



CHILDREN'S  
*Advent Devotionals*  
EBENEZER CHURCH 2019

Greetings in the Name of Christ.

Throughout history, the Church has marked time with its own calendar. Every year we celebrate six holy seasons including Pentecost, Easter, Lent, Epiphany, and Christmas, but the Christian year begins with the season of Advent. Advent means to “come near.” It is during this season we prepare for the coming near of our God through the event of Jesus Christ.

Like Lent, Advent is a season of spiritual longing as we make our hearts ready to receive God’s greatest gift to the world, the gift of Jesus. These pages are dedicated to helping us in our preparations during this Advent season. The staff members of Ebenezer wrote these pages. Some are teachers in our Preschool. Some work for KidzRock, manage our facilities, run technology, manage our office. These are the voices of God’s people designed to help us hear once more the voice of God. Our prayer is that this daily devotional guide will help all of us focus on the majesty, beauty, humility and life-changing power that entered the world when God became flesh.

May Emmanuel richly bless you and your family throughout this holy season.

In Christ,

Pastor Rob

**Sunday, December 1, 2019**

**Read Psalm 84:5-12**

*“For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere...”  
Psalm 84:10*

When was the last time you played Hide and Seek with your brother, sister, or friends? I used to love playing this game as a child, especially outside on summer nights. Isn't it an amazing feeling to run off in different directions, find the best hiding spot ever, and then just wait silently hoping you will never be found? It may take a long time, but someone always seems to find us, don't they?

When it comes to God, we sometimes try to play this game with him too. We don't want God to find out everything about us, so we try to hide parts of ourselves from him. Just like in Hide and Seek, we think that if we find the very best hiding spot, God won't find out that we weren't nice to a classmate at school, that we took something that wasn't ours, or that we said a bad word when mom wasn't listening.

Yet, God is the best “seeker” ever. Psalm 84 reminds us that we cannot hide from him no matter how good of a hiding spot we think we have found. I think God doesn't want us to run away and hide, but to run toward Him and tell him everything instead. God promises to love us just the same and promises that we are safest in his presence.

This Advent, as you wait for Christmas, remember that Jesus came into the world because he loves you so much. There is nothing you can do to change that so you will never have to hide from God.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for loving us so perfectly. Thank you for not hiding from us but instead coming to us on Christmas Day. And thank you for reminding us that we never have to hide from you. Amen.**

Author: Monica Reynolds, Pastor

**Monday, December 2, 2019**

**Read Genesis 8:1-19**

*“But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.” Genesis 8:1*

In this story, Noah was on the ark with the animals as the rain came down for forty days and forty nights and covered the whole earth. After it stopped raining, God made a wind blow over the earth to dry up the rain. Slowly, slowly, slowly the water went down.

One day, Noah opened a window and sent a bird, called a dove, out of the ark. If the dove returned to the ark, Noah would know that there was no dry land. The dove came back to the ark, so Noah waited another seven days to send the dove out again. This time, the dove returned with a green leaf in its beak. The water was going down, but it wasn't time to get off the ark yet. Noah waited another seven days and sent the dove out again, but this time the dove did not return. It was time for Noah, his family, and the animals to leave the ark.

Noah probably felt very afraid, but he knew that God would take care of his family and the boatload of animals. God did not forget about them and He would never forget about us. God keeps His promises.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for keeping Noah, his family and the animals safe. We know you keep us safe, too. Amen.**

Authors: Donna Kenkel and Alana Lynch, Preschool Office

**Tuesday, December 3, 2019**

**Read Genesis 9: 12-16**

*“I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth...Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” Genesis 9:13, 16*

Do you like rainy and thunder-filled days? The kind of day that keeps you in the house and you can't go out to play? Of course not, it's so much fun to be outside! Here's another question: do you like rainbows? Did you know that all the beautiful colors that paint the sky are God's amazing creations? The colors are formed by sunlight shining through the rain. Sometimes, you can see rainbows form near waterfalls, or when you are playing in the water coming out of a hose.

So, what is the connection between rainbows and God? God asked Noah to build an ark and God used the ark to save Noah, his family and two of every living creature. Then, He sent a flood to cover the earth. After the flood, God said to Noah and his sons, *“I now establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you.”* God showed this promise with a rainbow! When we look up and see a rainbow, we can know that God will never again send a flood to cover the earth!

So, the next time you hear the thunder and see the rain, be sure to look for a rainbow, and know it is a symbol of hope and love from God.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for the promise of everlasting life with you, and thank you for the rainbows after the storms. Amen**

Authors: Dana Czzowitz, Office Manager, and Ashley Czzowitz, KidzCare Worker

**Wednesday, December 4, 2019**

**Read Psalm 124**

*“Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” Psalm 124:8*

This message is all about how God helps us. He saves us, not just so that we can go to Heaven one day, but He also helps and saves us while we live here on Earth.

Have you ever had a hard time learning how to do something new? Have you ever been in a scary situation or had something happen that made you sad? Those things aren't fun, but the good thing is that we never have to handle them by ourselves.

God is always with us and He is the best helper we could ever have. Sometimes He might send us helpers here on Earth, like teachers, parents, friends, firefighters or police officers. Other times He might handle our problem all by Himself, because He's a great big God and He can take care of anything!

All we need to do is remember to talk to Him and ask for His help, and then watch for His answer. None of our problems are too big for God to solve, and none of them are too small for Him to care about.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for loving me and caring about everything that happens in my life. Thank you for your promise to always be with me and to help me. Please help me remember to talk with you, ask for your help, and trust you while I watch for your answer. Amen.**

Authors: Mandy Park and Gayle Thyrring, Preschool Teachers

**Thursday, December 5, 2019**

**Read Acts 1:21-26**

*“So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, ‘Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these you have chosen...the lot fell to Matthias.’” Acts 1:23-24, 26b*

In this story, Jesus has just been crucified and resurrected. A group of about 120 people have gathered to pray, including the 11 remaining apostles and Jesus’ mother. Peter stands up and reminds everyone that a 12<sup>th</sup> apostle needs to be chosen. Matthias and Barsabbas, two very faithful men, were nominated and the group prayed to God to lead them to who He has chosen. God chooses Matthias and he became the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle.

Have you ever not been chosen for something that you really wanted or worked hard for? Imagine how Barsabbas must have felt after God chose Matthias. Possibly a little sad, maybe even a little mad or jealous. After all, Barsabbas had done everything Jesus asked of him and there was no reason why he should not have been chosen; EXCEPT, God had other plans for him. We may not always know why God puts us where we are in life, but ultimately, He knows what is best for us.

When something does not go our way, it is certainly disappointing. It is hard to feel whole when the opportunity of reward is missed. Finding the silver-lining is often overwhelming, yet God asks us to trust him. Trusting God means believing He will keep His promise to us. It does not require knowing the “why” or “when,” but it does require trust that God is working in you and through you according to His time. Even when things do not go our way, we trust Him anyways.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for walking beside me in life. Help me to be strong and courageous and know the plan you have for me. Amen.**

Authors: Kelli Julian and Sara Swanson Preschool Teachers

**Friday, December 6, 2019**

**Read Acts 13:16-25**

*“Of this man’s posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.” Acts 13:23*

The book of Acts is about the work that Jesus’ disciples did helps us understand the actions of the early Christians just after Jesus returned to Heaven. This story explains a speech that Paul and Barnabas gave while they were in a city called Galatia. In this story, Paul and Barnabas were explaining the history of God’s people. This was very important because it helped people understand who Jesus was, and what Jesus came to do for all the people on Earth.

God wanted His people to know their history. This allowed them to see that God was preparing everyone for Jesus’ arrival for a long time. Paul and Barnabas teaching this to the people in Galatia gave them a chance to know who Jesus was.

Knowing about Jesus was just as important in those times as it is today. That’s why we study the history of Jesus and lots of other people who came before him in the stories of the Bible.

**Prayer: Lord thank you so much for loving us. I want to also thank you for sending teachers to explain to us about Jesus. Please help us to know Jesus as a close personal friend that we can talk to when we are happy and when we are sad. Amen**

Author: Keith Priest, Christian Counselor

**Saturday December 7, 2019**

**Read Isaiah 40 1-11**

*“Comfort, comfort for my people, says God.” Isaiah 40:1*

What happened before this reading in the Bible is that the people were being told to leave Babylon. Bad things happened in Jerusalem because of the people's sin. These verses are all about comfort and the people knowing that they are going to be okay because God is by their side.

Then a voice calls again telling everyone to prepare for God. If they do what they are told, then they will see God's glory. It is our job to notice His glory and celebrate it by sharing it with others and living the way He would want us to. We need to love God, and love others around us.

Why are people like grass? Grass doesn't live forever, and it cannot make it through every condition. Our faithfulness to God is a flower in the field. When we become weak and stray away from God, our flower falls down, but with God's word and His guidance, we can stay strong and make it through anything.

What do you do when you are worried about something and what is your way of getting comfort? The best way to feel comforted is by reading God's word or turning to Him. No matter what you have done or what is going on in your life, God will always love you and be by your side, guiding you down His path so that you are able to be there for others just like He is there for you.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for always being here for me and holding onto me to make me feel safe. Help me remember that whenever something is wrong, I can turn to you for help. Thank you for always loving me, even though sometimes I make mistakes. Amen.**

Author: Kya Bosserman, KidzCare Worker

**Sunday, December 8, 2019**

**Read 1 Kings:19-1-12**

*“And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.” 1 Kings 19:12*

Elijah was a prophet long before Jesus was born. A prophet was a person who God spoke to and God taught them how to share God’s message of love. Sometimes they could even perform miracles for God! But not everyone believed in God, and some of those people, like Jezebel, wanted to kill people who were spreading God’s message.

Elijah was afraid that Jezebel was going to kill him, so he ran away and hid. God’s angels provided food and water for Elijah so he had enough energy to go to a cave where God wanted to talk to him. After a strong wind, and an earthquake, and big fire, God spoke to Elijah in a powerful whisper and told him that he needed to go back and keep sharing God’s message with the people.

Have you ever been asked to do something that was scary, but you knew was the right thing to do? Maybe it was introducing yourself to a new kid in your class or talking to one of your friends about how much Jesus loves them. Elijah was scared too, but he quit hiding and went back to doing the work that God asked him to do. Maybe when you’re scared the next time, you can say to yourself, “I can be like Elijah!”

**Prayer: Lord thank you for being with me when I’m scared and for showing me that even though Elijah was scared, he kept on doing good work. Help me to learn how to share your love with others, because I know it is the right thing to do!**

**Amen**

Author: B.J. Priest, Executive Director

**Monday, December 9, 2019**

**Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12**

*“Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.”*

*1 Thessalonians 4:1*

This passage is part of a letter from a special man of God named Paul, to the people at a church in an ancient place called Thessolonica. It is all about the way God wants us to live, and the things He wants us to do that make Him happy.

God sent Paul and his helpers to the church to teach the people how to live for Him, and also to teach them not to do some things that were not pleasing to Him.

God wants us to do those same things Paul talked about back then, today. All of these good things make God happy and they also make other people notice something special about us, and that usually gives us a chance to tell them about Jesus.

We won't always get everything right, but it's kind of like getting really good at a sport or something we love to do. Once a coach teaches us how to do it, when we practice the right things more and more, we get better at it. We'll never be perfect, but we'll always try our best to do the things we know are right, and our coaches and teachers will help us learn from any mistakes.

**Prayer: Dear God, I want to do the things that make you happy. Thank you for the people you've put in my life to teach me, and for forgiving me when I mess up. Please help me to keep learning and trying, so more people can learn about you because of me.**

Author: Amanda Park, Preschool Teacher

**Tuesday, December 10, 2019**

**Read Romans 15:14-21**

*Paul said ... “Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God” Romans 15:17*

In today’s reading, Paul is reminding us that we are to be teachers. We are to teach everyone about Jesus Christ our Savior. We are to spread the good news and what is wonderful is that those who have not even seen God will believe.

Think about it: Would you like to be a teacher? In our Bible reading Paul says, “You are a Teacher!” You just need to tell a friend or neighbor about Jesus.

Things to do: Act like a teacher. Teachers are kind and polite to their students. They say nice words to everyone.

Craft idea: Make a card that tells a friend or neighbor that Jesus loves them forever.

Family Time: Sing songs or play music that glorifies our God. Song ideas are, “Go Tell it on the Mountain” and “Glory in the Highest.” Tell everyone you are the teacher and everyone in your family will have fun singing.

**Prayer: Dear God, you have made all people and we know you are good. Thank you for your grace and care. I ask that you make me brave to teach others about your love every day.**

**Amen**

Authors: Teresa Cole and Arlene Titus, Preschool Office

**Wednesday December 11, 2019**

**Read Matthew 12:33-37**

*“Either make a tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit...Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks...” Matthew 12:33, 34*

Have you ever squeezed too much toothpaste out of the tube then tried to scoop it back in? It’s impossible! If you have never tried this, you should do it (with your parent’s permission, of course). Our words are a lot like toothpaste: once they are out, they can never go back in. Sometimes we say things out of anger or sadness and regret it later. Have you ever said something when you were mad that hurt somebody’s feelings? We can always apologize and ask for forgiveness, but wouldn’t it be better if we never said those angry words at all? Our words are powerful tools and we must handle them with care. They have the ability to lift somebody up or tear them down. How have you been using your words?

Jesus reminded everybody that they should always show kindness and love. God wants you to know that no matter what anybody else says, He loves YOU! But, remember, He created everyone for a purpose. We are all His children and He commands us to love one another. Even if there is somebody you don’t like, God wants you to be kind. Sometimes that can be difficult. When somebody makes you angry or sad, it is easy to want to act out. But, try to remember that God calls us all to display His love and treat everyone with kindness. Jesus gives us a good example of what to do when He was very angry when people were doing things in God’s temple that they shouldn’t do. He quoted the Bible and defended God’s Temple. If you keep His love in your heart it will be easy to react in a loving way, regardless of the situation.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for loving me. Please give me the wisdom to choose my words carefully. I know that my words reflect the feelings I hold in my heart. Help me listen for your voice and feel your love from deep within. Amen.**

Authors: Becky Howell and Ashley Lingafelt, Preschool Teachers

Thursday, December 12, 2019

Read Psalm 146:5-10

*“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise...He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9*

This poem is a beautiful reminder of how blessed we are to be loved and helped by God. We can have hope in our hearts because of all the ways He wants to take care of us. He is strong and powerful, and so is His love for us. He sees us and knows what is happening in our lives, and He wants what is best for us.

As we grow, there are times in our lives when we make bad choices. My little boy Jack asked me one day, “Does God love me even when I do not nice things?” I was excited to tell him, “Yes! Absolutely!” God is sad—just like your mommy and daddy or teacher—when you make bad choices, but He is always ready to forgive when we tell Him that we are sorry.

How wonderful to know that our powerful God loves us enough to forgive us for the not-nice things we do. Even more, God is patient with us while we make mistakes and waits (and waits and waits) for us to say we are sorry. Do you ever argue with a brother or sister? Is it hard to share toys or take turns with a friend? God knows! He is proud of you when you say you are sorry and helps you to make better choices.

God also showed He loves us by sending baby Jesus to Earth so that we could be forgiven for the bad things we do. We can have hope in our hearts because of Jesus—that’s why Christmas is such a big deal! It is the time when we celebrate God’s love for us through the gift of His Son.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for loving and helping me. Please forgive me when I do not-nice things and help me to make better choices next time. Please help me to be a kind friend and member of my family. Thank you for the gift of Jesus.**

Author: Robyn Wallace, Preschool Teacher

**Friday, December 13, 2019**

**Read Psalm 146:5-10**

*“The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!” Psalm 146:5-10*

Have you ever had one of those days? A day that parallels the childhood classic, Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day? Have you indemnified Alexander by starting your day in a bad mood? Perhaps it was not your fault that you didn't get enough sleep or you had a bad dream, forgot to set the coffee pot or had a barking dog wake you up before the alarm? If you forgot to wave your “Praise the Lord Hands” while looking for your car keys or tennis shoes -you are NOT alone!

Some people hide their moods better than others while others share their bad mood openly and sparingly. Wearing those BIG feelings on your shoulders like a set of football pads may not protect you from the powerful roar of jealousy, bitterness, anger and fear. BIG feelings can strangle the happy from your day and become powerful instruments in your response to the frustrations of the day. Only God's shoulders were meant to carry that load.

Think about a time when you did not feel like giving God praise. Looking back on that time, how did you feel? Perhaps sad and angry? Tired and Burdened? Alexander had many emotions during his terrible day. He made mistakes and even thought of running away to Australia. But don't worry, through the terrible, horrible, no good and very bad days, God is with you! He will make any situation new again.

**Prayer: God, we praise you for all that you are. We praise you that on our very worst day, you are faithful! You keep your promises and are a comfort on a seemingly terrible, horrible and no good day. Help us to put our hope in you Lord. Amen**

Authors: Kim Bignell and Kelly Abbe, Preschool Teachers

**Saturday, December 14, 2019**

**Read Luke 3:1 – 18**

*“...Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming...” Luke 3:4*

What do you and your family do to get ready for Christmas? Do you decorate a tree, make cookies or wrap presents?

There is one other thing that is important to remember to do when you are getting ready for Christmas. It’s the most important thing of all! You need to remember to prepare for Jesus! After all, celebrating that Jesus was born and came to be our Forever Friend is the entire reason we have Christmas.

In our scripture, John is helping us understand that to prepare for Jesus, we need to be sorry for our sins (the things we did wrong on purpose) and ask God to forgive us for these things. John also says we need to live to please God. He is telling us that Jesus is coming to be our Forever Friend. John is telling us that Jesus will give us a relationship with God and nothing will get in the way of this.

How should someone live who knows Jesus? They should live a life that looks to God for direction. They should have concern for others, show love to those around them and be honest. They should faithfully help others. It isn’t just about “me” anymore; it’s about letting others see God in you.

With Jesus as our Forever Friend, we have a heart for God. that results in showing his love to others. Let’s use Christmas as a time to show others Jesus! How will you do that this year?

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for sending your son, Jesus, to give us life changing hope and a relationship with you. Help us to live lives pleasing to you. Amen.**

Author: Shari Parsons, Director of Children’s Ministries

**Sunday December 15, 2019**

**Read Acts 27:13-34**

*“So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.” Acts 27:25*

In this story, Paul was on a boat headed for Rome. After a few days sailing, a very strong windstorm began. The storm lasted for many days. The sailors became scared and threw things into the sea to keep the boat from sinking. Paul told the sailors not to worry because an angel came to him in the night and told him the boat would be wrecked but all the people on the boat would be okay.

Big storms can be very scary! How do storms make you feel? Do you go find your mom or dad during a storm? Do you have a safe place in your house you can go during a big storm? Parents help us to feel safe during storms because they have learned how to protect us.

The sailors on the ship knew how to protect the people and the ship during a storm. But, this storm was so big, that even the sailors were scared. That is why Paul told them what the angel had said. Paul trusted God. Paul knew that God would do what He said He would do. Paul knew that God would take care of them.

The next day the big boat crashed near an island. All the sailors and people swam to shore. Everyone was safe. Paul was thankful God had taken care of them.

Why was everyone afraid on the boat? What did the angel tell Paul? Paul showed God’s love to all the people on the boat when he told them about God’s promise to keep them safe. What are ways we can show God’s love to the people we meet?

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for the Bible and the story of Paul shipwrecked at sea. Help us to not be scared, but to have courage. We know that you love us and keep your promises. Also Lord, please help us show your love to the people we meet by telling them how you want to take care of them too. Amen.**

Authors: Michele Potter and Katie Pack, Preschool Teachers

**Monday, December 16, 2019**

**Read Acts 5:12-16**

*“Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.” Acts 5:14*

Have you ever played follow the leader? The game where you follow the person in front “wherever he may go?” Perhaps you’ve followed the crowd out of curiosity just to see what the hype is all about. In Acts 5, the Apostles were regularly displaying signs and wonders amongst the people. As the wonders multiplied, so did the believers -*More than ever, believers were added to the Lord. Amongst those gathering were the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits.* What a beautiful gathering of faith and devotion to the work of God.

How are you leading? Are you putting the love of Jesus on display? When you are brave and bold in your faith it is captivating. Your audience of family and friends feel the ripple effect of your profession of faith.

The Apostles exhibited, preaching the Gospel was so much more than lip service. It was necessary to provide supportive action. Peter and the Apostles put the words of Jesus on full display as they healed the sick. It was a tangible display of God’s power and love at work. How can God use you? How can you be the very best “leader wherever you go?” By prayer, petition and actions that display the words of God.

**Dear God, help us to be as bold as Peter and his Apostles to be your hands and feet, to be mindful of our words and actions. Help us showcase love at school, home and in our community and be the kind of leader others want to follow. Keep my heart pure as healing begins from the inside out. Amen.**

**Authors:** Samantha DiCola and Erin Healy, Preschool Teachers

**Tuesday, December 17, 2019**

**Read Jude 1:17-25**

*“But you dear friends... keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life.”*

*Jude 1:20-22*

Jude was Jesus’ brother who warned Christians about teachers whose lessons were not true. When Jude wrote this book, false teachers had crept into the church and were saying untrue things about Jesus and the things He said and taught.

Has there been a time when a friend of yours said, “I don’t believe in Jesus?” Or maybe you’ve seen something on TV that has you questioning things. How do those things make you feel? Jude reminds us to build our faith up, to pray, keep loving God, to look for opportunities to show mercy and to be compassionate to other. Take your questions to God, and don’t worry, He can handle our hardest questions.

The closing words of Jude’s book speaks of the hope and confidence we are assured of because of the glory, majesty, power and authority of Jesus. One easy way you can help your friends to experience this hope and confidence is by inviting them to Sunday School. It is possible that your friend may not know about Jesus and the sacrifice He made for them? In Jude’s letter he called the people “Beloved” because we are the beloved children of God. We can take heart in that truth!

**Prayer: Dear Lord, open up my heart to remember you are our Father and you sent your beloved Son for us. Help me remember that we must continue to build our faith by praying to you and loving you. Help us show mercy and compassion to others so we can do what you commanded us to do. In your saving name, Amen.**

Author: Crissy Sharon, KidzCare Director

**Wednesday, December 18, 2019 Read Matthew 8:14-17, 28-34**

*“...He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.” Matthew 8:17*

Jesus goes to Peter’s house where he heals Peter’s mother-in-law from a fever. Word spreads of His good works and He goes on to heal many others in the town. Later in the chapter, Jesus travels to another town and heals two men possessed by demons. The demons leave the men and possess a herd of pigs that then run away. In this case, the townspeople ask Jesus to leave.

Why was Jesus popular in one town for healing someone and unpopular for doing the same thing in another town. It may seem silly, but the difference was the pigs. In the second story, the swineherds lost their pigs and therefore the money they would have earned by selling the pigs. In one story when Jesus didn’t bother the people, they wanted Him around. In the story where they lost their pigs because of Jesus, they wanted Him to leave.

I know sometimes I feel this way. When following Jesus is easy, I like to have Him as a part of my life. When I have to give up something to have Jesus in my life, it isn’t so easy to follow him. The choice is hard, but I know if I follow Jesus, He will always be there for me when I’m sick or in need.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for taking care of me when I am sick or in need. Please help me remember that the right choice isn’t always the easiest choice but having you in my life is always worth it. Never let me forget that you choose me. Amen.**

Author: Michelle Joyner, Communications Director

**Thursday, December 19, 2019**

**Read Galatians 3:23-29**

*“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Galatians 3:26-27*

In Chapter 3 of Galatians, the Apostle Paul wants to make sure that the people know that faith in God is all He requires in order to be a part of God’s family. He was concerned that they might think this gift from God was given because they had followed the laws. A group of false teachers were trying to lure the Galatians into believing that they must follow the law of Moses in order to be considered Christians. Paul gives them reasons as to why it does not make sense for the Galatians to follow the law.

The Galatians had experienced the arrival of the Holy Spirit after they believed and witnessed miracles. This did not happen due to the Galatians following any laws, but simply because they believed that Jesus died for their sins and rose again. All people, regardless of their heritage, race, or gender, who accept Christ are a part of God’s Kingdom. It’s not something that we earn through good deeds or by following rules.

When we are young, we follow the rules that our parents and teachers have created to protect us. As we grow older, we are motivated by our faith in God. We choose to treat others with love to spread God’s love throughout our community. Every time we come in contact with another person, we have the opportunity to share God’s love with them through our words and actions. It’s important to remember that regardless of our actions, our faith in God is what matters.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for including me in your Kingdom. Help me to show your love to others through my actions. I want to shine your light on earth. Amen.**

Authors: Nadine Rottner and Brooke Yount, Preschool Teachers

**Friday, December 20, 2019**

**Read 2 Samuel 7:18-22**

*“Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and prayed, Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And now, Sovereign Lord, in addition to everything else, you speak of giving your servant a lasting dynasty! Do you deal with everyone this way Sovereign Lord?” 2 Sam 7:18*

David started life as a shepherd-boy. His great skill with a slingshot helped him defeat a giant named Goliath--even when all the King's soldiers were too scared to fight!

He was very musical and played a harp. He wrote poems and songs and some of them are still read and sung today! You can find them in an Old Testament book called “Psalms.” Even though young and not very tall, God could see that on the inside he was bold and full of faith. So he was chosen to be the King of Israel.

In today's Bible story, King David just got exciting news from God through a man named Nathan who told David that he was going to be a strong leader over Israel and have a lasting family line in God's Kingdom. King David was praying to God thanking Him for this wonderful gift and news. He was in amazement of God! David's family was quite big and years later, Jesus was born into David's family!

David kept calling God “Sovereign,” meaning God has control over all things. Have you ever received a gift or good news that made you so excited and thankful all at once? Maybe you were going to be a big brother or sister or maybe you were going on an exciting vacation? How you felt in that moment is exactly how King David felt and knew he needed to thank God for it.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for all you do for me and my family. Thank you for watching over me and the gifts that you give me so I can be a strong leader for you just like King David. Thank you for loving me! In Jesus' name, Amen!**

Author: Chrissy Leathers, Director of Connections

**Saturday, December 21, 2019**

**Read 2 Samuel 7:23-29**

*“And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant.”*

*2 Sam 7:28*

In these verses, King David is thanking God for keeping His promises to make David the King of Israel, helping him, and making his kingdom and his family grow very big. David had to wait a long time to become King after the day God told him He would, but eventually, in God’s perfect timing, He did exactly what He said He was going to.

Has someone ever made a promise to you and then you had to wait so long for it to happen, you thought maybe they forgot? Or maybe they did forget or they changed their mind, and they never did the thing they told you they would? Have you ever forgotten about or broken a promise you made to someone else?

Broken promises usually end up with us having hurt feelings and maybe not trusting the person who made the promise, but with God, we never have to worry about that.

Everything God says is true and He keeps every promise He makes. Sometimes it might feel like He’s taking a long time, but He will never forget about us, leave us, or lie to us, and He will always do what He says he’s going to do. We can **always** trust God.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for being the One that I can always believe, always trust, and always count on. Please help me to remember, even if it takes longer than I want, that you will keep your promise and do what you said. Amen.**

Author: Mandy Park, Preschool Teacher

**Sunday, December 22, 2019**

**Read Ephesians 4:1-6**

*“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” Ephesians 4:2*

“We’re #1! We’re #1! We’re #1! We’re #1!” Have you ever heard sports teams or fans shouting these words? Or maybe you have been a part of a team that has shouted them? At times, it is so easy to get caught up in winning and the excitement that we forget there is another side: Have you ever been on the team that has lost or seen the disappointed faces on the other side? The hurt and sadness are hard to hide sometimes.

In this letter, Paul reminds us that Jesus wants us to live a life that is worthy of being His follower and show that we love Jesus by being examples of His love each and every day. He wants us to love each other by putting others first ALL the time by always showing kindness and being patient and gentle with others.

Paul tells us how to act, but did he have an annoying brother or sister who bugged him all the time? Did he have a classmate who was different from him and who bothered him? Did he have a friend who was better than him at school or sports? We don’t know all the details about Paul’s life, but we do know that he met many different people and faced many hard times, and still Paul tried to follow Jesus’ example of showing love with patience and gentleness. How can **you** show that kind of love today? Who can **you** be patient with today?

Back to “We’re #1!” Later in Paul’s letter, he tells us that there is **one** body that we all get to be a part of. That **one** body has **one** Lord and **one** God and Father of all. Being part of God’s family is the best **one** of all. So let’s ALL chant: “We’re # **one**!”

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for all the special blessings you have given to me. Help me, Lord, to show kindness and love to everyone by being patient and gentle with them. Amen.**

Authors: Sarah Chapple and Jeanne Durham, Preschool Teachers

**Monday, December 23, 2019**

**Read Luke 1:46B-49**

*“My soul glorifies the Lord; and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me.” Luke 1:46-49*

It's two days before Christmas and Jesus Christ's birthday. We've put up our trees, decorated our houses, and made or bought gifts to exchange with our friends and family. Do you know what I like most about Christmas? It's the music! What is your favorite Christmas song? Is it "Away in a Manger," "Silent Night", or the "Little Drummer Boy?" I don't think there is any better way to express the love and joy we feel during this magical season than through music.

After Mary was visited by the angel that told her she would be the mother of baby Jesus, she hurried home to tell her cousin Elizabeth. She couldn't wait to tell someone of the amazing news of the baby that would one day save the world! When Elizabeth heard the news, she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!"

Mary was so happy she broke into joyful praise to God. Her words have come to be known as "Mary's Song" or "Magnificat." This Christmas Eve, take some time to listen to the music and just like Mary, celebrate the good news of Jesus!

**Prayer: Dear God, we are thankful for your gift of music. Through music, we can sing of your greatness. Thank you for always loving us. Amen**

Authors: Ashley Czzowitz, KidzCare Worker and Dana Czzowitz, Office Manager

**Tuesday, December 24, 2019**

**Read Psalm 96**

“...Sing a new song to the Lord!” Psalm 96:1

It's Christmas Eve!! Are you getting excited about celebrating Christmas? Today's Bible reading was written by King David (remember David and Goliath? Yes, that David when he was grown up.) David is encouraging us to praise God with instruments, music and dance.

Why should we praise God like this? To being with, God created us. He provides everything we need in life. He has given us our families, homes, food and friends. He is glorious and strong. He watches over us every day. And, most importantly, he gave us His ONLY son, Jesus.

Jesus came to Earth to teach us how to have a relationship with God. He taught us how to love others, how to help others and that we are an important part of God's world.

David closes out the psalm by saying that even the heavens, earth and seas should rejoice! Why don't you rejoice on this Christmas Eve by making some paper instruments, singing a Christmas song and dancing around to say, "Happy Birthday, Jesus!"

Take some paper and make some cones to shout praises through. Grab some Christmas bells to shake or make a drum. Then ask your parents if you can use some Christmas music to have your celebration.

Merry Christmas to you.

**Prayer: Dear God, we praise you and honor you not only by our actions but with song. Today we sing praises of Christmas and Jesus' birth as celebrate all that you made. We love you, God. Amen.**

Author: Shari Parsons, Director of Children's Ministries

**Christmas Day 2019**

**Read Luke 2:1-20**

*“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” Luke 2:10b-11*

Do you ever find yourself afraid? When I was a little boy, I had a bad dream that scared me. I remember having it a couple of different nights in a row. I would wake up and my mom would come to sit with me for a while. Sometimes we are scared by bad dreams. Sometimes we are afraid of the dark, of new challenges, of things changing.

It doesn't matter how young or old we are, fear can be part of our lives. Did you know that there is one thing God tells us more than anything else in the Bible? Can you guess what it is?

The thing God says to us most often in the Bible is “Do Not Be Afraid.” That is so special. No matter what we face, God says don't be afraid.

On this Christmas Day we hear the angels talking to the shepherds. They say, “Do not be afraid.” Then, the angels tell the shepherds that Jesus is born. What they actually say is that the birth of Jesus will cause “great joy for all people.”

There were some scary things in the world, so, like a loving parent, God came to be with us and to help us. Because Jesus was born our fears have been taken away and joy has been given to all the world.

Rejoice. The Savior is born.

**Prayer: Dear God, thank you for loving us so much that you sent Jesus to take away all of our fears and fill the whole world with joy. When we are afraid, help us to remember Jesus is always with us, and help us have a very merry Christmas. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Author: Rob Lough, Pastor

