

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

CHRISTMAS 2025

We have plenty of traditions and plans that fill our days leading up to Christmas. Some are passed down from generations, and others just started recently. They can be family traditions, church traditions, or even cultural traditions. What I love about this time of year is that many of the things can point us to Jesus. However, much of the trappings of the season can also distract us from the real focus of the festivities.

With all that in mind we hope you join us on a Journey to the Nativity this Christmas. Let's slow down and work to focus on Jesus throughout the whole holiday season. We know life is busy, but that is all the more reason to be intentional with the time that we have. Our hope is that this small devotional can be a part of a season that is more focused on Jesus than ever before.

You are also invited to join us on Sunday mornings as we walk down this journey together. Keep an eye on our social media and website for other advent resources and reminders to add to your weekly time with Jesus this Christmas season. Our prayer is that we can all refocus our hearts and minds on the One who should truly be the center of this season and our lives.

Happy Advent(ures) & Merry Christmas!

-Pastor Josh

11/30- Advent #1: Hope Candle
Journey Through Waiting
Luke 2:25-35

Have you ever felt like you are waiting on God for an answer that seems to never come? Whether we like it or not, waiting is often a part of God's plan for our growth. Abraham was forced to wait to get the child promised to him. The Israelites had to wait for their deliverance from Egypt and then had to wait to see the promise land fulfilled. Daniel had to wait in a den of lions to witness God's protection. David had to wait many years watching King Saul come after him before he was finally king. The people of God waited 400 years, this time with no response, before they could see what the next step was going to be. Jesus waited 40 days in the dessert from the day of His baptism to the start of His earthly ministry. Even the disciples were forced to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit to come upon them. But the focus of this week, is Simeon waiting expectantly with the promise that he would get to see the Messiah. Simeon, because of his connection with God even in the midst of the unknown, rested on the one promise he received from his Father. He got to be one of the lucky firsts who saw the child who would be his, and our, salvation. I am sure that waiting was tough. Like a child this early in the season excitedly anticipating the unwrapping of their gifts on Christmas morning, we too should be just as excited for the answer to our prayers. Waiting is tough, but as we wait on answered prayers and for Jesus to return, we can hold on to the beautiful truth of this season that "GOD IS WITH US!"

Questions for Discussion:

1. In what ways have you been waiting on God for an answer?
2. What parts of this season are you excited about?
3. What promises of God are you waiting for with anticipation?
4. Choose to do one thing this week differently to allow space for you to wait on God more purposefully.

12/7- Advent #2: Peace Candle
Journey Through Movement
Luke 2:1-5

As I write this my family is making plans to travel to see family for the Thanksgiving holiday. Putting all our travel together we are planning to drive around 850 miles during those days off. Yes, I know, that's a lot to put into 5 days. But for me it is one of those things I am excitedly waiting for. I get to see and reconnect with family that we don't see often due to distance. It makes the travel worth it. Mary and Joseph had a very different kind of journey. Four days and 90 miles on foot is a very different way to travel than in a minivan with a portable DVD player! On top of that, this was not a trip they wanted to take. They were forced on this journey by the government of the day. We really don't know what their head space was as they traveled day after day. They knew the census was their reason, they knew their child was coming soon, and they no doubt felt the pressure of raising the Son of God in the season that followed. Journeys into the unknown future can be incredibly stressful and difficult. As we were reminded last week, God often calls us to wait for His answer, but often in the midst of the waiting, He is calling us to move forward despite it being unclear as to why or where to go. God is not just with us in the waiting. He is with us wherever we go.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Where are you excited to go this Christmas season?
2. Read Joshua 1:9 and ask yourself where have you been afraid to go in your relationship with Jesus?
3. What steps can you take this week to take the next step in your faith instead of simply staying where you are?

12/14- Advent #3: Joy Candle
Journey Through Imperfections
Matt 1 & Luke 3

The genealogies in scripture are often not the parts that we spend much time with. There is often the thought that they are unimportant or boring. But let's take a moment to consider our own genealogy. When we think of our own family trees, we list off the people we love and care about along with the ones we struggle with having to admit they are on that list. We think of the broken parts of our families as parts to avoid and often try to hide the damaged parts we contribute to that lineage. In our video this week, the SkitGuys shared the reminder of some of the flawed people that were on Jesus' family tree. Those names aren't listed by Matthew and Luke for just history purposes. Those broken people are the unlikely options for the lineage of the Messiah that was promised. God chose to use people like Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Rebekah, Isaac, Joseph, Rahab, Hezekiah, Samson, Josiah, David, Solomon, and many others. God brought the Son of Man, the Messiah, into the world through this line of people. If He chose to use these hurting, broken, unworthy people back then, why do we doubt that He can use us. You have imperfections too, but God wants to use you too. As you see the star in the nativity this week, make sure to remember that God is calling you to His Son too.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are your thoughts as you read through the names included in Matthew and Luke's genealogies?
2. Have you ever thought God couldn't use you because of your brokenness?
3. Jesus used the broken to make something new. Find someone this week to speak the good and new you see in their life.

12/21- Advent #4: Love Candle
Journey Through An Unlikely Partnership
Luke 2:8-18

There are many things that we know go together well. Milk and cookies, peanut butter and jelly, sunshine and a sandy beach, marvel movies and wings (one of my favorites!). Those combinations make sense. This week in worship we are reminded of the unlikely partnership that God put together with the shepherds and angels. The heavenly messengers sharing the best news ever with the least expected ones to continue that message. We have images of this combination in our nativities, but we often miss the fact that those first to be called out as evangelists were dirty, smelly, uneducated, and from the world's perspective not qualified to do anything more than their low position allowed. God's message of salvation was shared first by the ones who would have been last picked at most anything else. Romans 5:8 reminds us that: "...God demonstrates his own love for us in this: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." You and Jesus are an unlikely partnership! That is the gift God gave in sending His Son.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are some unlikely pairs that you have seen?
2. What holds you back from the urgency to share the Gospel in the way the shepherds did?
3. Who can you tell about this good news today?

12/24- Christmas Eve: Christ Candle
Journey With The Messiah
Matthew 1:22-23

I am sure this past month has been a mix of crazy, fun, and stressful moments. Some are anxiously waiting for Christmas morning. Others are excited and yet also ready for the chaos to subside. At the same time there are others who have felt the darkness and loneliness that even this season can bring. As you prepare for this night, Christmas Eve, I encourage us all to take the moments to slow down and see the beauty of the gift given in what we call that Silent Night. The reality is that it was probably not silent, not comfortable, not easy, but it was a Holy Night. Amid all that life brings, Jesus was sent to us in the most unlikely of ways so that we could have the peace that the Silent Night speaks too. God was answering the call after years of waiting. God was honoring the difficult journey that was taken to get to this moment. He was uniting broken and unlikely people to show the world that this gift was coming for ALL. Take time to read the story of Jesus in Matthew and Luke tonight, and even this week, so that each one of us could rest in the beautiful gift of salvation and peace that we find in the baby, and in the risen savior, that is Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Merry Christmas!

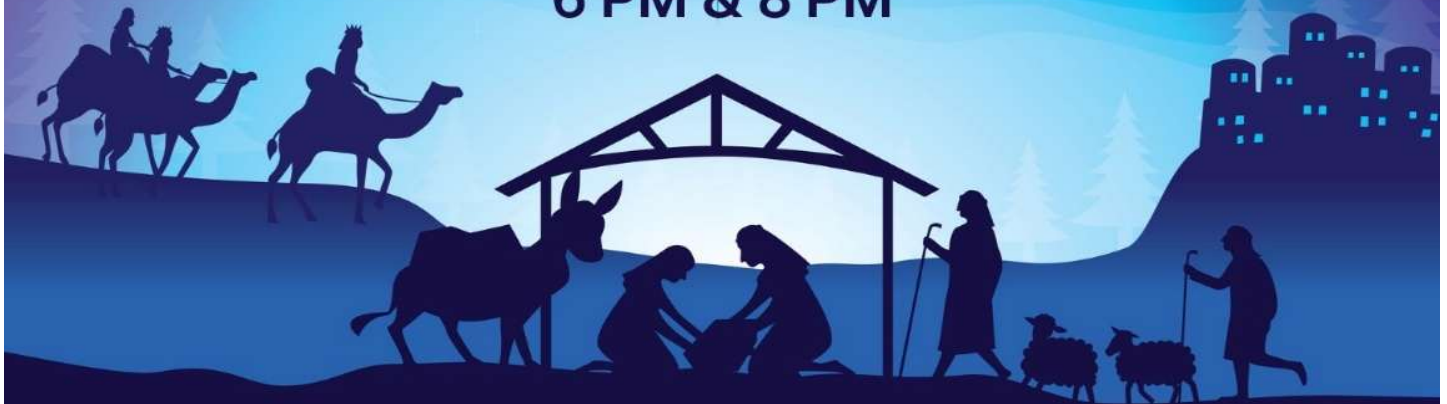
Questions for Discussion:

1. What part of the busyness of this season has prevented you from resting in His peace?
2. Take a moment right now in some purposeful time of prayer and reflection on what Jesus' birth means to you.
3. How will your worship with Jesus change in the weeks to come because of your time with Him this season?



Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24th
6 PM & 8 PM



Christmas Pageant & Candlelight Service at 6 PM
Cookie Fellowship 7 PM
Candlelight Service at 8 PM

Christ's American Baptist Church
730 Menges Mills Rd. Spring Grove, PA 17362
christabc.org | office@christabc.org