



Salem Mennonite Church

A Congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

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December 28, 2025

I. GOD CALLS US INTO PRAISE

Prelude

Lighting of the Advent Wreath & Christ Candle

Call to Worship (Isaiah 51 & 52)

The voices of your watchmen, they lift up their voices; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion. **Break forth together into singing, you empty places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem.** The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. **How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”**

Invocation

Opening Hymn

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” – HWB # 191

Greeting and Welcoming Each Other

Confession of Sin & Assurance of Grace (from Isaiah 52)

O Lord, our Maker, we confess that we have cared and feared more for the power of mortal people to do us good or harm, than we do for your will. Our lack of faith bows us down with dread that we will lack what we need, and our fear leads us to seize upon idols for more security. Forgive us, Lord; free us from captivity to such fear, and release the bonds from our neck, that no more shall uncleanness enter our lives.

Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; Shake yourself from the dust and arise; depart, go out from there, and purify yourselves, you vessels of the LORD, for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

Special Music

We Are the Reason

Anthem

“Wexford Carol” – arr. Hagenberg

II. HEARING JESUS, THE LIVING WORD

Scripture Readings Numbers 3:11-13; Hebrews 11:17-28; Matthew 2:13-23

Sermon

“Suffer the Children”

III. RECEIVING THE SPIRIT, JOINED IN CHRIST’S BODY

Hymn of Response

“What Child is This” – HWB #215

Announcements and Offerings

- **Today’s Worship offering:** General Fund
- **Today’s Sunday school offering:** Freeman Ministerial
- **Children’s Offering:** Weekend School Lunch Bag Program

Congregational Sharing & Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

IV. RETURNING TO GOD’S SERVICE AS NEW CREATURES

Closing Hymn

“The First Noel” – HWB # 199

Benediction (from Isaiah 51)

Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arm will judge the nations; Shores of distant lands hope for me, and for my arm they wait.

The ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all your empty places and makes your wilderness like Eden, your desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in you, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

Postlude

“Wie Schön Leuchtet Der Morgenstern” – Markull

Speaker: Spencer Bradford; **Worship Leader:** Peggy Waltner; **Greeters:** Linda Gruber and Vernetta Waltner; **Musicians:** Sharla Unruh (organist); **Candle Lighters:** Luke, Katelyn, & Scottlyn Hurley; **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.

THIS WEEK

NEXT SUNDAY, January 4, 2026

Speaker: Spencer Bradford; **Worship Leader:** Brent Mutchelknaus; **Greeters:** Brad & Kris Carlson; **Musicians:** Debra Schmeichel (organist) **Coffee:** Northeast #18

Worship Offering: Oyate Hope Academy

Sunday School Offering: Salem Sunday School

Children's Offering: Weekend School Lunch Bag Program

COMING EVENTS

Sunday, January 4, 12:00 noon – Parsonage Open House

Tuesday, January 6, 7:30 p.m. – Prayer & Fasting

COMMUNITY & BEYOND

Rural Revival will meet **Tuesday, December 30 at 8:00 p.m.** at the Freeman library. All are welcome to attend.

Etcetera Shoppe Needs: Are you a person who would enjoy doing a simple sewing task, in your own home, to benefit the work of Mennonite Central Committee? Et Cetera Shoppe has the perfect opportunity for you! We are seeking more volunteers to sew rug strips together, for our weavers to make into rugs. It's a very simple process that is quite similar to preparing a quilt binding. This can be done on your own time, however it fits into your own schedule - and provides the perfect opportunity to enjoy an audiobook, podcast, or movie in the background! If this sounds like something you'd be willing to try in 2026, please call the shop at 925-7098, or stop in, and talk to Kris or Anita.

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

Sunday Morning Worship – 9:30am/Sunday School – Following Worship

Vernetta Waltner, Administrative Assistant (southchurch@goldenwest.net) 925-4553

Spencer Bradford, Pastor 919-808-2024/spencerbradford42@gmail.com

You can't always get what you want, but if you pray, sometimes you just
might find, you get what you need.

Smile – it increases your face value.

He who sings his own praises is usually out of tune.