

# SOUNDS OF SALEM

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

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## The Pastor's Thoughts

<sup>16</sup> “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16 NLT).

Watching a baseball game recently on TV, I saw a man holding up a John 3:16 sign. I pondered how God could have destroyed the human race after Adam and Eve in their arrogant disobedience rebelled against God in the Garden of



Eden. But instead our good God said that He would send a Savior to make things right again with Him and His Holy and perfect standards. John 10:10 tells us “*The thief’s (Satan’s) purpose is to steal*

*and kill and destroy. My purpose (Jesus) is to give them a rich and satisfying life.*” The Savior would be a challenge to Satan who tricked Adam and Eve and gained the title deed to this world. Every sin we commit is a continued rebellion against God.

Consider this, would you sacrifice your one and only son for a people who rebelled against you in every way. But, the Creator God loved us so greatly that He did sacrifice His one and only Son so we could be saved. His love is so unfathomable and amazing that we can hardly imagine the depth of that love and what heaven will be like; in heaven there is not any tear, or sorrow or pain. Heaven is how the Garden was meant to be with us being God’s children.

Romans 10:9-10 (NLT) says, “<sup>9</sup> *If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* <sup>10</sup> *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.*”

All we have to do is to accept the offer of forgiveness in the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins on the cross. You can never earn it, all you can do is receive it.

Pastor Tom

## Welcome to the 2017 Gymanfa Ganu!

A special welcome to our new guests and our returning friends and neighbors. After a meal shared together, the Gymanfa is a festival of sacred Welsh hymns, sung with four-part harmony by the Salem congregation, under the direction of a choral director. This year it is Ben Williams, a returning native of Venedocia. The organist is Connie O’Neill, and the pianist is LaDonna Allenbaugh. Tom Dustman is the soloist.

A unique feature of the Gymanfa Ganu is the seating separation of alto, tenor, soprano, and bass singers into their sections for the four-part harmony singing. The Gymanfa Ganu is conducted with the dignity of a church service, but it is not unknown for the musical conductor to stop the singing when one or more of the voice sections needs special attention after wandering from the desired harmony. This is an enjoyable evening for all who participate.

Thank you, for joining us, and we pray that you are spiritually uplifted giving glory to God.

### He Is!

When you are the *neediest*, He is the **most sufficient**.  
When you are *completely helpless*, He is **most able**.  
When you feel *totally dependent*, He is **absolutely dependable**.

When you are the *weakest*, He is the **most able**.  
When you are the *most alone*, He is **intimately present**.  
When you feel *you are the least*, **He is the greatest!**

When you feel the *most useless*, He is **preparing you**.  
When it is *darkest*, He is the **only Light** you need.  
When you feel the *least secure*, He is your **Rock and Fortress**.

When you are the *most humble*, He is **most gracious**.  
When you say that you *cannot*, remember that **He can!**

-Author Unknown

### The Unforgivable Sin

One of the questions I’m regularly asked over the years is, “Pastor, can I commit a sin that God cannot forgive?”

According to Jesus, there is one sin a person can do for which there is no forgiveness or pardon either in this age or in the

age to come: blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. But what does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit?"

The only way to understand these words is by seeing them within the context of the whole passage.

Here are 10 things you need to know about the "unforgivable sin."

**1. Jesus mentions it in the gospel of Mark.** Jesus addressed the topic in Mark 3:20-30, a passage that ends with these words: "*Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation*" (Mark 3:28-29).

This is the verse that gets quoted whenever Christians address this issue. But the passage doesn't stop there.



Photo courtesy: ©Thinkstock

**2. To correctly understand it, you need to look at the very last phrase.** Take a look again at Jesus' finishing statement in verses 28-30: "*Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation,*" because they said, '*He has an unclean spirit.*'"

This paragraph has been the source of great misunderstandings in Christendom. To arrive at the correct interpretation, we have to begin with the *last phrase*, which explains why Jesus made this statement. He gave this teaching because His foes were accusing Him of having an unclean spirit (verse 22). Our Lord was telling them, in essence, "*There is a sin that you are on the verge of committing. You should be very careful, because you're about to do something for which there is no forgiveness.*"

**3. It's not a thoughtless mistake.** Let me take a moment and say the unforgivable sin isn't something that someone commits randomly. The scribes who came from Jerusalem

didn't just do this on a whim. If you follow the references to these scribes throughout the book of Mark you'll see there is a progression to their unbelief. They were initially curious about Jesus and His ministry. Then they had questions. In time, they grew indifferent; but then their indifference metastasized into a malicious attitude that became so hateful and vengeful that it ultimately nailed Jesus Christ to the cross.



**4. There is a Greek verb that proves it's not an instant reaction.** In our story in Mark 3, there's an interesting fact that's only apparent in the Greek New Testament. According to verse 22, the scribes said, "*He has Beelzebub.*" The verb form for "*said*" is in the imperfect tense. It can be translated as, "*They kept on saying.*" It wasn't just a matter of a sudden thoughtless word or an instant reaction. Their words represented a hardened attitude and an embittered and impenitent heart.

**5. It shows us that progressive rejection can be the most dangerous.** When God convicts us of sin and presents us with the Gospel, it's dangerous to neglect it, especially if our procrastination becomes chronic. We resist and resist and resist. After a while, we can become so hard-hearted and sin-hardened that we grow calloused of soul. Our ears can't receive the truth. Our minds shake off the conviction of the Spirit. We become cynical of conscience. And although the grace of God is still available to us, we push away from it.

**6. Knowing the Word of God isn't enough.** These scribes had become Jesus-resistant because of the time-lapsed attitudes of their own evil hearts. It's tragic, for these scribes had devoted their lives to copying the Word of God. Note the relationship between the words *scribe* and *scribble*. These men had copied and recopied the Old Testament. Every day they copied an ancient Scripture scroll by hand. They had copied Isaiah 53, about the Suffering Servant. They had copied Psalm 22, about the death of the Messiah. They knew Micah 5 and the prophecy of our Lord's birth. Yet their hearts had become so hardened they couldn't receive His grace when it arrived in the person of Jesus.

**7. We can be hardened to spiritual truth by living in the middle of it.** We can go to church and read the Bible so much that the words no longer register with us. The scribes had

come to the place where they were so familiar with religious things that when the Son of God showed up, they didn't know who He was and they accused Him of being from Satan.

**8. The unforgivable sin is denying the deity of Christ.** By ascribing the miracles of Jesus to Satan, the religious leaders were denying the deity of Jesus Christ. They were saying He could not be God. Yet by His miracles He was showing Himself to be nothing and no one less than God. Only God Himself could do what He had done. His followers believed in His deity.

**9. Rejecting the Holy Spirit and rejecting the deity of Christ are connected.** It's the Holy Spirit who witnesses to the deity of Christ in our world today.

So, when you refuse to accept the ministry of the Holy Spirit or you ascribe His ministry to Satan, you give up the final opportunity to be saved. You must believe in Jesus as the Son of God. We have to accept the witness of the Holy Spirit and act upon the conviction He brings.

**10. If you're worried that you may have committed a sin God will not forgive...you've likely not committed this sin.** The thought of an unforgivable sin has haunted sensitive people in every Christian century, and maybe it has haunted you. I want to be clear in saying that if you're bothered in your spirit that you may have committed a sin God will not forgive, the very fact that you have anxiety over that is evidence you've not committed the sin. If He is still working in your heart, it's not possible to have committed the unpardonable sin. The very fact that you're reading this article is a tremendous indication you've not committed the unforgivable sin described in the Gospel of Mark.

In its essence, **the unforgivable sin is hardening your heart against God and repeatedly refusing to respond to His entreaties to your soul.** By continuing to resist and reject the Lord, you build calluses on your soul until the conviction of the Spirit of God no longer registers on your heart. Over a period of time you become hardened. You hear the Word of God and it makes no impact on you. If you die in that condition, there's no further forgiveness available. For those who reject Jesus Christ, there's no forgiveness anywhere else, anytime, either in this world or the next. He died for you, and if you reject that, there's no other sacrifice for sin.

So, don't worry that you've committed the unpardonable sin. But if you don't know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, be concerned that you might.

If you've resisted Christ and refused Him as your Savior, and if something happens and you die, you will have committed the unpardonable sin. You don't get a second chance after death. Whatever we do concerning Christ, we do in this life.

Don't gamble that you will have time or that you can respond later. The Bible says, "*Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near*" (Isaiah 55:6).

**Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the only way to God. When He is your unforgettable Savior, you'll never have to worry about the unforgivable sin.**

Adapted from the original article "Have You Committed the Unpardonable Sin?" by Dr. David Jeremiah.

## Salem Scenes



The "Time for Children" "Sandy" skit



Cory McCollow recently promoted to Lieutenant Commander with the United States Coast Guard. Pictured with wife Silvia and daughter Adelina



Salem trip to see the Ark Encounter at Williamstown, KY



## 2017 Vacation Bible School



This year's Vacation Bible School met **Monday and Tuesday, August 7 and 8<sup>th</sup>, 9:30-11:30 am with 23 children attending.** Many thanks for those who helped.

The theme was *"Jesus In My Heart."*

Stories, songs, and activities were instructional for the children to understand what Jesus did when He died for us, and how to have an alive relationship with God. One hundred sample photos are on our website for downloading at <http://saalemchurch.cc/Photos.htm>.







### Church Financial Update

Needed to Date: \$67,690.00  
 Received to Date: \$67,130.64

## Prayer Concerns

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Elizabeth Adkins (liver issue)  
Violet Ashton  
Matt Blackmore  
Leona Browning  
Aiden Ellerbrock (serious injuries from a fall)  
Natalie Ellerbrock (Stacia Profit's niece)  
Doris Evans (cancer)  
Colin Good (emphysema – son of Charlie Good)  
Larry Howell  
Linda Howell  
Jeremy Hughes (recovering from MRSA)  
Noell Hunter (Type 1 diabetes)  
Nancy Lautzenheiser (colon cancer)  
Betty Lloyd  
Elizabeth Markus (depression and salvation)  
Janet Mohr  
Marian Morris  
Ronnie Neate (throat cancer)  
Dorothea Plikerd (Rehab at Roselawn)  
Walter Poling (heart attack & possible kidney failure)  
Lewis Price (bladder cancer & stones)  
Joyce Profit (cataract surgery)  
Bob Pugh (arm healing)  
George Siler (physical therapy)  
Bill Stewart (heart issues)  
Keith Stoller (surgical complications)  
Thad Summersett (brain tumor)  
Warren Summersett (cancer)  
Natalie Wilkens (90 years old and failing in health)  
Noah Wyatt (son of Stuart Wyatt)

\*Condolences to the family of Melanie Huddleston  
(Kim Coil's sister).

## In Our Thoughts & Prayers

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



### Violet Ashton

Roselawn Manor  
420 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St.  
Spencerville, OH 45887

### Warren Summersett

Vancrest Healthcare  
10357 VW—Decatur  
Van Wert, OH 45891

### Betty Lloyd

Van Wert Manor  
160 Fox Road  
Van Wert, OH 45891

### Marian Morris

Hearth & Home  
1118 Westwood Dr.  
Van Wert, OH 45891

### Marjorie Rhoades

Hearth & Home  
1118 Westwood Dr.  
Van Wert, OH 45891

## Serving our Country

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### Cory McCollow

(U.S. Coast Guard)  
311 Oak Street #109  
Oakland, CA 94607

### Nick Fuller

(U.S. Air Force)  
*Grandson of Dave & Ann  
Rees*

### Phoebe Eutsler

(U.S. Army)

### Pete McCollow

(U.S. Marine Corps)  
116 HAC Street  
Jacksonville, NC 28540

### Micah Linger

Grandson of Doris Evans  
(U.S. Marine Corps)  
LCTL Linger, Micah  
9 phesb 3mlg H&S Co.  
Unit 38430 FPO AP96385

## Away at College

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**Evan Pugh** – Aquinas University, Grand Rapids

**Andrew Emery** – University of Cincinnati

**Christina Emery** – University of Cincinnati

## Birthdays

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1 Elizabeth Adkins	1 Kim Ebel
3 Pete McCollow	4 Claudia LeValley
4 Katie McClure	11 Landon Price
18 Jayne Morris	18 Morgan Pugh
20 Megan Jones	23 April Ellerbrock
25 Darlene Jones	26 Cindy Davis
26 Marian Morris	27 Brian Ellerbrock
27 Lisa Lloyd	29 Stephanie Beck
30 Jack Blackmore	

## Anniversaries

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8<sup>th</sup> Paul & Doris Price  
11<sup>th</sup> Doug & Jan Jones  
15<sup>th</sup> Bob & Denise Pugh  
28<sup>th</sup> Eric & Jen Pugh

# September 2017

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	1	2
<b>3</b> 9:30 AM Worship Peace Offering 10:45 Sunday School 4-6 PM Light meal served <b>7:00 PM Gymanfa Ganu</b>	<b>4 Labor Day</b>	5	6	7	8	9
<b>10</b> 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 Sunday School 5:00 Trustee Meeting	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>17</b> 9:30 AM Worship <b>Blessing of the Tractors</b> <b>Potluck following service</b> 4:00 Session Meeting	18	19	20	21	22	23
<b>24</b> 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 Sunday School	25	26	<b>27</b> <b>Noon - Senior Luncheon</b>	28	29	30

Week of	Greeter	Special Music	Ushers	Flowers	Nursery
Sep 3	Evelyn Martz	Sheila Collins	The Price family	Liz Hobbs Gwenda Blackmore	Ross & Alyssa Evans
Sep 10		To be announced			Toby & Elizabeth Adkins
Sep 17		Jan Jones			Dave & Carla Breese
Sep 24		Josh VanGorder			Bob & Kathy McCollow



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

# Sounds of Salem Newsletter

Church Phone: 419-667-4142  
Church Web Pages: [www.SalemChurch.cc](http://www.SalemChurch.cc)  
[www.facebook.com/salemchurchvenedocia](http://www.facebook.com/salemchurchvenedocia)  
Church E-Mail: [Secretary@SalemChurch.cc](mailto:Secretary@SalemChurch.cc)  
Rev. Thomas Emery's cell: 419-863-9131  
Pastor's Email: [PastorTomEmery@live.com](mailto:PastorTomEmery@live.com)



VBS Pledge of Allegiance

September 2017 REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY YEAR A	
<b>13th Sunday after Pentecost – Sept 3</b>	
Ex. 3:1-15	Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26,45b
Rom. 12:9-21	Matt. 16:21-28
<b>14th Sunday after Pentecost – Sept 10</b>	
Ex. 12:1-14	Psalm 149
Rom. 13:8-14	Matt. 18:15-20
<b>15th Sunday after Pentecost – Sept 17</b>	
Ex. 14:19-31	Psalm 114
Rom. 14:1-12	Matt. 18:21-35
<b>16th Sunday after Pentecost – Sept 24</b>	
Ex. 16:2-15	Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Phil. 1:21-30	Mat. 20:1-16