

25 days of
ADVENT



2751 Patterson RD Grand Junction, CO 81506
Office: (970) 243-6672
northeastchristian.org





NOTES





NOTES



December 3

On a cold December night theologian Martin Luther was walking through the forest and spotted the twinkling of stars through the branches of the giant fir trees. Overwhelmed by the amazing beauty of God's creation, he cut down a small fir tree and took it home. Martin Luther gathered up all of the candles in his home, lit them, and carefully placed them on the branches.

Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

As Martin Luther's children watched the flickering flames of the candles they were able to experience the beauty of God's creation in their own home.

TAKE AWAY:

Spend some time looking at the stars in the sky and think about all of God's amazing creations.



December 4

In medieval Europe December 24th was declared Adam and Eve Day, and a play about the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was performed to celebrate. Since fruit trees were impossible to find in the winter, the director of the play decided to use a pine tree decorated with apples to represent the Tree of Knowledge. The audience loved the decorated pine tree even more than the actors and years later families started decorating their own pine trees with fruits and other sweet treats.

Romans 5:19 says, "Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one person obeyed God, many will be made righteous."

One of the treats hidden amongst the fruit was a biscuit that was placed there to remind them that in the midst of our sin Jesus was sent and died on the cross for us.

TAKE AWAY:

Look at the ornaments on your tree. Are there any that have a special meaning to you? Are there any that remind you of God's love?

Join us for Christmas at Northeast



Christmas Eve Service Times Tuesday, December 24 4:00 PM and 5:30 PM



Scan for the
Northeast Online
Service



December 1

The Christmas Wreath is a popular decoration that we typically find hanging on a door, over the fireplace, or in windows. But did you know that the circular shape of the wreath has a symbolic meaning? The circular shape symbolizes eternity as it has no beginning and no end, just like Jesus' love for us.

Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Every time you see a Christmas Wreath, remember that God sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins so that we can have everlasting life.

TAKE AWAY:

Look around your house or take a walk through your neighborhood, and every time you see a wreath think about a time when you have experienced God's love.



December 2

During the seventh century an English missionary named Saint Boniface came across some men offering sacrifices to an oak tree. Angered by their sin, Saint Boniface cut down the tree with one swing of his ax. Years later a pine tree began to grow from the tree stump, Saint Boniface used this as an example of Jesus' victory over death and the eternal life we have through Him. Have you ever noticed that a pine tree always points toward heaven?

1 Peter 2:24 says, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness."

Jesus died on the cross so that each one of us can have everlasting life.

TAKE AWAY:

Spend some time looking at your Christmas tree and see what other ways the tree reminds you of Jesus.

December 7

“Merry Christmas” and “Happy Holidays” are a couple of the most popular greetings during the Christmas season. But did you know that each phrase carries its own meaning? Happy Holidays derived from the phrase “Happy Holy Days” which was a greeting used toward those who worshipped God. Eventually, the phrase shifted to “holiday” which means “enjoy this time of year no matter what you’re celebrating.” On the other hand, “Merry Christmas” means “pleasant, happy, or joy” and “the feast or mass of Christ”. Why would we use a word like “Christmas” that reminds us of Jesus’ death to celebrate Jesus’ birthday?

Romans 15:13 says, “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 power of the Holy Spirit.”

When you greet someone by saying, “Merry Christmas!”, what you’re actually saying is, “I have joy because Jesus is alive in me.”

TAKE AWAY:

Think of the places that you can share a “Merry Christmas” greeting with others and share the joy and love of Jesus this Christmas season.



December 8

Edward Johnson, a friend of Thomas Edison, was the first to add electric Christmas lights to a Christmas tree. His tree had delicately painted glass bulbs that would alternate colors every few seconds. Years later, families started using these lights to decorate the roofs of their homes at Christmastime. Decorating our homes with lights is symbolic because as Christians we are called to be the light of Jesus.

Matthew 5:14-16 says, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden...In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

TAKE AWAY:

Spend some time looking at Christmas lights and think about how you can show the light of Jesus to your neighbors this Christmas.



December 24

Feasts and meals are a common theme throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament God designed annual festivals and feasts for His people to remember His faithfulness, and in the New Testament we see countless times where Jesus arranged or invited himself to meals. Sharing a meal with others brings people closer together. Maybe that’s why one of Jesus’ last acts before He died was breaking bread with those closest to Him. We take the opportunity each week to get closer to God by taking communion, which reminds us of Jesus’ death on the cross for our sins. John 6:35 says, “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’”

When we sit at the table for Christmas dinner, it’s another opportunity to thank God for sending his Son, Jesus, knowing that through Him, we could have a right relationship with God.

TAKE AWAY:

How do you plan to put Jesus at the center of your Christmas day?





December 25

Take out your Bible and read along. The Birth of Jesus.

Luke 2:1-20 says, "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."

TAKE AWAY:

From Northeast Christian Church, we wish you a Merry Christmas!



December 5

In the 1900s a candy maker took a sugary candy stick and added color and flavor to it which can be used to illustrate the meaning of Christmas. The large red stripe represents the blood that was shed and the white represents the purity of Jesus. The candy is hard which reminds us that Jesus is our rock. Later, the hook was added to it so that it would look like a shepherd's crook or if turned upside down it makes a 'J'.

Psalm 34:8 says, "taste and see that the Lord is good."

When we take a first step toward following Jesus we discover that He is good and kind and we begin to see His goodness all around us.

TAKE AWAY:

Which symbol of the candy cane is your favorite?



December 6

One of the most iconic symbols of Christmas is the star. We use them to decorate our Christmas trees, our homes, and we even cut cookies into the shapes of stars. The most significant star is in the story of Christmas; it was the light that guided the Magi to Bethlehem on the night of Jesus' birth. God created this moment in history to place a spotlight on the humble beginnings of a child that would become our King.

Matthew 2:10 says, "the sight of the star filled them with indescribable joy."

Astronomers today have used science and computers to replicate what the sky could have looked like 2,000 years ago. Some suggest the Star of Bethlehem was a rare conjunction of planets that came together in brilliant synchronization.

TAKE AWAY:

Go on an adventure tonight; either around your house or your neighborhood. Grab a flashlight and let it guide you through the darkness. Think about how Jesus is the light of your life and guides you each day.

December 11

In the 1600s the British conquered Ireland and implemented harsh laws that affected Irishmen and even drove out the religious leaders, warning them never to return. However, on Christmas Eve, Irish families of faith would place three candles in their windows to represent Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, as a signal to a traveling priest that the doors were unlocked and he would be welcome to come in, share a meal with the family, and celebrate Christmas.

John 1:5 says, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Believers understood that no matter how powerful their oppressors were, they could not wipe out the Light of Jesus.

TAKE AWAY:

Light a candle in your home and think about the ways that you can stand firm in your faith even when you are facing challenges.



December 12

The Christmas card was created by a man named Sir Henry Cole back in the 19th century. But in 1842 an Englishman named J.C. Horsley heard about this good idea and started selling Christmas cards. These early cards were illustrated with Nativity scenes, Christmas themes, and warm Christmas greetings. Today there are more than 2 billion Christmas cards sent out every year in the United States alone.

John 20:21 says, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

By sending Christmas cards that specifically focus on the hope and peace that Jesus brought, we are able to reach people near and far with a message that can change lives and homes forever.

TAKE AWAY:

Make a list of people that you can show God’s love to by sending them a Christmas card.

December 21

The Wise Men, also called Magi, followed a bright star in the sky for thousands of miles because they wanted to worship Jesus. It’s unclear exactly how many wise men there were, but many believe that there were three due to the fact that they delivered three gifts to Jesus. The three gifts given to Jesus were: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These kingly gifts symbolize who Jesus was and what He would accomplish. Gold was a gift for royalty, frankincense was a gift that represented holiness, and myrrh was a spice used for ancient burial. The wise men generously gave these gifts to acknowledge a future king.

Matthew 2:2 says, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

We can learn a lot from the wise men; we should be seeking out Jesus daily instead of waiting for Him to come to us.

TAKE AWAY:

How can you seek out Jesus today?



December 22

Every year on December 25th Romans would celebrate Saturnalia: an entire week spent feasting and worshiping false gods. This occurred all the way up until A.D. 313 when the Roman emperor Constantine became a follower of Jesus Christ. As a believer, he knew that this was wrong, and he declared that December 25th be changed to the Feast of the Nativity. In the years that followed, the name Feast of the Nativity would be changed to Christ-mass and eventually, Christmas. Jesus wasn’t likely born on December 25th, but celebrating his birth on this day reminds us that He has the power to bring our lives out of the darkness and into the light. Romans 12:21 says, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Isn’t it interesting that a day centered around something so dark and evil was transformed into a day characterized by radiant light, selfless giving, and sacrificial love?

TAKE AWAY:

How can you plan to make Jesus the center of December 25th this year?



December 23

Families celebrate many traditions during Christmastime; the lights, the tree, the ornaments, the candies, and treats. All of these are traditions that point us back to a common belief that Jesus is the reason for the season. In fact, opening gifts is a tradition that varies around the world. Do you open presents on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning? Do you put them under the tree or hide them in the branches? Are they wrapped or unwrapped? No matter what, the most important thing is that the gift is opened. Imagine spending your time, your money and thought into the perfect gift for someone and they refuse to open it. God gave the gift of His Son, Jesus to you. There is nothing that would please God more this Christmas than if you would open the gift He has given you. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

The exciting thing about accepting God's free gift of Jesus is you don't have to wait until Christmas.

TAKE AWAY:

What does it mean to receive God's gift of His Son Jesus?



December 9

When we think of Christmas we often think of colors like red, green, white, blue, and gold; each color holds a special meaning. Green reminds us of living things like plants and trees and the eternal life that we have in Christ. While red reminds us of the blood that Jesus shed on the cross, white reminds us of the pureness of Jesus. Gold was one of the gifts given to Jesus by the wise men, and blue reminds us of the sky and heaven. Isaiah 1:8 says, "'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." Colors are used throughout the Bible to express God's love and forgiveness.

TAKE AWAY:

Talk about other colors you see at Christmas and think about how they help you to remember the meaning of Christmas.



December 10

During the very first Christmas, angels kept appearing out of nowhere. The angel Gabriel, appeared to Mary proclaiming the news that she would be the mother of the Messiah. Another angel appeared to Joseph telling him that they shall name the Messiah, Jesus. Then, on the night of Jesus' birth, an entire army of angels announced the savior was born to shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem. Angels were messengers from God. They came to announce important news to others.

Exodus 23:20 says, "I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared."

Jesus is the most special gift that we can give or receive this Christmas. That's why we are called to share Jesus with others.

TAKE AWAY:

Who you can invite to Christmas services so that you can share the hope of Jesus with them?

December 15

Bows – they are everywhere at Christmastime! We wrap bows around our Christmas gifts, we decorate our homes and Christmas trees, and you might even see a bow tied to the front of a car! Bows are often a finishing touch placed on the center of a gift, making whatever they're on look beautiful and complete. Jesus has this same effect on our lives, He is the finishing touch. When placed in the center of everything we do, He unites us with one another and empowers us to share His love.

Ephesians 4:3 says, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

When we make Jesus the center of our lives, He promises us His peace which He wants us to share with the world.

TAKE AWAY:

How you can share Jesus with your friends and family when you give them a gift?



December 16

Gift giving is as old as Christmas itself, but people didn't always wrap a gift before they gave it to someone. In the late 1800s, almost all gifts were handmade. Once people started purchasing factory-made trinkets and toys they wanted to make these gifts feel as though there was more effort put into the gift, so the gift-giver began wrapping these presents in brown paper and decorating them. As you wrap gifts this Christmas, remember that the very first Christmas gift was wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Luke 2:7 says, "She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

This was God Himself wrapped in the form of a baby, who came so that He could wrap all of us in His love.

TAKE AWAY:

Take a drive around your neighborhood and look for a house that has a nativity scene. Think about what it means that the gift of Jesus came wrapped as a baby.

December 17

Do you ever get excited when you have a gift to give someone? We often become filled with joy and love and feel excitement for the person who is receiving the gift. The wise men felt this same way about the gifts they brought to Jesus after He was born. They traveled hundreds of miles because the greatest gift had been given and they wanted to respond with the same generosity. No wonder we love to be so generous around the holidays. Every time we give presents, baked treats, or cards, we're representing God's love to the world.

James 2:17 says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights..."

You can show your generosity this Christmas like the wise men did by sharing Jesus with others.

TAKE AWAY:

Think about the gifts that God gives you and how you can use those gifts to tell others about Him.



December 18

A long time ago in a small town there was a boy named Nicholas; he loved God and loved giving to others. He grew up in a wealthy family and even at a young age he loved giving to those in need. When Nicholas grew up he became a bishop in the church, and when he had received his inheritance from his family, he began giving away his wealth. The best-known tale of Nicholas involved three young sisters who couldn't pay for their weddings. Nicholas wanted to help, so he climbed up onto the roof of their house and threw gold coins down the chimney. The coins landed in the girls' stockings which were hanging over the fire to dry. Years later the good bishop was declared Saint Nicholas and today he is known as Santa Claus. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says, "...for God loves a cheerful giver." Nicholas's heart for giving to others came from a genuine love for God.

TAKE AWAY:

Think about some ways that Santa Claus reminds you of God.

December 19

In the 15th century, most people couldn't read and often times church services were in a language they didn't understand. To help them learn the story of Jesus at Christmas, plays were performed on large parade-like wagons. These wagons would move from street to street performing one scene of the play after another. These plays told of Jesus' first day on earth as well as his final instructions: to go into all the world and teach people the Good News of Jesus to everyone, everywhere.

Matthew 28:19 says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Remember that no matter what you're doing or who you're visiting, we are like these plays. We are a moving stage that displays God's life and love for everyone to see.

TAKE AWAY:

Think about how our lives reveal Jesus to others everywhere we go.



December 20

The nativity scene illustrates the night of Jesus' birth. From the moment Adam and Eve sinned, mankind was separated from God. This broke the Father's heart and immediately He set a plan in motion to send His Son, the Messiah, to rescue and restore the Father's relationship with His children. God had been dropping hints about the coming Messiah for hundreds of years. Hints like: a child would be born of a virgin, in the town of Bethlehem, and he would be a descendant of King David. God's word even points to the star of Bethlehem and the Magi.

Luke 2:10-11 say, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

God delivered His promised gift exactly as He said He would.

TAKE AWAY:

Think about why the story of Jesus' arrival gives us joy, peace, and hope.

December 13

Christmas and baking definitely go hand in hand. No one can resist the smell of a pie in the oven. As a way of preparing for Christmas people used to fast on Christmas Eve, so when Christmas morning arrived, they were very hungry. A typical breakfast used to be porridge. However, over time things like dried fruit or honey were added. Then, flour and eggs were added and it became more like a sweet loaf of bread, or a fruitcake.

Ephesians 5:2 says, "Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a sweet-smelling aroma."

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem which literally means, "house of bread", and He would later be referred to as the Bread of Life. Like bread, Jesus nourishes our heart with hope, forgiveness, and love.

TAKE AWAY:

Think about what your favorite holiday treat is and why you think we bake more around Christmastime.



December 14

Did you know that the word "carol" means to dance or a song of praise and joy? Francis of Assisi (uh-see-zee) introduced carols into formal worship during a midnight church service in Italy. He encouraged the town to "tell of your Christmas joy with song." "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing", "O Come, All Ye Faithful", "Joy to the World", and "Silent Night" are Christmas carols that help prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus.

Exodus 15:2 says, "The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."

As you sing Christmas Carols this Christmas, think about the words you are singing and the joy that they bring.

TAKE AWAY:

What is your favorite Christmas Carol and why?