

# 2023 Advent Devotional

## Preparing for the Christ Child



### DEDICATION

Our 2023 Advent Devotional is dedicated to the cherished memory of Ruth Stotsenburg, who joined the Church Triumphant on Tuesday May 9, 2023. Ruth faithfully served as First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown's Director of Christian Education from October 1993 until retiring in 2008. In her retirement Ruth continued to teach weekly at New Covenant Presbyterian Church of Mt. Laurel, where she served as an elder until becoming a member of First Presbyterian Church Moorestown in September 2021. May this devotional serve as a tribute to our dear friend and may Ruth's unbridled spirit and zeal for the Lord continue to rest in the sacred chambers of our hearts.

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters"*

(Colossians 3:23)

Rev. Wes Allen

### INTRODUCTION

#### Advent Wreath and Devotional

The Prayer and Discipleship Committee discussed last year doing an Advent Devotional with members of our Church Family writing a reflection on scripture for each day of Advent (Dec. 1 to 25). We are thankful to have this devotional come together this year and hope you will use this booklet each day, possibly at your breakfast or dinner table with your family. Our hope is that you will be fed each day with reading and reflecting on the scriptures and writings of our members.

The Advent candles (HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE) take us through each week and draw us closer to the Christ Child. We see the **Hope** in the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets. **Peace** comes to us in the birth of a little Baby, calling us to reconsider our tension of our gift buying, decorating and entertaining. The third week of Advent we see the incredible **Joy** that comes to the hearts of lonely shepherds tending their flocks and the amazing sight they witnessed. The fourth week we light the **Love** candle, or Angels' candle, which reminds us of the angels' message of love: "Peace on earth, good will to those on whom His favor rests." On Christmas Eve we light the white **Christ candle**, which symbolizes the purity of Christ, our sinless, pure Savior. Celebrating Advent is a wonderful way to prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas.

You are encouraged to make a wreath to include 3 purple candles, 1 pink candle and a white candle in the center (a pillar works well). You will find easy and beautiful ideas on Pinterest or Google. Each day, light the appropriate candles as instructed before reading the day's verses. Please read the entire passage for the day, as only a few verses are printed for some days.

Questions for discussion and/or activities to help children better understand the scriptures are included. You will find cut outs along side the booklet to color and decorate for your Christmas tree or Advent wreath. Please take a set with your booklet!

We would like to thank all who contributed a reflection on the scripture and prayer. We know it blessed each of you as it will all who read this. Notice that we have a few young people included! We pray that these scriptures and reflections will draw you closer to our Savior during this time of waiting.

The Prayer and Discipleship Committee

# *The Season of Advent*

## **Day 1 Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**

### **Scripture: READ Genesis 3:15**

*“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” ESV*

### **Reflection:**

HOPE! Our very first candle is the color purple. It represents HOPE! It is sometimes called the “Prophecy Candle” in memory of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. We are anticipating the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ during Advent!

When God created us He said, “Let’s create man in our image,” and he saw it was very good! Then why did God allow the serpent in the garden, that He had created, to deceive Eve? Why did He allow evil into the world?

Would God have wanted to create **Robots** who only did good? They would not have had hearts to choose between good and evil! They would not have had hearts to love and care for others! So right from the very beginning God gave HOPE to Adam and Eve, immediately after they had chosen to believe the serpent, Satan. He killed the animals and took their skins to provide clothes for Adam and Eve. He also told them that one of their offspring would be born and would ultimately win the battle between the serpent and mankind!

Joe and Arlita Winston *(Prayer and Discipleship Committee)*

### **Prayer:**

Father, thank you for creating me for Your pleasure! Thank you that Good will triumph over Evil! Thank you for giving me HOPE! Help me to prepare my heart to choose to love you with every ounce of my body, soul and spirit this day!

### **Question/Activity:**

If God created man “in his image” -- what would that look like? How would someone know God by looking at me?

## **Day 2 Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

### **Scripture: READ Micah: 5:1-3**

*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” NIV*

### **Reflection:**

Micah was a prophet at the same time as Isaiah. The kingdom of Judah was under siege by Assyria which had successfully carried off the northern kingdom of Israel. Although King Hezekiah was successful in holding off the enemy Micah knew the very real possibility that in the future God would permit Judah to be conquered because of her sin. In the midst of his call to repentance Micah holds out the hope for a Messiah who will rescue Judah, and even Israel. He would be born in the little, but very significant town of Bethlehem.

Ruth Stotsenburg *(from the 2010 Advent Devotional written by Ruth for New Covenant Presbyterian Church)*

### **Prayer:**

Lord, grant as we examine ourselves at this season, that we will acknowledge our own wandering from You. As we look for Your help, teach us to recognize that You often use the apparently insignificant as the source of your activity.

### **Question/Activity:**

Sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

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

**WEEK ONE Day 3 Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> First Sunday in Advent**

**Lighting of the First Advent Candle (purple)**

**The Candle of HOPE (or Prophecy)**

**Scripture: READ Isaiah 9:1-7**

*v. 2 "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." V. 6 "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given...."*

**Reflection:**

*Christian hope does not promise successful days to the rich and the strong, but resurrection and life to those who must exist in the shadows of death. Success is no name of God. Righteousness is.*

Jürgen Moltmann, Theologian

Hope is what holds us in the darkness. Hope is a power when the first light of dawn is far off. Hope strengthens us with a strength that we cannot explain. Hope is the first word in Advent.

I've always loved the imagery of Isaiah 9. Darkness is a fitting description for the hardest moments of our lives. We bury a spouse, a parent or worst of all, a child, and we walk in darkness. Pain, either physical or emotional never leaves us like a permanent midnight. The stomach-churning horrors of the terrorist attack on Israel in early October and the certain suffering of war is a nighttime existence.

Hope always come from the Lord. With it, He provides us peace and strength until the dawn breaks, as it surely will. Let's share our hope with each other and with our community this Advent and Christmas. We're in the hope business, don't forget.

**Prayer:** *Lord God, the source and giver of hope, come into our darkness.*

Rev. Stuart Spencer

**Questions:**

What would "hope" look like for me today?

How could I describe that to a 6 year old?

**Day 4 Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**

**The Candle of HOPE (or Prophecy)** Continue to light purple candle each day)

**Scripture: READ Isaiah 42:1-4 and Matthew 12:15-21**

*Is 42:1 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations."*

*Mt 16-18 "He (Jesus) warned them not to tell others about him. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 'Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight....'" NIV*

**Reflection:**

Isaiah was one of the most well know prophets in the bible. He predicted the coming of the Messiah who would redeem his people from sin. Isaiah means "salvation of the Lord". Isaiah foretold the Messiah's coming bring hope to his people at a troubling time. This hope was not just for Isreal, but for all of us. Isaiah looked to God's promise in the past (to Abraham and David) to generate hope for his own day and beyond. The Messiah will save them.

In Matthew, Isaiah's revelation was fulfilled. The Gospels though also state that Jesus was a faithful king from the line of David. Jesus is our hope now and for the future. He opened the door for us to enter the kingdom of heaven through his death and resurrection. When we turn to Jesus, there is Hope for the future.

**Prayer:**

Jesus, You are our Hope. In times when we feel helpless, we only need to turn to you for true Hope. Fill us with that joyful Hope as you are our Light in the darkness. Help us to walk in your light living a life of faith and glory. Amen.

Linda Jagiela (Director of Outreach)

**Question/Activity:**

How will this Hope change the attitude or fear that I have today?

**Make an ornament** – Color and cut out the candle on the additional sheets. Add yarn or ribbon to hang on your Christmas tree or place on your Advent wreath.

**Day 5 Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> The Candle of HOPE (or Prophecy)**

**Scripture: READ Romans 6:23 and Jeremiah 29:11-14**

*Romans v. 23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." NIV*

*Jeremiah v. 11, 12 "For I know the plans I have for you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future...." NIV*

**Reflection:**

ADVENT...."Come thou long expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free"  
Whenever the Bible speaks about humans waiting and hoping for God to act, it can deepen our understanding of Advent.

YAKHAL / QAVAH / ELPIS / HOPE these are the Hebrew words In the Old Testament, prophets like Hosea, and Amos use these words to describe the YAKHAL which is one of the two Hebrew words used for Hope. It also has the meaning "to wait.", as a farmer plants seeds in a field and waits for the fruit of the harvest. QAVAH is the other. Our waiting looks forward with hope because we can look backward at God's faithfulness. A Psalmist writes "And now O Lord, what else can I *qavah* for? You are my *yakhal*." (Psalm 39:7) This Biblical hope is not focused on circumstances, but rather is often recognized when there is no evidence of things to get better. But rather, this hopefulness is seen in spite of circumstances. God's past faithfulness motivates hope for the future.

In the New Testament, Peter states that Jesus' resurrection opened up a "living hope." The use of the Greek word *Elpis* describes the habit of hope that the earliest followers lived by in this new hopefulness. They recognized this New Hope as being God's living Good News. And Paul states that this living hope will be extended to all creation.

It is this waiting that we contemplate and celebrate. The time of contemplation of God's faithfulness of the past. The time of knowing that the "New Hope" has come when we celebrate the birth of God's promise in human form where "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight.". And the amazing knowledge that God's promises are not mere optimism but certain HOPE!

(Continued on next page)

**(continued - Day 5)**

**Prayer:**

Lord, you are the Alpha and the Omega. I come as I am, sinful and penitent. And I know that You hold all things in Your hands: the past, the present, and the future. Help me to live in that certain HOPE of Your gift of "life" with You forever. And help me to live each day with this living hope (*Elpis*) for others to see, understand and share.

In the name of THE CHRIST. Amen

Jan Amos (Prayer and Discipleship Committee)

**Activity:**

**Sing the Christmas Carol – "In the Bleak Midwinter" by Christina Rossetti**

*What can I give Him, poor as I am*

*If I were a shepherd, I'd bring a lamb;*

*If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;*

*Yet what I can I give Him: Give my heart.*

**Make an ornament** - You may color, cut out and decorate the heart found on the additional sheets. Thread with yarn or ribbon and hang on your tree or fasten to your Advent wreath.

**Day 6 Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**The Candle of HOPE (or Prophecy)**

**Scripture: READ Isaiah 11:1-5**

*v. 1-3 "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord – and he will delight in the fear of the Lord." NIV*

**Reflection:**

How can anyone "delight in the fear of..." anything? Doing a web search for delighting in fear gives almost exclusively references to this bible verse. My understanding is that good psychological therapy is to face the things you fear. As God instructed Moses to construct a bronze snake on a pole, and have the Israelites look upon it in their fear after having been overrun by poisonous snakes. Looking upon the bronze snake, the object of their fear, would save them (Num 21:4-9). In this, perhaps, we overcome our fear, and can better cope through life. But to "delight!?"

The object of this fear must hold the answer to this "delighting". "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov 9:10). Was Jesus born with awareness of who He was, or did the realization come upon Him as He grew and matured? Scriptures seem to infer the later.

How are this fear and delight linked? Is this delight like that of the exhilaration felt by a surfer riding a 40 foot wave, a mountain hiker standing on the edge of a cliff, or an astronaut looking back at earth from the heavens? Or perhaps it is the extreme contentment of being able to look upon the omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal God, and experience the full awe inspiring, abject, extreme fear that would accompany such a vision with understanding. Then the extreme delight to know this God is His Father, and is in Him and through Him, and is Him.

If we are to be wise, we need to understand and experience the fear of the LORD. But otherwise, we need to hold onto Jesus with all that we have. (By the way, it is really Him holding onto us).

(Continued)

**(Day 6, continued)**

**Prayer:**

Lord, grant us the courage to look upon, to stare at, the things that we fear. May we learn to look at You. To fear You. To delight in You. As the Israelites looked upon the image of their threat of death on a pole, and were saved from their poison, may we look at the death upon the cross, and be saved from its poison. In Jesus' name, Amen

Pete Honeyford (Prayer and Discipleship Committee)

**Questions/Activity:**

Identify things, situations, people, future events in your life that you need to look at, that cause fear. Pray for strength to look directly at them. Pray for strength to delight in the LORD in them.

How can a shoot come up from a stump where a tree has been cut down? Who is this "shoot"?

**Make an ornament** – Color and cut out the "stump of Jesse" and hang on your tree or add to your Advent wreath.

**Day 7 Thursday, December 7<sup>t</sup> The Candle of HOPE** (or Prophecy Candle)

**Scripture: READ Exodus 3:13-14 and John 8:58-59**

v. 13, 14 *“Moses said to God, ‘Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?’” God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” NIV*

v. 58 *“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” NIV*

**Reflection:**

We have difficulty with things that have no beginning or ending, with things that have been here forever and remain forever and a universe that we cannot control or one we cannot reach even the next galaxy. We have difficulty understanding things that don't have a switch to turn-off or on and things that are not in our control. Yet when we are faced with “I AM”, we truly do not know how to approach, we do not comprehend a spirit that has been here forever and has no beginning or end, nor understand what “I AM” desires of us. When Jesus came He showed us what the “Great I AM” wanted: “To love “I AM” and to love each other”. How can a spirit send his spirit to teach us this lesson? Yet His spirit “Jesus the I AM” was sent to earth to teach us to care, heal, feed, protect, live and help each other and to believe the “Great I AM’s” Son died for us, so we could be with “I AM” forever.

**Prayer:**

Thank you for your Son that brought salvation, love, forgiveness, and joy. We believe Lord, but please help us with our unbelief and help us to reach those seeking belief in the Son. AMEN

Jim Cole (Prayer and Discipleship Committee)

**Question:**

Today, how do you feel inadequate? Remind yourself that God said His Name is “I AM”. Does that feel like an incomplete sentence? God says “I am everything you are not.”

**Day 8 Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup> The Candle of HOPE** (or Prophecy Candle)

**Scripture: READ John 1:1-18**

*V 1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.” NRSV*

**Reflection:**

When I was a child, I remember a power outage we had. My mom instructed me to stay put in my bedroom while she went to get a flashlight downstairs. As I sat in the darkness, I felt very scared and alone and, in a panic, ignored my mom's instructions and fled my room to go find her. Unfortunately, in the total darkness I misjudged where the top of our banister was and ran straight into the pointy corner of it. When my mom arrived moments later, the whole hallway was lit up by the flashlight as was my injured face!

The darkness is scary and can seem pervasive at times. The local, national and international headlines show that, as do the personal stories we know of family, friends, and ourselves, dealing with loss and struggles, such as medical, financial, and mental health issues to name only a few. It is lonely and overwhelming in the darkness and without light, we are lost and fumbling in the dark. This is why I am so thankful for Jesus who is the light of the world, bringing light and hope where there is despair and loneliness. Jesus's light casts out the shadows, comforts us, and illuminates what is true and right. As His disciples, we are all called to be light in this world, bringing hope and love to those we encounter and sharing the Good news of Jesus. Shine brightly, my friends!

**Prayer:**

Jesus, thank you! Thank you for loving us, forgiving us, and breaking through the darkness of our lives with your light, grace, and love. Help us to not be afraid and to be beacons of light in this world, sharing your hope and love with those we meet this Advent season and beyond.

Melissa Corbin (Prayer and Discipleship Committee)

**Question/Activity:** Read Matthew 5: 14-16. What are some ways you can be light in this world, especially at this Advent season? Identify one action and commit to doing it this week.

**Day 9 Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> The Candle of HOPE (or Prophecy)**

**Scripture: READ Isaiah 7:14, 9:6,7 and Matthew 1:22, 23**

*Is. 9: 6, 7 "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." NIV*

*Matthew 1: 22, 23 "So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us.'" KJV*

**Reflection:**

The prophecies of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of these prophecies prove how much our Lord cares for us. God saw that His Creation needed a Savior, and so He sent Jesus. Jesus's birth, life, death, and resurrection changes everything. Jesus helps teach us how to be free from sin and offers us sanctification and eternal life. The Bible refers to the relationship between the Church and Jesus as like a bride and bridegroom. With the birth of Jesus, we are able to have an intimate, personal relationship with God.

The prophecies also prove Jesus's divinity. As Christians, we are to put our faith in the fact that the man named Jesus was, indeed, sent from heaven. As Isaiah wrote centuries before Christ's arrival, we can look to the prophets for further historical proof that Jesus is divine, and truly born of Mary.

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, you are Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. You were born as a baby in Bethlehem, yet you were born the King of Kings. Jesus, thank you for coming. You always existed, yet you came with a definite plan to save those who follow you. Your birth, life, death, and resurrection changed the world forever. Every Christmas, it brings me joy to celebrate your birth. Amen

Jessica Zorn (Deacon, recent grad of U of Delaware and teacher at Delran H.S.)

**Question:**

If the government of our lives is on His shoulders what can I trust Him for this day?

**WEEK TWO Day 10 Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday in Advent Lighting of the Second Candle (and also the first candle) The PEACE Candle (or Bethlehem Candle) a time of preparation or waiting**

**Scripture: READ John 7:42**

*"Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes "from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was." ESV*

**Reflection:**

As humans we have the tendency to rely on preconceived notions. This is evident in John 7:42 where we see Jesus' identity as the Messiah questioned. This advent, Christ challenges us to set aside our assumptions and He invites us to encounter Him in new ways. The Christmas story, or better yet, the entire Gospel is a testament to the unexpected and unconventional nature of God's plan and activity in the world. As we prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth and as we patiently await his second coming, let us open our hearts to the possibility that God may work in ways we least expect, challenging our assumptions and leading us to a deeper and more prolific understanding of His steadfast love for us.

**Prayer:**

In this season of waiting, our hearts are filled with anticipation and wonder. In the midst of the seasons' hustle and bustle, help us quiet our minds and open our spirits to the unexpected ways in which You work. Break through our doubts, O Lord, and lead us to a place of deeper understanding. Help us to surrender our expectations and trust in Your divine plan and unexpected grace. We pray for open hearts, ready to receive the gift of Your Son anew. Help us to place our trust in You, knowing that Your ways are higher than our ways. Prepare our hearts, O God, for the joyous celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Rev. Wes Allen

**Question:**

Bethlehem was a tiny town where nothing important seemed to happen. What small situation, though difficult, in your life today do you need God's peace? Are you willing to ask him for that?

**Day 11 Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>** (Light two purple candles each day)  
**The PEACE Candle (or Bethlehem Candle) a time of preparation or peace**

**Scripture: READ 1 Peter 1:19 and 20**

v. 19 *"a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world but was revealed in these last times for your sake"* NIV

**Reflection:**

Jesus, the Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, is perfect, without sin. The sacrifices of old, recorded in the Old Testament, foreshadowed the unique and entirely sufficient, saving sacrifice of our Lord recorded by the New Testament writers. Jesus Christ came to us from God for our salvation and His glory. Jesus paid the price for our sins so we can have life.

This message of salvation is the core of our faith... our Christian life is nothing without this precious gift that God has given selflessly and with great mercy and love. This gift is the hope that is in us, which spurs us on to love and good deeds... strengthens us, gives us courage and fills us with a peace that surpasses all earthly understanding.

On our own, living in this broken world, we are void of any hope. All that we can experience in the world, without Christ, will ultimately disappoint us. Without the promise of eternal life given to us through Christ, we have nothing. With it, we have everything... simple, true, unchanging. All that we are, all that we have, all that we can accomplish is a gift from God. Let us never lose sight of the magnitude of this gift – live and love gratefully.

**Prayer:**

We are grateful for the gift of faith and eternal life you have graciously given us. Thank You for the sacrifice You made to save us from our sins. Help us to live a life worthy of this sacrifice. In this season of Advent, help us to focus on the magnitude of the gift of Jesus Christ. Help us to live with hope and faith that are witnesses to the joy we know in You.

Ann McBride (Clerk of Session)

**Questions / Activity:**

Why did the lamb have to be without blemish or defect?

**Make an ornament** – Color and cut out the lamb. Glue on cotton balls if you wish! Thread a ribbon to hang on your treat or add to your Advent wreath.

**Day 12 Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**The PEACE Candle (or Bethlehem Candle) a time of preparation or peace**

**Scripture: READ Titus 2:11-14**

v. 13, 14 *"While we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness...."*

**Reflection:**

Praise our Lord that our salvation has been already paid for though the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Out of gratefulness for our salvation, we desire to please God by loving others and living righteously. People who do not have God's salvation think that by living a good life they can please God and earn their way into Heaven. They have no idea that they are putting the cart before the horse. No one can ever be good enough on their own to please God. Yet, through Jesus, God loves and accepts us with all our sins and failures. We are not a failure in God's eyes. We are blameless and one of His chosen children.

The more we study scripture and learn about God, the more we understand truly what a great gift Jesus has given those of us, who have accepted His gift of salvation. As we grow in Christ we become more grateful and desire to honor Him through our lives. We joyfully wait for the coming again of Jesus, having the confidence that as His children, we shall be with Him forever.

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for Jesus, who came as a baby and gave His life to pay for my sins that I may be blameless before you. Make me mindful of what it means to be your child and the blessings you have given to me, through Jesus. Help me to honor you through my life and show me how I can be a blessing to others.

Nancy Burkley (Prayer and Discipleship Committee)

**Question:**

Who do you know that needs to feel the love of God through you? How can you be a blessing to your family and others.

**SING:**

To God be the glory	Praise the Lord, praise the Lord
Great things He has done	Let the earth hear His voice
So loved He the world that	Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord
He gave us His Son Who yielded	Let the people rejoice; Come to the Father
His life an atonement for sin	Through Jesus the Son;
And opened the life-gate	Give Him the glory
that all may go in	Great things He has done.



**Day 13 Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**

**The PEACE Candle (or Bethlehem Candle) a time of preparation or waiting**

**Scripture: READ Daniel 7:13-14 and Luke 1:31-33**

*Daniel v. 13-14 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed". NIV*

Luke V. 32, 33 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever, his kingdom will never end." NIV

**Reflection:**

Advent is a period of spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The verses cited reflect God's plan to establish Jesus as the Savior of humankind.

Following the Prophet Daniel's deliverance from the lion's den, he had a vision. In the vision he saw that the Son of Man would be the final King ruling over the earth and that His Kingdom would last forever. The Son of Man of course is Jesus. All authority in heaven and earth was to be given to Jesus. He is the promised King who is the culmination of God's plan to set the world right. Matthew Henry in his commentary says that these verses (13-14) are "for the comfort and support of the people of God, in reference to the persecutions that would come upon them".

Before Mary had conceived Jesus, God sent the angel Gabriel to the City of Nazareth to ready Mary for the birth of Jesus. These verses (32, 33) set forth that there is no confusion Jesus is the Son of God, he is of the lineage of David, he will reign forever, and his Kingdom will always be with us. His coming birth and identity are foretold.

The Scripture verses cited culminate with the reassurance that Jesus will never leave us or forsake us. This all happens as part of God's plan and

(Continued)

(Day 13 continued)

God's promise. The deliverance of Jesus brings us comfort, security and peace even in the midst of life's challenging times and insecurities. Charles Spurgeon said, "When you go through a trial, God is the pillow on which you lay your head." During this Advent season reflect on the reassurance that Jesus is with you through eternity and that His love for you is a gift given to you now and forever.

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, as we reflect during this Advent Season, we are filled with joy and gratitude that you are our Savior who has come to save us. You are our source of comfort especially when life is difficult and challenging. As we look to the manger, let us feel your boundless love as we seek your presence in our lives. Help us to live in gratitude for your life, sacrifice, and promise of life eternal. Amen

Paul Booker (Chair of the Worship Committee)

**Questions / Activity:**

How is Jesus a source of comfort for you when life is challenging? We are reassured that Jesus is with us now and through eternity, how do you know he walks with you every day?

**Make an ornament** – color, decorate and cut out the crown and add to your Christmas tree or Advent wreath.

**Day 14 Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup>**

**The PEACE Candle (or Bethlehem Candle) a time of preparation or waiting**

**Scripture: READ Isaiah 40:3-5**

*"A voice of one calling: 'In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.....and the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'" The Message*

**Reflection:**

As God's people are coming out of the Babylonian exile, this is an incredible announcement with a loving promise, 'The Glory of the Lord will be revealed for all'. It was so important to know that God cared about His people and had a plan to show His powerful love. This revelation is proclaimed in the book of Isaiah and significant enough to be included in all four Gospels (*Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23*). John the Baptist was anointed to pass on the message and comfort of the coming Redeemer.

I hang onto these promises from God that the glory, majesty, and splendor of our Lord will be revealed to me during the obstacles in my life. The hills and valleys, struggles and challenges are there but the life and love of my God smooths them out. It always seems like a very long time to get through these situations, but it is usually me that holds back His love and answers. Finally, I open His Word, bow my heart, and listen to love being poured out. I am prepared to wait, for I am sure of His answers.

**Prayer:**

My heart rejoices in You, Lord. I praise You for Your love and Your wisdom. You act on my behalf accomplishing what concerns me and fulfilling Your purpose for me as I call on You. You are King of kings and Lord of lords. To You be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Joyce Wenzke (Elder and over 40 year member)

**Question/Activity:**

Does your highway of life include a daily shot of His Word including a necessary touch of laughter? Smile. It makes people wonder what you've been up to. Tell them about the love of our Lord. Smile. That is an easy way to show the love of Jesus and the peace that comes in knowing Him.

**Day 15 Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

**The PEACE Candle (or Bethlehem Candle) a time of preparation or waiting**

**Scripture: READ Luke 1:1-20**

*V. 13 "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John." NIV*

**Reflection:**

Luke's narrative sounds a lot like a continuation of the Old Testament, with the visitation of the priest Zechariah by the angel Gabriel to announce the conception of a new prophet, the prophet John the Baptist, by the elderly Zechariah and his wife Elkanah in their old age. (Indeed, there are six barren women in the Old Testament, including three of the four wives of the patriarchs and the mother of the prophet Samuel.)

The unsuspecting Zechariah entered the Temple alone to burn incense. And then amid the smoke and the smell of incense, the strange and awesome figure of the angel appears from heaven. Gabriel announces that this new son to be named John will be great and will turn many of the Sons of Israel to the Lord. And he will go forth in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the people for the arrival of the messiah.

Quite understandably, Zechariah reacts with fear. Gabriel tries to reassure him: "do not be afraid." Despite the miraculous appearance of the angel, he moves from fear to doubt: "How will I know that this is so.....?"

Six months later, Gabriel pays a visit to the virgin Mary. The same initial reaction of fear and doubt is evoked: "How can this be...?"

When we ourselves raise questions in our hearts and doubt God's promises of hope, we poor fallen human creatures are experiencing the very same emotions as the priest Zechariah. It seems we are in excellent company.

**Prayer:**

LORD, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts so that with our fears and doubts relieved, we may receive you at your Advent with a peaceful and trusting faith. Amen.

Bill Mueller (Board of Trustee)

**Questions / Activity:**

What are you afraid of today? What can you trust God for?

**Day 16 Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**

**The PEACE Candle (or Bethlehem Candle) a time of preparation or waiting**

**Scripture: READ Luke 1:26-38**

*v. 30 "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, though shall conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus." KJV*

**Reflection 1:**

I can only imagine how scary it must have been for Mary when she found out she was going to have a baby. When the angel appears to Mary, they told her not to be afraid. This is a good reminder for me that I don't have to be afraid of things that happen even if I don't understand them because God has a plan. In this case, an angel came to Mary and told her to not be afraid and that this was OK. In our lives, we should try to be like the angel who told Mary not to be afraid and to remind others that God has a plan for their lives even if they are having a tough time and can't see the light, we need to remind them that it is there.

**Prayer:**

Dear God, As we find ourselves in the dark, I pray that we can remind each other that God has a plan. Just like the angel that told Mary, we need to tell each other that God has a plan for our lives and we should trust God even if it seems all hope is lost. Amen.

Joshua Rotter (age 12, 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Moorestown Friends)

**Reflection 2:**

The Angel Gabriel appears to Mary and says, "Fear not, Mary; thou hast found favour with God." "Fear Not." What is the first thing you do when someone begins a statement with the words, "Now, don't be afraid" or "Don't worry?" I know I start to worry. "What are you going to tell me?" It doesn't take long before the Angel tells Mary what will come. 'And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and shalt call his name Jesus.'

(Continued)

(Day 16 continued)

When God speaks to us, it is rarely about things that are humanly possible because then we would not need Him. He typically speaks about things beyond our ability or understanding, and our natural response is fear or worry. We then have a choice. We can choose to rely on our own human frailty, or we can trust in the God who makes all things possible to work through our fear and weakness. Because of how often it is written in the Bible, "Do not fear," we can believe it is wrong to fear. But fear is sometimes a vehicle to realizing our limitations and causing us to lean into God's power and care for our lives.

Mary leaned into God through telling Joseph her betrothed she is with child, sharing the same news with her cousin Elizabeth, in the journey to Bethlehem for the birth, to the town with no room and birth in a stable, to the arrest and beating of Jesus, to his crucifixion and resurrection. In times of fear and worry, we can rely on Him too. He is there with His comfort, love, presence, and care for even our smallest concerns, reminding us that we do not have to go through this life alone in fear. We have a Savior who was born by a young unmarried girl in a stable with only a manger for a bed stuffed with hay, who saves us from our sin and death. From humble beginnings filled with the unknown and some fear to the most significant historical event. God takes the impossible and makes it possible.

**Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, when I face situations that make me afraid, thank You that I find in You the ability and strength to face whatever frightens me.

Holly Ascitutto, Director of Children's and Family Ministries)

**Questions / Activity:**

What do you need peace for today? Can you put that into words to God?

**Make an ornament** – Color and cut out the angel at the back of this booklet. Hang on your tree or add to your Advent wreath.

**WEEK THREE Day 17 Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday in Advent**  
**Lighting of the pink third candle**  
**The JOY Candle (or The Shepherds Candle)**

(light the pink and 2 purple candles each day this week)

**Scripture: READ Luke 1:39-56 Mary's song, The Magnificat**

v. 46-48 "And Mary said: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.'" KJV

**Reflection:**

This great exostulation of Mary generated from a reality recorded in the passage preceding Luke 1:35 – "And the angel said to her 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you.'" Mary's response to the message of the angel was: "be it unto me according to your word."

When the Word of God is before us and we believe it and obey, knowing the Holy Spirit will come upon us, He will enable us to obey, just as Mary did. He will make our body a dwelling place for Christ just as Mary's was. His place in our lives will be enlarged, just as it was in Mary's life. We will offer prophecy and proclaim the majesty and works of Jesus just as Mary did. We will rejoice that we are saved just as Mary did.

"Generations might" not see how blessed we are, but those around us will

**Prayer:**

Father, when you speak to us through an angel, through the Spirit, through your Word, help us to be as submissive as Mary and make you first in everything.

Joel Krott (Director of Music Ministry)

**Questions/Activity**

Knowing that Christ is living inside of you today, is there someone that you can encourage or comfort today?

**Day 18 Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup> The JOY Candle (or Shepherds Candle)**  
Light the pink and 2 purple candles

**Scripture: READ Luke 1:57-66**

v. 66 "Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, 'What then is this child going to be?' For the Lord's hand was with him." NIV

**Reflection** When Elizabeth had told everyone that she was going to name her baby John, they were in shock. Not only that, the people were even more surprised that her husband, Zechariah, was all for the baby being named John. As soon as Zechariah was able to speak again, the first thing he did was praise God because God had fulfilled his promise to give him and Elizabeth a child. Why do we care about this? John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin and soon after John was born Jesus was born, too. When Jesus and John are older, John, in essence, paves the way for himself and Jesus. John travels both sides of the Jordan River preaching that people should be baptized to show that they can turn to God and be forgiven of their sins. During this time of Advent, we as Christians remember how great it is that Jesus was sent down from God to take away all of our sins. John is traveling and telling people to be baptized to repent of their sins because we all know that later Jesus bears all the sins of the world. In this time of waiting for the Messiah, we thank God for sending his son to us so that we can be forgiven.

**Prayer:**

Dear God, we know this time of waiting can be hard. This time of year is filled with all sorts of busyness, but please guide us in remembering what we really are waiting for and that this gift you've given to us is more precious than anything else in this world. Amen.

Alivia Nawrocki (Chapel Choir and Denmark Tours, Senior at Burlington County Institute of Technology, Medford campus)

**Questions / Activity:**

If we were to meet John the Baptist today what would we be repenting of? How can we show our joy for His forgiveness today?

**Day 19 Tuesday, December 19 The JOY Candle (or Shepherds Candle)**

**Scripture: READ Matthew 1:18-25**

*v. 20 ..."an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because of what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'" NIV*

**Reflection:**

Two things stuck in my head as I read through this passage. The first is a calling and the second is my hope.

Joseph is described as faithful to the law but the footnotes and other translations expand on that and say he is just and righteous. This jumps out to me because it connects with one of our ways of the week. Just and righteous seems like a person who would speak the truth in love. This hits me as a calling to adhere to God's Word in a way that cares for people. Joseph was going to stick to the letter of the law but very much seems to consider the humanity of Mary and treat her lovingly despite a perceived offense. He then had the humility and love to not insist on his own way but was open to the guidance of God's word.

The hope that jumps out to me is from verse 18. The Spirit of God is the power that made life where there was none. This verse makes me think of Creation where God's spirit was breathed into Adam and brought him to life. It then also makes me think of Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit for me. There are days where I do not feel like a cup overflowing with joy like the psalmist says. There are days where I know my Savior but feel overwhelmed by the brokenness of our community, the people in it, and my own brokenness. What gives me joy though, is that our God can make life, complete abundant life, even in places where we would all think it's impossible.

**Prayer:** God, I ask You to continually remind me of Your ability and promises to bring life. God, I ask for Your guidance helping me trust Your Word and promises. God I know I need it, please fill me with Your Spirit.

Dave Fauvell (Director of Youth Ministry)

**Questions / Activity:**

Where specifically do I need His life of joy in my life today?

**Day 20 Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> The JOY Candle (shepherds Candle)**

**Scripture: READ Luke 2:4-7**

*"So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary" NIV*

*"While they were there the time came for the baby to be born and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." NIV*

**Reflection:**

God chose a specific time and place in history to bring his Son into the world. Both Mary and Joseph had been presented with an impossible message to believe. And both had submitted to the impossible in obedience, as God knew they would. As a grown man Jesus stated that with God, all things are possible.

Madeleine L'Engle wrote, "Possible things are easy to believe. The Glorious Impossible are what bring joy to our heart, and hope to our lives, songs to our lips." God, come to be one of us – a Glorious Impossible.

*We cannot wait till the world is a  
to raise our songs with joyful voice,  
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,  
He came with Love; Rejoice! Rejoice! --L'Engle*

**Prayer:**

Father God, though we are surrounded by the world's insanity, let us find joy in the Glorious Impossible which you have worked in our lives, that we are adopted, forgiven and redeemed. Give us the courage to share our joy with others. Amen.

Lissa Herman (Stephen Minister Leader,  
Adult Ed, adult & handbell choirs)

**Questions / Activity:**

**Sing:**

*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.*

**Day 21 Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup> The JOY Candle** (Shepherds Candle)

**Scripture: READ Luke 2:8-20**

*v. 10 "And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people'" KJV*

**Reflection:**

Picture It - The wilderness countryside, just outside of Bethlehem, over 2000 years ago. You're a shepherd tending your flocks. It's not a glamorous job. Sheep don't smell great. You're out in the elements, getting dirty. This time of year, you get really dirty because it's lambing season. Delivering lambs is not for the squeamish. There's blood and other bodily fluids. There's dirt, dust, and maybe mud if it's been rainy. And wolves and other beasts lurking nearby - just waiting for you to let your guard down. Yep, it's a dirty job, but someone has to do it.

Suddenly, an angel sent by God appears before you, and the very glory of the Lord encompasses you. The Bible tells us that you were "sore afraid". (*I think we sometimes gloss over this part of the story. **The very glory of the Lord - the manifest beauty of His holiness - SURROUNDS YOU.** I'm fairly certain that "terrifying" doesn't even begin to describe this experience.*) And then the angel delivers the news to you: "Don't be afraid! I've got great news! Tonight, just a couple miles down the road, in Bethlehem, the Savior that has been promised to you for generations has been born! You'll know it's Him when you find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger!" And then all the angel's friends appear before you and sing a heavenly song, the likes of which have never before (or since) been heard here on earth. Then, as suddenly as they appeared, they're gone.

You shout to your fellow shepherds, "Let's go see!" You HURRY to Bethlehem. And this means that you've left your sheep behind. We know this because sheep - especially flocks of sheep with newborn lambs - do not hurry. (*BTW - Rule #1 in the Dummies Guide to Shepherding is "Don't Leave Your Sheep Behind - Especially At Night."*) You arrive at the manger and find it exactly as the angel promised. God on earth, the promised Savior, the Messiah, born this night, lying before you, born for you, born for me, born for all!

(Continued)

You return to your flock (*which - by the way - God has protected while you were gone*) and tell EVERYONE you meet along the way about what you have seen, giving praise and glory to God.

Now Picture It: a charming town called Moorestown (or Mount Laurel, or Delran...) just outside of Philadelphia, in 2023. You're probably not a shepherd. Maybe you're a teacher. Or an engineer. Or a student. The job title is different, but the Good News doesn't change. The promised Messiah, Christ the King, is born for you, for me, for all. Will YOU come and see? Will YOU tell everyone you meet? Will YOU give all praise and glory to God for what He has done? Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

**Prayer:**

Lord, inspire us, to share the Good News of the birth of our Savior with the same enthusiasm as those Bethlehem shepherds of long ago. Grant that others come to know the joy of the gift of your son, Jesus Christ, through our faithful obedience to You.

Cheryl Gaskill (Session and chair of  
Discipling Children and Youth Committee)

**Activity:** Go outside tonight and sing under the stars that He created.

**O Come All Ye Faithful (vs. 3 & refrain)**

Sing, 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!

**Day 22 Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> The JOY Candle** (Shepherds Candle)

**Scripture: READ Matthew 2:1-12**

v. 2 ....*“Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.” NIV*

v. 10 *“When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented them him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.” NIV*

**Reflection:**

The Magi traveled thousands of miles, to meet the king of Jews. They did not know where the star would lead, yet, they faithfully followed the light. When they stopped, the star stood still over the place of his birth. They had found Jesus! The Magi entered, overjoyed, and filled with adoration as they knelt down and presented their valuable gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. The Magi gave these expensive gifts as a worthy acknowledgment of a king.

Advent is a time to recognize the glory of our God; while also acknowledging the humble circumstances of his birth. Our Lord did not come to live in a palatial palace and conquer kingdoms, but to rewrite what it meant to be a king. The baby the Magi came to visit would upend the world by being the perfect Savior, worthy of our obedience and cherished gifts.

**Prayer:**

Dear Lord, please give us hearts to seek, worship, and pursue you as the Magi did thousands of years ago. Help us to receive your words as truth. Help us to acknowledge you as the rightful King of our lives when the world seeks to distract us with gifts that can never truly satisfy.

Kelly Eagles (Prayer and Discipleship Committee)

**Questions / Activity:**

The Magi knelt before Jesus, bringing him gifts fit for a king. How can we use our gifts to glorify God? Take a moment to list the gifts God has given you and how they can be used to glorify him!

**Make an ornament** – Color and cut out the chest of gold and jars of frankincense and myrrh. Add ribbon to hang on your tree or add to your wreath.

**Day 23 Saturday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> The JOY Candle** (Shepherds Candle)

**Scripture: READ Luke 2:25-38**

v. 26 *“It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.” NIV*

v. 37, 38 *“....She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.” NIV*

**Reflection:**

In the first verses, Simeon was promised by God that he would not die before seeing the Messiah. His strong faith allowed him to see that the child brought to the temple was indeed the Messiah. In the second part of this passage, the widow was staying faithfully at the temple after her husband died and was overcome with joy at seeing the child Jesus as he was brought to the temple.

These verses illustrate that God will show himself to us and help us if we persistently look to him for guidance. He does not promise an easy road but will be there during our trials when we put our trust in him. He fulfills his promises as he has done time and time again in the stories of the Bible. We must remember that He is always looking over us. These stories demonstrate that we should fully trust God because He lives through all of us and will guide all who trust in Him and accept Jesus as their Savior.

**Prayer:**

Lord, as we learn more about you, we need to remember that you have a path for us to follow and if we trust in you, we are able to find ourselves and achieve the goals you set for us. We will not question any instruction You give us. We will lend our full attention to You. Amen

Alex Perkowski (11<sup>th</sup> grade, Rancocas Valley Regional High School)

**Questions / Activity:**

What guidance do you need for today? How can you bring Him joy today?

**WEEK FOUR Day 24 Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> Fourth Sunday in Advent**

**The LOVE Candle (or Angels Candle) Christmas Eve**

**Lighting of all four candles** (at morning worship)

(We will light the Christ Candle at the evening worship)

**Scripture: READ Isaiah 9:6, 7 and The Christmas Story Luke 2:1-20**

*Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." KJV*

**Reflection:**

How many of us have these verses memorized from hearing them every year in Christmas pageants, Sunday School and in worship? The scriptures we have read from this booklet have all led to the birth of the Christ Child and this moment. We will hear this story in our morning worship hour and this evening at our Christmas Eve worship service

I am in awe of what the shepherds witnessed when the angel appeared and then the sky filled with a great company of angels singing! Even heaven could not contain their music - just try to imagine! And to think that God would send a CHOIR of angels singing "Glory to God in the highest!" to the shepherds! LOWLY shepherds! Jesus so often went to the lowest and forgotten -- the Samaritan woman, a poor widow, lepers; a TAX collector; GENTILES; the thief on the cross! Of course, God would send angels to shepherds and tell them to go to the Baby. Jesus sends us out, as he taught us to take care of the poor, the less fortunate - the "least of these".

In the next verses, we find that the shepherds HURRIED and found the babe as they were told, "lying in a manger" – a common feed trough!! Mangers were carved out of stone because wood was scarce in the land. The King of Kings lying in a feed trough for goats and sheep! How fitting really, when I remember that Jesus fed the multitudes with his teachings; he said "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35); and we remember when we take communion that Jesus said as he broke the bread, "this is my body, given for you, do this in remembrance of me." It is not a coincidence that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which means "House of Bread"

Today, just as Jesus' followers were fed, we also are fed when we read and study the scriptures. As we move on into 2024, may we all continue in our journey with the Lord and continue to receive as He feeds us.

(Continued)

**Prayer:**

Glory to God in the highest! Thank you for how you sent the world your Son with such an amazing plan that started even before the beginning of creation. Bless us and our loved ones as we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child, Messiah, Prince of Peace and we pray for the peace of Jerusalem and in that land. In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.

Steve and Pam Engle (Prayer and Discipleship Committee)

**Activity: Sing verse from "O Come All Ye Faithful"**

*True God of true God*

*Light from Light eternal*

*Lo, He shuns not the virgin's womb*

*Son of the Father, begotten not created*

*Refrain:*

*O come, let us adore Him;*

*O come, let us adore Him;*

*O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

**Make and ornament** – color and cut out the stone manger with baby Jesus! Hang on your tree or add to your Advent wreath.



**Day 25 Christmas Day!**

**Light the white Christ Candle**

**Scripture: READ John 1:1-18**

*v. 14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth;. we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son, who came from the Father.." NKJV*

(Although we read this scripture on Day 8 we think it is very fitting to read again on Christmas Day.)

Merry Christmas from your Staff, Session, Deacons and Trustees! Christ the Lord is born today for you and me and the whole world!

"To me there is no greater consolation given to mankind than this: that Christ became a man, a child, a babe. playing in the lap and at the breast of his most gracious mother. Who is there whom this sight would not comfort? Now is overcome the power of sin, death, hell, conscience, and guilt. if you come to this gurgling Babe and believe that he has come, not to judge you, but to save."

Martin Luther, from a sermon preached on Christmas day.

Pastor Stuart

**Activity: Sing verse from "O Come All Ye Faithful"**

*Yea, Lord we greet Thee, born this happy morning*

*Jesus to Thee be all glory giv'n*

*Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing*

**Refrain:**

*O, come let us adore Him;*

*O, come let us adore Him;*

*O, come let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.*