

The final word is "peace." In following Paul's foregoing steps we can experience "the peace of God" in any circumstance we must face.

"Rejoice! I will say it again: Rejoice!"

We praise you, O God, for your "final word" of peace given to us in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Saturday, Dec. 12

Read Luke 3:7-18

from Rev. Kevin Bowers, Weirton—First Christian Church

I remember as a boy looking at the wonderful displays in the department store windows. Those many years ago we were amazed at the bright colors, wonderful lights, and robotic displays. I always wanted to be on the inside, but I always found myself on the outside looking in.

To be on the inside is still our fervent hope. Let us look into our hearts and lives and get ready for Christmas. Let us share what we have with others. Let us work at being more Christ-like. Let us live in an expectation of what the glory of the New Coming King brings.

The Good News is that you don't have to be on the outside, just looking at it - you can be on the inside. I encourage you this Advent to do just that. Stop looking on and join in!

*Dear God, thank you for this wonderful season.
Thank you for letting me be a part of it.*

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Week Two: PEACE

Sunday, Dec. 6

Read Luke 1:67-79

from Rev. Dawna Watkins, Bluefield—First Christian Church

My father is neither song writer nor singer for that matter, but I remember once getting a letter from him. In it contained all the hopes and joys of having been my father and for the God-led path that I might take as a young woman. Tears! Lots of joy-filled tears!

Zechariah had waited a long time to be a father and to learn that his son would have a dangerous yet holy calling as Christ's trumpeter. Tears! Lots of tears! Filled with the Spirit, he sang this praise song filled with all the hope and joy for this child and his God-led path as a young man. What if you received the Divine Word that your child would "go before the Lord to prepare the way...to give his people knowledge of salvation?"

In joy and in tears, O Giver of Peace, awaken us to the life-giving possibilities at work in our children...and in ourselves.

Monday, Dec. 7

Read Isaiah 61:1-11

from Rev. Mark Mills, Moundsville—First Christian Church

The title given to this text in the NIV is “The Year of the Lord’s Favor.” It begins with Isaiah speaking of his calling and beckons to us to take it personally. I read this and consider what God seems to have anointed or called me to be and to do.

Many of us might identify with living in a state of the “wandering generality.” In the face of a struggling economy, shootings in our schools, and blossoming reports of H1N1 infection, where is our hope?

The season of Advent is a time of preparation and hope. We journey toward Christmas, the birth of Light into darkness. Surely, with our faith in place and a positive sense of expectancy, we can say that we are journeying into the year of the Lord’s favor.

*Creating God, spark fervor within my heart.
Accomplish the purpose you have for me.*

Tuesday, Dec. 8

Read Psalm 85:1-7

from Rev. Sanford Downs, Parkersburg—First Christian Church

This psalm can be summed up in a one sentence prayer, “O Lord, you have helped us out of problems in the past, now please revive us again.” The season of Advent may be summed up in the same way. While it is a season of thanksgiving for what God has done in the past—sandwiched between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the celebration of the Incarnate Word coming to earth for us – it is mainly a season of penitence and preparation for both Christmas and the Second Coming.

Like this psalmist, we thank God for the Redemption that has come to us – and pray that during this season of Advent, God will revive us once again.

*O Lord, you have helped us out of problems in the past,
now please revive us again.*

Wednesday, Dec. 9

Read Psalm 85:8-13

*from Rev. Andrea Brownlee, Cameron—Big Run Christian Church
and Glen Easton—Fork Ridge Christian Church*

“Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.”

It is easy this time of year to turn toward God. We are focusing on the coming Christ Child and the peace and hope we see through his birth. In the coming weeks as we try to *re-turn* again to God let us open our ears as the psalmist did. Let us open our eyes and see the beauty of the peace we receive as the holy days of Christmas come closer.

Spend a moment now listening in the stillness for God’s word of peace to you.

*In the chaos of one moment and the stillness of the next,
speak peace to your people, O God, that we might rest in you.*

Thursday, Dec. 10

Read Zephaniah 3:14-20

from Rev. Donald Snyder, Beckley—First Christian Church

A promise is a serious matter. As kids, we cross our hearts as a sign of commitment. God has made promises to Israel regarding a coming deliverer, and Zephaniah sees the fulfillment of the great stream of promises for the people of God, even though in exile it may be hard to believe.

In the fulfillment of holy promises two aspects of sin must be covered. On the one hand, our sins of conscience (guiltiness) must be removed so that we can come to God in confident hope. On the other hand, the character of God must be appeased for the offense of sin (disobedience). This deliverance - promised by the prophets and born in the person of Jesus - renews us for action, frees us for activity, and saves us to serve.

*O God, you work to make peace with us at every turn of life.
We praise you for the peace that comes in Christ our Deliverer.*

Friday, Dec. 11

Read Philippians 4:4-7

from Rev. Billy Crane, Grafton—First Christian Church

Feeling down? Paul gives us some great words that will give you a lift.

The first word is "rejoice." He says we are to "rejoice in the Lord." He says it twice! He is rejoicing in what the Lord has already done for them, and in what His return would mean to His followers.

The next word is "prayer." We are to make "our requests to God," in harmony with His will, not our demands.

The next word is "thanksgiving." Let us always begin our requests with thanksgiving for what God has already done for us.