

HE
Came

SO WE

GO

Advent 2017



Church Family,

We hope this Advent season finds you and your family filled with joy and finding the time to prepare your heart for the celebration of Christmas in just a few short weeks. As a family, we are grateful to celebrate this season with you, our church family.

We have enjoyed this tradition of preparing a small token of our love for you through this Christmas Devotional and Recipe booklet. This year we have, as a family, shared each of our favorite recipes and a little story about each one in hopes that you can enjoy some of these goodies like we have over the years. We have all greatly enjoyed many of you sharing how some of these recipes have become some of your favorites, too.

Along with the recipes, there is a devotion for you to enjoy each week in preparation for each of the Sunday's in Advent. Our Advent theme this year is "He Came...So We Go!" During these four weeks leading up to Christmas, we will be looking at four of the reasons that Jesus came to earth and what our response should be as we go out into the world on Monday morning. Each devotion will follow the theme of that Sunday's worship service and sermon, and our hope is that these short devotions will be another tool to help you focus your minds and hearts on the Savior this season.

Again, our family wishes you a blessed Advent and Christmas season.

Merry Christmas,

Aaron and Dana Robb

Katie, Kelsie & Caleb

Devotion leading up to Sunday, December 3

He Came...To Seek and To Save the Lost

Why did Jesus come to earth? The foundational answer to that question is this: He **“came to seek and to save the lost”** (Luke 19:10). With this in mind, how are we called to respond? If He came for this purpose, how should we, then, go? The answer is, we carry on His work. Jesus Himself made this clear when He gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20.

One of the great examples of understanding this call to go and carry on Jesus’ mission is seen in the life of the great missionary Hudson Taylor, who left everything to go to China. After ministering in China for several years, Taylor and his wife had to return to England due to an illness Taylor had contracted. During his four years recovering in England, Taylor’s passion to go back to China grew. Taylor later wrote in his book Retrospect:

“On Sunday, June 25th, 1865, unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security, while millions were perishing for lack of knowledge, I wandered out on the sands alone, in great spiritual agony; and there the LORD conquered my unbelief, and I surrendered myself to GOD for this service. I told Him that all the responsibility as to issues and consequences must rest with Him; that as His servant, it was mine to obey and to follow Him — His, to direct, to care for, and to guide me and those who might labour with me. Need I say that peace at once flowed into my burdened heart? There and then I asked Him for twenty-four fellow-workers, two for each of eleven inland provinces which were without a missionary, and two for Mongolia; and writing the petition on the margin of the Bible I had with me, I returned home with a heart enjoying rest such as it had been a stranger to for months.”

On May 26, the following year, Taylor, his wife Maria and their children sailed with the largest group of missionaries that had ever sailed to China — sixteen besides themselves. Thus was the start of the China Inland Mission.

As we consider the wonderful truth that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, let’s pray for a passion, like the passion of Hudson Taylor, to continue Jesus’ mission and share the hope of Christ wherever He calls us to go.

Mama Brenda's Pancakes

Growing up, Dana spent a lot of time with her best friend, Lori. They spent the night at each other's homes weekly. Dana and Lori both grew up on dairy farms and have volumes of memories of their times together. Lori's Mom, Brenda, became like another mom to Dana. Sleepovers at Lori's house often included Mama Brenda making the girls pancakes for breakfasts along with fresh bacon from their farm. After Aaron and Dana had children, Dana wanted to continue this delicious tradition with her children. Mama Brenda's Pancakes are definitely a yummy way to kick-off Christmas morning.

Ingredients

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups milk

2 cups sifted flour

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil

3 tsp baking powder

1 egg

Optional Add-Ins: Chocolate Chips, M&M's, Oreo's, Berries or Bacon

Directions

Mix ingredients together and fry. Enjoy!

Devotion leading up to Sunday, December 10

He Came...To Declare the Truth

Jesus came to earth to declare the truth about God. Jesus Himself said, **"For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice"** (John 18:37). Our response to the fact that Jesus came to declare truth is to boldly, lovingly and humbly take truth to those caught in the lies of the world, religion and the devil.

This great author and apologist Josh McDowell tells the story of how he came to know Jesus through the obedience of some fellow college students declaring truth in response to the deception in which he was living. Relating a conversation with some Christian students, he writes:

"Christianity, ha!" I blustered. "That's for unthinking weaklings, not for Intellectuals." Of course, under all the bluster I really wanted what these people had, but my pride didn't want them to know the aching urgency of my need... So I turned to one of the students and I said, "Tell me, why are you so different from all the other students and faculty on this campus? What changed your life?"

Without hesitation or embarrassment she looked me straight in the eye, deady serious, and uttered two words I never expected to hear in an intelligent discussion on a university campus: "Jesus Christ."

"Jesus Christ?" I snapped. "I'm fed up with religion. I'm fed up with church. I'm fed up with the Bible."

Immediately she shot back, "I didn't say religion, I said Jesus Christ!" Then my new friends... challenged me to make rigorous, intellectual examinations of the claims of Jesus Christ – that He is God's Son; that He inhabited a human body and lived among real men and women; that He died on the cross for the sins of humanity; that He was buried and was resurrected three days later; and that He is still alive and can change a person's life even today. (www.cru.org/us/en/how-to-know-god/my-story-a-life-changed/my-story-josh-mcdowell.html)

McDowell, would, of course, go on to investigate the truth claims about Christianity and ultimately come to a life-changing belief in Jesus. As we consider our response to the fact that Jesus came to declare truth, I challenge you to think of those in your life who are caught in the lies of false religion, humanism, or simple self-absorption. Is God is calling you to study and prepare yourself to better engage in a Gospel-focused conversation? Is He calling you to pray more faithfully? Is He calling you to be better grounded in your faith so that you are ready to share boldly when the opportunity arises?

Katie's Candy-Coated Pecans

Katie loves spending time in the kitchen and always enjoys trying new things. After attending an event a few years ago and enjoying the aroma of Candied Pecans, Katie decided to try her hand at them too. Not only does our family love the smell of the house when Katie makes these, but we love to munch on the pecans too. A great treat for your family to munch on while opening presents on Christmas morning.

Ingredients

1 egg white
1 tablespoon water
1 pound pecan halves
1 cup sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Directions

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Grease one baking sheet. In a mixing bowl, whip together the egg white and water until frothy. In a separate bowl, mix together sugar, salt and cinnamon. Add pecans to egg whites, stir to coat the nuts evenly. Remove the nuts, and toss them in the sugar mixture until coated. Spread the pecans out on the baking sheet. Bake at 250 degrees for one hour, stirring every fifteen minutes. Enjoy!

Devotion leading up to Sunday, December 17

He Came...To Serve

Jesus came to perform the ultimate act of service: To die on the cross to save sinners. Mark 10:45 says, **"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."** If this is why He came, how do we respond likewise as we go into fray of our daily lives? We certainly can't die to be a ransom for many, but we can, as Philippians 2:5-11 says, live with the same attitude of servanthood that Jesus had.

A classic Christmas song, "Good King Wenceslas", tells a wonderful tale of a Medieval king who exhibited the heart of a servant. The lyrics are based on the life of the 10th century king of Bohemia who was revered as a very kind and generous ruler. The song retells the legend about King Wenceslas helping the poor on the Feast of Stephen (December 26th).

***Good King Wenceslas looked out, on the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even;
Brightly shone the moon that night, tho' the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight, gath'ring winter fuel.***

*"Hither, page, and stand by me, if thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he? Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence, underneath the mountain;
Right against the forest fence, by Saint Agnes' fountain."*

***"Bring me flesh, and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hither:
Thou and I will see him dine, when we bear them thither."
Page and monarch, forth they went, forth they went together;
Through the rude wind's wild lament and the bitter weather.***

*"Sire, the night is darker now, and the wind blow stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how; I can go no longer."
"Mark my footsteps, my good page. Tread thou in them boldly
Thou shalt find the winter's rage freeze thy blood less coldly."*

***In his master's steps he trod, where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure, wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor, shall yourselves find blessing.***

Truly one of the most powerful ways we can respond to why Jesus came is to serve others, especially those in need. I would challenge you, however, to not only look at those in financial need, but don't forget the need to serve those who may have few material needs but who are in desperate spiritual need. How can you serve someone in Jesus' name beyond this Christmas season? How may God be calling you and your family to invest in the lives of others for the sake of Christ?

Aaron's Favorite Greek Salad

We have friends who have a beautiful vacation home in Tarpons Springs, FL. They have generously shared their beautiful home with us for many years as a place for our family to vacation. Tarpon Springs is a beautiful Greek Community close to the water that has many amazing Greek Restaurants. After our first visit to Tarpon Springs, Aaron fell in love with the salad at Hella's Greek Restaurant and this is his take on their recipe. An excellent salad to include with your soup on Christmas Eve.

Ingredients

For the Gyro Meat:

1 pound ground lamb

2 teaspoons kosher salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves

½ yellow onion, cut into 1-inch chunks

1 clove garlic, sliced

3 ounces slab bacon (or 5 slices sliced bacon), cut into ½-inch pieces

For the Salad:

Lettuce

Tomatoes

Onions

Cucumbers

Olives

Feta Cheese

Croutons

Your Favorite Greek Dressing

Directions

Make the Gyro Meat:

In a medium bowl, combine the ground lamb, salt, pepper and oregano leaves with your hands, mixing until all of the seasonings have been evenly distributed. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, or overnight.

Greek Salad Continued...

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Place the lamb mixture in the bowl of a food processor and add the onion, garlic and bacon. Process until a smooth puree is formed, 30 seconds to 1 minute, scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary.

Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. With moistened hands, shape the lamb mixture into a rectangle about 8 inches long and 5 inches wide. Bake until the center of the loaf reaches 155 degrees F on an instant-read thermometer, 30 to 35 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to rest for 15 minutes.

Adjust the oven rack to the highest position (1 ½ to 2 inches below broiler element) and preheat broiler. Slice the loaf of lamb meat crosswise into very thin pieces (they should be about ⅛-inch thick; no more than ¼-inch thick). Lay the strips on a rimmed baking sheet lined with aluminum foil and broil until edges are browned and crispy, 2 to 4 minutes. Be sure to keep an eye on it, as the broiler works quickly!

Make the Salad:

On a plate, layer your lettuce and add your strips of lamb. Top with chopped veggies, croutons and feta. Complete this delicious salad with your favorite Greek dressing.

Devotion leading up to Sunday, December 24

He Came...For the Glory of God

Jesus came to earth to bring glory to God. All that Jesus did, even His death on the cross to save sinners, was ultimately to bring glory to God. Jesus Himself said, "**For this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name**" (John 12:27). In Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus declared, "**I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do**" (verse 4). Though a co-equal person of the Trinity, fully God in His essence and nature, Jesus was willing, in His condescension, to be a humble vessel to glorify the Father. Because this was at the heart of the reason He came, to glorify God with our lives should be at the heart of all we do as we go and live our lives in the middle of this dark and hurting world.

I've always thought that one person who so vividly glorified God in her life was the late author and speaker Elisabeth Elliot. Despite much hardship and difficulties in her life, she found a way to glorify God and so effectively keep the focus on Him, despite her many gifts, accomplishments and achievements.

Her first husband, Jim Elliot, was one of the five missionaries speared to death by the Huaorani Indians in Ecuador in 1956. Elliot powerfully told the story of God working through those deaths in the books Through Gates of Splendor, Shadow of the Almighty, and The Savage My Kinsman. Jim and Elisabeth's daughter was only ten months old when Jim was killed, yet Elisabeth stayed at the work, first with the Quichua people, but then, amazingly, for two more years with the very tribe who had killed her husband! I had the privilege of hearing Elliot speak during a chapel service my sophomore year at Southwest Baptist University.

Elliot seemed to truly grasp that her life was not her own, but was given to her for the purpose of glorifying God through serving and equipping others. One of my favorite quotes from Elliot comes in her book Keep a Quiet Heart:

"Do you often feel like parched ground, unable to produce anything worthwhile? I do. When I am in need of refreshment, it isn't easy to think of the needs of others. But I have found that if, instead of praying for my own comfort and satisfaction, I ask the Lord to enable me to give to others, an amazing thing often happens - I find my own needs wonderfully met. Refreshment comes in ways I would never have thought of, both for others, and then, incidentally, for myself."

How can you intentionally glorify God in your life today? What can you do to take the focus off of yourself and shine a light on Jesus? Just as Jesus came to bring glory to God, may we consider how we might exalt and glorify Him in all that we do.

Katie & Kelsie' s Dinner Rolls

The girls love spending time in the kitchen. They love exploring new recipes and ideas. A few years back, they were searching through a recipe book from the church Dana grew up in. They found this recipe, made them and they've been a family favorite ever since. A delicious roll to serve with your soup and salad on Christmas Eve.

Ingredients

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup hot water

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

1 tablespoon salt

3 tablespoon butter

1 cup warm water

2 pkgs dry yeast

1 egg beaten

5 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour

Directions

Mix together hot water, sugar, salt and margarine. Cool to lukewarm.

Measure warm water into large bowl. Sprinkle or crumble yeast into a

bowl and stir until dissolved. Add egg and half the flour. Beat until

smooth. Stir in enough remaining flour to make soft dough. Turn out

onto lightly floured board and knead until smooth. About ten minutes.

Place dough into greased bowl turning to grease dough. Cover tightly.

Store in fridge until doubled in size. Punch down, cut off amount of

dough needed. Let rise for two hours. Bake for 12-15 minutes in 400

degree oven.

Devotion for Christmas Day, December 25

So... Let' s Go!

Christmas is the celebration of this glorious truth: God, the Creator of the Universe, came to earth, taking on the form of a human baby, becoming fully one of us while never ceasing to be God, so that He might live a perfect, sinless life to become the payment for our sin, the perfect sacrifice to bridge that gap between Heaven and earth, our sin and God's perfection. He came so that we might know Him, enjoy Him, and spend eternity with Him. However, He didn't come simply so that we might be saved, He came so that we might go...go out into a lost and hurting world, proclaiming the truth about salvation, serving others in Jesus' name, and bringing glory to God through it all! Wow! What majesty and magnificence is wrapped up with that tiny swaddled babe in a manger.

Throughout this devotional, I've quoted some pretty powerful words from some wonderful Christians who exhibit the qualities of proclaiming truth, serving others, and glorifying God. It is fitting that to wrap up these devotions on this Christmas day, we read the words of the ultimate Author, the **"Pioneer and Perfector of our faith"** (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus said:

"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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God" (John 3:16-21)

Merry Christmas, and may we be moved and motivated to go and take the light and hope of Christ to everyone we know in 2018.

Caleb's Cheese Potato Soup

Katie, Kelsie and Caleb were born in Louisville, Kentucky. They all three have a great love for that city and many fond memories. Caleb is sharing one of his favorite recipes that a restaurant in Louisville serves as one of its staples. This would be a delicious soup to serve with bread and a salad on Christmas Eve after the candlelight service.

Ingredients

½ gallon water
4-5 pounds of potatoes
½ tablespoon of chicken base
½ tablespoon of black pepper
½ tablespoon salt
1 11oz can cheddar cheese soup
½ pound butter
¾ cup flour
1 cup half & half
1 small Velveeta cheese
1 small jar cheese whiz

Directions

Bring water to a boil. Add in potatoes, pepper, salt and chicken base. Cook for 12 minutes. Add in cheese soup, Velveeta and cheese whiz. Simmer for 10 minutes. In sauce pan, bring butter and flour to a ball consistency. Stir constantly 3-4 minutes. Add butter mixture to potato mixture. Add half and half. Heat to serving temp, but do not allow to boil. Enjoy!

Kelsie's Revived Apple Dumplings

Kelsie has always loved Dana's Apple Dumplings. It has been one of her favorite fall desserts for a long time. After Kelsie discovered her own love for baking, she often likes taking familiar recipes and adding her own special touches. So here is Kelsie's "Revived" recipe to Dana's Apple Dumplings.

Ingredients

Apples
2 pie crusts
2 cups sugar
2 cups water
1 tablespoon cinnamon
¼ cup red hots

Caramel Drizzle

1 cup sugar
6 tablespoons butter (room temp and cut into 6 pieces)
½ cup heavy cream
1 teaspoon salt
2-3 pieces of fried bacon

Directions

Grease pan and lay pie crust in the bottom of the pan. Cut up apples and lay in bottom of pan. Sprinkle sugar and cinnamon over apples and lay chunks of butter over top. Cover apples with second crust and poke holes in the top. Bring sugar, water, cinnamon and red hots to boil and stir until dissolved. Pour over top of crust. For Caramel Drizzle-heat sugar in saucepan over heat, stirring constantly. Sugar will form clumps and eventually melt into a thick brown liquid as you stir. Once sugar is melted, add butter. Be cautious, the caramel will bubble rapidly. Stir until melted (2-3 minutes). Slowly add heavy cream. Allow mixture to boil for one minute. The caramel will rise in the pan as it boils. Remove from heat and stir in salt. Allow to cool before using. After caramel has cooled, drizzle over pie crust. Crumble bacon over caramel drizzle. Place the pan in oven and bake at 375 degrees for 35 minutes.

