

Advent is a season in the church year when we remember the birth of Jesus the Messiah. Advent comes from the Latin word meaning "arrival" or "coming." Advent means that the Lord is coming. During this season we remember that the people of Israel waited expectantly for the coming of the Messiah. Advent is also a season when we look forward to Christ's return. We look forward with hope to the return of Christ, when God establishes his kingdom among us. Advent reminds us that Christ has come, and Christ will come again.

The Advent wreath tells the story of Christ's arrival. The circle of evergreen in which the candles are placed represents everlasting life. The light of the candles represent the Light of Christ coming into a darkened world. On Christmas Eve, the white center candle is traditionally lit and represents the light of Christ that has come into the world.



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### **Advent Calendar at a Glance**

#### November

- 25 Hanging of the Green Service- 6:00 p.m., Worship Center
- 25 Sights and Sounds of the Season Fellowship-after Hanging of the Green Service, MPB
- 28 Hope Market, MPB

#### December

- 1 Christmas Offering -Water For All
- 2 Advent Worship Service-9:45 a.m.
- 2 Hope Market, MPB
- 3 Advent by Candlelight for Women-6:00 p.m.
- 5 Hope Market, MPB
- 5 Last Wednesday Night Ministries
- 7 Parents Night Out, 5:30 p.m.
- 9 Advent Worship Service, 9:45 a.m.
- 9 Hope Market, MPB
- 16 Advent Worship Service-9:45 a.m.
- 16 Youth Choir Caroling & Supper- 4:00 p.m.
- The Longest Night: A Service of Hope and Healing6:00 p.m., Worship Center
- 23 Advent Worship Service— 9:45 a.m.
- Christmas Eve Carols, Candles and Communion5:30 p.m. (nursery); 7:00 p.m. (without nursery),Worship Center

## **Advent Opportunities**

### The Hanging of the Green Service

This Worship service is in preparation for Advent and Christmas in which the sanctuary is adorned for the season.

Sunday, November 25th at 6:00 p.m. in the Worship Center.

### Sights and Sounds of the Season Fellowship

Join us for a fellowship full of goodies, cocoa, hot cider, etc. in the Multi-Purpose Building.

Sunday, November 25th after the Hanging of the Green

### Tree of Remembrance

We invite you to bring an ornament in memory of family or friends and place it on our Tree of Remembrance in the foyer. Please put your name on the back of your ornament if you would like us to return it or it will be added as a treasured ornament for the tree each year.

#### **HOPE Market**

Give a gift of HOPE this year for Christmas! Southland's Annual HOPE Market offers you a Christmas shopping alternative with gift selections that will be more meaningful for your family members and friends and will give the gift of hope to those who need it most. Your monetary gift in the name of a loved one and your purchase of handmade and Fair Trade items will benefit Christian missions that share the love of Christ and provide aid, relief and economic and educational opportunities to neglected and marginalized people in our world.

November 28th, December 2nd, 5th, and 9th in the Multi-Purpose Building

## Water for All Christmas Offering

A mission of Terry and Kathy Waller and Southland Baptist Church, provides the technology and training for poor families around the world to drill, operate, maintain, and duplicate their own clean water wells. Our church's Christmas missions offering goes directly to fund WFA missions around the world. We will be taking this offering throughout the Christmas Season. Please prayerfully consider what God would have you to give. *Our church goal is \$80,000*.

### Advent by Candlelight for Women

The evening will be full of worship, inspirational speakers, music, fellowship and delicious desserts! It's the perfect evening to begin preparing our hearts for Christmas and the coming of our Lord! Contact Kim Floyd for general information and Angi Wilke for fellowship reservations.

Monday, December 3rd at 6:00 p.m. (fellowship in the MPB) and 7:00 p.m. (service in the Worship Center).

### **Parents Night Out**

Children ages 3 months to 5th grade are invited to attend. Dinner is provided at a cost of \$5 per child and \$15 max per family. If you prefer to bring your child's own meal, there is no cost. Register by Wednesday, December 5th by going online to the church website.

Friday, December 7th at 5:30 p.m.

### The Longest Night: A Service of Hope and Healing

This worship service recognizes the realities of despair, brokenness, grief, and loss in life. The heaviness of grief, the challenges of illness and aging, the loss of a treasured relationship, these are just a few of the real life challenges that hold our hearts captive during this season. We gather not to forget our pain but to remember it with honesty, and to seek God's beauty in our brokenness, and to reclaim the light that is found only in God's Grace.

Wednesday, December 19th at 6:00 p.m. in the Worship Center.

### Christmas Eve Carols, Candles, and Communion

The service celebrates the birth of Christ.

Monday, December 24th 5:30 p.m. service (nursery provided) and 7:00 p.m. service (no nursery) in the Worship Center.

### HANGING OF THE GREEN

Sunday, November 25, 2018 6:00pm

Prelude

Call to Worship Noel Peace Canon Youth Choir

Responsive Reading Pastor Chris Curran

Here in this place we prepare for the coming of the Lord.

Here we remember His Advent,

His birth in Bethlehem, weak and helpless as an infant.

And here we rekindle our prayer,

"Come, Lord Jesus"

as we await his coming as the bright and morning star.

Arise, Your Light Is Come Hymn 83

Welcome Jill Fulghum

Responsive Reading Jill Fulghum

We wait and we long for you, O God.

Yet, we question whether we are worthy of your coming.

We wait and we long for you, O God.

But we grow restless in the waiting—impatient with your sense of timing.

We wait and we long for you, O God.

Yet we fear the majesty of your return—for truly the heavens would break open, and the mountains quake in your presence.

And we, we would see ourselves as we truly are.

Yet, we wait and we long for you, O God.

For we dare not miss the day, the hour, the moment.

And while we wait, we trust—for you are a loving creator who touched the earth, and consecrated the ground of our being.

You hold and mold us gently, so gently, at times, that we are unaware.

Yet the work continues as we wait and long for you.

Loving God, may your faith in us lead us to faith in you,

help us to accept the darkness, to believe what eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and to sense our hearts in the hollow of your hands—that we might not grow weary or discouraged as we wait and long for you.

Amen.

Scripture Reading Luke 1:26-33 Laura Martin

Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming (stanzas 1, 2)

Hymn 78

O Little Town of Bethlehem (stanza 4)

Hymn 86

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:46-50

Love Can! Youth Choir

Instrumental Meditation

**Responsive Reading** 

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7a

Susan Whitaker

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.

And the government shall be upon His shoulder.

And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor.

The Mighty God.

The Everlasting Father.

The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. *He is the true light which lights everyone that comes into the world.* 

There Is a Great Joy Coming

Youth Choir

Reading Jamie Highsmith Lord, Thank you for the ways you continue to speak to a world in need. Through both prophets and angels you declared the message of hope, the way of healing, and the coming of a Savior.

As you spoke in the days of old, so we know you continue to speak to us today.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Hymn 89

Recession of Christ Candle

Travis Garcia Family

The Christ Candle exits today, only to return on Christmas Eve.

Its disappearance from the Advent wreath stands as a symbol of remembrance that he will one day return.

Even so, Lord Jesus, quickly come!

Emmanuel Hymn 82

December 2, 2018

### **Hope Brings Peace, Peace Allows Joy**

By Kassie Soldano

I sit here in the brisk cool air, surrounded by the beautiful Idaho mountains of my youth. The cold air is not welcome to me as I've become accustomed to the much warmer climate of Texas and my body rebels unable to get warm. I am surrounded by my family who poke fun of me dressed in thick socks, pants and several layers shivering while they are perfectly comfortable in their shorts and tank tops. While my body is obviously struggling my heart is full, I am home. Not a place but with people who I have loved since I was born. I am here to soak in the possible final precious moments with my dad, who at the unthinkable young age of 64 is in the final stages of Alzheimer's. The situation is not foreign to our family, we buried my husband's step father almost a year ago with the same heart wrenching degenerative disease.

On a good day my dad is in constant motion walking his safe little home in circles and right now each time he passes me, he winks or raises his eyebrows when he sees me followed by that same gorgeous smile I've always known. Always one to make jokes, he now grabs my hand and pulls me to walk with him or tries to steal my coffee cup just to play. All signs my dad is in there somewhere. And I can't help my heart from overflowing with love. Not at the loss of what isn't there in him anymore, but what he fights to keep there.

Though life shows us how frail our bodies are, we are clothed in the promise of hope that our God has already won. While we fight to keep our bodies warm, healthy, and warding off decay, He is strengthening our souls. The truth is that all our Earthly successes, insufficiencies and death are not the value of our worth. I even wonder if while we look at someone with illness and think of all they can't do compared to their prime, how different are we all from the perfection of God's plan for us? Does He look at us and know that we are greatly ill compared to what He has planned for us? Yet, how humbling that He has the fullness of grace, patience and love for us in our state.

December 2, 2018...continued

Only 6 short years ago, my dad was unstoppable. A man of legends told by many far and wide. He was compared to the likeness of Jeremiah Johnson and Paul Bunyan. He was a logger from the time he could hold a power saw in his early teens. Strong as an ox and could run up steep mountains with the pace of any wild animal. But now as I watch him, muttering words I can't understand, his eyes, though distant in a sunken face. His muscles are gone, legs shaky to make his next step and his silhouette a boney frail frame. He's not even close to the man he used to be. He has a scar on his cheek I've never noticed before but is now puffed up with the loss of nearly 50 lbs. in the past 6 months. And for the first time ever I notice he has the most perfect nose.

As I reflect on this time and the times I've had with him each year before, I am so thankful for the memories and words we shared. I choose to not focus on the loss but in the treasure of each memory and moment gained. I choose to focus only on the peace and hope that our Lord promises, so that I don't miss even the littlest joys and moments to love on my dad while he's still here. He's losing his Earthly battle every day, his body struggling and his mind shriveling but he will soon go to his forever home where he will become not Earthly perfect but heavenly perfect like the Lord has planned.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 says: Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

## Prepare, for this is a week of hope!

### THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 2, 2018 9:45am

Call to Worship

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Hymn 77

Sing We Now of Christmas

Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra

Welcome & Greeting

The Lord be with you,

And also with you.

Why have we come?

We have come to worship Him.

Living Hope

Litany of Hope

Leader: In this season, we remember Christ's first advent and anticipate his second.

All: We abide the coming of the Lord.

Leader: Today we light this candle believing the King of Hope will come, the gift of God's own son.

All: The Lord says, "Abide in me, as I abide in you."

Leader: Even so, the night is dark and our waiting seems endless.

All: O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel.

Child of Peace

(see Page 47 for Melody)

Aspinall and McDonald

Child of hope hear our cry on this silent holy night.

Hearts are broken. Come to stay, Child of hope, we pray.

Child of peace, we're on our knees.

Bid our warring hearts to cease. Heal our darkness, end our strife.

Come, and bring us life. Dona nobis pacem, pacem. Dona nobis pacem.

Child of hope this our prayer: bring Your light; heal our despair,

Open eyes: come here to dwell, Immanuel.

The Lighting of the Candle of Hope

The Staples/Whipkey Family

Scripture Reading

Psalm 25:1-10

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer

Sermon

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence (stanza 1)

Hymn 80

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (stanzas 1, 2)

Hymn 76

The Carols of Western Europe

Sanctuary Choir & Orchestra

Pastor Chris Curran

Arise, Your Light Is Come

Hymn 83

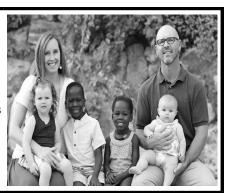
Offertory Prayer

Offering & Announcements

Come Thou Fount, Come Thou King

## Advent Missions Focus: The Rossers

Colin and Ronnie Rosser serve in Obule, Uganda and were on furlough for much of 2018. They spoke in churches, reconnected with family and supporters and helped the Wallers with several well drilling courses. They also attended a retreat for missionaries and went back to Uganda renewed. Since they have returned, multiple well clubs have started and Colin is teaching a course on "Farming God's Way". The Rossers four children are: Silas, Aggie, Corrie and Sunderlin (aka Sunny).



December 3, 2018

#### Hope

### By Libby Cammack

Webster's dictionary describes the noun, hope, as a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. The archaic definition is a feeling of trust. Even in 1734, Alexander Pope penned; "hope springs eternal in the human breast." But as we live in our world today, it becomes harder and harder to find the elusive – HOPE. We try and try to find the answers to our situations and fix them all by ourselves. We wonder where God is in all these troubled times. Not just with the larger concerns around the globe; but with the daily problems of our personal lives. Oh, if only we, as Gods children could remember God's promises in his word concerning His hope for us... If we did, we wouldn't let our circumstances drive us to despair. We would realize that God has a plan for our lives.

In Jeremiah 29:11 "for I know the plans I have for your" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you HOPE and a future".

In Romans 15:13 it states ... May the God of HOPE fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with the HOPE by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And lastly, Isaiah 40:31 ..."but those who HOPE in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not grow faint".

Rest in God's promises of HOPE...be renewed every day, knowing He is with you always – even unto the end of the world.

December 4, 2018

#### A Time To Every Purpose

By Molly Gideon

There was a time when joy came into the world. Baby Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary in a lowly stable with animals all around. People, led by a brilliant star over the manger, traveled great distances to worship him. Angels hovered about singing songs of praise.

There was a time when Jesus was a man. He walked on earth among men teaching by example and carrying an old rugged cross to a hill far away where he was crucified, dead and buried. It was a dark day and many people mourned Him.

Then there was a time three days later that Jesus arose from the dead, ascended into heaven and sat at the right hand of God. Prophesy had been fulfilled and people again rejoiced.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 tells us there will be a season and a time to every purpose under heaven. This beautiful passage is God's agenda for the world. The good off sets the bad just as the resurrection off-set the crucifixion. This is the joy that God put in our lives. After the grief, sorrow and sacrifice, there is victory.

I learned to abide by the family rules with several aids. One was a "switch tree" that grew in our back yard. Another was the hurt I could see on my dad's face when I strayed. Probably, the most important thing was being raised by a church family who set good examples, exhibited a strong faith in God and showered me with love.

Then as a young wife and mother, it was my season to pass along the things that I had learned. Later as a grandmother there were additional opportunities to show love, support and discipline. It has been such a blessing to share the generations of ups and downs. The greatest joy is to know that we are all in God's family.

Oh happy time, Oh happy day when Jesus took our sins away.

December 5, 2018

#### The Christmas Visitor

By Jamie Highsmith

My dad, who was born in 1919, was raised in Mineral Wells, Texas, during the Great Depression; he had just answered God's call to pastoral ministry as the Depression came to an end. He and his siblings grew up in the depths of poverty. Their mother died when they were small children. Though basic needs were met, there was little else. Worn out shoes, hand-me-down clothing, and "nothing extra" were the norms. When all seemed intensely bleak, news came of an upcoming holiday visit from Aunt Edna! Edna Jones, my father's paternal aunt, worked as the postmistress of Washington, D.C. in the 1920s. It became Edna's mission to make the 2,800-mile round trip by train from her home in Washington, D.C., to Texas each December. She made it her goal to save every vacation day to spend with her brother and nephews in Mineral Wells at Christmas. Aunt Edna knew just what to bring, always arriving at the little white frame house with special treats: a toy for each child and wonderful fruits and nuts for stockings. One year, she even brought a delightful addition for pancakes-maple syrup—which the Jones boys had never tasted. Far greater than what she brought was the love she shared. Oh, how three young boys and one grown man looked forward to the visits of this special Christmas guest. The promise of Edna's trips to Texas each holiday season encouraged this family to live with hope and to keep the faith regardless of the challenges that befell them. They knew that there would be enough love at Christmas to last throughout the year.

Didn't our Heavenly Father do the same for us? He provided enough love through the gift of his son Jesus Christ to last throughout the year. As our family reflects on the memories of Christmases past, we wish you and yours a genuine experience with the Love that will see us all through any challenges to come.

I Corinthians 13:13: And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.

#### December 6, 2018

### A Baby Changes Everything

By Teri Deweber

### A baby changes everything.

-Discovery-

"We're pregnant!"

-Announcement-

"We're having a baby!"

-Anticipation-

"What's he going to look like?"

-Excitement-

"He's here!"

-Sharing-

"He looks just like his Daddy!"

-Education-

"What do we do now?"

-Changed Focus-

"We're in love with this guy!"

-Family-

"The two have become three."

-Unconditional Love-

"I'll love you until the day I die, Little Man."

-Unbridled Joy-

"Life can't get any better than this."

### Thank you, Lord, for a baby changes everything.

December 7, 2018

#### The Sweetest Gift

By Angela Everton

A few weeks before my dad passed away, I sat with my daughter, Addie, amidst her array of books that she'd chosen to read that night. We began reading from *Jesus Calling*, and little did I know how this God-breathed night would unfold on this first day of July, 2017.

We read the story of the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection of Christ. We talked about how the disciples must've felt, and then Mary finding the tomb empty. What a bustle it must've been, yet He had conquered death and bore it all for us. What a celebration! We began down a road of discussion about Heaven. Months before I'd purchased a picture book about Heaven. I knew it would resonate with Addie because it's about a little girl who lost her grandfather. I told her I had just the book for us to read after bath time.

We continued talking and visiting about what we were going to read. In the middle of her bath, she earnestly asked me to turn off the water because she needed to pray right then. I was obedient and the sweetest, most heartfelt moment unfolded. She prayed, "Jesus come into my heart and take away my sin that I might live forever with You in Heaven. Live in my heart." I prayed over her and we rejoiced in this decision. A beautiful family discussion ensued as we read the book about Heaven... a tough conversation I had been praying for the right time to have.

Silly me to worry. She said, "Nepa's earthly body will remain here. He will have a perfect body in Heaven. He can run through fields and not have his headache anymore. I will meet him there someday." She held her *Jesus Calling* book close to her chest that night and said, "This is a special Bible. It is never to go to a garage sale."

The next morning I went to visit dad and told him of Addie's decision. He had the biggest smile on his face. That smile said it all. Her salvation is secure and her name written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

She made her decision public by walking the aisle on October 22, 2017. On Christmas Eve, she entered the baptismal waters, raised to walk in newness of life. She recently said, "I am a child of God. I am going to Heaven. When I was baptized, I know Satan was shaking and terrified."

What a true statement. When we abide in Christ and our hearts fully turn to His glory, we experience the fullness of the same power that raised Jesus from the dead flowing through us (Romans 8:11). As we prepare our hearts during this Advent season, may we remember the sweetest gift- Jesus came for us. Gave His life for us. And rose again for us. There is no greater gift.

December 8, 2018

#### **STAYING PUT**

By Lorin L. Cranford

The theme of the booklet for the Advent season this year is ABIDE. To an old professor of biblical Greek, the mentioning of this English word triggers immediately the recollection of  $\mu$ év $\omega$  (meno), the ancient Greek word used some 37 times in the Greek New Testament and translated in the older English translations as abide. The word, along with the concept, is overwhelmingly Johannine with all but one of the uses (1 Cor. 13:13) occurring either in the Gospel of John (13x) or 1 - 2 John (20x in 1 John; 3x in 2 John). Inherently,  $\mu$ év $\omega$  is not a religious idea at all. Essentially the word specifies 'staying in a particular place for an extended period of time.' In the non-religious use of the term, it comes close to the idea of living in a town or city for a good while.

It is John who coins the religious meaning of the term in early Christianity. And he does so out of the influence of the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures that largely served as the Bible for first century Christians. The Hebrew word, TIASUR has a similar meaning to the Greek word with the idea of seeking shelter or refuge. The LXX Jewish translators mainly use  $\mu\acute{e}\nu\omega$  for this word in their translation of the Hebrew text into early Koine Greek. Also another Hebrew word , Tilin is even closer in basic meaning to the Greek  $\mu\acute{e}\nu\omega$ , which also is mostly translated by this same Greek word. The point is that in the Hebrew Bible 'dwelling in God's presence' becomes a significant theme that uses both these Hebrew words (cf. Psalm 15:1-5; 61:4; 91:1 etc.). This OT metaphor defining God's care laid the foundation for John's use of  $\mu\acute{e}\nu\omega$  in the religious sense of connection to Christ.

A careful analysis of John's use of  $\mu$ év $\omega$  in both the Gospel and two of his letters reveals two perspectives on the idea of abiding. We 'abide' in something or someone. Or, something or someone 'abides' in us. Religiously, believers abide in Christ (John 6:56; 15:4-5; 1 John 2:16 etc.) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:17; 1 John. 2:27). In conversion, we are "placed in Christ" to become His body on earth. Thus God's Words, i.e., the teachings of Christ, 'abide' in us as believers (John 15:7; 1 John 2:24-27 etc.). God's love takes up residence in us (1 John 3:14-17 etc.). Fundamentally, God establishes our lives as His earthly residence (1 John 2:14; 3:9). This divine presence of God and His Word changes everything in our life. How we live. How we talk. What we think about. There is such a profound connection to God that we have difficulty grasping it. But it's real. And we know it. Advent means coming. God comes to us in Christ. But it also means our coming home to the Father to take up permanent residence with Him. We move in to stay put in His presence for all eternity. He earnestly desires all His children to move back home and stay put there for all eternity. Are you 'abiding' in God through Christ? Are His words finding a home in your life? Advent is a good time to reflect on these things.

December 9, 2018

#### Paz en la Tierra

By Jimmie Wilson

And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest. And on earth, peace among men with whom He is pleased". Luke 2:13-14 NASB

When the Houston First Baptist Church was still downtown, I was on the music staff. The large Women's Missionary Union had an ongoing ministry with immigrants and refugees, mostly Spanish-speaking. The FBC moved to the suburbs and ended the program, but I still try to help refugees through the work of CBF missionaries Butch and Nell Green. Their work is largely unrecognized but is very effective, particularly with women and children.

Fast forward to Southland today. Tim Lyles is leading the Choir and Orchestra as we prepare "International Carol Suites" for 2018 Christmas. This music is based on carols in several languages. It reminds me of a significant experience I had in Houston.

Each Christmas the WMU held a holiday party for the women and children. One year they asked me to do a program, teaching the group some American Christmas carols, and talking about who wrote them. I was surprised when research revealed that most of "our" carols come from other languages and were just translated into English!

Wanting to impress them with my scholarly prowess (I was young), I learned several carols in the original language. I ended with "Silent Night" in English and German then added Spanish for the Latin Americans. I expected a standing ovation, so I was shocked to see several women in the last row quietly crying. This put me off my pace, so I finished quickly and encouraged everyone to move to the dessert tables.

Later, I apologized to some of the Hispanic women for making it such an emotional time. One said, "Oh, no! It made me think of my own childhood when life was more peaceful. I loved hearing it again!"

Strange. It wasn't the season she remembered but a time when life was peaceful? I looked at the words in Spanish and English:

Noche de paz, noche de amor, todos duermen en derredor, Entre los astros que esparcen su luz bella anunciando al Niñito Jesús Brilla la estrella de paz, brilla la estrella de paz.

Night of peace, night of love, everyone is sleeping all around, Among the stars that scatter their beautiful light announcing the Baby Jesus, Shines the star of peace, shines the star of peace.

I have been thinking about the message of the carol. The writers also focused on "peace", fitting the verse in Luke: "... and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased". John Freeman Young wrote the English version, basing it on the original German by Joseph Mohr, who also ended with "heavenly peace". Both men lived in the 1800's. The yearning for peace abides still. Is God pleased when so many people continue to search for paz en la tierra -- peace on earth?

## Prepare, for this is a week of peace!

### THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 9, 2018 9:45am

Call to Worship

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Hvmn 76

Always Emmanuel

K-6th Children's Choir

Welcome & Greeting

The Lord be with you, And also with you. Why have we come? We have come to worship Him.

Living Hope

Litany of Peace

Leader: In this season, we remember Christ's first advent and anticipate his second.

All: We abide the coming of the Lord.

Leader: Today we light this candle believing the King of Peace will come, the gift of God's own son.

All: The Lord says, "Abide in me, as I abide in you."

Leader: Even so, the night is dark and our waiting seems endless.

All: O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel.

Child of Peace

(see page 47 for melody)

Aspinall and McDonald

Child of peace hear our cry on this silent holy night. Hearts are broken. Come to stay, Child of peace, we pray. Child of peace, we're on our knees. Bid our warring hearts to cease. Heal our darkness, end our strife.

Come, and bring us life. Dona nobis pacem, pacem. Dona nobis pacem.

Child of peace this our prayer: bring Your light; heal our despair, Open eyes: come here to dwell, Immanuel.

The Lighting of the Candle of Peace

The Daniel Family

Scripture Reading Isaiah 9:2, 6

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer

Carols of Eastern Europe Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra

Water For All Testimony Terry Waller

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear Hymn 93

Agnus Dei Sanctuary Choir & Orchestra

Sermon Pastor Chris Curran

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day Hymn 98

Offertory Prayer

Offering & Announcements

Come Thou Fount, Come Thou King

### Advent Missions Focus: The Wallers

Terry and Kathy Waller serve as the directors and founding missionaries of Water For All, a missions ministry of Southland Baptist Church that helps bring both clean water and the good news of the Living Water to some of the poorest places on the planet. The Wallers currently live in Paint Rock, TX on the WFA training farm where they conduct training courses for missionaries and indigenous church leaders. Terry also does research and development of new appropriate water technologies. They also oversee WFA drilling programs in Bolivia, Ethiopia and Uganda. Since WFA's beginning, over 4,000 WFA water wells have now been drilled in 26 countries with the WFA drilling method. The Wallers have 5 children: Matthew, Melissa, Marcy, Margarita and Marilu. Thank you for your prayers for the Wallers this past year. Kathy had an ankle replaced and Terry had an Aortic aneurism repaired. Both are fully recovered and with your continued prayers, they look forward to a healthy and productive 2019!



December 10, 2018

#### A Christmas Tree to Remember

By Harriet Lewis

I have always loved decorating a Christmas tree. I have ornaments that our children and grandchildren made. I have family ornaments that we purchased and ones that have been passed down to me from my parents, grandparents and in-laws. I collect ornaments from the places where we travel. Each year I tenderly place the special family ornaments, the ornaments from the kids and "The Grands" as well as the ones I collected during our travels that year. My "memory tree" is a bit eclectic, but I enjoy viewing the twinkling Christmas lights as I remember the events that are attached to each ornament.

The splendor of subsequent trees, however, does not compare with the joy and beauty of our first Christmas tree. Preston and I were living in Orange, Texas, far from family and friends. We married four days before Christmas the previous year and spent that holiday honeymooning and celebrating Christmas with Pennsylvania family who made the trip to Texas for our wedding. The next Christmas was the first that we would celebrate as a married couple with our own Christmas tree. Since we lived in an area that is known for its pine trees, I persuaded Preston to buy a real tree from a local lot.

We were young marrieds just out of college. Both of us were working, but our money was spent on the essentials of groceries, gas, car payments, rent, utilities and furniture. The purchase of a Christmas tree and a string or two of lights exhausted the budget for "extras," so we had no money left to buy decorations. Consequently, I decided I would make decorations using foil wrapping paper like I had made as a child growing up in Pennsylvania.

I bought several rolls of red, green, gold and silver paper and set to work. I spent many hours sitting at a card table in front of the television with my ruler, scissors, glue, needle and thread meticulously measuring, cutting, folding and gluing. I constructed woven stars, Swedish balls, German bells, Japanese cranes and German boxes. Carefully, I attached thread hangers and lovingly placed each ornament on that tree. I added a bit of tinsel and the lights. It looked exquisite with the twinkling lights reflected in the shiny paper decorations. I was thrilled and spent many pleasant hours enjoying the splendor of that first tree.

Over 45 years have passed since I decorated that first tree, but the memories of it bring joy to my heart and remind me that God can turn the most commonplace things into something amazing. Just as He chose Mary and Joseph to become the earthly parents of His beloved son, God continues to use ordinary people to accomplish His purpose.

Luke 1:26-28 (NIV) God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

December 11, 2018

### By Sybil Holveck

The miracles of the entire Christmas story are awe-inspiring and the re-telling of these stories during the Christmas season continues to give us every reassurance of God's amazing grace and undying love for us. He continues to send quieter reassuring messages of love to us throughout the ages and throughout the year.

The Monarchs who make their way from Canada through San Angelo on their way to Mexico every fall...and more specifically...make their way to the same trees and bushes in our yard...arrived once again this fall, right on time. In early October, I'd been checking several times a day to see if they had arrived yet...on the afternoon of October 10th about 2:00, I checked and there was nothing. Then two hours later, Monarchs were everywhere! Flying overhead...more than we could possibly count...settling in to roost on their favorite branches (or rather the favorites of their great grandparents who were here last year.) Absolutely no one understands how these tiny delicate, fragile creatures find their way on this very long journey every year, stopping by the same places...the very same trees in our case...to end up in the same 15 acres in Mexico. Beautiful, graceful, soundless little miracles. They fill my heart with joy.

God's awe-inspiring creative power and the evidence of His love for us continue to show up in our lives...day after day....year after year.

"How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures." ~Psalm 104:24

December 12, 2018

# **A Baby Is Born** *By Debra Pruett*

Aren't babies the most adorable little beings?

We were blessed this year to add another GRAND child to our family. Riley Sue is a wonderful blessing from God, and she already lights up her face when we see her.

I always find it so interesting to watch people with a baby. Total strangers are transformed into persons that stop to comment, coo, and talk baby talk. It seems to be a universal language as I have witnessed this phenomena on various trips to different states and even other countries.

What would happen if as adults we continued to treat each other the way we respond to babies? Seems there would be much less stress and aggravation in our lives. (A wise person even recommended we carry a baby picture of our loved ones to remind us how precious they were/are.)

A plan to send a savior wrapped up as a baby in swaddling cloths in a manger would seem to most to be a crazy idea. But obviously not...

December 13, 2018

### **Experiencing God's Peace**

By Cindy Maedgen

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. . . " John 14:27

Christmas is a time of love, hope, joy and peace . . . and of remembrance. Remembering special times with family and friends and most especially the ways in which the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ fills our lives with the assurance of His presence and peace. We are reminded through God's promise never to leave or forsake us, that we are never alone. But in the midst of our busy lives, it's sometimes challenging to find the peace Jesus promised us.

For many of us, we find peace in an expected place as we slow down on Sunday mornings and participate in worship experiences with members of our faith family, singing melodious hymns, and connecting with the well-prepared and meaningful messages delivered by our insightful and gifted Pastor Chris.

Sometimes, however, we find God's peace in unexpected places. Christmas can bring back memories of friends and family members who are no longer with us, causing us a sadness that threatens to steal our joy. For the third Christmas since her passing, my family and I will once again be remembering -- and missing -- my beloved Mother and James' Mother-in-law, Brody's "Gama," and Carter, Charlotte, and Coleman's "Great Gama." Dorrice Beck was a bright, beautiful, and courageous "ranch lady" who loved her family totally and unconditionally. As the insidious disease that took her from us progressed, it became increasingly difficult to visit her in the nursing home every day. However, as I continued to prayerfully seek Him before, during, and after each visit, I can assure you that God never failed me, as I experienced His presence -- and His peace -- even in the midst of profound sadness. We know that every human life is intended to be a journey toward Him, and Mother's definitely was. Thus, even as we continue to miss her, we find peace in the knowledge that she is whole again and basking in His glorious presence.

Loss of our loved ones can be a difficult and painful place to visit, but because of Christ's birth and resurrection, we trust that we will not remain in that place but will one day "dwell in the House of the Lord forever." So, this Christmas, as we remember Dorrice Beck -- beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother -- we will continue to seek God's peace, confident that He will meet us in our places of greatest need . . . Immanuel – God with us – in every place in every moment of every day, and we will experience His peace.

As you remember loved ones who are no longer in your sight this Christmas, may God envelop you with His powerful presence as you celebrate the birth of our living Savior -- Jesus Christ, Immanuel, Messiah, Redeemer, Good Shepherd . . . PRINCE OF PEACE!

December 14, 2018

### **Peppermint Blue Bell**

By Kim Caraway

Christmas has always been my favorite holiday, but this year it is bittersweet. Daddy loved Christmas, too - and this will be our first Christmas without him. It's hard to be excited about the season when I know that we won't talk about the new commentary he found on Luke 2, watch "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" with Arlene, listen to his favorite Mormon Tabernacle Choir Christmas CD, or eat our favorite Blue Bell Peppermint Ice Cream together. I have missed Daddy terribly every day for a long time - even back when Alzheimer's was taking his memories one at a time - but somehow it feels like Christmas will be worse than normal.

So I take my broken heart to God and ask how I can find joy in Christmas while I feel like I'm drowning in grief. I am reminded of Romans 8:18 that says, "For I reckon that the sufferings we now endure bear no comparison with the splendor, as yet revealed, which is in store for us." (That's the translation from Daddy's New English Bible that he carried to church for years.)

God has placed this verse on my heart many times in my life, especially in Daddy's last days. Often times we think about the balance of two things - every action has an equal and opposite reaction. But this Scripture tells us that's not how our suffering works. The Glory of Heaven far outweighs any of our earthly heartbreak. We can't even fully understand the difference.

Perhaps you, like me, have a heavy heart this holiday season. Maybe grief and sadness are overwhelming you, too. I hope that you will find comfort in Romans 8:18, knowing that our suffering doesn't even compare to what we will experience in Heaven. Daddy knows the full meaning of that verse now, and I look forward to discussing it with him someday and hearing about his first Christmas in heaven - hopefully over some Peppermint Blue Bell.

December 15, 2018

#### Choose

By Jill Fulghum

God chose two teenagers.
God chose a stable.
God chose a manger.
God chose a baby.

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.

The child chose to be one of us.

The giver of life chose to do life with us.

The Messiah chose to give his life for us.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

The world chooses fear.
The world chooses busy.
The world chooses stress.

Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden. And I will give you rest.

There are 10 days 'til Christmas.

Choose to focus on Christ.

Choose to rest in him.

Choose to remember that you are the reason that He made the choices.

December 16, 2018

#### Stargazing

By S.L. Harris

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." Matthew 2:1-2 NIV

One of my favorite childhood memories is that of gazing at the stars. Summer nights in Central Texas could be warm and humid and, in the absence of air conditioning (an unknown relief for my depression-era family), the grassy slope of our front yard was the perfect place to lie flat on my back and gaze into the starry sky. On the quilt our mother spread for us, my sister and I let our minds run wild as we saw all manner of figures and faces in the constellations, and tried counting, then guessing, the number of twinkling lights we saw, all the while amazed at the vastness of the heavens spread out above us. My childish mind could not grasp the mystery of it all.

I wonder if the Magi, learned men from afar, might not have felt something similar as they studied the star-studded skies from their vantage point in what had been the land of exile for the Jews in times past. Scholarly men of a priestly class committed to a search for truth, they were likely influenced by the Jewish hopes of a Messiah. A sign in the heavens would herald the coming of such a one, according to these astrologer-philosopher-priests. Thus the "star of Bethlehem" grabbed their attention and sent them journeying to find the one they called the newborn "king of the Jews."

The King James version refers to these ancient travelers as "wise men," and indeed they were. While not fully understanding the nature and mission of the child they sought, they exercised holy wisdom in following the brilliant new light in the sky that led them to Jesus. The Scriptures say that, having worshiped him and left their gifts, their hope fulfilled, they went back another way. And "the star of Bethlehem," having fulfilled its purpose, faded from the sky.

A bumper sticker sometimes seen in this season simply reads, "Wise men still seek him." If so, how may they find him? Jesus said to his followers, "You are the light of the world...let your light shine." Matthew 5:14, 16 Let us then, like the "star of Bethlehem," point the way to Him.

## Prepare, for this is a week of joy!

### THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 16, 2018 9:45am

Call to Worship

Joy to the World (stanzas 1, 4)

Hymn 87

O Come, All Ye Faithful (stanzas 1, 3)

Hvmn 89

Pre-K Choir

Welcome & Greeting

The Lord be with you,

And also with you.

Why have we come?

We have come to worship Him.

Litany of Joy

Leader: In this season, we remember Christ's first advent and anticipate his second.

All: We abide the coming of the Lord.

Leader: Today we light this candle believing the King of Joy will come, the gift of God's own son.

All: The Lord says, "Abide in me, as I abide in you."

Leader: Even so, the night is dark and our waiting seems endless.

All: O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel.

Child of Peace

(see page 47 for melody)

Aspinall and McDonald

Child of joy hear our cry on this silent holy night.

Hearts are broken. Come to stay, Child of joy, we pray.

Child of peace, we're on our knees.

Bid our warring hearts to cease. Heal our darkness, end our strife.

Come, and bring us life. Dona nobis pacem, pacem. Dona nobis pacem.

Child of joy this our prayer: bring Your light; heal our despair,

Open eyes: come here to dwell, Immanuel.

The Lighting of the Candle of Joy

The Ward Family

**Scripture Reading** 

Isaiah 12:2-6

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer

How Great Our Joy Hymn 108

Angels We Have Heard on High Hymn 100

Carols from the British Isles Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra

Sermon Pastor Chris Curran

Angels from the Realms of Glory Hymn 94

Offertory Prayer

Offering and Announcements

Let Us Rejoice, Christ Is Born Sanctuary Choir & Orchestra

### Advent Missions Focus: The Glahns

Rob and Almaz Glahn serve as WFA missionaries in Tulubolo, Ethiopia. The Glahns partner with Ethiopian Baptists to share the gospel with their neighbors. A new church has been started in Tulubolo with 30 believers and it continues to grow. Rob and Almaz also teach villagers how to dig their own low cost water wells. This year, in spite of the Glahns being on furlough part of the year, water clubs are on target to drill over 50 wells. Things are calmer now but please continue to pray for the Glahns and their two daughters, Sophi and Lisa.



December 17, 2018

### **Joyful Memories**

By Joyce Landon

In the 1930's, sometimes referred to as "The Great Depression", many people were unemployed or unable to make a living wage if employed.

In these conditions, money was scarce and was only used for necessities. Christmas meant: a cedar tree, cut from the pasture, adorned with red and green paper chains mounted on a stand made by nailing 2-1 by 4 inch boards together crossways. We thought it was beautiful as we waited for all the joys of the Christmas season.

We also had the Sears & Roebuck catalogue with pictures of toy cars, wagons, and all sorts of dolls. We would choose with our siblings' toys we wished and hoped for.

Despite the economic conditions, Christmas was a time of joy! The Christmas tree service at the small Baptist Church we attended gave each child a sack of fruit and candy.

The wonderful aromas that came from our kitchen where Mom made numerous 2 crust apple, peach, and mincemeat pies. She would stack them on plates, where you could cut a slice of each flavor at one serving.

She prepared for lots of family guests because our family had the most children and we were used to togetherness! We always had at least one toy or doll that made our joy full at Christmas.

I look back on this time with joyful memories as we observed our Lord coming in to a world as a baby, born in a stable.

Now I look back to a later time, where He suffered and died for the sins of us all. But He rose from the grave to prepare a place for all who believe in Him. Now we joyfully anticipate His return to take us to be with Him forever!!!!!!!!

December 18, 2018

### **Comfort and Joy Abide With Us**

By Tim Edwards

A beloved Christmas Carol, "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, "tells us that nothing should cause us dismay; for "Christ was born on Christmas Day to save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray." Then, the song celebrates that fact by saying, "Oh tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, oh tidings of comfort and joy."

That joy to come was announced to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night. The angel of the Lord said to them, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10-11

People have forever longed for a source of comfort and joy, longed for one who could deliver them from the bondage that enslaved them, whether those chains were actual chains or emotional or political ones. That hope for a Messiah sustained God's people as they awaited his coming.

The angel brought the news that their long hoped-for deliverer had come. No longer was it merely a matter of waiting and hoping. The birth of the Christ child meant that comfort was at hand and it was cause for great joy.

In this season, we once again celebrate the fact that the hope and longing for the one who can save us has become reality. The words of "O Little Town of Bethlehem" have come to pass.

"Oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel."

## The Longest Night: A Service of Hope and Healing

Wednesday, December 19, 2018 6:00pm

It is a divine gift that our Christmas celebrations are given to us in the deep of winter. Our sacred traditions have evolved wisely to grant us a winter's grace during these times when nights are longer and darkness deeper. Our spirits can sometimes bend at the weight of life and its harsh realities. The heaviness of grief, the challenges of illness and aging, the loss of a treasured relationship, these are just a few of the real life challenges that hold our hearts captive during this season of the year. Against the cheerful backdrop of sparkling lights and festive music, there are many for whom this time is a tearful reminder of the harshness of life. And so, we gather at this sacred time to worship, acknowledging our sorrow and embracing our grief: Lord, we are wounded and weary. Our hearts are an empty manger waiting for a promise. Tonight, we gather not to forget our pain but to remember it with honesty, and to seek Your beauty in our brokenness, and to reclaim the light that is found only in Your grace.

Prelude

Welcome Pastor Chris Curran

Responsive Reading

O come, O come, Immanuel,

And be light for our darkness.

Be comfort in our grief,

A guide for our path.

Be a friend for our loneliness,

An oasis for our searching.

O come, O come, Immanuel,

Restore our joy, heal our wounds and bring us peace.

Narration/Scripture Reading

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear (stanzas 1, 2)

Hymn 93

Narration/Scripture Reading

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear (stanzas 3, 4)

Hymn 93

Narration/Prayer

The Healing Place

Narration/Scripture Reading

I Thank My God For You

Call for the Light of Christ

**Pastor Chris Curran** 

In this darkness we call for Light.

This Light brought forth from the beginning of creation to shine in the shadows of our souls.

We yearn for this gracious Light to warm us, to nourish us, and to give us strength.

We call on this brilliant Light to show us our pain,

so that in seeing it more clearly we might have the courage to bring it to you. And we ask you, O Holy One, to be with us here in our healing walk on this darkened earth.

#### Lighting of the Candles

You are invited to come to the table and light a candle in memory or honor of your loved one.

As you light the candle, we invite you to say their name and pause for a moment of
thanksgiving to God for the life of that person.

Emmanuel Hymn 82

Benediction

This service is a combined effort between Southland Baptist and Harper Funeral Home

December 19, 2018

### **Abiding Joy in Christ**

By Sybil Dodson

Fully abiding in Christ is a life filled with joy. It is proof that what we have really satisfies the heart. The joyous Christian rejoices in his freedom as a child of God. Jesus came into the world that His joy might be established in all of us and made complete. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11).

Joy comes at the birth of a new born baby. In July joy touched my life. I received the news of the birth of my great granddaughter. Her parents, my grandchildren, named her Sophia Joy. She brings intense joy to my heart, as well as, to her whole family. She certainly is a bundle of joy and a truly wonderful gift from God.

Jesus came as a new born baby. As we come to this Advent Season and read the Christmas story from God's Word may each of us know the joy, peace and love He brings as He came to "live with us" (Matthew 1:22). Mary sings "my heart rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 1:47). "When the Wise Men saw the star they were overjoyed" (Matthew 2:10). Angels announced their "good tidings of "great joy" which was for "all people" (Luke 2:10). Mary must have felt joy. "But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

Joy to the world! The Lord is come. It is a Christmas gift to all who will receive it. Christ's own abiding joy can be for all of us who abide in Him. May we reach out and take it, the deepest joy in human life. Therefore, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).

December 20, 2018

### **Joy** By Lesley Casarez

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Comparison is the thief of joy." This thought argues that comparing ourselves to others will only make us unhappy. When we compare ourselves to others, it is typically done from a place of weakness. We perceive others to always be at their best and contrast that with where we feel we are in our own lives. This can strip us of our joy because we may feel that others are always doing better than us, having more than us, raising their kids better than us, etc.

However, comparison can also lead us to be more like Christ. In 1 Corinthians 1:11, Paul writes, "Be imitators of me, as I am in Christ." This type of Christ-like imitation can turn us into better people, as we read about Jesus' interactions with others and try to figure out how we can apply them to our own lives. In *The Message*, Philippians 2:1-4 tells us, "If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you *care*— then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand."

Rather than comparing ourselves with others, comparison of ourselves to the example that Christ set for us can lead to great joy, especially if we use that example in a way that can help others. When we compare what we desire with what we can gain through Christ, through abiding in a true relationship with him, we can live with a deep and everlasting joy in him. For, "this is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24.

December 21, 2018

#### Hope, Guidance and Joy

#### By Preston Lewis

Until I took high school physics my senior year, I had planned on becoming an engineer. One semester of physics, though, taught me that any engineering project that required my math computations was more likely to collapse, burn, sink or crash than to succeed.

Since I had always enjoyed reading and writing, I opted instead to study journalism because it would teach me marketable skills. So I took an unannounced trip to Baylor that spring and in the Old Main building met journalism chairman Dave Cheavens, a diminutive but big-hearted Christian man, who had worked for the Associated Press in Dallas from 1934-42 and then headed the AP's capitol bureau in Austin from 1942-61 before joining Baylor's faculty.

His was the most impressive office I had ever been in, not because of the dilapidated Old Main building the floors and the walls creaking whenever you passed—but rather because of the framed photographs hanging on the walls. He had signed pictures of himself with Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson along with several Texas governors. I shook the same hand that had shaken those of presidents!

I explained my mission, and Mr. Cheavens asked me if I had worked on the school newspaper. No. He asked if I had worked on the high school yearbook. Again, no. He described journalism as a calling not right for everyone, then got up and pulled from a shelf a journalism book. He offered it to me, telling me to take it home and read it, then send it back to him when I finished. He told me if after reading the book I was still interested in the profession to enroll in Journalism 141 my first semester.

Mr. Cheavens explained that at the end of the course, he would meet individually with each student to assess whether he thought that pupil could succeed in journalism or a related field. It was an obligation he believed necessary to be fair to his students and their futures.

So, I read the book, mailed it back, enrolled in Journalism 141 and completed all the assignments to the best of my ability. Above all I hoped and prayed that Mr. Cheavens' assessment of my potential matched my vision. On that fateful day, he invited me into that same office where I had first met him. With the photographic eyes of presidents and governors staring over my shoulder, Mr. Cheavens congratulated me on a fine semester and anointed me with a positive professional assessment. No Baylor moment other than when a cute Pennsylvania coed named Harriet Kocher accepted my marriage proposal brought me more joy or had a more profound impact on my life than that one.

I never had another class from Mr. Cheavens as he died my sophomore year, but his encouragement then and his memory today still bring me great joy. A year and a half after his passing, Harriet and I were married in Waco's First Baptist Church, where I had earlier attended his funeral.

Romans 15:13 (English Standard Version): May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

December 22, 2018

#### **Loving God**

By Jeanie Miley

In this holy season of Advent...and in the rush of the world, give me patience to wait on you. Help me remember that even when you seem far away...you are always near. Teach me what it means to abide in you...and remind me when I forget that when I abide in you, you have promised to abide in me.

God of Tender Mercy and Uncommon Grace, when I live in fear, help me to live in hope. When I look out into the world and see chaos and turmoil, turn my eyes toward your presence within...and calm my frantic mind with the assurance that you are abiding in me. If I drift away from you and nurse guilt or shame, recalling the times I have fallen short of your mercy and grace, remind me to return to you and to abide in you.

#### Prince of Peace,

I surrender my anger and my hate, my pride and my arrogance to you, for I know that you long to dwell within my heart...and give me peace. You ask me to live in you...and you promised to live in me...So as you live in me and I in you, please make me an instrument of your peace...As you abide in me and I abide in you...help me do the hard work of making peace.

Lover of All The World You Made...Giver of the High Calling to love with your Love...Give me the strength to keep on loving...By your dwelling in me, help me love you with all of my mind and heart and strength...And show me how to love my neighbor and myself. Dwell deeply in me – stay with me, live in me, abide in me...so that I do produce your fruit of love, joy, peace...Help me never sow discord in your world...the world you made...the world you love.

From your abundance, give me all I need to bring forth patience, kindness and self-control...And protect me from despair and disgust in the human race and in my own flaws and failures. Free me from stinginess...Fill me with your bounty.

Worker of Miracles, Giver of Life—Lord and Savior, As you work within me, I ask you to help me overcome my wobbly faith — Produce the fruit of faithfulness in me...Live in me in such a way that you take away my rudeness or harshness...so that your gentleness can grow in me.

Abide in me in such a way that you produce the fruit of self-control in me...so that what I plant in the world will be what pleases you.

Into my heart...Into my heart, Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today. Come in to stay.

I want to abide in you...And I want you to abide in me...Now and forever.

December 23, 2018

#### **Unique Christmas Day**

By Travis Garcia

Two years ago, Erin and I experienced our most unique Christmas yet. On December 19<sup>th</sup> we welcomed our son Jacob into the world. From the minute we first said hello face-to-face the process had already started of leaving the security of the hospital and going home, away from the doctors and professionals, to be on our own.

Needless to say, there was some panic about what the first few days at home were going to look like. We had so many questions: Would he sleep? How often does he eat? Are you coming home with us? etc. Christmas was only a few days away and it was not even on our radar. I remember sitting at home when Erin's mom asked us what our plans were for Christmas holiday. Where are we getting together and if so when? In our sleep deprived state and because Jake was only a few days old we all agreed that family traveling to see us was the better option. So, on Christmas day we had the most laid-back family Christmas you could imagine. Grandma, Grandpa, Aunt, and Uncle watched and ogled over Jacob while Erin and I got some much-needed rest. We then sat in the living room together ate enchiladas and watched Netflix while Jacob napped. This was our Christmas. It passed without flair or pomp. It was simple, quiet, and very calm. Once Christmas had passed Erin and I looked at each other and remarked how this unique day had looked like any other day we had spent with family. Did I mention we were too sleep deprived to even set-up a tree or any decorations for that matter. There was no over the top presentation of Christmas and because of that it allowed us as individuals and as a family to focus on the things that mattered. We got to be present with our family, we were reminded of Jesus' birth and how his parents felt caring for the Creator of the world, we enjoyed the gifts of time and help that come from community. It was a different Christmas but enjoyable. One, I am still learning lessons from. My prayer for all this Christmas is that we would be as focused as possible on the one that truly matters. Christ dwelt among what he created to bring Hope and Salvation to us stumbling in the darkness. Merry Christmas!

John 1:14

## Prepare, for this is a week of love!

#### THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 23, 2018 9:45am

Call to Worship

Angels We Have Heard on High (stanzas 1, 3)

Hymn 100

Hark the Herald Angels Sing (stanzas 1, 3)

Hymn 88

Welcome & Greeting

The Lord be with you,

And also with you.

Why have we come?

We have come to worship Him.

Litany of Love

Leader: In this season, we remember Christ's first advent and anticipate his second.

All: We abide the coming of the Lord.

Leader: Today we light this candle believing the King of Love will come, the gift of God's own son.

All: The Lord says, "Abide in me, as I abide in you."

Leader: Even so, the night is dark and our waiting seems endless.

All: O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel.

Child of Peace

(see page 47 for Melody)

Child of love hear our cry on this silent holy night.

Aspinall and McDonald

Hearts are broken. Come to stay, Child of love, we pray.

Child of peace, we're on our knees.

Bid our warring hearts to cease. Heal our darkness, end our strife.

Come, and bring us life. Dona nobis pacem, pacem. Dona nobis pacem.

Child of love this our prayer: bring Your light; heal our despair,

Open eyes: come here to dwell, Immanuel.

The Lighting of the Candle of Love

The Delgado Family

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:46b-55

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks he to God.

Prayer

What Child Is This Hymn 118

Sing We Now of Christmas Hymn 111

The Birthday of a King Hymn 102

Go Tell it on the Mountain Sanctuary Choir

Sermon Pastor Chris Curran

The First Nowell Hymn 85

Offertory Prayer

Offering and Announcements

Come Thou Fount, Come Thou King

#### Advent Missions Focus: The Masons

Aaron and Hannah Mason are our newest WFA missionaries. They currently serve in Soroti, Uganda. They were busy last year keeping things going in Obule while the Rossers were on furlough. While Aaron focused on the well drilling clubs, Hannah worked with the women and children. The Masons also continued the Rosser's house church, Bible studies and the demonstration farm. This year they will be helping to expand the WFA ministry in the Soroti area. Please pray for the Masons. They are on a short furlough in the States while Hannah has back surgery, but they will be back in Uganda in January of 2019.



December 24, 2018

#### By Teri Deweber

As a girl, I had an imaginary friend named "Ro Ro". He sat next to me at meals and played dolls with me. We engaged in incredible conversations and were quite inseparable.

One day, I came tearing into our house, crying hysterically and screaming, "He...was in...the street...and a car came...and...he was run over and *killed*!"

"Who was killed? Who?" my mom and dad shouted, eyes wide.

"Ro Ro was killed! He's dead!"

.....I don't remember the exact words that followed this announcement, but I do remember it was hard to sit down the rest of the day.....

Unfortunately, life's tragedies aren't made up. This has been a hard year for my family. We lost two favorite aunts, an uncle and our beloved grandmother; another uncle is in the hospital after suffering a stroke; and another uncle is under Hospice care with cancer.

I was reading scripture the other night and found comfort where I didn't expect it – in the book of Job.

God doesn't expect shouts of joy when you lose a job or hallelujahs when you hear a loved one is gravely ill. What he *does* expect is for you to trust him. To put your faith in him and to look to him for guidance, comfort and yes, even *joy*. Remember, tomorrow brings a new day and God is always totally in control of everything. When He declared He will never leave or forsake you, He meant it!

Events in an ordinary manger that day changed the lives of a young mother and father; the paths of twelve followers; the future of a woman getting water; and the destination of a man hanging next to Jesus on a cross. That baby born in Bethlehem changes lives still today and floods the believer's soul with hope and joy, even in the middle of pain.

May you find joy in the miracle of Jesus this Christmas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Prepare your heart to serve only God. Lift your arms and pray to him.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Put away the sin that you still hold on to. Don't keep evil in your tent.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> If you will do that, you could look to God without shame. You can stand strong and not be afraid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Then you can forget your troubles, like water that has already passed by.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Your life will be brighter than the sunshine at noon. Life's darkest hours will shine like the morning sun.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> You will feel safe because there is *hope*. God will protect you and give you rest.

# Christmas Eve Carols, Candles, and Communion December 24, 2018 5:30pm and 7:00pm

The Light Revealed

Prelude

Rhonda Partusch & Debra Pruett

The Carol Sung

#### Joy to the World

Joy to the World! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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.

The Greeting

The Lord be with you,

And also with you.

Why have we come?

We have come to worship Him.

O come, let us adore Him,

Adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Procession of the Christ Candle

The Scripture Read

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

#### The Carol Sung

#### O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

## The Light in Our World

The Scripture Read Luke 2:1-12
Testimony in Song
The Scripture Read Luke 2:13-20
The Carol Sung

#### Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head; The stars in the sky looked down where He lay, The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes; I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay Close by me forever, and love me, I pray; Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

Christmas Reflection Pastor Chris Curran

The Light Observed through Communion with Him

(We invite anyone who is a Christian to receive Communion)

## The Light Shared with the World

#### Responsive Reading

And God said, "Let there be light!" And there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good.

God is light and in Him is no darkness.

The people who sat in the darkness saw a great light; and to them who sat in the region and shadow of death, Light is sprung up.

Light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.

Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

And His name shall be called Wonderful! Counselor! Mighty God! Everlasting Father! Prince of Peace!

May our lights so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father in heaven.

Instrumental Meditation

Candle Lighting

The Carol Sung

#### Silent Night, Holy Night

Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light Radiant beams from Thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night, Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

#### Benediction

<sup>\*</sup>World Hunger Offering will be received at the end of each service\*

December 25, 2018

#### **Merry Christmas**

By Chris Curran

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them (Luke 2:6-7)

For the majority of my children's elementary years, we lived in a two story home. On Christmas Eve of every year, we told them that they were not allowed to come down the stairs until **the time came** 6:00 a.m. Recently, we have heard stories of Christmas' past. There was the year:

- They spent the night in each other rooms to make sure they would wake each other when **the time came** to head downstairs.
- Where one of my daughters woke up every hour on the hour until the time
   became the hour she could come down.
- · When the two girls figured out how to login onto our Amazon account and know all of the presents that were underneath the tree.

On Christmas morning, we proclaim that **the time came** for God to come down the stairs holding a baby. We celebrate that **the time came** for God to become Emmanuel, God with us. We acknowledge that **the time has come** for us to offer our lives back to the giver of this gift, to care for the oppressed and live in the joy that this baby's life will bring. Most of all, we look forward to when **the time will come** that Christ will come down those stairs once again—to make Christmas an everyday reality.

It is Christmas morning. It is time to open presents. It is time to hurry over to Grandma's house for lunch. It is time to stop all the hustle and bustle and rest. Yes, it is time to do all those things, but only because **the time came for the baby to be born...** and our world has never and will never be the same.

Merry Christmas!

# Child of Peace

Aspinall and McDonald



<sup>\*</sup>substitute peace, joy, or love on the appropriate Sundays of Advent\*

Christmas Eve Carols, Candles, and Communion Monday, December 24sh 5:30-6:30 p.m. (childcare) 7:00-8:00 p.m. (no childcare)

# Southland BAPTIST CHURCH

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