



ADVENT

DEVOTIONALS & LITURGIES

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Written by pastors and
members of Coram Deo Church

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Foreword

Welcome to Advent, a special season for remembering and celebrating the birth of Christ our Lord. As a child, Christmas music permeated my home during Advent. Whether it was Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, or Nat King Cole, Christmas music was always playing. Though I was completely unaware at the time, many of the carols that I was so fond of contained profound and beautiful biblical truths regarding the birth of Christ. Though I could sing along with many of them, I had no idea that the lyrics were simply echoes of Scripture.

This year, for our Advent series, we will be examining some of the most cherished and celebrated Christmas carols, tracing their lyrics back to the Scriptures that proclaim the glory and mystery of our Lord's incarnation. This devotional and liturgy booklet is meant to aid you in understanding, appreciating, and celebrating our Savior's birth. There are four Lord's Day devotions, which focus on one aspect of Christ's birth revealed in Scripture and heralded in a carol. Additionally, there are four midweek devotions, which explore the gifts that Jesus' birth brings, as described in Isaiah 9:2–5. We have also provided prayers for Thanksgiving and Christmas Day to

help set the tone for your joyful feasts and celebrations.

Of all our Advent traditions, our Christmas Eve candlelight services are the most cherished. These services are a simple and beautiful time to celebrate Christ's birth together. They consist of singing traditional Christmas carols, a short homily, and, of course, lighting candles. Service times are 2, 3, 4, & 5 PM. We would love for you to join us this year!

*Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing.
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

Merry Christmas!

Jon Needham, Lead Pastor

Coram Deo Church

Thanksgiving Day Prayer

Written by Pastor Aaron Kuhns

Psalm 107:1-9

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

Prayer

Our Father in Heaven,

Today we train our hearts and minds in thankfulness.

Clear our minds to see you, this world, and ourselves as we really are.

What is man that you are mindful of him?

We are like the grass of the field, here today and gone tomorrow.

All we like sheep have gone astray and find ourselves in desperate need.

Thanksgiving Day

*We tell ourselves that we deserve much more than
our feeble attempts could ever earn,
and we turn blind eyes to the true seriousness and extent of our sins.*

*You are the eternal God,
who is never in need, never lacking, never falling short.
Everything we have to give is already yours.
All of creation is from you, through you, and to you.
You are perfect in joy, peace, and love,
Forever sufficient and always complete.*

*And yet, the Son of God descended to earth
to wash the unclean,
cover the shamed,
give to the undeserving,
seek the lost, heal the sick,
atone for sinners,
redeem slaves, adopt orphans,
include outsiders, pay our debts,
bear our punishments,
and breathe life into dead hearts.*

*We give thanks for your abundant mercy to rebellious sinners like us.
Gracious Savior, shape our lives around this truth.
Help us face our trials in light of your overwhelming love.
Help us heal from our losses in light of your sustaining provision.*

A Prayer for Thanksgiving Day

Help us fight our fears in light of your constant faithfulness.

We give thanks for granting us faith and understanding.

Heavenly Father, renew our minds with this truth.

Root out the lies that remain in our thoughts.

Reveal the emptiness of our idols and distractions.

Refresh us with your life-giving wisdom.

We give thanks for the adoption of outsiders like us.

Holy Spirit, ground our identity in this truth.

Empower us to love our enemies as you loved us.

Embolden us to seek the lost as you sought us.

Equip us to tend to the wounded as you healed us.

In your mighty name,

Amen

Week 1 – Lord's Day Evening

"Silent Night"

Devotional and Liturgy by Pastor Jon Needham

Luke 1:34

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night!

All is calm, all is bright

Round yon virgin mother and Child.

Holy Infant, so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace.

Few things sound as miraculous to a new mother as a calm night of rest and peace as her newborn baby sleeps. And yet, as wonderful, heavenly, and even unbelievable as that might sound, that is not the miracle proclaimed in Luke 1, nor is it the mystery celebrated in the carol "Silent Night." Luke tells us that the angel Gabriel visited Mary and announced to her that, though she was a virgin, she would give birth to the promised Messiah, the Son of God.

Humanly speaking, it is utterly impossible for a virgin to give birth. Luke, who was a physician, certainly would

have understood this. Furthermore, Mary's question to the angel Gabriel reveals that she also understood the basics of human reproduction. Yet, every account of Jesus' birth in the Bible insists on virgin birth. In fact, the virgin birth was announced centuries beforehand by the prophet Isaiah, who said, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

Virgin birth is not a detail we can simply ignore or agree to disagree on. It is no secondary matter. Furthermore, the virgin birth is not just central to the Christmas story; it is central to the Gospel itself.

The reason we struggle with the virgin birth is because we have domesticated God and turned him into a small, tame, well-mannered household pet of a deity. We have made God in *our* image. But that is not the God of the Bible. The God revealed in the Scriptures spoke all of creation into existence out of nothing. He is not bound by our limitations or weaknesses, nor is he afraid to offend our sensibilities. He is God, we are not. And we live in his world, not the other way around.

The angel Gabriel reminded Mary that, "... nothing will be impossible with God." (Luke 1:37) Not virgin birth. Not atonement. Not resurrection. Not the full and complete restoration of the world. Not your own salvation. Do you believe that?

As you reflect upon the virgin birth of Christ this Advent season, may you be reminded that nothing is impossible with God. Nothing. Our God is the God of the impossible. He is not

just the God of virgin birth; he is the God who saves sinners. Whatever challenges you face, may the truth of virgin birth give you a renewed and profound trust in the unlimited and sovereign power of God.

Liturgy

*Omnipotent God,
What is impossible for us is as nothing to you.
Your power knows no limitations.
You know neither weakness nor want.
You spoke the world into existence out of nothing.
You parted the Red Sea.
You fed your people with bread from heaven.
You brought down the walls of Jericho.
You defeated your people's enemies.
And by the matchless power of your Holy Spirit,
The Virgin Mary conceived our Lord.
Truly, there is none like you.
None.
God, renew our hope in You.
Help us to see each challenge in the light of your omnipotence.
Give us the humility of Mary, that we too may say,
“...I am a servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your Word.”
(Luke 1:38)
It's in your powerful name that we pray,
Amen*

Week 1 – Midweek Evening

The Gift of Light

Devotional by Pastor Derrek Busha

Liturgy by Michele Fletcher, Member of Coram Deo Church

Isaiah 9:2

*The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.*

O Little Town of Bethlehem

*Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.*

Nothing quite brings more comfort to a household than power being restored after a long power outage on a winter's day. At first, the outage can be exciting and somewhat calming, especially if it's stormy outside or snow blankets the land. But, if the outage lingers, the lack of lights and heat can be frustrating and even frightening ... the land gets colder and darker.

Similarly, before the arrival of Christ, the world was

consumed in cold darkness. The land was dark, and the hope of mankind was bleak. Humanity lived trapped, not under snow or ice, but in the bondage and slavery of sin and despair. The cycle of sin never stopped. Men wandered without direction, and no one could light the path for them. Darkness ruled, and it felt as if it was never going to stop. There was no hope. The promises of God seemed to be gone. They could not find their way, nor could they remove the darkness themselves.

Christ's arrival disrupted the darkness because he is the light of men. Like a spotlight, he shone brightly with focus and precision into the hearts of men. His light exposed the sin that kept humanity at bay. He showed us the way to the Father by removing our sin and bringing us out of darkness and into God's marvelous light.

This light of Christ is not a temporary glimpse of the right direction, but the eternal hope of joy everlasting. Jesus is the eternal beacon of hope. He is the light that we need. He came to us because we would not look for him or ever find him on our own.

The light of Christ, like a lighthouse, warns people of the dangers that lurk nearby but offers safety and refuge in his presence.

The light of Christ gives us purpose and eternal hope. Our lives are safe in his light. No longer must we try to find comfort in the darkness. No longer do we need to hide from God.

The storms may come, but through Christ's light, we can reside in safety. The power will never go out again. Never again will we have to fear the dark world of sin, for "... on them has light shone!"

Liturgy

*Father,
It is the season of great joy,
and once again we
celebrate the birth
of your son, Emmanuel.
We bustle about
sharing love and laughter,
kindness and joy,
songs and stories of the season.
However, in stillness,
when the day's celebrations quiet,
it is often then that we forget you are light.
When the world is dark and we are alone,
our minds are filled with fear.
In that hour, we need you most.
Help us, oh Lord
to lean in to truth,
the words we've heard*

Week 1

and have always known.

We no longer walk alone.

*We need not fear the dark,
for in you there is great promise
and perfect peace.*

You alone are Immanuel, born to save us.

You alone are the light of the world.

You alone are everlasting love, forever.

In Christ's name we pray,

Amen

Week 2 – Lord's Day Evening

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Devotional and Liturgy by Pastor Jon Needham

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

*Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.*

There are several things that make our Advent traditions and celebrations so unique and wonderful. There are all the special meals and treats, festive music, trees, lights and décor. And who doesn't love exchanging gifts? But one of the greatest parts of the Christmas season is simply being with one another. More than any other time of the year, Advent is when friends and families draw near to one another. Our homes fill with the aroma of food and the echoes of laughter as we enjoy the presence of those we love and cherish. This is more than mere nostalgia. Advent is all about presence.

By Isaiah's time, Israel's heyday had come and gone. The kingdom was divided and in rapid decline. Invasion by a foreign enemy was imminent. Times were dark. But God made a promise: the virgin would conceive. Who would this virgin-born child be? Isaiah declares that he would be Immanuel, which means *God with us*. God's response to Israel's need was not simply to send someone on his behalf. God's answer was to draw near to them himself in the person of Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of the Virgin Mary. Jesus is not simply a token or symbol of God's presence with us. Jesus *is* God with us (Matthew 1:22–23). He is God in the flesh, fully God and fully man, dwelling among us because he loves us (John 1:14).

As you anticipate and enjoy the presence of loved ones this Advent season, remember that God has drawn near to you in Christ. The gift he gives is himself. He doesn't just have a solution for you. He is the solution. Are you grieving those who can't be present this year? Are you facing difficult or challenging times? Are you burdened by what is unknown? Does the darkness seem unrelenting?

Remember, Christ our Lord stepped down from his heavenly throne and came to Bethlehem's manger to be with you. Not only that, but, ultimately, he went to the cross. Why? Because that was the price he had to pay to rescue us from sin and death and darkness. God did all of that to be with you.

Because of Christmas, because of Immanuel, God with us, we can be certain that we are never alone. Never.

Liturgy

*Lord of Gracious Presence,
In awesome humility and compassion,
you stepped down from heaven to be with us.
Though we have given you countless reasons to leave,
you have drawn near to us.
You came for sinners, taking on our flesh.
You were tempted in every way,
yet you did not sin.
You chose the manger over heaven to be with us.
Lord, remind us this Christmas
that our greatest need,
and your greatest gift,
is always yourself.
As we enjoy the presence of others
may we be reminded of your ever-faithful presence in our lives.
We pray these things in your gracious name,
Amen*

Week 2 – Midweek Evening

The Gift of Joy

Devotional and Liturgy by Pastor Rusten Harris

Isaiah 9:3

*You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.*

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

Oh tidings of comfort and joy!

Christmas is a time of feasting, celebrating, and rejoicing. It is a time of joy. And this joy is at the very heart of Christmas. The angels declared “... good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” (Luke 2:10) because Christ came to bring joy to those who otherwise only had reason for sorrow.

In all the years leading up to the birth of Christ, joy was something promised. Joy was something anticipated as the people waited upon God to fulfill his promise to redeem his people. While they knew the sorrow of their sin and the sorrow of living in a world marred with sin, they looked forward in hope to the day when God would decisively pay for

their sin and undo their sorrow.

Indeed, because of the fall, humanity was plunged into sorrow and death; humanity was banished from the garden and the tree of life. We read in Proverbs 13:12 that, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” With the birth of Christ, the hope that was once deferred over thousands of years was now a desire fulfilled: a tree of life. Christ came as the great desire of nations, bearing the gift of joy.

Christ gives us joy by removing the guilt of our sin. He was born to be plunged into the sorrow and death that we deserved. Why? So we could come to him—our tree of life—and be given abundant life and joy. In Christ, no longer does the threat of punishment and death hang over our heads, but rather the love of God and ever-increasing joy.

In Christ, this joy is yours now. You no longer wait for the reason for joy to arrive. When Christ was born, when he died for your sin, and when he rose again, he ended your reason for sorrow, and he gave you reason for abundant joy. Though you may experience sorrows, pain, and loss, none of these things can take away your reason for joy. In Christ, your joy is anchored and solid. In Christ, you can look forward to a future of joy unspeakable, knowing that he who began a good work in you is faithful to complete it, knowing that he who paid for your sin is also the one who will make all things new.

Liturgy

*O God of Steadfast Love,
We rejoice that you have kept your promises.
That in the birth of Christ
you have turned our sorrow into dancing,
our mourning into rejoicing,
our despair into increasing joy.
Restore to us the joy of our salvation.
Give us eyes to see and ears to hear
the wonders of your love,
the glory of your grace,
and the reason for our increasing joy.
We confess that our hearts are often numb,
that we often seek joy and hope in idols and sin,
that we forget your tidings of comfort and joy,
and that we make for ourselves cisterns that hold no water.
We repent of our joyless pursuits.
Awaken our dull hearts to rejoice again
in the fulfillment of your promises,
in the Savior that paid for our sin,
and the abundant life that we have in him.
In the name of Jesus we pray,
Amen*

Week 3 – Lord's Day Evening

"O Holy Night"

Devotional by Pastor Jon Needham

Liturgy by Nette Yabeny, Member of Coram Deo Church

Titus 3:4-5a

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us...

O Holy Night

*Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope—the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!*

There is one day each year in our household that changes everything, because, on that day, everything changes. That day is the day *after* Thanksgiving. On that day, we turn up the Christmas music for the first time, take out the decorations, and put up the lights inside our house. Later, in the evening, we enjoy our first Christmas cookies and watch our first Christmas movie of the season. And, for the first time, we light up our outside Christmas light spectacle, hoping not to blow any fuses. I look forward to that day all year long.

Redemptive history has a similar day. Ever since the fall of

Adam and Eve in the garden, humanity has been dealing with the devastating reality of sin. Though God promised Eve a son who would one day crush the head of the serpent, sin continued to wreak havoc on humanity. But, even as sin continued to plague humanity, God continued to remind his people of his Gospel promise: a Savior-King was coming!

God promised Abraham that, through his family, the nations would be blessed. God promised David that a descendant from his own body would reign on the throne in righteousness forever and ever. Through Isaiah, God promised a virgin-born Son who would bring light to a dark world. And yet, humanity had to wait.

But then it happened. Everything changed because God showed up. What God promised in the past was revealed and appeared. The Virgin Mary gave birth to Christ, who gives eternal life to all who trust in him. Salvation came to sinners like us by way of the manger and the cross. This is grace. This is love. This is kindness.

But Christmas isn't just about something that happened in the past. It's also about something that will happen in the future. Death has been defeated, and immortality is ours because Christ appeared. Just as our Savior was raised, so too will we be raised in victory over death, and all of creation will be made new forever (Romans 6:4 & 8:20–21). God has promised us these things. Now it is our turn to wait.

As you celebrate Christmas this year, don't just look back to the humble manger. Look forward with great anticipation to

the return of the King who will appear in glory, "... for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn."

Liturgy

Gracious God,

*Thank you for Christmas, for sending Jesus,
and for showing us your kindness and love.*

*We could never earn your love,
yet you came close to us in Christ.*

*Through him you wash us clean,
give us new life, and fill us with your Spirit.*

*Because of Jesus, we are your children,
and we hold a hope that never ends.*

*On this holy day, we thank you for a love greater than our failures,
for joy deeper than our circumstances,
and for peace the world cannot give or comprehend.*

*Help us carry the kindness of Christ into our homes,
to share his mercy with our neighbors,
and to shine his light in a world that longs for peace.*

*We praise you for the gift of Jesus, your Son,
our Savior, and the reason we celebrate.*

*And we look forward with hope to his return
when we will see the King face-to-face,
a new and glorious morning forever.*

*We pray these things in the name of Christ our Lord,
Amen*

Week 3 – Midweek Evening

The Gift of Freedom

Devotional by Pastor Brandon Johnston

Liturgy by Ross McClelland, Member of Coram Deo Church

Isaiah 9:4

*For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.*

O Come, O Come, Immanuel

*O come, O come, Immanuel
And ransom captive Israel.*

Living under a burden is like walking every day with an invisible weight that relentlessly presses down on you. You carry it at work, in the car, even at the dinner table. It follows you into the night, filling your last thoughts and robbing you of sleep. Your heart cries out, “How long, O Lord, must I sit under this weight?”

God’s people in Isaiah’s day knew that cry well. They lived under the crushing power of foreign oppressors with no strength to free themselves. Yet, God gave a promise: “For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod

of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.” (Isaiah 9:4) This was more than a word for ancient Israel, it was a glimpse of the freedom Christ would bring when he came to ransom his people.

Outside of Christ, we too live under the weight of an oppressor we can never defeat. The greatest oppressor is sin, binding our hearts and lives. We are enslaved by sin’s guilt and shame, and the fear of death. We live under the oppression of Satan’s lies and the world’s demands. Our sin is like a debt that only grows, with no power in us to pay it off.

Yet Christ has broken the yoke of slavery to sin. He has brought liberty to the oppressed. It is only in him that we can truly sing, “O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.” Through his finished work on the cross, Christ has freed us from sin’s penalty and power, and one day he will free us from sin’s very presence. He is our freedom, breaking the yoke, the staff, and the rod of our oppressors. We no longer live under sin’s weight, but under Christ’s love and grace.

Freedom in Christ reaches into every corner of life. It brings peace where anger once lived, integrity where fear once haunted us, and trust where despair once ruled. The freedom Christ secured means one day there will be no more oppression: no sin, no sorrow, no Satan.

We celebrate his first coming, for in his death and resurrection, he secured our freedom, and at his second coming, we will know that freedom in full. If you are in

Christ, this freedom belongs to you. With every square inch of life, we cry out, “O come, O come, Emmanuel!” and await his redemption where there is brokenness.

Liturgy

O Blessed Messiah,

How long had been our enslavement to sin?

How decrepit, how festering, how fetid,

how dark had been our service?

Please, O God, forgive us!

We had borne the cuts, stripes, beatings,

and wounds of our evil gods that called

for our blood, destruction, and death.

In bondage, we had called pain our joy,

and suffering our relief.

Please, O God, heal us!

Rejoice for the birth of the Liberator,

who smashes the evil gods and

makes dark priests into priests of light.

Glorify our Redeemer, born of woman,

who, with his blood, ransoms slaves of sin and pain

to serve the God of joy and peace.

Worship the Sacrifice, born into a suffering world,

who chained and silenced the gods of death and destruction.

*We now bear the armor of beloved children
and honored sons of Adonai,
who are washed and cleansed,
and free to see the world as it really is.
Forever, we will be the Priesthood of Jehovah, our provider.
How joyous, how life-giving,
how bright, how adventurous
will be our service to the King of Kings.
Beyond all measure!
In the name of the Blessed Messiah,
Amen*

Week 4 – Lord's Day Evening

"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

Devotional and Liturgy by Pastor Rusten Harris

Luke 2:14

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:

"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;

The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,

With peace on earth, good will to men."

Some of us are good at preparing when it comes to Christmas. Lights up? Check. Christmas tree up and decorated right after Thanksgiving? Check. Presents purchased well in advance? Check. Groceries and supplies ready for our Christmas feast? Check. On the other hand, many of us are scrambling on Christmas Eve to finish our lists, and up way too late wrapping gifts for Christmas morning. Ready or not, Christmas is coming, and, without fail, it always comes on the same day every year.

No matter what is going on in your life—whether you are sick, you have lost a loved one, or the nation has gone to war—every

December 25, the Church celebrates the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. Christmas doesn't wait for us to have our acts together; it doesn't wait for the suffering to stop, and it doesn't wait for evil to be vanquished. Christmas comes in the middle of it all. Similarly, Christ was born into a world that didn't have its act together; a world full of sorrow and evil; a world at war with each other and with God.

If God had waited for us to get our act together before sending Christ, then Christmas would never have happened. Christmas declares that our predicament as sinners is so grave, so serious, so irremediable on our own, that the only thing that can save us and bring us peace is the miraculous incarnation of Christ. How bad is our situation? The divine Son of God had to become a baby so he could die for our sins in order to bring us peace with God.

And so, every Christmas, in the middle of whatever sorrow we are enduring or whatever evil is assaulting the world, as we hear the Christmas bells and carols, we remember: "God is not dead nor doth He sleep; the wrong shall fail, the right prevail." God's plan for redemption and justice is not thwarted. The birth of Christ is our reminder that while we cannot achieve peace on our own, our God has given himself for our peace and pledged himself as a guarantee that he will make all things right "... with peace on earth, good will to men."

Liturgy

*God of our Peace,
Were you to wait for us to cleanse ourselves,
we would never be cleansed.
Were you to wait for us to give up our rebellion,
we would never be at peace with you.
We give thanks that, while we were yet sinners,
you sent your Son for our peace and redemption.
We give thanks that, though the world is in chaos,
Christ is our guarantee of peace and hope.
We cry out for you to do what only you can do:
make right what is wrong,
bring justice to the oppressed,
heal the sick,
tear down evil regimes,
make alive those who are dead in sin,
and build up your people
Let us hear and believe those words again:
“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”
Be glorified in your people
as we rejoice in you.
In Christ’s name we pray,
Amen*

The Gift of Peace

Devotional by Pastor Kim Highfield

Liturgy by Michele Fletcher, Member of Coram Deo Church

Isaiah 9:5

*For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.*

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!

Peace is quite elusive. This was as true in the times of the Old and New Testaments as it is today. This is because war and peace start in the heart, and the conditions of our hearts have personal and global implications.

In the Old Testament, despite God's grace, mercy, love, and provision, Israel was frequently at war with God and with their neighbors. In the midst of this cycle of sin and repentance, rebellion and restoration, darkness and light, Isaiah prophesied a coming Prince of Peace, who would establish everlasting peace throughout the world. Approximately 700 years later, this Redeemer God was born as a man, announced by a multitude of the heavenly host saying, "... 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace

among those with whom he is pleased.” (Luke 2:14)

The peace Jesus brought was unexpected and completely disrupted the status quo. His peace is true and transformative. That’s because Jesus, the Word, is “... sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12) He performs surgery on our hearts that leads to peace with God and peace with others.

This Advent season, ask yourself, “What are the personal and global implications of my heart condition? Does the condition of my heart bring war or peace within me?”

Peace with God in your heart can spread to bring peace in your family, peace in your church, peace in your community, and peace in your state, nation, and world. Jesus’ peace “... surpasses all understanding ...” (Phillipians 4:7). Go beyond your internal peace and also live for the external peace promised in Isaiah 2:4, “He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

Throughout the coming Christmas season, reflect on these words from “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” written by Charles Wesley. May they bring joy to your heart and may you reflect their truth in everything you do. *Glory to the newborn King: peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!*

Merry Christmas!

Liturgy

Father,

*As we celebrate this season
and the birth of your blessed son,
we reflect on the beauty
of your amazing love.*

*From the beginning of time
you have remained steadfast
and filled with grace
despite our undeserving ways.*

*You have promised us eternal life
greater than we can imagine,
forgiveness that will end all
sorrow and doubt.*

*Guide our weary hearts
and restore our souls to you
so that we honor your name
above all others.*

Lord, we long for your embrace.

*We pray for the day
we enter heaven's gates
and find everlasting peace with you.*

In Christ's name we pray,

Amen

Christmas Morning Prayer

Written by Pastor Aaron Kuhns

Luke 2:8-14

And in the same 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, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 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 among those with whom he is pleased!"

Prayer

Our Father in heaven,

We thank you for another Christmas, a day to celebrate and remember.

Today, we marvel at the eternal plan of salvation, crafted before creation.

We rejoice in the promise of a Messiah given

to our forefathers in the faith.

*We praise the God who trains and corrects his
people through the law and the prophets.*

*We sing with joy to the Prince of Peace who got
off his throne to descend to earth.*

Son of God,

You took on flesh to be born, grow, and fulfill the law.

*Because of this, we have a High Priest who is able
to sympathize with our weaknesses.*

May we follow in your footsteps, loving the Father in daily obedience.

*You went to the cross, bearing our burdens and
paying our immeasurable debts.*

*Because of this, our atonement was accomplished
and we received the righteousness of Christ.*

*May we endure all trials knowing that you met our
greatest need and secured our salvation.*

You rose from the grave to reveal your victory and vindicate your name.

*Because of this, your followers took the good news to the nations,
facing trials, torture, and death.*

*May we learn to trust in your resurrection power
that is now at work within your people.*

You ascended in resurrected flesh to sit at the right hand of the Father.

*Because of this, we now have an ever-present
mediator who ensures our redemption.*

*May we lift our eyes from these earthly tents
to hope in our heavenly dwelling.*

Christmas Morning Prayer

Holy Spirit, we ask you to revive dead hearts to the glory of Christ.

*Gracious Savior, we ask you to intercede on
behalf of your brothers and sisters.*

*Heavenly Father, we ask that you bring your
kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.*

In the name of the exalted Son,

Amen

Christmas at Coram Deo Church

This Christmas, take some time out of your busy schedule to slow down and consider the message and meaning of Christmas. At Coram Deo Church, we will be offering multiple services to help us remember and savor the world-changing joy that only Christmas can bring us. We would love to have you join us.

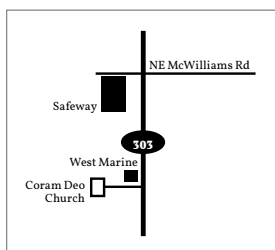
CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

Wednesday, December 24 at **2, 3, 4, & 5 p.m.**

SUNDAY SERVICES

Weekly at **8, 9:30, & 11:10 a.m.**

A Sunday School class is available during all services for kids who are 6 — 48 months old.



Directions available at
coramdeochurch.org/directions

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