

Greetings to Eden Members, Fellow Worshipers and Friends:

It doesn't seem possible that another year has almost completed itself but as we know, time marches on and waits for no one. We have moved on through the Thanksgiving Holiday so I trust you had a special time with family and friends sharing the bounty of God's Blessings. From what I read in the papers and on-line articles, Thanksgiving has become one of the most important holidays to celebrate. I suppose that might be because it still is known as Thanksgiving. Christmas has been overtaken with the "PC" crowd and more and more people are seeing this time of year as "happy holidays." I'm hoping that those who really understand the Biblical importance of this season will hold fast to "Merry Christmas" even when being wished a "happy holiday."

At church we have been sharing the Advent Wreath as we have for many years. We've had three Sunday's as I write this. The candles represented Hope, Peace and Joy. The remaining two candles will be for December 19 and Christmas Eve, and they, as you remember, represent Love with the final center white candle representing Christ will be used at our Christmas Eve Candles and Carols service on December 24 If we are able to have our Christmas Eve service we will meet at 5:00 p.m.



I'm sure you have been watching the world situation during all of 2021 and have observed just how the peace and tranquility of the world has been turned upside down in so many places and ways. We certainly can say the same for our own country as we have witnessed the ever increasing numbers of shootings, acts of terrorism and actions of people against people and, of course, all that has happened worldwide with Covid. Perhaps God's Christmas Gift for 2021 will be to eradicate all strains of said virus.

Any time we enter the Christmas Season and attempt to celebrate the real reason for this season, which is, of course, the birth of the Christ, I am reminded of the words of Isaiah, which you have seen before, as he writes of the coming Messiah.

**(Isa 9:6) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.**

First, it's important to note that Isaiah was writing of this coming event some 800 years before the actual birth of Jesus, the Christ. With the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah brings to the people of Israel an important element of living, **HOPE**. The history (neither the time nor space to get into all of that in this letter) was one of upheaval, war, captivity, slavery and despair. Isaiah is giving people HOPE for the future by writing of the coming Messiah and used these descriptive words that paint a picture of the coming Christ Child who would fulfill the Davidic Covenant. You can read about God's promise of the Christ Child coming through the "line of David" by turning to these references in your Bible: **(2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7: 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 17:11-14.**

The unconditional covenant made between God and David by which God promises David and Israel that the Messiah (Jesus Christ) would come from the lineage of David and the tribe of Judah and would establish a kingdom that would endure forever.

That kingdom has yet to be established and is referenced as happening when people speak of the "**second coming of Christ**" which is yet still future and we are told we know not the time or place for His return.

See the following scriptures regarding this event: **(Matthew 24:36, 44; Matthew 25:13; Mark 13:33)**

However, in the mean time, those wonderful descriptive words Isaiah used, I believe, are valid in today's world as we await the "advent" of Jesus' second coming. So, a short "sermon" (portions you may have read about before) on what those precious words mean especially for us today in such a gloomy world.

**\*Wonderful Counselor:** Christ's position as our Wonderful Counselor means we can trust Him to listen to our problems and guide us in the right direction (**Proverbs 3:6**). We can be sure He is listening because He told us to pray to Him about our worries (**Philippians 4:6; James 1:5**). We can be certain He has our best interests at heart because He loves us (**1 John 4:19**). And His love is so wide and deep (and wonderful) that we cannot fully understand it (**Romans 5:8**). \*(<http://www.gotquestions.org/>)

**Mighty God:** As you read both the old and the New Testament you find so much written describing the work of Jesus. All of His miracles and involvement with the people of His day, but most important for us is His Mighty Power. Power displayed as He walked those 33 years on the face of the earth and mightily demonstrated as He faced all those who opposed Him. At His arrest, trial, crucifixion, and burial, however, on that Sunday morning we have come to call Easter, Jesus demonstrated a Mighty God quality as he conquered death with his resurrection. You can read the full story in **LUKE 24**.

**Everlasting Father:** We all know the meaning of everlasting and if Jesus is the Son of God then all the titles found in Isaiah 9:6 fit. The psalmist said this: (**Psa 90:2**) **Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.** Jeremiah said this continuing the theme of "everlasting." (**Jer 31:3**) **The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.** It is that love that brings the fatherly quality to Jesus. That fatherly quality allows, even invites everyone, to a special personal relationship with Him. That relationship is summed up in what the Apostle Paul said to the Ephesian believers:

**Eph 2:4-10 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, (5) made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. (6) And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, (7) in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (8) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- (9) not by works, so that no one can boast. (10) For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**

Finally, **the Prince of Peace:** In this world everyone longs for peace. Yet we are fully aware of how lacking real peace is. From a biblical perspective there are two very important types of peace. I have spoken of them many times over the years. **Peace with God** is the primary purpose of Jesus' birth. From the time of the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve failed to follow God's simple statement to not eat the fruit of the tree of life, there has been disobedience (sin) in the world. According to God's established plan, sin was to be paid for on an annual basis with a blood sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. However, God knew that process was not sufficient so His perfect plan built on Love was conceived. He designed a "perfect lamb" that would pay the ultimate price for "Peace with God." The words of the beloved Apostle John says it all:

**Joh 3:16-18 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. (17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (18) 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.**

It is the birth of Christ we celebrate at this time of year that has made peace with God possible. We are a sinful people and in order for us to have true "Peace with God" we need to confess we are a sinful people and openly and in love accept the gift of peace (salvation) God desires us to have. For some reason, it is

a gift that many people choose not to accept. I pray you are not one who has rejected this wonderful gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus.

The Apostle Peter said: **2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.** Time will run out. This is the perfect season to come to Christ in faith or reflect on your relationship to Him and recommit your life to Him.

As world events continue to unfold, we are getting closer everyday to that time when Jesus will return to set up his kingdom as spoken of in God's word. Please don't be on the outside looking in....

We have been pleased to be able to broadcast our morning service on Eden Baptist Church's Face Book page. We are thankful for those who follow on a regular basis. It's not a large following but we are thankful for each one. We also have a website ([edenbaptistmaine.org](http://edenbaptistmaine.org)) which you can check out.

We are sending copies the old fashioned way (mail) we will also send a copy by email attachment and will post on our website, so we have not included a Christmas offering envelope. I apologize for the multiple copies you might receive.

If you wish to share an offering, please make note in the memo that it is a Christmas offering and you can mail it to Eden Baptist Church, 195 Bay View Drive, Bar Harbor, Maine. 04609. These gifts will be used for our outreach and mission activities we support on the local scene. (Heating, food pantry, schools helping students, etc.)

Kathy and I wish all a very Merry CHRISTmas and prayerfully a joyous and prosperous new year

In Christian Love and Thankfulness,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word.