



CHRISTMAS AT CFC 2021

ADVENT JOURNAL

FINDING THE TRUE GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS



The Heart Behind This Journal

Christmas 2021 is here, a time that can provide many emotions and thoughts to what this season means to each one of us in our context. As a church, we are using the rhythms of Advent to prepare our hearts for King Jesus, and to rediscover the best gifts that God has given us through His son, Jesus.

Christmas signifies the arrival of Jesus, the promised Messiah, that many had been waiting for and that we now know has come! With the arrival of Jesus, we also can experience God's everlasting gifts of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. As Christ followers we have received these gifts through our faith in Jesus and we are called to give these gifts to others with the message of the Gospel.

Our hearts as a CFC staff are that this journal will help bring these truths to the forefront of all of our Christmas celebrations. That Christmas would be more than what our culture says it is. That we find and rediscover the true gifts of Christmas and share that with others in our context. In 2021, and really in any year, we need these reminders of God's hope, love, joy, and peace as we navigate the various situations that this year has brought and that the future will bring.

This journal is filled with Scripture, prayer, activities, and songs that will help us all to focus on the arrival of Jesus. Throughout the next few weeks we will rediscover the best gifts of all as we are reminded to focus on Christ and reflect on his arrival as God incarnate.

We are praying for you as you prepare your hearts to focus on Jesus this Christmas season. May He shine brightly in your hearts and homes this year.

With His love,
Your Cheney Faith Center Staff

Christmas with Cheney Faith Center

Christmas Eve December 24th

We will be hosting two Christmas Eve services at Cheney Faith Center, 2pm and 4pm on Friday December 24th. Livestream of the 2pm service will be on YouTube and Facebook.

What to expect:

A 60min gathering with some traditional carols, a Christmas message, family story time, and a candle lighting time to light the Christ candle.

There will be no kids classes, but kids are welcome in service, and we will have kids activity packs available during service.

The Sunday after Christmas, December 26th:

The Sunday after Christmas (12.26) we will not be hosting any in-person gatherings at CFC. We want to encourage you to continue to “give out” the hope, love, joy, and peace of Jesus by being relational with those in your context.

We will resume our 8:30am and 10:30am services on January 2nd. Kid's classes will be offered at both services like usual.

Stay Connected

Email updates:

Visit our website, cheneyfaithcenter.org, to sign up for our weekly email. Make sure to check your spam/junk folder to ensure delivery.

Text updates:

Text the word CFCCHURCH to the number **43506** to receive text updates about what's happening at CFC.

Social Media/Live Stream/Podcasts: Search Cheney Faith Center through these platforms:



www.cheneyfaithcenter.org

How To Use This Journal

This journal contains four weeks of readings, devotionals, and activities that correspond with the four major words of Advent: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. This journal does not have daily readings or daily activities. Each week has the same simple layout so you and your household can decide when and how to do the readings and activities to prepare your hearts through this season.

Be intentional when you do this on your own or with the people in your household. Find a rhythm that works and stick with it, if you miss some things during a particular week that is okay. It's about our heart's preparation, not completing every task.

Lighting of Advent Candles:

An important feature that we are choosing to do as a church body is the lighting of the Advent candles. This journal is centered around each week's particular candle and the word that the candle represents. Need some Advent candles? We will have candles and an Advent wreath at the church to pick-up for your household as you start this Advent journal.

Each week has a specific candle to be lit, and as the weeks progress, you will add the next candle to your candle lighting routine. The candle lighting is best done when you are together with your household at a meal, or together with the CFC fam during our livestream. Each week's title page will include a reminder of what candle to light, as well as a special prayer to recite as you light the candles.

Candle Order:

Week 1: Hope - Purple Prophet's Candle

- Representing the hope of the coming Messiah

Week 2: Love - Purple Bethlehem Candle

- Representing that love came down from Heaven in the form of a baby.

Week 3: Joy - Pink Shepherd's Candle

- Representing the joy of the Savior's birth first heard by the shepherds.

Week 4: Peace - Purple Angel's Candle

- Representing that there is now peace on earth.

How To Use This Journal Continued...

Memory Verse Cards:

Each week there is an Advent memory verse card that you can tear out, cut, and either fold as a table decoration or hang somewhere in your house. Our heart is that we are reminded daily by God's word to reflect on His hope, love, joy, and peace during this Christmas season.

Family Connection Point:

Each week's readings will include a family connection point that is designed for family implementation to provide practical ways to give and receive each week's main point.

Additional Activities:

At the end of each week are additional activities that you can do as a household or by yourself during this Christmas season. These are designed to bring more impact during your Advent readings as we focus on Jesus and others. Every week there is a special soup recipe that can be used during an Advent candle lighting dinner time or whenever you want a fun special meal.

Advent Candle Lighting Demonstration:

The QR code below takes you to a YouTube video to explain the process of lighting the candles, as well as an example in how to incorporate the candle lighting in your Advent rhythms. This video is from last year, so it includes last year's prayer. This year, each week has its own prayer to pray as you light the candles.



**“Advent Candle Lighting
Demonstration”
Cheney Faith Center**

Week 1
November 28 - December 4

The Gift of Hope

A prayer to read aloud when lighting your candle.

We were once a people walking in darkness,
but You, Light of the World, came long ago
as a baby shining light and hope.

We now wait in hope of Your coming again,
so we light this candle to burn in our midst.

As its bright light shines in the night,
may the longing burning in our souls
reflect the true hope to our world
that darkness cannot overcome.

Isaiah 9:2, Romans 5:1-5

Candle:
The Purple Prophet's Candle

Tear out opposite page and cut out the memory verse card along dotted lines.

You can fold the memory verse to display on a table or simply hang some where in your house.

Isaiah 9:2, Romans 5:1-5

We were once a people walking in darkness,
but You, Light of the World, came long ago
as a baby shining light and hope.
We now wait in hope of Your coming again,
so we light this candle to burn in our midst.
As its bright light shines in the night,
may the longing burning in our souls reflect true hope to our world
that darkness cannot overcome.

Advent Prayer of Hope

*Praise be to the God and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy
He has given us new birth into a living
Hope through the resurrection of Jesus
Christ from the dead.
1 Peter 1:3*



HOPE

Sermon Notes

Sermons are also available on YouTube by searching *Cheney Faith Center*.

Date:

Speaker:

Big takeaway:

Key verses:

Songs of Hope

Scan the QR code below to be directed to a curated Spotify playlist centered around this week's theme. We have selected these songs to give another way to prepare our hearts for the coming of King Jesus!

If you don't use Spotify or want to listen to a few of the songs, we have listed our top 3 songs for this week. Search for these songs on whatever platform you use for music and enjoy.

Song List:

When Hope Came Down -

Kari Jobe

Hope Was Born on This Night -

Sidewalk Prophets

Hope is What We Crave -

For King and Country

Hope



Big Idea For This Week

1 Peter 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Hope is something all of us have as humans. The dictionary defines hope as; "to look forward to with desire and reasonable confidence." We all have Hope about many things in our life, mostly material things and desires but also relationship desires, financial desires, educational desires, future Hopes and dreams, retirement desires, etc. The challenge with Hope is it can come from within our own hearts and minds or it can change to match the desires the Lord has for our lives. When we study God's word and talk to God regularly our Hopes and desires are transformed. We begin to desire and Hope for God's will in our lives above all things.

Peter tells us something extraordinary about Biblical Hope! A Christian's Hope is a "Living Hope!"

Our own personal Hopes are more like dreams that most likely are left unfulfilled. The Hopes that God places in our lives are "living". They are alive in our hearts and minds because they are guaranteed by God Himself. In His great mercy, God gave us new birth into a living Hope. We have a new birth, Peter says, into a new life that is in Christ Jesus. Our new life has new Hopes. The new Hopes are placed inside of us by God Himself and we have a firm confidence that they will be fulfilled because it is God who will bring them to pass. The biblical Hope Peter is describing becomes even more powerful because of a single moment in Jesus' life that exponentially guarantees the biblical truths that we Hope for. It's the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! Jesus' resurrection is what makes our Hope, "living Hope." The One who is our Hope and is the answer to all our Hopes is Jesus and He is not dead. It seems somewhat silly that we would put our Hope in a dead person, but many do. This is what makes Jesus the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and why no one can get to heaven unless they go through Jesus. The Hope we have inside of us as believers in Jesus is real. We will see our biblical Hopes with our own eyes: some of them in this lifetime and all of them in heaven with Jesus!

Christmas is a great reminder of the "living Hope" that we have been given. The people of God and the prophets put their Hope in a Messiah that would come and rescue His people. Jesus is the answer to that long awaited Hope. He came and was the answer to generations of Hope. He came and died on a cross and rose from the dead so we could have a "living Hope" that would sustain us everyday of our lives as we put our trust in Him. The baby in the manger is a reminder that Hope never dies when our Hope is in Him. Receive the Hope of Jesus this Christmas and give it away to those around you.

Receive the Gift of Hope

Read the following scriptures alone for individual study or with your household.
Scripture: Romans 15:12-13

How does this reading give us Hope in Jesus?

Verse 13 says God is Hope. God holds the future in His hands therefore He is worthy of our trust and all our hope. What are you hoping to receive from God this Christmas? (Think and write down non-material things.)

Family Connection Point

Set up a nativity in your dining room or wherever you eat most meals, but do not place baby Jesus in the manger yet (bring him in on Christmas morning). When you see the empty manger, ponder the Hopes and expectations Jesus embodies.

Give the Gift of Hope

Read the following scriptures alone for individual study or with your household.
Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

How did the shepherds give Hope to Bethlehem?

How will you give Hope to those around you this Christmas?

Family Connection Point

Participate in our church's *Food from the Heart* ministry by donating food items or delivering a meal to a family. Pray over your contribution and ask the Lord to use these dinner kits to give Hope to people in our community.

Group Reading

With your household or small group, read the section of scripture aloud. After reading aloud, discuss a few main points from the reading as well as answer the questions listed below.

Scripture: Hebrews 6:11-20

How does this reading give us Hope in Jesus?

What are some of the Hopes you have in Jesus that you want to see fully realized?

Additional Activities

Sunday Supper Soup

Scan the QR code or type in the URL to be directed to this week's soup recipe.

This week's soup:
Craving Hope
and Taco Soup
From: Kate Posthuma

URL (case sensitive)
qrco.de/hopesoup



-
- Take some time to decorate your Advent wreath. You can add Christmas decorations, greenery, or other items that remind you of the Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace Jesus brings.
 - Brainstorm people with whom you can share hope, like the mail carrier, garbage truck driver, or neighbors. What are some specific ways you can share Hope with each of these people?
 - Have a family worship time one day this week using the playlist for this week.
 - Rather than hoping for a certain gift this year, would you give that up in order to give hope to someone across the world? Consider giving a gift to those in poverty through a charity like World Vision or Compassion International.
 - Together with your family, make a card to send to missionaries we partner with at CFC. If you would like to know what missionaries we support or how to send items to them, go to **cheneyfaithcenter.org** and click on our missions page.

Week 2
December 5 - December 11

The Gift of Love

A prayer to read aloud when lighting your candles.

Out of Your great and true love, great God, You sent Your Son.
A gift to Your people, Your world.

Your vast, deep, endless love broke into
the dark and cold and empty world, filling it with light.

As we light these candles filling the dark with warmth and light, we
ask once more that Christ fill our world
and our hearts with the fullness of God's love.

John 3:16, Ephesians 3:17-19

Candle:
The Purple Bethlehem Candle

Tear out opposite page and cut out the memory verse card along dotted lines.

You can fold the memory verse to display on a table or simply hang some where in your house.

Out of Your great and true love, great God, You sent Your Son.
A gift to Your people, Your world.
Your vast, deep, endless love broke into
the dark and cold and empty world, filling it with light.
As we light these candles filling the dark with warmth and light,
we ask once more that Christ fill our world and our hearts
with the fullness of God's love.
John 3:16, Ephesians 3:17-19

Advent Prayer of Love

*For the law was given
through Moses, but
God's unfailing Love and
faithfulness came
through Jesus Christ.
John 1:18*

LOVE



Sermon Notes

Sermons are also available on YouTube by searching *Cheney Faith Center*.

Date:

Speaker:

Big takeaway:

Key verses:

Songs of Love

Scan the QR code below to be directed to a curated Spotify playlist centered around this week's theme. We have selected these songs to give another way to prepare our hearts for the coming of King Jesus!

If you don't use Spotify or want to listen to a few of the songs, we have listed our top 3 songs for this week. Search for these songs on whatever platform you use for music and enjoy.

Song List:

Noel -

Chris Tomlin / Lauren Daigle

God so Loved -

We the Kingdom

Love Came Down at Christmas -

Shawn Colvin

Love



Big Idea For This Week

John 1:17

17 For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.

Love can have many definitions in our culture, and we can use the word casually with friends, Taco Bell, or a favorite Christmas song by Bing Crosby. But what does it mean that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's love, and that God is love? Well let's look at what the Bible says about love.

1 John 4:9-10 says this:

*God showed how much he **loved** us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real **love**—not that we **loved** God, but that he **loved** us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.*

We were dead because of our sins with no hope or future. We needed help because a dead person cannot bring themselves to life and can't have eternal life. So in stepped God, and in the greatest act of love ever known sends His son Jesus, to live on this earth, and lay His life down freely so our sin can be taken away.

Now God did this because we were so awesome right...NO!!! God did this because He loved us, no strings attached, even when we were His enemies (Rom 5:8). It takes true love to send your only son to be the sacrifice for someone who is against you and spits in your face. But Jesus fulfills God's unfailing love by giving his life, so that we can have a full and everlasting life and be restored back to our heavenly father.

This Christmas season, think about what it means to receive God's love, that he cares about you and loves you, regardless of what you have done or thought. Think about how you can respond to this love and give this love to others, and how you can be a witness of God's love to those who might be against you, or don't think they deserve love.

This Christmas take time to remind yourself that Jesus has come as a fulfillment of God's love, we get to receive this gift, and give this gift as we love God and love people (Matt 22:37-40)!

Receive the Gift of Love

Read the following scriptures alone for individual study or with your household.
Scripture: John 1:1-18 // John 3:16-17

Why is the coming of Jesus important to our understanding of God's love?

Have you received the free gift of God's love? When? Write out or tell your story of salvation.

If you have not received God's free gift of love and salvation, scan the QR code below to go to our website, read through this process, and have the opportunity to connect with a pastor.



qrco.de/knowjesus

Family Connection Point

Put on your pajamas, snuggle under the blankets, and watch *Charlie Brown Christmas* with family. It broadcasts on PBS Sunday, December 19 but is available to stream earlier. Or choose another Jesus focused Christmas movie your family enjoys.

Give the gift of Love

Read the following scriptures alone for individual study or with your household.
Scripture: Romans 12:9-21

How does this point us towards giving and showing love to others?

Read verse 16 again. How can you live this out with family over the holidays?

Family Connection Point

Support a local restaurant and show love to a friend at the same time: order delivery to your neighbor's house for dinner. Make sure to be a messenger of love by including a kind word or bonus tip to the restaurant, driver, and your neighbor.

Group Reading

With your household or small group, read the section of scripture aloud. After reading aloud, discuss a few main points from the reading as well as answer the questions listed below.

Scripture: 1 John 3:11-20

How does this reading point us to Jesus?

Verse 18 tells us not to love with words, but with deeds and truth. How do we do this based on verses 16-17?

Additional Activities

Sunday Supper Soup

Scan the QR code or type in the URL to be directed to this week's soup recipe.

This week's soup:
Minestrone with
Amore Soup
From: Julie Martin

URL (case sensitive)
qrco.de/lovesoup



-
- Write a love note to someone today telling them how much God loves them. Deliver it with a smile.
 - Set an extra place setting for Jesus at dinner one night this week. Discuss what it would be like to have dinner with Jesus. What would you say to Him if he were sitting with you tonight?
 - Make a list of all the ways you know God loves you.
 - Take some time this week with your spouse, family, or a close friend to learn each other's love language. You can visit **www.5lovelanguages.com** to learn more about this. Make it a point to give love according to their love language this week.

Week 3
December 12 - December 18

The Gift of Joy

A prayer to read aloud when lighting your candles.

Glorious God! The brokenness of our world compelled You so many
years ago to send Your Son as a baby,
beginning the beautiful rescue of Your people.

And He will return again, fully restoring perfect joy,
better than any we have ever known - a joy
that will never be diminished!

As we light these candles filling this room with light
and declaring we believe Your promises,
even in the darkness that may surround us
we are filled with inexpressible and glorious joy!

John 15:11, 1 Peter 1:8

Candle:
The Pink Shepherd's Candle

Tear out opposite page and cut out the memory verse card along dotted lines.

You can fold the memory verse to display on a table or simply hang some where in your house.

John 15:11, 1 Peter 1:8

As we light these candles filling this room with light
and declaring we believe Your promises,
even in the darkness that may surround us
we are filled with inexpressible and glorious joy!

And He will return again, fully restoring perfect joy,
better than any we have ever known - a joy that will never be diminished!

Glorious God! The brokenness of our world compelled You so many years ago
to send Your Son as a baby, beginning the beautiful rescue of Your people.

Advent Prayer of Joy

*Come, let us sing for joy to
the LORD; let us shout aloud
to the Rock of our salvation.
Psalm 95:1*

JOY

Sermon Notes

Sermons are also available on YouTube by searching *Cheney Faith Center*.

Date:

Speaker:

Big takeaway:

Key verses:

Songs of Joy

Scan the QR code below to be directed to a curated Spotify playlist centered around this week's theme. We have selected these songs to give another way to prepare our hearts for the coming of King Jesus!

If you don't use Spotify or want to listen to a few of the songs, we have listed our top 3 songs for this week. Search for these songs on whatever platform you use for music and enjoy.

Song List:

Joy to the World -

What A Glorious Night -

Go Tell it on the Mountain -

David Crowder Band

Sidewalk Prophets

Zach Williams

Joy



Big Idea For This Week

Psalm 95:1

***1 Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.***

Pastor Kate shared a message several years ago and gave us an acronym for JOY:

Jesus Others Yourself

If we keep our lives in this order we regularly have more Joy.

There are several ways we can receive Joy from Jesus, His salvation, His forgiveness, His healing, His restoration and His giving of the Holy Spirit to name a few. His salvation is a source of great Joy because we know we are saved and heaven is our future home. At Christmas we celebrate with Joy that Jesus left heaven and took on human flesh to pay for our salvation with His sacrifice. This is why we sing for Joy to the Lord and shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation (Ps. 95:1).

His forgiveness sets us free from our brokenness enabling us to live in Joy instead of shame, guilt and regret. His healing changes our lives completely as we experience the miraculous touch of a miracle-working God. Miracles always bring Joy. His restoration in our lives is a form of a slow miracle as we day by day understand all the blessings of God in Christ Jesus that become our identity. Lastly, we receive an abundance of Joy as we receive the Holy Spirit from Jesus. One of the evidences or fruits of living in the power of the Spirit instead of our flesh is Joy. The Spirit changes us from the inside out. He changes our thinking, our actions, what we find important and how we live a Joyous life for Jesus in our current context and world.

Giving Joy... Let's go back to the acronym. Remember that true Joy is resident within us when we put others before ourselves. Wow, this is hard to do. Have you noticed how this is a battle raging inside of us? Why? Because we all have a sin nature that lives inside of us and we are fighting against it to live for Jesus. Here's some good news. Christmas is a great time to get excited about others instead of ourselves. Do you have more Joy when you give a gift or receive one? Most of us are more excited by receiving a gift.

Can I encourage you to use this Christmas season as an opportunity to train your mind and heart to put others first. Get excited about what you can give to others. Look for those around you that are less fortunate than you and find a way to give them something they need. This is the way of Jesus. Jesus gave Himself for us and we get to do the same for those around us. Living this way gives us joy!

Receive the Gift of Joy

Read the following scriptures alone for individual study or with your household.
Scripture: Psalm 126:3

How has God been good to you in 2021?

What spiritual habits help you receive and be filled with God's joy?

Family Connection Point

Make some hot cocoa and go for a car ride around Cheney to look at Christmas lights. Count how many times you find the word JOY on your drive.

Give the Gift of Joy

Read the following scriptures alone for individual study or with your household.
Scripture: Acts 16:16-34 (focus on the joy in verse 34)

We celebrate Jesus coming to earth on Christmas. He came to give us the joy of our salvation. Jesus went through a lot of pain to give us joy... leaving heaven, a flogging, the cross, and the resurrection. What would you go through for someone to give them the joy of salvation in Jesus?

What did Paul and Silas do to keep their joy of Christ in jail? Is this a spiritual habit in your life?

Family Connection Point

Gather the family and make some Christmas cookies. Turn on some Christmas music and sing while you decorate. Then share these cookies with your neighbors. What a joyful way to celebrate Jesus' birth!

Group Reading

With your household or small group, read the section of scripture aloud. After reading aloud, discuss a few main points from the reading as well as answer the questions listed below.

Scripture: Luke 2:10-14

How does this reading give you great Joy today?

Christmas is one of the best times to share the joy of Jesus as Savior. Pray for someone you want to share the joy of Jesus with this Christmas season and let the Holy Spirit lead you into a spiritual conversation about why Jesus came.

Additional Activities

Sunday Supper Soup

Scan the QR code or type in the URL to be directed to this week's soup recipe.

This week's soup:
Joyful Chicken
and Rice Soup
From: Judy Schroeder

URL (case sensitive)
qrco.de/peacesoup



-
- Go sledding with your family! (You might have to pray for snow to make this one happen!)
 - Make some fun holiday masks with whatever craft supplies you have on hand paper plates, ribbons, pipe cleaners, etc. Spread joy by taking silly pictures and send them to family and friends – and us at church!
 - Do you know someone who needs joy right now? Is there something you can do to bring them joy? DO IT!
 - Act out the Christmas nativity story. Take some time to imagine the joy Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds felt when they were visited by the angels. What would your face look like if angels came to you?

Week 4
December 19 - December 23

The Gift of Peace

A prayer to read aloud when lighting your candles.

In our world there is tribulation and turmoil,
but You, O Lord, have overcome the world
with Your perfect peace.

As this group of candles makes darkness cease,
may we be reminded of the first Christmas night
when a host of angels brought light and announced peace.

Be near to us and rule in our hearts, Prince of Peace,
that our observation, preparation, and celebration
may also announce Your peace to our world.

Candle:
The Purple Angel's Candle

Tear out opposite page and cut out the memory verse card along dotted lines.

You can fold the memory verse to display on a table or simply hang some where in your house.

In our world there is tribulation and turmoil,
but You, O Lord, have overcome the world with Your perfect peace.
As this group of candles makes darkness cease,
may we be reminded of the first Christmas night
when a host of angels brought light and announced peace.
Be near to us and rule in our hearts, Prince of Peace,
that our observation, preparation, and celebration
may also announce Your peace to our world.

Advent Prayer of Peace

*"I am leaving you with a gift
Peace of mind and heart. And
the peace I give is a gift the
world cannot give. So don't be
troubled or afraid." John 14:27*

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a single lit candle. The candle is yellow with a bright orange flame. The background is a deep blue with a subtle gradient. The hand is dark-skinned and is positioned in the lower right corner of the frame.

PEACE

Sermon Notes

Sermons are also available on YouTube by searching *Cheney Faith Center*.

Date:

Speaker:

Big takeaway:

Key verses:

Songs of Peace

Scan the QR code below to be directed to a curated Spotify playlist centered around this week's theme. We have selected these songs to give another way to prepare our hearts for the coming of King Jesus!

If you don't use Spotify or want to listen to a few of the songs, we have listed our top 3 songs for this week. Search for these songs on whatever platform you use for music and enjoy.

Song List:

Silent Night -

Lauren Daigle

Peace has Come -

Hillsong Worship

We Wish You a (Merry, Peaceful, Wonderful Christmas) - Phil Wickham

Peace



Big Idea For This Week

John 14:27

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."

We are finding the true gifts of Christmas this Advent season. So far, we've opened hope, love, and joy. This week we are unwrapping the gift of peace. In Isaiah 9:6, one of the prophetic descriptions of Jesus is the "Prince of Peace". I don't know about you, but this phrase has always made me think of a prince, as in the son of a king. Upon further study, you'll find that this word "prince" is also the root word of principle, meaning "a primary source." What this prophecy was promising was that Jesus would be our primary source of peace in this world.

Jesus confirmed this prophecy when He told His followers, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have **peace**. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Jesus, doesn't promise a shortage of trouble. In fact, He promises we indeed will have trouble. Yet He also promises to be our peace in the middle of it.

Scripture is full of peace promises:

*You will keep in perfect **peace** those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You.* Isaiah 26:3

*In **peace** I will lie down and sleep, for You alone, O Lord, will keep me safe.* Psalm 4:8

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the **peace** of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:6-7

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." John 14:27

Jesus is the gift of peace that our hearts and minds so desperately need. This soul-level peace comes from no other source. Let's open the gift of peace together this week.

Receive the Gift of Peace

Read the following scriptures alone for individual study or with your household. Scripture: Read John 14:27 out of both the NLT and The Amplified versions of the Bible.

How is the peace Jesus gives different from the peace the world gives?

What would it look like for you to open the “gift of peace” that Jesus gives this Christmas season?

Family Connection Point

Take a break from your screens, put on some peaceful Christmas music, make some tea or cocoa, and sit near a window to watch the snow fall (or whatever the weather is doing). Take intentional deep breaths and enjoy the feeling of peace.

Give the Gift of Peace

Read the following scriptures alone for individual study or with your household. Scripture: Romans 12:14-21. These verses show how we can be peacemakers who display God's character, similar to the reading on giving love a few weeks ago.

Who is a specific person or what is a specific situation where God is calling you to be a peacemaker?

What is He asking you to do? Feel free to use Romans 12:14-21 for inspiration.

Family Connection Point

Go for a walk through your neighborhood and pray God's peace upon each house you pass.

Group Reading

With your household or small group, read the section of scripture aloud. After reading aloud, discuss a few main points from the reading as well as answer the questions listed below.

Scripture: Read Mark 4:35-41 out of a few different versions, including the ESV.

What is a (big or little) “storm” in your life where you need God’s peace personally?

How can you give God’s peace to one another?

Additional Activities

Sunday Supper Soup

Scan the QR code or type in the URL to be directed to this week's soup recipe.

This week's soup:
Peace Giving
Ratatouille
From: Martha Ming

URL (case sensitive)
qrco.de/peacesoup



-
- Memorize this week's memory verse. When you feel yourself growing impatient, anxious, or unsettled, allow God's word to bring your heart peace.
 - Bring baby Jesus into your nativity scene on Christmas morning. Spend a few minutes dwelling on the magnitude, awe, and wonder of Jesus, the best gift of all, coming to earth as a baby. Praise God!
 - One evening this week, turn off the lights and TV, light some candles, and have a family worship night singing your favorite Christmas hymns.
 - Make a pie (or pizza, or cake) this week. As you pass out the pieces of pie to those you share it with say something like, "May this piece of pie remind you of the peace of Jesus." Ponder the "gift of peace" anytime you have pieces of items you eat or share with others.

Christmas Eve

We want to invite you to join with the CFC church family on Christmas Eve at one of our two services. We will be hosting two Christmas Eve services at Cheney Faith Center at 2pm and 4pm on Friday December 24th. Livestream of the 2pm service will be on Youtube and Facebook.

Our service will be a 60min gathering with some traditional carols, a Christmas message, family story time, and a candle lighting time to light the Christ candle.

There will be no kids classes, but kids are welcome in service, and we will have kids activity packs available during service.

Christ Candle - Christmas Eve at Home

On Christmas Eve we will light the final candle in the culmination of our Advent candle lightings. Take a moment to read through the Advent prayer and light every colored candle while reflecting on each word and theme that we have studied these past weeks.

Then take a moment to give thanks to God for sending His son and light the Christ candle (white). The Christ candle represents the light that Jesus brings to our world as referred to in John chapter 1.

Christ Candle Prayer to read

As we light these candles (light each candle as you say the following)

We release despair and rest in hope

We give up hate and choose love

We reject sorrow and embrace joy

We surrender discord and claim peace

We let go of the world and proclaim Christ Who was, and is, and is to come!

Word of God, dwell in us richly. We praise You! Glory to God in the highest!

Christmas Day

Read through John 1:1-18 as listed below in the NLT or use a translation of your choice.

Prologue: Christ, the Eternal Word

In the beginning the Word already existed.

*The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.*

He existed in the beginning with God.

*God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.*

*The Word gave life to everything that was created,
and his life brought light to everyone.*

*The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it.*

God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"

From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

Take a moment today to light the Christ candle again on your Advent wreath. Take the other candles out of your wreath to symbolize that the wait is over, Jesus is here!



cheneyfaithcenter.org
509.235.4282