

SOUNDS OF SALEM

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

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PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

As the season of Lent approaches, it is a time for reflection, repentance, and renewal for many within the Christian faith. Lent, spanning forty days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, serves as a period of preparation, mirroring Jesus Christ's forty days of fasting in the wilderness. This sacred time invites believers to draw closer to God through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Lent is more than just a ritualistic observance; it is a profound journey into the heart of Christian spirituality. This season is an opportunity to guide ourselves in deepening our faith and understanding of Christ's sacrifice. The ashes received on Ash Wednesday symbolize our mortality and penitence, reminding us of our need for divine grace.

Lent calls us to examine our lives and make necessary changes. It is a time to shed the old habits that distance us from God and embrace practices that nurture our spiritual growth. As we embark on this journey, we are encouraged to seek forgiveness, extend grace to others, and cultivate a heart of compassion and humility.

Fasting, a key component of Lent, is not merely about abstaining from food or certain pleasures. It is a practice that helps us detach from worldly distractions and focus on our relationship with God. Through fasting, we become more attuned to the needs of our souls and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is a way to hunger for righteousness and cultivate a more profound dependence on God.

Prayer during Lent is a means of drawing nearer to God and seeking His guidance. It is a time to listen to His voice, meditate on His Word, and align our will with His. We should set aside daily moments for prayer and scripture reading, fostering an environment of spiritual intimacy and growth.

Lent is also a season of giving and service. Almsgiving, or acts of charity, reflects the heart of Christ's teachings. By helping those in need, we embody Jesus's love and compassion. We may join community



outreach programs, join county prayer groups, encourage volunteerism, and inspire each other to be Christ's hands and feet in our community.

The journey of Lent finishes in the celebration of Easter, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the cornerstone of the Christian faith, symbolizing victory over sin and death. As we prepare for this joyous occasion, Lent helps us to appreciate the gravity of Christ's sacrifice and the hope of eternal life.

One of the most valuable aspects of Lent is the opportunity for personal reflection. We should encourage each other to look honestly at our lives, identify areas that need change, and seek God's help in making those changes. This introspective process can lead to profound personal and spiritual growth, drawing individuals closer to God and one another.

Lent is a time of profound significance in the Christian calendar. As we approach this sacred season, let us embrace the opportunity to renew our faith, deepen our relationship with God, and prepare our hearts for the celebration of Easter. Through prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and personal reflection, we can experience the transformative power of God's grace and emerge from Lent with a renewed spirit and a strengthened faith. May this Lenten season be a time of blessing and growth for all who observe it. May we all draw closer to God's heart as we journey towards Easter.

Pastor Tom Emery

The Cross
Sung by Anne Wilson and Chris Tomlin



[Verse 1:]

You've been tryin' hard to bear the weight of all your shame
And if there's a God up there, you're sure He forgot your name
When your steps are getting heavy, and hope looks all but lost
Just bring it all to the cross
Who told you grace can't reach the messed up ones like you?
Has the devil made you believe the lies he tells are true?
When you're sure that you're the one who's wandered too far off
It's not too late
Just come home to the cross

[Chorus:]

Come and see a Savior's love that would die to make you new
Nothing you have ever done, can change what mercy's done for you
And if you ever wonder if you're worth so great a cost
Look up and see the cross

[Verse 2:]

Everybody's got a list at least a mile long
Of every scar and every sin from everywhere that we've gone wrong
But there's reason for rejoicin', and the reason is because
That list *was nailed to the cross*

[Chorus:]

Come and see a Savior's love that would die to make you new
Nothing you have ever done, can change what mercy's done for you (*What mercy's done*)
And if you ever wonder if you're worth so great a cost
Look up and see the cross
Oh, the cross

[Bridge:]

He was wounded for your wounds, pierced for all your sin
By His stripes you are healed, died so you could rise again
He let the blood and water flow, and did it all to let you know
You're the reason that He went to the cross
Oh, He's callin' you to run home to the cross
To the cross

[Chorus:]

Come and see (*Come and see*) a Savior's love that would die to make you new (*Oh, He's made us new*)
Nothing you have ever done, can change what mercy's done for you (*What mercy's done*)
And if you ever wonder if you're worth so great a cost
Look up and see the cross (*Oh, look up and see*)
Look up and see the cross (*He died for you and me*)
Look up and see the cross

[YouTube Link](#)

The Deeper Purpose and Meaning Behind Lent

There are numerous ways to approach Lent, some more legalistic than personal spiritual growth. Still, the origins of Lent seem to be rooted in Christians giving up food or money in order to imitate Christ's obedience to the Father. During Lent, Christians honor the 40 days and nights following Christ's baptism when He went into the wilderness without water and food and was tempted by Satan. During that time, Christ did what we do today when we fast: wrestle with temptation.

Fasting typically involves abstaining from certain foods or luxuries as a form of self-discipline and solidarity with the sufferings of Christ. Today, some still observe fasts that restrict quantity and type of food, but many view Lent as a time to give up a particular vice, bad habit, or pleasurable thing. While Protestants also participate, Catholic churches are particularly associated with Lenten fasting, with some people abstaining from all animal products while others, fish and/or poultry were allowed.

It's important to remember the primary purpose of Lent is meant to be a time of repentance. That's not a feeling of shame but an awareness that sin separates us from God and what Christ endured to save us from sin, death, and the devil. "Shame has its place, but feeling shame over sin is not the same thing as repentance from sin" because "our tempter can take our obedience

to God and turn it into a source of pride.” Lent should always lead us toward gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter.

Here are a few steps for practicing Lent in your own home and faith:

1. Name the pressing sin. Christians are taught to begin the 40-day period by confessing sins they would like Christ to remove, to “really examine areas of recurring sin,” which are a hurdle to “being conformed to God's will.”

2. Partner with other Christians. Historically, entire church congregations would support one another during Lent. Although Christ instructed, “When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret” (Matthew 6:3-4), believers keep each other accountable. “Self-disclosure brings forth humility by making it your responsibility to humbly open your soul to those to whom you are accountable. You are a witness to your own life, sharing truthfully, freely, and happily with little or no provocation.” Devoted friends encourage each other to be specific in their prayers and help one another seek Christ's strength to stay the course.

3. Your “fast” should feel like a sacrifice, not a religious duty. Nor should the fast be dangerous to one's health. Consider giving up one meal daily, a regular treat, coffee, or alcohol. Other sacrifices include increased charitable giving, staying away from social media, service to the community, or memorizing scripture.

4. Time with God is critical. Quiet and solitude enable one to listen to the Spirit and discern answers to prayer. Before the noisy corporate rejoicing of Easter Sunday, create opportunities for peaceful contemplation and intimacy with the Father. No matter how prayers are answered at the end of 40 days—no, yes, or wait-time with the Lord is cause for joy, praise, and thanks.

Protestant Observation of Lent

Lent is observed differently among Protestant denominations. Some, like Lutherans, Anglicans, and Methodists, follow structured traditions, while others, such as Evangelicals, Baptists, and non-denominational groups, may not formally observe it at all. Lent is typically a time of personal reflection, prayer, and spiritual renewal for those who participate rather than strict fasting or obligatory practices.



While some Protestants observe Ash Wednesday and engage in acts of self-denial—such as giving up certain foods or habits—fasting is generally optional and varies by individual or church tradition. Holy Week is recognized by many Protestant groups, but observances tend to be simpler than in Catholicism, with Good Friday often marked by scripture readings or a sermon rather than liturgical rituals. Easter Sunday remains the central focus, celebrating the Resurrection with worship and joy, often without an extended liturgical framework.

In Catholicism, Lent is a deeply structured and sacramental season emphasizing penance, fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. It begins on Ash Wednesday, where believers receive ashes as a sign of repentance, and includes strict fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, along with abstinence from meat on all Fridays of Lent. Confession and acts of charity are strongly encouraged as part of spiritual discipline.

Holy Week is a solemn time, with Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil playing significant roles in preparing for Easter. Good Friday services involve veneration of the cross, scripture readings, and prayers, culminating in the Easter Vigil on Saturday night, a highly symbolic and sacred celebration of Christ's Resurrection, often including baptisms and scripture reflections. Easter Sunday then marks the joyous conclusion of Lent, celebrating Christ's victory over death with a high emphasis on the Eucharist and resurrection hope.

What to Give Up for Lent

If something has a grip on you, more than likely, it's become unhealthy and may or may not be an idol. Lenten season is an opportunity to grow closer to God, to remember Jesus' life and death, and to focus more on him and less on us and our busy schedules. Fasting, or abstaining, for specific activities and items in our lives can help us focus on the life and sacrifice of Jesus. Here are 10 popular ideas for what to give up during the Lenten season:

1. Social media
2. Sugar
3. Alcohol
4. Online Shopping
5. Clutter
6. Complaining
7. TV
8. Video games
9. Soda
10. Eating out

What Are Your Motives for Observing Lent?

These 40 days of Lent are set aside to praise and worship the Lord; to read the Bible more, and to pray more often. Christians who observe Lent correctly anticipate deeper intimacy with the Lord, which *is* the blessing; they do not expect rewards such as more favorable answers to prayer or the resolution of health concerns, although many Christians have reported that, following Lent, they experience freedom from long-standing issues.

Many Christians prefer not to observe this pre-Easter tradition because it smacks of religious duty. Christ said of the Pharisees, "They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden" (Matthew 23:4). He often criticized the Pharisees for disheartening the Jews with demands that missed the heart of God. Christ did not establish the tradition of Lent as a commandment for followers to observe. Whether or not to participate is a matter between the individual and God.

"It is important to check one's motives for observing Lent. Christ told the disciples "when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that others may see their fasting. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward" (Matthew 6:16). A small personal sacrifice should not be "a badge of pride." The intent of a Lenten observance is to recognize our need for repentance and our depravity apart from God (1 John 1:9; Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 2:13), to draw closer to God, and to prepare our hearts for the celebration of Easter."

Is Lent a matter of obedience to tradition or obedience to God? A means of achieving works-based salvation or of giving praise and thanks to Christ that He finished that work for eternity? A way to achieve a resolution or a means of growing closer to the Father?

Undertaking something difficult (giving to charity, serving the poor, abstaining from certain foods, memorizing Scripture) makes one feel needy and weak;

humble: the perfect posture from which to approach God Almighty. For people whose lives are generally easy, Lent is a time to empathize better with those who genuinely go without luxuries or even simple needs. Lent can help establish a stronger sense of one's need of God minute by minute and to develop a more disciplined, intimate, and authentic prayer life.

Lenten Prayer

O Lord and Master of my life!
Take from me the spirit of laziness,
faint-heartedness, desire for power, and idle talk.

But give your servant
the spirit of chastity,
humility, patience, and love.

Yes, Lord and King!
Grant me to see my own errors
and not to unjustly or hastily judge my brother,
for you are blessed, now and forever. Amen.

Source: Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian

Article adapted from: "What Is Lent's Meaning and Purpose, and Why Is It Important?" by Candice Lucey, Christianity Today, February 25, 2025.

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	\$18,767.17
Received to Date	\$22,982.75

St. David's Day 2025



Our **St. David's Day** celebration is on this Sunday, **March 2**. We are planning a special 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.

Salem Scenes



2025-02-23 Sunday school crafts lessons.



Welsh daffodil jewelry of a Salem church member. Daffodils are a Welsh National symbol.



Two and three-year-olds learning the "Jesus Loves Me" song.



Two groups of bells.



Lent Season

- Ash Wednesday – March 5
- Palm Sunday – April 13
- Good Friday – April 18
- Easter Sunday – April 20

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

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

"Young at Heart"

Ann Rees

Hearth & Home
1118 Westwood Dr
Van Wert, OH 45891

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

Serving our Country

Cory McCollow

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

Madison Pugh-USCGA

64 Main St
Floor 3
Stonington, CT 06378

Dillon Ellerbrock

(Marines)
Grandson of Gloria Leiter

Corbin Evans (Marines)

Grandson of Bill & Ruth
Evans

Lloyd (Butch) Eutsler

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

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

Condolences to the families of Paul Price and Jane Harter

Birthdays

2 Marilyn Strickler
8 John Morris
10 Michael Garza
11 Todd Morris
14 Larry Caffro
14 Elijah Martz
16 Pastor
Tom Emery
18 Morgan McCollow
18 Mason Young
19 Pamela Beamer
20 Johnathon Morris
20 Brian Owens
22 Toby Adkins
23 Josh Hoehn
29 Bianca Richards

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 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)
Denise Pugh (broken leg & other injuries)
Ann Rees (at Hearth & Home)
Bianca Richards (Leukemia)
Evelyn Schwartz
The area Nursing Homes and their residents



March 2025



Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 9:30 AM Worship St. David's Day Celebration Communion Lunch to follow the service	3	4 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at the Global Methodist Church at Crawford and Walnut Streets. 7:00 PM Women's Bible study.	5 Ash Wednesday, Lent Begins	6 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Meeting at First United Brethren Church.	7	8
9 9:30 AM Worship with guest Pastor Harry Tolhurst 5:00 PM Trustee meeting	10	11 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at the Global Methodist Church at Crawford and Walnut Streets. 7:00 PM Women's Bible study.	12	13 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Meeting at First United Brethren Church.	14	15
16 9:30 AM Worship, 10:45 AM Session Meeting	17	18 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study. 7:00 PM Women's Bible study.	19	20 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Meeting at First United Brethren Church.	21	22
23 9:30 AM Worship	24	25 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study. 7:00 PM Women's Bible study.	26	27 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Meeting at First United Brethren Church.	28	29
30 9:30 AM Worship	31	25 7:30 AM Men's Bible Study. 7:00 PM Women's Bible study.	26	27 Noon - Van Wert County Prayer Meeting at First United Brethren Church.	28	

Week of	Nursery	Flowers	Organist
March 2	Jeff & Kelly Lloyd	Mark & Missy Zielke	Connie O'Neill
March 9	Bill & Ruth Evans	Vern & Liz Hobbs	Cindy Bowsher
March 16	Johnathon & Katie Young	Vern & Liz Hobbs	Jake Wilder
March 23	Jason & Danielle Lloyd	Vern & Liz Hobbs	Dave VanTilburg
March 30	Dave & Carla Breese		Becky Reichard
		Greeter:	Denise Pugh

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



Nnational heritage Celebrations in Wales
 in historic Welsh costumes.

Sounds of Salem *Newsletter*

Church Phone: 419-667-4142

Church Web Pages: www.SalemChurch.cc
www.facebook.com/salemchurchvenedocia

Secretary E-Mail: Salemchurch.cc@gmail.com

Secretary's cell: 419-303-2032

Rev. Thomas Emery's cell: 419-863-9131
 Pastor's Email: PastorTomEmery@live.com

March 2025
REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY
YEAR C

Transfiguration of the Lord – Mar 2

Ex. 34:29-35	Psalm 99
2 Cor. 3:12-4:2	Luke 9:28-43a

1st Sunday in Lent – Mar 9

Deut. 26:1-11	Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Rom 10:8b-13	Luke 4:1-13

2nd Sunday in Lent – Mar 16

Gen. 15:1-12, 17-18	Psalm 27
Phil. 3:17-4:1	Luke 13:31-35

3rd Sunday in Lent – Mar 23

Isa. 55:1-9	Psalm 63:1-8
1 Cor. 10:1-13	Luke 13:1-9

4th Sunday in Lent – Mar 30

Josh. 5:9-12	Psalm 32
2 Cor. 5:16-21	Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32