

Devotionals

2020 ADVENT BCC HOPE

Sunday, November 29, 2020 First Sunday in Advent: HOPE

Luke 1:37

37 For nothing will be impossible with God. NRSV Hope begins with understanding our source of promises, provision, protection, and blessings. It is our Almighty God who has freely given us access to unbelievable hope. By our status as

the crown jewel of creation, we have been given all we need to have abundant life. To make sure we knew that nothing with our God would be impossible, God sent God's only Son to clearly reveal the source to each of us.

There are no exclusionary clauses, no qualifying verbiage, and no only if you believe wording to determine what might impede God because Nothing is just that nothing. Therefore, in the midst of the state of our lives, and our world, not based on history nor even the future will never change the fact that there are no impossibilities with God, so we can have hope.

Song: *Nothing is Impossible* – <https://youtu.be/nuBA5YSsWUI>

Prayer: Oh Lord thank you for hope. Help me Lord to ever look to you when I feel that hope is slipping away by the circumstances that surround me. As I prepare for the celebration of your Son let me look forward with hope And strive to be the light that points other to the same hope. Amen.

Monday, November 30, 2020 ADVENT HOPE

Hebrews 6:17-18

17 In the same way, when God wanted to confirm His promise as true and unchangeable, He swore an oath to the heirs of that promise.

18 So God has given us two unchanging things: *His promise and His oath*. These prove that it is impossible for God to lie. As a result, we who come to God for refuge might be encouraged to seize that hope that is set before us. *The Voice*

There is hope available to each of us. What is so exciting is our Awesome and Amazing God wanted it to be so clear that hoping in God is not like pitching pennies into a wishing well that God swore by God self that the promise and oath of God are not changeable

Therefore, embrace the hope and move forward in confidence. Embrace the hope and stand up against any and all injustice. Embrace hope and choose love at all times. Hope anchored in our God will never be a lie. God's only Son came to remind us that Hope is alive and well in our one true and living God.

Song: *Hope is Built on Nothing Else aka Solid Rock* – African American Heritage Hymnal, 2001

Prayer: We praise you Lord for the amazing gift of Hope. Because of hope I can stand in any storm. Because of hope even when I am disappointed with myself Lord, I can find refuge and hope in you. Lord strengthen my resolve to be ever hopeful walking by faith and not by sight or sound. Amen.

Tuesday, December 1, 2020 ADVENT HOPE. WORLD AIDS DAY

Hebrews 11:1

1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. NIV

Only a perfect God would give a gift of Hope so that we can live in confidence and assurance. We are bombarded daily with images, memes, speeches and statistics that are meant to undermine our confidence, assurance and hope.

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God that we have been freed from doubt by the living presence of our Savior. We do not have to succumb to negative influence. We do not have to restrict our possibilities to our own finite understanding. Therefore, we celebrate God's Son as our beacon of light at all times. So go ahead exercise your hope.

Song: *My Hope* – Jonathan Nelson

Prayer: My Lord you have not left me without assurance and confidence. I can have hope at all times. My Lord I do not have to be afraid because of the hope you freely give to me. Help me remember your hope in my dark places of stress,

anxiety, disappointment, and depression. Remind me to keep my eyes on Jesus at all times the source of Hope. Amen

Wednesday, December 2, 2020 ADVENT HOPE

Romans 4:17-18

17 as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”)—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

18 Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” NRSV

We have phenomenal hope. We must never refuse to take the leap into what seems impossible. A young hand maiden did not blink at the hope presented to her to be the mother of God’s only Son. Abraham did not blink at the dead part of his body in order to be known as the Father of many nations.

The Word of God can manifest in our lives. Our hopes and dreams along with the visions can actually happen when we we hope against hope. When we believe what we cannot even fathom or imagine.

The celebration this season is meant to revise our youthful wide-eyed hopes and dreams that are often stymied by the circumstances we encounter. Therefore let us seize the opportunity to activate the Hope in our lives and the lives of others.

Song: *Called to Be* – Johnathan Nelson

Prayer: Hallelujah Lord, you are worthy of praise, worship, and all honor. Thank you for the miraculous gift of Hope. Thank you for presenting us with new possibilities that surpass what we think will be possible. Lord help us to share our hope, confidence, and assurance with others as we point

them back to you. Amen.

Thursday, December 3, 2020 ADVENT BCC HOPE

Isaiah 40:31

31 but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. NIV

There are lots of conflicts swilling around us at this time. Unemployment, climate change, health inequity, racial injustice, wars and rumors of war, COVID and hunger. No different than centuries past when even Jacob/Israel complained that God was not paying attention to the suffering of God's people. Our challenges have different names but still challenges.

Yet in the midst of our difficulties and trauma we can anticipate a change if we have Hope. We can expect to soar to higher heights. We can rise above our circumstances. In fact, the promise is strength renewal when we have hope in the Lord. The promise extends our abilities to overcome even weary. In this season of Advent it is time to Rekindle Hope In our lives and the life of our community, country, and the world. Our God gives us hope to keep us fueled for the journey. Let us seek to rise together.

Song: *Eagle's Wings* – Beverly Griffin Keller
– https://youtu.be/rzqn1kf_YPc

Prayer: Gracious Lord, we are thankful for hope that renews and restores. Thank you Lord that though we grumble and complain we still can have access to hope. Lord please allow our hope in you to ignite the hope in all those around us: family, friends, colleagues, and strangers for your glory and our restoration. Amen.

Friday, December 4, 2020 ADVENT BCC HOPE

Hebrews 10:23

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. NIV

There always seem to be so many choices and roads to take. With every dilemma, issue or decision we have to make in a daily bases it is often easy to find ourselves in a quandary. Sometimes rather than take our time, we can rush to making decisions and find ourselves abruptly changing lanes.

It is exactly at that this time that we need to rely on our unswerving hope in God. Can we filter our comments, decisions through the faithful lens of our God? Is it possible to hold onto the Word of God, pray to our Lord, and respond as God would have us to respond.? The answer is a resounding yes, but we must be totally committed to our non deviating hope in God. In other words we must believe and trust what God says is true and possible are just that. Elizabeth did, and John the Baptist was the forerunner for Jesus. Mary did and she was the mother of Jesus. Joseph did and he honored his commitment to Mary and cared for our Savior.

Song: *Hold to God's Unchanging Hand* – African American Heritage Hymnal, 2001

Prayer: Lord, please help us maintain our unswerving hope in you so that we do not deviate from your plan or disregard your commands. Forgive us when we miss the mark. We desire to glorify you in all that we do. Amen.

Saturday, December 5, 2020 ADVENT BCC HOPE

Hebrews 6:19

19 This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. NLT

19 That hope is real and true, an anchor to steady our *restless* souls, a hope that leads us back behind the

curtain to where God is. THE VOICE

We are familiar with the concept of an anchor. Large ships drop anchor in ports of call or specific locations to help prevent movement and straying away from that particular area.

Our hope in our God serves as that Anchor for each of us. The Hope keeps us in very close proximity of Our Awesome and Amazing God. In my vision, we are anchored right at the very bosom or heart of God. Able to be comforted by God's heart beat much like a baby in the womb of its mother. We are also able to sense when we are moving a little too far away or getting blown into another direction.

It is this anchoring hope that will keep us on track when we are faced with evil, hatred, and injustice. It is this anchor of hope that will allow us to stand boldly against oppression, captivity, blindness to injustice, and the deafness of others who refuse to hear the cries of the poor, downtrodden, and mistreated of God's creation.

Let us embody this hope in our God so that we never find ourselves too far away from the heart of God, confident, assured, and steadfast in hope in every situation.

Song: *My Soul is Anchored in The Lord* – Doug Miller

Prayer: My God, My God to be assured of hope and to have that hope serve as an anchor in choppy times is an incredible gift. Lord help me cling to my hope no matter what surrounds me. Show me how to live a hopeful, nothing impossible life. And Lord, allow the glory Of my victories in hope to continue to flow to you. Amen.

2020 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BCC PEACE

Sunday, December 6, 2020 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BCC PEACE

Isaiah 9:6-7

6 For unto us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. NIVA promise is given that there would be one who will come as God's representative, sovereign royalty gifted in all things especially Peace-Shalom. There is a promise of peace that will never end. Notice that there is no mention that conflict, trouble, or mayhem will have no end, but peace brought by Messiah will in fact never end.

Understand that our God desires for us to always have access to peace no matter our circumstances. The coming promised Prince of Peace in fact will hail the release from bondage and oppression. We are free from worry, freed from trying to control everything in an effort to achieve finite peace which often is a mere avoidance of conflict rather than infinite peace. Instead, we are able to retreat to our God where peace abounds. What a blessing and benefit for all of God's creation.

Song: *Let There Be Peace on Earth* – Milton Biggham

Prayer: Hallelujah Lord for the wonderful Prince of Peace and never ending access to peace. Lord, please help us choose to retreat to you when your peace is needed in our minds, bodies, and souls. Lord teach us to model your peace in every space we find ourselves so that change will take place not only in our hearts, but in the hearts and minds of all whom we encounter. Amen

Monday, December 7, 2020 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL PEACE

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. NIV

In this time of of many pandemics: Coronavirus, systemic racism, evil/hatred, judgmental behavior, increasing selfishness and self-centeredness, it is a blessing that our God made us a promise that will allow us to stand and withstand any storm.

We have been given the gift of PERFECT PERFECT PEACE.

This is not the peace of which the world speaks, but it is of SHALOM: a total and all encompassing state of perfected harmony where conflict and discord cannot exist. And if that were not enough our Lord added an extra Perfect to the gift which makes this peace abundantly above all we could imagine peace could be.

Therefore, our peace is impenetrable, no storm, no evil, no disappointment, or depression can block or inactivate this amazing gift as long as we trust our Sovereign God.

Song: *Perfect Peace* – Marvin Sapp, Earnest Pugh

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for the access to your perfect perfect peace simply by believing your word and always trusting you. We thank you as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus, the Prince of Peace our reminder that we are always in your presence, and therefore your peace. Amen.

Tuesday, December 8, 2020 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BCC PEACE

Psalms 119:165

165: You give peace of mind to all who love your Law. Nothing can make them fall. CEV

165: Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing

shall offend them. KJV

We need just a bit thicker skin all the time, but particularly this year. We are often too easily offended by actions, lack of action, and comments of others. When offended we often retaliate or imitate the very behavior that offended us. Many times the outrageous behavior of others may have nothing to do with us, but the result of other issues confronted by that person prior our arrival.

Knowing that our God has presented us with a way to remain in great peace despite the issues that may rise up to infuriate and enrage us is a unique blessing for God's elect. Move, speak, and respond if, when, and how God directs. God does not want us ever to stumble or fall. So remain at all times in the peace of God.

Song: *Order My Steps* v. 3 – African American Heritage Hymnal, 2001

Prayer: Lord, you know we are in need of peace, on our jobs, in the street, and in our homes. We intellectually understand that we can have great peace so we don't have to stumble, but Lord please teach us how to activate in these stressful time. And Lord help us get to the point that we don't have to activate what has already become a norm. Amen.

Wednesday, December 9, 2020 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BCC PEACE

Mark 4:38-39

38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

39 He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. NRSV

What power to be able to simply speak to the winds and the

waves and immediately have the raging storm become completely calm. But why are we surprised, all of of God's wonderful creation was spoken into existence. Then why shouldn't our Savior be able to speak to the elements of nature and calm the storm.

The question then arises, if our God can and did Calm the storm in nature, then why don't we believe that the same all powerful, all knowing God can calm the storms in our lives. Our God cares and loves us. So as immediately as God responded to the disciples question, our God will respond to us. The response can be to silence the storm or to allow us to thrive through the storm. We can be confidence that either way our God is with us.

Song: *Peace Be Still* – Vanessa Bell Armstrong: <https://youtu.be/7vocg0pLoGs>

Prayer: Lord you can do all things including speaking peace in a storm. Lord, please speak peace to the storms that seem to be raging in our world, country, community, and our lives. Teach us Lord how to use the power you have given us to do the same in your name, not only for ourselves, but for our neighbors whoever and where ever they may be. Amen.

Thursday, December 10, 2020 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BCC PEACE

Proverbs 14:30

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. NIV

Our mind, bodies, and souls are very much interconnected. What we think and feel, believe and eat or drink will yield change each area. Think about it, too much stress leads to headaches, indigestion, anxiety, and worry. All of those things can work to disrupt our confidence and assurance that our God is fully in control and not the least bit surprised at any time.

When we keep our minds stayed on El Shaddai, God Almighty, we have perfect peace. We have peace in a storm when we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God will quiet the storms. Therefore, a peace filled heart will generate life, combat stress, ease our aches and pains, and work to reduce anxiety. In other words, abundant life is ours when the peace of God takes over at center stage.

Song: *Peace in the Midst of a Storm* – Shirley Caesar: <https://youtu.be/qX8u2zmkr3E>

Prayer: My Lord thank you for peace. Lord help me move the idea of God's peace from my head to my heart so that I can have life and life more abundantly. Reveal to me how to keep that peace in my heart and help others do the same. Calm me, forgive me, heal me, restore me when other things are pushing peace from my heart center. Amen.

Friday, December 11, 2020 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BCC PEACE

Philippians 4:7

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. NRSV

We will face many challenges in lives, some daily, others seasonally. And then there are those life changing even threatening episodes that arrive often unannounced, completely by surprise. Left to our own devices even the strongest of us would crumble under the weight.

It is at that moment that the Peace of God manifests in such a way that you glide through events apparently seamlessly to those looking in and with such a sense of wholeness and peace that even you cannot quite explain it.

Because our God loves us so much, there will be times of incomprehensible peace that will overtake us. The peace will protect both our hearts and our minds. That peace will open

the us up to being comforted by as only a loving Creator can do. Then maintained with the help of our Sustainer.

Song: *Philippians* 4:7 – Fred
Hammond: <https://youtu.be/eEWzmiu1ld0>

Prayer: Oh my Lord, thank you for the peace that surpasses understanding, protects our hearts and minds. During these times our Lord, we cry out to you and know that you have answered our by the peace that engulfs us, comforts and keeps us. We love you Lord. We realize that without you we can not make it therefore we will bless your name at all times. Amen.

Saturday, December 12, 2020 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BCC PEACE

John 14:27

27 I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid. CEV

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. NLT

The gifts of God are purposeful. They will fill a need, change our lives, provide protection, and keep us from being fearful. What better gift to receive than Godly peace, the perfect wholeness that surpasses understanding which will leave us empowered to live an abundant life everyday, no matter our situation.

This gift of peace has no competition from the world, it does not tarnish, can't get stolen, and it can't be earned. As we take in our breath everyday, let us realize that we inhale the exhaled breath of God full of God's peace and power. Therefore, there will never be a need to be worried when we keep the peace of God in our hearts.

In this Advent season as we prepare to celebrate our Lord and

Savior, we recognize that gifts were brought to his birth which were accepted. We should make the resolve to accept God's gifts With our whole hearts. Then give to others with the determination to encourage them to accept all of God's gifts as well.

Song: *Peace* – New Direction: <https://youtu.be/K-hpjTPJ9lM>

Prayer: Lord your gift giving of Peace is welcomed and received. Guide us Lord as we learn to experience the full wholeness of your peace when our situations are calm or chaotic. Let us Lord be a role model for your peace everyday. We will give you all the glory for the life changing effects of your peace on ourselves, our community, nation and the world. Amen.

**Beloved Community Church is an Open and Affirming
United Church of Christ church where our pastors are
Revs. Guy and Sherry Molock.
Our address is 17500 Indian Head Hwy Accokeek, MD
20607. Our phone number is (240)899-7511."**

