

SOUNDS OF SALEM

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

Volume 25 Issue 1

January 2023

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

³⁴ "So don't be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time (Matthew 6:34 TLB).

Welcome to the New Year of 2023!

We may be looking forward to the New Year as better than the one we just finished, but the Bible tells us not to be stuck in yesterday or even to constantly worry about tomorrow as this will waste your time in the present. We can only deal with life in the present.

God wants us to take action in our lives. God wants us to commit to seek and follow His will this coming year. Psalm 143.10 NLT says "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. May your gracious Spirit lead me forward on a firm footing." There is only one path of joy and peace, and this is when we are in the will of God.

When we turn our life and our will over to God this New Year, we will find rest. Matthew 11:28-30 tells us, ²⁸ "Come to me and I will give you rest—all of you who work so hard beneath a heavy yoke. Wear my yoke—for it fits perfectly—and let me teach you; for I am gentle and humble, and you shall find rest for your souls; for I give you only light burdens." Some call this decision "to let go of your problems in this world and to let God take over your life."

If you ever rode a two-seat tandem bicycle you know that one person must steer and the other is the passenger in the next seat. If you have been in control of things in your life up-to-now, how's that working out? If it isn't, how about letting God steer by turning your life and will over to Him. When you commit to turn your whole life over to the care and control of God, don't you think that the loving God who created this world knows the most beautiful and meaningful bicycle paths to take in this world and in heaven in the next. So, why not turn your life and will over to God care and control?

Pastor Tom Emery

He Lives

I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today
I know that He is living, whatever men may say
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer
And just the time I need Him He's always near



He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart

In all the world around me I see His loving care
And though my heart grows weary I never will despair
I know that He is leading, thro' all the stormy blast
The day of His appearing will come at last

He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian! Lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ, the King!
The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find
None other is so loving, so good and kind

He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me

Along life's narrow way
He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart

Alfred H. Ackley. [Song link by Alan Jackson.](#)

The Opportunity of Uncertainty

Walter Hunt, a Quaker in New York in the 1800's, was in financial distress. He owed \$15 for the month's rent, and the owner was demanding payment. Hunt was an



inventor. As he sat and worried about his uncertain future, he began twisting a piece of wire. His attention was fixated on the wire, and he kept bending it one way and the other until he invented the safety pin. He sold the design for \$400, and his invention continues today.

The word *uncertainty* implies insecurity. When our finances, our future, or our times are unsettled, it's hard to cast out worry. It twists us in knots, but sometimes even the knots can become blessings. Now, without Christ, we *should* feel uncertain and insecure. Ecclesiastes 10:8-9 says, "When you dig a well, you might fall in...When you chop wood, there is danger with each stroke of the ax" (NLT). Everyone on earth is subject to sudden death at any moment of any day. We don't know what's coming. Praise God, we have an Anchor to stabilize the boat, a guiding Star to lead the way, and a Shepherd to watch over us in the dark valleys.

Great opportunities tend to bubble up from puddles of uncertainty. We can make safety pins out of wires and testimonies out of traumas. In the broad canvas of humanity – and in the individual sketches of our personal lives – peril brings promise within the remarkable parameters of God's providence.

The great thing is this: You have a choice in how things turn out. Because of all we read in God's Word, we have the capacity, through Christ, to thrive rather than survive.

SURVIVING Most people are in survival mode. In fact, we take pride in being called survivors. If you are a survivor of any kind – congratulations! Many of you are cancer survivors. Some have survived harrowing abuse or near-fatal accidents. We survive hurricanes, tornados, wars, and rumors of war.

A mother and daughter caught in the war in Ukraine had to flee and are now safe in Germany. The mother said,

"Everything I thought I had (material things, money) was an illusion. I realize now that the only thing that matters for me is people and their kindness.

Despite the blessings that come with survival, it's not really the word we want to describe us. It identifies us with past trauma, but there's more to victory than surviving, than simply hanging on or getting by. When we sink our roots deeply into Christ, we move beyond surviving. We find ourselves, by grace, thriving in these pre-Rapture days.



THRIVING In the Bible we read about Elijah at the Brook Cherith where he was fed by ravens, "And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land (1Kings 17:7). But the dry stream became the pathway of provision because God sent him to Zarephath, where a widow cared for him, with attending miracles!

It's disquieting when we watch brooks dry up. Every day they run a little lower until the trickle disappears. But the Lord has appointments for us in Zarephath if we'll just follow the creek bed.

TRUSTING You'll start thriving when you view uncertainty as an opportunity to trust God in fresh ways. Faith isn't put to the test when everything in life feels perfect. Tenacious trust happens when things go wrong, uncertainties arise, perils threaten, and disappointments come. David wrote, "Fear is on every side...But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in Your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies: (Psalm 31:13-15).

Is there anxiety in your mind? Lines of worry on your face? Bouts of sleeplessness due to stress? It's an opportunity to memorize and meditate on a fresh verse. Here are three verses to choose. Pick the verse that speaks most to you. * *But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, "You are my God" My times are in Your hand (Psalm 31:14-15).* * *But Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).* * *And this is*

the victor that has overcome the world – our faith (1John 5:4).

MOVING FORWARD As you trust in the Lord amid trials, you'll find a new impulse to move forward and make progress in life. The book of Ezekiel begins, "Now it came to pass in the 13th year (1:1). Ezekiel was a young priest who, just as he was getting ready for service in the glorious temple of Solomon, was seized by the Babylonians and taken into exile. His future disappeared. Ezekiel would never be able to serve in the presence of the glory of God. But wait! The glory of God came to Ezekiel in his 13th year, when, according to Mosaic Law, he was old enough for temple service. There in Babylon the Lord appeared to him in one of the most glorious visions of the Bible and commissioned him as both priest and prophet to the exiles.

For the child of God, there is always a "But wait!" moment when misfortune leads to fresh encounters with God's will. Ephesians 1:10 says, "At the right time He will bring everything together: (NLT). The Lord is always moving forward, and He takes His children with Him – at the right time.

SHARING CHRIST We thrive amid the difficulties when we learn to find ways of bringing Jesus into the conversations around us. We can use the events of the day and the stains of life as talking points about the return of Christ. There's never an event that doesn't lend itself to saying a word for the Lord if we simply learn to look for it.

Marjorie Caines lost her husband, mother and aunt within the space of a year. To recover, she spoke with pastors, enrolled in Bible studies, and saw how biblical heroes dealt with their problems. "I don't let my past define my future," she said, "Instead, I try to use godly wisdom to direct my choices in this life...Now I'm more equipped to share my faith to touch lives."

You can do the same. Even if all you have left is a piece of wire, bend it into a safety pin! Make up your mind to be a thriver, not just a survivor.

Adapted from "The Opportunity of Uncertainty – Your Choice in the Matter."
By Dr. David Jeremiah – Turning Points Magazine.

Prayers for the Person Grieving Loss

Maybe you're acutely aware of the gaping hole left by the love of your life. Or perhaps you're mourning your child's surprise suicide. An engagement that went south. A falling out with a longtime friend. A marriage that you'd never have thought would crash

in an affair. If you lost your job or business, that might mean the loss of your dream—maybe even hope. To prepare you—and your grief, try these quick prayers:

1. Heal My Sorrow

Proverbs 15:13 states, "By sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken." A broken spirit can sway you to abandon God. After all, "The spirit of man [that factor in human personality which proceeds immediately from God] is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts" (Proverbs 20:27, AMPC). A broken spirit will extinguish the Lord's lamp and darken your life.

Prayer: "Lord, I ask that you heal my sorrow so my spirit won't break."



2. Receive Comfort.

Prayer: "Lord, when you show me your love—including when you send people to comfort me—help me receive and not reject any of it."

3. Wise Response

Many intend well but unknowingly pile more emotional burden by making insensitive remarks: "you should have moved on by now," as though grief came pre-packaged with a term limitation.

Prayer: "Lord, when people utter insensitive comments about my grief, please grant me the wisdom to know how to respond."

4. Balanced Living

Let's give these individuals—the makers of callous comments in the point above—the benefit of the doubt. They're undoubtedly motivated by the desire to see us thrive. To that end, they have a valid point. Grief can engulf a mourner.

Prayer: "Lord, please help me give space to grief, but not let it run my entire life. Balance my grieving with living."

5. Assisted Anesthesia

One way not to balance your grief is by anesthetizing it. Our society has become adept at dousing unwanted feelings with 1,001 distractions, whether socially acceptable or not: Drinking. But anesthetizing grief

doesn't work. What is repressed today will eventually emerge some other day.

Prayer: "Lord, please strengthen me so I can properly grieve. I resolve not to utilize unhealthy means to avoid grief."

6. Joy and Wonder

Being joyful? Amid sorrow? I get it if the concept sounds off. Pause at the tinsels and twinkling lights on Christmas trees or the beauty of the Easter ceremonies. Listen to the songs and absorb their lyrics. Prayer: "Lord, please don't let me miss the wonder of the upcoming Christian holidays."

7. Trust

When death strikes, life doesn't remain the same. The more significant the loss, the more changes you can expect.

It's fine to ask the Almighty your questions but be prepared to wait for the answer. This isn't because He derives pleasure from delaying and seeing us squirm in the process, but because His still small voice (1 Kings 19:11-12) is hard to detect amid our loud anguish.

Prayer: "When I don't understand, and when my world seems strange, Lord, bolster my trust in you."

8. Heal Bitterness

Depending on the nature of your loss, bitterness could creep in. For instance, you might have prayed day and night so your mom would be freed from cancer. It's understandable if you feel resentful when she died.

Bitterness, however, is vile. It can infect others to become bitter, too (Hebrews 12:15). Further, once bitterness matures, it can crack your faith and convince you to forgo God.

Prayer: "Lord, please heal any part of me that is bitter about the loss I'm grieving."

9. Hope

Even as you're weeping over the past, mourning also provides the opportunity to cultivate the soil of your heart so hope can color your future.

Prayer: "Lord, I may not be ready to take any tangible steps toward my future but help me hope again. Prepare me for this unfolding new season."

10. Best Friend

Thankfully, there's a Friend who sticks closer than a brother or sister (Proverbs 18:24). God desires to be your Best Friend. He is perfectly suited for the role, especially given His propensity to be gentle with the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18).

So, when you wish to go Christmas shopping with the person who died one more time or wrap one more gift for him or her, ask Jesus to sit with you instead.

Prayer: "I invite you to be my best friend, Lord. Please walk with me every day."

In Jesus' name—amen.

Adapted from "10 Prayers for the Woman Grieving Loss This Holiday Season" by Dr. Audrey Davidheiser. Crosswalk 2022 Nov 30, 2022.

Notices

The **Church Carillon Project** was installed and already working, and it will have January updates forthcoming. It really helped make Christmas special this year throughout the Venedocia.

We collected collect 541 **gravy packets** this year for the Salvation Army.

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: \$110,592.35
Received to Date: \$112,574.90

Salem Photos



2022-12-07 Senior Luncheon with costumes and bingo



2022-12-12 Lion Club meeting with Thad Lichtensteiger to collect coats for those in need in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.



2022-12-11 Salem caroling to John Lloyd at his home.



2022-12-24 Christmas Eve Special Music Evan Pugh.



2022-12-11 Manse party after caroling.



2022-12-24 Christmas Eve Communion with Pastor Tom



2011-12-11 Youth Christmas Play with Junior Bells



2022-12-24 Christmas Eve Candlelight service



2022-12-11 Lexi Greer playing for the Christmas Play



2022-11-11 Charlotte (as Jesus), Morgan and Tyler McConnel and Grant Zielke as the angel.



Youth Bells playing "Silent Night."

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

Parkvue 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)
814 Strawberry Hill Rd. E
Columbus, OH 43213

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

Isaiah Pugh University of Toledo
3030 Residence Drive, Ottawa East Room 4205-A
Toledo, OH 43606

Condolences

No condolences this month.

Anniversaries

9th Michael & Lindsay Breese

Birthdays

2 Chris Beck	3 Emily Blackmore
5 Karen Pugh	6 Jim Lloyd
7 Nell Jean Wienken	7 Loretta Williams
10 Dominic Adkins	11 Chelsey Lloyd
11 Ashlyn Price	12 George Siler
12 Christina Youngpeter	16 Rob Breese
16 Liz Hobbs	19 Wrettic Breese
28 Scott Fair	30 Doris Price
30 John Smith	31 Carrie Jones
30 Isaiah Pugh	

Prayer Concerns

Edie 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)
Cindy Davis
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)
Becky Lee (carpal tunnel surgery)
John Lloyd
Steve Martz
Carol Matthews (Lou Gehrig's disease)
Wayne McMichael
David Morris (Zeb)
Todd Morris (open heart surgery)
Paul & Doris Price
Evan Pugh
Evelyn Schwartz
Derek Sellers (Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy)
Tori Wells (spine surgery)
6 The area Nursing Homes and their residents

January 2023

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 AM Worship w/guest Speaker Harry Tolhurst	2	3 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study	4	5 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at Trinity Friends Church.	6	7
8 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 AM Confirmation class 5:00 Trustee Meeting	9	10 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study	11	12 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at Trinity Friends Church.	13	14
15 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 AM Confirmation class 1:00 PM Session meeting	16	17 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study	18	19 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at Trinity Friends Church.	20	21
22 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 AM Confirmation class	23	24 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study	25	26 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at Trinity Friends Church.	27	28
29 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 AM Confirmation class	30	31 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study				

Week of	Nursery	Flowers	Organist
January 1	Toby & Elizabeth Adkins	Gloria Leiter	Cindy Bowsher
January 8	Tyler & Morgan McConnell	Gloria Leiter	Cindy Bowsher
January 15	Bob & Kathy McCollow	Gloria Leiter	Cindy Bowsher
January 22	Bob & Denise Pugh	Gloria Leiter	Cindy Bowsher
January 29	Jeff & Kelly Lloyd	Gloria Leiter	Beth Conn
		Greeter:	Rex Lloyd

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



2022-12 Salem Manger scene in front of the church.

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

January 2023 REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY YEAR C

1st Sunday of Christmas – Jan 1

Isa. 63:7-9	Psalm 148
Heb. 2:10-18	Matt. 2:13-23

Baptism of the Lord – Jan 8

Isa. 42:1-9	Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43	Matt. 3:13-17

2nd Sunday after Epiphany – Jan 15

Isa. 49:1-7	Psalm 40:1-11
1 Cor. 1:1-9	John 1:29-42

3rd Sunday after Epiphany – Jan 22

Isa. 9:1-4	Psalm 27:1, 4-9
1 Cor. 1:10-18	Matt. 4:12-23

4th Sunday after Epiphany – Jan 29

Micah 6:1-8	Psalm 15
1 Cor. 1:18-31	Matt. 5:1-12