

**Devotions for the Week of December 17, 2017****LARGE-PRINT****3rd Sunday of Advent****North East United Methodist Church****By Rev. Dr. Drew M. Christian**

*This week, I thought I would share a few excerpts from sermons on the birth of Christ, written and preached by some of history's great preachers. I hope they touch your heart as they have mine.*

*-Pastor Drew*

**Sunday, December 17, 2017**

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Sermon: "No Room for Christ in the Inn"

Preached December 21, 1862.

As the palace, and the forum, and the inn, have no room for Christ, as the places of public resort have none, have you room for Christ? "Well," says one, "I have room for Him, but I am not worthy that he should come to me." Ah! I did not ask you about worthiness; have you room for him? "Oh," says one, "I have an empty void the world can never fill!" Ah! I see you have room for him. "Oh! But the room I have in my heart is so base!" So was the manger. "But it is so despicable!" So was the manger a thing to be despised. "Ah! But my heart is so foul!" So, perhaps, the manger may have been. "Oh! But I feel it is a place not at all fit for Christ!" Nor was the manger a place fit for him, and yet there was he laid. "Oh! But I have been such a sinner; I feel as if my heart had been a den of beasts and devils!" The manger had been a place where beasts were fed.

Have you room for Him? Never mind what the past has been; he can forget and forgive. It matters not what even the present state may be if you mourn it. If you have but room for Christ, he will come and be your guest. Do not say, I pray you, "I hope I shall have room for him." The time is come that he shall be born; Mary cannot wait months and years. Oh! Sinner, if you have room for him let him be born in your heart today.

"Today if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation." "Today is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation." Room for Jesus! Room for Jesus now! "Oh!" says one, "I have room for him but will he come?" Will he come indeed! Do you but set the door of your heart open, do but say, "Jesus, Master, all unworthy and unclean I look to you; come, lodge within my heart," and he will come to you, and he will cleanse the manger of your heart, nay, will transform it into a golden throne, and there he will sit and reign forever and forever.

### **Family Activity - Sunday, December 17 2017**

Light three candles on the advent wreath as a family. Read Isaiah 35: 1-10.

### **Monday, December 18, 2017**

Clarence Edward Noble Macartney (1879-1957)  
Sermon "*The Night of Nights*"

Night had come down, just the same as night had come down in all the centuries before. Yet this is the Night of Nights! This is the night that will conquer darkness and bring in the day

when there shall be night no more. This is the night when they who sit in darkness shall see a great light. This is the night that shall make eternal light, for it is the night when God brought into the world Him who is the Light of the world. Yonder, in that stable of the inn, where the cattle are breathing softly in their slumber, a virgin mother has brought forth her child and laid him in a manger. The cattle heeded it not; but over that Bethlehem manger a star will halt and angels will sing. The long journey of preparation for the redemption of the world ends on this Night of Nights. Immanuel has come!

“There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.” The first message came to those shepherds. Not to the kings and potentates of the earth, not to the conquering soldiers, not to the rich and powerful and learned of the world, but to those shepherds as they kept watch over their flocks by night was the first Christmas sermon preached and the great tidings brought unto them that a Savior was born.

Sometimes the preacher will feel that the best he can do is to bow down in adoration before the Child, as those shepherds did, and listen to the holy song of the heavenly host, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!” No Christmas sermon will ever improve upon that; for in that chorus of the angels is summed up all the glory, all the beauty, and all the power of Christ and His redemption.

### **Family Activity - Monday, December 18, 2017**

Write a family prayer. Ask a family member to write a special prayer to say tonight. Include thanks for important events in the past year and prayers for the year ahead. Thank God for the gift of Jesus.

## **Tuesday, December 19, 2017**

Dwight Lyman Moody (1837-1899)  
Sermon "*No Room for Jesus*"

There would be a different state of things in the Church of God today if Christ should come. A great many church members do not want Him; they say: "My life is not right." There are very few families in the whole city of New York that would make room for Him. They would make room for the greatest drunkard in New York rather than make room for Him. Don't think the world is better if it won't make room for Him. If He should go to Washington, do you think they would make room for Him there? If a man should get up in Congress and say, "Thus saith the Lord," they would hoot him out. If Christ should go there, they would say: "He is too good; He is too honest; we don't want Him; we don't want honest men."

When it comes to a real, personal God, the world doesn't want Him; the nations of the earth don't want Him. Does France want Him? Does Italy want Him? Oh, my friends, there is no room for Christ, yet it would be a glorious day if there was room for Him"

Isn't it the very best thing you can do to make room for Christ? When He made the world, He made room for us, plenty of it. He made room for Himself in our hearts, but a usurper has come. My friends, won't you let the Son of God into your hearts; and won't you let Him dwell with you?

### **Family Activity - Tuesday, December 19, 2017**

Write a letter to God thanking Him for the gift of Jesus. Ask for God's help to improve one thing about yourself, your

family, in the coming year. Save the letter and put it somewhere you will be able to find it and read it next Christmas.

### **Wednesday, December 20, 2017**

Clovis Gillham Chappell (1882-1972)

Sermon "*The Christmas Miracle*"

I believe that Jesus was divine in a unique sense because, though crucified nineteen hundred years ago, he is still a living presence among us. He is what another has called, "Our Eternal Contemporary." That which gave the saints of the Early Church their amazing joy and power was the consciousness of his presence. That which steadied them when all human help failed was his nearness. "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known...and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." These early saints had an optimism, a dauntless courage, that made fear impossible. This was the case because they were sure that they were not alone. They were convinced out of their own experiences that their Lord was making good his promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The experience of the early saints has been the experience of the saints of every age. Here is a man, J.G. Paton by name, who is buying his wife and baby at the midnight hour in far-off Hebrides. No scene could be more lonely, few ordeals more trying. How does he manage to see it through? This is his own answer: "The ever-merciful Lord sustained me to lay the precious dust of my loved ones in the same quiet grave. But for

Jesus, and the fellowship He vouchsafed me there, I must have gone mad and died beside that lonely grave!” Here is another man, my close personal friend. He passed recently “to where beyond these voices there is peace.” He suffered from a disease that was tragic in the extreme. Yet he remained more than serene. There was a radiance in his face that was never seen on land or sea. What was his secret? He told it to me one day in these words: “Jesus Christ is as real to me as my own right hand.” I can, therefore, believe in his unique divinity because, though crucified, he still lives. He is still face to face with every soul who is willing to recognize him.

### **Family Activity - Wednesday, December 20, 2017**

Make a pledge as a family to be a better Christian in the upcoming year. Sit down together with a calendar and plan one activity a month for 2018 that will bring joy to others.

### **Thursday, December 21, 2017**

James S. Stewart (1896-1990)  
Sermon “*O Come, O Come, Immanuel!*”

But the greatest thing of all is this, that when you see this compassionate Christ, you are seeing God. This is the comfort which the Advent tidings bring - and it is all in that one word Immanuel: for Immanuel means “God with us,” with us in Jesus, God going through the darkness with you, God saying, “My friend, you must not carry the trouble alone any longer - cast it down at My feet: I will take it and carry it, and the hardest part shall be My part!” The word Immanuel means that where we, with all our poor human words of comfort, break down utterly,

God begins. Immanuel means that when you feel nobody wants you, God does. Immanuel means that when your heart is crying to every would-be comforter, “Ah, you don’t understand, you can’t see things from my side of the, you are outside” - Immanuel means that God is right inside. Immanuel means God with you and in you, God making the pain a sacrament, the conflict a crusade, and the broken dreams a ladder up to heaven. And so, through Christ, God speaks home to the heart of Jerusalem.

### **Family Activity - Thursday, December 21, 2017**

Have a picnic around your Christmas tree tonight! Share memories of Christmases past and hopes for the future.

### **Friday, December 22, 2017**

Read the Revised Common Lectionary readings for the 3rd week of Advent. The Revised Common Lectionary is a three-year cycle of scripture readings used by many Protestant churches. Each Sunday there are four readings: a reading from the Hebrew Bible, a Psalm, a reading from the Epistles, and a Gospel reading. This week’s lectionary readings are:

- Zephaniah 3: 14-20
- Isaiah 12: 2-6
- Philippians 4: 4-7
- Luke 3: 7-18

### **Family Activity - Friday, December 22, 2017**

Read the lectionary passages together and talk about them. Then take time to simply pray together as a family.

## **Saturday, December 23, 2017**

Remember to light four candles tomorrow with your family as you prepare for Christmas Eve and the Christ Candle in the center of the wreath. Remember to invite your neighbors, co-workers, and friends to church that they may hear the Gospel message on Christmas Eve. Services are at 4 and 9 PM.

Have a wonderful Christmas! May there be room in the inn of your heart for Jesus. God Bless you and your family.

## **Family Activity - Saturday, December 23, 2017**

Once again, think of ways with your family that you can give to others this coming Christmas week. Sit down with your family and decide together on another way you can help someone less fortunate this Christmas.

**Don't Forget: Invite Someone To Church Tomorrow!**

