



Come Lord
Jesus,
Be Our Light!



Christmas Celebrations Schedule

*** Sunday, December 2nd after Worship
Luncheon, Advent Wreath Workshop and
Sanctuary Decorating**

*** Sunday, December 9th at 3:00 pm
Blue Christmas Service of Healing
And Remembrance**

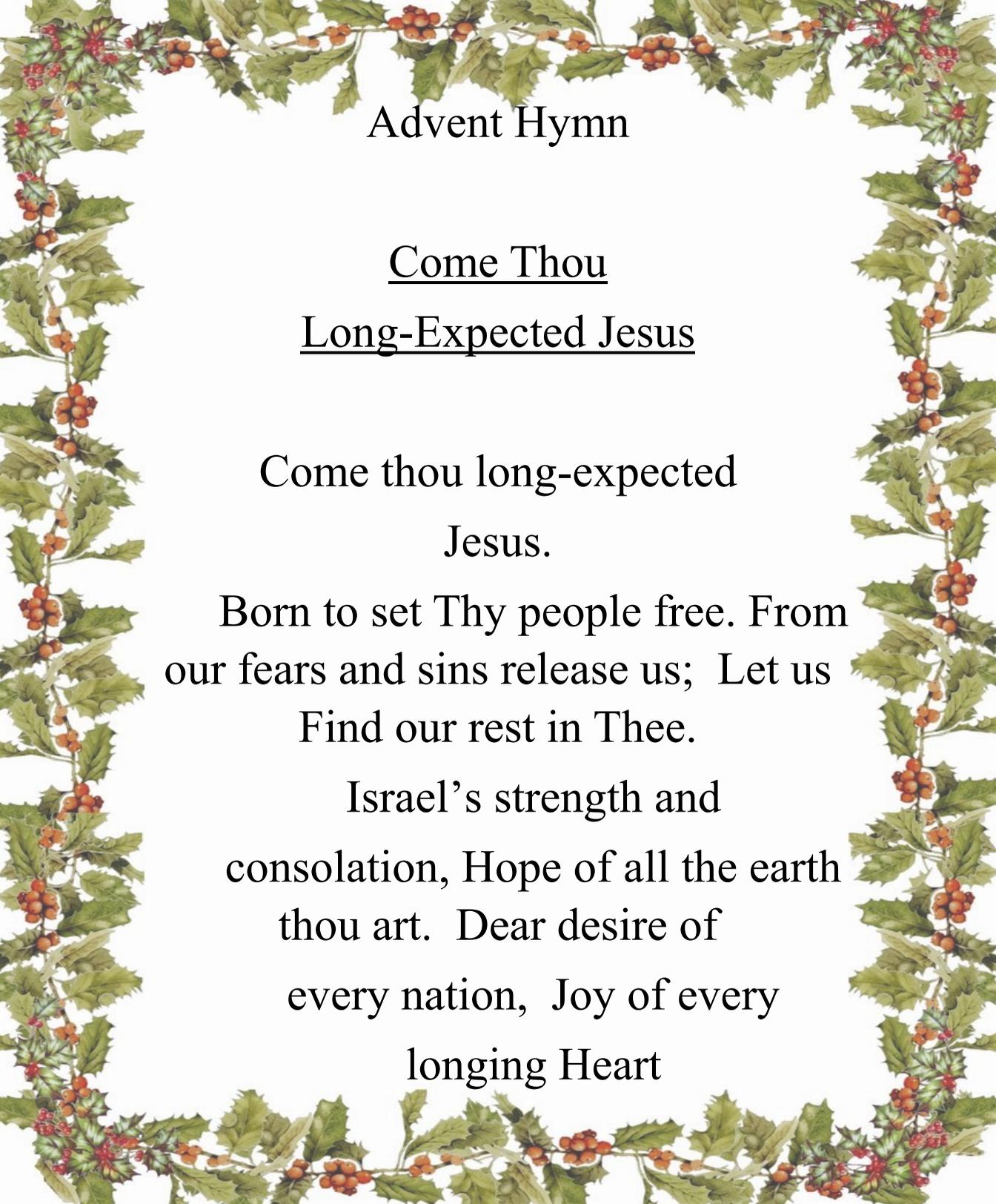
**Sunday, December 16th at 4:00
Christmas Caroling meet at Church**

*** Sunday, December 23 in Worship –
"Camel Lot" Christmas Pageant,
followed by the Annual Cookie Walk**

*** Monday, December 24 –
4:00 PM Family Christmas Eve Worship;
8:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship**

*** Tuesday, December 25 at 4:00 PM Christmas Dinner
Reservations are now being accepted**

*** Sunday, December 30 at 10:00 AM
"6th Day of Christmas Worship"**



Advent Hymn

Come Thou
Long-Expected Jesus

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

Today's Date: December 2nd

Today's Scripture: Psalm 90

Today's Theme: God's Eternity, Human Frailty

Devotional: God has been around forever, since before earth and even time, and He will continue steadfastly into the future. Of this, we are sure.

But what of us? Man is present but for an instant, so what's the use, we might say? We all work hard and long to some sort of satisfaction, but when we pass away, and our work is simply forgotten or is it?

Know this: When we praise the Lord, and accept His blessings, and carry out our work in the name of the Lord, then He will carry our work on forever, and our job here will be rightly done.

Prayer: Lord, each day, please help me to know You better and help me to accept Your love without conditions or cost. And when I work, please help me understand that I am able to work because of the strength and confidence You give me and that my work is Your work and I will strive to fulfill Your word through what I do. That is satisfaction enough. Amen.

Jim Baker

Today's Date: December 3rd

Today's Scripture: Jeremiah 33:14-16

Today's Theme: Promise of Restoration

DEVOTIONAL: With the holiday season upon us, happiness and festivity fill the air. The sights and sounds of Christmas delight our senses, while smells of open fire, pine and gingerbread incite us to cheerfulness. As we come together in celebration, however, let us be reminded that the true gift we received was not gift wrapped and sealed with a bow, but rather the fulfillment of our Lord's promise through the birth of his son, Jesus Christ. As the fall of Judah was precipitated by idolatry, wicked rule and the warning of prophets, let history serve as a guide for our future. To avoid a similar fate, we must faithfully observe the Word of our Lord and serve only Him as King. Only then will our collective future hold the promise of unity and righteousness, impartiality, justice and love for one-another irrespective of our differences.

PRAYER: Dear Father, as we come together this holiday season let us be reminded of the many gifts and blessings you have so generously bestowed upon us. As we indulge ourselves in the revelry of Christmas, keep close to our hearts the fact that love, kindness, virtue, and compassion surpass all other gifts. Give us continued means and strength to help those less fortunate; the poor, hungry and disenfranchised. And most of all Father, let us thank You for granting us the joy of another day. Amen.

Charlie Barkley

Today's Date: December 4th

Today's Scripture: 2nd Samuel 7:18-29

Today's Theme: David's Prayer

Devotion: It is through prayer that we build a strong relationship with God; whether we are saying thank you for His great work, asking for forgiveness, or support for a situation we or someone else may be in. It is that relationship that brings love, friendship, courage and thought! When we go back to a time when we may have received a true blessing from God, a gift, or a flat out miracle, it brings us right back to prayer, knowing He is always there.

Prayer: I come before You and ask for Your strength within me. A strength not of the world but of Your kingdom. To refrain from judgement and feast on love. To push out greed and hold tight to joy. To dispel pride and rise with humility. To quell anger and rest in self control. To shun greed and rest in giving. To turn from power and embrace service. To let go of resentment and rest in peace. To push through fear and walk towards grace. To run with faith and soar with forgiveness. And allow Your eternal strength to abide in me. Amen

Janet Dickerson

Today's Date: December 5th

Today's Scripture: Psalm 25: 1-10

Today's Theme: "Prayer for Guidance and Deliverance"

What type of life crisis would lead you to pray, "O my God, in you I trust;"?

A terminal illness for yourself or a loved one; marriage trouble; loss of a job; that dreaded phone call that brings shocking news? Or could it be that verses four and five are a perfect way to begin each new day, as with a prayer? Advent is a time of waiting and watching for God to do something new, and it can also be a time of testing. Looking out at the world at the absence of decency and truth can make us forlorn, wondering when God will "ransom the captives" and when "Emmanu-el," God with us, will take place. Psalm 25 is a psalm of trust, and as such it is a psalm that transcends time – it can be read in any era and apply to our lives. Learning to trust God is a life-long venture. Like faith, ultimately it is a gift from God to those who invite it into their lives. Let this Advent season be a time when God makes you more aware of light in darkness, and grace in waiting.

Prayer: God, the times I need you are but moments, and then once in a while I recognize that I need you twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. I know you are at work silently, quietly, in the world, and in my heart, and amazingly, in all of humanity. Help me to trust in your presence and the working of your Spirit today. In Christ I pray; amen.

Peter Kelley

Today's Date: December 6th

Today's Scripture: Malachi 3: 1-7

Today's Theme: The Day of Judgement

Devotion: Imagine this happening today: we are being informed that a messenger is being sent to prepare the way for whom we seek. Then we are asked who will be able to endure the day of the Lord's coming, which one of us can stand when the Lord appears? Because when the Lord comes it is as a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap and God will purify as a refiner of silver and gold until what is presented to the Lord is presented in righteousness and is pleasing to the Lord the way it used to be. It is then and only then that the Lord will draw near to us for judgement.

Who among us today are the sorcerers and the adulterers? Who are the ones who swear falsely, who are those who oppress workers in their wages, the widows and orphans, who thrust aside aliens and do not fear the Lord?

Of course, when I first read this, I looked everywhere else for all the bad guys and gals, but then I remembered what I am reading – it's the Bible! I may not specifically fit into all the categories mentioned, but I do know that there are things about me that need work. Then I started thinking about my communities: work, my home, my church, the town, country and world in which I live. If we each did one more thing it would make a difference. If I were to come face to face with the Lord right now what would I feel about me and more importantly what would the Lord feel about me? My heart tells me that God would wrap God's arms around me and tell me "I love you!!" "For I the Lord do not change – Return to me and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, "How shall we return?" "If you feel far away from God – guess who moved!!"

Prayer: Lord – help us to remember that You never change and that we are the ones who wander off or get too busy or sad or happy to remember that all of that living life stuff comes from loving You and You loving us all the time. Amen

Jay Batterman

Today's Date: December 7th

Today's Scripture: Malachi 4: 1-6

Today's Theme: The Great Day of the Lord

Devotion: Only those who embrace Jesus, the “sun of righteousness” can avoid the firing consuming of Judgement Day. Also portended in Malachi is the prophet who will come before this day and turn us toward Jesus, the Christ—our Lord and Savior. Could this be a reference to John the Baptist?

Prayer: Jesus, as we wait to celebrate your coming, help us to focus on the right path in our thoughts, words and deeds. Amen

Tony Nish

Today's Date: December 8th

Today's Scripture: Phillipians 1: 18b-26

Today's Theme: Paul's Chains Advance
the Gospel

Devotion: Christ Announced! Paul proclaimed Jesus Christ, Paul was Saul he in fact proclaimed Christ in all ways. As Saul, he announced him as a heretic and condemned him and he also murdered Christians. Then on the road to Damascus he met and clashed with Jesus, and was turned around. He then proclaimed Christ to be the savior, healer and son of God. As Christians today we proclaim Jesus as our savior. Through experience, Christ has been and is there for me.

Prayer: I thank you God for Jesus, for the love and hope that he comes to us with when we ask. We thank you Jesus for being there for all. Amen

Annette Ray

Today's Date: December 9th

Today's Scripture: Luke 3:1-6

Today's Theme: Preparing the Way

Devotion: This selection seems to be set up as a theatrical production. John the Baptist sets the stage. "What", "where" and with John to be the main actor in the search for God. Isaiah becomes John's model, but the way is not easy. There are extra tests to overcome, paths to be straightened, rough places to be smoothed etc., before we can say we are saved. I feel that now I am going through something like this; you have seen me lurch and fall. The path is not free and clear, but I must hope that someday it may be.

Prayer: Dear God, We ask for your help for the past and our understanding and acceptance of its times and tribulations; help for the present so that we can accept God and cast out the bad openly. We ask that the future will be approving of our attempts to listen to and live by our Lord's words. Amen

Herb Adler

Today's Date: December 10

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11

Today's Theme: God's People Are Comforted

Devotion: Every Thanksgiving, our youngest daughter, Susanna, is the first to play Christmas music, the first to pull out the Christmas decorations and the most insistent about getting a tree early. Peter and I always balk at this, explaining that it's "just not time" to begin celebrating. Why do we resist? In four short weeks we have parties to attend, Christmas cards to write, shopping to do, cleaning, decorating, cooking, traveling and on and on. In addition, there is the constant barrage of bad news to process and personal losses that are often felt more acutely this time of year. The month of preparations can be busy and emotionally overwhelming.

But Isaiah 40:1-11, tells the people of Jerusalem to be comforted; to start preparing and make way for the Lord. The people are freed of their suffering and can return from exile.

Advent can be a time of "freeing" ourselves of our own kinds of exile (suffering) and as we prepare for Christmas this year, the start date doesn't really matter. We are always assured of and comforted by the birth of Jesus Christ. Susanna may be on to something: Let's prepare for and celebrate the advent of Christmas today and everyday!

Prayer: Gracious God, as we go through the hectic days ahead, we are grateful for your constant presence. Continue to comfort and guide us through each day as we make way and prepare for the birth of your son. Jesus. Amen

Penny Kelley

Today's Date: December 11th

Today's Scripture: Psalm 126

Today's Theme: A Song of Ascents

Devotion: It is a true Harvest of Joy as Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ. To follow his love and teachings is in itself a true, happy and meaningful experience. May this Advent season bring joy to all His believers who live and practice a Christian way of caring and giving to those in dire need.

Prayer: Dear God, may I have the strength and desire by thought, word, and deed to profess and preach the everlasting Harvest of Christian Joy.

Charles Lauer

Today's Date: December 12th

Today's Scripture: Isaiah: 35: 1-7

Today's Theme: Joy of the Redeemed

Devotion: Wow- this scripture is filled with such happiness, the land and all its people will be redeemed. When Jesus comes everything will be transformed. He will come with divine retribution, He will come to save us! Hallelujah! This second week of advent is the celebration of peace. I find such peace in knowing that I have been saved. That everyone can be saved, when we open our hearts and accept Jesus into it. I thank God every day for the saving grace of Jesus.

Prayer: God of Peace, Thank you for the joy of redemption. Thank you for allowing me to be transformed, to see your love and light. Please continue to work on my heart so that I may walk in your ways and spread your word through voice and deed. Amen

Jan Falkowski

Today's Date: Thursday December 13th

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Today's Theme: Encouraging Generosity

DEVOTION: Throughout the eighth chapter, Paul repeats the word “grace” seven times. In this scripture passage, the word grace is used in the context of generous giving. Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to follow through with the commitment they made to help the church at Jerusalem by following the example of the Macedonian churches who gave not because of their circumstances, but based on their relationship with Jesus Christ.

“It doesn't matter how much you have. What matters is how much you are willing to give from what you have.” (2 Corinthians 8:12) This reminds me of the parable, The Widow's Offering. (Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4) The widow's offering was a true sacrifice. She was most likely in need of receiving charity herself, yet because of her faith in God, she chose to give from the heart generously. Paul reminds us that there is really only one single motive for giving and that is the grace of God. This grace makes us exceedingly rich, and because we have received it, we can give to others. As Christians we are not to give because we have been commanded or to get something back but because we have already freely received the gift of salvation.

PRAYER: Heavenly and Gracious Father, help us to open our heart to others based upon our relationship with Jesus Christ, who gave us His amazing grace. Our giving will then come from the heart joyfully and generously. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Sue Ketcham

Today's Date: December 14th

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 12:2-6

Today's Theme: God, our Salvation

Devotion: This passage begins with each of us placing our trust in God , and relying on Him for everything. And we draw water from His well of love and nurture anytime, for it never runs dry. It fills us with the Holy Spirit that inspires and guides us in God's will. We are asked to joyfully tell others about God and be an example so others can be drawn to Him also. God is with us in our midst---- in our church community, in our world , and in each of us individually.

Prayer: Dear God, I lift up my soul to You, knowing that with You I am always cared for, always loved, that you are there for me always and forever. Help me to be an example of your love in the world. Help me to joyfully praise Your name. May I come to know Your presence in me more deeply each day.
Amen

Karen Lee

Today's Date: December 15th

Today's Scripture: Amos 9: 11-15

Today's Theme: The Restoration of David's
Kingdom

Devotion: Throughout the latter Hebrew Scriptures, prophets of Israel and Judah focus on the restoration of King David's kingdom and the return of God's Favor to the Jewish People. King David's reign represents the highpoint of the Jewish state, not only in terms of territory and power but also the relationship of God to his people. Restoration eventually came and Jerusalem, the temple, and the Davidic State were re-established. In Advent we await a restoration the coming of God's Kingdom in the person of Jesus. This restoration is a change; it is not just the Davidic kingdom, but God's Kingdom coming to you and me. Come Lord Jesus.

Prayer: Loving God, help us to prepare for your coming kingdom, not in just waiting for Christ's return, but through our actions and deeds of love, mercy and forgiveness. Amen

Bill Thompson

Today's Date : December 16th

Today's Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7

Today's Theme: Rejoicing In God

Devotion: This passage finds Paul in jail, writing to the Philippine church, telling them to rejoice. Paul knew Jesus was with him in all circumstances. Paul knew that God would fulfill his promises for him, even in jail. By his attitude Paul reminds us to turn our worries into prayer, so we can feel God's peace, so that God can be in control. If we let it, God's peace can guard against anxiety. To encourage my campers at a church camp, I, though fearful of heights, climbed Mohawk Mountain. At the top my anxiety became joy. With God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, anything is possible.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Help us to turn our anxieties over to you. Help us to remember that you are in control, that you are always with us. Thank you for your Son, the Prince of Peace. Amen

Doris Bernstein

Today's Date: December 17th

Today's Scripture: Isaiah: 11: 1-9

Today's Theme: The Branch from Jesse

Devotion: In the scripture Isaiah speaks to the future arrival of a child who will grow into our messenger from God. He describes a Kingdom full of peace and love that he expects us to enjoy after we receive the message and follow the simple instructions Christ will bring to us.

How short we currently fall as we struggle to live up to the message that the Christ gave his life to convey. As we approach our holy celebration of this gift at Christmas, we recognize that we are still struggling to implement these simple instructions. We have been falling short for over 2000 years.

Troubled times have never been overcome down through the years and today seems still full of the sin that prevents the Peaceful Kingdom from covering the earth the only home we all have in this universe.

Advent allows us to remember that our goal must be to strive mightily, to love one another and that One God loves us all and sent his son to point out that Love is the only way to the Peaceful Kingdom.

Hennery Wadsworth Longfellow in 1863 in the middle of the Civil War wrote lines appropriate to pray in this year 2018.

Prayer: Dear Lord: I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play
and wild and sweet the words repeat
of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head.
There is no peace on earth, I said.
For Hate is strong and
Mocks the song of peace on earth,
Good Will to men.

Please Lord help us to live lives that move the world toward the final verse in this poem:

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep.
God is not dead, nor doth he sleep.
The wrong shall fail. The right prevail.
with peace on earth and good will to men. Amen

Bill Leverich

Today's Date: December 18th

Today's Scripture: Acts 28:23-31

Today's Theme: Salvation for all

Devotion: This scripture from Acts details the teachings of Paul in Rome. Throughout the entire day, he discusses the kingdom of God and the Good News of Jesus.

However, not all of the listeners believed what Paul was saying. As they're all leaving, Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah, proclaiming that even those who are deaf and blind toward the word of God will be saved.

Throughout our lives, we may experience moments of doubt in our faith, but that's OK! God won't give up on us, so we shouldn't give up on God.

Prayer: God, help us through moments of doubt, and help us open our eyes to your unconditional love for all. Amen

Will Dickerson

Today's Date: December 19th

Today's Scripture: Luke 7: 31-35

Today's Theme: Misunderstanding

Devotion: In this Scripture people have a picture in their minds what the Son of Man should look and act like. They are confused with Jesus. They question and mock him. Why he is spending time with these undesirables? Who is this guy? The Son of Man should be better than this, right?

When we take it upon ourselves to decide how God should act, and what his role should be, we must take "should" out of the equation, and remain mindful that we are limited in our understanding; God's ways are not our ways. We must throw away our preconceived ideas and prejudices. We must realize God will challenge our expectations and we are challenged to remain open and have enough Faith to trust and accept how God presents Himself, and what He has in store for us. This is how we grow in Christ.

Prayer: Dear God, Help us see with new eyes so that we can see things, not as we think they should be, but as they could be according to Your plan. But help us accept that all things change and we should be open to this. Help us to understand the difference between right and wrong. Help us see clearly with Your Grace and Love. Amen

Jennifer Mannino

Today's Date: December 20th

Today's Scripture: Psalm 80:1-9

Today's Theme: Prayer for Israel's
Restoration

Devotion: No matter how much it seems that God has forgotten us, no matter how dire the circumstances, we are God's children, the descendants of His chosen people in Israel. He loves us all and will not forsake us. Keep striving, keep praying, keep working to make things better and God will provide. He blessed and nurtured our forefathers and continues today to bless and provide for those who believe in Him and do his work on earth.

Prayer: Restore us, O God; let your face shine that we might be saved. Amen

Stewart Ross

Today's Date: December 21st

Today's Scripture: Jerimiah 31:31-34

Today's Theme : A New Covenant

Devotion: The new covenant is a hopeful message of a new World where there is peace and love; where people follow God and Jesus and we are kind and happy. All people will listen and believe in the new way and let the ways of the past go.

Prayer: Dear God, Thank you for creating a beautiful world where we can live and enjoy your many creations----- from sunrises to sunsets, culture, music, food, animals and trees. Teach us to follow your words and way to create a more peaceful and loving world. Amen

Heather Cusack

Today's Date: December 22nd

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 42:10-18

Today's Theme: Hymn of Praise

Devotion: A new song! Such a beautiful and hopeful message for us all in today's world. As I read this passage, it is both familiar and comforting. I am so thankful for my faith. I am grateful for those around me who trust that even in the darkest most difficult times, God's light steadily shines through. This is such a season of hope when you can look beyond the glitz and glitter towards the true meaning. The coming of the Prince of Peace brings renewed opportunity for each of us to be signs of God's ever present and unfailing love.

Prayer: We await your coming, Dear Lord. Bring your light your hope, your peace into our hearts our homes, and to the ends of the earth, today and every day.
Amen

Caryll Batterman

Today's Date: December 23rd

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7

Today's Theme: Israel's Future Hope

Devotion : Hope -one of my favorite words. While expectation and waiting are some of the biggest challenges in life, the idea that what is coming may be better or exciting or peaceful lends the waiting a layer of hope. While reading this passage from Isaiah, I can feel the anticipation – the desire for something to hold on to the wish for to be better “there shall be endless peace”. How wonderful- to feel peace. To feel life is a blessing. To know we are blessed. When things are not the way we perceived they should be what better feeling than to hope that they might be better. Getting through life and enjoying the small miracles of a day-that is my prayer for everyone.

Prayer: May today bring small joys, moments of peace, nuggets of clarity. Help me see the small wonders of this life and allow me to be open to lending a hand to someone in need or receiving a helping gesture. Fill me with a sense of awe as this Advent season comes to an end and anticipation is rewarded with birth. Fill my heart with hope. Amen

Sandy DeLong

Today's Date: December 24th

Today's Scripture: Luke 2: 1-14

Today's Theme: The Birth of Jesus

Devotion: Can you think of anything more joyful and exciting than the birth of a baby? Now imagine the birth of our Savior! What a beautiful, humble, understated way to enter our sinful world. This baby was and is the only perfect human to be born---His life was an example of radical, unconditional, saving love. To think that the little baby Jesus will live, minister, be crucified, die and rise again to save all sinners, is hard to believe! But it's true and is where all our hope lies. Hope lying in a manger accompanied by animals and shepherds and a multitude of angels proclaiming His Glory!

Prayer: Loving God, may we see Jesus in one another. Because we are all created in the image and likeness of God, let us try to patiently love and accept all people echoing Jesus' message of Peace and Love for mankind.
Amen

Nancy Ward

Today's Date: December 25th

Today's Scripture: John 1: 1-14

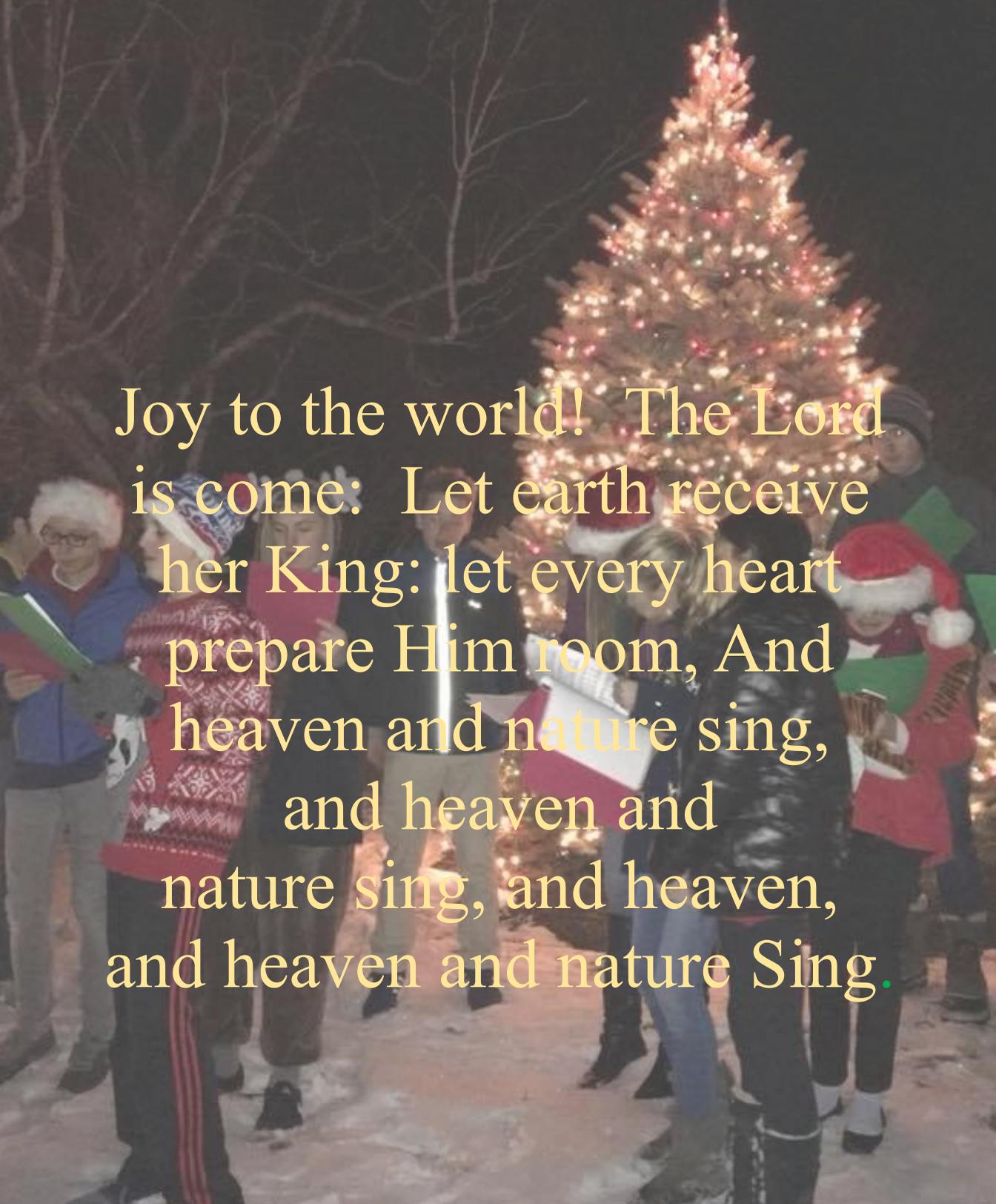
Today's Theme: The Word Became Flesh

Devotion: John's prologue leaves little room to misunderstand the Jesus event. When the "Word became flesh and lived among us, we have seen his glory..." we are not merely gazing into the face of some great man, prophet, teacher, or revolutionary but rather, we are brought face to face with the one Living God, who created the heavens and the earth. The incarnation we celebrate this Christmas Day inaugurated a new creation that has immediate and lasting impact on each and every one of our lives, right here and now.

Let us celebrate His joyous birth, and the new life that it brings this day and always.

Prayer: Father God. We thank you for giving us new life in your Son Jesus Christ. Fill us with the love that He incarnated and by which we are saved. Help us to become this love which fills us beyond measure, so that it may flow out of us to heal our broken world, so that the Word may become flesh once more, and live not just among us, but within us, as we reveal your glory. In Jesus' name we pray...Amen.

Greg Doroski

A group of people, including children and adults, are gathered outdoors at night for a Christmas celebration. They are standing in front of a large, brightly lit Christmas tree that is covered in warm white lights and some red and blue ornaments. The ground is covered in snow. Several people are holding green songbooks and appear to be singing. The scene is festive and joyful.

Joy to the world! The Lord
is come: Let earth receive
her King: let every heart
prepare Him room, And
heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and
nature sing, and heaven,
and heaven and nature Sing.