



*A D V E N T*

*Awaiting Hope*





Awaiting Hope

This Advent devotional was written by 24 different authors from our Center Pointe family. These authors included elders, staff, and members of CPCC, who took the time to listen, reflect, and share what God has placed on their hearts. Each entry adds a unique voice and perspective— together, they form something beautiful: a reminder that God speaks through His people in many ways.

To our authors, thank you! Your words have helped create space for others to draw near to Jesus this Advent season. We're grateful for each of you and for the part you've played in pointing others toward Hope.

Thank you to Candy Yocom for creating the coloring pages in this devotional. Your God-given creativity and heart for Jesus have made this Advent journey even more special.

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# Awaiting Hope

For over a month now, we've seen signs of the Christmas season. The commercials. The lights. The blow-up Santa next to the giant Halloween skeleton in Lowe's. It all just kind of runs together these days, and the true meaning of Christmas runs the risk of getting lost in the noise. Maybe it already has for you.

That's why we created this Advent devotional. The word "advent" means arrival. It reminds us that Jesus has come, is coming, and is already here. He's before time, beyond time, and here with us at this very moment in time. The pages ahead are designed to slow you down to experience Him and to prepare room in your heart for what this season is all about: Emmanuel. They are designed to help you pause and rediscover the wonder and awe of God with us. We need space to remember His first coming in Bethlehem and to renew our hope in His promise to come again. These pages serve as that space.

Our heart as a church is that this season would not simply be sentimental, but deeply spiritual. We don't want to just experience Christmas—we want to encounter Christ. So slow down. Take time. Make space. Rediscover the wonder of this season. Whether you're going through this book alone, with your family, or with your small group, I pray it helps you experience the presence and peace of Jesus in a fresh way.

Each of the four weeks of Advent focuses on one of the themes of Christmas: **Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.**

Each day you'll find:

- **Scripture** to center your heart and mind.
- **A short devotional** written by someone from our Center Pointe family.
- **A simple application** to help you live out what you've read.
- **A prayer** to guide you in a conversation with your Heavenly Father.



To help you worship throughout the week, we've also included a ***song for each day***. Just scan the ***QR code*** on this page to access our Advent playlist, which is a collection of songs to fill your home and heart with worship.

You'll also find journaling pages where you can write your thoughts and prayers each week, and a color page designed to give you quiet time to pray and process what you've read.

My hope is that this devotional helps you not just celebrate Christmas, but connect with Christ. He has come. He is coming. And He is with us, even now.

Merry Christmas!  
Shawn



“NOW IT IS THIS HOPE WE  
WERE SAVED, BUT HOPE THAT  
IS SEEN IS NOT HOPE,  
BECAUSE WHO HOPES FOR  
WHAT HE SEES? NOW IF WE  
HOPE FOR WHAT WE DO NOT  
SEE, WE EAGERLY WAIT FOR  
IT WITH PATIENCE.”

ROMANS 8:24-25 (CSB)



# Hope

*To desire for a better future and to have expectation  
that because of God's faithfulness,  
it will come to pass*

ἐλπίς (elpis)

Week

01

# DAY 01

Bryan Shelley  
Team &  
Teaching Pastor

## *A Hope That Lasts*

<sup>19</sup> Look, I am about to do something new; even now it is coming. Do you not see it? Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.

<sup>20</sup> Wild animals—jackals and ostriches—will honor me, because I provide water in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people.

Isaiah 43:19-20 (CSB)

**W**hen was the last time you had an insane level of anticipation for something that was going to happen? As a kid, I counted down the days until the end of the school year. As I approached 16, the anticipation was for that day when I would take the keys and go for a drive all by myself. Then it was graduation. Then it was marriage. Then it was... (fill in the blank). The point is, we often live our lives placing hope in these big moments that will define the next season of our lives. We believe that when these moments arrive, they'll change the trajectory of our lives. Sometimes they leave us with a temporary form of satisfaction, only to lead to a 'wanting' for the next thing. Other times they leave us with disappointment, as things sometimes do not unfold the way we want them to.

For generations, people placed their hope in the anticipation that God was going to rescue them—rescue from wandering without a homeland, rescue from government occupancy, rescue from a brokenness that came into the world at the beginning of time.

While none of it was ill-placed, the anticipation was often misplaced. Sometimes the gifts we need the most come in the most questionable and suspicious packages. And that was the Savior Messiah Jesus.

I do not know what it is that you are seeking refuge from in this season of life. Maybe you've experienced some level of disappointment, frustration, or straight-up brokenness. I don't have a quick fix solution for you, but I do know a God that provides exactly what we need when we need it!

When Jesus came, it wasn't how most were expecting Him to be. They were looking in the wrong places and, while doing so, missed the perfect gift that would meet all their needs even though they didn't know it. I hope you know that God gives us all we need in Jesus! It may not provide an 'easy' path, but it will pave the way for the 'better' path—the only path that matters.

*Take some time to consider your life. Take inventory. Where have you been met with the fulfillment of hope, and where have you been wanting more? Where are you still clinging to hope? Is the answer to trust Him in the gap? No matter what, God gives us what we need in Jesus. May your faith and trust in Him not waver given any circumstance.*

*Worship Song:  
"Desert Song" - Hillsong United*

*God, thank You for giving me exactly what I need, when I need it. May I trust in the ways that you provide and sustain. May I look to you for the ultimate hope that can be found in Jesus. And if there is any time or space where I am wanting more, keep me humble. As I walk in that space of 'hopeful anticipation,' may you increase my faith and allow it to be a testimony to others in my life.*



# Reflections



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# DAY 02

Jacob Herald  
Worship & Creative  
Arts Pastor

## *Anticipating Hope*

<sup>2</sup> The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
a light has dawned  
on those living in the land of darkness.

<sup>6</sup> For a child will be born for us,  
a son will be given to us,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
He will be named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:2, 6 (CSB)

**A**dvent is a season marked by hope. The hope we find during Advent is greater than optimistic or wishful thinking; rather, the hope we celebrate is firmly rooted in the promises of our faithful God. His words are not empty, and His promises never fail.

Hundreds of years before Jesus arrived, the prophet Isaiah spoke about a great light coming to a dark world. This prophecy reminds us that even when circumstances feel overwhelming, God is working out His purposes in His perfect timing.

The people of God have always known seasons of waiting. The people during Isaiah's time waited with expectation for a Messiah they hadn't seen. They lived their lives between the promise and the fulfillment. We live in this same tension today, between the first coming of Jesus, and His second coming. In the waiting, we can remember that our hope does not rely on temporary conditions, but on the never-changing character and promises of Our Father.

In the life of Jesus, Isaiah's ancient prophecy became reality. Hope appeared as a human. Jesus is the prophesied promise— "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace". In Jesus, God demonstrates that He is true to His word.

As you begin this Advent season, allow yourself to embrace hope. Not simply hope in circumstances, but hope in the One who never changes and whose promises are always true. Allow yourself to confidently expect God's presence, guidance, provision, and love, knowing that the same God who faithfully fulfilled His promises in Bethlehem will continue to fulfill His promises in your life today.

*Take a few moments to reflect on the areas of your life where hope has faded or become uncertain. Write it down and prayerfully ask God to renew your hope in Him, trusting that He is still the never-changing God.*

**Worship Song:**  
**"Yes and Amen" - Housefires**

*Father, thank You for hope. Thank You for being the source and sustainer of my hope. When I grow weary in the waiting, remind me of Your never-changing faithfulness. Renew in me a confidence and expectation of Your presence and fulfillment of Your promises. As I begin this journey of anticipating Your coming this Advent, allow me to trust You deeply and find hope that is fully rooted in You.*

# DAY 03

Judy Horne  
CPCC Member

## Hope Amidst Darkness

<sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

<sup>5</sup> That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it.

John 1:4-5 (CSB)

**W**ho should we fear? What should we fear? Nothing with the Light of Jesus in us. *He is our light and our salvation (Psalm 27:1)* He is the light for all people. Do you always remember that? Do you need reminders sometimes? I do, that's for sure. Most of our fears in this world haunt us when we face the darkness in a state of forgetfulness. We forget that we have God dwelling in us. We forget that we have life through the Word. We forget that we are His child. We forget that we are filled with His grace and power and strength. We forget that His light outshines whatever darkness we are facing.

These days of shortened light can certainly seem to be an invitation for gloom, chill, and dreariness, but fear not—Jesus' light shines through it all. When we look at the darkness in our lives—the piles of bills, the deep pains of aging, bullies in school, a marriage that feels more like a roommate relationship, job loss, a grandchild in the hospital, a sister fighting cancer, an out-of-control schedule, family divided by opinions—when we look at these moments of darkness through the lens that is the Light of Jesus, we can rest in His peace and remember: there is no darkness greater than our God!

This season, when we are given an opportunity to choose whether to get caught up in the societal hype of holidays, surrender to the darkness, or become overwhelmed, or to choose



Jesus and experience peace, light, calm, and joy. Advent offers peace, light, calm, and joy as a time to prepare our hearts and minds for the most beautiful moment in our history and heritage: when Jesus, the Light, punched through the darkness to bring life for all who would believe.

*Sit by a tree aglow with lights and meditate on the Light of the World entering into your darkness—how His birth still brings hope, renewal, and life to all people. Boldly offer the Light and Peace of Christ to someone. Say it out loud: May the Light and Peace of Christ overwhelm your darkness with new life.*

**Worship Song:**

*“Things That I’m Afraid Of” by Josh Wilson*

*Jesus, You are my Light! Thank you for shining Your light on me today. I pray for those who are stuck in the fear of darkness that they may find life in this season. I ask You to bless those who are in a constant state of fear and anxiety to experience Your peace. I ask You to make me brave enough to share Your Light today.*



# DAY 04

Kate Arrington  
CPCC Member

## Waiting With Hope

<sup>5</sup> I wait for the Lord; I wait  
and put my hope in his word.

<sup>6</sup> I wait for the Lord  
more than watchmen for the morning—  
more than watchmen for the morning.

<sup>7</sup> Israel, put your hope in the Lord.  
For there is faithful love with the Lord,  
and with him is redemption in abundance.

<sup>8</sup> And he will redeem Israel  
from all its iniquities.

Psalm 130:5-8 (CSB)

Waiting is not easy to do. There seems to be a pattern of waiting throughout Scripture as God promises things to His people and to specific individuals. Often our periods of waiting come with silence. There were 400 years of silence at the end of the Old Testament before the birth of Jesus.

My mind jumps to Mary and Martha as they sent word to Jesus that their brother, Lazarus, was dying. They were waiting for their friend, their Savior, to arrive. They had hope in who Jesus was and what He could do. Jesus did not arrive right away. What thoughts may have entered their minds? We get a glimpse of their thoughts: *“Lord, if you would have been here...”* (John 11: 21, 32). In our pain, we may be quick to assign attributes to Him that are unfair—and yet, Scripture tells us otherwise.

*“Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus.”*—John 11:5

<sup>33</sup>*“When Jesus saw her (Mary) crying, he was deeply moved in His spirit and troubled...”* <sup>35</sup>*He wept.”*—John 11:33, 35

*“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in Spirit.”--Psalm 34:18*

As believers, we are currently in a season of waiting. We live in the now and not yet as we await Jesus’ return. Hope serves as an anchor because we know His promises are true. His Word is a gift to encourage us to endure. We can rest in knowing that He loves us and is near, and He is victorious in the end of all that plagues us in this world.

*Whether or not you are currently in a season of waiting, spend some time thinking of your own response to periods of waiting. In what ways, do you misconstrue God’s character? Spend some time in the Word and ask God to illuminate His heart towards you so that you may endure with the hope of who He is and what He promises to you.*

**Worship Song:**  
*“I Set My Hope”--The Worship Initiative*

*Father, we thank You for the gift of hope and assurance that You are with us as we wait upon You. Our hearts eagerly long for Your return. May our hearts be filled with hope and joy as we bend our knee to Your ways as we wait upon the promise that You are a God of redemption and will make all things new.*

# DAY 05

Kelsey Helton  
Communications  
Director

## *Anchored In Hope*

*<sup>18</sup> God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. <sup>19</sup> We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, <sup>20</sup> where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.*

Hebrews 6:18-20 (CSB)

**I**n the Old Testament temple, the innermost room, known as the Most Holy Place, is where God made His Spirit dwell. This room was not accessible to nearly all Israelites, and therefore a personal encounter with the Spirit was also not attainable. Once a year, one priest was permitted to go beyond the veil, enter the Most Holy Place, and offer sacrificial blood for the forgiveness of sins.

This temple system represented Israel's relationship with God until Jesus came (Hebrews 9:10). As we know, Jesus changed everything. Jesus, acting as a high priest, went behind the veil, entered the presence of God, and offered Himself for all sin. When Jesus died, “. . . *the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom*” (Mark 15:38). This means that the veil—the barrier, the chasm—no longer exists. There is nothing that separates the believer from having an unfiltered, unrestrained, moment-by-moment encounter with the presence of God. Furthermore, the Spirit of God no longer dwells within the temple, but, since the veil has been torn, God's Spirit dwells inside believers.

We have gone from one man, once a year, interacting with God's Spirit to anyone who surrenders to Jesus having that same Spirit

inside them all day, every day (Romans 8:11). What a gift! What an honor!

God's Spirit anchors us in hope. Our confidence rests on who Jesus is and what He accomplished "inside the veil." He will not change. He will not wear down. He said He would make a way, and He did. He said He is coming back, and He will. Our souls are securely anchored.

*God's unchanging character provides stability, confidence, and daily dependence on God. Create a list of your top five to ten favorite characteristics of God (e.g., eternal, merciful, just). No matter what you face, these characteristics are still true and will remain true. Thank God for who He is.*

*Worship Song:  
"Fall Like Rain" by Passion*

*Father, You do not change; Your promises and Your character remain unchanged. Therefore, I know my hope in you is dependable. Please help me listen for Your voice today and drown out any voices that are not of You. Thank You for the season of Advent that anticipates the coming of Immanuel, the One who tore the veil for me.*

# DAY 06

Jason Brown  
Director of CP Kids

## Sharing Hope

*<sup>13</sup> Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Romans 15:13 (CSB)

**H**ope is not something to keep to yourself. The hope God gives us as believers is meant to overflow and touch the lives of everyone around us.

In Romans 15:13, the Apostle Paul gives us a recipe for sharing hope. It begins with faith. As our faith grows, so does our hope. The more we learn to trust God, the more we discover that even in the hardest times, hope remains alive within us.

As our faith increases, God fills us with two amazing gifts: joy and peace. These don't come from external circumstances—they grow out of our daily walk with Jesus. As believers, we can experience joy even in seasons of grief and sorrow, and we can hold on to peace even in the middle of life's storms.

The final ingredient for overflowing hope comes from the work of the Holy Spirit. As we walk with God, the Spirit not only strengthens us through difficult times but also places us in the lives of people where we live, work, and play, who need the very hope we've received.

Our mission is to share that hope with the people God places in our lives. This Advent season, you may never know how much a simple word, gesture, or act of kindness can mean to someone in need of hope. The hope of Jesus is the one gift that never fades—and it's the gift worth sharing most.



*Take a moment to consider: Who in your life needs the hope of Jesus right now? Pray for them, and then look for a way to share that hope in a tangible way.*

*Worship Song:*

*“O Holy Night” - Chris Tomlin with CeCe Winans*

*Dear God, thank You for the reminder that true hope comes from my faith in You. Thank You for the joy and peace that comes as I walk daily with You. Help me to keep trusting You even in the darkest nights, and allow me to share that hope with those You have placed around me.*



# DAY 07

Tony Spranger  
Family Ministries  
Pastor

## *A Living Hope*

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. <sup>5</sup> You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:3-5 (CSB)

Christmas has always been one of my favorite times of the year! I love the colors, the special activities, and the family gatherings. One of our traditions was to attend a family gathering on Christmas Eve, then go to church. We would close out the night at home by reading the story of Christ's birth by candlelight. Each time a new character was introduced, we would place that figure into our nativity set. The evening always ended with us singing "Silent Night"—though none of us were very musically gifted!

Another tradition I loved was making my Christmas wish list. Each year, the Toys "R" Us and Sears catalogs arrived in the mail. My siblings and I would grab pens and circle everything we thought we "needed" to be happy. After distributing the list to grandparents, aunts, and uncles, I would hope that someone loved me enough to buy me something from that list.

But the hope Peter describes in 1 Peter 1:3-5 is far greater than that. He reminds us that by God's mercy, we have been given new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Unlike the toys from my childhood that quickly broke or ended up forgotten, this hope never fades. God Himself is keeping our inheritance safe, and through faith, we can live with the

confident assurance of salvation in Christ.

So this Advent season, don't get lost in the busyness of preparation and shopping. Remember that because of Jesus' resurrection, you have a living hope that will never perish, spoil, or fade.

*Hope shines brightest when shared. Look for ways to serve—volunteer at a local shelter, support a family in need, or simply offer a listening ear. Acts of kindness become beacons of hope to others.*

**Worship Song:**  
***“Living Hope”- Phil Wickham***

*Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your great mercy that has given us new birth into a living hope through Jesus. In this Advent season, when the world around us feels hurried and distracted, help us to slow down and remember the lasting gift of salvation that never perishes, spoils, or fades. Guard our hearts from placing our hope in temporary things, and instead root us deeply in Christ, our true and eternal hope. Fill us with joy and peace as we wait for the day when Your promise of salvation will be fully revealed. May our lives reflect this living hope so that others may see and be drawn to Jesus.*



“THE PEOPLE WALKING IN DARKNESS  
HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT; A LIGHT  
HAS DAWNED ON THOSE LIVING IN  
THE LAND OF DARKNESS. FOR  
A CHILD WILL BE BORN FOR US,  
A SON WILL BE GIVEN TO US, AND  
THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE ON HIS  
SHOULDERS. HE WILL BE NAMED  
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, MIGHTY  
GOD, ETERNAL FATHER,  
PRINCE OF PEACE.”

ISAIAH 9:2, 6 (CSB)



# Peace

*A declaration of restored wholeness between  
Heaven & Earth*

**εἰρήνη (eirēnē)**

Week

# DAY 08

Bryan Shelley  
Team & Teaching  
Pastor

## *Peace in Chaos*

<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, he told them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the sea." <sup>36</sup> So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup> A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup> He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?"

<sup>39</sup> He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Silence! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> Then he said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

<sup>41</sup> And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

Mark 4:35-41 (CSB)

**I** found myself tied up and blindfolded, laying on a cold concrete floor. I wasn't quite sure if there was anybody else in the room with me. It was quiet—almost too quiet. The stillness was suddenly broken by a loud pop and a flash bright enough that it blinded me through the blindfold. Immediately, the sound of a door getting kicked in echoed through the space, followed by a few smaller pops that sounded like gunfire. The craziest and most chaotic ten seconds I have ever experienced in my life! Then, out of the newfound quietness, a voice: "Everybody alright?" At the same time, someone helped me off the floor and lifted my blindfold. A couple buddies and I were helping our local SWAT team run situational drills in an abandoned warehouse. And while they were just drills, those of us who were volunteering as the hostages were still mildly overwhelmed and terrified.



Not much can replicate that experience, but sometimes life can have similarities —lost in darkness,unaware of surroundings, not quite sure what's going to happen next. It must have been similar to how the disciples felt when they were on that boat with Jesus in the midst of the storm. Maybe you find yourself in a storm of sorts at the moment. If not, just wait— they tend to sneak up on us. And how we respond in the midst of such storms says a lot about who we are and where we place our trust.

Jesus doesn't promise us a life that is free of storms, but He does promise that he'll be with us in the midst of it.

*When facing a storm in this life, keep yourself focused on the One that has the power to speak to the waves. Also, be mindful of your surroundings and the people whom you allow to be close to you. The friends who are in your boat are pivotal. They can encourage you, pray for you, and help you focus on the things that matter most.*

*Worship Song:*

*“Another in the Fire” - Hillsong United*

*Father, thank You for watching over me. Help me to keep my focus on You. No matter what goes on around me, remind me that You are in the middle of it with me and that You will not waiver. God, I look forward to what it is that You're going to do in my life as a result of being anchored to You.*

# Reflections



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# DAY 09

Hannah Ellis  
CPCC Member

## Peacemakers

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called sons of God.

Matthew 5:9 (CSB)

As Christ-followers, “peace” describes our Redeemer, reality, and relationships. Our Redeemer is the Prince of Peace, and we are “sons of God”. Therefore, as unconditionally loved children, we pursue and resemble Peace.

Jesus’ death and resurrection settled our reality, worth, and identity, securing peace with God and within our souls. In John 16:33, the Greek word for this peace is *eirēnē*, “*the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot.*”<sup>1</sup> The peace that Jesus offers is not the absence of conflict or pain. It is deep, soul rest and future hope because He has overcome the world. Henry Blackaby wrote:

*“I determined that no matter what my circumstances, I would never look at my situation except against the backdrop of the cross. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God forever convinced me that He loved me.”<sup>2</sup>*

Sons of God pursue peace in relationships. *If possible, as far as it depends on us, we live at peace with everyone* (Romans 12:18). This does not mean we condone evil, but that we can repent of and forgive the most grievous offenses because the power that forgave us to the uttermost resides in us. Bitterness and resentment are antithetical to our sonship— we must remember who our true Enemy is. If we seek peace and it isn’t reciprocated on earth, we can cling to the hope that in Heaven, discord is

impossible. Satan and sin will no longer interrupt relationships, and peace reigns victorious forever!

*Inquire of the Lord if there is an area where you are not living out your sonship, resembling your Redeemer, resting in your reality, or pursuing peace in relationships. Then, ask Him to help guide you as you are obedient to whatever He lays on your heart.*

**Worship Song:**

**“Prince of Peace” – Celtic Worship**

*Precious Savior, Prince of Peace, thank you for sacrificing everything so that I may experience peace with You, in my soul, and with others. Help me to fully live as the beloved child that You say I am. Guide me as I seek to resemble You, the ultimate Peacemaker and my greatest Love, in all areas of my life.*

1"G1515 - eirēnē - Strong's Greek Lexicon (csb)." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 3 Aug, 2025.  
<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1515/csb/mgnt/0-1/>.

2Blackaby, King, et al. Experiencing God - Bible Study Book with Video Access. Lifeway Church Resources, 2 Aug. 2021, p. 51.



# DAY 10

Tim & Cindi Konstanty  
CPCC Member

## *Peace in Christ*

<sup>27</sup> “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don’t let your heart be troubled or fearful.

John 14:27 (CSB)

**I**ove having choices—especially during the holidays, a season brimming with joy, anticipation, and seemingly endless possibilities. But every choice comes with a cost: our time, energy, and attention. The pace can be thrilling, yet it often leaves us feeling stretched thin, overwhelmed, and weary.

This season, we invite you to slow down and refocus on what truly matters: God’s presence and peace. Whether we’re caught up in the festive whirlwind or quietly carrying the weight of the season, one truth remains—we need peace. Deeply. Desperately. Gifts come and go. They wear out, break down, or fall short of our expectations. But in John 14:27, Jesus reminds us that God gives gifts of a different kind—greater gifts. They may not be wrapped in shiny paper or look like what we imagined, but they are always good, purposeful, and perfectly timed. The Lover of our souls invites us into something deeper, richer, and life-giving: His peace. It’s not just a feeling—it’s a gift. And while it may not be tangible, it’s more real and lasting than anything we could place under a tree. His peace is available now, ready to meet us right where we are.

“Silent Night” is a beloved Christmas carol that beautifully captures the contrast of Jesus’ birth. It marked one of the busiest moments in all of eternity—both in Heaven and on Earth. Yet in that sacred moment, the newborn Savior slept—wrapped in

peace, calm, and quiet. “All was calm,” and He slept “in heavenly peace.” True peace doesn’t come from circumstances—it comes from a relationship.

*We don’t have to miss out on God’s peace or its power. When we pause, quiet our hearts, and turn toward the One who offers true peace, we’ll find it. He sees us. He knows. His peace isn’t distant or reserved for perfect circumstances; it’s present, near, and ready to meet us in the middle of whatever we’re facing. So lean in. Speak with Him. Rest in Him. Be encouraged. The Lover of your soul slept peacefully in a manger. In the busiest moment of eternity, He rested. Surely, we can too.*

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you” (John 14:27). Let go. Be still. Receive the gift.*

**Worship Song:**

**“Silent Night” - Mariners Worship**

*Lord Jesus, during our busy lives and the noise of the season, help us pause and remember the peace You came to bring. Quiet our hearts, calm our minds, and draw us near to You. May we not miss the beauty of Your presence or the gift of Your peace. Teach us to rest in You, just as You rested in that manger, wrapped in heavenly calm. Amen.*

# DAY 11

Lisa McCoon  
Pause CEO

## *Peace Through Surrender*

<sup>6</sup> Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7 (CSB)

Christmas is often painted with images of serenity - silent nights, glowing candles and peaceful snowfall- but the reality of the first Christmas was far from calm. A young, unwed mother was giving birth in a stable, a Roman Empire was flexing its power with a census, and a couple was trusting God while everything around them looked uncertain. Yet in the middle of this chaos, and at the heart of the Christmas story, was Jesus entering our broken world to bring peace. Not the kind coming from control, but surrender. Mary surrendered her plans. Joseph surrendered his pride. And Jesus, the Son of God, surrendered His heavenly throne to take on flesh.

Paul encourages us not to be anxious about anything—a tall order in today's world—but he doesn't stop there. He offers us a roadmap to surrender through prayer, petition, and thanksgiving. Instead of holding tightly to our fears and trying to manage everything on our own, we are invited to lay our burdens before God with a heart that trusts He is good, even when life doesn't make sense.

When we raise our hands and submit our worries to God, we open our hearts to receive His peace—a peace that doesn't always change our circumstances, but guards our hearts and minds in the middle of them. It's a peace that "transcends all understanding", because it doesn't rely on everything being perfect; it relies only on a perfect Savior.

*Mary and Joseph didn't expect their story to go this way, but they trusted God's hand in the unknown. What's your Bethlehem - where is the place you didn't plan to be, but the place God is using?*

**Worship Song:**

**“Oh Holy Night” - Tommee Profitt (feat. Tauren Wells & SVRCINA)**

*Father, thank You for the gift of peace that Jesus brings. In this season where the world can feel loud and demanding, teach me how to lean in to surrender. Help me to release what I can't control and to trust that You are always writing a better story than I could ever write on my own. Instead of trying to hold everything together, let me allow You to instead hold me. Fill my heart with a peace that guards me, reminds me You are near and rejoices when I am weary.*

# DAY 12

Brent Carter  
Director of CP Adults

## Peace With Others

<sup>18</sup> If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18 (CSB)

**I**n a world often filled with discord and tension, the concept of peace can seem elusive. What does it truly mean to have peace, especially with others? Peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of harmony, understanding, and reconciliation. It's an active pursuit, a deliberate choice we make daily in our interactions.

*In Romans 12:18, let's first consider the phrase "If possible." This acknowledges that not all situations or relationships may allow for perfect peace. External factors and the actions of others may create turmoil, discomfort, and even pain. However, this phrase implies that we should actively pursue peace despite our circumstances. Jesus demonstrated peace in the midst of rebuke, persecution, and even death.*

*Next, we examine "as far as it depends on you." This part places a crucial emphasis on our personal responsibility, meaning that we are accountable for our own attitudes, actions, and reactions. We are called to do our part in fostering peace, regardless of what others may do.*

*Finally, "live at peace with everyone" is a broad and challenging command, calling us to seek peace, not just with those we like, but with everyone—even our adversaries on social media. It means extending grace and kindness to those who may not deserve it, reflecting the boundless love and mercy of God. It also means resolving conflicts respectfully, communicating openly,*



and compromising when necessary.

Let us commit to doing our part, as far as it depends on us, to live peaceably with all, bringing love and harmony into every interaction.

*Think about someone you interact with who causes you strife. Write down three specific actions you can take to resolve conflict, show gratitude, or demonstrate empathy and compassion toward them.*

*Worship Song:  
“Make Us One” - Jesus Culture*

*Father, thank You for the example of peace that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, demonstrated. Please help me seek peace, especially in my interactions with \_\_\_\_\_ (person who causes you strife). Help me adopt a humble heart and see the same value in this person that You do. Lord, guide my thoughts and actions to reflect the love and grace that You have extended to me.*

# DAY 13

Jacob Herald  
Worship & Creative  
Arts Pastor

## *Peace on Earth*

<sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful.

Colossians 3:15 (CSB)

One of my favorite things during this season is setting out the nativity. Now, ours isn't anything fancy— it's a Fisher Price Little People nativity set. You push down the angel on top and it plays *Away in a Manger*, and guess what I get to hear a thousand times a day? That scene, the birth of Jesus, is sometimes where we stop when we think about this season. But the nativity is not just the story of a child's birth—it's the breaking in of God's peace to a broken world.

When the angels appeared to the shepherds, they declared: "*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!*" (Luke 2:14)

Centuries earlier, Isaiah had promised a ruler who would be called the Prince of Peace. The Messiah was never just about power or deliverance from enemies. His coming was about *Shalom*, the Hebrew word for peace.

In English, peace often means the absence of conflict or a sense of calm. But *\*shalom\** goes deeper. It means wholeness or completeness—everything in right relationship with God, with others, with creation, and within ourselves.

Paul uses a similar word when writing to the Colossians. He uses the Greek word *eirēnē*, the New Testament counterpart to *shalom*. It carries the same sense of wholeness and completeness.

Paul is picturing this peace like an umpire, ruling in the hearts of followers of Christ. His peace isn't just a feeling— it calls us into unity, forgiveness, and love. It means relationships healed, hearts steady, and lives aligned toward God.

Advent invites us to see a world set right under the reign of the Prince of Peace.

*When you sense anxiety building or conflict in your heart, pause and let Christ's peace be the umpire. Stop and pray, "Jesus, let Your peace rule in me right now."*

*Worship Song:  
"P E A C E" - Hillsong Young and Free*

*Father, thank You for stepping into a broken world and bringing with You the wholeness that our hearts desire. Let Your peace rule in me today, not just a feeling, but the power that restores. Where my heart is restless, speak calm; where my life is fractured, make me whole; where relationships are strained, bring restoration. Help me to live as a person of peace, walking in unity and aligned toward You.*

# DAY 14

Nicole Snelling  
CP Adults Grow  
Coordinator

## *Dwelling in Peace*

<sup>8</sup>I will both lie down and sleep in peace,  
for you alone, Lord, make me live in safety.

Psalm 4:8 (CSB)

**T**he promise of God's peace is "Yes" and "Amen", bringing us the comfort we long for. The Psalms are full of declarations of willful choice to dwell in peace in the midst of chaos, accusation, disaster, anxiety, and longing. David is no different here.

Over and over in Scripture, we read stories of people who, in the midst of darkness and uncertainty, dwell in peace. Like Mary, even in the midst of the anxiety of giving birth in a dirty stable, in the darkness of night, in an unfamiliar town, oppressed by an unrelenting empire, she birthed the source of that which the angels declared "Peace on Earth."

Sleep can evade us when anxiety and stress come. It's almost as if we think we can avoid the chaos of life's overwhelming realities by worrying about them and the "what-if" for ourselves and those we love. But in truth, this worry can become the very dams that prevent God's river of Peace from finding its way to us.

Water always finds the lowest point and the path of least resistance. It's time to let down the walls, the defenses you build: protecting image, digging in on who is right and who is wrong, mounting up worry, assembling a brigade of research and self-assured intelligence, overwhelming efforts to secure the future, only thinking of you and yours. Let these dams crumble. Let the river of peace flow.

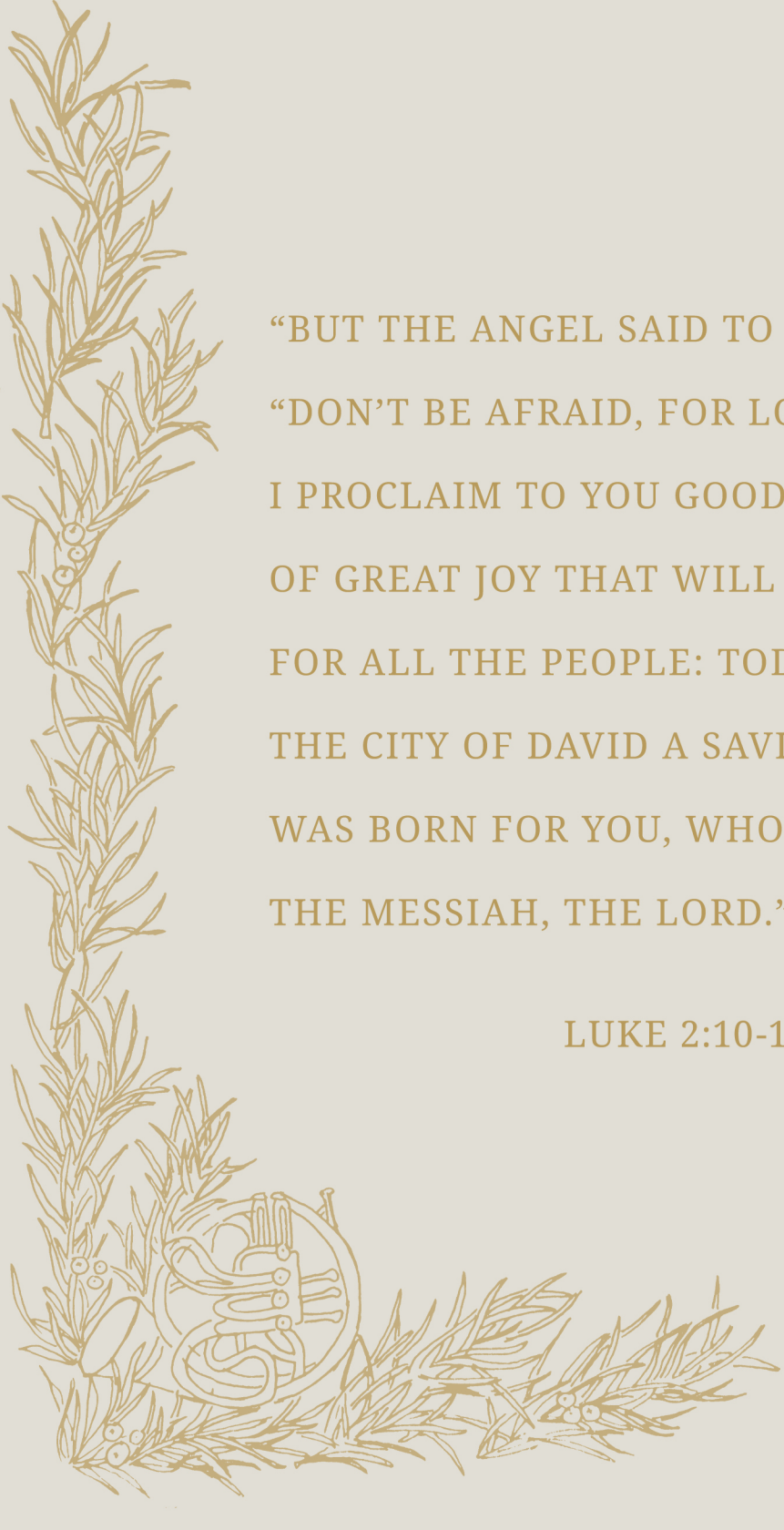
In this season of waiting, remembering what was and anticipation of that which is to come, Advent calls us to peace. Let the river of God's Peace carry you to this truth: "He is before all things, and by him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:17) It is enough.

*Tonight, as you ready for bed, stand at the sink a minute longer. Let the water from the faucet flow over your hands and think about how the flow of God's Peace will always come to your lowest point to bring new life. As you settle into bed, take a deep breath in, and as you exhale, whisper, "In peace I will lie down and sleep."*

**Worship Song:**  
**"Peace Like a River" - Page CXVI**

*Dear God, thank You for holding me close, swaddling me in as a mother swaddles her newborn child. I pray Your nearness brings calm to my anxious cry. Break down the walls and dams I have built around my life so that Your Living Water of Peace washes over all I love and hold dear. As the week of remembering Peace comes to a close, let me be assured the waters of Your Peace will always find me. Amen.*





“BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO THEM,  
“DON’T BE AFRAID, FOR LOOK,  
I PROCLAIM TO YOU GOOD NEWS  
OF GREAT JOY THAT WILL BE  
FOR ALL THE PEOPLE: TODAY IN  
THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOR  
WAS BORN FOR YOU, WHO IS  
THE MESSIAH, THE LORD.”

LUKE 2:10-11 (CSB)

# Joy

*A deep spiritual gladness that flows from  
deep relationship*

χαρά (chara)

# 03

Week

# DAY 15

Bryan Shelley  
Team & Teaching  
Pastor

## *Joy in the Waiting*

*<sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified; <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: <sup>11</sup> Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*

Luke 2:9-11(CSB)

**W**hen was the last time you were terrified? Maybe something unforeseen or unexpected happened that caught you off guard and made you uncomfortable. Something about the unknown and unforeseen elicited a response of fear. Most recently, I was faced with a big decision that didn’t just have ramifications for myself, but for my entire family. That decision was whether or not to move to Cincinnati and join the Center Pointe team. While I was excited about the prospect, I was terrified of what it would mean for my family, specifically my kids. And as a parent, our kids tend to be the ones who occupy our thoughts and considerations—how we can provide the best for them. Even though I had clarity on the decision, I was fearful of what it would mean for my kids and the life they would move into—in a new space, in a new school, removed from the things that are familiar and normal to them. If I’m honest, I’m still fearful of the long-term ramifications for them and their trajectory.

But fear is not where we are meant to live! As followers of Jesus, we have the assurance of knowing that wherever we go, His love and His grace never depart from us. I can’t imagine being one of

those shepherds that night and experiencing what they experienced. And in their fear, being greeted with a message of hope and joy that would surpass all understanding.

The message of hope is for all of us! There is no prerequisite, and it does not play favorites. It is an invitation for all of us to step into a faithful, trustful posture and find joy in knowing that God is going to fulfill his promises. So whatever you face today, know that there is joy to be found in the promises of God. We get to celebrate the anticipation of knowing what is yet to come. It's as if we know the greatest gift is on its way, and we get to be the recipient of it in full.

*Where are you waiting for God to come through? The fear and doubt you have are from an enemy who wants to get between you and the promises of God. Take joy in knowing that God always comes through and fulfills His word.*

*Worship Song:  
"Light Up The World" - Desperation Band*

*Thank you for your promises, God! When I'm shrouded in fear and doubt, remind me that You are the God that comes through in the biggest and most unexpected ways. May I find joy in the space of waiting and anticipating the fulfillment of those promises. And may my faith never waver, but may it strengthen because I know the best is yet to come!*

# Reflections



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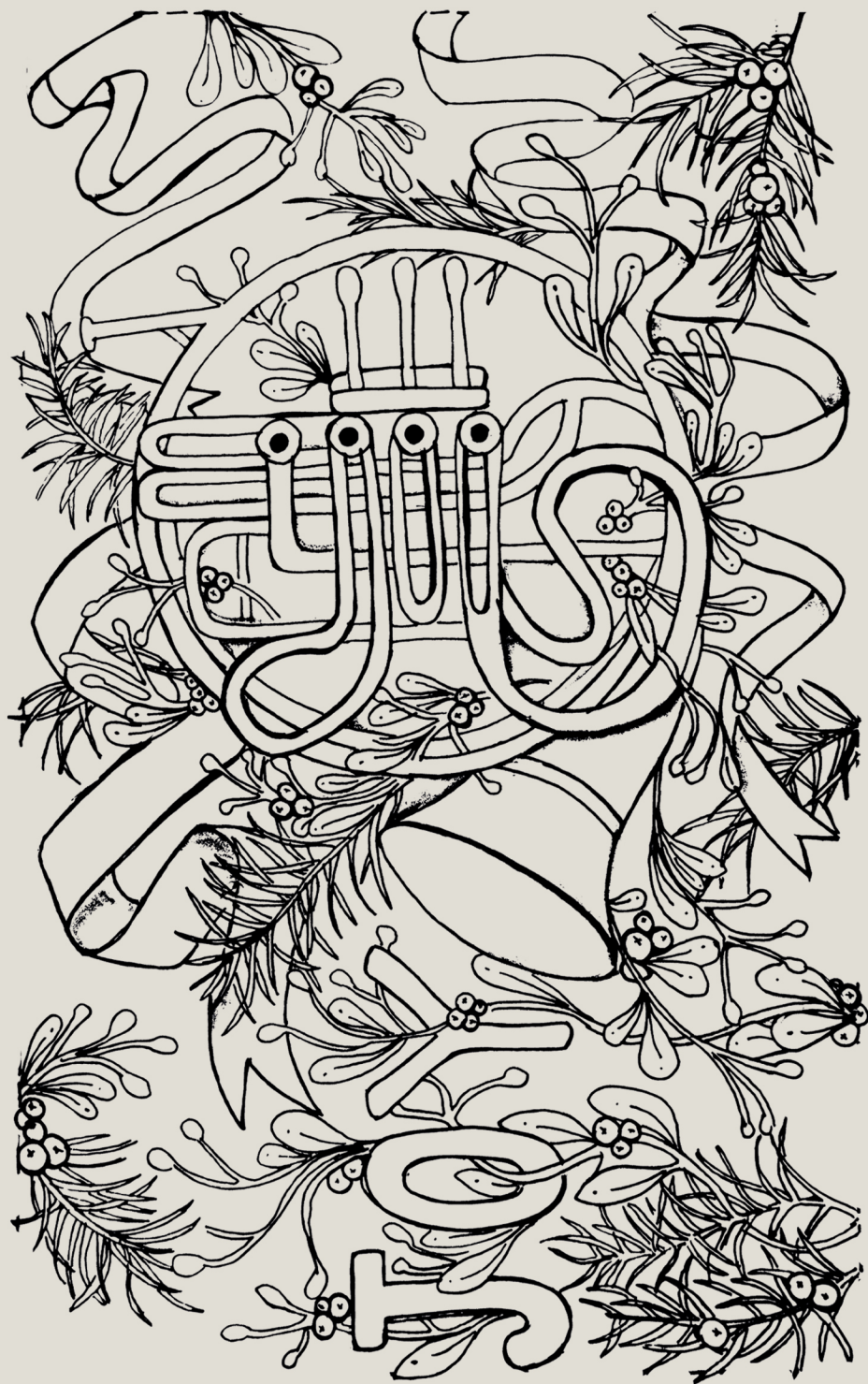
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# DAY 16

Amber & John Cecere  
Facilities Director  
& Spouse

## *Joy in Every Circumstance*

*<sup>2</sup> Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup> And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.*

James 1:2-4

**T**his time of year, the word joy is everywhere. We see it on ornaments, Christmas cards, and home decor— a cheerful, three-letter word we often associate with the holiday season. For followers of Christ, joy is far more than a festive decoration or a seasonal slogan.

Joy is one of the clearest marks of a life set apart by Christ. It doesn't come from perfect circumstances or cheerful traditions. It comes from the presence of Jesus within us. The world is watching us, often more than we realize, and our response to life's challenges can be a powerful testimony.

James 1:2-4 reminds us to “*consider it pure joy... whenever you face trials of many kinds.*” James isn't asking us to ignore pain or pretend to be happy. He's pointing us to a deeper relationship with our Savior—one that flows from trusting God's purpose in every circumstance. Trials, rather than stealing our joy, can become tools God uses to shape our maturity and deepen our faith.

This Advent season, let's choose joy! Not just in celebration, but in the midst of struggle. As we live, work, and play with those who may not know Jesus, may our joy point them to the One who gives it.

Instead of being overwhelmed by difficulty, let's view our hardships through God's eternal lens. In doing so, we grow in spiritual maturity and reflect the true joy of Christmas.

*Where in your life do you need to choose joy over frustration or fear? How might your response to hardship be a light to someone else?*

**Worship Song:**  
**"Can't Steal My Joy" - Josiah Queen**

*Lord, help me to find joy not in my circumstances, but in You. Use every trial to shape me, and let my life reflect the joy of Christ this season. Amen.*

# DAY 17

Bob Perry  
CPCC Member

## Strength in Joy

<sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, “Go and eat what is rich, drink what is sweet, and send portions to those who have nothing prepared, since today is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, because the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10 (CSB)

**L**ike many biblical concepts, JOY is something our contemporary culture has redefined to the point of corruption. The world thinks of joy as a momentary emotional high we get when we feel good about ourselves because things are going our way. But biblical JOY is not a feeling, and it should not be temporary. It is an eternal mindset centered on the blessings we receive from God, regardless of our circumstances. Biblical JOY is a way of life that recognizes the goodness of God in everything, whether we like what’s going on in the moment or not.

In this passage, the Israelites are grieving because they recognize how completely they have rejected God’s Law. But Nehemiah encourages them to take the long view— to focus on the future that awaits them as they rebuild the Temple in the land God had promised them centuries before. His exhortation is to acknowledge the eternal goodness of God and not be distracted by the awareness of their temporary failures.

Likewise, Advent encourages us to focus on the coming arrival of the Messiah. Knowing that his eternal promise was to release mankind from the temporary burden of the Jewish Law should compel us to be “joyful always” (1Thessalonians 5:16), and to rest in the unimaginable power of that mindset, no matter what is happening around us.



*For the next week, search the Scripture each day to find a passage that talks about biblical joy. Reflect on the passage throughout the day, reminding yourself to have a grateful mindset about the goodness of God, no matter what happens during the day. Try to create a new habit that reinforces that kind of attitude so that it continues long after Advent is over.*

**Worship Song:**

*“Joy to the World” – Isaac Watts (Lyrics), Lowell Mason (Music)*

*Lord God, You assured us that we would face trouble in this world, but You encouraged us to “take heart, because you have overcome the world.” Help me to always remember to have a joyful mindset that never loses sight of that truth. Help me to think eternally, not circumstantially. When the world expects complaining and negativity, help me to display joy instead. Let my joy be authentic, not forced, and make it infectious to everyone around me. I pray for a grateful heart and a joyful attitude that always lets others see You through me.*

# DAY 18

Scott Heid  
CPCC Elder

## Choosing Joy

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

Philippians 4:4

Joy—not happiness, but joy—can feel impossible in a world full of heartache. The Apostle Paul wrote these words—“Rejoice in the Lord always”—while imprisoned. His circumstances were anything but joyful, yet he chose joy. Not a fleeting feeling, but a deep-rooted response to the unchanging goodness of God. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow knew something of the tension between joy and heartache. After losing his wife in a tragic fire and his son being gravely wounded in the Civil War, he penned the poem that became *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*. In it, he writes, “In despair I bowed my head; ‘There is no peace on earth,’ I said.”

His sorrow is palpable. Yet the poem doesn’t end there. He continues, “Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: ‘God is not dead, nor doth He sleep.’” Longfellow, like Paul, made a choice—to trust that God’s presence was greater than his pain. Though it felt like God was missing, He was always there. Advent reminds us that joy isn’t found in perfect conditions but in a perfect Savior. We rejoice not because life is easy, but because Emmanuel—God with us—has come. Like those bells that rang out in Longfellow’s poem, the truth of Christ’s coming breaks through our darkest moments. In Christ, we have the unshakable assurance that choosing joy is always possible, even in sorrow.



*Today, pause and reflect on one reason you can rejoice in the Lord, regardless of your circumstances. Write it down and thank Him for it.*

*Worship Song:  
“It Is Well” by Bethel Music*

*Lord, help me to choose joy—not because everything is perfect, but because You are present. Remind me that even in sorrow, You are my reason to rejoice. Amen.*

# DAY 19

Riley Latham  
Students Worship  
Coordinator

## Contagious Joy

*“<sup>2</sup> Then our mouths were filled with laughter, and our tongues with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them.’ <sup>3</sup> The Lord had done great things for us; we were joyful.”*

Psalm 126:2–3 (CSB)

**A**dvent is a season of hope—but it’s also a season of joy. True joy, however, is not found in perfect circumstances or fleeting feelings. Joy has a way of catching people’s attention. It is contagious, undeniable, and often unexpected, especially when it shows up in seasons that once felt marked by sorrow. Psalm 126 paints a picture of that kind of joy: joy that was born out of restoration, joy that came when the people of God realized just how far He had brought them. Joy is found in the unshakable reality that God keeps His promises and moves with love and purpose in the lives of His people.

This psalm speaks to a season when everything seemed lost, and then God made a way. The people didn’t just whisper their gratitude—their mouths were filled with laughter, and their voices rang out in praise. Their joy was so powerful that even neighboring nations took notice, saying, “The Lord has done great things for them.”

We may not be returning from physical exile, but many of us know what it feels like to walk through difficult seasons—times of uncertainty & disappointment. And yet, this passage reminds us that God is in the business of turning mourning into laughter, of transforming what feels broken into something beautiful.

We live between two Advents, between Christ’s first coming in Bethlehem and His return. And just like the people of Israel, we

remember the great things God has done while longing for what is yet to come. In the waiting, we choose joy—not because everything is perfect, but because God is faithful.

As you walk through this Advent season, let joy rise up within you, not just for what God has done, but for who He is. Let it overflow, becoming a testimony to those around you. Because just like in the psalm, your joy can declare to the world: “The Lord has done great things!”

*Take time today to write down something God has done in your life that made you rejoice. Reflect on that memory and ask God to give you fresh joy as you remember His faithfulness. If you're in a season of waiting, ask Him to help you rejoice even before the answer comes.*

**Worship Song:**

*“Graves Into Gardens” - Elevation Worship*

*Father, thank You for the joy that comes from knowing You. Thank You for the great things You've done and the even greater things You have promised. In seasons of waiting, remind me of Your past faithfulness and let it stir laughter, praise, and confident joy in my heart. Let my life declare to the world that You are good and that You always keep Your promises. Amen.*

# DAY 20

Andy & Linda Leong  
CPCC Members

## Eternal Joy

*<sup>10</sup> and the ransomed of the Lord will return  
and come to Zion with singing,  
crowned with unending joy.  
Joy and gladness will overtake them,  
and sorrow and sighing will flee.*

Isaiah 35:10 (CSB)

**J**oy. Isaiah 35:10 promises that joy is the inheritance of the redeemed. Joy that is everlasting and constant is our in Christ. During this Advent season, as we wonder at the miracle of Jesus' first coming and anticipate His second coming, may our hearts lay claim to this eternal truth.

Christ came to us the first time to give His life as a ransom for our sins. We are redeemed and will spend eternity with Jesus. What joy should fill our hearts!

However, on this side of heaven, our joy is not easily sustained. We encounter dry seasons and grow weary as we struggle with grief and sorrow. Our eyes allow us to see as through a veil now, so delight in the Lord can elude us.

But we must learn to fight for the joy that is ours. Fight to find our satisfaction in Him, for He alone is able to fulfill the deepest longings of our hearts; we were made to know and enjoy Him. For now, persistence in prayer, finding Him in Scripture, and community with fellow believers all serve as some ways to pursue joy and satisfaction in Jesus.

And one day— one glorious day— Christ will come again to gather His people in Zion. On that day we, the rescued, will no longer contend with sorrow. We will wear our joy as a crown

upon our heads, a visible reminder of our fullness in Christ and the unceasing joy we will experience forevermore.

*In what ways can you pursue delight in Jesus? How does the anticipation of our future eternal joy give you hope to persevere in your life today?*

**Worship Song:**

*“Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee” - Reawaken Hymns*

*O Father, may we, the redeemed, remember Your birth as a gift that we did not deserve. May we remember Your sacrifice for us and may this lead us to worship and adore You. For You alone are the lover of our souls. We ask that You help us find satisfaction in You. Let the things of this world grow dim as we pursue joy in You. Come, Lord Jesus, come!*



# DAY 21

Stephanie Herald  
Director of CP  
Unlimited

## *Abiding Joy*

<sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

John 15:9-11 (ESV)

**I**n a season full of “holiday cheer,” the world seems to offer unending promises of joy. Simply buy this gift, decorate your home just right, make traditions and memories, and don’t forget all the school activities! Of course, these things are beautiful and they do bring joy for a moment, but what happens when the season is over? Or when you run out of time or your energy is depleted? What happens when the promises of the world fall flat and joy is the farthest thing from your experience? Is abiding joy even possible?

The word abide is not so common in our day-to-day vernacular. It is made up of the prefix “a-,” which means “onward” and the verb “bide,” which means “to remain or stay.” So how, in this world of emotional highs and lows, do we continue onward with joy that remains? Jesus doesn’t keep it a secret — the answer is to abide in His love. These words of Jesus from John 15 were surely echoing in his disciples’ minds when they found themselves alone after his death, and again after his ascension into Heaven. Jesus promises us joy but it is not from worldly offerings. Rather, it is from staying in communion and relationship with Him. And this is great news! It’s not about striving, it’s not about buying, it’s not about doing “all the things.” It is about staying and remaining in His love — there is where true joy is found!

This love (and joy!) is like nothing you can experience in our world. This love that is being poured out on you is the very same love that God the Father has poured out on His Son. We are being loved to life, and joy is our inheritance.

*Today, find a time to sit in silence and let this truth of God's love wash over you. Set a timer for two, five, or ten minutes and open your heart to receive the love the Father is pouring out on you*

*Worship Song:  
"What Joy is Found" - Jeremy Riddle*

*Father, thank You for the promise of abiding joy. Thank You for sharing exactly what it takes — not keeping it a secret or requiring anything of us other than staying in relationship with You. Take us to new depths of understanding Your love for us —the same love You have for your Son —and help us to abide in that love and experience Your joy today.*

A detailed line drawing of an olive branch with many small leaves and several olives, running vertically along the left side of the page.

“FOR GOD LOVE THE WORLD IN  
THIS WAY: HE GAVE HIS ONE  
AND ONLY SON, SO THAT  
EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN  
HIM WILL NOT PERISH BUT  
HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. FOR GOD  
DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO  
THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE  
WORLD, BUT TO SAVE THE  
WORLD THROUGH HIM.”

JOHN 3:16-17(CSB)



# Love

*Never stopping, never-giving-up, unbreaking,  
always and forever love*

ἀγάπη (agapē)

# 04

Week

# DAY 22

Bryan Shelley  
Team & Teaching  
Pastor

## *Love Came Down*

<sup>16</sup> For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3:16-17 (CSB)

**A**t the core of our being is this desire to be loved and accepted. It exists in all of us and is intentionally wired into us by our Creator. But we tend to look for it in all the wrong places. When we seek love, we tend to focus on things that have earthly appeal. What that leads to is attachment to frauds—things that provide temporary satisfaction, love, and acceptance. The enemy has a vast array of tools and objects he dangles in front of us, attempting to sway us from the only true thing that can offer us complete satisfaction.

For some of us, it is influence, position, authority, etc—you name it! It's where you find yourself shifting focus from things that are eternal to things that are temporary. And the enemy is so good at it. He is efficient at enticing and persuading. And it works! But it is only temporary. It only lasts for a moment, but in the light of eternity, you have to ask yourself: "is it worth it?"

We messed things up. The story goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden, where, in a pursuit of worthiness, mankind bent to the temptations of this world in exchange for something so temporary. We face the same battle today. This world is fighting for our attention and affection. But God has something in store for us that doesn't just fix the temporary but fulfills the eternal.



So the question is: do you want temporary satisfaction or complete and eternal fulfillment? He gives us the greatest gift that any of us can receive. Jesus fulfills every need we have! When we want more, we realize we have all we need in Jesus! He is the One who fills every need and desire. The world cannot offer the love and acceptance we have in Christ. May we realize the only gift we truly need is the gift God gives us— His Son, Jesus Christ.

*Where do you tend to seek temporary satisfaction and fulfillment? How are those areas falsely supplying a temporary fix? What can you do to fixate on Jesus and realize He is the One who can not only fill those desires here on earth but also fill them eternally?*

*Worship Song:  
“Forever Reign” - Kristian Stanfill*

*God, thank You for giving me everything I need in Your Son Jesus. May every gap I seek to fill be found in Him. When I misplace my hope in things that are earthly and temporary, remind me of the hope that I have in Jesus—hat He not only fills that gap in eternity, but He also fulfills every need that I have here on Earth as well. Remind me that the love and acceptance that I crave so deeply, came down in the form of a baby— God's only Son, who was a gift and sacrifice for me.*

# Reflections



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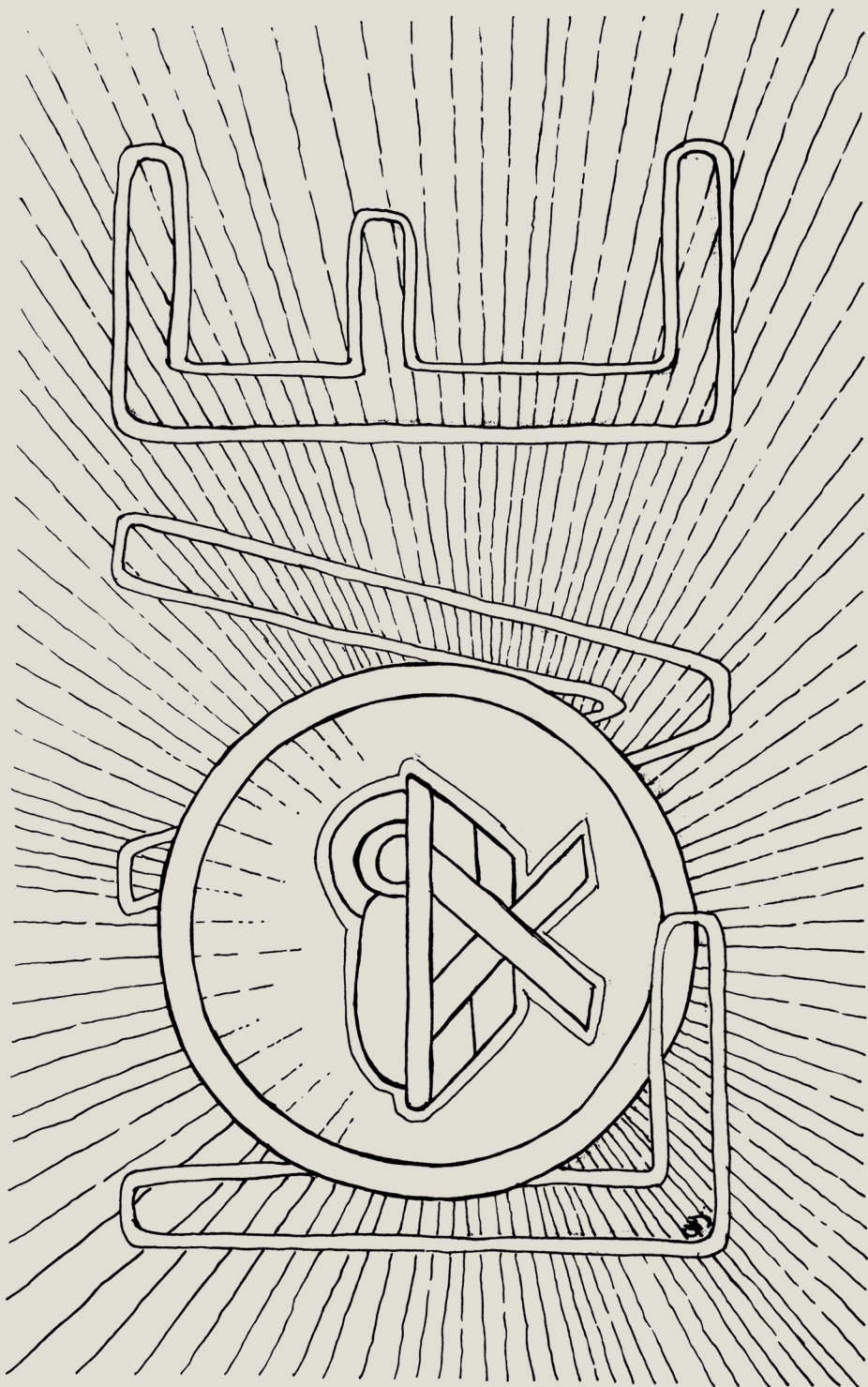
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# DAY 23

Denny Bogard  
CPCC Elder

## *Sacrificial Love*

“But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

**T**here is a love so deep, so unearned, that it defies human logic. Romans 5:8 captures this divine love with stunning clarity. Christ didn’t wait for us to clean up our act, to be “good enough.” He didn’t demand that we become worthy first. While we were still in rebellion, still running from Him, He gave His life for us.

That’s sacrificial love. Agape love.

Too often, we say the word love so flippantly. But God’s love was shown at great cost, offered without any guarantee we’d return it. His sacrifice wasn’t a calculated trade— it was pure, undeserved grace.

Take a moment and reflect: Do you love like that? Or do you often love with conditions, expecting appreciation, reciprocation, or change? Are there people in your life from whom you withhold love or grace because they “don’t deserve it”?

God’s love invites us not only to receive it but to reflect it. To lay down pride, convenience, or comfort in order to love the way Christ loves us. That may mean forgiving someone who hasn’t apologized, serving someone who won’t thank you, or loving someone who seems unlovable.

Have you ever struggled to love the unlovable? I remember as a youth leader, I heard a coach remind us that even the most challenging student was created in the image of God and has the

capacity to know Him as their Savior. What a great reminder for those times when we get stuck in our own heads and forget to lead with love.

*Today, let Christ's sacrifice be your mirror. Look into it. Ask honestly: What does it reveal about how I love? Now, let it also be your model for how to love more deeply, more freely, and more sacrificially. Think of someone you have been withholding love from and engage with them this week. Lead with love.*

**Worship Song:**  
**"Reckless Love" – Cory Asbury**

*Father God, we just want to stop for a minute and thank You. Thank You for loving me, despite me. Thank You for showing us how we should love others. Father, please show me today those opportunities to love sacrificially. Give me insights into my own failures to love those around me the way I should, and supply me the courage to correct that. Father, in those times I try to make it about me, guide me out of that pit. Show me Your ways, Lord, to love those that You sacrificed everything for. Thank You for Your agape love.*



# DAY 24

Karen Reed  
CP Kids Content  
Coordinator

## Love in Action

*<sup>16</sup> This is how we have come to know love: He laid down his life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> If anyone has this world's goods and sees a fellow believer in need but withholds compassion from him—how does God's love reside in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth.*

*1 John 3:16-18 (CSB)*

**G**od's compassion for us led to the greatest act of LOVE the world has ever seen. He responded to our need for a Savior and sent Jesus to rescue us. Jesus' great love for us was demonstrated by the way He lived His life and the reason He gave His life — to save us.

We reflect God's love when we care about people and live out love in ways that show others they matter. But where do we start?

Each year, the Advent season is filled with the busyness of traditions and celebrations. It may seem as though our calendar is too full to consider how we may add one more thing to it. And yet, surrounding each calendar event, there are people all around us who are loved by God and are desperate to know and experience His love.

Consider what you have to help others in need. It could be expressing an encouraging word or extending the compassion of a listening ear to someone battling anxiety or depression. It might mean a gift of money or other resources to bless someone who lost their job or is facing a major expense. Perhaps it's an

invitation to join your inner circle for a meal and companionship for someone suffering from isolation and loneliness. You offer your best worship to God when you give of yourself to love others. In this act of worship, God is the Way Maker who shines a light in the darkness. His presence is with you and brightens the world around you.

*You can't help others until you see their needs. The next meal you share with family or friends today, talk about the needs you see around you. It may be people in your community who are hungry or need a place to stay, or it could be someone in your neighborhood, school, or church who is going through a hard time and needs some extra support. As you share the needs you see, talk about what your family or friend group might be able to do to help. What do you have as a collective group that could help someone else? If you bring your resources together, you will likely find there's a lot you can use to help others!*

**Worship Song:**  
"Waymaker" – Leeland

*Father, thank You for loving me unconditionally. Thank You for the best act of love ever given when you sent us Your son, Jesus. When I am hesitant to put my love for others into action, would You work in my heart to love like You do? Stir compassion within me to see the people around me the way You see them. Help me see their burden and grow a desire in my heart to offer my time, talent, and resources to show them Your love.*

# DAY 25

Nicole Snelling  
CP Adults  
Grow Coordinator

## *The Greatest Love*

*<sup>9</sup> God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in[c] us and his love is made complete in us.*

*I John 4:9-12 (CSB)*

**O**n the eve of a promise fulfilled, we remember GOD IS LOVE. The Greatest Love, that which is given away. In the alchemy of this Love, consists no need for our effort to love to be loved. Only rest in the truth that God loved and gave.

A love that overwhelms and satisfies. It takes the lead of our sin and transforms it by the sending, the given-awayness of the Son, into gold. A pure gold that remains only when it is not hoarded and hidden, but given away. Sin, the terrible and hungry monster found within, dissolves to reveal that we are image bearers of the Living God. This is God's great alchemy of love.

God moves not as we think He ought. What power is this? A weak, vulnerable baby—the Greatest Love at first look—disappointing, the worst good news. What power is this? A dying, crucified King. We look, but will we perceive?

This Christmas Eve, perceive a love that is revealed and remains when given away. A love that is not our own, to control and hand off to whom we deem worthy. “Beloved, let us love one another.” We live through Christ, and therefore are made complete when

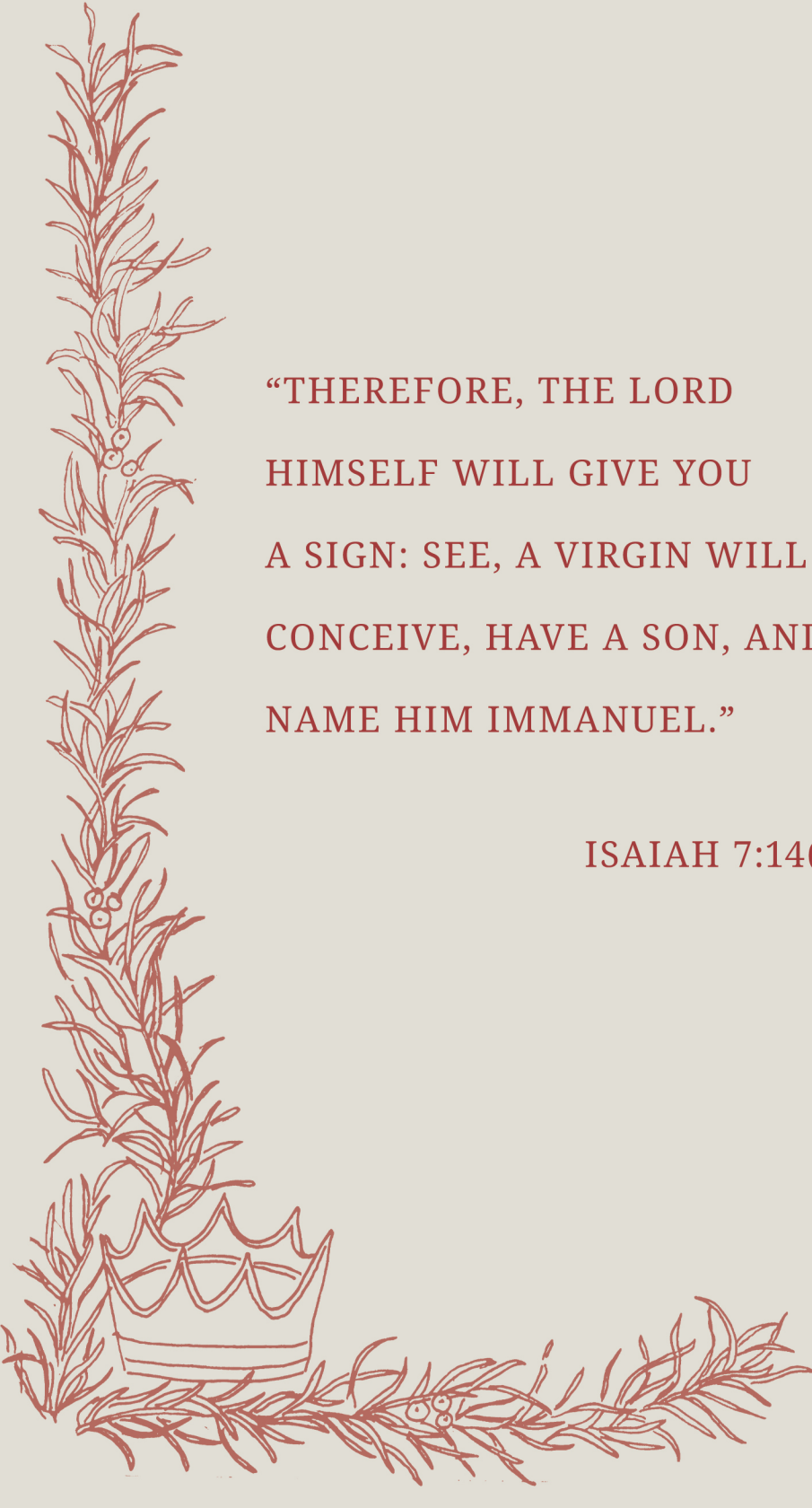
we choose to sacrifice, to give that which was given: Love.

*Tonight, look in the mirror and see the face that looks back. Try not to see the “me” but the “we” for whom God gave the Son, that “we” might live through Him. Can you see? The revealed Love of God dwells there. Remember, it is revealed in the giving away—love that has already atoned therefore can be freely given and freely received.*

**Song:**

*“One Thing Remains (Your Love Never Fails)” - Jeremy Riddle  
“Noel (Live)” - Chris Tomlin ft. Lauren Daigle*

*Lord, we know not what to look for. We seek overpowering empires when You offer a kingdom of a baby born in darkness and obscurity. Align our hearts with Yours: God who is love. Help our faith to consist in the truth that a life best lived is a love given away. Amen.*



“THEREFORE, THE LORD  
HIMSELF WILL GIVE YOU  
A SIGN: SEE, A VIRGIN WILL  
CONCEIVE, HAVE A SON, AND  
NAME HIM IMMANUEL.”

ISAIAH 7:14(CSB)



# *Immanuel: God with us*

עִמָּנוּאֵל (Immanuel)



# DAY 26

Shawn Spradling  
Lead Pastor

## Christmas

<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people; <sup>11</sup> Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.”

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

<sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and peace on earth to people he favors!

Luke 2:10-14 (CSB)

**M**erry Christmas Center Pointe family! Today, we celebrate the breathtaking truth that God came near. John captures it in one powerful sentence: “*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14). I’ve always appreciated Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of this verse. He said, “The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood.” I love that! The Creator of the Universe stepped onto our street. He lives on our lane. He’s the King of our cul-de-sac. He’s that close!

God didn’t remain distant. He wrapped Himself in flesh and entered into our world. He walked among us, laughed with us, wept with us, and ultimately suffered for us. This is what the name, Emmanuel, means—God with us. In all of life.

Luke’s account of the Christmas story reminds us that this miracle unfolded in the most unexpected way. Not in a palace, but in a manger. Jesus exchanged His crown for a cradle and His robe for rags. His birth announcement wasn’t sent to kings or nobles, but to a group of blue-collar shepherds watching their sheep in nearby fields. They were among the lowest class in

society, and an angel appeared to them with a message, “I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10).

Shepherds, who weren’t permitted to worship in the Temple, were invited to the manger. There’s a message within that message. Emmanuel is not just for the powerful or the polished. He is for the overlooked, the ordinary, the lowly, and the ‘not-good-enoughs’. If royalty had been the first to be invited, you and I would wonder if we would ever be welcome. But the fact that it was given to shepherds means all are welcome. It really is for all people.

Christmas is not just a story of “once upon a time in a land far away.” It’s the story of what God is doing right now in the world...and in your world. The God who came near in Bethlehem still comes near to us now. In Jesus, God is with us in our struggles, with us in our waiting, with us in our joys, with us in our sorrows. He is not distant or aloof. He is near and present in every season of our life. So, when you feel weak, Emmanuel is your strength because He’s near. When you feel uncertain, Emmanuel is your confidence because He’s close. When you feel alone, Emmanuel is your companion because He’s always with you.

This is the wonder of Christmas: God didn’t shout from heaven; He whispered from a manger. He didn’t send an ambassador; He came Himself. Emmanuel—God with us. It really was good news of great joy. And it still is.

- *Where do you most need to experience the presence of God this Christmas?*
- *Who in your life needs you to reflect Emmanuel to them?*
- *How might your celebrations today be different if you remembered that God has “moved into the neighborhood”?*

**Song:**

*“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”, “O Little Town of Bethlehem”, “Joy to the World”, “Go Tell it on the Mountain”*

*Father, thank You for the gift of Your presence. Thank You for humbling Yourself, for entering our world, for coming not just to live among us but to save us. This Christmas Day, help us slow down long enough to marvel at Emmanuel. May we, like the shepherds, be filled with joy and eager to share the good news where we live, work, and play. And may our lives repeat the sounding joy that You are God with us. Amen.*

# Reflections



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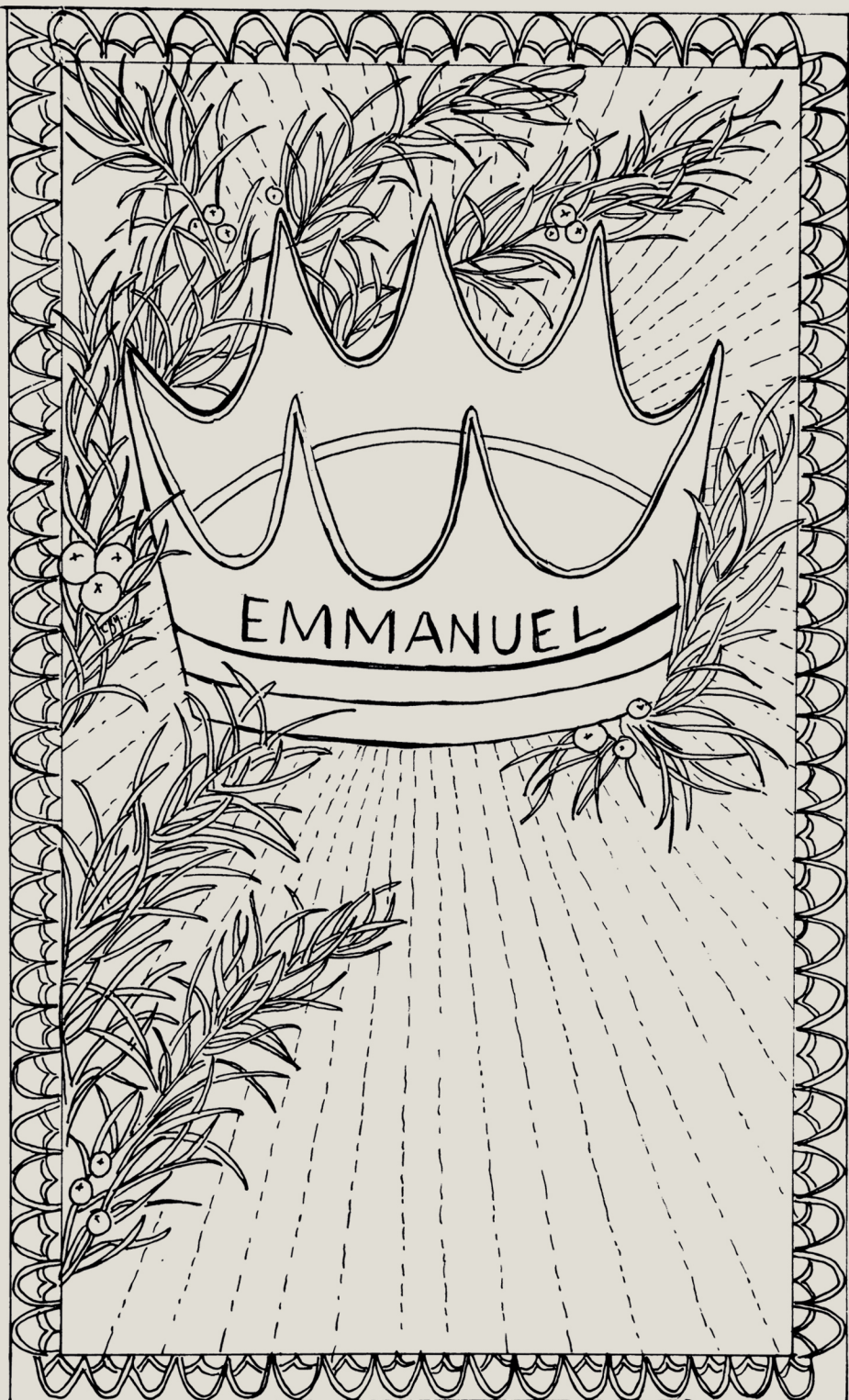
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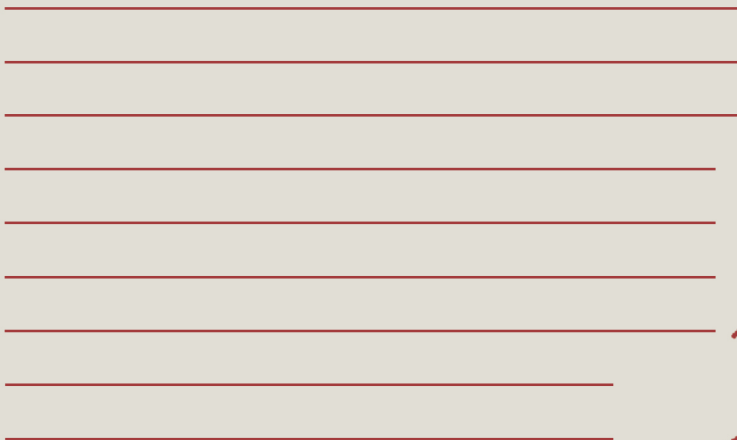
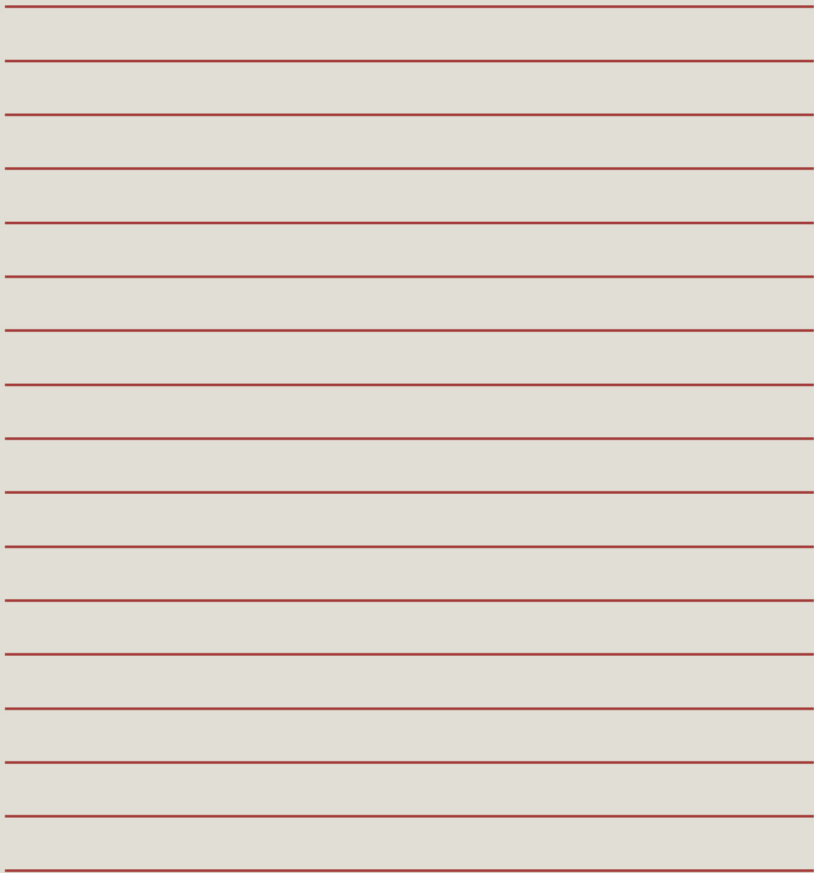
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# Reflections



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