Christmas at Hudson First



2026

Christmas At Hudson First

November 18th: HF Midweek Fall Session Ends

November 25th-26th Church Office Closed

November 29th: Advent Begins
Lottie Moon Week Of Prayer/Offering taken up all month
Cookie Collection for Homebound Ministry

December 6th: Baptism and Toy Store Prayer and Toy Collections

December 12th and 13th: Christmas Spectacular @ 6PM Life Center.

December 14th-18th: Toy Store Week

December 20th: Family Christmas Pictures
LC Dining Room 8:30AM-12:00PM / Treat Bags

December 24th: Christmas Eve Service @ 7PM in Sanctuary

December 25th: Christmas Day Lunch

December 24th-28th: Church Office Closed

Jan 4th: Church Office Closed



The season of Advent is one of the most cherished times in the Christian calendar. It is a sacred period of anticipation, reflection, and preparation, leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Advent invites us to pause amidst the busyness of life and focus deeply on the true meaning of Christmas. This season calls us not only to remember the historic event of Christ's birth – the nativity – but also to embrace the ongoing hope, peace, joy, and love that Jesus brings into our lives and the promise of His imminent return.

We have created this Advent devotional to help you with your spiritual journey during Christmas. Through daily scripture readings, meditations, prayers, and involvement with your children, these devotions will guide you into a richer understanding of the promises fulfilled in Christ's coming and the sure hope we have for our futures, including the promise of His Second Coming. Our prayer is that these devotions, along with your weekly attendance at worship services during the Christmas season, will transform your hearts and minds and make space for God's presence during the holiday season.

Each Sunday during Advent, starting November 29, we will light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, culminating in the lighting of the Christ candle during the Christmas Eve communion service.

HUDSON FIRST
ADVENT 2026



The Candle of Hope

WEEK ONE

HF ADVENT

The History of First Baptist Church of Hudson

First Baptist Church of Hudson began as Gunpowder Baptist Church on Sept. 17th, 1831. There were 15 members. Four years later the name changed to Sardis Baptist. The building to the right was built in 1914 and was located on the corner of Sardis Cemetery. In 1949 the current sanctuary building was built. In 1955 the name was changed to First Baptist Church of Hudson.

SPECIAL FEATURE · SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2026 · COST OF LIVING EDITION

Hudson First Ledger

FACTS, FIGURES AND FAIR COMPARISONS

PRICES THEN AND NOW

What everyday life cost in 1940, in 1980, and today

HOW FAR DOES A PAYCHECK GO? A look at the cost of everyday life in 1940, in 1980 and today shows that wages have climbed to levels grandfather never imagined, but so have the price tags on the things families need most. A home, a car and a tank of gas all take a larger bite than they once did, and the gap is wider than many families realize.

In 1940 a new car could be had for about $850, a gallon of milk cost roughly 53 cents, and a loaf of bread about nine cents. Today that car averages more than $51,000 and a gallon of milk runs about $4.10. Gasoline, a dime a gallon then, now sells for around four dollars. The table below sets the figures side by side.

ITEM	1940	1980	TODAY
Annual income	$1,368	$21,020	$87,460
Hourly wage, average	—	$6.84*	$32.75
Federal minimum wage	$0.30	$3.10*	$7.25*
Home	$3,900	$47,200	$434,100
New automobile	$850	$7,591	$51,109
Gasoline, per gallon	$0.10	$1.19*	$4.02
Milk, per gallon	$0.53	$1.60*	$4.10
White bread, per loaf†	$0.09	$0.50*	$1.86
Eggs, per dozen	$0.24	$0.81	$2.32

A HOME COSTS, IN YEARS OF PAY
2.9 · 2.2 · 5.0
1940 · 1980 · TODAY

A NEW CAR COSTS, SHARE OF A YEAR'S PAY
62% · 36% · 58%
1940 · 1980 · TODAY

* Approximate; sources vary. † Today's bread price is quoted per pound. Income is not measured the same way each year: 1940 is the average annual wage of a manufacturing worker, 1980 is median family income, and today is median household income (2025). Home prices are a new home in 1940, a median home in 1980, and the median existing home in July 2026, so treat them as a rough picture. Today's figures: U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, AAA, Kelley Blue Book and the National Association of Realtors.

Hope



Sardis Baptist Church 1914-1949

Through the years, pastors have changed, and so have our church's name and buildings. But one thing has stayed the same: the mission of the church, "To love God and love people." As we look to the future, we look forward to growing in fellowship, serving one another and our community, and deepening our worship of God through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our goal this year for Lottie Moon Christmas offering is $20,000.

NOVEMBER 29TH

Hope

BIBLE VERSE: *But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."*
Lamentations 3:21-26

Devotion: If we're honest, we hate waiting. We don't see how it could be good to wait. But this text in Lamentations, written by the prophet Jeremiah in the ruins of Jerusalem after the Babylonians destroyed it, says, "It is good that one should wait." That's because the Lord does his best work on us while we sit in the waiting room.

I don't know what you are waiting for. It might be a good report from the doctor. It might be a day when your bills don't outweigh your bank account. It might be for the consequences of your sin to finally be over.

Whatever it is, wait quietly. Rest in the Lord's steadfast love and receive his mercies that are new every morning. We don't deserve his mercy, and yet it meets us every day. Call to mind his saving acts in the past, above all the night he came to us in Bethlehem, and wait for him to show up again. He's changing you in the waiting room, at the soul level.

Prayer: Father, help me wait. Help me hope while I wait. You've shown yourself to be trustworthy. Help me trust your plan, that involves waiting, and change while I wait. Make me more like Jesus.

Hope

BIBLE VERSE: *For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*
Romans 8:24-25

Devotion:

I'm absolutely awestruck at that last sentence: if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. That seems to be the opposite of my experience. I am incredibly impatient. But that's because I'm hoping for what I can see. I want this life (the one before Jesus makes all things new) to be the thing I'm hoping for, so I'm impatient.

But God is preparing something far greater than what I'm hoping for. He's preparing something indescribable for you and me. So when we take our eyes off this life as it is and truly begin to hope, we can be patient, knowing that everything we see now is good but broken, and everything we will see will be good and unbroken.

So I hope for the world as it will be, not as it is.

Prayer:

Father, give me patience. Fill me with hope. I can't see what I hope in. Not yet. But when I look at the character of Jesus in Scripture I see a little more each time. Help me keep my eyes on him and not on this life. For only in him is there hope.

Hope

BIBLE VERSE: *Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*
Psalm 130:1-8

Devotion:

Hope sometimes looks like crying out to the Lord in desperation. Some circumstance or sin has us in a deep pit. Our prayers seem to go nowhere. We feel alone and hopeless. In moments like this, we can get gospel amnesia. We forget that we are forgiven, that the Lord loves us with a love that never leaves, and that he has redeemed us and will redeem us.

It's amazing what remembering those truths will do. Sometimes we open our eyes after praying and find ourselves on the mountaintop. Other times we're still in the dark, but like a watchman on the wall, we know the morning is coming. What changed? The gospel. Your circumstances may not have changed, but your perspective has. God heard your prayer and reminded you who you are to him. The psalm ends with a promise: "he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities." The people cried out from the pit, and the morning came when the Son of God rose over the horizon and redeemed them, and us. Hope is coming again, brothers and sisters.

Prayer:

Lord, you are my Redeemer. I need you to redeem me again today, and tomorrow. This life is hard, and sometimes it feels like you aren't listening; but I know that's not the case. You have proven to me time and time again that you hear me. Show me your steadfast love today. I will watch, my soul will wait for you.

Hope

BIBLE VERSE: *But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him."*
1 Corinthians 2:9

Devotion: There is a day coming, a day when our Father will show us something that will change everything. It will be better than any Christmas morning.

I love to think about it from the perspective of a father. I love to give my daughter gifts and love to see her joy when she opens them. I imagine our Father is excited to show you what he has prepared for you. Jesus said it himself: "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

But he has not made us wait empty-handed. Paul goes on to say, "these things God has revealed to us through his Spirit." The Spirit is already giving us glimpses: peace that doesn't make sense, joy in the middle of grief, the quiet assurance that we belong to him. Elsewhere Paul calls the Spirit the "guarantee of our inheritance," a down payment on what's coming. So, we see what the Spirit is doing in and amongst us now, and that builds anticipation within us for the next, greater gift.

He's shown us time and time again that he is good. He has never broken a promise. On the first Christmas he gave us the greatest gift of all, his own Son. Let that fuel your hope for the promises still to come. He's looking forward to giving you the gift of his kingdom. I hope you're looking forward to receiving it.

Prayer: Lord, I can't even begin to imagine what you have planned. Help me know your fatherly love today. I might not see the kingdom today as I will one day soon. But I can see glimpses of it, through the Spirit and the Word. I can't wait for the day when I receive your gift. It will make all this worth it.

Hope

BIBLE VERSE: *Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*
Romans 5:3-5

Devotion:

Suffering is the first domino to fall. It's one of the main ways God produces endurance, character, and hope. Suffering is hard, but Paul says that knowing this, we can "rejoice in our sufferings." Easier said than done, but once you've seen the fruit God grows through suffering, you may face it differently next time. It is a mature prayer to pray: "Lord, whatever it takes, produce hope in me."

There's nothing like hope. It produces joy. Suffering is not good on its own, and we cannot pretend it is. It's hard. But I trust that a good God has a good plan, even when I can't see it.

And we don't suffer alone. Paul says this hope won't disappoint us, because God's love has already been poured into our hearts through his Spirit. Isn't it good news that we serve a God who redeems our suffering? He is not aloof in heaven, nor is he powerless. At Christmas he came down and suffered with us. He allows suffering, and he uses it to produce endurance, character, and hope.

Prayer:

Father, suffering is hard. If I didn't have your love in my heart through the Spirit, I don't know if I could endure it. But you have good plans for me. Even in my suffering you are redeeming me. You're shaping me. It hurts, but the result is glorious. I know you hate to see me suffer, and one day I won't suffer anymore. But I ask that you would use this suffering for your glory and my good.

Hope

BIBLE VERSE: *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Matthew 11:28-30*

Devotion:

This passage does not use the word "hope." It does something better: it shows me the heart of the one in whom I hope. Jesus says he is "gentle and lowly in heart." That's hope-producing. I can trust God with everything because I know who he is. He is the God who came down and offered weary sinners rest. All he said was, "Come to me." Rest and hope are found in the same place: in the presence of Jesus of Nazareth.

What yoke do you need to trade in today? Are you living under the yoke of performance, proving yourself, or acceptance from others? Those yokes don't produce rest. But the yoke of the man from Galilee is "easy." He walks beside you and carries the weight. He invites you today to come to him.

Prayer:

Father, how wonderful is your Son!? His character gives me hope. His presence gives me peace. I pray today that when I struggle, or sin, or suffer, that you would help me remember my savior. And His tenderness for his weak sheep. Let it fill me with hope as I wait for the day that my faith becomes sight.

Hope

BIBLE VERSE: *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him."*
Romans 15:13

DEVOTION: **Have you ever waited for something special, like your birthday or a trip?**

Waiting can be hard, but it's easier when you know something good is coming. That's what hope is: trusting that something good is on its way.

A very long time ago, God's people waited hundreds of years for a Savior. They didn't give up, because God had promised. And God kept His promise when Jesus was born in Bethlehem!

During Advent, we remember that God always keeps His promises, so we can hope in Him too.

TALK ABOUT IT: What is something you're hopeful about?

ACTIVITY: Plant a seed (beans or grass seed work well) in a small cup of soil. Water it and set it by a window. You can't see what's happening underground, but you hope something will grow. Check it each day this week. When you see it sprout, remember that God's promises keep growing even when we can't see them.

COLOR THE HOPE CANDLE





The Candle of Peace

Peace

Toy Store Ministry

This year the Toy Story Ministry will be December 15th-19th. During that week we will serve an average of 650 children that are referred by the Caldwell County Schools. Along with serving our community, the Toy Store also delivers gifts to other children in need outside our area. An average of 75 volunteers serve the week of Toy Store from greeting, helping parents shop, stocking shelves, building toys, bagging gifts, loading cars and most importantly, sharing the gospel. The Toy Store team works year round to help ensure this ministry is a huge success. The week of Toy Store is not only a blessing to those in the community but a huge blessing to those that serve.

PUNCH

CHRISTMAS PUNCH /DOT LAND

1 46 oz. Pineapple Juice
2 Litter Cheerwine

Mix all together and refrigerate

1ST BAPTIST "FAVORITE PUNCH" /DOT LAND

1 64 oz. White Grape Juice
2 Litter Sprite

Mix all together and refrigerate

LOVEY'S SLUSH PUNCH /TAMMY SEAGLE

1 2 cups of Sugar
2 Cup Hot Water
1 Large Strawberry Jello Pack

Bring top ingredients to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in bottom ingredients.

2 quart Cold Water
1-46 oz. Pineapple Juice
6 Tbs. Lemon Juice

Freeze and serve

Peace

BIBLE VERSE: *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*
Isaiah 9:6-7

DEVOTION: Around 700 years prior to the birth of Jesus, Isaiah prophesied that God would raise up a Messiah, or a Savior King, who would bring peace to the world. In fact, this King would be called the "Prince of Peace." What does it mean that this King would be the Prince of Peace? It means that through the ministry of this King, peace would be established between God and man and between mankind as well.

There's only one man who can fit the description given in Isaiah 9:6-7. His name is Jesus. He came in peace, and through his perfect life and sacrifice, he established peace between God and man. He paid the penalty for sin that was the source of enmity between God and man. He is the only mediator who brought reconciliation. He is the continual intercessor who goes to the Father for his people.

Not only this, but Jesus' life has brought reconciliation between people all across the world through the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit. And, one day, he will establish universal peace in the New Heavens and New Earth.

Friends, do you have this peace in your life?

PRAYER: Father, thank you for your goodness and grace in sending Jesus, the Savior of the whole world, the Prince of Peace. Help us to grasp the weight of this good news and live in it and through it. Remind us daily of the peace that is ours because of the Prince of Peace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Peace

BIBLE VERSE: *But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:5*

DEVOTION: In this chapter of Isaiah, the prophet speaks of the "Suffering Servant" to come. This Servant would be "pierced for our transgressions," "crushed for our iniquities," chastised, and wounded. Isaiah proclaims that the reason the Servant would suffer is due to the transgressions and iniquities of the people. The Servant would receive the punishment for sins that he never committed, but he would bear it nonetheless on behalf of the guilty.

This Suffering Servant would also be the source of peace and healing for the people. This peace is the knowledge of being made right with God. It is knowing that the penalty for your sin has been fully satisfied and there is nothing more that needs to be done to satisfy God's holy and perfect justice. It's the peace of knowing that God's disposition is always toward you as a son or daughter, not an enemy. The Servant did this because he loves you.

Have you made peace with God? There's only one way to do that; it is through the Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ, who purchased the peace for you with his blood. It is trusting that Jesus took your punishment on the cross and rose again three days later. Make him your Savior and Lord today.

PRAYER: Father, thank you that we can have perfect peace today because of your great love. Help us to live in the peace that you have purchased for us by the blood of your Son. Help us not to place our source of peace in anything or anyone else. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Peace

BIBLE VERSE: *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.*
Isaiah 26:3-4

DEVOTION: Whenever you are baking a dish of any kind, it can only be as good as the ingredients used to make it. If you want a good meal, you must use good ingredients. Did you know the same thing is true for peace? If you want a peaceful life, you must have the right ingredients. But there is one ingredient that you cannot do without, or the dish will be ruined. You can't have peace without it. That ingredient is faithfulness.

If there is one attribute of God that can bring peace amid a hard time, it is his faithfulness. This is what Isaiah is proclaiming to God's people. You can have peace if you set your thoughts on the Lord. Why? Because he is an everlasting rock. What does that mean? It means that God is faithful; he is unchanging in his character. Isaiah commands the people to trust in the Lord because he is faithful.

Seasons change, people change, times change, and culture changes at breakneck speed. There's no peace to be found in the world. It's been said there is only one thing that is certain, and that's change. But that saying must be altered in light of the Word of God because the prophet declares that God never changes. He is the faithful rock.

So what will you set your mind on this Christmas? An ever-changing world, or a never-changing Lord? Choose peace this holiday season.

PRAYER: Father, thank you for rescuing me from darkness and bringing me into the light. Thank you that I know the way of peace through Jesus. Although you would have been just to leave me in my sin, you chose mercy and grace. I praise you, Lord! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Peace

BIBLE VERSE: *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*
Romans 16:20

DEVOTION: Oftentimes we think about God in relation to peace as one who grants us peace in virtue of who he is (faithful) and what he has already done (salvation). But did you know that God is still in the business of establishing peace? In this passage, Paul draws the readers' minds all the way back to the promise made to Eve in the Garden of Eden, that through Eve's offspring, the head of the serpent (Satan) would be crushed.

Here, Paul reminds us of that promise. One day, God will deal the decisive and final blow to the enemy, forever establishing peace for his people. There will no longer be a spiritual battle to be won—it will be over.

Perhaps you're in a season of negativity or battling a stronghold over your life. The reality is that we live in a spiritual war, and many of the ills we deal with are due to this ongoing battle. Let this passage be an encouragement to you today. One day, God will end the war and establish peace forever.

PRAYER: Father, thank you that there's still a lot more in store for those who belong to you. Help us to battle faithfully now, but even more, plant the hope of future peace in our hearts. We look forward to this day. Come soon, Lord Jesus. It's in your name we pray, Amen.

Peace

BIBLE VERSE: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*
Matthew 5:9

DEVOTION: Although we serve a God who is the ultimate source of peace, who has granted us peace through his Son now, and who will establish permanent peace in the future, it doesn't mean believers are not to strive to make peace as well. In fact, as image bearers of God who are being conformed into the image of Christ, believers should be people of peace themselves and people who establish peace in the world as well.

Being a peacemaker is not easy; it's not for the soft of heart. It's much easier to join in on complaining and gossiping than it is to call people to a higher place. Anyone can retaliate and quarrel, but it takes a person of strong character to bless those who persecute them (Mat. 5:10-11). How often are you the one to attempt to dissuade conflict, to reconcile enemies, or to offer and seek forgiveness? That's how you become a peacemaker.

This Christmas, give those in your life the gift of peace. It could be one of the best ways you point someone else to the Prince of Peace, himself. Who knows, it could be the best gift they receive this season.

PRAYER: Father, help us to be peacemakers this Christmas season. When we see conflict, help us to engage it with truth, grace, and love. Help us to be people of forgiveness ourselves, and to encourage it in others. In all this, we pray that you are magnified, and you get the glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Peace

BIBLE VERSE: *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*
Colossians 3:12-17

DEVOTION: In this passage, Paul is commanding the Colossian Christians to walk in the identity they have received in Christ. He lists many virtues back-to-back, but in the midst of all these, he singles out love—and peace. What Paul says about peace is very interesting. He writes, "let the peace of Christ…," and it's common for English readers to view this as a passive thing. It's as if all one needs to do is "let" something happen that's going to happen anyway. But this is not what the Greek implies. It is an imperative. That is a command that believers are to make happen among themselves. Paul is commanding believers to make the peace of Christ rule among them in their hearts. To cultivate those virtues that Paul has just listed will bring about the peace that must exist in the body of Christ.

Everyone wants peace, but we must ask the question, "What are we willing to do in and among ourselves to cultivate that kind of peace?" Are we willing to die to our flesh, and abide in the Spirit today? Let's be people who bear the fruit of peace this Christmas season!

PRAYER: Father, help us to walk in these virtues and establish the rule of peace in our hearts. Help us to be the body of Christ that you have called us to be this Christmas season. Fill us with your Spirit today and let us walk in his power. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Peace

BIBLE VERSE: *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given... and he will be called... Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6*

DEVOTION: **Sometimes our hearts feel busy and noisy, like when we're worried, upset, or in a hurry. Peace is that calm, safe feeling inside, like being wrapped in a warm blanket.**
Jesus is called the Prince of Peace. When He came, the angels announced peace on earth! Jesus doesn't just give peace to us.
He helps us share it with others, like when we say sorry, forgive a friend, or speak kindly.
When you feel worried, you can talk to Jesus, and He will help your heart feel calm.

TALK ABOUT IT: When do you need peace the most?

ACTIVITY: Fill a clear jar with warm water, add a spoonful of glitter glue or a pinch of glitter, close the lid tightly, and shake it. Watch the glitter swirl around like a busy, worried mind. Then set it down and watch it slowly settle. Whenever you feel upset this week, shake the jar, watch it settle, and pray: "Jesus, please give me Your peace."

COLOR THE DOVE OF PEACE





The Candle of Joy

WEEK THREE

Joy

Shoebox Ministry

Shoebox Ministry packaged 2,638 boxes and delivered them to Samaritans Purse this year. Linda Rash and the Shoebox Ministry Team work weekly all year long packing boxes in preparation for the Christmas season. These boxes are a blessing to children all over the world.

APPETIZERS AND SALADS

MABLE'S PIMENTO CHEESE /JANET JARVIS

½ lb. Easy Melt Cheese
4 oz. Shredded Sharp Cheese.
½ tsp. Vinegar
1-1/2 T. Mayo
2 oz. Jar Pimento "drained"
1 tsp. Sugar

Mix all together and refrigerate

JUDY'S CRANBERRY SALAD /JUDY HENDRIX

1 (13oz)can Crushed Pineapple
2 (3oz.) pkgs. lemon Jello
1 (7oz.) Bottle of Ginger Ale
1 (16oz.) Cranberry Sauce
½ cup of pecans
1 (8oz.) Cream Cheese
1 (2oz.) pkgs. Dream Whip

Drain pineapple, save syrup. Add water to make one cup, heating to a boil. Dissolve jello in hot liquid and cool. Stir ginger ale and chill until partially set. Blend fruits into gelatin. Chill until firm in a 9x9x2 dish. Prepare Dream Whip according to directions. Blend in softened cream cheese and speard over gelatin. Sprinkle nuts and chill.

Joy

BIBLE VERSE: *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him...*
Isaiah 11:1-2

DEVOTION: One of the most beautiful hymns of Advent is "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming." The hymn draws its imagery from the prophecy of Isaiah. The prophet spoke of a shoot coming forth from the stump of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David, and God had promised that a King would come from David's family line whose kingdom would never end.

As the years passed, that promise may have seemed like a forgotten dream. God's people experienced hardship, suffering, captivity, and uncertainty. The royal family of David appeared much like a tree that had been cut down, leaving only a stump.

But God Does not forget His promises!

From what appeared lifeless and hopeless, God would bring forth new life. Like a beautiful rose blooming in the middle of winter, Jesus Christ would come into a world that desperately needed hope. What true joy this hope brings!

"Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse's lineage coming, as men of old have sung."

As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, let us remember that Advent is more than counting the days until December 25. It is a season of remembering God's faithfulness, celebrating Christ's coming, and preparing our hearts for His presence.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You for the beautiful promise of the Rose that bloomed from the lineage of Jesse. Thank You for Your faithfulness throughout the generations and for keeping Your promise by sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. Amen.

Joy

BIBLE VERSE: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*
Luke 2:14

DEVOTION: The Christmas hymn, "Angels from the Realms of Glory," reminds us of the glorious announcement that echoed through the heavens on the night Jesus was born. The angels came with a message that would change the world forever: the Savior had come! Their song was not simply an announcement of a baby's birth; it was a declaration that God's promised Redeemer had entered the world.

The first verse calls the angels to come and proclaim the birth of Christ. Imagine that heavenly scene. Shepherds were watching their flocks when suddenly the glory of the Lord shone around them. An angel appeared with wonderful news of great joy! Then a multitude of the heavenly host began praising God.

The hymn continues by inviting all of creation to worship Him. The shepherds came from the fields. The wise men traveled from afar. Each came with a different story, a different journey, and a different offering, but they all came for the same reason: to worship Jesus.

That invitation still stands today.

We may come to Christ with different burdens, different backgrounds, and different circumstances, but the call is the same:

Come and worship!

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You for the wonderful gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank You for the angels who proclaimed His birth and for the message of hope that still speaks to our hearts today. We welcome You, Lord Jesus, as King of our hearts. May we never lose the wonder of that holy night and the joy it brings when heaven came down and the Savior was born. Amen.

Joy

BIBLE VERSE: *AnAnd the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*
Luke 2:10

DEVOTION: One of the most beautiful Christmas hymns is "The First Noel." Its beautiful melody and familiar words remind us of that glorious night when Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born in Bethlehem. When we sing this hymn, we are remembering the greatest announcement ever made: God had sent His Son into the world!

But there is something especially meaningful about the story behind this hymn. The first announcement of Christ's birth was not made in a palace, a royal court, or among the religious leaders of the day. Instead, God chose to announce the birth of His Son to humble shepherds watching over their flocks by night. What a reminder that God's greatest gifts often come in the most unexpected ways! After the shepherds had seen the baby Jesus, they did not keep the wonderful news to themselves.

Luke 2:17 tells us:

"And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child."

They became the first witnesses of the good news! Think about it: They had heard the announcement, followed the message, found the Savior, and then shared what they had experienced. That is still our responsibility today.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You for the wonderful gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank You for that first Christmas night when the angels proclaimed the good news that a Savior had been born. Lord, help us never to take the Christmas story for granted. When we sing these words may they bring us hope, love, joy, and salvation that came into this world through Jesus. May our lives continually proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen

Joy

BIBLE VERSE: *After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, and all that heard it were amazed.*
Luke 2:17

DEVOTION: One of the most joyful hymns of the Christmas is "Go Tell It on the Mountain." Its message is simple but powerful: The good news of Jesus Christ is too wonderful to keep to ourselves! When the angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds, they didn't whisper the news or keep it to a select few. They proclaimed it with great joy! The shepherds responded by going to Bethlehem to see the newborn Savior. After witnessing the miracle for themselves, they spread the word about everything they had heard and seen.

Think about that for a moment. The shepherds were ordinary people doing ordinary work when God chose them to receive an extraordinary message. They weren't famous, wealthy, or powerful. Yet God entrusted them with the greatest news the world would ever hear. The same is true for us today. We don't have to be preachers, Bible scholars, or extraordinary people to share the love of Jesus. We simply need willing hearts and a testimony of what He has done in our lives.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You for the wonderful gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank You for the good news that brings hope to a lost and hurting world. Give us the courage of the shepherds, who went out and told others what they had seen and heard. May my words and actions point others to Jesus. Let me never be ashamed of the Gospel but give me a joyful heart that is always ready to share the Good News. Amen.

Joy

BIBLE VERSE: *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*
Luke 2:13-14

DEVOTION: For centuries, God's people had waited for the promised Messiah. They had experienced seasons of darkness, suffering, disappointment, and longing. Yet God had not forgotten His promises. At just the right time, He sent His Son into the world. Joy had dawned!

But the joy of that first Christmas was not found in earthly riches, royal celebrations, or worldly recognition. Jesus entered the world in humility. The King of Kings was born in a stable, laid in a manger, and welcomed by ordinary shepherds. The One who created the heavens and the earth came as a helpless infant. What an amazing picture of God's love! The birth of Jesus reminds us that true joy is not dependent upon our circumstances. The world often tells us that happiness comes from having more, achieving more, or experiencing a trouble-free life. But biblical joy is rooted in something far greater. Our joy is found in knowing that God has kept His promise and provided a Savior for our greatest need.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son into this world to be our Savior. Thank You that when the world was lost in darkness, You sent the Light. May the joy of Jesus fill our hearts, strengthen our faith, and overflow into the lives of those around us. Help us to remember that our greatest reason for rejoicing is not what we have or what we experience, but who You are and what You have done for us. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.

Joy

BIBLE VERSE: *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusts in thee.*
Isaiah 26:3

DEVOTION: There are moments in life when everything around us seems uncertain. We face unexpected challenges, unanswered prayers, difficult seasons, and circumstances that leave us wondering how things will ever work out. Sometimes our hearts are heavy, our minds are troubled, and the future seems unclear. Yet, in the middle of it all, there is a beautiful truth we can hold on to:
All is well because God is still in control.

Being able to say, "All is well," doesn't mean that everything is perfect. It doesn't mean we don't cry, hurt, struggle, or have questions. It means that even when life doesn't make sense, we trust the One who does. It is the kind of faith that allows us to stand in the middle of a storm and know that God has not abandoned us. It is the confidence that our circumstances may change, but God's promises never will. God wants you to remember that you do not have to understand everything to trust Him with everything.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You for being my peace and joy in the middle of life's storms. Thank You that even when I cannot understand what You are doing, I can trust who You are. Thank You for being faithful yesterday, today, and forever. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.

Joy

BIBLE VERSE: *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. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*
Luke 2:10-11

DEVOTION: **Imagine you're a shepherd out in a dark field at night. Suddenly an angel appears in the sky! The shepherds were scared at first, but the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have the best news ever!"**
The news was that Jesus, the Savior, had been born.

Joy is a happiness that goes deeper than toys or treats. It comes from knowing that God loves us and sent Jesus to be with us. The shepherds were so full of joy that they ran to see Jesus, then told everyone they met!

TALK ABOUT IT: Who could you share some joy with today?

ACTIVITY: Be like the shepherds and spread the good news this week! Pick one or more:
- Sing a Christmas carol to a family member, neighbor, or grandparent.
- Draw a "Jesus is born!" picture and give it to someone.
- Call or visit someone and tell them one thing that makes you joyful.

COLOR THE SHEPHERDS' NIGHT



HUDSON FIRST
ADVENT 2026



The Candle of Love

WEEK FOUR

Christmas Day Lunch

This year will mark the 18th year of the Christmas Day Lunch. This ministry began in 2008 by Don and Happy Austin. Tammy and Jeff Bradshaw lead this ministry and organize the lunch that will fed around 1200 people on Christmas Day. An average of 60 volunteers deliver food all across Caldwell County, including deliveries to the hospital and emergency personal.

CAKES & COOKIES

MAWMAW ANN'S GOLDEN POUND CAKE/ LORI JARVIS

3 Sticks of Butter
½ c. Crisco
3 c. sugar
5 eggs
3 c. plain flour
½ tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. vanilla extract
2 tsp. lemon extract
2 tsp. pineapple extract (or orange)
1 c. milk

Cream sugar, butter and crisco until fluffy. Add I egg at a time, beating well after each. Alternate adding the flour and milk, beating well after each addition. Add flavorings and baking powder last. Place in cold oven; bake at 325 for 1 hr. 15 min. (or until cake is done). Do not open oven until baking is complete. Let cool in pan for 15 mins.

LEMON COOKIES/ ALMA KINCAID

1 c. Butter
1 ½ c. sifted powdered sugar
2 c. all purpose flour
⅛ tsp. salt
1 ½ tsp. lemon extract
1 tsp. vanilla

Beat butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add flour, salt, and flavorings. Roll into balls and place on ungreased cookie sheet about 2 in. apart. Bake at 350 for 8-10 minutes.

Love

BIBLE VERSE: *The LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.*
Jeremiah 31:3

DEVOTION: Long before there was a manger in Bethlehem, there was a promise. God spoke these words through Jeremiah to His people, a people in exile, a people who had wandered, rebelled, and paid the price. Jerusalem lay in ruins. The temple was gone. Many must have wondered whether God had finally given up on them. Yet,into that darkness the Lord said, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." Everlasting love has no starting point we can find and no ending point we need fear. God's love for His people did not begin when they behaved well, and it did not end when they failed. It reached back before the foundation of the world, and it stretches forward into eternity.

Advent reminds us that Christmas was not God's Plan B. The coming of Jesus was the faithful fulfillment of a love that had been speaking for centuries: through Abraham, through Moses, through David, through the prophets. Every promise was a thread, and in Bethlehem the threads came together in a Person. "Therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you." The birth of Christ is God keeping His word.

Some of us come to this season feeling a bit like those exiles. Maybe it has been a hard year. Maybe you have wandered further than you ever meant to. Hear His word again: everlasting. Not seasonal. Not conditional. Everlasting!

The same God who drew Israel back from exile has drawn near to us in Jesus. His love was there before you were born, it holds you today, and it will still be holding you when this Christmas is a distant memory. You can rest in that.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You that Your love for me did not begin with my faithfulness and will not end with my failures. Thank You for keeping every promise and sending Jesus in the fullness of time. When I feel far away, draw me back to Yourself. May I find rest this Advent season in a love that has no beginning and no end. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Love

BIBLE VERSE: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*
John 3:16-17

DEVOTION: It may be the most familiar verse in the Bible. Many of us learned it before we could read, and we've seen it promoted on billboards, by ballplayers, and more. But familiarity can dull wonder. Read it slowly today, as if for the first time.

"For God so loved..." That little word, "so," tells us something of the measure of this love. It is not mild affection or polite goodwill. It is a love so great that it had to act.

"...the world." Not just the righteous, the religious, or the respectable, the world. The same world that had turned its back on Him, the world that would one day shout, "Crucify Him!" God's love is not limited to the deserving, which is good news, because none of us qualify.

"...that he gave his only Son." Love that gives. That is the heartbeat of Christmas. We give gifts in December because God gave first, and He gave the very best for us. The Father did not send an angel, a prophet, or a set of instructions. He sent His Son. In the manger lay heaven's most precious treasure, given to us.

"...that whoever believes in him should not perish." Whoever. The door is wide open. No one is too far gone, and no one is too good to need it.

Then comes verse 17, which we often skip: "God did not send His Son to condemn the world, but to save it." Some people expect God to come with a gavel in His hand. In Bethlehem, He came with open arms.

This Christmas, as you wrap gifts and place them under the tree, let each one remind you of the greatest Gift ever given. And ask yourself: who in my world needs to hear, maybe for the first time, that God so loved them?

PRAYER: Gracious Father, I confess that I have heard these words so often that I sometimes forget to be amazed by them. Thank You for loving a world that did not love You, and for giving Your only Son for me. Thank You that Jesus came to save, not to condemn. Open my eyes to someone who needs to hear of Your love this season and give me the courage to tell them. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Love

BIBLE VERSE: *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
Philippians 2:5-8

DEVOTION: Christmas is the story of a great descent. The One who spoke galaxies into existence was born in a borrowed stable. The One who holds the universe together had to be held by a young mother. The King of kings slept in a feeding trough.

Paul tells us that Jesus did not count equality with God "a thing to be grasped." He did not cling to His rights or His privileges. Instead, He "emptied himself." He did not stop being God, but He set aside the glory and comfort that were rightfully His and took the form of a servant.

That is what love does. Love stoops. Love lays down its rights for the good of another. Love goes lower than it has to.

And notice how far the descent went. It did not stop at Bethlehem: "He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." The manger and the cross belong to the same story, one great movement of love, downward, toward us.

But Paul does not write these words only so that we will admire Jesus. He writes them so that we will become like Him: "Have this mind among yourselves." The love that stooped to save us now calls us to stoop for others.

During the holidays it is easy to insist on our own way: our traditions, our schedule, our preferences, our place at the table. What would it look like this week to set aside a right in order to serve someone else? To take the lower seat? To listen instead of trying to win? To serve the family member or co-worker who is hardest to love?

When we stoop in love, we look most like the Savior who stooped for us.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, You left the glory of heaven and humbled Yourself all the way to the cross for me. I am amazed that You would stoop so low. Forgive me for the times I cling to my rights and my way. Give me Your mind and Your heart, that I might serve others this week with the same humble love You have shown me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Love

BIBLE VERSE: *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
Romans 5:6-8

DEVOTION: Most of us know what it is to be loved for something. We are appreciated for what we do, praised for how we perform, valued for what we contribute. And deep down, many of us fear that if we stopped performing, the love would stop too.

Paul draws a sharp line between that kind of love and the love of God. He admits that someone might be willing to die for a good person: a hero, a dear friend, a beloved child. That is rare, but we can imagine it. But God does something no one would expect: "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Not after we cleaned ourselves up. Not once we promised to do better. While we were still weak, still ungodly, still sinners, Jesus gave His life for us. God did not wait for us to become lovable before He loved us. His love is what makes us new.

This is why Christmas matters. The baby in the manger came "at the right time" on a rescue mission. He was born to die, and He was born for people who did not deserve Him.

That truth is humbling, because it means I bring nothing to the table but my need. And it is freeing, because it means I cannot lose by my failures what I never earned by my successes. If God loved me at my worst, He will not abandon me on my bad days.

Maybe this season you are carrying the weight of regret: words you can't take back, a year you are not proud of. Bring it to the manger. Bring it to the cross. The love of God was not given to the deserving. It was given to sinners like you and me.

And once we have received that kind of love, we can begin to extend it to others who don't deserve it either.

PRAYER: Father, thank You for loving me while I was still a sinner, before I ever thought to love You. I confess that I sometimes try to earn what You have freely given. Help me rest in Your grace and walk in your love. And as I have received undeserved love, help me show it this Christmas to those who have hurt me or let me down. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Love

BIBLE VERSE: *The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.*
Zephaniah 3:17

DEVOTION: What do you imagine God feels when He thinks of you? Many believers, if they were honest, would say disappointment. We picture Him with folded arms and a frown, expecting us to mess up, and waiting for us to finally get it together.

Zephaniah paints a very different picture of God. The prophet spent most of his short book warning of judgment. But in the final chapter, the tone changes. God promises to gather His people, remove their shame, and dwell among them. Then comes this astonishing verse.

"The LORD your God is in your midst." That is the promise of Christmas. Matthew tells us that Jesus is Immanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). God did not stay at a distance; He came near.

"A mighty one who will save." The baby in Bethlehem looked weak, but He was the mighty Savior come to rescue His people.

And the verse goes even further. He "will rejoice over you with gladness." He "will quiet you by his love." He "will exult over you with loud singing."

Think about that. At Christmas we sing about the birth of God the Son, but God wants us to know that He sings over His people. You heard that right: God sings over you! Like a parent rocking a restless child, He quiets our fears with His love. Like a father at a homecoming, He cannot contain His joy.

If you belong to Jesus, this is how God regards you. Not with a scowl, but with delight. Not because you are impressive, but because you are His, covered by the righteousness of His Son.

In a season that can be loud and hurried, let His love quiet you today. Be still for a moment. Listen past the noise and remember: the God of heaven rejoices over you.

PRAYER: Mighty God, thank You for drawing near to us in Jesus, Immanuel. It is hard for me to believe that You rejoice over me, yet Your Word says it is so. Quiet my anxious heart with Your love today. Silence the voices of accusation and shame and help me hear Your song of delight over me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Love

BIBLE VERSE: *And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

Luke 2:4-7

DEVOTION: Merry Christmas! The waiting is over. For weeks we have lit candles, sung carols, and prepared our hearts. Today we celebrate the day Love was born.

Luke tells the story with remarkable simplicity. There is no fanfare and no royal announcement, only a weary couple traveling the long road from Nazareth to Bethlehem because a pagan emperor ordered a census. Yet behind Caesar's decree stood the sovereign hand of God. He was bringing Joseph and Mary to the very town the prophet Micah had named centuries before. Love was keeping its promise.

Then Luke gives us a line that stops us in our tracks: "there was no place for them in the inn." The Son of God entered the world He made, and the world had no room for Him. Mary wrapped her firstborn in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, a feeding trough for animals.

Think about what that says about the love of God. He did not wait for a palace to be prepared nor demand that we make room first. He came anyway, into a cramped, ordinary, unprepared place. Love came down to where we are.

That is still how He comes. He does not wait for us to tidy up our lives or make our hearts perfectly ready. He comes into the messy kitchens and noisy living rooms. He comes to the empty chairs at the table and to the quiet ache some of us carry even on Christmas morning.

The question of Christmas is not whether God loves us, because Bethlehem affirmed His love, and later, the Cross settled that. The question is whether we will make room for Him. Amid the wrapping paper and the feasting, take a moment today to welcome Him again. Give Him the best room in your heart, not a corner in the back.

Love has come, and His name is Jesus. Merry Christmas!

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, on this Christmas Day we thank You for the gift of Your Son. Thank You that Jesus did not wait for the world to make room for Him but came in love anyway. Forgive us for the times we crowd Him out with lesser things. Today we open our hearts and homes to Him again. Fill our celebrations with Your joy and let our love for one another reflect the love that came down at Bethlehem. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Love

BIBLE VERSE: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son."*
John 3:16

DEVOTION: **Why did God send Jesus? One reason: Love!**
God loves you so much that He gave you the greatest gift ever. Jesus didn't come as a king in a palace. He came as a tiny baby in a manger, because God wanted to be close to us.
When someone gives us a gift because they love us, we feel special. God's gift of Jesus shows that you are never alone and you are always loved. And because God loves us, we can love others by sharing, helping, and being kind.

TALK ABOUT IT: How can you show God's love to someone this week?

ACTIVITY: Make a gift for someone that doesn't cost money. Ideas: a handmade card, a drawing, a coupon book ("good for one free hug" or "I'll help with dishes"), or a baked treat. Give it to them and say, "God loves you, and so do I!" Then, as a family, light all four Advent candles (or draw four candles on paper) and thank God for hope, peace, joy, and love.

COLOR THE MANGER SCENE



Merry Christmas and blessings to you and yours!

From,
Hudson First Staff