



SOUNDS OF SALEM



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

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December 2020

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

The angel said to Joseph, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20-21 NLT).

The Christmas story is about Jesus, the long-awaited promised Messiah, born not in a palace, but in an animal manger to a teenage family in poverty. He grew to perfectly obey the Hebrew Law and to become the sacrificial payment on the cross for the sins of those who turn to God in remorse for their sins. During His hard life, He experienced all the trials and tribulations that we could ever experience so that we know that our Savior understands us with our own trials and tribulations.

It is the Christmas gift of eternal life with God for those who will receive it. It is almost too much to believe that God's Son in His merciful love would come to earth to take the form of a newborn child in order to eventually die for us to make us right with God. It is hard to believe that God would have such love for us even when we can't help but break His commandments.

To receive God's Christmas gift, we must realize that His promises are not limited by our circumstances. We are chained by our reality, but God is not. Our reality has no hope, but God's reality has no human limits. We can have joy in all circumstances if we focus on God's love and promises for us. We are promised a future life without pain, sorrow, or tears if we follow Christ.

During this Christmas season while people ponder the birth of the child as our Savior, God urges us to share our faith of following Christ with family and friends around us. At the end of His lifetime on earth, before Christ was lifted to return to heaven, He gave us His simple instructions. Let us worship Christ by sharing our faith this Christmas season!

¹⁹ *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20 NLT).*

Pastor Tom Emery

O Come O Come Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear



Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel
O come, O come, Thou Lord of Might
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height

In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud, and majesty and awe, refrain
O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny

From depths of hell Thy people save
And give them victory o'er the grave, refrain
O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight, refrain
O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home

Make safe the way that leads on high
And close the path to misery, refrain
O come, Thou Wisdom from on high
And order all things, far and nigh

To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go, refrain
O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind

Lessons Hidden in the Christmas Story

Bid Thou our sad divisions cease
And be Thyself our King of peace, refrain

The hymn has its origins over 1,200 years ago in monastic life in the 8th or 9th century. O Come O Come Emmanuel was initially sung by monks in monasteries during the medieval days. This song's words were considered so important that a separate stanza was assigned to each of the most pious monks, to be sung from the 16th of December to the 23rd. In the 1800s, a standard tune was written for it and the refrain was added. Today, O Come O Come Emmanuel remains one of the most popular carols to be sung, especially during the advent season.

As sung by [The Petersons](#)

As adapted from Praisecharts, "The Story Behind 'O Come O Come Emmanuel'"

Emmanuel, the Child of Promise and Hope

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

In Scripture, some children were specially promised by God. Abraham was promised a son (Genesis 15:4). Hannah

prayed for a son, and God promised to answer her prayer (1 Samuel 1:17). Through the birth of each promised child, God gave great hope to His chosen people.

The birth of Jesus was promised many times, Isaiah proclaims the promise of a child who would be the mighty God. It is this child, Jesus, who was later promised to Mary (Luke 1:26-31) and Joseph (Matthew 1-21). The angel who appeared to Joseph and this child "will save his people from their sins." That promise gives hope to all who believe this child is the Son of God, who lived, suffered and died for them.

What a child! What a promise! What a gift of peace! Lord Jesus, we give thanks to You for the gift of hope and peace! In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Adapted from Eldor Kaiser, "Creative Communications for the Parish"



What's the best story you've ever heard—the one that drew you in and had you hanging on every word until the end? Since many of us grew up hearing the Christmas story, sometimes the wonder is lost in the retelling. But for today, sit back and watch the story unfold from hidden lessons you may have never considered.

1. God offers forgiveness to all

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit" ([Isaiah 11:1-2](#)).

The underlying message, woven throughout the Christmas story, is "God and sinners reconciled". Whether we're proud of our ancestral roots or not, we're stuck with them. And while we don't get to choose our lineage, God chose Christ's human ancestry right from David's seed.

David—the man after God's own heart, yet David—the man who committed adultery. This speaks to our Father's abundant mercy! The Messiah descended from a royal human bloodline, but one riddled with human frailty. But Christ's heavenly ancestry rang perfect, pure, and holy.

This is the ministry of reconciliation. God sent Emmanuel—God with us, to "save His people from their sins"; [no matter who we are, or](#)

[what we've done.](#)

2. Christ will be our shepherd

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!'" (Luke 2:13-14 NIV).

Shepherds were looked down on in Bethlehem society. People didn't exactly rub elbows with them at social events. But God's message was clear—this hope was for ALL people, including shepherds!

There is another reason why the appearance to the shepherds is important. Ezekiel 34:15, "I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord God", is just one of many passages in the Old Testament referring to Christ as our Shepherd. Christ

came to bestow peace, but also to lead us. What a comfort!

3. God can perform the impossible

"And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation'" (Luke 1:46-50).

Cousins Mary and Elizabeth each had miraculous reasons to rejoice! God had honored their everyday faithfulness by granting them pregnancies. Both seemed impossibilities; one, an old woman of 80 years; the other, a virgin.

As the angel said to Mary upon the announcement that she would conceive in holiness, "For nothing shall be impossible with God".

4. God provides in His way

"So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:6-7).

We tend to glance over the stable birth, forgetting how traumatizing that would be for an expectant mom. But you can be sure that Mary, a female, probably fretted over this.

Well, Mary was on a trip! And not only that, but she also couldn't find a decent room in which to have her baby! She also had to lay him where the animals fed. But God used Mary, an unwed teenage girl, to deliver His Christmas gift on a trip in a barn. He provided in His way, in His time.

5. God grants peace when we wait on Him

"But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

Mary had just experienced unexpected excitement, what with the shepherds rushing in and out, telling everyone about her baby. Not only was she processing, but she was probably experiencing protective, maternal instincts.

She recalled the angel's words to her. "Blessed are you among women", "Son of God", and "Nothing shall be impossible with God" were now fulfilled. This was really happening, and she needed time to catch up to the ramifications for her son; her family.

When we pause to reflect, we allow the Spirit to speak. We can reflect on the wonder of our personal God; God of the impossible.

6. God is in control of leadership and world events

"When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born" (Matthew 2:3-4).

Herod was jealous, and God knew it; in fact, God allowed the wise men to go straight to this pompous king in search of the Real King. Why? God, the Creator, set that star in the sky, pointing the wise men to Bethlehem. But then—nothing. No directions. They had lost sight of the star.

"Surely the king would know! He could tell them where the child-king was!" So, they thought. Instead, he sought to find the child and destroy him.

In every twist and turn of the story surrounding Christ's birth, God's hand overrules. Our God, who made the earth, sky, and stars, had a plan.

Our world is in much the same, chaotic state as back in Herod's day; we worry about the future. It's hard, trusting a God we cannot see, while perplexing events unfold. But God is in control, and peace lies in resting in the Prince of Peace.

This story has a happy ending—yet one with a complex meaning. Even though we are a sinful people, God regards our lowliness, desiring to forgive and shepherd us through life.

As the shepherds returned to the sheep-dotted hillside, they carried with them a joy they'd never known. The wise men experienced God's sovereignty in directing them safely home. Our personal God used each character in the story to reveal these hidden truths. But if we're not careful—we'll miss them.

We can rest and reflect like Mary, assured that God knows our story, and that He has a plan. We can't explain it all, but we know the One Who guided the star. And the happy ending? He came to bring us inner peace, no matter our circumstances.

Adapted from "6 Lessons Hidden in the Christmas Story" by Ruthie Gray
Crosswalk.com 2017 29 Dec

Salem Website, Facebook and FM Radio

During the coronavirus outbreak, our website is **SalemChurch.cc**. Our Facebook pages are: "**Salem Presbyterian Church Venedocia**" for our Facebook

Live unedited service recorded using just a cell phone. Our Group Page is “**Salem United Presbyterian Church**” for private spiritual church wide discussions. Our two mile short-range FM station is **FM 87.9** for the Venedocia-area during service times.

Church Financial Update

Although most of you were probably not celebrating November’s Thanksgiving as you normally would, we wanted to bring light to one important consideration on this coming holiday season: If 2020 has taught us anything, it is that we should hold gratitude in our hearts every moment of every day for all that we hold dear—because in the blink of an eye, anything could change.

Before the pandemic hit Salem Church, we were doing financially better than last year at this time. This year church services and events like the Gymanfa Ganu and meal events were cancelled and restricted by the State of Ohio, with that, we need more than ever for our church family to continue their giving during this trying time. We are behind in some repairs in our attempt to stretch-out our limited income.

It is because of you that Salem can look confidently towards 2021. Although the path ahead may have been altered by 2020, because of you we know that the path remains of the witness to Christ of Salem Church and its church family.

Prayerfully consider making a donation. Church offerings should be mailed to the church at:

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

Needed to Date: \$92,472.59
Received to 2020-11-22 \$101,472.70

Announcements

Because of the Covid rate in Van Wert County, we will not have the annual Advent meal, the Manse Party or the Christmas Caroling this year. We will still have the **Christmas Program on December 13th**, and we will have a **Christmas reception** after the service.

Many people have been taking their quarantine time to make Christmas ornaments, and we will have a sharing of Christmas cheer with an **ornament exchange** to show our Christmas love for one another. Talk to Carol Emery for more information.

By November 22nd, Salem collected 33 **Christmas Shoe Boxes**. We were part of an amazing project that brings hope and joy to children in over 100 countries. Not only do they receive fun and useful items, but they also hear the Gospel message. In the past 10 years, 8.9 million children reported making decisions for Christ.

We have collected 569 **gravy packages** toward our goal this year of 650 packages to donate to the Salvation Army. They are due by December 6th.

Please take photos and contribute recipes, thoughts, and ideas for the January newsletter. Submit them to secretary@salemchurch.cc.

The Election Day Supper



November 3rd - Cars backed up from in front of the Lions Club to past the Post Office

The Election Day Supper this past month turned out differently in many ways. First, due to Covid we were encouraged to not have indoor seating, so we decided to experiment with a drive-thru version. Well... Big THANKS to all of you who supported us and sat patiently in line it turned out to be very successful, and we did it safely. I would like to thank all of our members for their donations and all the people who helped work. It all came together; we just did not anticipate the amount of people we would have the opportunity to serve. We apologize to those who were turned away, because we ran out of food and hope they will join us next year as we already plan to do it again.

The money raised, approximately \$2,000.00 was put in the General Fund. As we go forward, we hope to be back with our Ice Cream Social in the summer and look forward to being able to be more sociable. Until then stay safe, God Bless, Kathy McCollow

2021 Newly Elected Officers

Session
Gloria Leiter
Steve Richards

Nominating Committee
Marylin Foust
Kim Coil

Trustees
Bob McCollow
Eric Pugh

Head Usher
Liz Hobbs

Music Committee
Kathy McCollow
Jan Jones

Church Secretary
Liz Hobbs

Clerk of Session
Carolyn Girod

Treasurer
Lisa Lloyd

Financial Secretary
Kim Coil

Auditor
Todd Morris



November 8th – Veterans Day and the New Member joint receptions

The Sights of Salem



November 3rd - Some of the Election Night Supper volunteers



November 8th Session and Trustees joint meeting over the Budget and the Nominating Committee Reports



November 8th – Ceremonial inception of new members: Steve and Lindsay Richards with their four children [Lindsay was called into work and will be formally added later]



November 22nd – David Dave VanTilburg special music recital of Louis Moreau Gottschalk's virtuoso piece, "Union, Paraprase de Concert (RO 269)"



November 26th - The Lloyd family installing Christmas decorations at Salem

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

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

Bartie Jones

407 Stony Ridge Dr.
Sandusky, OH 44870-5468

Marjorie Rhoades

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

Marian Morris

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

Ione Owens

Van Wert Manor
160 Fox Road
Van Wert, OH 45891

Serving our Country

Cory McCollow

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

SPC Eutsler, Phoebe

(Army)
CMR 405 Box 3825
APO, AE 09034

Dillon Ellerbrock (Marines)

Grandson of Gloria Leiter

Sgt. Linger, Micah

(U.S. Marine Corps)
2nd MEF G4
PCS Box 20085
Camp Lejeune, NC 28542

Lloyd (Butch) Eutsler

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

Gyer Blackmore (Army)

Section BDE. S1. Unit HHC
101st DSB
APO AE 09366

At College

Evan Pugh – University of Northwestern Ohio

Christina Emery – University of Cincinnati

Madison Pugh – USCGA | 15 Mohegan Ave.
8785 Chase Hall | New London, CT 06320

Birthdays

5 Dave Owens	8 Paige Thatcher
9 Jason Lloyd	13 Marilyn Stockton
17 Jeremy Morris	23 Jeff Owens
24 Mary Ellen Lloyd	30 Isaiah Pugh

Anniversaries

16 Kent & Heather McClure
28 Doug & Marilyn Stickler

Condolences

Condolences to the families of Larry Tribolet & Carol Ringwald

Prayer Concerns

Connie Bassett (breast cancer)
Barry Coil (stroke)
Kathy Comer
Cathy Donnal (health issues)
Catie Emery (nightmares)
Melissa (Summersett) Fallis (cancer)
Stephanie Gamble (eye issues)
Suzanne Hadley-Himes (recurrent cancer)
Jerry Holscher
Dale Kiesza (leg operation)
Nancy Lautzenheiser (colon cancer)
Karen Lentz
LuAnn (family issues)
John Lloyd
Donald Martin

Carol Matthews (Lou Gehrig's disease)
David Morris (Zeb)
Marian Morris
Judy Jones Muhn (health issues)
Nursing Homes and all residents
Ione Owens
John & Joe Pavel
Marjorie Rhodes
Daune & Denise Schrieber
Derek Sellers (Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy)
Doug Smith (Jen Pugh's father)
Mary Strayer (cancer)
Betty Tenant (recovering from stroke)
Curt Whetstone (cancer)
6 Raymond Young



December 2020



Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 7 pm Women's Bible Study	2	3	4	5
6 9:30 Worship Gravy packets due today 10:45 Sunday School 5:00 Trustee meeting	7	8 7 pm Women's Bible Study	9	10	11	12
13 9:30 Worship Christmas Program 10:45 Christmas Reception 11:00 Session short meeting	14	15 7 pm Women's Bible Study	16	17	18	19
20 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School	21	22 7 pm Women's Bible study	23	24 9:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service & Communion	25	26
27 9:30 Worship w/guest Speaker John Zerbe No Sunday School	28	29 7 pm Women's Bible study	30	31		
Week of	Nursery		Flowers		Organist	
December 6	Jeff & Kelly Lloyd		Carla Breese		Becky Reichard & Arlene Amstutz	
December 13	Bill & Ruth Evans		Carla Breese		Connie O'Neill	
December 20	Nursery is not staffed		Gloria Leiter		Becky Reichard	
December 27	Eric & Jenny Pugh		Gloria Leiter		Dave VanTilburg	
Ushers	Jim Lloyd		Greeter:		Bob McCollow	



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



November 23rd – The Venedocia Lions review Van Wert community improvement plans with Seth Baker, Chief Executive Officer of the Van Wert County Foundation, and have discussions about the annual Venedocia Christmas streetlight decorations and the Santa visit of Venedocia bringing treats for the little ones.

Sounds of Salem Newsletter

Church Phone: 419-667-4142

Church Web Pages: www.SalemChurch.cc

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

December 2020 REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY YEAR B	
2nd Sunday of Advent – Dec 6	
Isa. 40:1-11	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:3-15a	Mark 1:1-8
3rd Sunday of Advent – Dec 13	
Isa. 6:1-4, 8-11	Psalm 126
1 Thess. 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
4th Sunday of Advent – Dec 20	
2 nd Sam. 7:1-11, 16	Luke 1:46b-55
Rom. 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
1st Sunday of Christmas – Dec 27	
Isa. 61:10-62:3	Psalm 148
Gal. 4:4-7	Luke 2:22-40