

SOUNDS OF SALEM

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

Volume 26 Issue 1

January 2024

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT).

As we enter 2024, we might think of many reasons to believe that life will get better than this past year, but does this mean we should wait until next year to be happy? The Bible says we should start right away to have a thankful attitude. The Bible instructs us to give thanks in *all* circumstances.

I heard a story about a schoolgirl who was embarrassed and angry with her parents about her shoes that were not stylish like the other girls. Then, she saw another girl her age without a foot. Immediately, she thanked God for her two feet, that she could easily get around, and also for all that she had.

As you study the Bible, it says that God doesn't tell us to be grateful *for* all the bad circumstances that happen to us, but rather to be grateful *in* all circumstances. Some years bring in more bad events than others, but while every year may bring a reason for sorrow, every year also brings reasons for joy. We need an attitude of gratitude year-round.

Once we cultivate a stronger sense of gratitude, we'll watch as our perspective on life changes for the better. To cultivate an attitude of gratitude for this year and the next acknowledge the obvious blessings that jump out to you. If none do, why not note God's works in your life, either in a journal or in a book of prayers answered? The more effort we put into remembering, the less we will forget. Some of those journals may prove to be the most cherished of your possessions later in life.

Paul taught us a crucial lesson about contentment throughout his life; He said in *Philippians 4:11-13 NLT*:

Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

His attitude is one we should model in our lives. We won't always experience life's comfort, and we should not get stuck dwelling in life's pitfalls. Sometimes we will have much, and sometimes we will not. But no matter what, we always have a loving God with us. That's reason enough to be thankful.

Pastor Tom Emery



Praise You in This Storm

[Verse 1]

I was sure by now
That You would have reached down
And wiped our tears away
Stepped in and saved the day
But once again, I say amen
And it's still raining

[Pre-Chorus]

As the thunder rolls
I barely hear Your whisper through the rain
"I'm with you"
And as Your mercy falls
I'll raise my hands
And praise the God who gives
And takes away

[Chorus]

And I'll praise You in this storm
And I will lift my hands
For You are who You are
No matter where I am
And every tear I've cried
You hold in Your hand
You never left my side
And though my heart is torn
I will praise You in this storm

[Verse 2]

I remember when I stumbled in the wind
You heard my cry to You
And raised me up again
But my strength is almost gone
How can I carry on if I can't find You?

[Pre-Chorus]

As the thunder rolls
I barely hear You whisper through the rain
"I'm with you"
And as Your mercy falls
I'll raise my hands
And praise the God who gives
And takes away

[Chorus]

And I'll praise You in this storm
And I will lift my hands
For You are who You are
No matter where I am
And every tear I've cried
You hold in Your hand
You never left my side
And though my heart is torn
I will praise You in this storm

[Bridge]

I lift my eyes unto the hills
Where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord
The Maker of Heaven and Earth
I lift my eyes unto the hills
Where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord
The Maker of Heaven and Earth

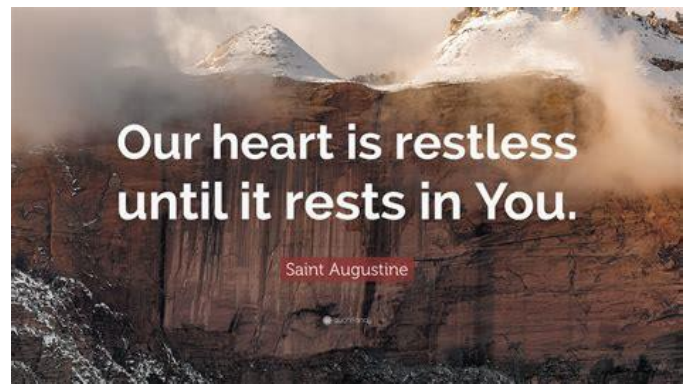
[Chorus]

And I'll praise You in this storm
And I will lift my hands
For You are who You are
No matter where I am
And every tear I've cried
You hold in Your hand
You never left my side
And though my heart is torn
I will praise You in this storm
And though my heart is torn
I will praise You in this storm

Casting Crowns [YouTube Link](#)

Restless Hearts and Anxious Minds

Saint Augustine famously observed that the human heart is restless until its rest is found in God. That applies not only to individuals but also to cultures and entire generations. Practically speaking, this



“restlessness” can take many forms, including an unprecedented mental health crisis.

The recent and much-talked-about report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes precisely that. As a CDC spokeswoman bluntly stated, “young people”—especially young women—“are in crisis.” An article in [The New York Times](#) summarized, “Nearly three in five teenage girls felt persistent sadness in 2021 ... and one in three girls seriously considered attempting suicide.” Jonathan Haidt, author of *The Coddling of the American Mind*, painted an even starker picture: “We are now 11 years into the largest epidemic of adolescent mental illness ever recorded.”

The timing of this unprecedented outbreak of anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems, Haidt points out, corresponds suspiciously with the rise of smartphones and social media apps. This technology led to a culture-wide exchange of what he calls a “play-based childhood” for a “screen-based” one. That exchange likely helped create a generation with fragile psyches unable to deal with life’s challenges.

A reason that teen girls are especially hard-hit in this crisis is they spend more time on social media platforms and websites that engender social and body anxiety. However, political views also predict psychological issues. Using Pew Research’s American Trends Panel, Haidt demonstrates that liberal leanings predict the worst mental health outcomes. In fact, a *majority* of self-identified progressive women in Generation Z report that they have been diagnosed with a mental health condition.

Age, sex, and politics are not the only predictors of trouble. Using the same set of data, political scientist and pastor Ryan Burge suggests that religious commitment is another important factor. Those who rarely or never attend religious services suffer worse mental health than those who attend regularly or weekly.

Part 1: About Believers Going to Heaven

Altogether, and controlling for economics and education, Americans under 25 are doing very badly when it comes to mental health. Those suffering the worst are young, female, liberal, *and* secular. For them, brokenness is, incredibly, the *norm*.

On the other hand, the apparent insulating effect of religious faith and conservative philosophy is fascinating. Highly religious people are, in fact, more likely than their secular peers to describe themselves as “very happy.” One explanation for this is the proven positive social effects of religious belonging, including higher occurrences of stable, loving family relationships. For example, in 2020, the Institute for Family Studies reported that those who attend church regularly are more likely to get married than their nonreligious neighbors and less likely to divorce.

Still, it’s worth considering whether the social benefits of religious commitment have something to do with the belief itself. Does an active faith in God reduce the impact of the mental health crisis on young people? Does a lack of religious faith leave others more vulnerable to it?

Though a tough question to answer via social science, St. Augustine would say “yes.” Despite his lack of familiarity with Gen Z, he would speak of their “restless hearts” seeking in politics, gender identity, and self-expression, which can only be found in a relationship with our Maker.

In the face of Gen Z’s mental health crisis, it is the Gospel and not gloom that should motivate and inform us. As blogger and author Samuel James pointed out on Twitter, mentally broken young people may be primed to hear the truth: “Evangelicals need to disabuse themselves of the idea that Gen-Z is a wholly unreachable mass of buffered selves. The mental health crisis may cut right through secularization like butter.”

God has made us for Himself. The kind of postmodern individualism that Gen Z was raised with will never deliver on its promises. This mental health crisis *is* a spiritual crisis. We have the opportunity to introduce a generation of restless hearts to the One able to deliver on His promises to bring rest to their souls.

Adapted from “A Generation of Restless Hearts and Anxious Minds” by John Stonestreet and Shane Morris. Breakpoint. *Originally published on April 13, 2023.*



Jesus’ death on the cross allows us to embrace the soul-gripping freedom of eternity that we are invited to share as Christians.

Humanity is born into a curse of sin that we cannot control, but we serve a God who has made a way for us to escape it. This Biblical promise guarantees that “every ear will have a chance to hear,” and Jesus will not come back until then. But He will be back. For those who have accepted Him as their Savior, they will get to gaze into the face of Peace and embrace the King of Kings.

There will be no sickness, death, pain, or suffering in Heaven (Revelation 21:4). We will be reunited with believers who have gone before us (1 Thessalonians 4:17). All the questions that we have stored up will fall away amid the glory that will surround us when we finally arrive home.

When Jesus was born on earth, angels appeared to the shepherds in the fields (Luke 2:8-16). In an instant, the pitch-black sky burst forth with blinding light. Jesus assured us that following Him would lead us to the light, keep us within the light, and promises us a bright future (John 8:12).

Adapted from “10 Things the Bible Says about Believers Going to Heaven” by Meg Bucher. Crosswalk.com. December 21, 2023.

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 \$115,520.43
Received to Date \$127,592.90

Salem Photos



2023-12-03 Advent Breakfast at Salem.



2023-12-10 Youth Acolytes Wrenley and Wrigsby Breese lighting candle sticks during youth service.



12-23-12-06 Senior Luncheon held at the Lions Club Building.



2023-12-10 Manse party and food.



Ongoing December Advent skit and Advent candle lighting.



2023-12-17 Youth Christmas Handbells.



2023-12-10 Caroling at John Lloyd's home.



2023-12-17 Christmas Youth Service Play.



2023-12-24 PM Christmas Eve Service Communion.



Christmas Eve Special Music: AM Service, Jule Rickard, and PM Service, Jake Wilder.



2023-12-24 Christmas Eve Service "Silent Night" Played by all the Pugh family cousins.



2023-12-31 Service "Time for Children" Sandy Skit explaining Jesus' Birth.



2023-12-31 Service Lotte McConnell watching Sandy Skit.

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

Paul & Doris Price

18890 Bebb St
Venedocia, OH 45894

Charles Boroff

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

Marjorie Eutsler

Room 302
Homestead at Town Ctr
240 Towne Center Blvd
Van Wert, OH 45891

Serving our Country

Cory McCollow

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

Dillon Ellerbrock

(Marines)
Grandson of Gloria Leiter

Lloyd (Butch) Eutsler

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

Madison Pugh-USCGA

8800 Pine Forest Rd
Apt 6303
Pensacola, FL 32534

Corbin Evans (Marines)

Grandson of Bill & Ruth
Evans

Away at College

Landon Price. Ohio University,
77 Mill St, 101, Athens, Ohio 45701

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 Christina Youngpeter
16 Liz Hobbs	16 Rob Breese
19 Wrettic Breese	28 Scott Fair
30 Doris Price	30 John Smith
31 Carrie Jones	

Prayer Concerns

Josh Archinal (recovering from car accident)
Cindy (Davis) Barnes (liver transplant)
Sara Beeks (heart)
Charles Boroff (heart issue)
Jason Boyd (cancer)
Dave Burnett (heart)
Kim Coil (recovery from surgery)
Lynn Collins (cancer)
Stephanie Dillon (lymphoma)
Pastor Tom Emery (Long Covid recovery)
Marjorie Eutsler
Ellen Friesner
Shana Fryer
Stephanie Gamble (eye & knee issues)
Diana Glass (cancer)
Jane Harter

Jerry & Elizabeth Holscher
Pat Hunt (breast cancer)
Mandolin Jones (cancer)
Barb Kimmet
John Lloyd
Steve Martz
David Morris (Zeb)
Monica Placke
Patti Poling (pancreatic cancer)
Paul & Doris Price
Ann Rees (at Hearth & Home)
Kristy Ringwald (adenoid cystic carcinoma)
Evelyn Schwartz
Derek Sellers (Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy)
Phillip Winfield (brain tumor)
The area Nursing Homes and their residents

January 2024

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. No Women's Bible Study	3	4 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at First Baptist Church 13887 Jennings Road	5	6
7 9:30 AM Worship w/guest Speaker John Zerbe	8	9 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study	10	11 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at First Baptist Church 13887 Jennings Road	12	13
14 9:30 AM Worship, Installation and Ordination of officers End of year reports are due. 10:45 AM Session meeting. 5:00 Trustee Meeting.	15	16 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study	17 End of year reports due to Liz after auditor review	18 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at First Baptist Church 13887 Jennings Road	19	20
21 9:30 AM Worship End of year reports will be available to the congregation	22	23 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study	24	25 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Mtg. at First Baptist Church 13887 Jennings Road	26	27
28 9:30 AM Worship Congregational meeting following the service to approve the annual reports	29	30 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study, VW Hosp. Cafeteria. 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study				

Week of	Nursery	Flowers	Organist
January 7	Dave & Carla Breese	Mark & Missy Zielke	Cindy Bowsher
January 14	Tuzz & Liz Hobbs	Mark & Missy Zielke	Cindy Bowsher
January 21	Rex & Lisa Lloyd	Mark & Missy Zielke	Lexi Greer
January 28	Todd & Jayne Morris	?	Dave VanTilburg
		Greeter:	Rex Lloyd

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



2023-12-03 Bob McCollow holding his grandson, Owen.

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 2024 REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY YEAR C

Baptism of the Lord – Jan 7

Gen. 1:1-5	Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7	Mark 1:4-11

2nd Sunday after Epiphany – Jan 14

1 Sam. 3:1-20	Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Cor. 6:12-20	John 1:43-51

3rd Sunday after Epiphany – Jan 21

Jonah 3:1-5, 10	Psalm 62:5-12
1 Cor. 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-30

4th Sunday after Epiphany – Jan 28

Deut. 18:15-20	Psalm 111
1 Cor. 8:1-13	Mark 1:21-28
