

LIMESTONE
ADVENT
DEVOTIONAL
2024





All around the world, Christians celebrate the four-week season of Advent, a time of reflection and anticipation as we remember and rejoice in the arrival of Jesus on Earth. While Advent is often associated with the tradition of counting down to Christmas, it is much more than a calendar. For people of faith, Advent is a sacred journey of meditation and prayer, a shared tradition that helps us prepare our hearts for the wonder of Christ's birth.

This year, we are reclaiming an Advent tradition: our congregation contributing the content for this devotional. Members of our church family were invited to share personal stories, reflections, and prayers, as well as other creative ideas, all intended to create a unique tapestry of voices that reflect our shared hope and faith.

In addition, we have included several "Legacy" pages from past devotional collections. You'll recognize these treasured entries by their lavender background, a visual reminder of the continuity of our faith and traditions through the years.

As you use this devotional during Advent, may these reflections draw you closer to God and deepen your sense of community with one another. Together, let us embrace the spirit of waiting, preparing, and celebrating the gift of Emmanuel—God with us.

Blessings,
Pastor Tim

Sunday, December 1

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

A HISTORY LESSON TO BEGIN ADVENT



The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ.



Two turtle doves are the Old & New Testaments.



Three French hens stand for faith, hope, and love.



The four calling birds are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.



The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.



The six geese a-laying stand for the six days of creation.



Seven swans a-swimming represent the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit-Prophesy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.



The eight maids a-milking are the eight beatitudes.



Nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit-Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control.



The ten lords a-leaping are the ten commandments.



Eleven pipers piping stand for the eleven faithful disciples.



Twelve Drummers drumming symbolizes the twelve points of belief in the Apostle's Creed.

So, there is your history for today. MERRY CHRIST-MAS. Yes, I said MERRY CHRISTmas, because Christmas is not without CHRIST!

CHARLOTTE LOPILATO

Monday, December 2

I chose to access all five suggested passages and offer some background along with my takeaways:

Psalms 122; 145 ... (Author David, between 1440 and 586BC)

Psalms is at the center of the Bible, hmmm? 122: "What Jerusalem was for the Israelites, the church is to the believer" so delight in worship, praise the Lord and pray for peace; 145: ... speaking of a time when all people will join in recognizing and worshipping God; many impactful adjectives describing God; reminded me of "let go, let God;"

Psalms 40; 67 ... 40: (Author David) while patiently waiting, love God, serve others, tell others about God; 67: (Anonymous) Joy comes from spreading the good news about God; a familiar refrain: "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations."

Isaiah 1:10-20 ... (Author Isaiah, speaking to Israel-Northern & Judah-Southern, about 700BC); Isaiah warns that their rebelliousness will have consequences they will not like, with reference to Sodom and Gomorrah; God does not abandon us, but our sin separates us from God; seek a meaningful relationship w/God, confess your sins, obey God's instructions, communicate regularly in prayer;

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 ... (Paul to young, persecuted Christians in the church at Thessalonica; ~AD51); Paul gave thanks for their work produced by faith ... labor prompted by love, and ... endurance inspired by hope in ... Jesus Christ."

Luke 20:1-8 ... (religious leaders challenge Jesus' authority; ~AD60) ... the leaders question where Jesus got his authority; responding with his own question as to whether John's baptism came from heaven or from men, they carefully responded "we don't know;" Jesus then says he will not answer their question either ...;

1 Corinthians 13:13 ... (Paul to the church in Corinth; AD55) ... a bonus I threw in because it is a favorite of mine, and I like the entire chapter, ending with verse 13; "And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love."

Tuesday, December 3

Psalm 33:1, Sing for joy in the Lord, O you righteous ones;
praise is becoming to the upright.

“There’s a star in the East on Christmas morn;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow;
It will lead to the place where the Christ was born;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Refrain:

Follow, follow;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the Star of Bethlehem;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.”

[Hymn: “*There’s a Star in the East,*” *Glory to God hymnal*]

As we go into this Christmas season, and throughout the year,
keep Christ in your heart and keep looking up.



PHOTO BY LINDA WARDELL

LINDA WARDELL

Wednesday, December 4

1 John 3:18 New International Version

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Matthew 6:3-4 New International Version

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Mister Gafney

As a young student in the early 1960's I walked to elementary school just seven houses down the street. Every day I passed Mister Gafney's home where the elder gentleman sat in a white metal chair close to the street in his front yard. He was usually reading the newspaper.

Each day I stopped to talk to Mister Gafney in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon. He was a sweet man with a friendly greeting, and I always wanted to stop and talk. One Saturday, I went to play with Mister Gafney's grandson as I often did when he visited. We took off our shoes and ran barefooted in the summer grass. Back then, instead of sneakers I wore brown leather tie shoes.

I forgot to take my shoes when I went home, and did not think about them until the next day when it was time to go to church and my Mother asked, "Where are your shoes?" I returned to Mister Gafney's house, but I did not find my shoes in his yard.

As I searched, Mister Gafney appeared. He had cleaned my muddy, scuffed shoes and polished them to a brilliant shine. I remember thinking about how he did this as a gift, a simple act of generosity. And, I was proud of my shiny shoes!

My parents had already taught me to be kind and to help others. From Mister Gafney I learned to simply do the right thing without expecting credit. Jesus teaches us to show love through our actions without expecting thanks, credit or anything in return.



BOB MARSHALL

Thursday, December 5

EMBODY PEACE

Long ago in many ways and at many times God's prophets spoke his message to our ancestors. But now at last, God sent his Son to bring his message to us...God's Son has all the brightness of God's own Glory and is like him in every way.

Hebrews 1:1-3 CEV

The visual light we see is a small part of the energy given to us by the sun. But that light is for us to see more clearly what we have been given and to overcome darkness.

This is the season when we get to slow down and reflect on our lives. Nature goes to sleep so we can awaken. Let's allow Spirit's wisdom within to create a glow around us so others may see the brightness of God and be attracted to the light.

Regardless of our circumstances we can always see God in the light. By this light and with gratitude we know the power, peace, and energy of God's Spirit is flowing through us and we are blessed. so let us embrace and express God's peace.

Thank you, God, for this Advent season. May it be a Holy season as well. Come and join us. Bless our festivities with your presence. Amen.

FRED KIRSCHMAN
2013

Friday, December 6



Illustration: Sam Butcher, Precious Moments, I'll Play My Drum For Him

THE DRUMMER BOY

“The Little Drummer Boy” is a popular Christmas song written in 1941. It was originally known as “Carol of the Drum” and is based on a traditional Czech carol. Although there isn’t any reference to a drummer boy in the Christmas story in Matthew 1–2 and Luke 2, the point of the carol goes straight to the heart of

the meaning of worship. The carol describes how a boy is summoned by the Magi to the scene of Christ’s birth. Unlike the wise men, however, the drummer has no gift—so he gives what he has. He plays his drum, saying, “I played my best for Him.”

This echoes the worship Jesus described when He told of the widow and her two coins: “Truly I tell you,’ he said, ‘this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on’ ” (Luke 21:3-4).

All the drummer boy had was his drum and all the poor widow had were her two coins, but the God they worshiped was worthy of their all. He is worthy of our all as well, having given His all for us.

By: Bill Crowler
Our Daily Bread

REFLECT & PRAY

All to Jesus, I surrender, all to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live.

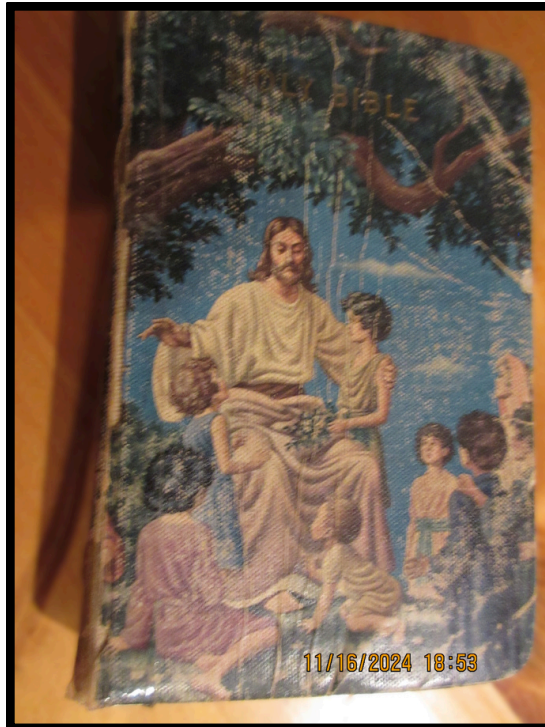
By: Judson W. Van De Venter
Our Daily Bread

SARAH J. HEALEY

Saturday, December 7

ADVENT THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

When I received my Bible for my 8th birthday, I could read the story of Jesus myself learn how special his birth was to all the world! Kings came to honor him following the brightest star in the sky! They had special gifts! The shepherds were special because they were the first ones to know when Angels sang from Heaven! Even animals knew Jesus was special!



My 8th birthday Bible!

When December 1st arrives, it seems there is a special feeling which swells each day! As a child, excitement was there but not as intense, as we did not have all the commercials on TV and Radio! I remember listening for Santa to come and I still think my mom and dad rang bells while putting out the presents! The first present I remember was my Betsy Wetsy when I was five. Later years were a encyclopedia of Bible Stories, clock radio, my record player, and my portable organ.

I enjoyed reading my Bible and memorizing scriptures in Sunday School. I realized that before Jesus came, people weren't very happy. God seemed to be very stern and unhappy with his people He created. Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, Noah had to build a big ARK to save all different animals of the earth and his family.

Then Moses saved God's people, again, from slavery in Egypt, but they had to live in the desert for 40 years because they made idols to pray to instead of God! I could not understand the idol part. God was real! Over the years the story of Jesus as a baby, a boy talking to the Elders and then traveling from village to village, praying and telling parables to show right and wrong giving people a feeling of hope. He talked about love and our loving God. About going to Heaven to be with him. And I felt like I grew with Him.

SUSIE ESTERLY

Sunday, December 8

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

I THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

HOPE

In reading the scripture of today, my thoughts went to hope. As many of you know only too well, losing your loved one, the love of your life is a traumatic experience.

Your life is changed in an instant; everything about it! How can you go on without them by your side? I clung to God's promise to be with me always, and though my tears, acknowledged that He was, and is with me always and that it was possible to continue to live. As a Christian, the knowledge that those who believe in The Lord Jesus Christ, are saved and are with the Lord, gave me comfort. It also gave me hope that since I believe in the Lord, I will be united with Him, and with my loved one.

The season of Advent is a time of preparing ourselves for the birth of Jesus. This means being thankful for God's LOVE, PEACE, JOY, and HOPE, dwelling on their meanings for our own lives. I pray we do not get caught up in all the earthly preparations for the celebration of a commercialized holiday and forget the true reason we celebrate. The Lord came to live on earth, to be with us and experience the joys and sorrows of life as we do. He suffered, died and rose again to save us from our sins, and He promises to come and take us to live with Him for all eternity - with those we love.

This gives me HOPE!

Thank you, Jesus!

ANNETTE FRIDAY

Monday, December 9

“And now faith, hope, and love abide. these three; and the greatest of these is love.” 1 Corinthians 13:13

This past year, my son served with the Army in Africa for nine months. During that time, our congregation here at Limestone prayed for him each week. I cannot tell you how much it meant to me to see his name on the Prayer List and to hear his name called in the Morning Prayers every Sunday while he was deployed. Knowing that my church family was keeping him in prayers filled my heart. Thank you so much! I felt completely loved. As we go about our daily lives, we may not realize how our prayers effect others and how much they mean to others.

Now, as we all look forward during Advent to celebrate the birth of our Savior, let us all remember God’s greatest gift of love.

Gracious God, we thank you for all your gifts to us, especially the gift of Your Son. Help us to follow in His footsteps. Amen,



PETE QUAYLE
2012

Tuesday, December 10

God is both our savior (redeemer of sin and saver of our soul) and our sovereign (the one with ultimate power). His reign is secure and He will continue to rule until evil is defeated.

He sent His Son Jesus to triumph over sin and death. Jesus honored God in life and in death and pointed people to Him with every action He took.. We know that we as His followers should glorify God, our ultimate leader, in all that we do... following a righteous path is not always easy but perseverance to be faithful will lead us to God's grace.

The salvation our Father promises is by grace through faith in Jesus. God's unconditional love need not be earned but instead is achieved by this belief in Him and His blessed Son. This saving by grace is our gift from God.

Father in Heaven, Holy is Your Name. May Your reign and rule over all creation be extended from where you are to where we are. In all things You show that You are Sovereign Lord. Help us, O Lord, to see Your hand in our lives.

Lord, you are the King of glory, and everything ultimately belongs to you. Give me clean hands and a pure heart, as I seek to be part of this generation that seeks your face, who will dwell with you. You are the King of glory, and I give you glory.

Thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you that you are always with us and will never leave us. Thank you for your incredible sacrifice so that we might have freedom and life. Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who you are, for all that you do, for all that you've given. Amen

CAROLYN ALLEN

Wednesday, December 11

The traditional date we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ is December 25. However, the entire Old Testament points the way to the coming of Christ and the New Covenant long before his earthly birth. When the apostles read the Old Testament, they saw references to Christ throughout the pages of scripture.

God Announced before hand in promise and prophecy the redemption he would accomplish through his incarnate Son. He did this so that his people might believe on the promised Messiah prior to his coming. God did this so those who would come to know the Christ might have greater understanding of the work that he would accomplish through his suffering and glory, for example, see:



Psalm: 22 – **“Messianic Psalm”**;

Isaiah 7:14 – **“Virgin Birth”**;

Isaiah 11 – **“Righteous Judge”**;

Isaiah 53 – **“Suffering Servant”**;

Job 19: 25-27 – **“Direct Prophecy”**;

Psalm 119:1- **“Priestly Messiah”**;

Isaiah 9:6-7 – **“Child Ruler”**;

Jeremiah 23:5-6 – **“Righteous Branch”**;

Zechariah 9:9 – **“Humble King”**;

Zechariah 12:10- **“Pierced King”**.

IN JESUS CHRIST,
RON CRICK

Thursday, December 12



ADVENT LESSON FOR DECEMBER 2024

Taken from a reading in *These Days* entitled “Remembering the Future- When Christians Disagree”, written by Steve Lynch, Lancaster, PA. The writing is based on John 18:36; “Jesus Answered 'My kingdom does not belong to this world...my kingdom is not from here'.”

Some people do not anticipate a happy family gathering during the holiday season. Some dinner table discussion may launch into political happenings and other divisive cultural issues.

It's not just families that disagree, Christians do also. However, the teachings of Jesus transcend our differences. It's not that our differences don't matter, it's just that our perspectives are limited. We look to the teachings of Jesus to better see the Way, the Truth, and the Life. These teachings help us to love those who disagree with us.

DOUG TIPTON

Friday, December 13

Lord, this is the time of year when we are tempted to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, and in so doing, lose sight of what it all means. Be with us, we pray, in our Advent journey, and keep us ever mindful of the real reason for the season.

Amen



RUTH SMITH

Saturday, December 14

“Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men’”. (Luke 2:13-14)

What does Christmas mean to you? Is it an overwhelming time with shopping, cooking, visiting, parties etc.? All of us in the Christian community know it is “Jesus’ Birthday,” but with all of the activities and preparations, sometimes it is easy to let that fact fade into the background.

What is Jesus’ birthday? Do we ever think, I mean really think, about what Mary and Joseph went through? How frightening it must have been, even with the Angel’s visits and assurance that all would be well. They did not realize what the future held for them and this Holy Child. They didn’t realize how dangerous their present state was.

The this precious child was born to this very young women in a foreign place; her only comfort being that the man she loved was there. With that birth, the heavens opened to a bright star, trumpets and angels singing the Good News to the shepherds. This celebration-did they really understand what was happening? Did the visit by the Wise Men and the wrath of their enemies overwhelm them? Did fleeing into Egypt cause then any stress?

Prayer: “This Christmas, let us remember not only the wonderful traditions or the Christmas celebrations, but also the awe and magnitude of His birth and those involved. Let us realize exactly what Jesus’ birthday is-the Birth of our Lord-our saving grace-a gift of love and sacrifice for all mankind.
Amen”

Happy birthday, Jesus!

Sunday, December 15
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



As we approach the third Sunday of Advent, we are invited to reflect on the joy we have access to because of our faith in Jesus. One of the defining characteristics of followers of Christ is our joyful demeanor. Let's not allow the struggles of this year to steal from the great joy we have because of Jesus.

The tradition for the third Sunday of Advent includes lighting a third, usually pink candle that is a symbol of joy. Let us read, pray, and reflect on the joy that God's plan gives us (foretold by the prophets and fulfilled by the life and death of Christ), and we meditate on the promise of Christ's coming glory-filled return.

There is so much comfort to be found in the practice of pausing to read, pray, and reflect over the course of the Advent season in which we eagerly anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth. The approach of the third Sunday of Advent gives us the opportunity to prepare in our hearts a sense of holy anticipation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus as well as for his promised second coming.

Over this Advent, would you pray that the joy of the Lord would be evident in your heart and home? May God's spirit transform the days leading up to Christmas into a time of holy anticipation; preparing our hearts, as we joyfully await the chance to celebrate the arrival of our Savior.

Luke 2:10-11 says, *“But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”*

Lord, the good news of Jesus' arrival brings such joy to our world! Reach those who are lost and searching with the message of hope that we have through the Messiah. God, allow your message of peace to bring comfort to our anxious world. As we all go about the holiday season, let the message of great joy pierce through all the noise and into people's hearts. Amen.

TOM MORAN

Monday, December 16

A Big Tree in Heaven

What my Dad believed was the road to heaven after we die:

When we die, we go to a place described as the edge of a field with a long winding path that leads to a large tree off in the distance. As we get closer we notice that there are many people under the shade of the tree waiting for us. Our parents, grandparents, spouse, children, relatives, friends, beloved pets, all who may have gone before us and they are there to greet us and welcome us to paradise. We then meet with Almighty God and he asks us what were we most proud of during our life on earth.

My response:

“I was a good and loyal friend, husband, father and grandfather. I left to my children and grandchildren a legacy of unconditional love, commitment, loyalty, dedication, stewardship and Love of God and his son Jesus Christ.”

I believe that these characteristics are the core to being a good human being and God will grant me the reward of entering heaven and paradise.

RALPH LOPILATO

Tuesday, December 17

In that region, there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But, the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and those on earth, peace among those whom He favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into Heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So, they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child, lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told to them about this child.

Luke 2:8-18

When you look at a Nativity set, the crèche and all the figures, do you ever think about the real people they represent? Of course, we all think about the Baby and His mother, but what about the others, 3 shepherds for instance?

As was true of all Israel, they would have been praying all of their lives for the Messiah to come and for signs of His coming to appear. But, they could not have dreamed that a sign would be directly at them. Imagine the shock they must have experienced when the angels appeared to them. Imagine the shock they must have experienced when the angels appeared to them. Panic. Terror. When the sky lit up and the angels brought the news, they would have only believed it as they realized that all of them had seen the same things.

Just imagine, too, the reactions and the conversation that must have taken place after the angels left them. Fear. Hope. Finally, faith. In simple faith, they went to Bethlehem. But that is not the end of the story; they made known what they had heard and seen. Let's all learn from those long ago shepherds and "make known all that we have seen and heard."

Lord, help us know You & make known to others what we have learned. Amen.

ROSEMARY HICKMAN
2013

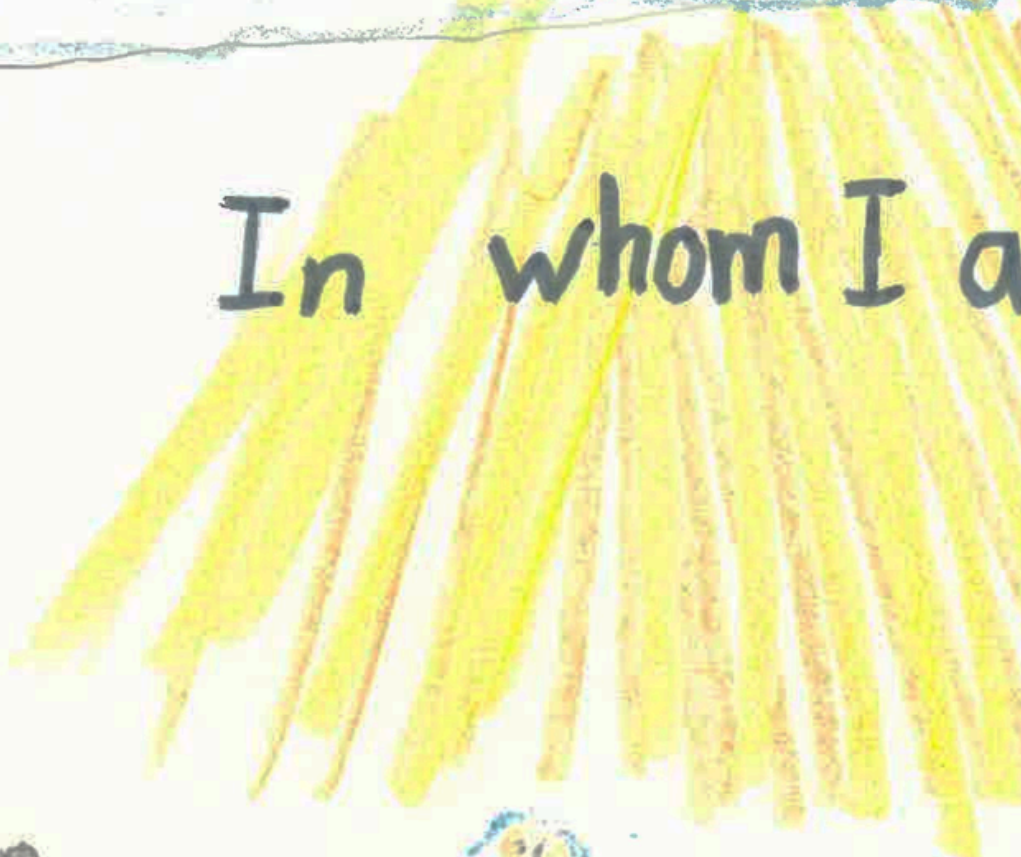
Wednesday, December 18



This is my



In whom I a





beloved son



m well pleased



DANE BROWN

Thursday, December 19

AN EVENING PSALM 126

*It seemed like a dream, too good to be true,
when God returned Zion's exiles.*

*We laughed, we sang,
we couldn't believe our good fortune.*

We were the talk of the nations—

"God was wonderful to them!"

*God was wonderful to us;
we are one happy people.*

*And now, God, do it again—
bring rains to our drought-stricken lives
So those who planted their crops in despair
will shout "Yes!" at the harvest,
So those who went off with heavy hearts
will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing.*



This I offer; an invitation to find peace, renewal, and joy. Both upon reflection of this day, and in experience for the remainder of our season of anticipation. This season giving way to celebration. Celebration of a blessing, Mary's armload.

While we wait on the rain, on renewal yet to come this advent season, sprinkle a bit of that sandman sand. Where memories of the armfuls of harvest are pulled to exist here, in the waiting in the now. While we wait we see it's just a seasons time til your harvest of hope. While we wait we look ahead to every laugh; and In the laughter-ephemeral midst of joy- we are in our unity, celebrating the wonderful. While we wait we will sing and when you do it again we will sing, in unity, in renewal, in joy. And when every time you bring us to rebirth, whether by armloads of blessings or simply your presence; we'll be ebullient, and we'll be yours.

KATIE BOSTICK

Friday, December 20

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST FORETOLD
LUKE 1: 5-25

The birth of John the Baptist is celebrated in June, which is six months before Christmas. This celebration of John's birth foreshadows the Celebration of Christmas. In addition, John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Lord, by preparing peoples hearts and minds for God. John's message was one of repentance and forgiveness. So, let's ready ourselves for the celebration of Christ's birth with a change of our heart and mind by seeking repentance and forgiveness for our transgressions.

I know it's a bit different to hear a message about repentance and forgiveness during Advent. But Advent means coming, and shouldn't we prepare for the Celebration of Christ's Birth, his coming, by way of repentance and forgiveness.

KIM RUDISILL

Saturday, December 21



SPECIAL GIFTS

Luke 1:26-38 (NRSV)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph in the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

What, in Mary's life, allowed her to believe the message from the angel Gabriel?

The Virgin Mary was born to elderly parents, Joachim and Anna, who took her to the Temple in Jerusalem when she was three years old to be consecrated to God. Because her parents were quite old, they left her there. While living in the Temple, Mary and the other maidens were taught the Law of God, prayed and read the Scriptures. Mary remained there until she was 14 and, according to law, could no longer stay there and had to wed. She was betrothed by a high priest to a distant relative of hers, a widowed octogenarian named Joseph. During Mary's first year with Joseph, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to visit her.

Perhaps being raised in the Temple allowed Mary to believe and accept Gabriel's message that she was chosen to bear the Messiah. How much faith did that require?

How much faith do we need today to believe that the God we worship truly loves us? We re-visit the story of the Nativity every year and celebrate the Christmas season. But do we really believe that the infant born so long ago came for us? Perhaps that is what faith is all about – the belief that a tiny baby would save the world by proclaiming love for everyone, hope beyond despair, the promise of everlasting life, and dying for the sins of all. Those items are, perhaps, the greatest gifts for mankind.

Merry Christmas!

Prayer: *Eternal Father, please walk with me along my faith journey. Help me to answer the question: How will I choose to live knowing that God has already chosen me? Amen.*

KATHY MAGNER

Sunday, December 22

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Silent Night!
Holy Night!

JOSEPH MOHR FRANZ GRUBER

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, All is calm, all is bright
2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Shep-herds quake at the sight,
3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light
4. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Won-drous star, lend thy light;

My favorite moment the whole advent season is the candlelight singing of Silent Night! Holy Night! While singing, I am overcome with a wave of emotions that concludes with an inner sense of peace. "Silent Night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright" There are times when I am unable to join in the singing and just take in the moment. To me, it feels like the start of a new year. Jesus is born and all the things I am worried about go away. It is in that moment where I get this feeling of peace and feel everything will be alright. "Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light Radiant beams from thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. I hope you can feel the Peace of Christ this Advent season.

Sleep in heav-en-ly peace, Sleep in heav-en-ly peace.
Christ the Sav-ior is born! Christ the Sav-ior is born!
Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
Christ the Sav-ior is born. Christ the Sav-ior is born.

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CATHERINE SHAFER

Monday, December 23

Music means a great deal to me during the Christmas Season. It is a time to remember the meaning of Christmas. One song I find that I love because of its simplicity is "C H R I S T M A S " that I found on the *Time Life Treasury of Christmas-Volume 2*

C is for the Christ Child, born upon this day
H is for the Herald Angels in the night
R is Our Redeemer
I means Israel
S is for the Star that shone so bright
T is for the Three wise men, they traveled far
M is for the manger where he laid
A's for all he stands for
S means Shepherd's came

And that's why there's a Christmas Day!

CINDA MCCOMBIE

20--

Tuesday, December 24

ISAIAH 35:1-10

The Voiceless Break Into Song

This can be an overwhelming time of year. We're tired. Anxious. Burdened. Weeding through those emotions and thoughts tumbling around in our heads just feels too daunting of a task. We want to express ourselves and be understood, but we're so bogged down we don't even know where to start.

Just like David, music can help us connect with and express our hearts to God. Music can help us interpret, understand, and share our emotions, our thoughts, our worldview. It can even help others to understand bits about ourselves we're still discovering!

As we near the end of our season of anticipation, take a few moments to listen to the playlist linked below and experience this expression of thoughts, feelings, emotions shared with God and shared with you. Inspired by Isaiah 35, the message is one of joy: God already knows your struggles. God knows exactly what you're going through.

God will keep their promises, will create a path, will comfort you. Our God is almost here.

*Scan the QR code or type or click the link, to be taken to the playlist!



<https://tinyurl.com/lpcdec24>

HOLLY BOSTICK FASCIANO

Wednesday, December 25



In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

And everyone went to their own town to register.

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, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 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 guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,
“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

OR IN THE WORDS OF CHARLES SCHULTZ...



*Scan the QR code or type or click the link!

<http://tinyurl.com/25declpc>



Merry Christmas to all of our
LPC family & friends!