



# Salem Mennonite Church

A Congregation of Mennonite Church USA

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December 7, 2025

## I. GOD CALLS US INTO PRAISE

- Prelude** Overture from *"The Messiah"* - Handel
- Choral Call to Worship** *"Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"* – arr. Larkin
- Call to Worship** STS #126
- Invocation**
- Opening Hymn** *"Comfort, Comfort, O My People"* – HWB # 176
- Greeting and Welcoming Each Other**
- Lighting of the Advent Wreath** *"Advent's Holy Light"* - Raney

### Confession of Sin

In the desert of this world, our lives are grass, and we dwell on transient things of this world, like flowers of the field. We fill our lives with dry chaff and not enough good fruit for your kingdom. Forgive us and restore us, even if it flattens our mountains and erupts up our valleys.

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed.

## II. HEARING JESUS, THE LIVING WORD

- Anthem** *"Come, Messiah"*- Larson
- Scripture Readings** Isaiah 40:1-11 (ESV); Matthew 3:1-12 (ESV)
- Sermon** "The Coming of Peace"

## III. RECEIVING THE SPIRIT, JOINED IN CHRIST'S BODY

Welcome to Membership – Elizabeth Waltner

HWB # 794

### Announcements and Offerings

- **Today's Worship offering:** Harvest Thank Offering
  - **Today's Sunday school offering:** Salem Sunday School
  - **Children's Offering:** Weekend School Lunch Bag Program
- Congregational Sharing & Prayer**

## IV. RETURNING TO GOD'S SERVICE AS NEW CREATURES

**Closing Hymn** *"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"* – HWB # 195

### **Benediction** (from 1Chronicles 17)

Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name;  
make known his deeds among the peoples!  
Sing to him, sing praises to him, and tell of all his wondrous works!  
Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!  
Glory in his holy name;  
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!  
**Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day.**  
**Declare his glory among the nations,**  
**his marvelous works among all the peoples!**  
**For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised!**

**Postlude** *"Besancon Carol"* - Callahan

**Speaker:** Spencer Bradford; **Worship Leader:** Paul Balzer; **Greeters:** Linda Graber and Monte Waltner; **Musicians:** Sharla Unruh (organist); Marilyn Brockmueller & Cheryle Gering (handbells); Brittney Kempf (trumpet); Brooklyn Ries (drum); Sonja Waltner (finger cymbals); Chancel Choir (special music); **Candle Lighters:** Brooklyn Ries and Brittney Kempf; **Coffee:** Conference Room Sunday school class

## THE CHURCH AT WORK

### TODAY

**We welcome all** who are worshiping with us this morning! Coffee is available following the worship service in the Fellowship Hall.

**Annual Business Meeting** following a noon potluck meal.

## **THIS WEEK**

**Wednesday, December 10, 1:30 p.m.** – Freeman Network for Justice & Peace at Freeman Public Library

**Wednesday, December 10, 6:30 p.m.** – Handbells

**7:30 p.m.** – Chancel Choir

**8:30 p.m.** – Ladies Ensemble & Men's Choir

**Thursday, December 11, 2:00 p.m.** – Assemble Freezer Meals for FA Dorm

## **NEXT SUNDAY, Third Sunday of Advent, December 14, 2025**

**Speaker:** Spencer Bradford; **Worship Leader:** Stewart Hofer; **Greeters:** Linda Graber and Vernetta Waltner; **Musicians:** Heather Haggerty (organist); Men's Choir (special music); **Candle Lighters:** Curt and Erin Hobson & Family; **Coffee:** Conference Room Sunday School class

**Worship Offering:** Wellspring Wholistic Care Center

**Sunday School Offering:** Oyate Hope Academy

**Children's Offering:** Weekend School Lunch Bag Program

## **COMING EVENTS**

**Wednesday, December 24, 7:00 p.m.** – Christmas Eve Service  
by Sunday School Children and Church Choirs

**Thursday, December 25, 10:00 a.m.** – Christmas Day Joint Service here  
with Salem-Zion as our guests

## **SOUTH CHURCH NEWS & NOTES**

**A variety of new Advent Devotional Books** are available to check out from the library carousel in the narthex. There are also new books for children and adults!

**There is a new letter from Lanna (Waltner) Lebkuchner** posted on the bulletin board above the narthex table.

**Church Photo Directory** – Thanks to all of the folks who have sent in photos or taken photos on Sunday mornings. We will continue to receive photos during the month of December. If you are not tech savvy, have a family member who is take your photo during the upcoming holidays and have them send it to Vernetta in the office. We will coordinate a photo op with Jeremy for those who signed up for November 30 (which didn't happen☺).

**Poinsettias** – If you would like to donate a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one to share with the congregation during the Advent season, please contact Cheryl at Fensels Greenhouse and they will deliver it to the church.

**The annual Senior Giving Tree is set up in our narthex.** Cards and instructions will also be available at Norm's Thrifty-White, Jamboree Foods and Salem Mennonite Church. The deadline for returning gifts is December 15. Thank you in advance for bringing joy to the residents of the Freeman Nursing Home and Assisted Living! -- SMC Mission and Service Team

## **COMMUNITY & BEYOND**

**All local bakers** are invited to bake peppernut (pfferrnuesse) cookies for the Et Cetera Shoppe to sell. Every year this is a huge boost to our end-of-year giving to the work of Mennonite Central Committee. Peppernuts can be baked using your favorite recipe and brought to the shop in pails or ziploc bags, anytime between now and Thanksgiving - we take it from there! Consider ushering in the holiday season by having a peppernut bee with your family, Sunday School class, grandchildren, book club or pickleball team!

**Swan Lake Christian Camp 2026 Winter Retreats** are just around the corner. Make plans now to attend. Dates are as follows 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat/January 16-18, 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat/January 9-11. Sign up online at [www.myslcc.com](http://www.myslcc.com)

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Sunday Morning Worship – 9:30am/Sunday School – Following Worship  
Vernetta Waltner, Administrative Assistant ([southchurch@goldenwest.net](mailto:southchurch@goldenwest.net)) 925-4553  
Spencer Bradford, Pastor 919-808-2024/[spencerbradford42@gmail.com](mailto:spencerbradford42@gmail.com)

## Prayer Seeds for December 2025

*We open wide our hearts to Your abiding presence in our world in this Advent season. O loving Presence, help us to see you and hear you more clearly. We remember with the Psalmist that when we speak to you, You strengthen our souls.*

We name our thanksgivings:

- ✓ The beauty of the first snowfall before the plows come,
- ✓ The change of pace that a new season brings
- ✓ The technology that allows us to worship and connect when weather prevents a gathering
- ✓ The help of generous neighbors
- ✓ Every day of good health
- ✓ The talent of musicians in the many concerts of this season
- ✓ For the marriage of Ben Brockmueller

We wish healing for Lisa, Everett, Lee, and others we know who are suffering changing health.

We need consolation for the sorrows and uncertainty this year has brought to many of us.

We need discernment in responding to the many requests for money that come to us in our mailboxes and as we consider our budget at annual meeting.

We pray for your intervening power to become known in conflicts around the world.

We pray for students and teachers taking a break this month.

Above all, we give thanks for your mercy, steadfast love, and reconciling power. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

--Duane, Lois, Pastor Spencer