

# SOUNDS OF SALEM

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

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## PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matthew 6:33 KJV).*

In his book, Dedication and Leadership, Douglas Hyde gives us an interesting contrast between the demands of atheistic Communism and Christianity. From his early days as a Communist, Hyde tells us that the Party appealed to recruits, because of the sacrifice and commitment that they saw in those already in the Communist Party.

The Party knew that it was bad psychology to ask for low commitment or small sacrifices. New members were expected to devote all of themselves to the Communist movement for life's meaning even dying for the cause, and that is the only example that they saw from fellow members. The ends justify wrong means.

Unfortunately, Communism takes good men with good intentions and uses them for a bad cause. Because its approaches to God, the nature of man, and the world, Communism starts off on the wrong foot. The consequences are that the men, who join the party, start out to be saviors, and instead become men's abusers. It is Christianity that a gives the better world.

As Lent begins, realize that by comparison, Hyde says that the Church often asks very little of Christians. We have the amazing Good News of the Creator God's love and acceptance, and it is a message worth devoting one's life. Unfortunately, we often seem afraid to ask people to make major devotions or to live sacrificial lives. Hyde notes that such a lukewarm Christianity won't grip the watching world's minds and hearts.

We forget that our God is alive and active in the world. God is never satisfied with being second or third in our priorities. God wants us to live a lifestyle that is more than abundant in quality. This can only happen if we are willing to surrender ourselves with all abandon. God calls us to devote ourselves by full obedience to His commands so that we can readily receive the fullness of His love as His children. We position ourselves by seeking after Him with our whole heart. Seeking God without limitation unleashes us into the full blessings that naturally flow from His presence.

When we seek God, our desire for Him grows. We become more dependent on who God is, not what He can give us. We become nourished by His love and realize He created us, and He alone is our fulfillment.

The more we know our merciful God, the more we see how infinite He is. His ways are right and important to live by for the true well-being for us and others. Those who have studied the Bible, have spent much time seeking God and acquiring a rich relationship with Him. Our relationship with God goes as deep and as close as we allow it. God gives the invitation for intimacy and waits for us to pursue relationship with Him.

God does not keep anything good from us. As it has been said, He gave His one and only Son to die for us to take the punishment for our sins; that is the ultimate gift. So, why would He keep anything from us that would obviously be less valuable? This Lent, let us ponder James 4:8, "*Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.*"

*Pastor Tom*

### Ash Wednesday and the Journey of Lent

The forty days of Lent that begin on Ash Wednesday are a time for Christians' self-examination, purification, and a closer journey with God. Many Christians adopt a spiritual discipline for the forty days, including fasting from certain foods or adding spiritual study and reading to their daily schedules.



The forty days of Lent remind us of the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness after his

baptism, fasting and being tempted by Satan ([Matthew 4:1-11](#); [Mark 1:12-13](#); [Luke 4:1-13](#)), as well as the forty days that Moses spent in spiritual questing on Mt. Sinai ([Exodus 24:18](#)). There is also the spiritual legacy of the forty years that the Israelites spent wandering in the

desert after their release from slavery in Egypt ([Deuteronomy 8:2-4](#)). All of these scriptural traditions give us a heritage of spiritual questing through prayer and self-discipline.

The Lenten journey begins with Ash Wednesday, the day on which worshipers' foreheads are marked with a cross of the dark ash of palms (often palms used in the previous year's Palm Sunday observances) as a sign of penitence and mourning and as a foretaste of the death that is to come on Good Friday.

### Were You There?

This anonymous written plantation spiritual hymn asks the listener to imagine him or herself at Jesus's crucifixion. Such an inventive move is particularly compelling for oppressed people, such as the American slaves who traditionally sang this song, who are thus reminded that Jesus has experienced terrible suffering and understands their pain.



The repetition of lines allows for ease of communal singing; when combined with the song's slow, somber melody, this repetition also gives the spiritual a meditative quality.

Note the physical response to the spiritual contemplation; picturing oneself at the scene of the crucifixion leads one to "*tremble, tremble, tremble.*"

*1 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,  
tremble.  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

*2 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?  
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?*

*Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,  
tremble.*

*Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?*

*3 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?  
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?  
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,  
tremble.*

*Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

*4 Were you there when God raised him from the  
tomb?*

*Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?  
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,  
tremble.*

*Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?*

### Walking the Path – A Poem for Lent by Justin Farley

Today my journey begins.  
I will walk the winding path  
That you have set before me.  
I will leave behind the comforts of yesterdays –  
The stability of life without unforeseen change  
Where I am the captain of my soul,  
The master of my destiny,  
And the ruler of my fate.  
But now I leave the wide, empty fields  
And enter through the narrow gate –  
Where I depart from my crumbling kingdom  
And admit that I'm not fit to rule.  
I choose to become a servant of your will  
And refuse to feed mine any longer.  
I choose to be weak  
And in the process grow stronger  
With every piece of me that gets replaced with you.  
I don't know where you will lead me.  
And if I'm honest, I'm terrified  
Because every inch of my mind  
Is telling me that it's foolish  
To venture into the unknown with  
Only faith as my guide.  
But my heart knows that faith is more than enough  
And when the road gets tough,  
You'll be there by my side.  
My spirit soars singing  
That I shall be released,  
As soon as I find that I've lost myself  
And discover that you have increased.

## A New Lifestyle

Repentance means establishing new priorities dependent on God's purpose for our lives.

A man lost his job in the great depression of the thirties. His savings were quickly gone. He and his wife lost their home. His grief was multiplied when she died quite suddenly. The only thing he had left was his faith, and it was weakening.

One day when he was out looking for work, he stopped to watch some men who were doing the stonework on a church building. One of those men was skillfully chiseling a triangular piece of rock. Not seeing the spot where it would fit, he asked, "*Where are you going to put that?*"



The man pointed toward the top of the building and said, "*See that little opening up there near the spire? That's where it goes. I'm shaping it down here so it will fit up there.*"

Suddenly, God was speaking to him through these words: "*Shaping it down here so it will fit up there.*" He discovered what he must do with his remaining days: shape his life to fit up there.

Many of us need to make that same discovery. We need to change directions. Even God repented once. He was going to destroy a city because of its wickedness. They repented. He changed his plan.

Are you open to a change of plans? You've been walking in your own way. Are you willing to walk in His way? Being baptized with water will not of itself make you a new person any more than deer meat can become fish because it has been baptized. Only a

willingness to change directions and an invitation to Christ to come into your life can do that.

-Adapted from writings of King Duncan

## Group Prayer

The apostles learned their leadership patterns from the Master, Jesus Christ. Scan the Gospels for Jesus' teaching and practice of prayer, and you will identify 37 verses, sometimes repeated in more than one Gospel. Of those 37 instances in which Jesus refers to prayer, 33 of them were addressed to a plural rather than singular audience. In other words, Jesus' instruction decisively leaned toward praying with others, not just praying in private.

The Book of Acts records the mighty works of God for and through His church in its early years, and clearly connects them to unified, corporate prayer. The 120 were gathered in an upper room praying in one accord when the Holy Spirit comes (Acts 1:13; 2:1).

The disciples prayed for wisdom in knowing who Judas' replacement should be (Acts 1:24).

When Peter and John reported the Sanhedrin's threats, those gathered cried out to God in one accord for boldness, and the place was shaken where they prayed (Acts 4:24, 31).

The church prayed over the seven men appointed to serve the widows (Acts 6:6).

After James was martyred and Peter imprisoned by Herod, the church was fervently praying, and God miraculously delivered Peter from his cell (Acts 12:1-11).

While the prophets and teachers were praying and fasting, the Holy Spirit called Paul and Barnabas to go on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-2). Paul and Silas were praying when God sent an earthquake that resulted in the conversion of the jailer and their release (Acts 16:25).

Let us not disparage personal, private prayer. Ananias was praying alone when God instructed him to go to Saul (Acts 9:10ff.). Peter was alone on the rooftop when he had his famous vision leading him to share the Gospel with a Gentile named Cornelius (Acts 10:9ff.). Nevertheless, the majority of God's recorded workings came when His people prayed together.

There are so many examples of how corporate prayer was the springboard for the sweeping movements of God. Let me mention a few. In 1857, America was riding the wave of a strong economy, and, as tends to be true in times of prosperity, showed a radical decrease of interest in the things of God. There was a layman named Jeremiah Lamphier whose concern led to a call for prayer. He tacked up notices in New York City calling for a weekly prayer meeting on Wednesdays from noon till one at a rented space on Fulton Street.

The first prayer meeting was on September 23, 1857. Only six people came, and they didn't arrive until just before 12:30. The next week, the attendance jumped to 20. The numbers continued to climb week-by-week.

Then, on October 10th, the Stock Market crashed and financial panic ensued. Trouble had its humbling affect, and the hearts of many turned to spiritual matters. It wasn't long until somewhere between 10 and 50,000 businessmen were meeting every day in NYC to pray at noon. By week 15, the meetings moved from weekly to daily.

In 1858, this prayer movement leaped to every major city in America. The Second Great Awakening swept our land. Estimates are that a million Americans out of a population of 30 million at that time were converted in less than two years. And it all started with prayer.

Rees Howells, a Welsh coal miner, journeyed to South Africa as a missionary in 1910 in response to an increasing burden from the Lord. Six weeks after arriving, he joined in a prayer meeting. Out of that came the sweeping work of the Holy Spirit in which they had two revival meetings a day for fifteen months and all day on Friday. Thousands were converted as a result.

You can find story after story of how corporate prayer became the springboard for the mighty movement of God. Right now, the Gospel is sweeping the globe at a rate that is unimaginable. The missionary, Avery Willis, has reported that statistically, most of the people who have ever been saved in history were saved during the 20th Century. Willis suggested as high as 70 percent of the total number of people who have been saved throughout world history have come to Christ in the last hundred years.

But get this: 70 percent of that number has been saved since 1945! Let me boggle your mind with one other layer of observation from this world missions expert: 70 percent of those saved since 1945 were saved since

1990! That's how fast the Gospel is storming our world. That means that at the turn of the 21st Century, possibly one-third of all Christians who have ever lived have been converted since 1990!



What does that look like? In Nepal, just 2000 Christians were known in 1990; ten years later that number had grown to half a million. Cambodia claimed only 600 believers in 1990; there is a reported 60,000 today. In

Korea during the 20th Century, the country advanced from being 2 percent Christian to about 40 percent Christian today.

East Africa is experiencing one of the greatest movements of God in history. In Uganda alone, HIV/AIDS once claimed the lives of one-third of the population. The World Health Organization predicted the complete collapse of the Ugandan economy by the year 2000. But revival has come to that country. With the salvation of many has come a transformation in morals, so that AIDS is down to 5 percent. So great is this revival that one church alone went from 7 in attendance to an average of 2000 in just two weeks! Currently, that same church has a membership of 22,000 and has planted 150 other churches.

In almost every quarter of the globe, Christianity is advancing...except for four primary areas: North America, Japan, Australia, and Western Europe. Guess what one of the common denominators is everywhere Christianity marches forward? Christians spend time in prayer together.

- Adapted from writings of Lloyd Stillely

### The Most Important X

"Find X." There are many types of Xs in the world – educational Xs, connection Xs, informative Xs, and entertainment Xs. These can be broken down further. For example, mathematical Xs (X coordinate on a 4-quadrant graph, relationship Xs (an X-spouse), files (a CIA file labeled Patient X), even video game systems (2015 white X-box 1).

There are many ways to find those Xs (*and ways not to find them*). The Most Important X is unique, eternal, has emotions, is perfect, righteous, and holy. This X created everything, it even has a Son. This X is God.

Now, that we know that God is the Most Important X in life, all we must do is find Him. There are ways to find Xs and ways not to find Xs. As for this particular X, finding God is the same way.

You cannot find God in perversion, horror movies, cursing, anger, hatred, fear, etc. You can find God in truth, love, reading the Bible, sincere compliments, hope, joy, peace, grace, etc. God is perfect, powerful, loving, true, real, trustworthy, joyful, hopeful, sincere, etc.

When you find the Most Important X, you can choose to commit to further seeking after Him, or you can choose to turn away, discard, and/or deny everything about this X. This decision is the most important choice that everyone must make in his or her life. If you choose to follow everything about this X, then you will never cease to find all the factors that are included in this X. You have also, made the best and wisest decision of your life.

On the other hand, if you choose to turn away from this X, you have made the worst decision of your entire life, and it will become clear that you will eternally face the consequences, even after your death. The Most Important X will continue to bless everything about your entire life, as long as you give up every part of your life. The hardest part to give up in everybody's life is his or her past.

Even though it is hard to give up, the Bible tells us multiple ways to give it up. What it means to give up your past is to tell God that you are sorry (repent) for all of the bad (sinful) things that you have done in the past, admit that you have committed them; finally, ask for forgiveness for it all. You need to do this daily. Once you ask for forgiveness, God WILL forgive all the sinful things that you have committed. The Bible also tells us, "God knows no sin." That means that God forgives you and your sin is forever forgotten. God will do this every time that you repent.

In conclusion, there are many Xs in this world. God is the Most Important X. This particular X is loving, perfect and forgiving! Choose to follow Him, and He will forgive and bless you eternally.

- Catie Emery, age 17

## Music Committee Update

Mark your calendars for the 2018 Gymanfa Ganu to be held Sunday, September 2, 2018.

The director this year will be Trefor Williams, who has not been to Venedocia since 2014. Trefor currently resides in Milwaukee, Wisconsin but is talking about returning to Wales for retirement. We look forward to having Trefor return to Venedocia and direct the best Gymanfa in the USA!

Connie O'Neill will be on the organ with Mary Ann Owens Mathews returning to her homeland to play the piano.

Please plan to join us! (cool weather has been pre-ordered)



Rock Garden in Memorial Park

## Family Request

Kim Owens will be 60 on February 18. We would like to have a card shower to encourage her in her battle against cancer. Her address is: 13373 Jonestown Road, Van Wert, OH 45891

*The Owens Family*

## Church Financial Update

Needed to Date: \$7,708.00

Received to Date: \$6,259.95

# IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

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

## Serving our Country

### **Natalie Morgan Wilkins**

Vancrest Healthcare  
10357 VW—Decatur  
Van Wert, OH 45891

### **Marjorie Rhoades**

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

### **Bob Louth**

15113 Main St  
Venedocia, OH 45894

### **Marian Morris**

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

### **Warren Summerset**

Vancrest Healthcare  
10357 VW—Decatur  
Van Wert, OH 45891

### **David Hugh Evans**

PO Box 696  
Venedocia, Ohio 45894

### **Cory McCollow**

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

### **Phoebe Eutsler (Army)**

### **Pete McCollow**

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

### **Micah Linger**

Grandson of Doris Evans  
(U.S. Marine Corps)  
Cpl. Linger, Micah  
9<sup>th</sup> ESB 3MLG /H+S Co.  
Unit #38430 FPO AP96385

## Away at College

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

**Andrew Emery** – University of Cincinnati

**Christina Emery** – University of Cincinnati

## Condolences

Condolences to the families of Jim O'Neill,  
Martha Walker, and Janice Owens

## Birthdays

1 John Lloyd

4 Andrew Emery

11 Evelyn Martz

15 Ryan Fair

16 Scott Lloyd

18 Marilyn Foust

21 Paul Price

25 Bill McGee

28 Jean Owens

1 Ashley McClure

4 Jerry Foust

12 Madison Pugh

16 Jeff Lloyd

18 Dalton Ellerbrock

19 Corey Hobbs

24 Tim Price

27 Kevin Fair

## Anniversaries

15 Brian & April Ellerbrock

15 John C. & Anne Morris

## Prayer Concerns

Tim Adams

Peggy Burnett (cancer)

Aiden Ellerbrock (serious injuries from a fall)

Natalie Ellerbrock (Stacia Profit's niece)

Doris Evans (cancer)

Suzanne Hadley-Himes (recurrent cancer)

Bill Harmon (cancer)

Larry Howell

Linda Howell

Bob Hundley (cancer)

Tim Hurbert (cancer in lungs & pancreas)

Jan Jones (health Issues)

Paula Jones (healing from fall)

Nancy Lautzenheiser (colon cancer)

Carol Lee

Bob Louth

Becky Martz (health problems)

Marian Morris

Ronnie Neate (throat cancer)

Kim Owens (cancer)

Dorothea Plikerd

Walter Poling

Joyce Profit

Mallory Rentz (blood clot in brain)

Randy Richards (mowing accident & loss of wife)

Julie Sheets (lung cancer)

Bobbie Spyles

Thad Summerset (brain tumor, grandson of Warren)

Natalie Wilkins (failing health, 90 years old)

Noah Wyatt (son of Stuart Wyatt)

# February 2018

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
<b>4</b> 9:30 Worship Approve Annual Reports Souper Bowl of Caring 10:45 Sunday School	5	<b>6</b> 7pm Teens for Christ	7	8	9	10
<b>11</b> 9:30 Worship. 10:45 Sunday School 5:00 Trustee Meeting 7pm VW Prayer Meeting at Trinity Friends	12	<b>13</b> 7pm Teens for Christ	<b>14</b> <b>Ash Wednesday</b> 6 pm Dinner 7 pm Service	15	16	17
<b>18</b> 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:45 Session Meeting	19	<b>20</b> 10am Presbytery Tiffin meeting 7pm Teens for Christ	21	22	23	<b>24</b> 9am Vantage "Children of Trauma" workshop (free)
<b>25</b> 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 7pm Lent Pulpit Share Pastor Tom at Agape (Spencerville)	26	<b>30</b> 7pm Teens for Christ	31			

Week of	Special Music	Nursery	Flowers
February 4	Shonda Pugh Marley	Bill & Ruth Evans	TBD
February 11	Jan Jones	Eric & Jenny Pugh	TBD
February 18	Tamara Mullenhour	Rex & Lisa Lloyd	TBD
February 25	Jr. Choir Bells	Tuzz & Liz Hobbs	TBD
<b>Ushers</b>	Bill & Ruth Evans & Tuzz & Liz Hobbs	<b>Greeter:</b>	Kelly Lloyd

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

Church Phone: 419-667-4142  
Church Web Pages: [www.SalemChurch.cc](http://www.SalemChurch.cc)  
[www.facebook.com/salemchurchvenedocia](http://www.facebook.com/salemchurchvenedocia)  
Secretary E-Mail: [Secretary@SalemChurch.cc](mailto:Secretary@SalemChurch.cc)  
Secretary's cell: 419-303-2032  
Rev. Thomas Emery's cell: 419-863-9131  
Pastor's Email: [PastorTomEmery@live.com](mailto:PastorTomEmery@live.com)



## *Sounds of Salem Newsletter*

### *"Ashes"*

We rise again from ashes,  
from the good we've failed to do.  
We rise again from ashes, to create ourselves a-new.  
If all our world is ashes, then must our lives be true,  
An offering of ashes, an offering to You.  
We offer You our failures, we offer You attempts,  
The gifts not fully given, the dreams not fully dreamt.  
Give our stumblings direction,  
give our visions wider view,  
An offering of ashes, an offering to You.  
Then rise again from ashes, let healing come to pain,  
Though spring has turned to winter,  
and sunshine turned to rain.  
The rain we'll use for growing,  
and create the world anew  
From an offering of ashes, an offering to You.  
Thanks be to the Father, who made us like himself.  
Thanks be to the Son, who saved us by His death.  
Thanks be to the Spirit, who creates the world anew.  
From an offering of ashes, an offering to You.

<b>February 2018 REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY YEAR B</b>	
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany – February 4</b>	
Isa. 40:21-31	Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Cor. 9:16-23	Mark 1:29-39
<b>Transfiguration of the Lord – February 11</b>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Kings 2:1-12	Psalm 50:1-6
2 Cor. 4:3-6	Mark 9:2-9
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent – February 18</b>	
Gen. 9:8-17	Psalm 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22	Mark 1:9-15
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent– February 25</b>	
Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16	Psalm 22:23-31
Rom. 4:13-25	Mark 8:31-38