

# First Presbyterian Church

Goldsboro, NC

## Advent Devotional



2022

This 2022 *Advent Devotional* is dedicated  
to the glory of God  
and  
in grateful and loving honor of



Nona Andrews  
Church Administrator

1996-2001

2012-2023

at her retirement

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”

Ecclesiastes 12:1a (KJV)

Nona, a “good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21) of the Lord and  
this church, has cherished this Scripture since childhood.

### Having Faith

*Let it be to me according to your word.* Luke 1:38 (NKJV)

The Christmas story came to be because some ordinary people showed extraordinary amounts of faith.

Mary was God's chosen vessel to bring our Savior into the world. After the angel spoke with Mary about having a baby boy who would be the Son of God, she was confused. She was young, a virgin, and engaged to be married. Doing as God wished would interrupt her whole life. Soon after, though, her great faith allowed her to put aside her misgivings and put her life in God's hands. She told the angel, "Let it be to me according to your Word" (Luke 1:38). Accepting the path that God chose for her caused her to be scorned as an immoral woman. And, after riding into town on a donkey while pregnant, she gave birth surrounded by dirty and smelly animals.

Joseph also showed an amazing display of faith. Joseph heard of Mary's pregnancy and was going to call off the wedding. After the angel visited him in his sleep offering assurance and peace, he chose to believe. He took Mary as his wife. He believed in Mary's virginity when no one else did. Because of his obedience and faith in God's plan, he endured criticism and danger. Despite the contempt from others, he loyally raised the Messiah as his own child.

The three magi exhibited tremendous faith by risking their lives to travel across the desert. They were persistent in their journey, and God faithfully led them to the birthplace of Jesus. The faithful magi believed that Jesus was our Savior and bowed down and worshiped Him. Then, they presented Him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The magi were warned in a dream not to return to King Herod and faithfully returned home by an alternate route.

Prayer: Dear God, please strengthen my faith and help me to put my trust in You. Help me to turn to You first. Guide me along my journey and help me to believe in Your plan. In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

*Margaret Burgess*



*Where is the Prince?* Eleanor Metzler, age 9

## Why Goodness?

*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.*

Isaiah 9:6 (ASV)

It is no secret that I am a lover of music! Don't get any ideas; I couldn't carry a tune if my life depended on it. Music just makes me happy! Something about Christmas music takes my joy to a new level during the holiday season. My favorite Christmas song is "Do You Hear What I Hear" recorded by Carrie Underwood. There is power in these lyrics that bring tears to my eyes each time I hear the song, "The child, the child sleeping in the night, He will bring us goodness and light, He will bring us goodness and light."

I love this reminder of how Jesus, the Son of God, was sent to bring us goodness. Maybe that is why it touches my heart and brings me to tears. It is more than a reminder; it is a promise. Often, I get so wrapped up in my day-to-day routine and rush of life that I forget how truly blessed I am, and this song so quickly reminds me. Our lives are just that, *good*, because God is good and gave us His only Son. How blessed are we?

Prayer: Almighty God, thank You for the gift of Your Son. We often get so wrapped up in our busy lives that we forget how wonderfully blessed we are to have been given His goodness and light. Help us to remember after the Christmas music comes to an end that You are with us every day spreading goodness and light. Amen.

*Meredith Gurley*



*Child Sleeping in the Night*

Dean Gurley, age 6

### Christmas Angels

*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God.*

Luke 1:35 (KJV)

When Mary Taneti asked me if I would write a Christmas devotional, I said yes, but I thought at the same time, “I do not like to write and what on earth would I write about?” That night after I said my prayers, it came to me: I could write a devotional about angels since I believe I have a guardian angel who protects and guides me through the year.

The next morning, I went to the computer and discovered that angels are mentioned over 300 times in the Bible beginning in Genesis right through Revelation. So for my Advent devotional, I decided to write about Christmas angels. They decorate our Christmas trees as ornaments, and every nativity scene, whether live or sitting on a table, has angels. Our daughter was in a Christmas pageant one year, and her posterboard wings, decorated with glitter, hung in our attic for years.

Many of our Christmas hymns mention angels. Whether it is “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,” “Angels We Have Heard on High,” or numerous others, we sing about angels throughout the Christmas season.

When the angel Gabriel visits Mary in the opening verse above, we get the beginning of the Christmas story and Jesus’s birth. In Matthew 1:20-21, an angel appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him to trust Mary because her child is of the Lord and to name him Jesus. After Jesus is born, an angel of the Lord shines bright and tells the shepherds where to find the baby Jesus.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, each time we see an angel or sing about angels this Christmas season, let us be reminded of Jesus’s birth. In Jesus’s name, Amen.

*Emily York*



*Angels We Have Heard on High* Brenda Behr

No Christmas Tree in the Manger Scene

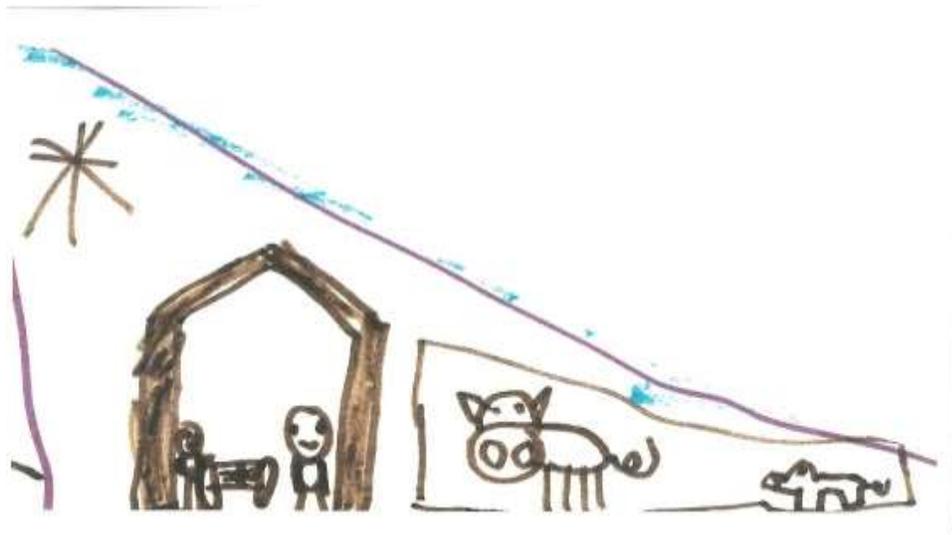
*When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. Matthew 2:10-11 (RSV)*

A Sunday School student asked if people had Christmas trees back when Christ was born. When the teacher told her they did not, the little girl asked why we have them now, and the teacher told her own version of what a Christmas tree is.

1. The tree is an “evergreen” and represents the eternal life that we have through Christ.
2. The star on the top represents the announcement of Christ’s birth.
3. The lights represent Christians who are spreading the gospel, the story of the Light of the world.
4. The ornaments represent others who see Christ’s light through us.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, we come to You with thankful hearts for Your sending Your Son. Without Jesus, the world would be lost. We will let our light shine so that others can see the way. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

*Bill and Sharon Stanley*



*At the Manger*

James Spicer IV, age 8

Dome of Destiny—Cradle of Prophecy

*In these days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. And everyone went to his own town to register.* Luke 2:1-3 (NIV)

Into a clear, cold wintry night laden with myriad stars, tiny feet clad in Buster Brown shoes emerged from the floorboard bed of a 1952 baby blue Dodge. Heightened senses recorded for childhood safekeeping the pungent perfume of pine trees towering above and the deep southern sand of the road. Crisp air inundated with woodsmoke from Granddaddy's wood stove welcomed a family gathering to celebrate the birth of a child from long ago.

Into a similar clear, cold wintry night, a weary young mother's sandal-clad feet touched the cold hard earth under a starry dome of destiny. Welcomed sincerely, though there was no family room in which to stay, these feet were led to the stable area, warmed by the presence of the Creator's beasts and fowl. Here the cradle of prophecy was filled with the promise God had declared for the salvation of man--the birth of His own Son, Jesus the Christ.

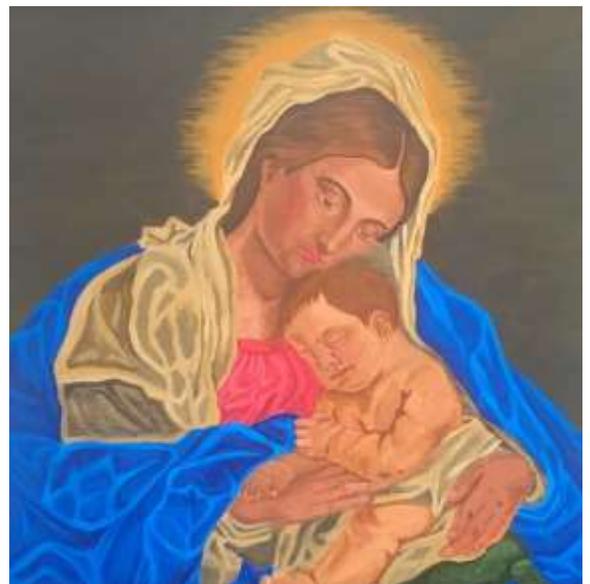
*Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*

*Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.*

*The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, just as they had been told.* Luke 2:11, 15, 20 (NIV)

Prayer: Almighty God, Father of all, from Whom come pure truth, endless joy, and quiet peace, grant Your blessings on this present humankind in its entirety that ALL may see, hear, and accept Your eternal love, Our Lord and Savior. Amen.

*Linda Stevens*



*Madonna and Child* Vismitha Taneti

Bless the Work of Our Hands

*Let your work be manifest to your servants, And your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us. And prosper for us the work of our hands—O prosper the work of our hands.*  
Psalm 90:16-17 (NRSV)

Anticipation of great hope, joy, and peace approaches in the Advent Season. We have much to be grateful for and many reasons to praise God at FPC. We have a history of outreach to our community and in foreign missions. We had a long period of interim leadership, but programs continued to operate, and our doors were open for worship on Sunday morning. Our standing committees continued working, and our church office was open to serve members. We are grateful for a loyal and faithful staff.

We have had past years with greater membership. However, we have always been blessed with capable, dedicated, and hardworking members.

We are now blessed with the presence of a full-time pastor in Dr. Noé Juárez, his wife Laurie, and their family. Dr. Juárez has a vision in Christ of what our church could be in service to the community. We have continued to add new members since his arrival. Surely the Holy Spirit stirs in our midst.

Perhaps even greater days of glorifying God and reflecting his Spirit are not behind us but are here now and will grow into the future.

Prayer: For the wonder, promise, and great hope of Advent which is ours, we give praise and glory to our Father. Bestow Your favor upon us and bless the work of our hands. Amen.



*Praying Hands* Cara Haithcock, age 11

*Tim Haithcock*



*Hope, Joy, and Peace* Chris Watkins

### Not Just a Christmas Figurine

*So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.*

Luke 2:16 (NIV)

Every year, after the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, we put our nativity set away in a “safe” place. Over the years, our safe place has changed many times. This has caused confusion and panic to ensue when we could not remember the latest safe spot when it was time to display it the next Christmas season. Fortunately, we have rediscovered it every year except for one—the year we refinished the hardwoods in the den. The house was topsy turvy with nothing seeming to be in the right place (literally)!

Often, we as Christians tuck our Savior away in our safe spot amidst the clutter and distractions of our daily lives. There Christ sits, safely tucked away until we need Him. Christ is boxed up and put in that safe place like the nativity set. Unfortunately, confusion and panic occur when our need arises for our Savior in our lives. We frantically look for Him amongst our clutter. We know He is there; now we must find Him. He never went from us. We are the ones that put Him away.

God sent His Son so that His light could shine in our lives each day of the year, not just during the Christmas season and other religious seasons. He wants to be there for us in our daily lives and not stuffed behind the decorations of the season. He is so much more than just a figurine to be brought out once a year.

Prayer: Dear Lord, as this joyous Christmas season comes upon us, may we be reminded to stop and reflect on the true meaning. It is Your gift of Jesus Christ, His birth, His life, His death, and above all, His resurrection, that gave us eternal life and salvation. Amen

*Lisa and Bill Royall*



*The Gift* Robin Wilson

Stars of the Christmas Tree

*After listening to the king, they went their way. And behold, the star they had seen in the east went on before them, until it came to rest over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great gladness.* Matthew 2: 9-10 (NIV)

My favorite part about this time of the year is setting up the Christmas tree: taking down the box that holds our tree, putting together each section, spreading apart each branch, purposefully placing each ornament in its designated spot. The finale is the best part: plugging in the lights and watching the whole tree come alive.

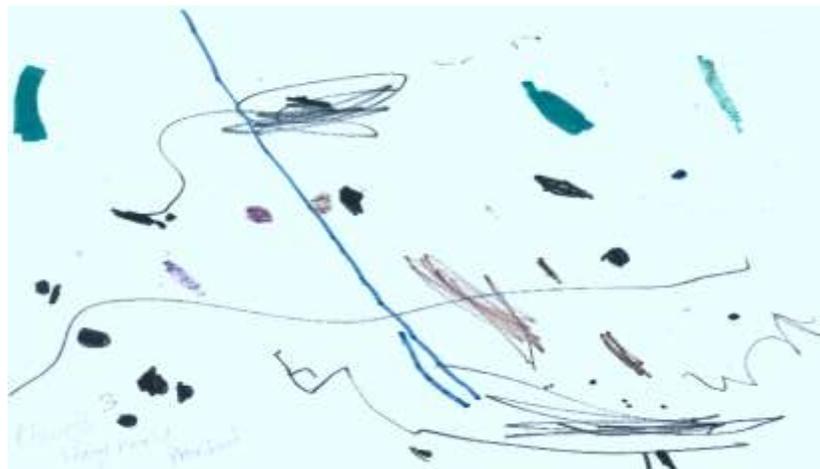
When I was little, I would plug in the lights at random times throughout the days leading up to Christmas. I lay on the floor under all the branches that I had helped my mother fluff out. I stayed there for what felt like hours watching the lights.

I think that might have been what it was like on the night Jesus was born: the baby lying in the manger, the animals lying on the hay, the shepherds lying in the fields outside Bethlehem. Above all of them were the stars, a million lights, one brighter than the rest of them.

While lying down and watching the lights under my Christmas tree, I felt at peace. I felt peace within myself, and peace surrounded me. This year, go and lie under your Christmas tree. Plug in the lights, and while lying there, take a moment to yourself. Watch the stars of the Christmas tree.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the Light You have given us. Sometimes we feel anxious, confused, and helpless. Other times we feel angry, hopeless, and lost. Calm the storms in our minds and hearts. As You are the Lord who makes the wind and the waves stand still, You instill peace in our lives and in ourselves, and we thank You for that peace. In Your Son's name, we pray, Amen.

*Vismitha Taneti*



*A Starry Night*

Charlotte King, age 4

## Get Ready!

*And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins. Because of the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

Luke 1: 76-79 (NRSV updated version)

Suggested Reading: Luke 1:67-80

John the Baptist helped *prepare the way* for Jesus. That is what the Advent season is all about—*preparing*. We ourselves are being prepared for the coming of baby Jesus in *many* different ways.

When I was little, we had an Advent calendar that my grandmother made. We'd turn over a figure from the Nativity every day of December to help prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas. It built up the anticipation and hope that come with our Savior. I've used the same calendar with my children every year since they were born. I look forward to getting it out every year as it reminds me that Jesus is on His way.

I'm sure we all do things that prepare us for baby Jesus. It's getting close—are you ready? Have you prepared yourself? How? Perhaps you've been lighting the candles on an Advent wreath, perhaps you've been reading the daily devotionals, or maybe you've made Christmas cookies! We all prepare ourselves in different ways.

A social media friend shared that when she was young, she felt that anticipation and joy of Christmas when the family went out to get their Christmas tree together. My daughter Ella (14) said she starts *feeling* Christmas when Christmas music starts playing on the radio. Paul, my son (16), said the Christmas season for him begins with putting up the decorations and our tree. Noé remembers enjoying *Panetón* and hot chocolate with his community to prepare for the Christmas season.

However you have been preparing yourself, get ready! In a short time, our Savior, the baby Jesus, the Lamb of God, Emmanuel will be born—and you don't want to miss it!! And we don't want others to miss it! In your own joy, help spread the good news to others and *ready* them to meet baby Jesus, their Savior.

Prayer: God, just as John the Baptist helped prepare the way for Jesus, help us to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of the Lord so that we can be like John, so that we can be the one to show others and teach others about Your Son. “By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” In His name we pray, Amen.

*Laurie Juarez*

## Joy and Peace

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

Philippians 4:4-9 (NIV)

These verses from Philippians are some of my favorite verses in the Bible. They exemplify the joy and peace I feel during the Advent season. Our wonderful Advent devotional book written and produced by church members is a special gift filled with joy and peace.

My cousin Bob Bass was chairman of the Advent booklet for many years. He loved working with church members using his artistic and editing skills to make the booklets special keepsakes. While I was working at WAGES with Bob, the booklet became even more important to me. I decided to start each day with my FPC devotional booklet by going into the living room, turning on the Christmas tree lights, and spending a few minutes of quiet devotional time. This is a practice I have continued daily now for several years.

Since Bob's death, our church has continued the tradition of the FPC Advent booklet. When I was asked to write a devotion, I looked back through past booklets reading some of Bob's entries as well as those of other past and present members. I enjoyed remembering so many of "our saints who have gone before" and reading the wonderful messages in those pages. The tradition of this church booklet is a special source of joy, peace, and love for our church family. May it bless you all this Advent season.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for our many, many blessings. Thank You for our church family and our new minister Noé. Thank You for Your love and Your peace which passes all understanding. Amen.

*Brownie Doss*



*Quiet Time* Vera Mae Blackburn, age 5

Lean on the Lord This Holiday Season

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.* Matthew 11:28-39 (NIV)

The holidays are a wonderful time to spend with friends and family, but they are also extremely stressful not just for me, but for many people. We remember loved ones who have passed, worry about whether we have enough money for the perfect present, and feel pressures that come with the expectations the holidays can bring. I often find myself running out of time to bake enough cookies, decorate the tree, and keep the birth of Christ the center of Christmas.

As we prepare for Christ's arrival this holiday season, I encourage you to remember that this little baby in a manger is also your solid foundation, your rock to lean on, and your greatest confidant. We can bring our stressors to Christ, and He will provide us guidance, rest, and salvation. Our burdens are His to bear. This holiday season, I will get stressed—it's natural (especially for me, just ask Dalton!)—but I will remind myself to lean on the Lord and allow Him to grant me reprieve.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank You for sending Your only Son to Earth to walk among us and die on the cross for our sins. I pray that You grant me wisdom and peace this holiday season and help me cope with the expectations that this season brings.

*Hadley Bolles*



*Reprieve* Kim Brogden

Working While Waiting

*Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.*

Psalm 27:14 (NIV)

Some days, I feel I've spent most of my life waiting: waiting to graduate from college, waiting to get married, waiting for my children to be born, waiting for a vacation, waiting for retirement.

There are times I've waited for hard things as well: waiting to hear if I had cancer, waiting to make it through a major surgery, waiting for my dad to pass away after battling Parkinson's disease for five long years.

I believe waiting is one of God's favorite tools to draw us closer to Him. He teaches us about waiting in many of our Bible stories. Noah waited for the rain. Daniel waited through the night in a den full of lions. Paul waited in prison. Yet here's what I noticed about these "waiters"—they didn't just wait around; they worked and prayed during these times in their lives. While Noah waited for the rain, he got busy building the ark. As Daniel waited in that lion's den, he remained faithful in prayer and firm in his convictions. Paul sang and prayed while imprisoned and won over the hearts of the jailers to Christ.

Scripture teaches us there is always work to be done while we're waiting. It does us absolutely no good to sit by idly and wait for God to wave His magic wand and grant all our wishes. We must continue with the work He has set out for us to do. Sometimes it's physical work, and other times it's the practice of prayer. There are times we are to focus on our relationship with God and times we are to focus on our relationship with others. I've found when I continue to be open to God's moving in my life and follow His urgings, these waiting periods have become holy and precious to me. I am able to "be strong and take heart" as I wait for the Lord.

During this season of Advent, as we wait for Christ's birth, or perhaps, as we wait for God to answer our prayers, let us be about His business here on Earth.

Prayer: Dear God, show me where You are while I wait, and reveal what I can do to serve, love, and lead others even as I wait. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Randa Scott*



*Dove of Peace* Lily Spicer, age 10

## Living by Faith

*In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 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 room for them in the inn.*

Luke 2:1-7 (NIV)

My study Bible has commentary at the bottom of each page. Sometimes the comments really illuminate a passage. Here's part of what it says about the above verses: "Watch this quiet couple as they head to Bethlehem. God did not soften Joseph's bumpy road, but strengthened him. When we do God's will, we are not guaranteed comfort and convenience. But we are promised that everything, even discomfort and inconvenience, has meaning in God's plan. He will guide you and provide all you need. Like Joseph, live each day by faith, trusting that God is in charge."

Being a take-charge personality, I sometimes have trouble ceding control, even to the Lord. I keep thinking if I work hard enough, long enough, I can organize my little corner of the world all by myself. That doesn't work, of course. I have to trust that God is in charge.

In this very troubled world, we need the Christmas reminders that God has a plan and that He sent light into the world through Jesus. We can handle the rough times when we keep those things in mind. We still need to work long and hard to try to make the world a little better, but we have to keep in mind who is really in charge. As we celebrate the Advent and Christmas seasons, let's try to live each day by faith.

Prayer: Lord, help us to honor You by living in faith and knowing that You are in charge of our lives. Thank You for sending Jesus to be the Light of the World. We ask that You guide us and bless us as we try to do Your will. In Jesus' name, Amen.



*Chris Martin*

*On the Road* Eleanor Metzler, age 9

The Gift that Chose Us

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

“We didn’t choose Him; He chose us.” No matter how many times I hear this line, it still brings tears to my eyes. The quotation is spoken by Jacob from the Bible at the beginning of the last episode of *The Chosen*. As I have heard (for the twentieth time) the line in the episode, it has caught me in tears (again)--as if it were the first time.

With the words “We didn’t choose Him; He chose us,” God has reminded me that He has chosen us for a time such as this. Just as assignments are given to students in school, He has given us assignments to carry out. Just as we may be challenged and pushed by others to achieve things that we cannot see right now, He is doing the same. Will we struggle or be uncomfortable at times as we navigate how to proceed, what the answers are, and how to complete the assignment? YES! It is our calling to continue to press and push students to their best, not to settle. So why do we get upset when God’s assignment does the same?

I can imagine that Joseph and Mary struggled at times with the calling placed on their hearts and spirits. But great is God’s faithfulness. Just as He walked with and before the Holy Family, God does the same for each one of us today.

God has given each of us an assignment to fulfill in this current season. It’s an assignment that only you can complete. It may be challenging; it may be different; it may at times even be uncomfortable. We might not fully understand the why or even the how. But know this: God would not have given you the assignment or called you to it if He hadn’t thought you could complete it. Trust what He sees within you and follow that Christmas Star throughout the year towards your own personal Bethlehem that awaits your arrival.

Prayer: Dear Father, thank You for choosing us over and over again. Without pause, without doubt, in a heartbeat, You keep choosing us. Amen.

*Christie Stafford*



Christmas Tree Liam Jack, age 10

Sing for Joy

*Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.* Isaiah 49:13 (KJV)

Singing is my favorite part of worship. Singing Christmas music brings me special joy. The Biblical text has so much more meaning to me when it is put to music. It stays in my head and plays back to me over and over again.

The Christmas worship service this year has been such fun to prepare for. All the songs are memorable, but to me the best one is “Jesus, What a Wonderful Child.” The choir joins a soloist to celebrate the birth of a wonderful child. And celebrate we do! We can’t stand still while we sing this music. We have to move with unabashed, unapologetic abandon when we sing of the “new life, new hope, new joy He brings.”

This song is not for the frozen chosen. They may shudder in their seats for a minute, but eventually they will feel the beat and the joy. We sing “glory” eleven times at the end, and it makes us want to sing it eleven more times.

The best way to find this joy is to sing about it. Although this is an Advent devotion, not a plug for the choir, I encourage you to add your voice to ours to celebrate the miracle of Christmas and the entire church year.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to feel the “good tidings of great joy” this Christmas by singing for joy. And help us to spread that joy throughout the church, the community, and the country. Amen.

*Barbara Ann Vinson*



*Singing for Joy* Photo by Malcolm Shearin

## Repeat the Sounding Joy

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord; all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! Sing praises to the Lord with the Lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody! With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!* Psalm 98: 4-6 (RSV)

Virtually every Christmas Eve service at FPC ends with the exhilarating (and full organ!) "Joy to the World." I cannot imagine ending this service with any other song, but did you know that when Isaac Watts wrote it in 1719, he did not intend for it to be a song at all, much less a Christmas song?

Watts, an English minister and hymn writer, studied the second part of Psalm 98 and wrote "Joy to the World" as a reinterpretation of the psalm, which depicts a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The words bring joy and encourage us to join with creation ("and heaven and nature sing") in declaring the divinity of Christ and in celebrating the wonder of salvation.

When we love someone, we do not tell him or her just one time; we say it over and over again. The song's powerful refrain in verse two instructs us to "repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy." The repetition of words throughout the hymn allows singers to enthusiastically express our thanksgiving for God's gift of salvation.

What makes you joyful this holiday season? How will you "repeat the sounding joy"?

Prayer: Lord, we thank You for inspiring writers and musicians of songs that express our love and gratefulness to You for Your gift of salvation--the birth of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Joy to the World! the Lord is come; let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.  
Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns; let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*Ellen Eubanks*



*Angels and Gifts* Lola King, age 6

## The Joy of Jesus, with us Always

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."*  
 Luke 2:10 (NIV)

When I was growing up, my favorite decoration was our old nativity set. Throughout the Christmas season, I redecorated that manger several times while waiting for that joyful day. Then afterwards I would carefully box it up for the year.

My parents had a rule that on Christmas morning my sister and I could not go downstairs until after we had made our beds. It did not take many Christmases before we started sleeping in the same bed so we only had to take the time to make up one. Our excitement would be unstoppable until we reached the Christmas tree. We would be happy with whatever treats and toys we found. We thought that was joy, the joy the angel told the shepherds about. As I grew older, the less happy I was Christmas night. It was a letdown after weeks of anticipation.

My sister and I found our circumstances had changed for a few hours because of what we had received that morning. It would make me wonder how the shepherds could have been happy that night sitting with a flock of sheep in the field. All they could expect or hope for was for the sheep to still all be there in the morning. The way I see it, the shepherds, my sister, and I were all looking at our circumstances for our happiness. I didn't understand the difference between happiness and joy.

THEN THE ANGEL!! The angel went to the least likely, the shepherds. He spoke to them about a great joy, which would be Jesus. The majority of my life I was in church, but the JOY eluded me until one day, Jesus called on me, the least likely, just like the shepherds. The JOY the angel spoke of for ALL people, including a sinner like me, filled my heart forever. Now I leave our nativity set on my mantle all year to remind us that the JOY of Jesus is with us ALWAYS.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank You for loving us so much You sent us Your son and Your joy. Help us to learn the lesson of love from You, and guide us in sharing that love with all the people. Amen.

*Kathy Daniels*



*Stay by My Cradle*

Kim Brogden

## Comfort and Joy

*Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior--yes, the Messiah, the Lord--has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!"* Luke 2: 9-11 (NLT)

In my life, there are few things that warm my heart and soul more than celebrating the birth and life of our Savior by spending time with my family during the holidays. We have warm homes to gather in, food to share, and gifts to exchange.

While I am so very thankful for these things, I cannot forget that my comfort and joy come from His suffering. I am comforted by knowing that Jesus gave His life so that we may live, and I am joyful for this ultimate gift every day of the year.

Prayer: Dear Lord, we ask that You bring comfort to all this holiday season and especially to those that are hurting, those who are without a safe and cozy home, those who have lost loved ones, those that are sick, and those that are in need. Help all of us, Your children, to be loving brothers and sisters of Christ, and let us all learn the joy of knowing Jesus as our Savior. Amen.

*Amy Krutsch*



*The Manger*

Theodore Krutsch, age 6

Spreading the Light

*Arise, shine for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.*

Isaiah 60:1 (RSV)

*And in that region, there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them.*

Luke 2:8-9 (RSV)

Christmas is a time of light. It is important for us as Christians to shed light all the time, but particularly during Advent and Christmas.

Christ is the light of the world. As His followers, we should be helping to spread the light everywhere and particularly among those who are less fortunate in their circumstances and help them when we are able. Let us follow the example of Christ during this period of Advent and throughout the year.

I have always tried to celebrate Christmas with family and friends. It is important to do so and to include those who are away from their family and friends in your celebrations.

Have a light and Merry Christmas.

Prayer: Dear gracious and omnipotent Heavenly Father, please help us shed light on all. Thank You for the many blessings You have given us and let us share them with others. Continue to wrap us tightly with Your grace to protect us. Amen.

*Borden Parker*



*Friend*

Kim Brogden

## Praise the Lord and Enjoy the Music

*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 2:7 (NIV)

There was always music at my house. We listened to the radio, watched variety shows on tv, and eventually purchased 78 and 45 rpm records of our favorite songs. When I was 8 or 9 years old, radio stations would have live shows with bands and local singers performing for our listening pleasure. Listeners could call the station and make requests. Our family always wanted to hear “Rockin’ Robin” performed by a local singer named Robert Bell.

At Christmas, we enjoyed the familiar tunes made popular by Bing Crosby, Perry Como, The McGuire Sisters, and many others. Of course, our church choir always provided us with the traditional scriptural hymns that we still sing today – “Silent Night,” “What Child Is This,” “Good Christian Men Rejoice,” “Joy to the World,” and all the rest.

It would be difficult for me to pick a favorite tune, but high on the list would be a fairly contemporary tune entitled “Mary, Did You Know?” I love the melody and chords of “Mary Did You Know,” but mostly I am gripped by the spellbinding lyrics, powerful phrases such as “The child that you delivered will soon deliver you,” or the most captivating of all, “When you’ve kissed your little baby, you’ve kissed the face of God!” Wow! Just think about that. Can you picture Mary and Joseph sitting in a stable with Mary holding Baby Jesus (the incarnate God) in her arms while reflecting on all the things she has been told by God through the angel Gabriel? The song is powerful and should remind us of the full Christmas story. It’s a story that is played out every day as God’s plan for us unfolds.

Secular songs also awaken our Christmas spirits and put us in the mood for the Christmas holidays. You know the songs like “Jingle Bells,” “White Christmas,” and all the children’s songs that arouse our imagination. But it’s the spiritual, scriptural songs that remind us of what the Christmas season is all about. *Praise Ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song and his praise in the congregation of saints* (Psalm 149:1 KJV). Yes, praise the Lord, and enjoy the music of Christmas, everyone.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the music of Christmas that reminds us of the Christmas story—the story of Jesus our Lord and Savior. Fill our hearts with that story so that we may live the kind of life that Jesus taught us to live, not only at Christmas but every day. Amen.

*Malcolm Shearin*

## Treasured Traditions

*But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.*

Luke 2:19 (NIV)

Every year Curtis and I have always placed a special ornament on the tree to represent something special from that year. It could have been a wedding, a birth, or a special trip. Since Christie and Kaitlyn were born, the ornament could be a special place we loved, an activity they participated in, or even a movie or book character that they enjoyed. We have continued to carry out this tradition as we now have two grandsons.

It has been so much fun to place the ornaments on the tree and tell the story behind each ornament. Liam loves to help place the ornaments, and he can tell most of the stories as we put them up. Our favorite stories are always the ones that tell about the people we love and the things we do as a family. As the years have passed, we have many ornaments that remind us of those we love that have gone to be with the Lord. It is wonderful to reminisce and remind ourselves that we will one day be reunited.

Perhaps the most meaningful ones are those that tell the story of Jesus' birth and moments in His life. These ornaments remind us of the true meaning of Christmas and the love our Father has for us. Our hope for everyone as you celebrate this Christmas season and the traditions your family shares is that you are always reminded of the love that Jesus brought to us in His simple, humble birth.

Prayer: Dear Lord, as we celebrate the season of Your birth, may each tradition, event, and celebration remind us of You and Your unconditional love for us. Keep our focus on You and the true message of this season. Help us to take the time to reflect and enjoy each moment, and like Mary, may we treasure all that You have done for us and ponder it in our hearts. Lord, help us to live our lives according to Your word, to live in humility, and to love others as You love us. Amen.

*Curtis and Joan Stafford*



*Our Miracle* Robin Wilson

## Reflecting the Love

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*  
Matthew 6:33 (KJV)

Now that our children are grown with homes and Christmas trees of their own, I do most of our tree decorating although Fred has an opportunity (ultimatum) to hang a few ornaments each time he passes the living room.

Over the fifty-four Christmases of our marriage, I have developed a tree plan. We're an angel-on-the-top household (although a star is equally appropriate). Our particular angel at the top was a gift from a little neighbor girl in Charlotte; I've always hoped she had permission to give our baby girl that angel. Among a few stars, many other angels fly in the top third of the tree.

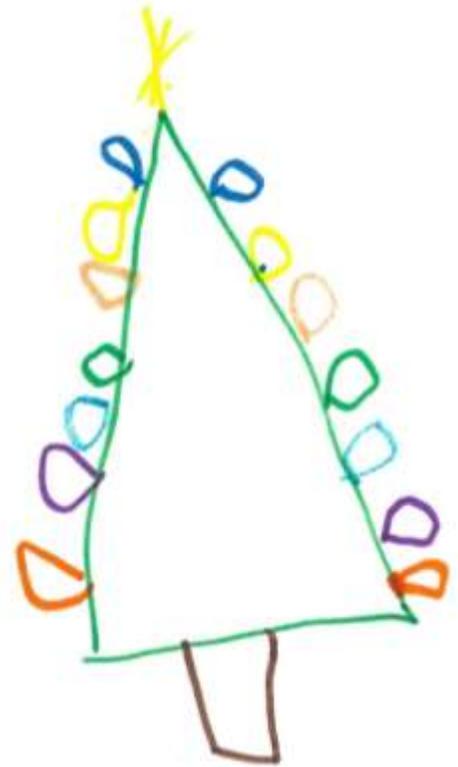
The next and main third holds nativity ornaments and Christian symbols. A beaded fish was a gift from a LOGOS child. From our pastor David and Suzanne Jenkins came several handmade ornaments like an oyster shell with a pearl, a Chrismon of the cross over the world, a tiny bundle of hay. Cross-stitched symbols in tiny frames and tin figures from Russia were gifts from choir friends. One priceless treasure looks like bubble gum: a Baby Jesus our son made in preschool.

Finally, around the lower branches go the Santas and other secular ornaments: Goldsboro commemorative pieces, little red plastic Santa boots my brother and I hung as children, a reindeer our daughter made in preschool, a colored glass house that was originally a bulb in a string of lights on my childhood tree.

On the coffee table, my childhood family Bible is open to Luke 2. Our Willow Tree nativity contrasts with the raised leaf of the mahogany console table where my parents always set an elegant Holy Family. Wise Men our son loved as a child visit a nativity on another table. Atop the antique pump organ, our first newlywed purchase, sits a nativity in greenery and twinkling lights. Red velvet Victorian sofa and red Turkish rug seem most at home now—it's Christmas! The living room is ready for the greatest Birthday.

Prayer: May our living room and our lives reflect our faith and our gratitude for God's greatest Gift, and may God's love shine through us all year. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Rosalyn Lomax*



*Christmas Tree with Ornaments* Rory Blackburn, age 7

## Treasured Memories

*But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.*

Luke 2:19 (NIV)

Memories of being a grandchild, seeing my daughters as grandchildren, and having grandchildren are loved treasures. As children, we were so excited for the arrival of Grandmommy and Granddaddy to spend Christmas with us. We were so loved by our grandparents. They brought good food, lots of laughter, and, of course, lots of attention! We always attended Christmas Eve service together and went home to spend a fun time of getting ready for Santa. My grandparents had a strong Christian faith and showed it in their everyday lives.

My parents and Wilson's parents are and were also adoring grandparents, bringing fun and craziness and showing boundless love to our daughters. Sharing their Christian faith with our children was always present. Christmas was chaotic with the Derbys and Stackhouses but was a special time of celebrating Jesus' birth together.

Now, here Wilson and I are as grandparents to Eliza Grace, John, Matilda, John, Louise, and Charlie! I know I'm prejudiced but "oh, what fun" they bring, and they really are cute (most of the time)! I pray that they will feel as loved as I felt loved by my grandparents when I was a child. I pray that they will feel the amazing love of Christ and have treasured memories.

Prayer: Precious God, we praise You and thank You for the gift of Your Son. I pray that we all will feel His love in our everyday lives. Amen.

*Susan Stackhouse*



*To Grandmother's House We Go* Peggy Till

*Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum*

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*  
I Peter 4:10 (NIV)

*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*  
James 1:17 (NIV)

Rosalyn gave little John *The Little Drummer Boy* book when he was a baby. John loved the pictures; I loved that he wanted me to sing the song to him. We rocked to sleep many nights throughout the year with that book.

One of my all-time favorite Christmas memories is a time when our family, in Christmas PJs, were listening to Christmas carols and decorating the tree. Daddy John and Matilda were engrossed in hanging ornaments, and two-year-old John was sprightly rolling his head around, robotically playing the air drum and repeatedly embracing the speaker looking as if to give the speaker without a nose an Eskimo kiss. This cavorting was to Pentatonix's "Little Drummer Boy." It was so cute that I instantly uploaded the merry dance to Instagram, so proud to share.

"The Little Drummer Boy" lyrics make you feel so good. Here they are minus one of the best parts, the *Pa Rum Pum Pum Pums*: "Come, they told me, / A newborn king to see. / Our finest gifts we bring, / to lay before the king, / /So, to honor him / when we come. / Little baby, / I am a poor boy, too. / I have no gift to bring / that's fit to give the king. / Shall I play for you / on my drum? Mary nodded. / The ox and lamb kept time. / I played my drum for him. / I played my best for him. / Then He smiled at me, / me and my drum."

The poor boy sees Jesus, the King of Kings, in the stable, dressed in swaddling clothes, and wants to share his humble gift, his talent of playing the drum. The animals love it; they are stomping their feet to the rhythm. The boy plays his best, and you know he is proud of himself! Then it gets even better: Jesus smiles at the boy. Jesus accepts the poor boy. Jesus loves the gift. Jesus loves us all!

We all have God-given talents to share, and God loves seeing us share them with others.

Prayer: Dear God, Thank You for Your Son Jesus and His teachings. Thank You for the excitement of Noe and his family's call to our church. Thank You for Chris and Mary's talents and humor. Thank You for the role models a mom like me has in the FPC women. Thank You for our church family. Help us to remember to share our gifts with others throughout the year. In Your name. Amen!



*Katherine Parker*

*God's Creature* Anna Kate Leonard, age 7

## A Christmas Blessing

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.* Luke 2:14 (KJV)

Family Reading: Luke 2:1-14 (KJV)

Ever since I can remember, our family has read the story of Jesus' birth before our Christmas night meal. I picture my grandmother's dining room: a perfectly set table, the smell of food prepared with love, candles flickering, my grandmother's hands folded and resting on the back of her chair at the head of the table as she waits for the rest of us to take our places, Bibles representative of family members no longer with us at each place setting. Nana carefully chose the Bibles and the verses each of us would read. We always recited verse 14 together as a family to end the passage.

Before the meal, I would always sneak in and open the cover of each Bible to see who got whose that year. I would read the birth and death records that were so often kept in Bibles. I would marvel at my great-grandmother Beatrice's handwriting, the thin pages of a Bible that belonged to a long-deceased aunt, and the worn leather that covered my grandfather's childhood Bible. Each Bible with the same chapters, verses, parables, and psalms told its own story, the story of its former owner's hopes and dreams, happiness and sadness, prayers and praises. What a joy it was to read the Christmas story surrounded by family, living and dead!

Nana celebrated one hundred Christmases on this earth. Her Bible was added to the table last year—a Bible that takes its rightful place among all the others, a Bible that holds the promise of a Savior born to us.

Prayer: Dear God, Thank You for Your son Jesus. Thank You for family traditions that span generations and enable us to remember and reflect on those who have been called home before us. Help us to quiet our hearts and minds during this season of Advent so we can be prepared to accept the greatest gift of all, a baby born in a manger who came to save the world. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. Amen.

*Emily Byrd*



*The Holy Family*

Beatrice Byrd, age 7

## Childhood Christmas Eves

*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. . . . And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem.* Luke 2: 1, 4 (KJV)

My fondest memories of Christmas are Christmas Eve as a child. The family would gather together and eat a wonderful meal and sing Christmas carols. I can still hear my father singing in his low, loud, boisterous voice, “We three kings of Orient are. Bearing gifts we traverse afar.” Then the best part of all—my sister Scottie and I would sneak away and prepare the living room by setting up chairs and turning off all the lights except the Christmas tree lights and candles. Mother decorated a white flocked Christmas tree in the living room with white lights and blue ornaments, to offset the multicolored lighted tree in the den. The white and blue set a very somber and peaceful mood. When we were ready, my younger sisters would escort everyone in to be seated.

We started the program by singing “Angels We Have Heard On High,” and then, after weeks of practicing, Scottie and I would recite by memory the Christmas story from the King James Version, Luke 2: 1-14. I can still remember most of it. We ended by having everyone sing “Silent Night.”

Mother and Daddy were very proud of us, and I have to say we were very proud of ourselves. (I’m sure if my mother could recount the events of Christmas Eve when she had four little girls running around the house and a husband doing everything to get us more and more excited, including peering up the chimney to make sure it was clear for Santa, her version of the evening might not be as calm and peaceful as mine.)

But beyond the praise and the boasting, we were filled with a sense of wonder. We felt what it must have felt like that beautiful night in Bethlehem. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2: 14).



*Baby Boy* Robin Wilson

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank You for giving us Your Son to show us the way. Help us to remember that even during difficult times, You are in control, and You love us unconditionally. Amen.

*Lynn Branch*

Merry Christmas to all from Lynn and Carol Branch!

## We Gather Together

*When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been said to them about this child.*

Luke 2:15-17 (NIV)

And so it began. An angel appeared before the shepherds and told them that the Savior had been born and that they should go to see him. In a humble faraway stable, the very first gathering to celebrate the birth of Jesus occurred.

Since that time, Christians all over the world have set aside the Christmas season as a special time to gather with friends and family. When I was growing up, my family as well as my cousins would gather on Christmas Day for brunch at my grandmother's house. I would rather have stayed home and played with the toys Santa had brought me, but now, I would not trade those memories for anything.

Things started to get more complicated in 1982. I married Hannah, and before 1990 we had four children. And boy, there sure were a lot of gatherings. First, we would gather with all of the Rouses at my parents' house for lunch on Christmas Eve. Then, following the afternoon church service, we would gather at Hannah's parents' house with all of the Wilkins family. Rather quickly on Christmas morning, after Santa had come, we were back off to my grandmother's for brunch with my cousins as I had always done. And then, the tradition in Hannah's family was to go to Christmas lunch with her cousins at her grandmother's house in Mount Olive. All of this with four children in tow!

Needless to say, it was exhausting, especially for the children. But just like me, if you ask any of them today, they will tell you that they would not trade those memories for anything. Gathering together is one of the most special traditions of Christmas.

But in all of the excitement of the season, let us not ever forget that it all started with a small gathering in that humble stable all of those many years ago. After all, that really is what it's all about.

Prayer: Dear God, be with us all as we gather this Christmas Season to celebrate the birth of Your Son Jesus. Always help us to remember that Jesus truly is the real reason for the season. Amen.

*Charlie Rouse*

## Christmas Eve Reflections

*For he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.*

Luke 1:48-49 (NRSV)

Christmas Eve was all about getting ready for church. Every year my family woke up early. My sisters and I took all the time we needed to wash our long hair. For Christmas, we could wear it however we liked (not the usual two braids we wore all year long). Then we set out our new clothes and shoes. We helped cook all the food and Christmas goodies we would share with our neighbors on Christmas Day. I made sure all the decorations I put up last week in the house were still intact. Then I blew up the balloons that I had saved for the last minute so they would look good for Christmas Day. We took a long late afternoon nap to help us stay awake for the midnight mass.

After a good dinner, we walked to church to attend the Christmas Eve midnight service. The excitement of new clothes, shoes, fancy hairdos, and festivities removed every trace of sleep. We attended worship, greeted our friends, and adored all the new outfits. I watched Mary (or the girl who played Mary) in the Christmas pageant, wondering why they never picked me to do that part even though my name was Mary and I had long hair.

I loved everything about church on Christmas Eve, the long-awaited night, Jesus' birth, joyful music, a fabulously decorated church, happy people, cake, and coffee after worship. We went home feeling blessed, with joy in our hearts, and anticipating attending worship on Christmas Day.

This Christmas Eve, I will reflect on Mary (not the girl who played Mary), the mother of Jesus. Oh! So Lowly! Oh! So Trusting, Oh! So Lovely! The Mother of our God. For the Gospel writers, it was pertinent that Mary and Joseph were of the lineage of David. In Mary's song, it is evident that God will call and use anyone, irrespective of who or what they are. God called Mary, she answered, and God blessed her for generations. I pray that God will call and mold us to be like Mary.

Prayer: Dear God, prepare us to hear and answer Your call. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

*Mary Florence Taneti*



*Jesus and an Angel* Jase Brown, age 6

LOVE

Christmas Day: Sunday, December 25, 2022

### Our First Christmas

*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. . . . And the angel said unto the shepherds, fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy. Luke 2: 7, 10 (KJV)*

It was Christmas 1992. I was 15 years old. My father decided that it was best for us to leave the farm and move into the city for me to finish high school and go to college. One little problem: We didn't have much money. We barely managed to buy a lot outside the city, and my father built a temporary shelter.

My parents decided to take us to a Christmas Eve service. We enjoyed the service, and we met nice people, but we still didn't have much money for the celebrations of *Nochebuena* dinner, fruit cake and hot chocolate. We came back from church, and my mom invited us to pray and thank God for our shelter and that we were healthy.

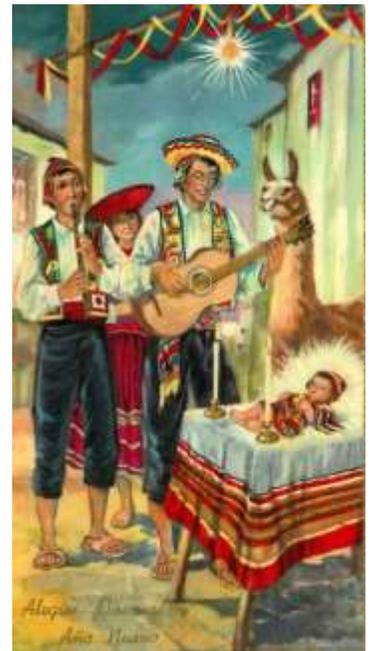
While we were praying, someone knocked on our door. It was Marilou, whom we had met at the Christmas Eve service. She had managed to get us chicken, Christmas meal ingredients, fruit cake and chocolate. This was a Christmas miracle. An angel visited us with "good tidings of great joy." Jesus, Who knew about being born in a temporary shelter, offered His love through Marilou. Jesus wrapped us in His swaddling love that night.

And here we are, in our First Christmas with you, my new family of First Presbyterian Church. These first months, your love and generosity have inspired us each day. May we all be grateful and worship our Lord Jesus Who came to love us so much and provide all our needs.

Prayer: Loving Jesus, thank You for showing up into our homes giving us Your love and providing all our needs. Look with compassion to those who might not have food or shelter today. And help us to be always grateful for all Your blessings. Amen.

Merry Christmas and *Feliz Navidad!*

*Rev. Dr. Noé Juarez, Laurie, Paul, Ella, and Gemma*



Peruvian Christmas Card received by Peggy Till in 1965



*Following that Star* Jewel Sauls

Think About It

From swaddling clothes to burial shrouds,

People have always sought Jesus,

The shepherds from the hills,

The Magi and the apostles.

Angels were always there in peace.

We are seeking Jesus.

Look for Him everywhere,

and

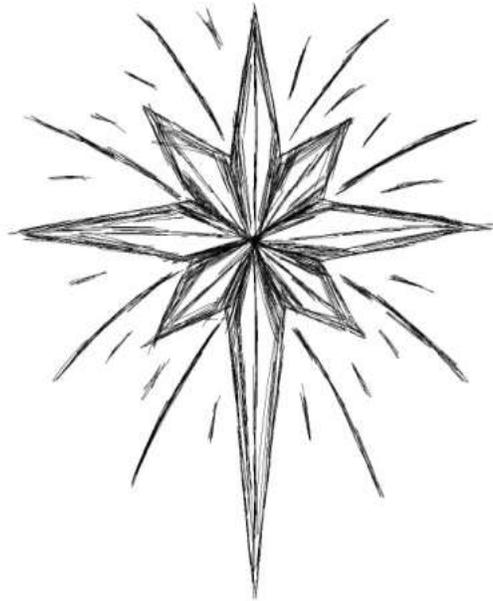
We find Him in our hearts

And in our daily prayers.

*Peggy Till*

## *Acknowledgements*

From the Editors: May the words of these Advent devotional writings from our church family be like God's promise as described in Isaiah 7:14 (KJV): *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*



*Star of Bethlehem*      Vismitha Taneti

Front Cover: *A Christmas Story* in stained glass by Chris Watkins

Back Cover: *Winter* by Brenda Behr

Special thanks to all writers and artists who have contributed to this year's Advent Devotional

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Editor: Rosalyn Lomax

Assistant Editors: Kathryn Spicer, Mary Taneti

First Presbyterian Church  
presents  
The Chancel Choir  
Guest Soloists and Symphony Orchestra

## The Music of Christmas



Sunday, December 11, 2022

Seven o'clock in the evening

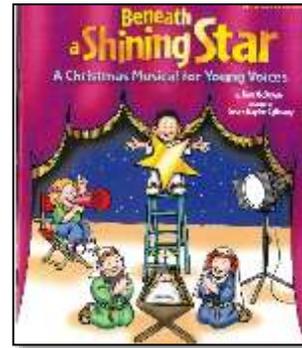
(Doors to the Sanctuary will open thirty minutes prior to the service.)

The service is free and open to the public. A nursery will be provided.

*Beneath A Shining Star*  
Sunday, December 4 @ 10:00 a.m.

Join us!

FPC's Children's Choir will present the delightful 17-minute Christmas musical *Beneath A Shining Star* to the congregation in lieu of a sermon on this special Sunday morning.



**Presbyterian Women Bake Sale**  
**Sunday, December 4 after Worship**



Come shop!

Please contribute your favorite baked goods, soups, frozen foods, pies, biscuits, cheese straws, and other delicacies!

Bring your donations to the gym at 8:30 a.m. on December 4.

The PW Bake Sale is a great place to shop for holiday foods. Invite your family and friends to shop! All money raised will go to support the PW's Mission!

## Singing with the Angels

The Scripture and the poets note  
all creatures great and small.  
Hymn writers have us sing of them,  
“The Lord God made them all.”

Christ came to earth in lowly stall  
yet was already King,  
and every creature great and small  
could hear the angels sing.

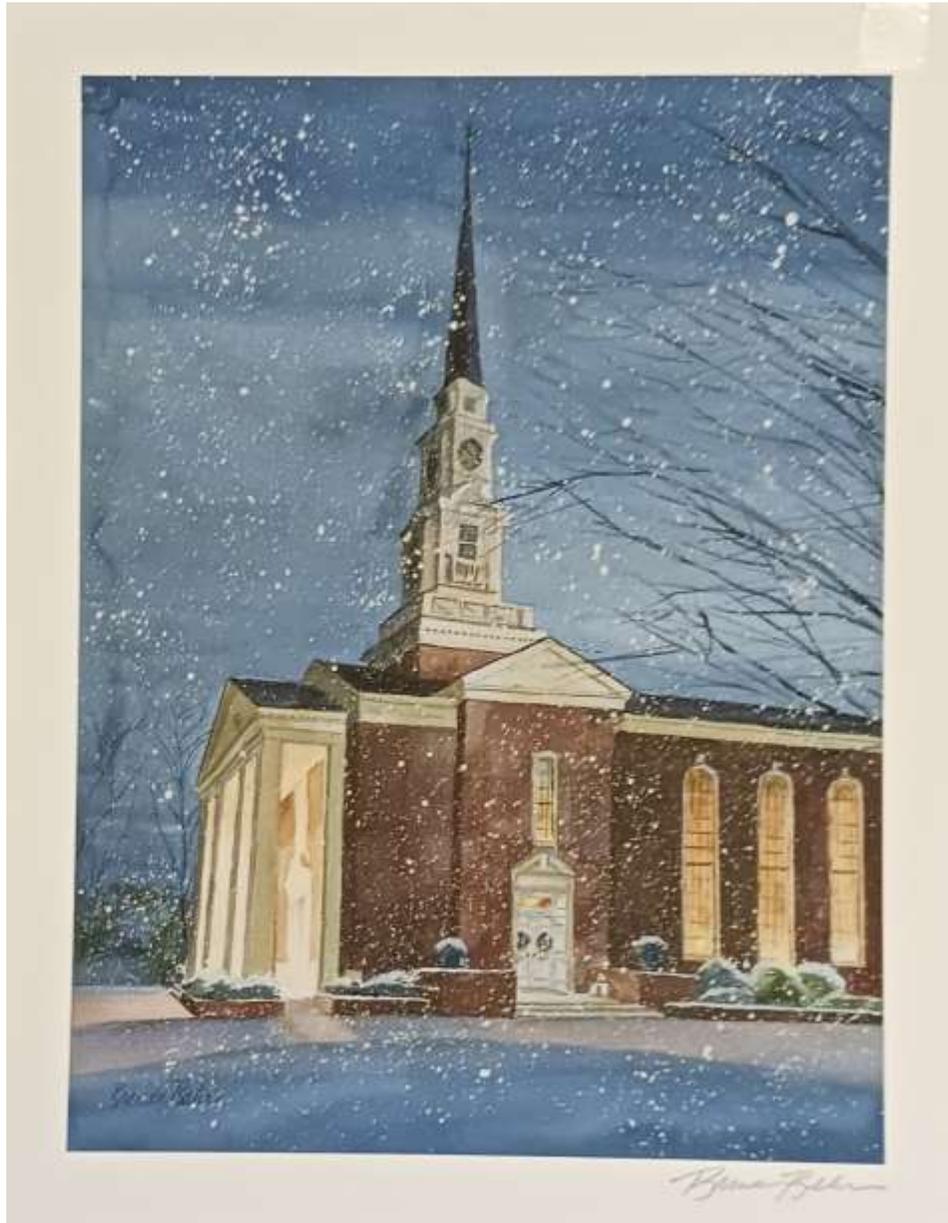
The whole creation shouts and sings  
the Savior’s birth for all.  
His coming marks a turning point  
for creatures great and small.

As Heav’n and Nature praise Him  
and repeat the sounding joy,  
their music celebrates the birth  
of God’s own Baby Boy.

*Rosalyn Lomax*



*Listening to the Angels*      Kim Brogden



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