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CELEBRATING THE COMING OF CHRIST

Advent: Celebrating the Coming of Christ

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HOPE



DECEMBER 3

COLOSSIANS 1:25-27

I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.



A PRAYER OF PRAISE

FATHER we praise you today because we have a living hope, a sure hope, a never-failing hope in your Son, Jesus Christ. God, you alone are wise. God, you alone are good. God, you alone are gracious. So Father, we praise you as the only One worthy of all our hope. We praise you for giving us in Christ the hope of salvation, the hope of restoration, the hope of glory.

DECEMBER 4

PSALM 33:16-19

The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.



A PRAYER OF CONFESSION

LORD, we confess that our hope is not always in you alone. We hope in our jobs. We hope in our success. We hope in our own strength. We hope in our own goodness and religious performance. LORD, help us to fear you. Help us to fix our eye on Jesus who came down from heaven to lavish us with your steadfast love. Help us, God, to hope in him alone.

DECEMBER 5

ROMANS 4:18, 20-21

In hope Abraham believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." ... No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.



A PRAYER OF ASSURANCE

FATHER, we know that you are able to do what you have promised. Your word is true and you are faithful. We know that we can hope in your word even when things seemed hopeless. Help us to look to Jesus who was born to be the yes and amen of every promise. Father, strengthen us as we look to Jesus and may we be fully convinced and completely unwavering in our hope in him.

DECEMBER 6

ROMANS 5:2-5

Through Jesus we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 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.



A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

JESUS, we thank you for coming for us. We thank you that by your birth and by your death, we have access to your grace and hope in your glory. We thank you that even in our suffering you are working in us so that we might be like you and so that we might hope in you. We thank you that our love has been poured into our hearts and that you have given us your Spirit. Jesus, we thank you for the hope we have in you.

DECEMBER 7

TITUS 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.



A PRAYER OF PETITION

FATHER, we have seen the appearing of your grace in Jesus. He was born to bring salvation for all. So we pray that our hope in him would teach us to live for you. Help us to turn from worldliness and to godliness. Help us as we spend our lives waiting for the hope of Jesus' return. Father, may we be a people free of sin, a people of purity, and a people for your glory. Help the hope we have in Jesus to change us and make us new.

DECEMBER 8

ROMANS 15:8-9, 12

For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." ... And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."



A PRAYER OF BLESSING

GOD, we pray that this great hope in Jesus would be known among the peoples of the earth. We know that Jesus was born as the root of Jesse — the King who is new and better David. And we know that without him all people are hopeless. So God, we pray that you would send the name of Jesus to the ends of the earth. And God, we pray that the nations would come and find all their hope in this One who was born in the city of David, Bethlehem.

DECEMBER 9

1 PETER 3:13-15

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.



A PRAYER OF DEDICATION

FATHER, we pray that we would be ready to share the hope that we have in Christ. Help us in all that we do to shine as a city on a hill as we live among this world. Help us to speak light to those in darkness. Help us to speak life to the lifeless. Help us to speak hope to the hopeless. Father, use us so that this world might know the True Light, who was born to be our light, our life, and our hope.

MAY THE GOD OF
HOPE FILL YOU WITH
ALL JOY AND PEACE
IN BELIEVING, SO
THAT BY THE POWER
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
YOU MAY ABOUND IN
HOPE.

ROMANS 15:13

PEACE



DECEMBER 10

EPEHSIANS 2:14-16

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.



A PRAYER OF PRAISE

JESUS, we praise you that you are our peace. Lord, you are the promised Prince of Peace who would rule over us and through us. We praise you that you have brought us peace with God by the blood of your cross. And by that same cross, Lord, we praise you that you have purchased our peace with all peoples, no matter their ethnicity or nationality. Jesus, we praise you that you don't just give us peace, but you are our peace.

DECEMBER 11

JAMES 3:16-18

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.



A PRAYER OF CONFESSION

HOLY SPIRIT, forgive us when we fail to live at peace with those around us. Forgive us when we are selfish and unholy. Forgive us when we are not peaceable nor gentle. Forgive us when we are stubborn. Forgive us when we show favoritism and are not genuine. Spirit, would you come and cleanse us so that we might be peacemaker and that we might sow peace with everyone we meet.

DECEMBER 12

ISAIAH 53:4-5

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 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.



A PRAYER OF ASSURANCE

FATHER, we look to Jesus today and rest in the confidence we have in him. We know that it was your will to crush Jesus so that by his suffering he might bring us to you. In that today we trust. Father, when we feel like our sin too high and wide, like our shame is too deep to hide, may we look to your Son and his cross. And may we forever rest in the peace that he purchased for us there.

DECEMBER 13

ISAIAH 9:6-7

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.



A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

LORD, we thank you for the promise of Jesus' coming thousands of year before he came. We thank you that this was the great plan of redemption even before the world began. We thank you that Jesus was born so that he would forever rule over us, that he would bring comfort and might and provision. We thank you, LORD, that Jesus came to be our forever Prince of Peace.

DECEMBER 14

2 CORINTHIANS 13:11

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.



A PRAYER OF PETITION

FATHER, what joy it is to know that you have given us peace by sending your Son into this world. He was born to restore what is broken in us. And he will come again to make all things new. His peace will reign forever. So Father, help us to live at peace with all men and to bless one another with your love. We pray that your peace would reign in our hearts, in our church, and in our lives.

DECEMBER 15

LUKE 2:13-14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"



A PRAYER OF BLESSING

GOD, we pray that your glory would be seen among all the peoples of the earth. Even as that heavenly host proclaimed peace with the coming of Jesus, may the peace of Jesus be proclaimed to this lost and dying world. God, may the message of peace go to those whom you love, those with whom you have chosen in your grace to be pleased. May your glory shine as you extend your gracious gift of peace to this world.

DECEMBER 16

ISAIAH 52:7-8

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion.



A PRAYER OF DEDICATION

LORD, you reign over all and your peace is everlasting. So use us that your peace may be known over all the earth. May we be faithful to bring good news, to declare your salvation, and to proclaim your peace. Help us to fix our eyes to Jesus who was born that he might be our peace. LORD, give us beautiful feet as we proclaim your peace. And may your peace forever live and reign among us.

NOW MAY THE LORD
OF PEACE HIMSELF
GIVE YOU PEACE AT
ALL TIMES IN EVERY
WAY. THE LORD BE
WITH YOU ALL.

2 THESSALONIANS 3:16

JOY



DECEMBER 17

PSALM 16:9-11

Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.



A PRAYER OF PRAISE

FATHER, you are the source of true joy. You are the Giver of Life. You are the Father of Lights. You are the Blessed One who freely and generously blesses your people. It's not in your works or in the way you benefit us, but it is in your presence that we can know the fullness of gladness and joy. Father, we praise you that in Jesus — who is Immanuel, God with us — we can know your joy forevermore.

DECEMBER 18

PSALM 51:10-12

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.



A PRAYER OF CONFESSION

GOD, we know that our sins are many and that we stumble in many ways. So we come and confess to you that we have turned from you and have not honored you as we should. We pray that you would cleanse us, that you would renew us, that you would increase our joy in your salvation. God, we look to Jesus as the Lamb of God who came to take away our sin. Let us find our greatest joy in him.

DECEMBER 19

ZEPHANIAH 3:14 & 17

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies.

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.



A PRAYER OF ASSURANCE

LORD, we know that you are gracious. We know that you are merciful and your steadfast love endures forever. So we rejoice that you have take away our judgement and have overcome our enemies. We know that Christ came to be your glory dwelling among us. So, we pray that you would drive away our doubts and our shame. May we ever look to Jesus as the song of love that you will forever sing over us.

DECEMBER 20

PSALM 30:11-12

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever!



A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

LORD, we give thanks to you for the joy that you give to us. You have saved us. You have redeemed us. You have comforted us. You have given us your joy. We thank you that we have a song to sing in times of trouble. We thank you that we have a garment of joy for times of doubt. LORD, we thank you that Jesus was born to turn our darkness to light, our mourning to dancing. As we fix our hearts on the joy he brings, we give thanks.

DECEMBER 21

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-6

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.



A PRAYER OF PETITION

JESUS, we pray that we might always — in all circumstances and in all situations — find our joy in you. Help us not to worry or be anxious, but instead to pray. Help us to have grateful hearts as we bring our requests to you. Jesus, you came from heaven for us and you have promised to never leave us or forsake us. You are near to us. May we forever look to your nearness and find lasting joy.

DECEMBER 22

LUKE 2:8-11

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.



A PRAYER OF BLESSING

HOLY SPIRIT, we know that you desire that people come to Jesus and find life in him. We know that it is your pleasure to inspire the proclamation of the good news of Jesus. So just as those shepherds heard the message of joy that night, may you send the message of Jesus around the world. And may all peoples find their greatest joy in a Savior, who is Christ our Lord.

DECEMBER 23

MATTHEW 13:44

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.



A PRAYER OF DEDICATION

JESUS, you have taught us that following you cost us everything. Help us to lose our lives so that we might save them. Help us give everything that we have in order to gain your kingdom. May we give you our money, our time, our energy, even our lives. Jesus, you gave up everything by coming to earth and dying in our place. We pray that you would give us your great joy as we seek to lose everything for you.

BE GLAD IN THE LORD,
AND REJOICE,
O RIGHTEOUS, AND
SHOUT FOR JOY, ALL
YOU UPRIGHT IN
HEART!

PSALM 32:11

LOVE



DECEMBER 24

1 JOHN 4:9-10

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.



A PRAYER OF PRAISE

GOD, we praise you for your great love. Your love is perfect. Your love is pure. Your love is steadfast. Your love is mighty. We praise that you have shown us your great love by sending your Son into this dark and sinful world. We praise you for the life we have in him. We praise you that he was born so that he might die. God, may we ever live under the banner of your great grace and love. May we ever live under the banner of the cross.

DECEMBER 25

LUKE 2:4-7

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.



A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

JESUS, today we celebrate your birth. You left your home in heaven and came down to a fallen world. You were made like us and you humbled yourself. You — the King of Heaven — were laid in a animal trough. Your kindness toward us is unthinkable. Your grace toward us is unimaginable. Your love is unexplainable. Jesus, we praise you today and ask that your love would reign over us, in us, and through us.

DECEMBER 26

ROMANS 8:38-39

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.



A PRAYER OF ASSURANCE

GOD, we come to you knowing that we face all kinds of troubles and struggles in life. When we are tempted to believe that we have fallen too far from your love, remind us of the gift of love we celebrate at Christmas. GOD, we pray that you would remind us and comfort us with your love — a love that will never fail us, never disappoint us, and never leave us. We rest today in the love of God given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

DECEMBER 27

ROMANS 5:6-8

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.



A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

JESUS, we thank you that you laid down your life to save us. You taught us that there is no greater love than for someone to lay down his life for his friends. We know that you have been a great friend to great sinners. The depths of our rebellion shows us the heights of your sacrifice. Jesus, we thank you that you died for unrighteous people like us. We thank you for the great love with which you have loved us.

DECEMBER 28

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.



A PRAYER OF PETITION

HOLY SPIRIT, we pray that you would help us to love like Jesus loves us. He is kind. He is gracious. He is humble. He is patient. He sees the worst in us and looks to what is best for us. Spirit, we pray that you would create in us this kind of love. May we live our lives loving the way Jesus loves. And may we forever look to the One who came down and made himself low to show us just how much he loves us.

DECEMBER 29

JOHN 3:16-17

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.



A PRAYER OF BLESSING

FATHER, we praise you for sending your Son to come and die for this helpless world. We know that you desire that sinners from every nation, tribe, and tongue would come to Jesus and be saved. So we pray that you save your people. May you work in hearts around the world to draw them to Jesus and his great love. Father, let the love of Jesus be known throughout all the earth.

DECEMBER 30

JOHN 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”



A PRAYER OF DEDICATION

JESUS, we pray that you would help us to love as you have loved. You came down. You became one of us. And you died to rescue us from your wrath. So we pray that you help us to love like that. Give us hearts to be selfless, to sacrifice and to give ourselves for others. Allow your love to flow through us so that we might truly love one another. Jesus, fill us with your fullness so that the whole world would see your love in us.

MAY YOU KNOW
THE LOVE OF CHRIST
THAT SURPASSES
KNOWLEDGE, SO
THAT YOU MAY BE
FILLED WITH ALL
THE FULLNESS OF
GOD.

EPHESIANS 3:19