

SOUNDS OF SALEM

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

Volume 27 Issue 2

February 2025

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

⁹ If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved (Romans 10:9-10 NLT).

There is a popular story circulating about a great chieftain who lived on the southern border of Cyrus's empire. His name was Cagular. He was a mighty warrior who tore apart and completely defeated various detachments of armies sent by Cyrus to subdue him."

Finally, running out of patience, the Emperor gathered an entire army, which marched down, captured Cagular, and brought him to the capitol for trial and execution.

Cagular and his wife were brought to the judgment chamber on the day of the trial. Cyrus was most impressed when he saw this magnificent-looking warrior. Cyrus began to reconsider his course of action.

He asked Cagular, "*What would you do if I spared your life?*" Cagular responded, "*Your Majesty, if you spared my life, I would return to my home and remain an obedient servant as long as I live.*" Cyrus then asked, "*What would you do if I spared the life of your wife?*"

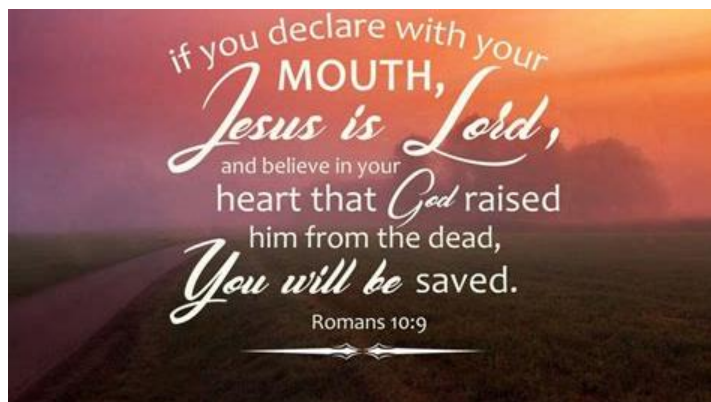
"*Your Majesty,*" Cagular said, "*if you spared the life of my wife, I would die for you.*"

The Emperor was so moved that he freed both Cagular and his wife, returning them to their province.

During the trip home, Cagular reminisced with his wife. "*Did you notice the beauty of the palace and its opulence? Did you notice the marble at the entrance to the palace? Did you notice the tapestry on the wall as you went down the corridor to the throne room? ---Did you see the chair on which the Emperor sat? It must have been carved from one lump of pure gold.*"

---- "*I did not notice any of that,*" said his wife.

Cagular was amazed. "*What did you see?*"



Cagular's wife looked deep into his eyes and said,..."*I beheld only the face of the man --- who said he would die for me.*"

Jesus died to take our punishment for our sins. He is the one who sets us free. In Him, the message of God's love for us is fulfilled. If we only hear the Words of scripture and do not accept the Word, we will miss it all. We are those for whom Christ gave his life.

Why not open your heart to receive the gift of forgiveness of your sins? You only need to receive it.

Pastor Tom Emery

Blessed Assurance

1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain:

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.

2 Perfect communion, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight.
Angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. [Refrain]

3 Perfect submission, all is at rest.
I in my Savior am happy and bless'd,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. [Refrain]

Written by Fanny J. Cosby

A Prayer for the Parents of a Prodigal Child

“20 “So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him” Luke 15:20 NLT).

The parable of the prodigal son is a familiar one among believers and is often shared in faith-based circles or among youth groups. It provides a valuable lesson of hope. Yet, when this story hits close to home and a faithful parent witnesses the falling away of their own flesh and blood, it can be unbearable at times, and there is a sense of sheer helplessness.

A few years ago, we watched our oldest drift in life and follow a destructive path. Although he was raised in the church and read Bible stories since he had been in the womb, it's almost as if something inside him snapped and in a few short months a destructive pattern of behavior emerged. It was heartbreaking. It is still heartbreaking as he teeters over the line between worldliness and faith. Yet, when he goes with us to church, and I see him lift his hands in praise to worship the Lord, I know deep in my heart that while the enemy may be wooing him, he still belongs to God. He is His Son, first and foremost.

This must have been precisely how the prodigal son's father felt upon seeing his son from a distance. Although he knew his son had squandered his inheritance, wasted his life on sinful pleasures, and essentially ran away from all that was good, seeing his son made him rejoice.

Maybe you are a parent of a prodigal son or wayward daughter, awaiting their return home physically and/or spiritually. If so, let me first extend my heartfelt sympathy and say how very sorry I am that you are in this situation. I wish there were the perfect words that could comfort your wounded heart. However, I do know and understand the anguish and exhaustion that comes from raising a child in the way they should go only to watch them part ways with it.

However, if I can extend any hope and encouragement to you today, it is this: you are not alone in this journey. There are so many parents who are fighting the same

battles and often do so in silence. As a parent of a wayward son who has made plenty of my own parenting mistakes, I am slowly coming to grips with a realization. Maybe you need to be reminded too?



Your children's choices aren't a reflection of your parenting skills but rather a harsh reminder of the challenges of raising kids in a lost and broken world (Romans 3:23). God gives us the free will to choose between good and evil, so we must lay the spiritual foundation and then give them the freedom to choose as well (Matthew 22:37).

The truth of the matter is that your child may be choosing to live in a manner that is displeasing to you, but there are consequences for choosing their own way and not obeying God and His will (Colossians 3:25). Sometimes our children need to learn that the hard way and may even hit rock bottom. As sad as it is to hear those words, we have hope, and God's Word offers help! Oh, dear friend, we must hold on to the truth that we serve a God that is merciful and forgiving and is continually pursuing us, no matter how far we venture off or how much our sins try to consume us (Luke 15:4-6). That means that the prayers of a parent for their prodigal child are so very powerful, and we can pray for deliverance and God's hand of mercy over them!

Let's Pray:

Father God, You are our true source of hope and the place we can go for help when we are desperate and weary. Today I lift my broken heart to You in need of the hope that can only be found in Your love, mercy, and grace. I have done my best to raise my son/daughter (name) in a Godly home, but I admit I have made plenty of mistakes. Please forgive me where I have failed You or my child and provide healing to the wounds that have been acquired on this journey.

Lord, I thank you for my son. I deeply love him, but the choices and decisions that he is making are causing a wake of destruction and so much tension to our relationship. I know You have a plan for him, and even in the midst of these trials there is a purpose, so I hold tightly to the promise that this will be a part of his testimony and can be used for good.

O God, I know You are so much stronger than any wicked influences that are found in this world, and the temptations that my son faces, which is why I have faith that he will not be able to permanently depart from the foundation that was set before him (Proverbs 22:6). I plead with my whole heart for You to release him of this sinful hold, that every lie from the deceiver will be brought to light, and that he will seek repentance. I pray no weapon formed against my child prosper because the love, mercy, and blood of Jesus covers him. I ask all of this in Your holy and precious name, Jesus, amen.

Adapted from [A Prayer for the Parents of a Prodigal Son](#), by Alica Searl. Crosswalk.com

How to Have Joy in Hard Times

Once, there was a big boat. There were precisely 276 people on board, and precisely 275 of them were freaking out. They knew the boat was going down. The storm was way too much.

They gave up hope entirely. “We’re totally going to drown!” they said. But then there was one guy who was totally calm. It wasn’t the captain, or some other veteran sailor who’d seen it all. No, all the salty professionals were freaking out too.

So, you wonder: *Was this calm guy an idiot? Couldn’t he see the obvious?* To not be anxious in the middle of all that, you’d have to lack basic knowledge about how the world works, right?

Turns out the guy—Paul, in the Bible—wasn’t an idiot. He didn’t lack knowledge. No, he was calm because he knew *more* than everyone else on board. He told them the ship would go down but everyone would survive and be just fine. And so it did, and so they were. (It’s in Acts 27–28).

I tell you this story because in our culture now it’s kind of like we’re all in a big boat, and everyone’s freaking out. Anxiety and anger are so widespread that if you’re not anxious and angry, people will suspect it’s because you’re willfully ignorant of all the Big Issues. You just don’t know, or you don’t care, because if you did, you’d be just as scared and ticked off as they are.



Finding Joy in an Angry World

I’ve noticed people will get angry if I’m not angry enough about the things they happen to be angry about. They think I don’t care. Or they think I’m naive at best. “Don’t you know about this crisis, and that injustice, and this other tragedy?”

But then there it is, this joy thing, and I love how Dallas Willard defined it: Joy is “not a passing sensation of pleasure, but a pervasive sense of well-being.”¹ No matter what happens, that sense of well-being is there. It might seem impossible or even crazy to live this way in a world of anger and anxiety. But I want you to know that it’s possible. And not only that, I want you to know that joy is quite reasonable, in light of reality properly understood. Jesus kept showing His followers that too. Yes, horrible things happen. Yes, there is great evil in the world. But joy—this sense of well-being—doesn’t come from knowing less. Joy comes from knowing *more*.

Do You Believe What Jesus Believes?

I believe we lack joy not because we now know too much but because we know too little.

Or we’ve forgotten what we knew.

Think about it: Jesus basically said in John 16:33, “Yes, I know you will have problems. I know. But here’s some additional information that might interest you—something I know but you don’t . . .”

And then He told us to be of good cheer.

God is quite aware of all the suffering and injustice, thank you; but if we believe what Jesus believes, we’ll have a sense of well-being no matter what.

Yes, pain and suffering are real. But in Jesus’ worldview, despair is not the deepest reality. We know it is fleeting. Joy underpins everything. The deepest note rings through our lives, even in tragedy.

We'll hurt, cry, and go through tremendous loss. We might be deeply unhappy. And yet . . . His peace persists.

So yes, there is a “second naivete,” a second *simplicity*. It's an innocence and a beautiful, peaceful life we can live in light of what we can know.

Like, say, how this all ends.

1 Adapted from: [Life is Hard, God is Good, Let's Dance](#) is published by HarperCollins Christian Publishing, Inc., by Brant Hanson.

2 Dallas Willard, [The Allure of Gentleness: Defending the Faith in the Manner of Jesus](#) (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2016), 31.

The Five Solas of Protestantism

The Five Solas of Protestantism define how Salem Church and our Presbyterian denomination differ from other churches and their denominations.

The Five Solae (or Solas)

The “Five Solae” (the Latin plural of “sola”) are a collection of theological statements expressing a distinction in Protestant thought against Catholic tradition. Though these statements were never made in such a format during the Reformation itself, they have come to represent its principal claims.

Of course, like all summaries, they paint with a broad brush, and overlook distinctions between Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, and other Protestant movements. But they are helpful for understanding the Reformers' overall disagreements with Catholicism.

Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone)

Scripture alone is the authority on Christian doctrine. Often considered the central “sola” or principal of the Reformation, “sola scriptura” contrasts the Catholic (and Orthodox) view that church tradition — through councils, creeds, decrees, and other teachings — is intertwined with Scripture as the source of Christian truth.

Sola Fide (Faith Alone)

Justification by faith alone. Justification (how we are made righteous and cleansed of sin — not technically the same as *salvation*, which Christ granted to all people at Calvary, but often merged) happens simply through trusting in Jesus's sacrifice for us on the cross. This is in distinction to the traditional Catholic teaching that justification requires human participation in the acceptance of Divine Grace.

Sola Gratia (Grace Alone)

Salvation through grace alone. Closely related to *sola fide*, *sola gratia* means God's free grace is sufficient for our salvation. There are no “good works” or charity we can do to make ourselves more worthy. (In fact, this view is shared by most Christian denominations, including Catholicism; it's the *justification* part where they differ.)

Sola Christus (Christ Alone)

Christ alone mediates between God and humanity. Priests are not a separate class able to intervene on behalf of laypeople — only a direct relationship with Jesus Christ provides access to God the Father. People should therefore confess to God directly, not to priests, who cannot offer absolution.

Sola Deo Gloria (Glory to God Alone)

God alone deserves the glory of worship. This principle rejects any veneration of Mary, the saints, and angels. They may be worthy of admiration — but only because the Holy Spirit made them so. They are *not* worthy of devotion.

Adapted from: “What Was the Protestant Reformation? Complete Guide to Its Origins and Impact.” By Jacob Edson. Biblegateway.com.

Church Financial Update

Prayerfully consider donating to Salem Church. Offerings should be mailed to the church at:

Salem United Presbyterian Church, PO Box 678, Venedocia, Ohio 45894.

Needed to Date \$9,383.59
Received to Date \$15,883.25

St. David's Day 2025



Please mark your calendar for our **St. David's Day** celebration on Sunday, **March 2, 2025**, at 9:30 AM. We are planning a special AM service honoring our Welsh Heritage. We have secured a speaker from Wales to join us. Dan Rowbotham will speak about life in Wales and his job at Rio Grande Community College as the director of Welsh Studies. Plan to join us for Welsh hymns, bell music, and some Welsh history. Lunch will be served following our morning service. Below is a costume of a

Salem Church Welsh maiden and a Welsh soldier with a leak on his helmet.

If you have any questions, please call Kathy McCollow at 419-233-6126.



Welsh National Celebrations in Wales and at Salem in Welsh costumes.



2025-01-19 Session anointed with oil during the Installation of Officers.

Salem Scenes



2025-01-19 Junior Bells practice for St. David's Day.



2025-01-26 Time for Children Prayer Time.



2025-01-19 Greeters, Morgan McConnell and daughter, Lottie.



2025-01-26 Making a blanket for Bianca (B) Richards.



2025-01-26 Pete and Morgan McCollow with their youngest child, Willie.

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

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

"Young at Heart"

Paul Price

18890 Bebb St
Venedocia, OH 45894

Marjorie Eutsler

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

Ellen Freisner

Delphos Van Crest
1425 E. 5th St
Delphos, OH 45833

Ann Rees

Hearth & Home
1118 Westwood Dr
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

64 Main St
Floor 3
Stonington, CT 06378

Corbin Evans (Marines)

Grandson of Bill & Ruth
Evans

Away at College

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

Isaiah Pugh (at the University of Toledo)
2632 Greenway Street
Toledo, OH 43607

Birthdays

1 Ashley McClure	2 Lindsay Breese
2 Jerry Holscher	3 Elizabeth Holscher
4 Andrew Emery	12 Madison Pugh
13 Audrey McCollow	15 Gabrielle Lloyd
16 Jeff Lloyd	16 Scott Lloyd
18 Dalton Ellerbrock	18 Marylin Foust
19 Corey Hobbs	21 Paul Price*
24 Tim Price	25 Bill McGee
31 Carrie Jones	* Let's sent a BD card

Condolences to the family of Marilyn Stockton

Anniversaries

14 Dylan & Catie Brayton
15 Brian & April Ellerbrock
15 John C. & Anne Morris
22 Dave & Ann Rees

Prayer Concerns

LaDonna Allenbaugh (shoulder surgery)
Charles Boroff (heart issue)
Dave Burnett (heart)
Tom Burnett (tractor accident)
Pastor Tom Emery (Long Covid recovery)
Marjorie Eutsler
Millie Fletcher
Ellen Friesner
Cecil Foust (heart surgery)
Shana Fryer
Stephanie Gamble (eye issues)
Bob & Jane Harter
Sheryl Hefner (cancer)
Carla Hillabrand (Medical issues)

Jerry & Elizabeth Holscher
David Kroeger (pancreatic cancer)
Jim Lloyd (recovering leg surgery)
Mary Lou Morgan (Eleanor's daughter)
David Morris (Zeb)
Tim Morris (broken ribs after a fall)
Steve Muhlenkamp (cancer)
Bev Place
Patti Poling (pancreatic cancer)
Paul Price
Denise Pugh (broken leg & other injuries)
Ann Rees (at Hearth & Home)
Bianca Richards (Leukemia)
Evelyn Schwartz
6 The area Nursing Homes and their residents



February 2025



Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:30 AM Worship Souper Bowl of Caring (bring canned food)	3	4 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at the Living Truth Church in VW. 7:00 PM Women's Bible study	5	6 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Meeting at the Trinity Friends Church.	7	8
9 9:30 AM Worship 5:00 PM Trustee meeting	10	11 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at the Living Truth Church in VW. 7:00 PM Women's Bible study	12	13 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Meeting at the Trinity Friends Church.	14	15
16 9:30 AM Worship, 10:45 AM Session Meeting	17	18 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at the Living Truth Church in VW. 9:30 AM Zoom Presbytery Mtg. 7:00 PM Women's Bible study	19	20 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Meeting at the Trinity Friends Church.	21	22
23 9:30 AM Worship	24	25 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at the Living Truth Church in VW. 7:00 PM Women's Bible study	26	27 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Meeting at the Trinity Friends Church..	28	

Week of	Nursery	Flowers	Organist
Feb 2	Toby & Elizabeth Adkins	Mark & Missy Zielke	Jake Wilder
Feb 9	Tyler & Morgan McConnell	Mark & Missy Zielke	Cindy Bowsher
Feb 16	Bob & Kathy McCollow	Mark & Missy Zielke	Jake Wilder
Feb 23	Bob & Denise Pugh	Mark & Missy Zielke	Dave VanTilburg
		Greeter:	Marilyn Foust

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



Jeremy with Hayden C Morris, born Jan. 20, 7 lbs. 11 oz., 20 ½ inches. Samantha is the mom.

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

Feb 2025 REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY YEAR C	
4th Sunday after Epiphany – Feb 2	
Jer. 1:4-10	Psalm 71:1-6
1 Cor. 13:1-13	Luke 4:21-30
5th Sunday after Epiphany – Feb 9	
Isa. 6:1-13	Psalm 138
1 Cor. 15:1-11	Luke 5:1-11
6th Sunday after Epiphany – Feb 16	
Jer. 17:5-10	Psalm 1
1 Cor. 15:12-20	Luke 6:17-26
7th Sunday after Epiphany – Feb 23	
Gen. 45:3-11, 15	Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
1 Cor. 15:35-38,42-50	Luke 6:27-38