Israel is filled with a call to wait upon the Lord.

“Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!” - Psalm 27:14

“For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.” - Psalm 37:9

“But for you, O LORD, do I wait; it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer” - Psalm 38:15

“I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.” - Psalm 130:5

In the New Testament our waiting shifts to waiting for his second coming. We “wait for his Son from heaven” (1 Thes. 1:10), and we are “waiting for our blessed hope.” James 5:7 is a beautiful picture of what we are doing in Advent:

Be patient, therefore, brothers until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains James 5:7.

How Old Was Mary When She Had Jesus?

The truth of Christmas Day is a reminder that all of the Old Testament waiting and longing came to fruition. God came through on His promises. And so, we celebrate this with great vigor, because it means God has rescued us. But there is also a longing that this also sets into place because God not only *has* rescued us—someday he also *will* rescue us.

Perhaps it would be helpful to consider what we miss if we don't celebrate Advent.

What if we don't celebrate Advent?

Not celebrating Advent, you can still get much benefit out of celebrating on Christmas Day. You can have a fine experience singing all your Christmas songs where you sing *O Come, O Come* on the same Sunday that you sing Hark, the Herald Angels Sing. You don't really *have* to celebrate Advent to experience the reality of the incarnation or to understand longing for the Second Coming.

But you won't learn to wait as well. Your joy on Christmas Day won't be nearly as sweet if you don't learn how to stretch out the longing and the waiting. You'll miss out on several teaching opportunities as we wait for Christmas Day, we are also reminded of our waiting for the Second Coming. Advent helps us be better watchers and better at waiting.

I suppose, like anything, Advent could turn into a dead and empty ritual. But the same is true of the tumult that we've turned the Christmas season into. Advent can give us guard rails and structure to what can be a chaotic season. Advent slows us down. When we blend everything into one loaf and call it "Christmas" it too can become just as stale as a bargain bin fruitcake.

Conclusion

You don't have to celebrate Advent. But you really should. Consider researching some of the great traditions, some of the time-tested symbols and actions which help us wait, hope, and celebrate the redemption which Christ has brought and to help us long for the redemption He is still bringing. You'll find that it'll be better if you learn to wait.

Adapted from "Is Advent Really That Important?" By Mike Leake.



So, exactly how old was Mary when she had Jesus? Historians place Mary's age in the range of 12 to 14 years old when Jesus was born. Mary was an



adolescent, which in our culture today seems shockingly young to be a mother. However, in the culture that Mary lived in at that time, young motherhood was commonplace. Couples married and started families much earlier than they typically do today. So, Mary and the

people in her life wouldn't consider it unusual to embark on marriage and motherhood as a young teen.

It may even have been an advantage for Mary to be so young when she learned of God's plan. Mary hadn't lost the wonder that many young people have but unfortunately lose as they grow older. Jesus encourages us all to pursue the sense of wonder that children are known for having. The curious mind and open heart of childlike wonder can strengthen our faith at any age. "Truly I tell you," Jesus says in Matthew 18:3, "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Mary's youth helped her choose awe for God rather than the cynicism that older people often struggle with in this fallen world.

At the same time, Mary's spiritual maturity was higher than her age suggests. God knew Mary's soul well, and in His wisdom, God chose Mary out of all other souls to be the human mother of the world's Savior. Mary was able to handle her calling well because she focused well on developing a strong faith.

What Does This Teach Us about Who God Calls?

Mary's beautiful example teaches us that God calls people of strong faith to accomplish wondrous purposes. Hebrews 11:1 explains the kind of faith that God is looking for: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." When Mary received God's call to serve as Jesus' human mother, she didn't see how that would work out, but she was confident in her hope that God would achieve something wonderful through that plan. Mary's strong faith helped her play an important role in God's work to save humanity. When God calls us, if we respond with strong faith, he will also accomplish something important through our own lives.

The book *Wake Up to Wonder* shows how we can each become part of a miracle simply by saying “yes” whenever God calls us to take action. Sometimes when God nudges us to act, it feels like being led to the top of a cliff and encouraged to jump off. God regularly challenges us to grow our faith, and we may not understand why he leads us to take action in a situation, or what will happen when we do. However, our purpose is all about love. The more we choose to respond in love when God calls us, the less fear we’ll experience. “There is no fear in love,” 1 John 4:18 promises. “But perfect love drives out fear.”

When we drive fear out of our lives, wonder rushes in, since we’re free to discover more of God’s work. Experiencing awe while we’re facing uncertainty helps us perceive God’s guidance and purpose more. So, the more we intentionally choose love over fear, the more we can enjoy wonder, and the more that awe will inspire us to pursue God’s purpose for our lives.

Adapted from “How Old Was Mary When She Had Jesus?” by Whitney Hopley Crosswalk.com



2022-11-27 Sheila Collins and David Van Tillburg Special Music.

Y NADOLIG (Christmas)

Before Christmas the tradition in Wales was to decorate homes with fresh mistletoe and holly; mistletoe to protect the home from evil and holly as a symbol of eternal life. "Deck The Halls" is a Welsh folk song.



The custom in many parts of Wales as early as the 13th century was to attend a very early church service known as “Plygain,” (pronounced PLAH GYNE) between 3 AM and 6 AM on Christmas morning. People would lead a torch lit or candle procession to the church and gathered to sing, mainly unaccompanied, in four-part harmony singing carols in a service that went on for three hours. All of the carols encompassed the birth of Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross for all sins.

Christmas Services

The Christmas Eve Service will be celebrated at Salem on December 24th at 9 PM. Communion will be served.

The Christmas Day Service will be an informal worship and praise day at 9:30 AM, and Communion will be served.

Notices

The **Church Carillon Project** was installed, already working and will have January updates forthcoming.

The **Budget and Nomination Reports** were voted on and accepted by the Congregation on November 20th.

Please collect **gravy packets**. The goal for our church this year is 500 packages to donate to the Salvation Army by December 11th.



Aerial view by drone of the existing Landeck Cross and their benches as constructed by the Lions Club.

The **Lighted Cross Project** is finalizing visions of where to locate the Venedocia outdoor cross and how to configure the landscaping and benches. Please give ideas to the Trustee Members.

The **Lloyd Family** wants to thank everyone for their support and help in assisting of **Mary Ellen Lloyd's funeral**.

The Salem Trustees and Session would like to thank everyone for your financial support of the Salem Presbyterian Church. God Bless Everyone!

The Salem Trustees and Session

Church Financial Update

Prayerfully consider making a donation to Salem Church. Offerings should be mailed to the church at:

Salem United Presbyterian Church
 PO Box 678
 Venedocia, Ohio 45894

Needed to Date: \$102,085.25
 Received to Date: \$106,060.90

Salem Photos



2022-11-20 The Christmas decorations were installed by the extended Morris family. Seen here are Jonathan Morris and Michael Breese.

Who Jesus is to Us?

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

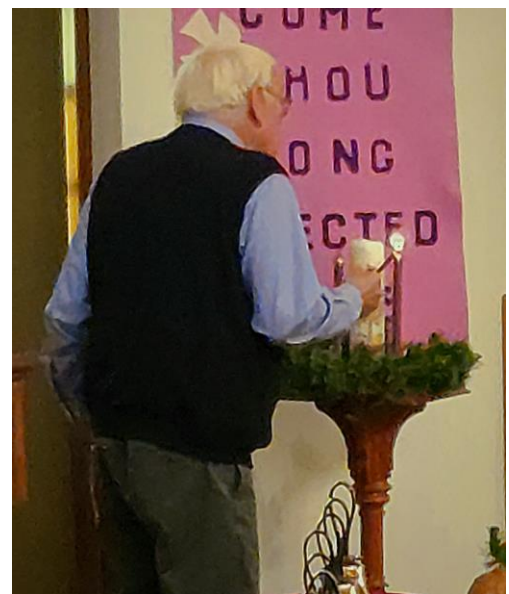
This powerful truth spoken through Isaiah the prophet, 700 years before Jesus was even born, is still so relevant and needed today.



2022-11-25 Morgan and Peter McCollow had their second child named Owen Lloyd McCollow, at 7 lbs. 13 oz. and 20" length .



2022-11-20 The Abraham Lincoln impersonator speaks of Thanksgiving at the Van Wert County Thanksgiving Eve Service with the countywide ministers.



2022-11-27 The start of Advent began with Dave Rees lighting the Hope Candle.

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

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

“Young at Heart”

John Lloyd

20155 Venedocia-Eastern
Venedocia, OH 45894

Marilyn Stockton

Lochhaven Apt 220
1640 Allentown Rd
Lima, OH 45805

Bartie Jones

Parkview Healthcare Ctr
3800 Boardwalk Blvd
Sandusky, OH 44870

Paul & Doris Price

18890 Bebb St
Venedocia, OH 45894

Charles Boroff

311 West 4th Street
Apt. 104
Odessa, Texas 79761

Marjorie Eutsler

15044 Main St
Venedocia, OH 45894

Serving our Country

Cory McCollow

(U.S. Coast Guard)
7225 Altura Place
Oakland, CA 94605

SPC Phoebe Eutsler (Army)

Cmr 405 Box 3825
APO, AE 09034

Lloyd (Butch) Eutsler

(National Guard)
14975 Van Wert-Mercer
Co. Line Road
Venedocia, OH 45894

Sgt. Micah Linger,

(U.S. Marine Corps)
2nd MEF G4
PCS Box 20085
Camp Lejeune, NC 28542

Madison Pugh-USCGA

8800 Pine Forest Rd
Apt 6303
Pensacola, FL 32534

Dillon Ellerbrock (Marines)

Grandson of Gloria Leiter

Gyer Blackmore (Army)

Grandson of Gwenda
Blackmore

Away at College

Landon Price. Ohio State University,
160 Woodruff, Columbus, Ohio 43210

Evan Pugh University of Pikeville
147 Sycamore St, Pikeville, KY 41501

Condolences

Condolences to the family of Mary Ellen Lloyd

Anniversaries

16th Kent & Heather McClure

28th Doug & Marilyn Strickler

Birthdays

8 Paige Thatcher

9 Jason Lloyd

13 Marilyn Stockton

17 Jeremy Morris

17 Jon Finn

23 Jeff Owens

30 Isaiah Pugh

Prayer Concerns

Eddie Basham (back surgery)

Marion Morris's daughter

Charles Boroff (heart issue)

Jason Boyd (cancer)

Jeff Coil (Bypass heart surgery)

Lynn Collins (cancer)

Kathy Comer

Irene Cooper (in a coma after a fall)

Stephanie Dillon (lymphoma)

Pastor Tom Emery (Long Covid recovery)

Marjorie Eutsler

Deb Fair (cancer)

Nikki Ford (surgery & funds for surgery)

Shana Fryer

Stephanie Gamble (eye & knee issues)

Jane Harter

Jerry Holscher

Mandolin Jones (cancer)

Ann King (cancer)

John Lloyd

Steve Martz

Carol Matthews (Lou Gehrig's disease)

David Morris (Zeb)

Todd Morris (open heart surgery)

Paul & Doris Price

Evan Pugh

Evelyn Schwartz

Derek Sellers (Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy)

The area Nursing Homes and their residents



December 2022



Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at Church on the Horizon, 634 N. Washington	2	3
4 9:30 AM Worship. 10:45 AM Session meeting If needed Last day to give donation for poinsettias Gravy packets due by Dec 11	5	6 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study	7 Senior Luncheon - noon	8 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at Church on the Horizon, 634 N. Washington	9	10
11 9:30 AM Worship Christmas program 2:00 Santa at Lion's Club 5:00 Trustee Meeting 5:30 Christmas Caroling 6:00 Manse Open House	12	13 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study	14	15 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at Church on the Horizon, 634 N. Washington	16	17
18 9:30 AM Worship Christmas Joy Offering	19	20 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study	21	22 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at Church on the Horizon, 634 N. Washington	23	24 9:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service & Communion
25 9:30 AM Christmas Day Worship	26	27 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria.	28	29 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at Church on the Horizon, 634 N. Washington	30	31

Week of	Nursery	Flowers	Organist
December 4	Todd & Jayne Morris	Dave & Carla Breese	Connie O'Neill
December 11	Gwenda Blackmore	Dave & Carla Breese	Becky Reichard
December 18	Mark & Missy Zielke	Dave & Carla Breese	Dave Van Tilburg
December 24	Nursery is not staffed		Seth Baker
December 25	Nursery is not staffed	Gloria Leiter	Becky Reichard
		Greeter:	Morgan McConnell

*Salem Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 678
15240 Main Street
Venedocia, Ohio 45894*



2022-11-27 Michael Breese with his son, Wrettic



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

**December 2022
REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY
YEAR C**

2nd Sunday of Advent – Dec 4

Isa. 11:1-10	Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Rom. 15:4-13	Matt. 3:1-12

3rd Sunday of Advent – Dec 11

Isa. 35:1-10	Psalm 146:5-10
James 5:7-10	Matt. 11:2-11

4th Sunday of Advent – Dec 18

Isa. 7:10-16	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Rom. 1:1-7	Matt. 1:18-25

Nativity of the Lord/Christmas Day – Dec 25

Isa. 52:7-10	Psalm 98
Heb. 1:1-12	John 1:1-14
