

# *The Greatest Gift of All!*

is a publication of the  
Department of Christian Education Ministries

**Big Bethel AMEC Atlanta, GA**

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All biblical text—NRSV, unless otherwise noted



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**the  
Greatest  
Gift on  
Earth**

**For a child has been born  
for us, a son given to us...**

**Isaiah 9:6a NRSVUE**

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**Monday:** “...you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:30-31

Prayer: Lord, I want to be better person, a better friend, a better family member, and most of all, a better Christian. With your help, I will learn to love in ways that make me all of these. And so it is.

**Tuesday:** *I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. Isaiah 63:7*

Prayer: Just as the great prophet Isaiah proclaimed the grace you showed his people, dear God, I too, will tell of your love and mercy in my life this Season. I will not let your Son’s birthday go by without recounting the gracious deeds you have shown us. Bless your holy name! And so it is.

### Christmas Eve

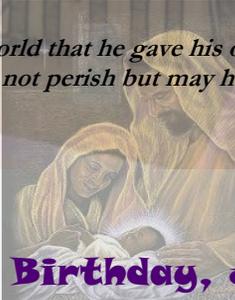
*In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room. Luke 2:1-7*

Prayer: We love you, Jesus, our Light of the World. We invite your light to shine in us. And so it is!

### Christmas Day

We welcome the GREATEST GIFT OF ALL...

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” John 3:16



**Happy Birthday, Jesus!**

### From Your Editor



Welcome to Advent 2025! It is such a pleasure to greet you at this blessed time of year. How happy we are to celebrate these next four weeks, particularly with our new First Family! It is a gift from God to be alive; it is a gift to worship together. Yet, the greatest Gift of all is *Whom* we worship. God sent The Christ Child to save each of us; what greater gift than that can there be?

### Using the Devotional Guide

This year, The Department of Christian Education Ministries is producing the devotional. I am grateful for such a talented team with which to work. On Sunday, we offer a meditation for the week. Monday-Friday, we share a prayer and daily Scriptures. As we often do, Saturday is a personal journaling day. We invite you to reflect on a special gift God has given you during the week; do write a message to the Lord. Enjoy Advent and rejoice with us as we celebrate the *Greatest Gift of All!*

### The Meaning of Advent

Advent is the Holy Season of expectation. We look forward to the coming of The Christ; it should not be confused with Christmas. It is from the Latin term, *Adventus Redemptoris*, referring to the arrival of the soon coming Messiah. Advent usually begins on the 1st Sunday of December culminating on Christmas Day. When there is a fifth Sunday in November, as this year, Advent begins then. At Big Bethel, we light candles (colors are noted) each week that are set in this order:

1st Hope—Purple; 2nd Peace—Purple; 3rd Joy—Pink; 4th Love—Purple & Christmas (lit on Fourth Sunday or Christmas Eve/Christmas Day)—White

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT  
THE GIFT OF HOPE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2025

The Reverend Jessica Buford



**The Gift of Hope**

*Psalm 23:5 You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.*

Psalm 23 is a familiar passage, but lately, I have been meditating and praying on how this Scripture still speaks to life today. If I am honest, the world we live in has me looking at relationships, expectations, and tolerance in a different way. Life can be draining. It sucks the joy away, tries to gouge out peace, and strangle hope. But this scripture has brought a renewed HOPE to the forefront of my everyday life.

It reminds me that in the presence of my enemies, there isn't just victory, there is hope--hope that my situation won't last forever. It is a hope that I still have power in how I respond. Because if I choose to allow the enemy a seat at the table that God prepared for me, I am letting the enemy take my mind and steal my HOPE. "My cup overflows" is not just about blessings, it is God's trust in me—trust that I will not lose HOPE when things don't look good or go my way.

**Prayer**

Dear God, continue to give us the strength to unwrap the hope we have in You. The world commands and demands so much from us, and sometimes we stray. But today we come asking that You bring back to our remembrance all You have done, all You are doing, and all You will do for us, Your children. Allow our cups to overflow and let the residue drip down to touch the lives around us. Amen.

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT  
THE GIFT OF LOVE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025

The Reverend Monica C. Jones, PhD



*(Love) does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:6-7*

Love, in its truest, purest form, endures forever. It does not show up just when things are going well or when the persons involved are friends. Love is there when times are hard. Love is there when someone hurts or disappoints us. Love is there through it all. Love is there despite the circumstance; it *endures*.

When Jesus came to earth, it was to endure suffering, to endure hate, to endure mockery, to endure rejection and ultimately, death on the cross. He did this so that we would not have endure damnation, but rather enjoy everlasting life. Thank God for the Christ Child, whose love was so great that he allowed himself to enter earth as an humble infant and then leave as the imperishable King for each of us!

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, as we look to Christmas Morn and celebrate your birth, please grant that we will demonstrate our love for you through our love for one another. May the love we share be not just on Christmas Day, but for a lifetime. May it be a godly, tender and sweet love that endures. And so it is.





THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT  
THE GIFT OF JOY  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2025

Bro. Khamisi Walters

*And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room. Luke 2:7*



“Laid in a Manger...” When I think of Jesus’ birth, I find joy not only in the miracle of His arrival but in the quiet message God sent through the details. The newborn King was not laid in silk or gold, but in a manger, a trough used for feeding livestock.

Even at His birth, God was showing us something extraordinary: Jesus came into the world to be consumed. Jesus would later say, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry.” The cradle foreshadowed the cross, and the manger pointed toward the table. From the very beginning, His purpose was to give Himself for our sustenance and salvation. What greater joy could there be than to know that heaven’s gift came wrapped not in wealth, but in nourishment for the soul?

**Prayer**

Lord God, Bread of Heaven, feed us till we want no more. Thank You for coming to feed our hunger for truth, peace, and eternal life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT  
THE GIFT OF PEACE  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025

Sis. Lauren Blanchard Rajad

*2 Thessalonians 3:16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with all of you.*



Peace is defined by Webster as a state of calm and quiet, freedom from disturbing thoughts or emotions, and a state of harmony (as between persons or governments). Also, it is an agreement to end hostilities.

When we look at the overall current conditions of families, communities, governments, the environment and the world, it’s almost impossible to find or feel that peace even exists because of all the chaos and confusion. Unfortunately, without God being front and center in all of these situations, we are relying on our own limited resources to resolve problems and conditions far beyond our human abilities.

However, we serve a God of peace and when we call on Him, anytime and anywhere, He will remove the disturbing thoughts and calm our anxious spirits. God is good and available all the time!

**Prayer**

Most gracious and merciful God, thank you for your peace and comfort which you’ve provided through your Holy Spirit for our daily use in times of trouble. May your peace abide in our homes, communities, governments and nations throughout the world and reside in our hearts forever.

