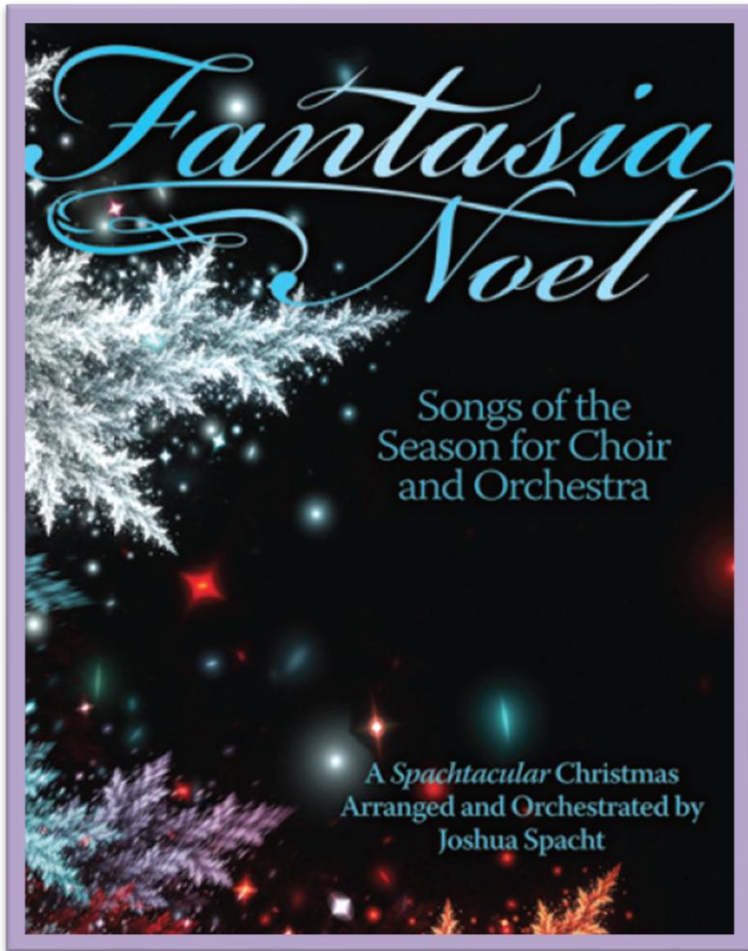


First Presbyterian Church of Salem, Ohio

December 14, 2025

10:30 a.m.

Third Sunday of Advent



Worship will be live streamed on
Facebook: First Presbyterian Church of Salem, Ohio
You Tube: [www.youtube / FPCSALEM](https://www.youtube.com/FPCSALEM); and
our website, www.fpcsalem.org.

"We are centered in Christ and powered by love."

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

PRELUDE

Two Bohemian Carols (Organ)

Benton Price

Away in a Manger

James Murray

Jan Cox, Organ; Kara Craig, Piano

*Let us silently turn our hearts, minds, and
bodies to the worship of God as the
light of Christ is brought forward.*

PRELUDE

Good Christian Men, Rejoice

Gilbert M. Martin

Jan Cox, Organ; Kara Craig, Piano

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please take a moment to sign and pass the Attendance Pad.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

We come to worship Christ

**Who proclaims good news to the poor,
binds up the broken-hearted,
frees the prisoner
and comforts those who mourn.**

We come to worship Christ

**Who bestows a crown of beauty instead of ashes,
the oil of joy Instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.**

We come to worship Christ

**Who rebuilds ancient ruins
and restores broken places.**

THE LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

The Seefeldt Family

Adam, Grace, and Joseph

HYMN – Rejoice!

The Haviland Choir

*HYMN 2

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Congregation and Choir

**Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.**

**Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.**

*INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Jesus said,

Come to me, all you who are tired,
who are worn out from carrying heavy burdens.
Put down the heavy load that you are carrying,
and you will find rest for your souls.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*Unison*)

**God, we confess that we don't always understand our own
actions. We clearly know what is right—what you expect of
us —
but we don't always do it.
We also clearly know what is wrong —
the thoughts and actions that hurt others and offend you —
but we do these things anyway.
Forgive us and help us to always walk in your ways. Amen.**

(Moments of Silent Prayer)

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

People of God, know this:

Our God is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry, and filled with unfailing love. When we stumble, he is there to catch us; when we are weighed down, he is there to lift us up. So be at peace:

In Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven!

***GLORIA PATRI** (*Unison; Hymn 579*)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD AMONG US

Fantasia Noel

Songs of the Season

Arranged and Orchestrated by Joshua Spacht

The Haviland Choir; John Krauss, Director

LITTLE TOWN

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently the wondrous Gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His Heaven.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell.
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him still,
the dear Christ enters in.

Rejoice! People of the earth, Rejoice! celebrate His birth!
Rejoice! Hail the newborn King! Let Heaven and nature sing!

Rejoice! People of the earth, Rejoice! celebrate His birth!
Rejoice! Hail the newborn King!
Let Heaven and nature, Heaven and nature,
let Heaven and nature, Heaven and nature, let Heaven and
nature, Heaven and nature sing!

GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN

God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay.
Remember, Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day
to save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our Heavenly Father a blessed angel came,
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same,
how that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!
O tidings of comfort and joy.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Now we who have this Christmas Joy, believing in His worth,
to others sing that they may too adorn our Savior's birth.
And offer praise to his dear Name, thus filling all the earth
with tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
O tidings of comfort and joy! Joy! Joy! Joy! Joy! Joy!
Comfort and joy! Joy! Joy! Joy! Joy!
Comfort and joy! Comfort and joy!

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Christ by highest Heav'n adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!

Late in time behold Him come, Off-spring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;
peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Hail, the Heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Son of Righteous, Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, He brings,
risen with healing in His wings.

Mild He lays His glory by, born that men no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth!
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King.
Christ is born in Bethlehem, Bethlehem."

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 35:1-10

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; ⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; ⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸ A highway shall be there, and

it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
their old familiar carols play,
and wild and sweet their words repeat
of peace on earth good will to men.

And thought how, as the day had come,
the belfries of all Christendom
had rolled along the unbroken song
of peace on earth, good will to men.
I can hear them. I can hear them.
I can hear them. I can hear them.

And in despair, I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"for hate is strong and mocks the song
of peace on earth, good will to men."
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor does He sleep;
the wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
with peace on earth, good will to men."
I can hear You. I can hear You. I can hear You.
I can hear You. I can hear you.
I can hear You. I can still hear You.

The world can still hear You. I can still hear You.
I can still hear You. I can hear You loud. I can hear You now.
I can hear You loud. We can hear You now.

THE CANTICLE (*Responsively*)

Psalm 146:5-10

⁵ Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;
⁶ who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;
⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets the prisoners free;
⁸ **the LORD opens the eyes of the blind;**
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.
⁹ The LORD watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
¹⁰ **The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion,**
for all generations. Praise the LORD!

O COME MEDLEY
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Come, Thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free.
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's Strength and Consolation, Hope of all the earth, Thou
art;
Dear Desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.

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!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Come O Come! Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
Come, O come. and ransom captive Israel.
From our fears and sins release us, til the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, Hope of all the earth Thou art.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, the Joy of every longing heart
shall come to thee, O Israel. Amen.

O HOLY NIGHT!

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;
it is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.

Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,
and in His Name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise his holy Name.
Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim!
His power and glory evermore proclaim!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night divine, O holy night, O night divine, divine!
O holy night, holy night, O night divine, night divine!

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 1:47-55

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
⁵⁰ indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD IN OUR LIVES

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*Unison*)

**We find God made known in Jesus of Nazareth,
and so we sing of God the Christ,
the Holy One embodied.**

**We sing of Jesus, a Jew,
born to a woman in poverty
in a time of social upheaval and political oppression.**

He knew human joy and sorrow.

**So filled with the Holy Spirit was he that, in him,
people experienced the presence of God among them.**

We sing praise to God incarnate.

(from “A Song of Faith,” the United Church of Canada, 2006)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND SUPPLICATION/LORD’S PRAYER (*sins*)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy
kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Christmas Joy Offering

Mark Smith

CALL TO OFFERING / OFFERTORY

Hanging of the Greens

C.E. Walz

Christmas Joy Offering envelopes are at Sanctuary entrances.

***RESPONSE HYMN 592 (*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*)**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*Unison*)**

God of joy, may giving these gifts be our deepest joy. You are the God of abundance, and on this day, we give thanks knowing you are our salvation; we will trust and will not be afraid, for you are our hope and our strength. Amen.

O SING A SONG OF BETHLEHEM

O sing a song of Bethlehem, of shepherds watching there,
and of the news that came to them from angels in the air:
The light that shone on Bethlehem fills all the world today;
of Jesus' birth and peace on earth the angels sing always.
O sing a song of longing hearts waiting for the days to pass.
Now Heaven speaks and God imparts the Promised One at last.
For in the counsel of His will a Baby was His plan,
born in a stall that He might call the weak and needy man.

O sing a song of love come down, His glory laid aside that
He might wear the Victors' crown and bridge the great divide.
Now God and sinners are reconciled and all may find new life,
for hidden in dear Bethlehem is God's eternal Light.
Now God and sinners are reconciled and all may find new life,

for hidden in dear Bethlehem is God's eternal Light.
He is the Light.

FANTASIA NOEL MEDLEY
Joy to the World!
Angels We Have Heard on High
O Come, All Ye Faithful

**Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room,
and Heaven and nature sing,
and Heaven and nature sing,
and Heaven and Heaven and nature sing.**

**No more let sin and sorrow grow,
nor thorns infest the ground.
He comes to make His blessings flow
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.
He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of His righteousness
and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love,
and wonders, wonders of His love.
And wonders, wonders of His love.**

**Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains
and the mountains in reply,
echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Come to Bethlehem, and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him! O come, let us adore Him!
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!
Sing, the choirs of angels; sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of Heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

We'll give Him all the glory. We'll give Him all the glory.
We'll give Him all the glory, Christ, the Lord!
For He alone is worthy. For He alone is worthy.
For He alone is worthy, Christ, the Lord!
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

WE ENTER THE WORLD AS GOD'S PEOPLE

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE** (*Unison; "Grant us peace."*)

Dona nobis pacem, pacem. Dona nobis pacem.

Dona nobis pacem, pacem. Dona nobis pacem.

*Please remain standing as the Light of Christ
is carried into the world.*

POSTLUDE

Fantasia on "The First Nowell"

Robert J. Hughes

**Please stand if you are able.*

Instrumental Ensemble

Ken Alexander (Percussion), Benjamin Ammon (Tuba),
Robert Barnett (Percussion), Rebecca Bickel (Oboe),
Rob Cole (Horn), Albert Colella (Clarinet), Jeffrey DiCesare (Bass),
John Olsson (Bass Trombone), Lisa Price (Flute),
Brandon Ritchie (Trumpet), John Veneskey (Trumpet),
Jonathan Willis (Trombone), Lauren Zetts Record (Tuba),
Jan Cox (Piano)

Guest Vocalists

Benjamin Ammon, Brad Bickel, Georgeann Colella,
Kirk Hofmeister, Julie Holderbaum, Deb Imler, Christine Langer,
Colleen McNally Harris, Valerie D. Weingart, Lauren Zetts Record

Head Ushers: Wanda Navoyosky, Sandy Quinn

Liturgist: Tegan Jackson

Light-Bearer: Joseph Seefeldt

Bulletins have been given by The Melvin and Virginia Wilms Family in memory of Harry Kelly.

Flowers have been given by Rob and Debbie McCulloch in memory of Robert S. McCulloch Jr. and John D.L. Beebe, and by Fred and Phyllis Denton in celebration of their Wedding Anniversary.

The Congregational Care Committee has a special gift for all of you this morning – a beautiful Angel. Please take one with you at the end of the service today as a reminder of Jesus, God's gift of love for us.

A Special Christmas Invitation from Our Preschoolers

Our little ones here at First Presbyterian Preschool have been busy 'Decking the Halls', coloring, creating, and joyfully preparing for Christmas. We invite you to check out the tree in the preschool hall, outside of the far door, and to please take a one-of-a-kind ornament. These ornaments were lovingly colored by our preschoolers, as a small token of our gratitude and a reminder of the joy we share in Christ this season. May each ornament brighten your home and your heart as we celebrate the birth of our Savior together. Please remember to check back throughout the Advent season, the children will be adding new decorations each week to continue to spread holiday cheer and the love of Jesus as we prepare for His birthday.

As always, With Grateful Hearts,
Your First Presbyterian Preschoolers

2026 Offering Envelopes are available today in Fellowship Hall. If you have not had envelopes, but would like a box, please call the Church Office.

Giving to the Christmas Joy Offering doesn't provide the fun of buying gifts for children, but it does provide for tomorrow's *and* yesterday's leaders. Please give prayerfully and generously. Envelopes are available in the Pew Racks today.

Bells, Carols, and Cookies – Next Sunday, December 21 at 6:00

Everyone is encouraged to submit titles of Christmas carols that you would like to have included in the program, not necessarily restricted to songs in the hymnal. Papers will be available at the entrances to the Sanctuary to write your requests, which can be put in Cheryl's mailbox or left in the Blessings jars baskets.

Participants in the program are also needed. Our bell choir will perform, and several other individuals are planning to share Christmas tunes with performances on piano, instruments, and voice. Perhaps you or a friend or family member have a Christmas song, poem or story to share. Beginners and musicians of all ages

are welcome and encouraged to be included. Just let us know who is participating and the title of their piece so that programs can be created. Deadline for inclusion in the program is Wednesday, December 17. Everyone is asked to bring cookies to share afterward. Come and enjoy a relaxing, fun evening.

Christmas Eve Worship – Wednesday, December 24

7:30 p.m. / Candlelight and Communion at both services.

CHURCH ORGANIST – The Personnel Committee is accepting applications for Church Organist. It has been decided to prioritize this position to a member of our congregation first and then extend the request outside if necessary. Applications should include a letter of intent, a resume to include organ experience, and three contacts who can give reference to the applicant's experience on the organ. Applications are due by December 14, 2025, addressed to the Personnel Committee, and delivered to the Church Office.

The First Presbyterian Preschool has been a cherished part of the First Presbyterian Church for over fifty years. Many church members and area residents have been students of our early childhood education program and have fond memories of their year or years they spent enjoying the Christian centered activities the staff have provided. The current staff are currently involving the congregation in some of the children's activities to demonstrate the type of Christian concepts the students are learning.

Our preschool is funded entirely by student tuition, preschool board fundraising, and donations by caring individuals who understand the need for a Christian based learning center for area young people in our community. Our preschool board truly appreciates those within our church who have seen this need and continue to provide monetary support for our preschool to continue in the years ahead.

Charitable end of the year income tax contributions can be a way to assist the First Presbyterian Preschool to continue its excellent

work in providing a faith-based preschool education for our young people. If you are looking for a charity to support at the end of the calendar year, please consider the preschool. A notation on your check (Preschool Education Fund) would direct the donation to the designated account. Thank you for your support!

Vision Statement

*To glorify God and share the Spirit and love of Christ
with our community and the world.*

December, December 14

Choir Reception before and after Worship (Fellowship Hall)

2:00 Cub Scout Pack 3 (Basement)

Monday, December 15

6:30 Troop 3 Scouts (Basement)

Tuesday, December 16

9:30 Holy Yoga (Fellowship Hall)

5:00 Experiencing Christmas Bible Study (Library)

Wednesday, December 17

6:15 Carillon Ringers (S)

7:00 Haviland Choir (S)

Thursday, December 18

9:30 Holy Yoga (Fellowship Hall)

6:00 Regular Session Meeting (Library/Hybrid)

Sunday, December 21

9:00 Sunday School for Pre-K to 12th Grade / Adults (Library)

Choir Reception before and after Worship (Fellowship Hall)

10:30 Service of Worship

2:00 Cub Scout Pack 3 (Basement)

Monday, December 22

6:30 Troop 3 Scouts (Basement)

Pastor..... Rev. Annie Parker, 330-720-5884

pastorannie@fpcsalem.org

Clerk of Session..... Barbara Loudon, bloudon@neo.rr.com

Director of Music..... John Krauss, wjohnkrauss@gmail.com

Dir. Handbells/Youth Choirs Cheryl McDevitt, cheracd@aol.com

Interim Organist Jan Cox, jansalem1@yahoo.com

Administrative Secretary Phyllis Garlock, phyllis@fpcsalem.org

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Custodian Ed Tonkinson, mtonkinson@sbcglobal.net