

The Church's Liturgical Year : Advent "Born, the Hope of the World."



CHPC's 2015 Advent Preaching Series has focused on a HOPE that the world is missing — the celebration

of Jesus Christ's birth and His second coming at the end of time. The Celtic symbol for Hope, adopted by St Patrick in the 5th Century combined a never-ending, interwoven circle (Jesus) with a Celtic knot — a symbol of God's love revealed by the Holy Trinity. This whole symbol predates the use of the cross by Christians.

1st Sunday of Advent, this part of the symbol was used. Looking like a candle on a stand, it pointed to Jesus Christ, the HOPE and *Light of the World* who comes to ordinary men and women ...people open to God.



2nd Sunday, we inverted the same symbol as a reminder of the plans of God in the hands of God Christ coming "In the fullness of time...." Jesus Christ was God's miracle for the Jews and the Gentiles.



3rd Sunday, the circle is for the ONE that is our HOPE, Jesus Christ. *All things were made through him.... In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.* (Jn 1:2-3) St Patrick in Ireland added the circle to an ordinary three leaf clover shape to teach about the Trinity. In the 1500's Martin Luther in Germany popularized using a circular Advent wreath with candles as a Christian-education device to teach of Jesus' birth.



4th Sunday. Surrounded by all the World's and the Church's trappings of Christmas, we may be tempted to forget the real picture



of Christ's birth. The manger sits in stark contrast to the glitter and glitz. Eugene Petersen's *Message* paraphrase puts it this way:

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son. (Jn 1:14)

Jesus came in the fullness of time, but it took a long time for this to happen. Around us, the World says, "Be happy...it's Christmas time." But many people this Christmas are lamenting — crying out, longing, hoping, asking God to show up in their neighborhood, or to show up in the circumstances of those they love and pray for, including themselves.

Have you felt tempted to turn away from God or to think you've been abandoned in your grief and struggle? Those who awaited Christ's birth more than 2000 years ago shared such feelings. Psalm 22 — verse 1 says, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?*

Consider those the Gospels listed as coming to Jesus, the baby in the manger. Look at the art above. One by one, put yourself in the place of

those who came. Why did they come? What were their hopes? What do the Gospel writers have to teach us?

Luke's gospel says God's angelic choir invited ordinary shepherds tending their flocks. Both the shepherds and the sheep they watched are significant. In the *Mishnah*, Jewish rabbis wrote that the Messiah would be revealed from Midgal Elder ('the tower of the flock') which was near Bethlehem. The shepherds working there took care of the temple-flocks meant for sacrifice. They came to find God's Lamb who would take away the sins of the world through His death and resurrection.

Matthew's gospel reports that wise men who were star-watchers from the East came in search of the 'King of the Jews.' It doesn't say how many came although *magi* is plural. The wise men brought three costly gifts—gold, frankincense and myrrh. They clearly did not visit Jesus when he was still lying in the manger, but God used a star to make sure they found the King they hoped to find.

God provided guidance for Joseph, Mary and all who sought Christ. He does the same today. The HOPE of the world IS come for us.

BY SHARLYN STARE, STARECVG@AOL.COM

RECIPES FOR A HOPE-FILLED CHRISTMAS

from Dr Gary Sweeten & the Sweeten Life Team

SCROOGE'S 'BAH! HUMBUG!' RECIPE OF PUT DOWNS

We might consciously or unconsciously engage in light or heavy put downs of our family and friends. Examples:

Maurie: *Hey Gary, I just received good news. I lost 10 pounds on my new diet!!*

Gary: *Really? How are the kids?* (Light put down — Laurie was rightly proud of his achievement, but Gary did not celebrate it and even changed the topic.)

A heavy put down is even worse.

Gary: *That is not nearly enough. When are you going to lose the rest?* (Not only did Gary ignore the good news, he made it into bad news! These kinds of interactions will bring an end to the 'Holly Jolly Christmas!')

ADD BUTTER TO BUILD-UP OTHERS.

Examples: Laurie: *Hey Gary, I lost 10 pounds on my new diet!* Gary: *That is great. Glad to hear it.* (A light Build Up!) or *That is fantastic. You are looking terrific. I am proud of you!* (A Strong Build Up matches Laurie's enthusiasm). By remembering to build up every relationship and not tear down any comment, you can alter the whole environment of your holidays.

TINY TIM'S HAPPY HOLIDAY RECIPE FOR GRATITUDE

God uses *gratitude* to change relationships. Prepare your ideas in advance so you can start conversations that reflect gratitude rather than a bad attitude. Ask gently:

1. What *good things* did you observe at home, work or church this past year?
2. Were there *nice things done for you* this year that caused you to be grateful?
3. Were you able to *do some nice things for others* this year?

These are recipes for a nicer, more peaceful Christmas. It will not be perfect, but it can be a terrific end of 2015 and a great [hope-full] start for 2016!

Adult Spiritual Formation for the winter will be a series of round table discussions on worship themes offered by the Session worship committee. This committee has been meeting for several months discerning what God wants from our worship. Building on what was presented at the congregational meeting in October we will offer 5 weeks of discussions led by team members and several others who regularly lead classes. No changes to the current worship services has been planned, but God has given this team a vision for worship that brings the congregation together within the framework already in place. Some of the topics will include: Expecting God's presence, Encountering and Experiencing God in worship, Struggling with conviction, and surrendering to God's will and Being sent into the world. There will be time for questions and open discussion. Come join us during the middle hour in Fellowship Hall, Jan. 10 - Feb. 7 at 10:10am. As a special bonus, look for an announcement next week for a preview of the class that will take place on Jan. 3.

Children & Youth Helpers in Worship

Children ages Kindergarten through third grade are invited to a Children's Worship service each week. Start off with your families in both the 9am and 11:15am service, then listen for the announcement dismissing the kids to their special service. Just before the sermon, children will be dismissed to their special study and worship time.

No Children & Worship today week. K-3rd graders will remain in the sanctuary for the entire service.

Next week's helpers are:
9:00am Jason M.
11:15am Lucas F.
The Vinson Family will greet

20. sunday

9:00am	Morning Prayer	Prayer Room
10:00am	Unified Christmas Service	Sanctuary
1:30pm	Adult Children of Alcoholics	Fireside Room
6:30pm	CRASH Christmas Party	BC 205 & 206

21. monday

1:00pm	Worship Team Rehearsal	Sanctuary
6:00pm	Community Prayer Walk Supper Club	House of Joy Fellowship Hall
7:00pm	Orchestra Rehearsal	Choir Room

22. tuesday

23. wednesday

6:30pm	ACA Meeting	BC 203
7:00pm	Bi-Polar Support Group	Great Hall

24. thursday

Christmas Eve Services

5:00pm Interactive Family Service
8:00pm Candlelight Communion Service

25. friday

Offices Closed

12:00pm	Feast Of Love Dinner	Fellowship Hall
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26. saturday

"LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION" POLICY

When parking, remember to keep your valuables and all parcels out of sight safely locked in your trunk. Thieves can even see through dark tinted glass. Don't tempt!

December 20 - December 26 calendar

TRADITIONAL ADVENT SYMBOLS: 1st — the first candle is the "Prophecy Candle" that reminds us of the prophets who foretold Christ's birth. God is faithful to fulfill His promises. "Our HOPE comes from the Lord." (Romans 15:12-13).

2nd — the "Bethlehem Candle" symbolizes Christ's birthplace as God promised. A star led the Wise Men to Christ child. Ask God to cause you to 'get ready' for Jesus. (Luke 3:4-6)

3rd — the "Shepherds Candle" is for the ordinary people who had their fear replaced joy and HOPE. (Luke 2:7-15).

4th — the "Angels' Candle" is lit for God's divine messengers. They came to declare 'Glory to God' first and then announce Jesus — God with us. The Savior of the World. (John 3:16-17) **Christmas Eve** — the "Christ Candle"...Hope of the World.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent/Christmas Decor: Honor your loved ones by contributing to poinsettia plants and greens used during December. Donors and honorees will be listed in the Christmas Eve Bulletins. *Contact Sam Routzon by Dec. 21st. Ext. 1125 or sroutzon@chpc.org.*

At the 5pm and 8pm Christmas Eve services, a special offering will be taken for Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), an organization that partners with congregations like ours to provide shelter, meals, and support services to families experiencing homelessness. Our children have been collecting coins for IHN this month as a way to practice their theme of compassion: caring enough to do something about someone else's need. Children may bring their coins to offer on Christmas Eve or to their class next Sunday. Please prayerfully consider how you can join them in this challenge by giving as God leads you on Christmas Eve.

JOINING THE CHPC FAMILY If you are interested in becoming a member at CHPC, our next New Covenant Partner Orientation Classes are: Sundays January 10, 17, 24 and 31 at 10:10am. To sign up or if have questions contact Michelle Hemsath 541-5676 Ext. 1123 or mhemsath@chpc.org or Pastor Dennis 541-5676 Ext. 1122 or dhall@chpc.org

Year End Giving - Timing matters! To be considered a 2015 contribution for tax purposes, your checks must be postmarked and dated before December 31, 2015 (if mailed). All other contributions including cash, must be received by December 31st.

Stock Gifts Are you planning on giving a stock gift to CHPC? Please let Heather Lethander, Finance Manager, know the details so it can be accurately credited to your account for tax purposes.

Mark your calendars for the College Hill Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration – Sunday, January 17, at 6:30pm at Good News Church of God in Christ at North Bend and Cary.

The Front Desk Ministry needs you! Do you like welcoming folks? Do you have a gift of hospitality? If so, we have the ministry opportunity for you. We are in need of subs for the front desk (during the week) for January-March. If you are interested contact June Elwood 681-1767 or Michelle Hemsath at 541-5676 ext 1123.

Give a Christmas Gift to our Global Workers! (1) Please pick up a red or green marked envelope from the table on Main Street next to the atrium doors. (2) Fill it with a donation of any amount, cash or check made out to CHPC. (3) Place it in the offering plate during worship or deliver it to the church office during the week. Each of our global workers will receive an Amazon gift card at Christmas. Call Mary Sue Verhagen 542-7829 if you have questions or would like to send something personal to a Global Worker. (these contributions are not tax deductible.)

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

There will be no Children and Worship during the 10am Unified Service today. This service will be a musical celebration of the Advent season and appropriate for families of all ages. Children ages 0-4 will have enrichment time in the nursery, and children Kindergarten and older will worship with their families in the service.

The December Theme in BLAST (K-3) and MEGABLAST (4-6) is Compassion: "caring enough to do something about someone else's need," and our memory verse is John 3:16: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life." Please pray this month that our children would learn to reflect God's character of compassion by caring for others' needs. For more information on what kids are learning as well as ideas on how to engage with them on this subject, check out the Parent Cue on chpc.org/forms.

CRASH Christmas Party is tonight, from 6:30-8:30pm for all students grades 7-12. Bring a white elephant gift: something inexpensive or that you already have sitting around your house. It can be anything fun, silly, or weird, but make it something you think someone would actually want. We will not have CRASH from 4-5:30pm.

Family New Years' Eve Party We are trying something new this year for families with elementary age children: a New Years' Eve party! From 6:30-8:30pm (eat dinner before you come), we will be at church playing games & having nerf gun battles. Older students are welcome if they are a part of a family with elementary age kids, but every family must have at least one adult attend. Bring a snack to share, a game your family enjoys, and your best nerf gun (we'll have extra if you need one).

SERVING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Feast of Love needs donations of ham and desserts for our Christmas Dinner. Please see Bev Graves to donate. Thanks!

Mitten Tree in the Atrium Please bring hats, mittens and gloves to place on our "Giving Trees" in the atrium. All the items will go to the children in area schools. Thanks, Feast of Love!!!

City Gospel Mission is looking for advocates for men moving out of homelessness. Individuals, couples, or families would get to know someone staying at City Gospel Mission shelter to support and encourage them as they make steps to move toward sustainable housing. After they move into permanent housing, they would continue to walk alongside them, helping them develop a support network through their local church home and community. If you are interested in finding out more about this opportunity, contact Andrew Wells: awells@chpc.org, 375-7909.

SPECIAL EVENT

Mark your calendars now! Thursday, December 31st from 10pm to Midnight, you are invited to a **Watch Night Service** at the House of Joy. The Watch Night Service can be traced back to 12/31/1862, in anticipation of Emancipation Proclamation actually becoming the law of the land. Come pray in the New Year at the House of Joy!

Prayer Page

"... without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers," Romans 1:9

CHPC Community

Melanie Alexander	Lee Alexander
Sue Baker	Frank Baker
Barbara Barber	Ann Bass
Erin Bartsch	John Bartsch

Staff

Heather Lethander - Finance / Human Resources

Officers/Leadership

Catherine Sanders - Deacon

Home Bound/Health Center

Margaret Kuyper

Ministries

Feast Of Love

Global Workers

In the Military

Adam Steveley US Army	Chris Jaeger USMC
Cary Jaeger USMC	Kirk Kalmbacher US Coast Guard
Zach Scharf Army National Guard	Nyjoel Baker US Air Force
Danny Holian US Navy Pilot	Will Connor US Army
Joey Nieberding US Army	Peter & Amanda Leugers US Navy
	Gus Carpenter US Marines

College/Career Students

Katy Verhagen	Luke Verhagen
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Condolences

Christian love and sympathy to Drew and Cathy Smith on the death of Drew's sister, Audrey McDonald. Please lift Randy, Audrey's husband, and the entire family in your prayers. Condolences may be sent to: Rev. and Mrs. Drew Smith
6532 Loiswood Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45224

Christian love and sympathy to Richard and Sharon McCutchen on the death of Richard's father, Kenneth. Arrangements pending. Condolences may be sent to: Mr. & Mrs. Richard McCutchen
1196 Cimmarron Trail, Cincinnati, OH 45238



December 20, 2015

FEAR NOT

The Victory

Preaching: Rev. Drew Smith

Welcome to College Hill Presbyterian Church

Thank you for worshiping with us today. Single, married, with children or not, there are many opportunities for knowing Christ, worshiping, personal growth and discipleship, service and ministry within the church and beyond the walls.

Visitors - Stop by the welcome table or the desk in the Atrium to find out more about College Hill Presbyterian. Return and become part of this dynamic Church Family.

Upcoming Services

Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Services 5pm Family/Interactive Service 8pm Candlelight/Communion Service
Dec. 27	2 Services - 9am and 11:15am

Today's Order of Worship

Prelude
Lighting of Advent Candle / Opening Prayer
Carols / Dance / Choir Anthem
1st Scripture Reading
Dance / Carol / Solo
2nd Scripture Reading
Choir Anthem / Dance / Carol
3rd Scripture Reading
Carol
Christmas Meditation / Pastoral Prayer
Offering
Choir Anthem
Charge and Blessing
Postlude

Available Help

Ushers have copies of the song lyrics for this service. Ushers can also provide help with wheelchairs and equipment for hearing assistance. Handicapped accessible restrooms are located off the exit hallway to the right side of the main platform. This exit also leads to handicapped parking spaces.

