

# St. Paul's Herald

December 2025

## LETTER FROM PASTOR

“Well, that’s a bit crooked.” “Oops, it looks a little off kilter.” Have you ever said these things before? Sarah, Samuel, and I are coming up on our one-year anniversary here in Tunkhannock, PA in December. It has been one year since we moved here and had to put up all kinds of pictures around our house. When you put up pictures, it is very easy for them to be crooked, especially if you're very close to them. This is often because pictures are hung with one nail or a hook which means it is easy for them to lean one way or another. In order for a picture to be ‘straight’, a greater perspective is needed for the picture to be correctly positioned.

As we prepare for our Lord’s coming at Christmas with this Advent season, we hear again the voice of John the Baptist tell us “I am the voice crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said (Jn 1:23).” Make straight the way of the Lord. It’s an important message for us as humans. Except, there is a problem. Like a picture that is hanging crooked, we are ‘crooked’ because of our sin. In fact, if we are

honest, we like to lean into sin just like a toddler who is told deliberately not to do something but goes and does it anyway. Although we know the right way to act because of God’s law providing the standard, as Paul himself claims (see Romans 7:18), we don’t have the ability to carry it out or ‘straighten’ our own life.

Try as we might, there is nothing we can do to make ourselves straight, even though we have the ruler, or level, of God’s Law. We need someone with an outside perspective to set us on the right ‘way’ by correcting our imbalance. “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 7:25)” the answer to our dilemma has been given to us. Jesus is the one who came to make our ‘crooked’, ‘off kilter’ lives straight by His life, death, and resurrection.

Even though we often barely see our sin, it is clear from God’s perspective. God the Father out of deep love for us, sent Jesus to bear our sin and to give us the ability to ‘walk straight’. Because of Jesus, we don’t have to lean into every sinful desire that comes our way. We don’t have to worry or be anxious about our inability to meet God’s standard. Jesus has met it for us and now gives us the ability to walk in that standard in our own life. As you go about your holiday preparations during this season of Advent, ‘walk straight in the way of the LORD’ by the grace of Jesus Christ. He has come for you dear friend!

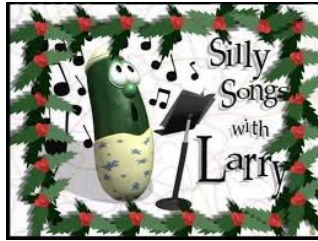


A Blessed Advent and Christmas to you  
and yours,

Pastor Josh, & the Makey Family  
(Sarah & Samuel)

## CONNECTING TO GRACE

Do you like Christmas? Many a child throughout history and even today would of course answer yes. There is a silly VeggieTales (a Christian animated series) song about Christmas that Larry the Cucumber sings that perfectly expresses the delight



a child feels about Christmas. The words are “Oh, Santa, I can’t wait for you to come, I just can’t wait for you to come...”. Certainly, a goofy song that misses the true meaning of Christmas, but it does highlight an important concept related to Christmas; something that children know even if they can’t explain it. That concept is anticipation.

Whether young or old, all people anticipate things in life. To anticipate is simply to look forward to or consider something before it happens. We probably can think of different things that we anticipate, some good and some bad. From a Biblical perspective, there is no single word for anticipation in the ancient languages. The concept of anticipation however is not at all foreign to the Bible though. Just like we do today, people of the Bible anticipated things that would happen in the future – some good, like the promised land of Canaan and some bad, like Jesus foretelling of the temple’s destruction in Jerusalem. There is one form of anticipation that is always positive in the Bible – anything relating to the grace of God coming through Jesus as the Messiah, the promised one of old.

All the way back in Genesis 3:15, God promised to send the seed (Jesus) of the woman (Eve) who would bring about His plan

of salvation for all people. Throughout the Old Testament, numerous people looked forward with strained or intense expectation to the coming of the Messiah. The prophets earnestly foretold of the hope that the Christ would bring. In the New Testament, a devout man filled with the Holy Spirit, awaited his turn to see Jesus before he died (see Lk. 2:25-32). Luke describes Simeon as one “waiting for the consolation of Israel” (Lk. 2:25) that was to come through Jesus. Even Paul, in His letter to Titus, had an eager tone of anticipation for Christ’s second coming in glory when he wrote “we await the blessed hope for our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Anticipation during the Christmas season is a wonderful thing. It is not because Santa is coming, family is together, or gifts are exchanged that make Christmas worth looking forward to. Instead, it is the fact that God’s grace has come down in Jesus the Messiah, the babe of Bethlehem. This grace is for the salvation of all who believe in Him. As we move toward Christmas, eagerly await God’s grace that came in a manger, continues to come in Word and Sacrament, and will one day be fully realized upon Christ’s return. Anticipate God’s grace; it can be expected!

For unto you is  
born this day  
in the city of David  
a Savior, who is  
Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:11