

## FPC ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2022

### Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 2:1-5

These Old Testament verses seem to foretell the coming of the Prince of Peace - what an appropriate message for the beginning of Advent!

This Prince of Peace "will teach us His ways so that we may walk in his paths."

So, as Isaiah says and as we begin the season of Advent, "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord. "

Jane Sample

### Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup>

Psalm 122

David is writing a joyful song about making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to a temple that is not built yet. He seems to be trying to put himself in someone else's shoes; to travel all that way and to be welcomed by such a holy sight, making it all worth it.

And so to; Mary and Joseph made a pilgrimage, and welcomed the holiest of holy sights, and it was all worth it.

Anticipation is always the word and the feeling of Christmas. We anticipate the tree, and the lights, and the presents. We anticipate the coming of Christ, we anticipate him coming again.

But do we prepare as we should? Does the pilgrimage of Christmas prepare you for what's to come? I like that we have arranged our calendar that Christmas is celebrated right before the new year. The hope and the promise of what this season starts; should renew us and sustain us. Gods light shines bright this time of year; and my hope is that we recognize that light for the year ahead, and warm our hearts in its glow.

Happy CHRISTmas

Katie Chandler

### Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>

Romans 13: 11-14

Wake Up People! As the days of our lives dwindle, we are all coming closer to salvation in the Lord. The days of darkness are coming to an end; the new day is dawning. Forget about your lives of worldliness; forget about money, alcohol, drugs, idleness, fighting, and jealousy. Forget about hatred. Instead, live your life in the light! Live in prayer, love, respect. The light of the Lord Jesus Christ is upon us!

Sandy Allebach

### Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>

Matthew 24: 36-44

What does the end of Matthew, a passage talking about the end of days, have to do with Christmas? Everything apparently.

Jesus is in Jerusalem, the week of his death, speaking to his disciples about signs of the end of the age. He tells them to be prepared, that he will come again; but only that The Father knows when. So to keep watch.



And that is what we do, every Christmas Season. We keep watch. We hold vigil in our souls because of the promises fulfilled with Jesus' birth. The love of God that carries us at our lowest, this world he has given us and the freedom to make it our own, and soul saving life after the mortal death.

It is the time of year that God reminds us just how much better giving feels than receiving. And that our good deeds are not done for boasting or only when someone is watching, even though He always is.

So why talk about the end of the world as we are preparing for twinkling lights, presents, and all that holiday cheer? Because Christmas will always be the beginning to that end.

Jr. High Sunday School

**Thursday, December 1st**

**Isaiah 11: 1-10**

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." So begins this powerful, yet comforting, section of hope from the prophet, Isaiah. God's people will witness a new beginning as He raises up a Saviour, tender and powerful, not just for Israel, but for all nations.

It is good to look back on Old Testament sources that foretell the coming of this "branch," Jesus, our Saviour. There is hope for God's people through his faithfulness. It says to me that God waits for the time when "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea." I pray this knowledge of God will bring lasting peace to our world. Thanks be to God!

Rob Land

**Friday, December 2nd**

**Psalms 72: 1-7**

"He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations. Verse 5

Psalms 72 was written by King Solomon. The subtitle has been given "The Perfect King" and he prays that he and his son can rule with justice. And who is this perfect King that he wants to model? It is Jehovah and the Son is Jesus Christ. Even though Jesus has not yet appeared, Solomon is confident that he will come and his reign will endure forever.

In the season of Advent, we anxiously await the coming of Jesus. But unlike Solomon, we know that he did indeed come. And just like his Father, He will judge all people with righteousness. "He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor." Verse 4

In these uncertain times throughout the world we are thankful that we have these words to cling to and live by. And we must have faith that everything is in the hands of the "Perfect King" and his Son.

Prayer: O Perfect King, help us to await your Son's birth again and let us all be filled with awe and wonder as if this is the first time for us all

Jo Ann Bathurst



**Saturday, December 3rd**

**Romans 15: 4-13**

When I first read this scripture, I was confused! After reading the verses again, I realized Paul was talking about how Christians could learn to live together.

“Look to the past,” he says, “look at what you have been taught.”

Sounds like this church family right now, doesn't it? We are in a time of change, but this congregation has gone through many changes over the years, and we are still here, still strong.

As we move through Advent this year, things are different, but still the same - we are worshipping, praying, singing, serving, celebrating together, four generations, looking towards the Light that is coming into the world, once again.

In closing, I will use Paul's words, written in the first century, but still true for us today.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the powers of the Holy Spirit.”

Blessings to you all as we wait together,  
Jane Barndt

**Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Matthew 3: 1-12**

We hear again those familiar words: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." But how? Is it MY road? Is it the road for others? Is it for Advent, or for my life? Way too much to unpack and put into my very small closet!

But whether for Advent, to remind us again that we are preparing to celebrate the birth of our Savior, or we are thinking of the overarching return of our Christ, what is our call?

In vs 10 John tells those who feel "safe" from judgment by virtue of their heritage, that God is ready to chop down the trees that do not produce good fruit.

So perhaps we are being reminded that even if we do all of the ritual celebratory things perfectly, and if we are so into our own right-ness (righteousness), if it's our outward perfection, it's all wasted effort! We are being asked to examine who we are in our worship of this One who has come to show us the way. Maybe we should try to remove from our hearts anything that makes us feel we're better than another, or not as good as another. And make room in our hearts for the One who alone can make us right with God.

Gayle Hall

**Monday, December 5th**

**Isaiah 35:1-10**

The poetic words of Isaiah are a gift of hope, joy and salvation to the struggling Israelites of centuries ago, to our struggling world today and to me.



God will transform the wilderness. He will change our desert into a garden and our exile into a road home. God's people will be guarded and cared for, lifted up.

God's promise is to make the weak strong, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the speechless to sing. This is a testimony to the power and grace of God.

The message of Advent is that God will come as Jesus and save us. Hallelujah!

Liz Genter

**Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Psalm 146:5-10**

Blessed is he whose help is in God, Whose hope is in the Lord who made heaven and earth, sea and all that is in them.

We are living in a time of upheaval –huge wildfires, floods, hurricanes of Biblical proportions. Major icebergs are melting, fish and wildlife are disappearing. Amidst all this, people are fighting with and killing others for no reason at all.

Our Lord, who created all, gives food to the hungry, raises up the oppressed, opens the eyes of the blind, protects strangers, thwarts the way of the wicked. As stewards of the Earth, we are called upon to serve, to do the Lord's bidding on Earth. How can we, as ordinary citizens, make a difference? At First Presbyterian we have the ability to reach out in so many ways, in addition to what we can do on our own. In our homes, limit the amount of plastics used, turn off water and lights when not needed, recycle where possible, stop the waste. At church and in the community support the many programs to help others and the environment and, most of all, to Pray for Peace.

We are in a season of Hope and Love. May we share God's Love through this season and all the year.

Our Lord will reign forever, through all generations. Praise the Lord!

Merry Christmas.

Kathy Benning

**Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Luke 1:46-55**

We walk by faith, but faith leans on the promises. Mary is not just speaking sentimentally here. Mary is confessing her faith in this song. And however beautiful this song is to you, it won't make any difference to you unless you believe what Mary is saying. She believed the promises. She believed the message of the angel. And she believed this promise for this life and the life to come.

And that's the challenge for us today. It doesn't matter how many Christmases we've heard this song, if we've not believed it, if we've not embraced it, if we don't have a personal trust in the God who made these promises, if we don't have a personal faith in the Lord about whom these promises speak, then we do not have fellowship with God. No matter how many times you have heard this song, try to listen with new ears; try to listen through Mary's ears with a trusting faith and see how the song hits differently. Amen

Kim Wheelles



**Thursday, December 8th**

**James 5: 7-10**

It seems like my life's prayers are often filled with a request for more patience. How about you? Reflecting on the seasons of my life there are many times when patience was not my virtue. When I am out of patience... I do tend to grumble.

10 years of infertility. Lord help me. Repeated month after month year after year. Please Lord Please, How long Lord? Help me wait, Help me be patient. Lord, do you hear my prayers? Take courage, the coming of the Lord is near.

My cancer diagnosis. Lord God Almighty, help me to face this. I am afraid, I am in pain. Please Lord, help me. I am weary, I am afraid, more surgery? Help me wait, help me be patient. Lord, do you hear my prayers? Take courage, the coming of the Lord is near.

Unemployment. How Long Lord? Take courage the coming of the Lord is near

Marriage challenges: How Long Lord? Take courage, the coming of the Lord is near

Human Suffering, Wars, Poverty, Hunger, Homelessness, Prejudices, Pandemics, Political strife:  
HOW LONG, LORD? HOW LONG, LORD?

This scripture reminds me of the faithful saints who spoke the name of the Lord for generations before me as they waited for the Lord's return.

This Advent, brothers & sisters, take courage, for the Coming of the Lord is near.

As we wait, have confidence that the Lord is near. Faithfully call on the name of the Lord.

Kathleen O'Hara

**Friday, December 9th**

**Matthew 11:2-11**

"Are you the one who is to come?" That is John the Baptist's direct question to Jesus. John gets word that Jesus and his hand-picked disciples are on separate missionary journeys spreading the word of God and sharing the miracles that Jesus has performed. John raises that question, essentially challenging Jesus, because John has yet to witness the things that he is hearing about...even though he has been sitting in jail. John is expecting big things to come...transformational things...things that are all part of God's plan. Jesus does answer his question and takes it one step further by glorifying John's ministry to those that have gathered.

"Are you the one who is to come?" Isn't that the question that we are all asking ourselves today? Aren't we all expecting big things to come that will transform First Presbyterian Church? I know that I am!

This bible verse is very symbolic to our situation at FPC. Together, the congregation is playing the role of John the Baptist – our faith is strong, we stand firm on the word of God, and we are eager to know about what is headed our way. Those that continue to lead us in ministry each week, essentially keeping our family together, they are playing the role of the disciples – greeting, gathering, sharing the word, and refusing to let the sheep wander. Our transformation is beginning, and we trust in Jesus to lead the way.

John Livezey



**Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Isaiah 7**

We live in a world of empty promises. Advertisements tell us we can be rich, beautiful or famous, if we only purchase a certain product. We soon discover that these promises are full of emptiness. However, in Isaiah 7, God makes a promise that is anything but empty. He promises that a son, Immanuel (God is with us), will be born to a young virgin. This promise symbolized that the people may suffer at times, but that God would be with them through their hardships. During this advent may we be reminded of the fulfilled promise God made, through the birth of Jesus. And may we find hope and peace knowing he will be by our side, not just during our times of joy, but during our most difficult days.

Michelle Thompson

**Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Psalms 80 : 1-7, 17-19**

Honestly, this was a hard selection for me. The people of Israel are begging for forgiveness and mercy. They are feeling lost and scared. My default is to look for a change in tone to indicate some degree of hope or comfort. When I initially read this passage, I really felt discouraged. There was no promise of positivity for these people, just continued pleading. This is unfortunately very close to reality in many situations. Until we are suffering and frightened, we don't fully accept and turn to God. Too often, we reach for him in times of turmoil but not joy. Bring to Him your burdens and strife. But also, remember to regularly present to Him your grateful and smiling heart.

Megan Ziegler

**Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Romans 1: 1-7**

“Through him (Christ) we received both the generous gift of his life and the urgent task of passing it on to others.....” (The Message translation)

In her poem, “The Summer Day,” poet Mary Oliver invites us to wonder.... “Tell me, what it is you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” In these verses from Romans, I feel invited to wonder about what I am doing with my one wild and precious life in Christ? What does receiving and sharing Christ's life look like in my life? In my thoughts, heart, and actions? In our life together as the body of Christ?

Wondering about these questions, in the presence of the Gift Giver, can be transformative. Right now, the world so needs this generous gift Christ gives....life and living that produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control....these are the gifts you and I can urgently pass onto others in these anxious days. May you find joy and gladness in your gift giving during this season of wonder.

Amy Shutt

**Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Matthew 1:18-25**

The reason for the season

The story of the birth of Jesus, the son of God, born of the virgin Mary, who will one day save all who believe in him from their sins. Jesus is the "reason for the season" as the saying goes. These verses in Matthew however tell of Joseph and what amazing faith and trust he had in the message given to him by an angel of the



Lord. Once set to end his engagement to his betrothed who carried a child not his own, took her hand and under the direction of the angel named the child conceived by the Holy Spirit Jesus. What wondrous faith Joseph had to carry out the instructions he was given. His act of faith led to the birth of our savior and generations of believers to follow. Each of us, as believers, is a child of God. Each of us has the ability to do God's work as the hand of God here on earth. This advent, try to find your reason, and be that hand this season.

DeeAnne Orzechowski

**Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Isaiah 9:2-7**

What glorious words of reassurance! We read in Isaiah 9 that, although trouble may surround us, God will lead us, not around grief, sadness, and hardship but, safely through it. And how can this possibly be? "And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (v. 6) The words contain such promise. These much needed gifts all delivered by the Christ Child. Wonderful Counselor imparting spiritual wisdom that we crave. Mighty God empowering and enabling us to do good deeds through the Holy Spirit. Everlasting Father calling us as sons and daughters, encouraging us to feel a sense of belonging to God's family. Prince of Peace recognizing our human restlessness and offering the gift of heart and soul peace. These gifts, that God lovingly offers through the birth and life of His son, are ours for the asking. Let us receive them bowed in prayer, unwrap them with grateful hands, and enjoy them forever! Amen!

Donna Hutchison Force

**Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Psalms 96:1**

"Sing unto the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord, all the earth."

When I first read this verse, I immediately thought of our choir. They "sing unto the Lord" and share the talents that God has given them, every Sunday, of which I enjoy immensely.

As I thought more about this verse, I realized that we don't have to actually "sing" to the Lord, to praise him. We can "sing" unto the Lord in so many ways. When we help those in need or serve on committees at church we are "singing" unto the Lord. When we tell others about the Lord, sing in the choir or show kindness to someone who needs a listening ear, we are "singing" unto the Lord. When we go to work camp, adult or youth, or help with Living Waters, we are "singing" unto the Lord. When we give our time and offering to the church, we are "singing" unto the Lord."

God has given each of us a "voice". I encourage you today to go out and "Sing" unto the Lord".

Kay Vogt

**Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Titus 2:11-14**

Isn't this great news from the book of Titus? And so appropriate as we approach Christmas. Some of us get so caught up in the busyness of season, and while we don't necessarily forget the "reason of the season," we may not give that reason the attention it deserves. I must tell myself (or Kenn has to tell me!) that I don't need to make one more wreath or one more gift for someone. I don't have to bake one more different type of cookie or wrap every gift just so.



I love cooking and baking for Christmas. I love decorating our home for Christmas. I love buying or making “perfect” gifts for friends and family. I enjoy attending Christmas parties. I love sending out Christmas cards. Yet I must remind myself that the only “perfect” of Christmas is the miraculous arrival of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. During the season of Advent, we must slow down and be mindful, to be self-controlled, and to find time and space to reflect upon and share the wonder of Christmas, Jesus’ birth and constant presence and love. Alleluia. Amen.

Patty Picardi

**Saturday, December 17th**

**Luke 2:1-14**

The angel of the Lord revealed himself to the lowliest of people to announce Christ’s birth. There’s hope for all of us.

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.

Lord, May I walk as humbly as a shepherd that I may be worthy to hear the good news of great joy and your favor rest on me. Amen

Bruce Achuff

**Sunday, December 18th**

**Isaiah 62: 6-12**

*I see multiple parallels between the story in Isaiah and the advent season.*

*Verses 6 & 7 discusses watchmen and I think of the shepherd who watch over their flocks as they see the new star in the sky. We are like those shepherds in the advent season, waiting to celebrate the birth of the Christ child.*

*Verses 8 & 9 discuss the feast of grain and wine and how those crops will never again be given to our enemies and that the wine will be saved and prepared for us. As the advent season is the beginning, I think of the Easter season to come. The supper and giving of the bread and the cup for our salvation. Those who gather the grain will eat and those that gather the grapes shall drink, and they will praise the lord. In the same way, all those who gather are welcome at the table to celebrate communion, because anytime two or more are gathered in his name he is there.*

*Verses 10 & 11 Pass through the gates, remove the stones, raise a banner for the nations..... I see no better visualization of the path the newborn Christ child paves for us. He grants us new life and salvation. Not only does he remove obstacles, but the removal of his own stones sets the stage for his ascension and creates a path for the nation of Christians to thrive and grow.*

*Verse 12 ... They will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord; and you will be called Sought After, the City No Long Deserted.... No, explanation needed.*

Brad Chandler



**Monday, December 19th**

**Psalm 97**

When will true justice prevail in our world? How long must we wait? What does justice for all really mean? While Psalm 97 may not answer all of these questions, especially the when, the Psalm is a hymn in three parts celebrating what the world will look like under the reign of a just and righteous ruler.

In the first part (97:1-5), the Psalmist proclaims that “The Lord is king!” and describes God as being surrounded by “Clouds and thick darkness” and wherever God treads “Fire goes before him, consuming his adversaries.” This imagery of a God who can light up the world, cause the earth to tremble, and melt mountains like wax strikes fear in our human hearts. In this description, we are presented with the unqualified sovereignty of God. However, we are also comforted by the assurance that “righteousness and justice are the foundation of God’s throne.” God’s sovereignty is not based on brute force nor is it autocratic, abusive, or unrestrained. Rather, the foundation of God’s rule is one of mercy, love, and truth.

The second part of the Psalm (97:6-9), speaks to the response of nature and humans to the mystery and majesty of God’s glory. Nature’s response is unclouded and direct: “The heavens proclaim God’s righteousness.” It seems that Nature is more attuned to the marvelous wonders of God while we humans struggle with our own mixed responses: Zion (God’s people) rejoices in God’s judgment while others worship idols. When God’s majesty and glory is revealed, however, those idol worshippers are ashamed and even the idols bow down to the true God!

Finally, the third part of the Psalm (97:10-12) addresses God’s mercy. In a world in which not everyone recognizes God’s sovereignty, we are told that God “loves those who hate evil” and will protect and rescue his children from the wicked. In these final verses we are given a promise: “Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.” While there is pain, suffering, and injustice in the world today, we live in hope that God is ever present with us, will sustain us, and will one day come to reign over the world. Give thanks to God’s holy name! Amen.

Debbie Remelius

**Tuesday, December 20th**

**Titus 3:4-7**

“But— When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.”

Titus 3:4-7

I believe this is the core message God wants us to understand through Jesus’ life. We come up short or fail in our duties as Christians but through His grace we are given new life and renewed strength to continue living out His word.

Blake McClimon



**Wednesday, December 21st**

**Luke 2:1 – 7, 8 – 20**

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!! This is the familiar story of Christ's birth. Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem to register for the Roman census. While there Mary gives birth to Jesus in a stable.

What struck me this time reading the story is the response of the shepherds. While at first, they were terrified when the angels suddenly appeared in the night sky, then they soon set off to find this newborn king. Upon seeing the baby Jesus, the shepherds were so overcome with emotion they shouted to everyone glorifying and praising God. In contrast, Mary treasured all these responses in her heart. In our changing times at church may we treasure our time as a church family but not forget to celebrate and shout out loud why we are here, just like the shepherds.

Laura Hazeltine

**Thursday, December 22nd**

**Isaiah 52:7-10**

*<sup>7</sup> How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." <sup>8</sup> Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices; together they shout for joy, for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. <sup>9</sup> Break forth; shout together for joy, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup> The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*

If ever you have waited, feeling alone and desperate for release from the pain or affliction you're enduring, then perhaps you also know the feeling of relief and joy when you hear words of solace and comfort, and the promise that your suffering is at an end. Perhaps you've waited as a doctor came to tell you a loved one is recovering, or that they are, themselves, relieved of their anguish and pain. Amidst the ruin or devastation of your life as it seems at that moment, there will come, nevertheless, an upwelling of joy, of celebration—that is Christmas—whether or not the calendar says December 25. "Break forth; shout for joy!"

Rob Wade

**Friday, December 23rd**

**Psalms 98**

Psalm 98 is a very special Psalm as it is the only given a title ("A Psalm") by its author. Psalm 98 also has a link to the Advent Season as Mary, mother of Jesus, had this Psalm in mind as she composed her Magnificat.

"Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! For he has done marvelous things." The idea of a new song means there should be something fresh and dynamic about worship and praise to God. How fortunate that Deb, Cindy, and our Choirs provide new songs of praise.

"Shout joyfully to the Lord." This congregation does not sit on their hands! Include the strings of the lyre, the blare of the horn, melodic voices, and drums. Thanks to Cindy, Deb, and the Choirs! The sounds of the instruments and the shouts of the people are said to have been "heard far away."

On Christmas Eve, let our singing of "Joy to the World" be our Psalm 98. And let them hear us in Gilbertsville.

Paul Lepard



**Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Hebrews 1: 1-4**

“Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways...”, begins the author of Hebrews, “...but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son...”

Generations before this letter was written, God spoke to the people of Israel, through their prophets, in awe-inspiring ways. God speaks from a burning bush, a cloud large enough to obscure a mountain, and numerous, vivid dreams. Elijah weathered a great wind, an earthquake, and a fire before hearing God in a “sound of sheer silence.” These are dramatic experiences of God, an unmistakable voice ringing out through Scripture.

As Scripture brings us closer to Christmas, we may notice that the way God speaks feels different. Certainly, we know there will be at least one encounter with a great company of the heavenly host, but this is not the norm. God does not appear in a pillar of fire, but alights on Jesus as a dove. It is a different voice, for a different time.

God begins Jesus’ story in a hushed whisper, as he slumbers in the manger, but it does not remain so quiet. Soon enough the whisper will be nurtured and shared until it grows into a roar, strong enough to rattle the foundations of the world.

May we carry God’s whisper of love, peace, and justice into this Advent season and beyond.

Liz Remelius

**Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup>**

**John 1:1-14**

The first half of this scripture reading describes the beginning of time in which there was the Word, and the Word was God. Here, John states that “all things were made through Him” and that in Him was life and the light that the darkness did not comprehend. After reflecting on these verses, the words of John bring a great sense of comfort and understanding to the events that occur in my life. Oftentimes people come into our lives and leave unexpectedly, or events take place that feel unfair and make us angry. This scripture, however, emphasizes that God is behind all of these occurrences, actively grasping the course of our lives and utilizing us to fulfill a greater, eternal, and heavenly purpose. With the state of our world, we must rely on God and remember that His light cannot be comprehended by the darkness, no matter how close the darkness may feel.

The second half of this scripture embodies and reminds all of us that we are children of God, beholding his glory, and full of grace and truth. In this season of giving, it is important that we remember who we are and where we come from. John states we are born, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”. We must not give in to temptation or try to justify our actions by the beliefs of society, but be driven by He who created us, constantly working to better His kingdom. This scripture reading served as a strong reminder for me that each of my actions should be motivated by the goal of spreading the Word of the Lord, and I hope this Christmas, I, along with my church family, will be able to share God’s love and light with each of those around us.

Paige Barcus

