



Advent Devotional

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH -
MOREHEAD CITY, NC

You are invited to read along each day with our church family as we dive deeper into this year's Advent sermon series, "This Shall Be A Sign Unto You."

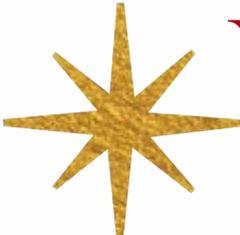
The Prophet Isaiah and the Gospel of Luke spoke of a Sign - an act of God speaking forth Hope, Peace, Love and Joy. That Sign is ultimately Jesus, the very incarnation of God's hope, peace, love, and joy for his children and creation. With this Sign, God breaks in to save - to forgive and redeem - those who embrace the Sign. May this be us!

Each Sunday, you can use our Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy around your own table to light your own candles as a home worship experience. Read the Scripture and Daily Reading aloud. Then light the candle as you pray the prayer that is included.

Weekly Themes:

 WEEK 1 
A SIGN OF HOPE: 11/27-12/3

 WEEK 2 
A SIGN OF PEACE: 12/4-12/10

 WEEK 3 
A SIGN OF LOVE: 12/11-12/17

 WEEK 4 
A SIGN OF JOY: 12/18-12/24

Sunday, November 27



Scripture

Matt 24:36-44 - "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Daily Reading

God is all about signs. A rainbow in the sky was a sign of covenant. A pillar of cloud and smoke was a sign of God's presence. A snake on a pole was a sign of healing and faith. Manna and quail were signs of God's provision. Advent is also a time of signs. Around 800 BC, the prophet Isaiah pointed to God's greatest sign. Isaiah

7:14 declares: "the Lord himself will give you a sign - a virgin will conceive and bear a son." That baby would change our lives and the whole world forever.

Around 33 AD, a man crucified on a cross and an empty tomb were signs of a Savior and Risen Lord. And Matthew says one day other signs will welcome again the coming Lord's Day - a day of judgment and salvation. Signs anticipate. They point the way. And we begin the Advent way with the sign of Hope. Hope rooted in the One who came - Jesus - our Savior. Hope that we shall be raised with Jesus.

And Hope that Jesus

will soon come again to make all things new.

Light your candle and pray

As we light this first candle of Advent, we embrace the sign of Hope.

Let us pray: Come thou long expected Jesus, the incarnate sign of God!

Come and bring hope into our hearts and world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



AUTHOR: KAY STARLING

Monday, November, 28



1 THESSALONIANS 1:3 – WE REMEMBER BEFORE OUR GOD AND FATHER YOUR WORK PRODUCED BY FAITH, YOUR LABOR PROMPTED BY LOVE, AND YOUR ENDURANCE INSPIRED BY HOPE IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.



Until we retired and moved to Pine Knoll Shores, our life was consumed with three children and both working at our jobs. We went to church regularly, but never actually got involved in giving our time. After we adjusted to our new style of retirement and living, we decided to search for a church. We attended several, but after attending one service at First United Methodist Church, we felt very comfortable and decided to join. Soon after, our church welcomed a new pastor, Pastor Powell Osteen. A short time later, Powell met with us and asked if we would assume the Backpack Blessings Program, which Glenda Kinney had very successfully managed.

We needed something to help fill our time and also a way to interact with our church. What a great decision we made. We thought ok, we will try it and we have now been doing this for several years. Until we met with Glenda, we had no idea what an impact this has on so many children. The thought of some children not having food on weekends and not having a snack at school like the others, was too sad. We were also amazed at the number of people who want to participate with this ministry, both in time and monetarily.

About six years ago, I volunteered to work with Christmas Cheer, and what a blessing it has been and I look forward to it every year. Most of the families I met had such sad and pitiful stories. I would try to imagine later how I would handle such a dire situation. The most amazing thing I learned is they have HOPE and deal with these situations, especially for their children. Jesus loves all children and wants us to provide for them. Through our faith and labor by love, we give these families HOPE that our Jesus Christ loves them.

Now with the Christmas season upon us, our church will continue to reach out in the community and give them love and hope. We are so thankful and blessed to be part of such a caring and giving church. We thank you, Lord for the many reasons we have been given a Merry Christmas. We thank you for the mighty gift of your creation.





Tuesday, November 20

Author: Pat Willis



Hymn

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

Scripture

1 Peter 1:13 - Therefore, with
minds that are alert and fully
sober, set your hope on the grace
to be brought to you when Jesus
Christ is revealed at his coming.



Daily Reading

December 2018, we heard these words, "This diagnosis can be worse than cancer." Really, I didn't think there was anything worse than the "c" word. As we progressed in this journey, words like transplant, and COVID made us a little more fearful. Those were scary days and a lot of words we never dreamed we would hear in our lives. We would walk portions of this journey alone and COVID even separated Al and I physically for about 4 weeks of this journey. From past experiences, I knew God would see us through this journey and He did. Situations in our lives may change, but God does not change; may not be same diagnosis, not sickness or death of same loved one, job change or work issues, move from your home community of over 50 years, whatever circumstances we face, God does not change. He moves with us through each situation, preparing us for the next one. Experiences are our best teachers, which reminded me over and over, that our hope is in HIM. Proverbs 18:24 tells us we have a "friend who sticks closer than a brother".

A song of hope comes to my mind, The Solid Rock. "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus name." Sometimes we have to be alone to realize we are NOT really alone. As you spend time with HIM, "May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in believing (through the experience of your faith) that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound and be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope." (Rom 15:13 AMP).

During Advent, as we prepare to celebrate Jesus first coming as a baby, Kings came to worship Him, at time of his death He was mocked as "King of the Jews" and we have the promise He will return as KING. So let us with "minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming." 1 Peter 1:13. He is our HOPE both now and for eternity. May we go forth singing "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" You are the Hope of all the earth.

Wednesday November 30

Author: Fletcher Poulk



Revelation . 1:4-8- J

John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

“Look, he is coming with the clouds,”

and “every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him”;

and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”

So shall it be! Amen.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Today, we gaze at the Alpha and Omega Chrismon. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8) This is mentioned in the bible several more times and has been used as an important Christian symbol for Jesus Christ or God, often combined with other Christian symbols, from early Christianity and even appear in Roman catacombs.

I was born to Bob and Dot Poulk on January 20, 1951. My dad was a Methodist pastor so I was taught from an early age about Jesus. Although I was about Jesus and saw Jesus lived out in the lives of my mother and father, I didn't really have a relationship with him until High School. In June of 1965, we moved from Goldsboro to Fayetteville. This move really depressed me because I missed all the friends I had made in Goldsboro. This led me to Jesus for his help and he came into my life in a very real and life changing way. The Bible would say that I was born again, a new birth, and a new beginning. This was my spiritual beginning or you may say my ALPHA as a Christian.

Since that beginning, Jesus has proven himself faithful in his guidance, with his presence, and his perfect love. He has called me to do things I thought I “couldn't” possibly do, like give 5 sermons! He has also led me into helping in youth ministry and working with our local FCA. I never thought that is what I would be doing when I retired, but he did. I like to say that now I live each day in joyful anticipation of what Jesus is going to do in me and through me. Sharing each moment of each day with Jesus gives me great hope for the future because he is LORD of the past, present and FUTURE! That is my OMEGA - my end - Life with him forever. What a life!!





AUTHOR: DEGA LANCASTER

Thursday, December 1



Ephesians 1:15-23 - For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

PRAY:
Pause
Reboot
Adore
Yearn

PAUSE each day (AM/PM) to spend intentional with God and your loved ones.

REBOOT -ask God to clothe you in his armor (Ephesians 6:14-17) to face the day and keep you on the right path.

ADORE God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Thank the Lord for his blessings. Show gratitude for the most precious gift of his only son, Jesus.

YEARN for God to light the way for you to see more clearly, hear without secular distractions, serve with a willing heart, and feet that follow where he leads.

Specifically, during Advent, our family does the calendar activities in the AM; these vary from year to year all with the purpose of learning Jesus' miracle birth story. During the PM, we pray. We read the selected devotional. Sometimes, the devotion sparks a "treasure hunt" in God's word. Ultimately during this season of anticipation, we focus on hope, faith, joy, peace, and love.

Spend time together, hold onto hope, and grow stronger in the warmth of Jesus' love.

From our family to you, Merry Christmas,
Dega Baily Lancaster



Friday, December 2



Author: Leslie Morey Whitmore



Song

Light of the World by Lauren Daigle

For all who wait
For all who hunger
For all who've prayed
For all who wonder
Behold your King
Behold Messiah
Emmanuel, Emmanuel

Glory to the light of the world
Glory to the light of the world
Glory to the light of the world

Scripture

Hebrews 10:23-25 -Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.



Daily Reading

Hope pours from the lyrics of this song. From praying for peace, calling out from a sea of hurt, hearing the angels singing, the tears of a mother, a baby's cry sounding of pure love, for He is the song of the suffering. He is the hope. The light of the world.

Hope can be easily lost in the darkness, when we rely on our eyes more than our hearts. Hope can be overlooked when worry and fear take hold.

For all who wait, have hope.
For all who hunger, have hope.
For all who've prayed, have hope.
For all who wonder, have hope.
Behold your king...



This past year has taught me many things. Some of those were painful lessons. But hope allowed me to continue focusing on the positive and not losing sight of who I am and what I know in my heart.

My father has had a medically challenging year, to say the least, and worry consumed me. The feeling of such guilt, if I were to miss something, not learn of the latest information or say what he really needed to hear. Worrying that I wouldn't be able to do enough.

Holding tight to the hope that is promised is the goal. It is faith. Helping others lean in the direction of love and good deeds by leading with truth, hope and faith. Encourage all, in any circumstance, to hold tight to these pillars, as each of us navigate through our own choppy waters. With the light of the world as our forever guide.

Saturday December 3

Author: Bradley Williams
Grade: 4th



Romans 15:13 -May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Advent is a season of waiting - both for Christmas and for Jesus to return. Hope is wanting something and the belief that you will get it or that it will happen. The BEST place to put our hope is in Jesus Christ our savior. A place I saw a sign of hope during advent last year was when I was waiting for Santa to bring us tickets for Disney World. I had hope that Santa would bring us tickets to Disney World. I prayed for it to happen and guess what! It happened. BUT thats not really CHRISTIAN hope. Thats just regular hope.

One time during Christmas Eve church, Pastor Powell talked about hope and thats my favorite memory of Christmas Eve worship. When Pastor Powell told us the story of Mary's Treasure Chest, I clearly remember him saying that Mary had HOPE that Jesus would return. And that is the kind of hope we talk about at church during the season of advent. In the story of Mary's Treasure Chest, Pastor Powell talked about the gold, frankincense, and myrrh that Mary kept in her treasure box. I liked the part about the myrrh the best. Mary had only a little of the gold left because they had to use it to run away from King Herod. They only had a little frankincense left because they used it for worship. But they had all of the myrrh because when the went to put it on Jesus's body, he wasn't in the tomb.

That gives us hope that Jesus will return!

Every night I pray and I pray to God and have hope that he will return. While we wait, we serve the Lord. In my kitchen, we have a sign hanging that says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15. Every day when I go to school, I try to tell my class about Jesus so they can have hope too.

(If you want to read the book for yourself that Pastor Powell read in church, its called Mary's Treasure Box by Carolyn Walz Kramlich)



Sunday, December 4



Scripture

Ephesians 2:14-17 - For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

Daily Reading

Advent can seem anything but peaceful! A night of a birth in a stable surrounded by animals surely was anything but peaceful. And how can the hustle and bustle of decorating and gift-shopping ever be peaceful? A calendar of parties and events is hardly peaceful. We struggle with peace. We strive to be perfect, to achieve and win, to possess and to control. The world says it wants peace, yet wars and conflicts fill the globe. Jesus is God's sign of Peace. Our hope truly is that we might again be at peace with God and with one another. Jesus makes peace through the forgiveness found in his sacrifice upon the cross. He offers peace with God, peace within ourselves, peace with others, and ultimately, peace on earth.

Light your candle and pray

As we light this second candle of Advent, we embrace the sign of Peace. Let us pray: Come, Mighty God. Lord Jesus, come. Come and bring us your peace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



AUTHOR: CLARK JENKINS



Monday, December 5



Matthew 5:9 –
Blessed are the
peacemakers,
for they will be
called children of
God.

Why is a peacemaker called a child of God. Most children are eager to please, quick to forgive, easy to repent and most importantly apt to give love where love is needed. This is what God looks for in the people that open their hearts to him. God wants people to have the childlike unconditional love that drives them to love one another, forgive and repent.

Having been involved in Project MHC and Costa Rica Mission Projects, I have witnessed first hand children who will one day be peacemakers and peacemakers who are now called the children of God. I have seen God working through the hearts of these people, working unconditionally and with a light as bright as the North Star. God blesses us all and I pray that everyone has the opportunity to find the light as a child of God.





Tuesday, December 6

Author: Brandon Wickizer



Hymn

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin
with me

Scripture

John 14:25-27 - "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Daily Reading

As we sing Let There Be Peace on Earth, the first verse starts with Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. Jill Jackson-Miller who co-wrote this hymn was once quoted as saying she wrote this song after discovering what she called the "Life saving joy of God's peace and unconditional love." I feel this can best be described in John 14:25-27 as Jesus says "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." I best describe to others the Holy Spirit is what we feel in our hearts. As Jesus says, the Holy Spirit will teach and remind us. From our hearts we feel his gift of peace and the prosperity of love Jesus has for us all. Jesus's unconditional love was his gift to us.

During the past few years, I have been humbled to be reminded that these material gifts we are given on Earth were not earned by us, but loaned to us by Jesus. While these gifts are lovely to have, they do not take the place of the calmness that comes into our lives when we are at peace with ourselves, our family, and our Lord. As we sing the very first verse, let us remember that for there to be peace on earth, it begins with the love in your heart, and with the love you feel from the Holy Spirit within you and around you. Let it be a reminder of the unconditional love Jesus has for us all.

Use the love in your heart as a testament to others. Share your faith by sharing his love, and peace will follow.



Wednesday December 7

Author: Kitty Simmons



Ezekiel 37:21-28 - And say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

“My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children’s children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.”

Today we are going to take a look at the
“Cross and the Orb” Chrismon.....

It represents the triumph of Christ’s Cross over the powers of the world. It is a sign that declares “The Cross stands firm as the world turns”.

I don’t know about you but I feel like the world is spinning out of control sometimes , but as our scripture today taken from Ezekiel in the Old Testament says....GOD is always in control. Even as the Israelites were scattered, worshipping idols, doing evil and living in sin, GOD was in control. He told them HE would bring them together and send them a Savior (Jesus) to rule over them and GOD would dwell with them forever.

Take comfort knowing GOD is in control today as HE has been forever.

Many years ago I was asked while taking the Disciple Bible Study to keep a journal every day. I wrote in that journal daily for four years. I put the journal away and forgot about it until years later. As I read it reliving many times of joy, several moves, the deaths of our parents, the tragic death of our Grandson, GOD was there with HIS Grace and mercy, leading, loving and giving hope.

How can we give peace, joy and hope to others? We can stand firm in our Christian values, we can show kindness to others and be there for those in need. Most important is to share our faith to others and invite them to worship with us.

During this Advent Season, take a look at the Cross and the Orb Chrismon and remember that the Cross (Jesus) stands firm as the world turns. GOD is on HIS throne and all is as it should be when we trust GOD’s plan.

REJOICE in the birth of our Savior, JESUS CHRIST.





AUTHOR: MANDY BRYANT

Thursday, December 8



Colossians 3:15-17-“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”



Advent for our family is full of excitement and anticipation. You see, each night during the season we have a great reveal of not one, but two advent calendars that we come together for. I get to watch my two boys take turns first building from the LEGO advent calendar; a new set for a new year. Each night the boys open a small surprise hiding behind a cardboard door: a part that makes up a whole holiday scene. Jesse, age 9, says that building the LEGOs helps him feel calm as he concentrates on assembling each piece correctly.

Our second advent calendar is a wooden train that has 24 drawers on its sides. Each drawer contains a bible verse that tells part of the Christmas story as well as two pieces of candy. Here is where I find my joy, watching and listening to my boys reading the familiar words each night and meditating on them while they enjoy their treats. Jonah, age 12, says it gives him a sense of pride that we have this tradition, coming together for Christ. For my husband Daniel, these are new traditions he embraced when he became the head of our family last year. For all of us, our peace comes from the time spent together in the quiet hours of the evening focusing on each other and the true meaning of the season. We're thankful to God the Father for giving us the best gift of all, Jesus!



Friday, December 9



Author: Alan Leary

Song

Joseph's Lullaby

Go to sleep my Son;
Go and chase your dreams
This world can wait for one more
moment
Go and sleep in peace.

Scripture

Isaiah 9:6 - 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.

Daily Reading

I love this song for several reasons. The music is beautiful, very calming and very soothing. The words are simple and easy to understand even though they are difficult to accept. Understanding that it is Joseph speaking to God the Father about "their" son, asking that baby Jesus be able to rest before he begins his journey to save all of us, is so overwhelming; yet Joseph remains calm and peaceful in his plea. No anger, no fear, no demanding; just total love for Jesus and accepting His future that God has prepared. Joseph knows he is sacrificing his son to God so He can allow Jesus to be our savior. I cannot imagine how his heart feels at this time - yet he calmly trusts God as he speaks to Him.

2022 has been another "unique" year: less COVID, more economic, political and personal challenges. Families having to address lots of questions about finances, relationships, religion and more. Personally the Learys have seen family health issues, church issues, friends and family decisions and more. Through it all, this song reminds me(us) that God is in control at all times, and he will peacefully lead us to where we need to be. Worry and doubt do not enhance our situations; trusting God and calmly following Him is what will make a difference. He has given us his only son to save us, and though sometimes our path is tough He will never leave us. He will calmly and lovingly take us where we want and need to be. The "Prince of Peace" has offered to do what no one else can do. May we all peacefully consider following Him.



Saturday December 10

Author: Baily Salter
Grade: 9th

Psalms 4:8 - In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Some of my favorite Christmas memories are from an annual Disney on Ice trip during childhood. My Aunt Debbie reserved a room at Embassy Suites for us to stay in each year. We would spend the entire weekend in Raleigh to see the show, eat at our favorite restaurants, and go Christmas shopping. Every year, we looked forward to our "DOI" weekend and making fun memories. One year, Aunt Debbie bought so many presents that her entire Suburban was full. We had to climb through the driver's door to get to our seats in the very back because the other doors were blocked with shopping bags. Another year, we sat in the lobby of the Embassy Suites eating their complimentary snacks. A company was hosting their Christmas party in a big room off of the lobby. To entertain ourselves, we pretended we were the fashion police and commented on the party attendees' holiday attire. Oh the laughs!

In 2019, my Aunt Debbie was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor a month before our trip. Her doctors gave her permission to go as long as my mother drove and she took it easy. We managed to see the show, visit Santa, and go to some of our favorite stores, but Aunt Debbie had to take things slow. She struggled with her speech and did not have much energy. This would be our last Disney on Ice trip together. The following year, the covid pandemic shut down performances like Disney on Ice. After a year and half battle with brain cancer, my aunt went to be with our Lord. I miss my Aunt Debbie. I miss our fun adventures, boat days, and trips. Most of all, I miss our conversations. But knowing she is safe with our Lord and her family that preceded her gives me peace. Even though I grieve her loss and miss her deeply, I know she is no longer in pain. She is reunited with her father, grandparents, and friends that have gone before her. The Lord ensures me that if I follow the path Jesus has for me, I will be reunited with her again.





Sunday, December 11

Scripture

I John 2:28-3:3, 3:16-18 – And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him. See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure... This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Reading

“This is how we know love, God sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” God loves us not because we are all that loveable, but because God is love. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his Son that whosoever believes in him should have everlasting life.” Jesus is the sign of God’s love. But not a mushy, sentimental love. God’s love is a strong love of action. God shows love. And his love is transforming, never leaving us as we are but changing us to become signs of his righteousness in the world.

Light your candle and pray

As we light this third candle of Advent, we embrace God’s sign of Love. Let us pray: Almighty God, whose steadfast love endures forever: pour upon us your love, mercy and grace. May the love of Jesus break forth in our hearts and lives. Amen.



AUTHOR: CATHY BAKER

Monday, December, 12



Matthew 22:34-40 - Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

This past June, I had the opportunity of serving as a volunteer in Project MHC alongside the youth of our church. We had a group of twelve youth that we assisted in completing construction and home improvement projects in our community to help others in need.

Our first project was to build a ramp to allow Ms. Dallas the ability to get in and out of her home independently. From the minute we arrived at the jobsite, the youth were eager and fearless to jump in, learn new skills, and use all types of tools. They also took it upon themselves to learn the needs of Ms. Dallas and quickly jumped right in to get those tasks taken care of as well. The youth quickly became very fond of Ms. Dallas and loved visiting with her and helping her in any way they could. The love shared was reciprocal and was truly an example of loving your neighbor.

During our lunch break each day, we would all gather in a circle in the yard and share our highlights and God moments for the day. Each of the youth would share a different moment in their day where they were overjoyed to help their neighbor and be the hands and feet of Jesus in their community. Watching these youth willingly work with joyful hearts during a very hot week of their summer vacation reaffirmed the power and importance of loving your neighbor. Acts of kindness to our neighbors bring joy to those we help, but also to ourselves, and in turn, God. Loving and serving our neighbors is a beautiful way to show love to God with all of our heart, soul and mind.





Tuesday, December 13

Author: Loretta Baily



Hymn

People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.



Scripture

John 3:16 - For God so loved the
world that he gave his one and
only Son, that whoever
believes in him shall not perish
but have eternal life.

Daily Reading

People Look East is not a carol that is heard every time you hear Christmas music. I heard it the very first time in our beloved First Methodist Church. Betty Jo Baily, Dykeman's mother loved this carol, she liked the simple lyrics and melody. Betty Jo was raised on the Outer Banks, looking East was the beginning of each new day, bright and fresh for new adventures. The hymn lyrics speak to getting ready for Love....the Guest, the Rose, the Star and culminating with the Lord. This year I have witnessed the Love of Jesus many times in the aftermath of the tragic plane accident that sent shock waves through our Down East families, community, schools, Carteret County and beyond. The spirit of Love through

Jesus wrapped these families in a true bond of Christian Love. The unbelievable tragedy brought together our community to serve these families. A sense of true love even in the most heartbreaking of circumstances, this is where I witnessed the Love of Jesus this year.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life...John 3:16. The Lord of Love, Jesus is coming. Get yourself together, spread hospitality, joy and love to all. Prepare not just your home but your HEART. Christmas is a time to Look East, remember the peace in your life when Jesus is in charge. I believe this is a daily walk to find Jesus every morning in the Bible and claim him as King of your life. Start today, remember our Down East community in this season of preparation and renewal. Vow to begin today and continue with a lifetime of thanksgiving, prayer, community, peace, joy and Love with Jesus! His Love Never Fails.

Wednesday December 14

Author: Rodney Kemp



Today, we look at the Sacrificial Lamb Chrismon. Growing up in Morehead City in the 1950's, my two most favorite seasons of the year were baseball and Christmas. Baseball because I loved playing it and watching it on TV, and Christmas because of the excitement of the lights and decorations, and of course the prospect of Santa bringing me gifts.

As I aged and matured, my relaxation of the advent season's true meaning has changed. Christmas - the birth of Jesus - is the greatest "gift" in the history of man's time on earth. The stories of the manger birth, the wise men following the star, the angels telling the shepherds of the birth are REAL and TRUE. The birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ is truly the reason for the season.

This fact is represented in the Chrismon tree in our church. The word "Chrismon" is a combination of the words "Christ" and "monogram." It tells of the true spiritual meaning - the worldly birth of our savior. He was born in a humble manger, but he is also the king forever. He is the lamb that was slain for us. Jesus Christ loved us so much, he gave his life to save us! Amen!



Rev. 7:9-17 - After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:
"Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb."

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

"Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!"

Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?"

I answered, "Sir, you know."

And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore,

"they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd;

'he will lead them to springs of living water.'

'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"





AUTHOR: DENNY LAWRENCE

Thursday, December 15



1 John 4:7-12 - Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and 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. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Love is so fundamental that it's hard to wrap our heads around. It's like trying to describe the taste of water to a thirsty person. I can say, "I love you" to my family as you surely can, but to describe love makes things much harder, it's so close. We can call it patient, kind, say it doesn't boast, but those are descriptions of something that can be indescribable.

As a father, I do everything possible to give and share a loving and magical Christmas season. Ask yourself the following which is accentuated in the scripture above, when did you truly show and feel unconditional love...Agape? If you are a parent it usually is the birth of your children. Much like God's love for Christ and His love for us, being made in his image, gives us this capacity.

Outside of the family that you were blessed to co-create, how difficult is it to truly love one another as Christ commanded? This means means loving a stranger, and even more, a perceived adversary that may oppose a longtime held belief that you may hold deeply exactly the same as you love your own child. Christmas is easy because our homes have all the unconditional love that's easy to feel, how can we take that forward 364 more days and longer?



Friday, December 16



Author: Amber Hughes



Song

Heaven Everywhere

Somehow there's a little more of love
And maybe there's a little less of us
Or maybe we're just slightly more aware
there's a little bit of heaven everywhere
-Francesca Battistelli

Scripture

1 Corinthians 13:1-7 - If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Daily Reading

During the Christmas season, I switch up my daily listening of whatever Sirius XM station is my favorite at the moment to a Pandora Christmas station. A song by Francesca Battistelli rolled through the playlist one year, and it has quickly become one of my favorite Christmas songs. "Heaven Everywhere" paints a picture of the Christmas season as a time to slow down and notice how Jesus is working in our lives and how He shows up for us every day—we just have to look. During Christmas, we celebrate Jesus coming to us; Immanuel, or "God with us." Because God is with us, we can see glimpses of Heaven here on Earth. We just have to pay attention. As the song says, we can see more of love, but maybe we just have to be "slightly more aware." So where have I seen God's love this year?

I've seen His love in a sweet puppy, who, like Him, never leaves my side. A kind of love that gives us glimpses into Heaven and shows us love in its purest form. Winnie (my puppy) points me to a God who loves us enough to give us puppies. Winnie also teaches me how to love better, to be more patient and kind. She goes to work with me every day, which can't be too much fun for a one-year-old high-energy Doodle. But she loves it. She greets our co-workers, plays with her squeaky toys, and when the days get stressful, she lays on my feet or jumps in my lap. And this teaches me that sometimes the best way to show love is to just be present, to be there for those you love. I have no doubt that a puppy laying on your feet and snoring while she naps is a glimpse into Heaven. I've seen His love in my Village, a group of women who mean the world to me. Like the man in Luke 5 whose friends carried him to Jesus, their love and friendship point me to Jesus every day. They show me how to love selflessly. Again, sometimes showing up and being present is the best way to show love. And show up we do. It's the "where are you texts" when someone isn't signed into Gchat by 9 a.m. during the week. It's showing up to the baptisms and the birthday dinners and showers. It's Thursday nights and Sunday brunches at the country club together. It's vacations and girl's weekends. It's laughing together, but also crying together. It's celebrating the good moments and grieving the sad moments. It's been quite a year for my Village, both good and bad. But we've shown up. And friends showing up for each other, loving one another? That's surely a glimpse into Heaven. I've seen His love in countless other ways throughout the year. I'm also sure that I've missed opportunities to see His love and glimpses into Heaven. May we be "slightly more aware" this Christmas and the coming year to see all the ways in which He loves us and to see "a little bit of Heaven everywhere."



Saturday, December 17

Author: Kendall Shine
Grade: 5th



Romans 12:9-10 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

When I think about Christmas, I automatically think about love. The Christmas caroling, hot cocoa, the Moravian Love Feast, The Christmas Eve service and all the things in between. I have so many favorite Christmas memories, so it is hard to pick just one. The Christmas that sticks out the most to me is December of 2020. That year we traveled to Disney World. While Disney World is a magical fun place, we really could have been anywhere. The last two years had been a little rough, my mom got sick and was not able to travel. While there is nowhere, I would rather be than with my family, we all love to travel and do new things. It was such an adventure getting to ride all the fun rides with my family. The trip had already been postponed once because of the pandemic so we were not even sure if we would get to travel. While there were many negatives about the pandemic, I do think there were many positives as well. I hope that I learned to love a little deeper, give people grace and enjoy each small moment. I hope that I am more present and really enjoy the company of the people around me. My nana travels with us often and she was with us at Disney World. It is always nice to have her around. She is very special to me.

I think that at Christmas time, no matter where you are or what you are doing, it is a time of reflection to remember what is important and what the real meaning of Christmas truly is. While I really love Disney World and traveling with my family, I also love to be involved in all the activities our church offers. Operation Christmas Child is one of my favorites. I will get to participate twice this year. Once with church and again at school. The Christmas Eve service is my favorite Christmas Holiday service. To be able to spend such a special occasion with my church family and my loved ones makes me happy. Love fills the fellowship hall with hugs and smiles from everyone gathering in the room for the same reason, to Celebrate the birth of Christ. What a great feeling.



Sunday, December 18



Scripture

Matt 1:18-25 - This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, 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 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." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Reading

Joy is the surest sign of the presence of God! The angels broke forth in joyous song the night Jesus was born. Glory to God! Glory to God in the highest! Joy is so different from mere happiness. Happiness can be fleeting, disappearing as quickly as it arrived - gone when things don't go our way or we don't get what we want. Joy is rooted in the work and promise of Jesus. Circumstances can't change our joy. Our joy is In Christ. He is our Joy!

Light your candle and pray

As we light the fourth candle of Advent, we embrace the sign of joy! Let us pray: Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, Great God our Savior. May our hearts and lives overflow with joy - in word, song, and deed. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.



AUTHOR: TIM WILSON

Monday, December, 19



Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7 - Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Every year since moving to Morehead City, I ring the bell for Salvation Army at the Belks store on Mondays during the Christmas season. I am always inspired by the people who stop to put a donation in the kettle. Many Moms have their children put the money in the red kettle, and tell their children that is how we can help other children to have clothes and food. What a special learning moment for us all.

The Salvation Army has its challenges at the administrative level, but here locally they are the first on the scene of an accident or disaster. Much like our church, that responds whenever we can to assist those in need of shelter, food, and God's love. I remember a lady and her son from Pittsburgh drove to the Salvation Army Disaster Store after Florence; to deliver a truck pulling a trailer load of cleaning supplies. I still get a little emotional when I think about them telling that they just had to help somehow!

It reminded me so much of my faith in Christ!

The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Lord Jesus Christ son of God have mercy on me a sinner; We are blessed to celebrate the birth of your Son during the Advent season.

I am inspired by the way you show me your love and grace everyday through the good works done by others.

Christ is born!



Tuesday, December 20

Author: Joe Kirk



Hymn

Joy to the World

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders, of His love

Scripture

Psalm 47:1-7 - Clap your hands, all you nations;
shout to God with cries of joy.
For the Lord Most High is awesome,
the great King over all the earth.
He subdued nations under us,
peoples under our feet.
He chose our inheritance for us,
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.
God has ascended amid shouts of joy,
the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.
Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.
For God is the King of all the earth;
sing to him a psalm of praise.



Daily Reading

“Joy to the World“ is an English song written in 1719 by the English minister and hymn writer Isaac Watts. Its lyrics are an interpretation of Psalm 98. Even though we sing this at Christmas time, it was written to celebrate the second coming of Jesus Christ. “God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”. (Phil 2:9-10)

When we consider that the second coming can happen at anytime, we should all shout to God with Joy. We should sing praises to our King. The wonders of his love are evident in that Christ died on the cross to save us from our sins. Every day we can see evidence of God in our daily lives. We should be overjoyed each time we witness these God moments, joyfully proclaiming these events by sharing with others.

For example, my cousin in California has recently been diagnosed with Cancer and will undergo radiation treatments for 44 days. He does not have a car so he needs transportation for all those visits. His daughter has been given the go-ahead by her boss to be his transportation, and a friend has volunteered to take him on any days his daughter is unavailable. We are shouting for Joy at the wonders of God’s love.

Recently I was discussing a concern with my wife and she suggested we pray about it. We did. Within two days, a God Moment happened. I was approached by another person who asked if he could help with the effort I needed help with. I was shouting for Joy at the wonder’s of God’s Love.

Wednesday December 21

Author: Janet Roberts



Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
“Your God reigns!”

Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices;
together they shout for joy.

When the Lord returns to Zion,
they will see it with their own eyes.

Burst into songs of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem,

for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord will lay bare his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth will see
the salvation of our God.

The bible tells us that God created angels. Angels are God’s messengers to us, His people. They can be celestial or those of us here on earth. They celebrate our salvation and point us to God. They guide us and seek to bring peace and unity in our world. Our scripture today echo’s these messages. Artist’s over centuries have created what they thought angels must look like. Some are very ornate and some like plain folks. Some with halo’s and some like us without. We decorate with angels during Advent, and you will see them on the Christmon Tree in our church’s atrium. No Christman pageant would not be complete without those sweet children being angels, even if their halos are crooked.

Think of angel’s that have touched your life. Mine include childhood neighbors, co-workers, and strangers and dear friends that have stepped in to help me in a time of need. I have heard people describe cardinals as messengers from God that appear in their yards after a loved one has died. Ever wonder why so many Christmas cards include cardinals? Today’s scripture includes so many messages. GOOD NEWS, PEACE, GOOD TIDINGS, SALVATION. GOD REIGNS! The message in Isaiah 52:7-10 is as true today as when it was written. We are still seeking to bring the news of God’s salvation to the ends of the earth. Verse7...“feet of those who bring good news“ references messengers bring good news. Some may have been angels. This scripture tells us to shout for joy. Just think of how many hymns include joy and angels. Start signing! Take time in 2023 to look around and see who needs your help, to see angels at work and remember, there are many that are at work behind the scenes.





AUTHOR: MALLORY FLOYD

Thursday, December 22



Luke 1:46-47

And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in
God my Savior“



For most of us, we consider Christmas to be the most wonderful time of the year. It is a time to celebrate, spend time with the ones we love, and make memories. I always enjoyed Christmas, but experiencing Christmas through the eyes of my children is better than I could have ever imagined. It is pure magic. Second Corinthians says, “I thank God for his gift that

words can’t describe!” I am often left feeling this way when I look at my children. We spend our time soaking up all the holiday magic, but keeping our focus on the true reason for the season.

It is easy to get caught up in the excitement of Christmas and lose your focus. It is important for me that my children learn that Christmas is about giving and not just receiving. We started a tradition of making our own Christmas ornaments. Each year leading up to Christmas we make ornaments together, often including tiny hands or feet. We spend days working on them together. We wrap them up and our daughter decides who she wants to give them to each year. You see, this fosters a giving spirit within her. And isn’t a giving spirit what Christmas is really about? We celebrate Jesus’ birth on Christmas Day. God loves us so much he gave his only Son for us to have eternal life.

When the time comes to give out her ornaments, she is so proud of herself and excited to be giving to others something she worked hard on. Our Christmas tradition not only allows us to make memories together, but teaches her to have a giving heart. After all, Jesus himself said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Extra Bible Verses:

2 Corinthians 9:15

Acts 20:35

Friday, December 23

Author: Robby Oakes

Song

O Holy Night (Hillsong version)

O holy night the stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks
A new and glorious morn

Fall on your knees
O hear the angel voices
O night divine
O night when Christ was born

Scripture

Aside from keeping people informed, beautifully designed booklets can also be brought home as a keepsake. These visually appealing platforms are easy to distribute as well, and can be handed out during expos and other events, making your brand truly memorable.

Daily Reading

O Holy Night is my favorite Christmas song. Each year as I hear this song on Christmas Eve it serves as the culmination of the Christ's spirit throughout the season. Specifically as the chorus first rings out "FAAAALLL ON YOUR KNEES". Upon the soloist singing that line my mind immediately imagines myself on my knees at Christ's feet and my eyes begin to tear up. My mind begins to wander as we move though the second verse. I'm always brought back in as we hear the first line in 2nd chorus. "Christ is Looooord; O Praise his name forever". By the time the chorus 3 starts and I hear "Fall on your Knees" for a 2nd time" I'm usually hiding my tears at this point. It's always here where I begin to count my blessings and remember Christmas' of past.

This year there are many blessing for me. First and foremost my beautiful wife Amanda. She is our family's rock and foundation, to me she is the person I know most closely resembles Christ's love. I'm also always thankful for the wonderful Christmas' of my past, either it was with my daughters when they were younger or the wonderful Christmas' that my parents always provided me as a kid. I'm also really thankful for our health and the health of our parents, as each year passes I know and appreciate what a blessing that is. Lastly as I hear this song my mind wanders to the joy my daughters Anna Claire, Kenan, and Lily bring me. This joy that gives me a notion of the love and forgiveness Christ offers us all as his children.



Saturday December 24

Author: Cameron Johnson
Grade: 11th



Luke 2:8-12 - 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.”



My favorite Christmas memory is spending last Christmas with my family and grandparents. This was the first Christmas that my grandparents have spent Christmas Eve and Christmas Day with us, so getting to spend that with them as a teenager made me truly appreciate the moment. During their time in Morehead I was able to attend the Christmas Eve service with them – a service which is one of my favorite services every year because of its warmth and the joy that it brings to my heart. I also got to enjoy a Christmas Eve dinner with them and was able to help my grandmother cook in the kitchen, which is something that I love doing.



Both of my grandparents are the embodiment of joy. They are joyous people who bring joy into my life as well as others. Spending time with my grandparents is always a Jesus moment for me. They always come with good news, whether it be one of their bible study friends having a new grandchild or a new recipe turned out great! This is similar to Luke 2, where the angel brings good news that causes great joy for all the people.

My grandparents’ presence is always something that I look forward to. Both of my grandparents are Christians and act as good Christian role models for my siblings and me. As I have gotten older, I have begun to realize the impact that their Christian love has made on me and how it has helped mold me into the Christian I am today.

In Luke 2, Jesus is a sign of joy and good news! Being disciples for God, we all need to strive to be a sign of joy in others’ life, similar to my grandparents. We should come to others bearing the great news of Christ. We should be overwhelmed with excitement to share how he was born in a manger, performed miraculous wonders, rose from the dead, and then ascended into heaven. All of these things are recited every Sunday at church during the Apostles Creed; however, it is one thing to recite it, and another to spread this joyous news to others. During this Advent season, I encourage you to share the good news of Christ and the joy he has brought to the world. Spread Christmas joy to all. Let Jesus shine through you so that you can be a sign of great joy for all of those you come across.





Advent is a season of waiting and preparation.
We wait and we prepare our hearts to celebrate
with joy on Christmas morning.

In the waiting for Christmas Day, we remember
that even when Christmas comes, we are still
in Advent. Because we are waiting... waiting for Jesus
to return again in final victory.

While we wait for him, we prepare our hearts
and our lives to welcome him with joy and thanksgiving.
We hope these words will help you remember that
in the waiting, God is always working. And there
are signs all around - signs of hope, peace, love and joy.
May your life become a sign of his goodness for the world.

Download our app or visit us at
www.fumcmhc.org
to find out how you can connect with us
in worship during this season!