

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL



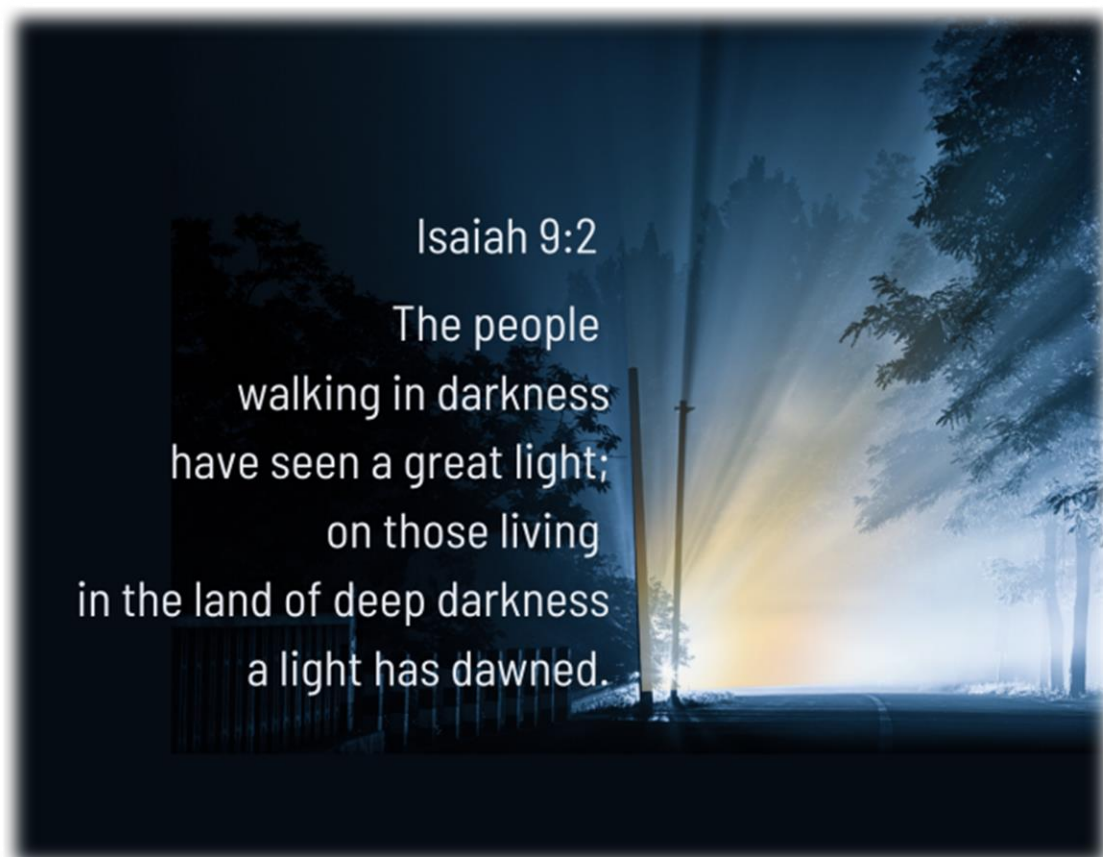
2024 Advent Devotional



First Presbyterian Church of Ambler
4 South Ridge Avenue • Ambler, PA 19002
215.646.3030 fpcambler.org

A place where lives are changed by Christ
and we live out our faith together.





Isaiah 9:2
The people
walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living
in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

Advent Begins

December 1, 2024

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE: THE CANDLE OF HOPE



Today is the beginning of Advent - the preparation time for getting ready to celebrate Jesus birth and second coming. We are here because God's promises to our ancestors of faith came true when Jesus was born. God's promise is kept each Sunday when we worship because Christ is in our midst. God will also keep the promise to come again in glory. This is our hope.

SCRIPTURE

The prophet Isaiah said, *“Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you.”*

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF HOPE

We have lit this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into darkness. With the coming of this light, there is hope. Because of Christ, we not only have hope but believe that good is stronger than evil, and that God wants us to work for good in this world. Let us pray.

PRAYER

God, we thank you that Jesus brought hope into our world. By way of the Good News of the Bible, you are still bringing hope to your people. Help us to be ready to welcome Jesus Christ so that we may think good thoughts and do good deeds and that we may be a people of hope in our world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

This week's devotions were written by Debi Ferrarello

Monday, December 2, 2024

Read: Acts 1:1-6

Reflect: In Christianity, Advent and pilgrimage are closely linked. Mary and Joseph journeyed their way to Bethlehem, ostensibly to be counted for the census, yet they were fulfilling prophecy as Mary gave birth to the long-hoped for Messiah in the City of David. Their journey became a holy pilgrimage. In today's Scripture,



Jesus told his disciples to wait to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, but the disciples still did not understand. They asked Jesus if this is when he would restore the kingdom to Israel. God's plan was so much bigger and more expansive than they could ever imagine! I wonder. As we walk through this life is our vision too small? Are we even on the right path? We busy ourselves striving for success by standards of little eternal value. As believers filled with the Holy Spirit, we are invited to participate in the restoration of God's eternal kingdom by walking in Jesus's way of humility, service, and sacrificial love. We live as hopeful pilgrims, journeying toward our holy homecoming, inviting others, and sharing Light along the way.

Leslie Wise

Prayer: Lord God, we thank you that you invite us to walk with you. You equip us for service and to do good works that you prepared for us in advance. We are journeying with you and to you, inviting others to join the pilgrimage. *You* are the Way.

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Read: Psalm 121

Reflect: Psalm 121 is a *Psalm of Ascent*, sung by Hebrew pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem or Mount Zion. In September, a group from FPCA went on a 75-mile walking retreat---a pilgrimage---on the Camino de Santiago. As we walked, we went deep with one another, sharing stories of heartache and hope, talking of God and of faith, praying to God and listening for His voice. We were part of a stream of pilgrims from many nations all heading toward Santiago. There were echoes from ancient times, a faithful throng singing praises to God as they ascended the holy hill. We are part of thousands upon thousands of God's children "walking each other home." As we travel through this life, may we be conscious of God's presence that makes every day holy. May we take the time to share stories along the way and help each other see the hope Jesus gives us in the midst.



Debi Ferrarello

Prayer: Jesus, our journey of life is a pilgrimage leading to life eternal in your Kingdom. You make every step holy. May we open our eyes to see your glory, open our hands to one serve, and open our hearts to love you and love one another. Guide us along your way.

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

Read: Isaiah 30:20-21

Reflect: Imagine! The Teacher hidden no longer. His voice whispering guidance. Can you think of a time you heard or felt a holy nudge? A time you chose a path that made sense only because it was the way God spoke to you? Hold on to that memory. Pastor and author Arthur Boers wrote, “Surely God does not operate differently on the Camino than in the rest of life. But I learned to pay better attention to God-God’s company, God’s workings, and God’s interventions” What a lovely way to live. This is abundant life, and it is open to us when we slow down and pay attention. Life seems to speed up this time of year, doesn’t it? So many things we think we must do. What if we intentionally carve out time for stillness, to listen for God’s voice to listen as he tells us, “This is the way, Walk in it.”

Prayer: Lord God, this time of year our to-do lists lengthen and our preoccupations multiply. This is not your plan for us. We ask you to re-order our priorities and use the time you give us according to your will, the values of your Kingdom, as we wait expectantly for our King.

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Read: Hebrews 6:13-15

Reflect: Waiting is a common theme in Scripture, isn't it? In this passage, we are reminded that Abraham waited a long time for the fulfillment of God's promise but receive it he did. The Jews waited centuries for the long-awaited Messiah, and many did not recognize him when he arrived. During Advent, we remember that we are waiting still for our Messiah to come again. What promises has God given us? In one of the hostels along the Camino there was a sign based on Hebrews 6:15. Later that morning I saw a signpost with graffiti that said, "You already have it!" The words hit a deep chord inside me. What promise has already been fulfilled? What am I searching for that I already have? And the answer? Jesus and his abiding, everlasting love. Immanuel, God with us. And if the God of all creation is with us and for us, we already have everything we need. As I meditated on that truth, my anxieties melted away, replaced by the Peace of Christ. I already have what I need. I need Jesus.

Prayer: Lord God, you are all we need. You are the Light in the darkness. The Truth in a sea of falsehood. The Way for us to follow. Thank you for abiding in us and us in you. We pause now to breathe in your Holy Spirit and exhale all that is not of you. Help us to walk in your Way.



Debi Ferrarello

Friday, December 6, 2024

Read: 2 Timothy 4:7-8

Reflect: On the middle day of our five-day hike, we geared up for a long walk. We were prepared for the 18 miles the guidebook stated. We started the day with hours of silent reflection. Ten miles listening to the songs of nature and to the whispers of the Holy Spirit. It was truly glorious. By mile 15 we realized we had not 3 more miles but 7 more to go! The trail was rocky and steep, and the afternoon grew hot. The morning's peace dissipated with the mist, and we may have (definitely) grumbled a bit. Late afternoon it dawned on me that the God who was with us during the morning's prayerful walk was with us still in the challenging climbs. Pilgrimage, the journey of life, has hard parts. God gives us the strength to persevere. By God's grace, we will run the race set before us, but not in our own strength. God gives strength to the weary and joy in the journey. What a glorious hope to hear those words, "well done, good and faithful servant."



Carol Kocher

Prayer: Lord God, help us to persevere, to walk faithfully with you all our days on this earth. Along the way, may we remember you are with us in the hard parts and lean on your strength.

Saturday, December 8, 2024

This week we will light the candle of peace. Consider how having God's peace could change one worry you might dwell on.

December 8, 2024

Please join us for the 9am traditional service or the 10:30am contemporary service. Livestreaming is available on Facebook, YouTube and FPCAmbler for both services.

LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE: THE CANDLE OF PEACE



We gather around the Advent wreath today knowing that we are not perfect - that we all make mistakes and do wrong things. Only Jesus obeyed God fully. Jesus helps us to live as God wants us to live and Jesus gives us peace.

SCRIPTURE

The prophet Isaiah said, *"For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."*

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF PEACE

We have lit this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into darkness. With the coming of this light, there is peace, for Christ is called the "Prince of Peace." Christ's name is also Emmanuel, *"God with us."* The presence of Christ with us gives us peace day by day.

PRAYER

Eternal God, we thank you that through all the years you have given peace to your people. Help us to have your peace in our lives. We pray that, in this Advent season, we may, by what we do, show your presence to the sick, the hungry, and the lonely, so that they too may have your peace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

The poem below and the devotions for this week were Debra Lee.

Monday, December 9, 2024

Reflect: The Advent or “arrival” of Jesus reminds us that God, “in his great mercy ... has given us new birth into a living hope” and it is our God who enables us to “overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13). The lyrics below are inspired by and quoted from scripture, offering a prayer and message of hope for the coming of our Lord Jesus (*Psalms 51, 88; Hosea 6:2-3; Isaiah 40:3; Luke 3:4; Matthew 3 & 5:80*).

*My soul is full of trouble
As my life draws near the grave
I feel like I have lost my strength
Confined with no escape*

*Down here in the lowest pit
I'm bound in the darkest depth
I reap the wages of my sin
Bringing only shame and death*

*O Lord, the God who saves me
Turn your ear and hear my cry
Restore me to your Presence
As sure as the sun does rise*

A VOICE CRIED FROM THE WILDERNESS

**MAKE READY FOR THE WAY
REPENT TO PURIFY YOUR SOUL
SO ALL FLESH CAN BE SAVED**

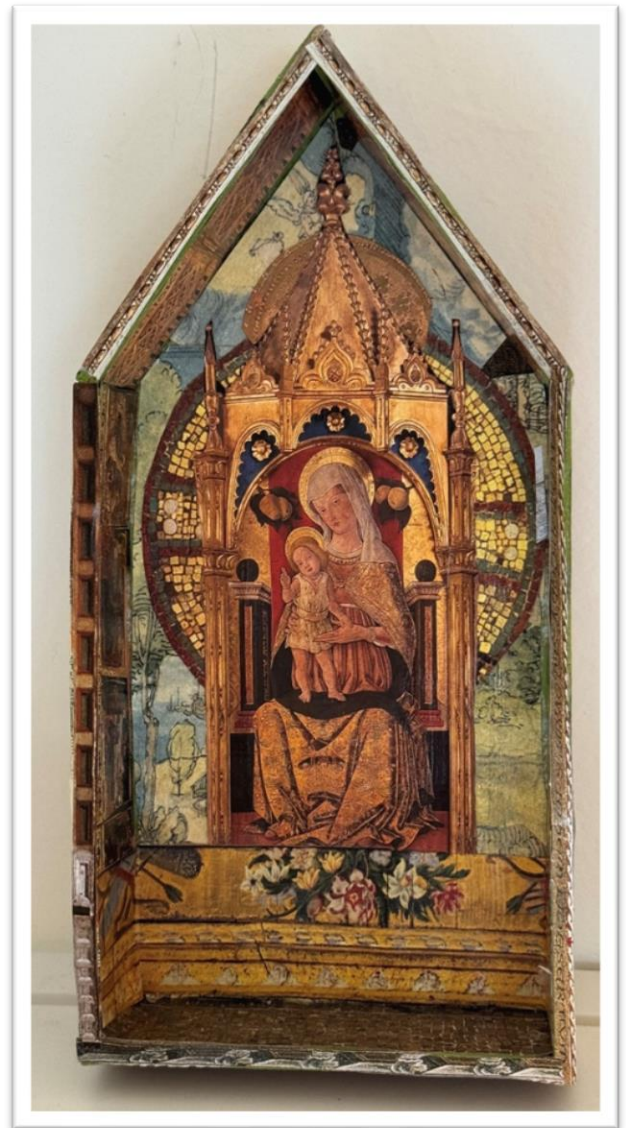
*Emerging from the darkness
A great light now has dawned
The pure in heart are surely blessed
In righteousness and love*

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Read: Isaiah 11:1-2.

Reflect: During Advent, let's remember that Jesus is the embodiment of God's love and grace. Starting even before Thanksgiving, the "world" makes the holidays all about buying, doing, and buying even more. The message of Advent can be easily forgotten. The **Advent** season invites us to **reflect** on the profound significance of the gift of God's Grace in Christ's incarnation.

Romans 3:23-24 says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God being justified as a gift by His Grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." During this time of spiritual introspection, let us prepare our hearts to welcome Christ anew into our lives. Grace came to Earth in the form of a baby in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago and continues today to all who welcome and receive Him.



Suzanne Shockley

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I praise and thank you for the gift of Grace through our Lord Jesus Christ. May your Spirit be born anew in my life as I reflect on your redemption and amazing, saving Grace. In Jesus' Holy name.

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Read: Lamentations 3:22, John 3:16

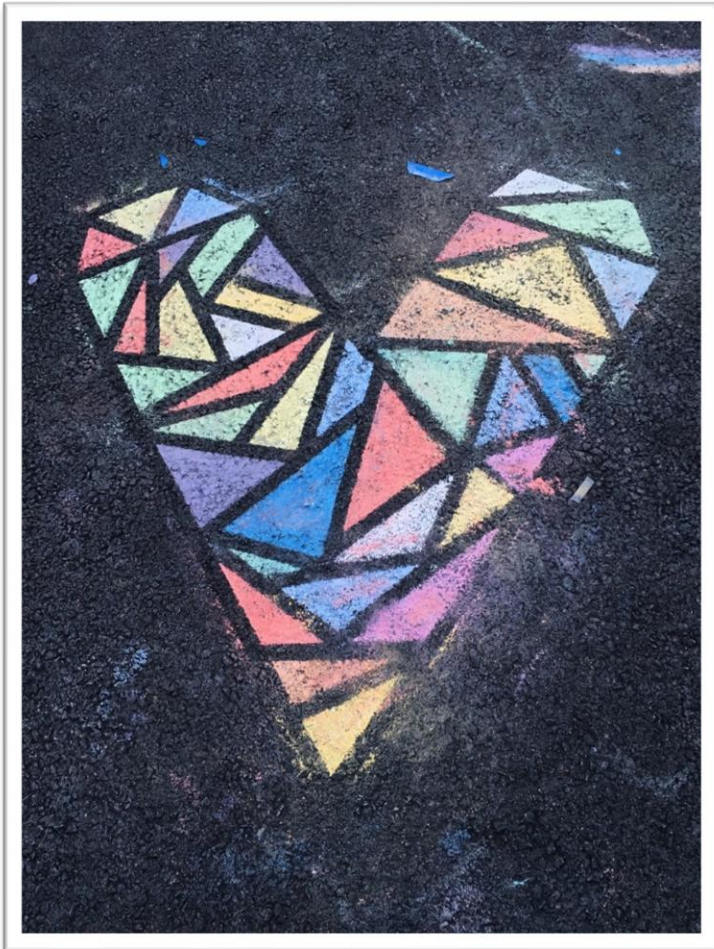
Reflect: At Christmas, God's compassion for humanity is on display in a real and tangible way in order that we can grasp and be transformed by His love for us. God planned, prepared and paved the way for the appointed time when the babe in Bethlehem would be born. One of the Advent candles of Christmas represents love. How fitting to spend the days just before Christmas thinking of "the wonders of His love," as sung in *Joy to the World*. Jesus' birth is a huge proclamation of God's love found in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." As John 13:34 says, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Let us be transformed by God's LOVE and make it our aim to extend God's grace and love toward others, not only during the holiday season, but throughout the year.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit, live in me and guide me to do your will by offering others your unfailing mercy and compassion.

Thursday, December 12, 2024

Read: Isaiah 9:6

Reflect: We turn to Isaiah's prophecy about the coming Messiah during Advent and celebrate its fulfillment in the arrival of baby Jesus—a baby, yet a king. It is human to fall into doubt and unbelief and fall prey to fear and anxiety about the future, but when we remain vigilant to trust firmly in God, we have the assurance of the counsel of the Holy Spirit to find true peace through the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ.



Frankie Spinner, Leslie Wise's granddaughter

As the song *Joy to the World* reminds us, “Let every heart prepare Him room.” When we find that we default to worry or waver in unbelief, let’s remember to make room for the Lord, no matter what our personal circumstances or chaos in the world around us may be. This doesn’t mean we ignore fear, anxiety, and doubt, but we hold steady to God’s Word in the midst of it. Through life’s many storms we are buoyed by something greater – the birth of the incarnate Savior and the promise of his return.

Prayer: Lord, when in the midst of fear, anxiety, doubt, strengthen me with your love and the assurance of your Presence, in Jesus’ Name.

Friday, December 13, 2024

Read: Matthew 4:16, John 1:5

Reflect: It is a well known fact that depression increases during the holidays. We're bombarded with images that say we should be joyful, surrounded by the perfect family, buying lots of stuff and celebrating! We can easily find ourselves in a place of comparison with unrealistic ideals. It is easy to find ourselves in a place of spiritual or psychological darkness. For some, once the holiday celebrations stop and decorations come down, a time of "depression" can set in. The truth is that many of us experience depression in ways that are not life-threatening but are still difficult. Depression is a complex issue where there may be a biochemical component or a link to other medical or psychological concerns. It is always good to offer up our suffering to Christ, but when depression is deep or long-lasting we should seek help as needed and encourage others to do so. We can spend much time, energy, and money running away from our own experience of darkness—but if we are not afraid to look at it, it can help us draw closer to Christ. Without Christ, we are *all* prisoners of darkness. We cannot rescue ourselves from our own sins and our own alienation. We are people walking in darkness—and it is when we recognize this that we can truly rejoice that the Light has come.

Prayer: Lord, in all things I give thanks, including times of darkness which draw me closer to you. I pray that those suffering from depression may find you and experience Your Peace. In Jesus' precious name.

Saturday, December 14, 2024

Read Luke 3

Sunday, December 15, 2024



KaLisa Veer on Unsplash

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE: THE CANDLE OF LOVE

As we gather around the Advent wreath today, we rejoice that Christmas is a time of prayer and of open hearts when we sing songs of joy. Christmas is a time of worship, the moment when the busiest of us should pause and wonder. Christmas happens when God comes to us in love through Jesus Christ and fills us with love for all people.

SCRIPTURE

The Apostle John said, *"This is how God showed His love among us; he sent his only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."*

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF LOVE

We have lit this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into our darkness. With the coming of this light, there is love. Such great love helps us to love both God and one another.

PRAYER

O God, we thank you that Jesus showed your love for every person, babies and children, young people and old, sick people and those who are strong, rich people and those who are poor. Come to us in this Advent season, and give us love in our hearts for all persons. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

This week's devotional offerings are the gift of Beth Hedges, "our" missionary in Armenia.

Monday, December 16, 2024

Read: Luke 3:7-9

Reflect: John the Baptist, the voice in the wilderness, (Lk. 3:3-6) is preparing the way for King Jesus. He calls people to turn away from rebellion and disobedience to welcome God's presence. But there needs to be fruit – a change in actions and behaviors in line with repentance. Otherwise, the axe and the fire await those with fruitless repentance.



Prayer: God thank you for this call to true repentance. Show me where I need to turn away from sin. Spirit, give me the fruit of real repentance. Change my life, my behaviors, and my motivations so they line up with King Jesus and His Kingdom. May Your Kingdom come, and Your will be done in my life as it is in Heaven. Amen

Song: *He is like a Refiner's Fire*
(Handel's Messiah)

"But Who May Abide + For He Is Like A
Refiner's Fire + And He Shall Purify"
Trinity Wall Street Choir and Trinity
Baroque Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JozORpK4lyY>

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Read: Luke 3:10-14

Reflect: When conviction of the truth comes there needs to be a response. Here, three different sets of people repent, and John gives them three different actions to take tailored to each group. The fruit of repentance here is generosity and integrity. We don't have cloaks, and we are neither Jewish tax collectors nor Roman soldiers, but generosity and integrity we can practice.

Prayer: Lord, You are generous and trustworthy, I praise You. Your grace abounds and You keep Your Word. You know where I struggle to be generous and where I struggle to keep my word and do what is right in Your eyes. Show me those places now so I may confess and be forgiven (pause and confess). Forgive me. Help me to share with a cheerful heart with those in need. Help me to be truthful, trustworthy, and to have integrity in my words and deeds. By Your mercy and grace, Amen.

Song: *In the Bleak Midwinter* In the Bleak Midwinter (Tune: Cranham - 4vv)

[with lyrics for congregations]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAzQIS4-MpY>



Carol Kocher

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Read: Luke 3:15-20

Reflect: Advent means “arrival”, usually of a notable person or thing. Here we see that the people were waiting for the promised Messiah/Christ. John tells them that the One Coming (Jesus) will be powerful and to be honored more than himself. Now we are in the time between Jesus’ first arrival and his second arrival when He will come to judge the living and the dead. Am I “waiting expectantly” and looking for Jesus’ return?



Suzanne Shockley

Prayer: Jesus thank you for your first arrival at Christmas. As you left you gave the Holy Spirit who is at work within me to help me remember all You taught and to give me spiritual gifts and spiritual fruit. I know that You will come again, and it will be a great and terrible day when You will gather up wheat and burn the chaff. Give me a longing for that day and help me to wait expectantly.**Song:** *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding* - Latin Hymn Tune: *Freuen Wir Uns All In Ein* 1531

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZnabxcayqc>

Thursday, December 19, 2024

Read: Zephaniah 3:14-17

Reflect: Salvation comes from God. We are not able to save ourselves, as we are caught in sin and the consequences of it in every part of our world and every part of our lives. But Jesus is a savior and deliverer. He comes to deal with the consequences of sin as he lived a sinless life and then died in our place. Thanks be to God that Jesus is mighty to save!

Prayer: Praise be to You, Father for your everlasting love. Praise be to You, Jesus for Your willing sacrifice. Thanks be to You, Spirit for coming to transform and live in us. Praise be to You, Holy Trinity for the work of salvation and rescue. Delight in me, quiet me with Your love, rejoice over me with singing. Let me experience these realities of my relationship with you this day. Amen.

Song: *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*

Phil Wickham - God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen (Official Lyric Video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K01cCKfA-6M>



Carol Kocher

Friday, December 20, 2024

Read: Zephaniah 3:18-20

Reflect: The people of Israel waited from the time of Zephaniah (late 600 B.C.) for the Messiah to come. When Jesus comes, only a few recognize him and understand who He is. But Jesus brings the Kingdom of God of which Zephaniah speaks - healing the crippled, the blind, the lepers, and those with evil spirits. Jesus also changes our relationship with God so that it no longer depends on our feasts and sacrifices of the Law but only on His death on the cross. Thanks be to the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.



Ed Herritt, age 93, Suzanne Shockley's Father

Prayer: God thank you for my relationship with you that does not depend on my sacrifices. Thank you that you are rescuing and working to bring freedom in my life. I long for the day when you will gather us and bring us home. While I wait help me to live in your love and grace. Help me to share this with others today. For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.

Song: *O Come O Come Emmanuel* Kim Walker-Smith - O Come, O Come Emmanuel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mL0E1qC-zpw>

Saturday, December 21, 2024

Read: Micah 5:1-5 Luke 2:1-20

Sunday, December 22, 2024

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE: THE CANDLE OF JOY



As we gather around the Advent Wreath today, we rejoice because soon we shall celebrate the birth of Jesus. We worship God with joy in our hearts as we are reminded of the words the angel said on that first Christmas day, *“Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people.”*

SCRIPTURE

Jesus himself said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full."

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF JOY

We have lit this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into our darkness. With the coming of this light there is joy, joy that is ours not only at Christmas but always.

PRAYER

O Holy Father, as Christmas draws near, there is a sense of excitement in the air. We can feel a joy in our lives and see it in those around us. Still, for some, this is a sad time because of unhappy things that have happened in their lives. Help us to have the joy that does not depend upon earthly happiness but upon you. Help us to be filled with your joy so that we may share it with a joyless world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

You are welcome to join us at the 9am traditional service or the 10:30 am contemporary service. Live streaming is available on Facebook, YouTube or FPCAmbler.org.



Leslie Wise

This week's devotions were written by Leslie Wise.

Monday, December 23, 2024

Read: Micah 5:1-5

Reflect: We are so often constrained by physical limitations while here on earth. Our genetics also seem to determine so much of who we are. As written in Micah, Bethlehem Ephrathah was deemed too little to be among the clans of Judah. Bethlehem was an insignificant small town in the West Bank of the Jordan River near Jerusalem. Despite its small size and lack of importance, God prophesied great things to go forth from Bethlehem. "One will go forth to be a ruler in Israel and He will be great." Consider this, Mary was a teenager, David was a youth, Moses was eighty years old and had a stammer. Sarah was well beyond her childbearing years. God used what we may think of as impossible limitations. As we journey through this time of Advent, look with expectancy on how you may be used by God. No group or person is ignored and deemed unworthy. Too old? No worries. Just a teenager? Perfect! Jesus described a tiny mustard seed as being the beginning of great faith. Bethlehem was a small town, yet it produced a King and a Savior. It is revered in the beloved Christmas carol, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. God chose a little town to bring His glory low.

Prayer: God help us to think beyond our boundaries here on earth. Enable us to encourage others to think beyond known possibilities. Help us not to "despise the day of small things."

Tuesday, December 24, 2024

Read: Luke 2:8-20

Reflect: There are times when I just want that big revelation from God, a declaration of purpose and plan just for me. Sometimes those declarations do not come when we are waiting, looking or sadly hoping for the Big Life to come. The shepherds were minding their sheep on a typical night, nothing seemed out of the ordinary. Suddenly, a star appeared, angels sang, and they were amazed. The unexpected can happen on the edges of an ordinary day. Putting the silverware away or cutting the grass may seem like the mundane things we do every day. Not much is expected from these actions. But it is in those times that God can reveal His presence and purpose. Cherish the everyday. God may speak when we least expect it. Christmas Eve is the intersection between the everyday and heaven. A quiet night of herding turned into a chorus of angels. The mundane and the holy. They are bound together on this night.

Prayer: Father, help us not to grow weary of the ordinary things we do in life. Allow us to hear your voice and sense your presence in our uneventful days. Make them as beautiful as the Christmas star.



Leslie Wise

Wednesday, December 25, 2024 *Written by Sue Shockley*

Merry Christmas! "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:15



Mackenzie Panettieri, Suzanne Shockley's Granddaughter

Read: Luke 1:46-55, Isaiah 43:19

Reflect: Luke 1:46-55 is called the Magnificat, Mary's song of praise. She glorifies God in song for what He was going to do for the world through her. Mary knew only that God asked her to serve Him and she willingly obeyed. Listen to God, offer yourself willingly, even when the outcome is uncertain. Mary's heart was open. God is near, speaking a message to you today. Open your heart and listen. You will not be alone. God never asks us to do something on our own, but rather watches over us always.

Prayer: Glory to God! Look at what He has done for us! Accept this gift God has given us. Praise and serve God. Thank God for this indescribable gift and us all he gives us for His glory.

Thursday, December 26, 2024

Read: Luke 2:8-20 Matthew 2:10

Reflect: One of my favorite sounds is the thump of the newspaper on the sidewalk being delivered in the early morning. Will the news be good or bad? How are the sports teams faring? I always love to see the news in print, feel the paper and smell the faint odor of newsprint. I have my favorite columnists and sections. The Good News edition that the prophets were waiting for was delivered last evening; in a stall, under a star, announced by angels, surrounded by jubilant shepherds and worshipped by magi. What a headline! Extra, extra, read all about it! Today is the day after Christmas. So much awaits our attention. Take the time to sit amongst the wrapping paper and ribbons still strewn on the floor. The returns can wait. Read The Good News column as written in Luke 2. Like Mary, take the time to treasure all of these things, pondering them in your heart. Good news of great joy is ours today.

Prayer: Help our lives not to be consumed with grievous headlines and worrisome news. So much of the news we hear or watch may not be worthy of our concern, yet it sits heavily on our hearts. “When anxiety was great within me, your consolations brought me joy”. Thank you, God, for those words of comfort.

Friday, December 27, 2024

Sing: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* and Listen to *Majesty and Meekness* by Graham Kendrick

Reflect: One of my favorite verses is from the song, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*. “See from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down, did e’re such love and sorrow meet or thorns compose so rich a crown.” As I rolled up the Christmas lights one year, I noticed that the roll of lights looked like a crown of thorns. Christmas and Easter are entwined together in this picture; the lights of the Christmas season meet with a reminder of the thorny crown to come. We walk between the jubilation of a new birth and the sorrow of the tomb. Jesus understands our humanity, our own journey from birth to death. His heart of sorrow and love was given for us. “Oh, what a mystery, meekness and majesty, bow down and worship, for this is your God.”



Leslie Wise

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for all of the joys of this Christmas season. Help us to carry that joy into the world that needs it so desperately. Let all heaven and nature sing.

Saturday, December 28, 2024

Going Forward

Reflect: The journeys to Advent and Christmas are now behind us. Our thoughts may now be toward the New Year and celebration planning. Soon, the season of Lent will be upon us as we continue to walk through the upcoming months. “We are part of thousands upon thousands of God’s children walking each other home. Continue this year to walk in Jesus’ way of humility, service and sacrificial love. We live as hopeful pilgrims, journeying toward our homecoming, inviting others, and sharing light along the way.” Let the candles of hope, peace, love and joy continue to light our paths.



Christie Bogrette

We hope you found this devotional a help in your personal and family devotions during Advent. Many thanks to those who contributed words or artwork: Debi Ferrarello, Beth Hedges, Carol Kocher, Debra Lee, Mackenzie Panettieri, Suzanne Shockley, Frankie Spinner, and Leslie Wise.

If you would like to contribute to a devotional for Lent, please contact Leslie.W.Wise@gmail.com or Debi@FPCAmbler.org. You are invited to share your gifts.



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215.646.3030 fpcambler.org

A place where lives are changed by Christ
and we live out our faith together.

