

# GRACE **AND** TRUTH COMMUNITY CHURCH

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THE  
SEASON  
OF  
**ADVENT**  
GRACE AND TRUTH COMMUNITY CHURCH

HOPE,  
PEACE,  
JOY,  
& LOVE  
ARE ONLY  
FOUND IN  
JESUS

Sunday, November 26

# Anticipation

To view this week's message, open  
your phone's camera and scan  
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Or visit: [https://  
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anticipation/](https://graceandtruthcommunity.church/anticipation/)

## Holiday Schedule:

**GRACE  
AND  
TRUTH**  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

### Christmas Eve Services:

**Bel Air: 4:00PM**

**Box Hill: 7:00PM**

### Christmas Day:

**NO Church Service**

### Thursday, December 28:

**NO Bible Studies**

### New Year's Eve/Day:

**NO Church Services**

**All of our regular weekly  
activities will resume on  
Thursday, January 4, 2024!**

**GRACE  
AND  
TRUTH**  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

# Weekly Schedule:

## Box Hill

### Sunday

**5:30 PM: Fellowship**

**6:00 PM: Church Service**

### Thursday

**10:00 AM: Bible Study**

## Bel Air

### Monday

**1:00 PM: Church Service**

### Thursday

**1:00 PM: Bible Study**

Monday, November 27

### **Psalm Reading:**

Psalm 74

### **School/Apartments to Pray For:**

North Bend Elementary School

Box Hill Apartment 104 Bel Air Apartment 214

### **Devotional Reading:**

Isaiah 40:28-31

Our focus this week is going to be on **hope**, which is the confident expectation that God's promises are true. God has made many promises to His children, all of which are true, but the promise of strength in this passage seems particularly timely these days!

**Isaiah 40:31** *"but those who **hope** in the LORD will renew their strength"*

Other translations use "wait" or "rest" in place of **hope** in this verse, helping us to understand what it means to "hope in the LORD." When we put our **hope** in the LORD we can both *wait on* and *rest in* Him, because we know that His promises are true. If He has promised to renew our strength, then if we wait and rest, and don't try and do it ourselves, then He WILL do exactly what He has promised.

# Tuesday, November 28

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 75

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

North Harford Elementary School

Box Hill Apartment 105 Bel Air Apartment 215

## Devotional Reading:

Isaiah 40:28-31

This passage tells us some of the things that God has promised to do for us: *“He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak...the LORD will renew their strength.”* But this passage also tells us some things about God’s character and nature, and it’s these things that allow us to put our **hope** in Him.

**Isaiah 40:28** *“The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.”*

Just in that verse we see that God is everlasting, the Creator, strong, and wise beyond all measure! These descriptions of His character and His nature should fill us with the confidence we need to put our **hope** in Him. Since He is strong, we know that He can bring strength to us!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

<u>Day</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Box Hill Apt</u>	<u>Bel Air Apt</u>	<u>Reading</u>
<b>Monday, January 1</b>	<b>Psalm 102</b>	<b>Aberdeen High School</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>Matthew 1:1-17</b>
<b>Tuesday, January 2</b>	<b>Psalm 103</b>	<b>Abingdon Elementary School</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>Matthew 1:18-25</b>
<b>Wednesday, January 3</b>	<b>Psalm 104</b>	<b>The Arrow Center For Education-Riverside</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>Matthew 2:1-12</b>
<b>Thursday, January 4</b>	<b>Psalm 105</b>	<b>Bakerfield Elementary School</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>Matthew 2:13-18</b>
<b>Friday, January 5</b>	<b>Psalm 106</b>	<b>Bel Air Elementary School</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>Matthew 2:19-23</b>
<b>Saturday, January 6</b>	<b>Psalm 107</b>	<b>Bel Air Middle School</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>Matthew 3:1-12</b>
<b>Sunday, January 7</b>					<b>Sabbath</b>

## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

<u>Day</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Box Hill Apt</u>	<u>Bel Air Apt</u>	<u>Reading</u>
<b>Monday, December 25</b>		<b>Merry Christmas</b>			
<b>Tuesday, December 26</b>	<b>Psalm 97</b>	<b>West Virginia University</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>Isaiah 42:1-7</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 27</b>	<b>Psalm 98</b>	<b>William Paca/Old Post Road Elementary School</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>Isaiah 49:1-7</b>
<b>Thursday, December 28</b>	<b>Psalm 99</b>	<b>William S. James Elementary School</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>Isaiah 50:4-9</b>
<b>Friday, December 29</b>	<b>Psalm 100</b>	<b>Youth's Benefit Elementary School</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>Isaiah 52:13-53:12</b>
<b>Saturday, December 30</b>	<b>Psalm 101</b>	<b>Aberdeen Middle School</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>Isaiah 61:1-3</b>
<b>Sunday, December</b>	<b>31</b>				<b>Sabbath</b>

## Wednesday, November 29

### Psalm Reading:

Psalm 76

### School/Apartments to Pray For:

North Harford Middle School  
Box Hill Apartment 106 Bel Air Apartment 216

### Devotional Reading:

**Matthew 11:28-30**

In Isaiah we saw God's promise that if we put our **hope** in Him, He will renew our strength. Today we move forward to the New Testament for another of God's promises, this time coming through Jesus:

**Matthew 11:28** *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

In addition to needing strength, many of us need rest. And not just the rest that comes from sleep, but the rest that comes from putting our **hope** in God. Contrast this verse with what we saw of God in Isaiah: we "are weary and burdened", while "He will not grow tired or weary." We can put our **hope** in God for strength and rest because He has a never-ending supply of both!

Thursday, November 30

**Psalm Reading:**

Psalm 77

**School/Apartments to Pray For:**

North Harford High School

Box Hill Apartment 107 Bel Air Apartment 217

**Devotional Reading:**

**Matthew 11:28-30**

One of the keys to understanding how we find rest in Jesus (specifically) is in this verse:

**Matthew 11:30** *"For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

For those of us who didn't grow up on a farm, a yoke is a device which links two animals together, allowing them to share the burden of the job they are doing. What Jesus is saying to each of us is that we can be "yoked" to Him, allowing us to share the "burden" of life with Him. And, His yoke is easy and His burden is light! Since we know that He is strong and does not grow tired or weary, we can rest in Him and in His ability to handle the load.

Sunday, December 24

Jesus

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Or visit: <https://graceandtruthcommunity.church/jesus/>

Sunday, December 24

# Love

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your phone's camera and scan  
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Or visit: [https://  
graceandtruthcommunity.church/love/](https://graceandtruthcommunity.church/love/)

Friday, December 1

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 78:1-31

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

OneSchool Global-Chesapeake Campus  
Box Hill Apartment 109 Bel Air Apartment 218

## Devotional Reading:

Matthew 12:15-21

This passage uses a lengthy quote from Isaiah 42 to describe aspects of Jesus' character and nature. Today we're going to focus on this verse:

**Matthew 12:21** *"In his name the nations will put their **hope**."*

Names often had important meanings in the Bible, and the name, Jesus is no exception. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew name, Joshua, which means, "The LORD saves." In **Matthew 1:21** Joseph is told to name his son, Jesus, *"because he will save his people from their sins."* That is exactly what Jesus did when He died on the cross, saving all who would believe in Him from their sins. **Acts 4:12** tells us that *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven...by which we must be saved."* And in the name of Jesus we can have the confident expectation that we have been truly saved from our sins.



# Saturday, December 2

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 78:32-72

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Patterson Mill Middle School  
Box Hill Apartment 111 Bel Air Apartment 219

## Devotional Reading:

**Isaiah 42:1-4**

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). So, when the OT is quoted in the NT, sometimes the wording is slightly different. Yesterday we looked at **Matthew 12:21**, which is a NT quote of an OT verse:

**Isaiah 42:4** *"In his teaching the islands will put their **hope**."*

This verse uses "teaching" instead of "name" as the object of our hope. The secret to this comes from our discussion of the "yoke" from Matthew 11:30. In addition to being a piece of farm equipment, "yoke" can also mean teaching. So Jesus' teaching (or way of life) is easy and His burden is light. His way of life is the only true life (eternal life) and is certainly worth putting our **hope** in!

# Saturday, December 23

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 96

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Vincent Farm Elementary School  
Box Hill Apartment 207 Bel Air Apartment 310

## Devotional Reading:

**Luke 2:1-21**

The anticipation is almost over! If we're being honest, this story is tough to believe: God Himself came to rescue us from our sins. He didn't send someone else, He humbled Himself, left Heaven and came to earth. Disbelief is a reasonable first reaction! But take a look at the shepherd's reaction:

**Luke 2:15** *"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.'"*

Instead of scoffing, they decided to go and see for themselves if what they were told was true. And wouldn't you know it, it was!

**Luke 2:20** *"The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."*

This is the best reaction any of us could have to the good news of Jesus' birth and the salvation He came to bring: Go and see for yourself, and you will find it true as well!



# Friday, December 22

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 95

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Victory Villa Elementary School  
Box Hill Apartment 206 Bel Air Apartment 309

## Devotional Reading:

**Matthew 1:18-25**

Advent is a season of anticipation. We're anticipating the first coming of Jesus at Christmas as well as His second coming at the end of this age. Today and tomorrow our readings will recount His coming at Christmas. Matthew's account of Jesus' birth focuses on Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, but it gives us great insight as to two reasons why Jesus came to earth, and both are found in names:

**Matthew 1:21** *"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

**Matthew 1:22-23** *"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us')."*

The name "Jesus" is the Greek form of "Joshua" which means, "The LORD saves." In being Jesus, He came to save us from our sins. And in being Immanuel, He came to be with us, revealing the unseen God to us.

# Sunday, December 3

# Hope

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your phone's camera and scan  
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*Or visit: [https://  
graceandtruthcommunity.church/hope/](https://graceandtruthcommunity.church/hope/)*

# Monday, December 4

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 79

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Patterson Mill High School

Box Hill Apartment 113 Bel Air Apartment 220

## Devotional Reading:

**John 16:16-33**

Our focus this week is going to be on **peace**, which is not so much the absence of conflict, but a life of wholeness or completeness. Nowhere in the Bible are we promised a life without conflict or trouble. But, we are promised a life of wholeness and completeness with Jesus by our side!

In today's passage, Jesus is preparing His disciples for the trouble that was about to come: His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. But at the same time, He comforts them with these words:

**John 16:33** "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have **peace**. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Jesus' warning about trouble and His words of comfort weren't just for His disciples at that moment in time. It was for any of His disciples at any time, including us! Our lives will have trouble, but through Jesus, they can also have **peace**!

# Thursday, December 21

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 94

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

University of Maryland

Box Hill Apartment 205 Bel Air Apartment 308

## Devotional Reading:

**Philippians 2:9-13**

Yes, we are to look to and be inspired by Jesus' example of **love**, but oftentimes inspiration is not enough. How many people were inspired to start playing the guitar after The Beatles played on the Ed Sullivan Show? How many of them do you think stuck with it more than a few weeks? Inspiration wears off quickly when things get tough. Thankfully, Jesus didn't just leave us His example of **love**, He left us the power to do so!

**Philippians 2:12-13** "Therefore, my dear friends...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."

In using the phrase "work out your salvation" Paul is talking about sanctification, the process of the Holy Spirit molding our hearts into the shape of Jesus' heart; giving us the ability (among other things) to **love** as He **loved**. The more our hearts look like Jesus' heart, the more we are empowered to **love** others as Jesus does!

# Wednesday, December 20

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 93

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Trinity Lutheran School

Box Hill Apartment 204 Bel Air Apartment 307

## Devotional Reading:

**Philippians 2:5-8**

Jesus' life provides us with the greatest example of **love** the world has ever seen. One of the major tenets of the Christian faith is that when Jesus lived here on earth He was fully God and fully man (not 50/50, but 100/100). In this passage Paul shows this very clearly: "[Jesus] *being in very nature God*" (verse 6)... "*made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness*" (verse 7). But the key word for us in looking to Jesus' example of **love** is found in verse 8, "humbled." Jesus, being God, humbled Himself to become one of us, human. And in the ultimate example of humility, willingly offered His sinless life on the cross to pay the price for our sins. If we're to do the things we've read about over the past few days, we need to humble ourselves in order to **love** others!

**Philippians 2:8** "*And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!*"

# Tuesday, December 5

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 80

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Primrose School of Bel Air

Box Hill Apartment 115 Bel Air Apartment 221

## Devotional Reading:

**John 14:15-31**

In the passage we looked at yesterday Jesus warned us that our lives would always have trouble, but He also comforted us with the truth that we can always have **peace** in Him! You see, the **peace** Jesus is talking about isn't the absence of conflict or trouble, it's His presence in the middle of conflict or trouble. We see in today's passage how that can be: Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to live inside of each Christian.

**John 14:16-17** "*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*"

How amazing is that?! God Himself comes to live inside us! And as we see a few verses later the Holy Spirit will teach us what we don't know, remind us of what we do know, and by His presence in us, He brings us **peace**!

# Wednesday, December 6

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 81

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Prospect Mill Elementary School  
Box Hill Apartment 117 Bel Air Apartment 222

## Devotional Reading:

**John 10:11-18**

One of the most poignant pictures Jesus paints of Himself is that of a shepherd. And in this passage He refers to Himself not just as any shepherd, but as “the good shepherd.” This good shepherd will defend His sheep, and with His life if need be.

**John 10:14-15** *“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.”*

Jesus laid down His life willingly when He died on the cross. In doing so, He saved us from our sin: its penalty, power, and presence. This is the extent our good shepherd was/is willing to go to defend us, His sheep. What **peace** we can have knowing that our good shepherd will defend us with everything He has!

# Tuesday, December 19

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 92

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Towson University  
Box Hill Apartment 203 Bel Air Apartment 306

## Devotional Reading:

**Philippians 2:1-4**

In yesterday’s passage, Paul showed us what **love** should look like in real life (despite the fact that we read that passage at every wedding, it was intended to show us how to **love** in any relationship, not just romantic ones). Today he gives us another look, only this time tying it the ultimate example of **love**: Jesus! Just about everything Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13 can be summed up in these two verses:

**Philippians 2:3-4** *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”*

As with all of the seemingly impossible tasks that God has given us, He doesn’t leave us alone to figure out how to accomplish them, He gives us help. Over the next few days we’ll look to Jesus’ **love** for our example and our power!

# Monday, December 18

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 91

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Swan Creek School

Box Hill Apartment 202 Bel Air Apartment 305

## Devotional Reading:

### 1 Corinthians 13

We're going to be spending this last week in Advent by talking about **love**. As with hope, peace, and joy, we need a good, Biblical definition of **love**: Putting the good of another person ahead of your own good. This **love** isn't an emotion, it's an action. It doesn't come from our heart, but from our will. We are called to **love** (family, friends, enemies, strangers) whether or not we feel like it. Today's passage gives us a good view of what this **love** looks like in real life, especially in these verses:

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7** "**Love** is patient, **love** is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. **Love** does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

# Thursday, December 7

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 82

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Red Pump Elementary School

Box Hill Apartment 118 Bel Air Apartment 223

## Devotional Reading:

### Psalm 23

If we're going to talk about Jesus as our good shepherd, then we have to go back a few hundred years (and pages) and look at Psalm 23, which gives us an amazing picture of the care and protection a good shepherd provides His sheep.

**Psalm 23:1** "*The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*"

When the Psalmist (King David, no less) says he lacks nothing, here's what he means: his shepherd is providing him with food and drink (verse 2), rest (v3), guidance (v3), as well as **peace** and protection (v4). Certainly there is comfort and **peace** in knowing that our needs will always be taken care of! Often, these needs are met in seemingly mundane ways: jobs or other sources of income. But it's in times of trouble: job loss, illness, or some other disaster that we see God provide for us in miraculous ways. Whether it's through the mundane or the miraculous, our good shepherd always provides for His sheep!



# Friday, December 8

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 83

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Ring Factory Elementary School

Box Hill Apartment 119 Bel Air Apartment 224

## Devotional Reading:

Psalm 23

Earlier this week we talked about the **peace** that comes from Jesus' constant presence in our lives. These verses beautifully illustrate that **peace**:

**Psalm 23:4-5** *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

The source of the sheep's **peace** is the presence of his shepherd. And such is the shepherd's protection that the sheep can stop and eat at a table prepared in the presence of his/her enemies. Notice that the table isn't set somewhere safe, it's right in the middle of trouble, but the sheep is safe because the shepherd is right there with them! It's normal to want God to take us out of a difficult situation, but what if we remembered that we can have **peace** right in the middle of that situation because our good shepherd is right there with us?

# Sunday, December 17

# Joy

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your phone's camera and scan  
this QR code:



Or visit: [https://  
graceandtruthcommunity.church/joy/](https://graceandtruthcommunity.church/joy/)



# Saturday, December 16

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 90

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

St. Paul Christian Academy

Box Hill Apartment 201 Bel Air Apartment 304

## Devotional Reading:

Isaiah 35

In addition to the picture of **joy** and relief that salvation brings, Isaiah shows us what it is like to live life according to God's will.

**Isaiah 35:8-10** *"And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting **joy** will crown their heads. Gladness and **joy** will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."*

The only way to have **joy** (true **joy**, not just happiness) is to know and serve Jesus, walking on His "highway," and living life according to His will.

# Saturday, December 9

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 84

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Riverside Elementary School

Box Hill Apartment 120 Bel Air Apartment 225

## Devotional Reading:

Isaiah 40:9-11

Today we're returning to the chapter in the book of Isaiah that we started in last week. Take a look at this sweet picture of God as our shepherd:

**Isaiah 40:11** *He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*

Can't you just feel the kindness and gentleness in these verses? God cares about us, His sheep, more than we can ever know. Let's not think too hard about these verses today, but maybe just soak in the idea that God loves us so much, that He cares for us so much, that He leads, guides, protects, and provides for us so much that we can live lives of **peace** because of Him!

Sunday, December 10

# Peace

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your phone's camera and scan  
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graceandtruthcommunity.church/peace/](https://graceandtruthcommunity.church/peace/)*

Friday, December 15

## **Psalm Reading:**

Psalm 89

## **School/Apartments to Pray For:**

St. Margaret School

Box Hill Apartment 125 Bel Air Apartment 303

## **Devotional Reading:**

**Isaiah 35**

Today we head backwards in time to the Old Testament and a poem from the prophet Isaiah. In this poem Isaiah is using nature personified to describe the **joy** and relief that the nation of Israel will feel with God rescues them from their captors.

**Isaiah 35:1-2** *"The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will **rejoice** greatly and shout for **joy**."*

This is also a great description of how each of us feels when Jesus rescues (saves) us from our sin!

**Isaiah 35:5-6** *"Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for **joy**. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert."*

6 times in these 10 verses of rescue and salvation, Isaiah uses the words "**joy**" or "**rejoice**." If we ever find ourselves hopeless or joyless, we just need to remember that Jesus rescued and saved us!

# Thursday, December 14

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 88

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

St. Mary's College

Box Hill Apartment 124 Bel Air Apartment 302

## Devotional Reading:

**John 15:1-17**

In addition to using the word “remain” 11 times in this passage, Jesus uses “command” 5 times. This is another way to remain in Jesus, to obey His commands. It is also a way to show that you love Him.

**John 15:10-11** *“If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete.”*

All this talk of obeying commands would seem to reinforce the false ideas that following God is all about rules and regulations, and that God is a huge, cosmic killjoy. But nothing could be further from the truth! Anything God tells us to do is for our benefit, and anything He tells us not to do is (you guessed it) for our benefit. Remaining in Jesus and obeying His commands is a surefire way to experience His **joy**, not only during this time of year, but all throughout the year!

# Monday, December 11

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 85

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Roye-Williams Elementary School

Box Hill Apartment 121 Bel Air Apartment 226

## Devotional Reading:

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

This week we are going to be talking about **joy**. But first, we need to remember that happiness and **joy** are not the same thing. Happiness is temporary and comes from people, places, and things, which are all external and subject to change at any time. But **joy** is steady and unchanging because it comes from Jesus, who is steady and unchanging and lives within us! Otherwise, how would it be possible for us to follow Paul’s command here?

**1 Thessalonians 5:16** *“**Rejoice** always”*

As we said above, people, places, and things can make us happy, but they can also let us down or disappoint us, causing our happiness to turn to sadness. If the command is to “**rejoice** (be **joyful**) always” then **joy** has to come from something other than people, places, and things. The Bible tells us that **joy** comes from knowing and serving Jesus, who is unchanging and will never disappoint us!

**Hebrews 13:8** *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

# Tuesday, December 12

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 86

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

Southampton Middle School

Box Hill Apartment 122 Bel Air Apartment 227

## Devotional Reading:

**1 Corinthians 15:1-11**

Yesterday we said that **joy** comes from knowing and serving Jesus. As we break this idea down, let's start with knowing Jesus. We were created to be in a right relationship with God, but our sin separates us from Him. **BUT**, God sent His Son, Jesus, to live a sinless life which Jesus offered up on the cross as the payment for our sins. Jesus died on Good Friday, from Friday night until Sunday morning He lay buried in a grave, and on Sunday morning God raised Him from the dead. This is what we call the Gospel, or "Good News." All we have to do is put our faith in this good news and we are made right with the Father. This is the moment where we come to know Jesus, and His **joy** comes into our hearts and lives.

**1 Corinthians 15:1-2** *"Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain."*

# Wednesday, December 13

## Psalm Reading:

Psalm 87

## School/Apartments to Pray For:

St. Joan of Arc School

Box Hill Apartment 123 Bel Air Apartment 301

## Devotional Reading:

**John 15:1-17**

We know that **joy** comes from knowing and serving Jesus, and that knowing Jesus starts with believing the Gospel; so now we can look at serving Jesus. But first, here's a tip for understanding the Bible: When a passage repeats a word or phrase several times, we're meant to take notice. In this passage, the word "remain" is used 11 times, 4 times in this verse alone!

**John 15:4** *"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."*

The secret to living the Christian life and experiencing all that Jesus has for us (such as **joy**) is to "remain" in Him. To stick by His side, to do everything we can to know Him better (praying, reading the Bible, being in fellowship with other Christians), to make Him the priority of our lives, these are ways that we remain in Jesus.