

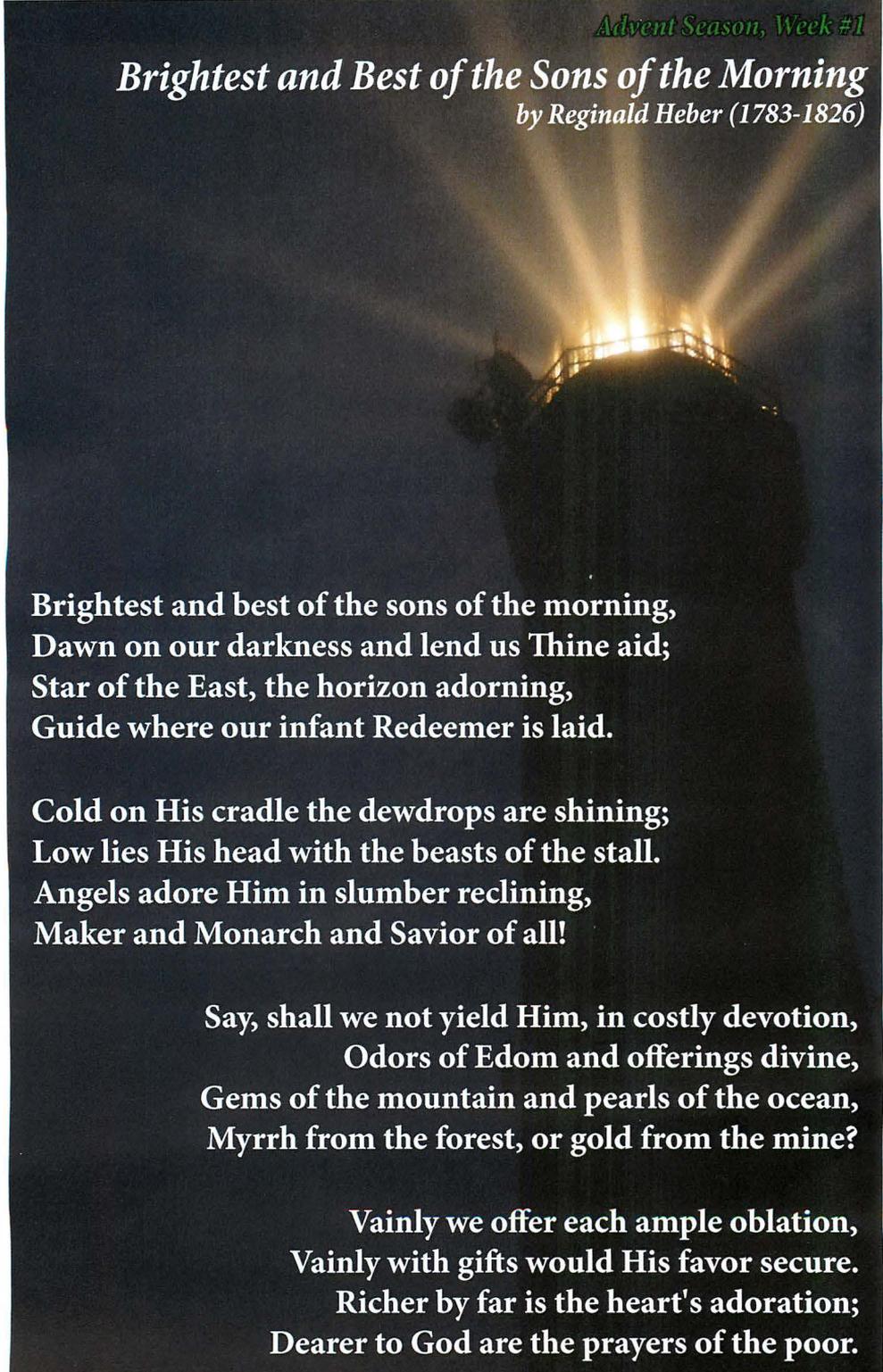
Advent
Hope

welcome to long beach alliance church
november 27, 2016

Advent Season, Week #1

Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning

by Reginald Heber (1783-1826)



Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us Thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining;
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall.
Angels adore Him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all!

Say, shall we not yield Him, in costly devotion,
Odors of Edom and offerings divine,
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favor secure.
Richer by far is the heart's adoration;
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.



Women's Rudolph Exchange
Sunday, December 4
6:00PM-8:00PM

Purchase Your \$8.00 Tickets
At Courtyard Table Today!
(Note: Tickets Required)



MEN'S
FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST
long beach alliance

Saturday, December 3rd
at 8:00 am

LBAC Year-to-Date Financial Report

Budget	Required	Received	Budget %
Weekly:	\$12,236.37	\$9,929.15	81.1%
Month-to-Date:	\$36,709.11	\$30,468.37	83.0%
Year-to-Date:	\$146,836.44	\$129,783.38	88.4%
Disbursed YTD:	\$125,807.13	GOF Balance:	\$4,597.09

LBAC's Family Calendar & Events

Sunday, November 27

- 9:00AM Worship Celebration 1
- 10:00AM Mind the Gap (Courtyard)
- 10:45AM Foundations Adult Class
- 10:45AM Foundations Youth Meeting
- 10:45AM Worship Celebration 2
- 6:00PM Perspectives

Monday, November 28

- 7:00PM Compulsive Eaters Anonymous

Tuesday, November 29

- 7:00PM High School Core Group

Wednesday, November 30

- 6:30PM AWANA

Thursday, December 1

- 7:00PM Junior High Core Group

Friday, December 2

- 6:30AM Men's Bible Study
- 8:00PM Narcotics Anonymous

Saturday, December 3

- 8:00AM Men's Fellowship Breakfast

Sunday, December 4

- 9:00AM Worship Celebration 1
- 10:00AM Mind the Gap (Courtyard)
- 10:45AM Foundations Adult Class
- 10:45AM Foundations Youth Meeting
- 10:45AM Worship Celebration 2
- 6:00PM Women's Rudolph Exchange

MISSIONS

<http://www.lbac.org/missions>

Join us for Perspectives & Serving the World!

GROWTH GROUPS

<http://www.lbac.org/gg>

Mid-week Bible Studies for all Adults

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

<http://www.lbac.org/children>

Sunday Mornings

Gospel Project @ 9:00AM & 10:45AM

AWANA

<http://www.lbac.org/awana>

Wednesdays through May 6:30PM-8:30PM

YOUTH MINISTRIES

<http://www.lbac.org/youth>

JH & HS Foundations - Sundays @ 10:45AM

HS Core Groups - Tuesdays @ 7:00PM

JH Core Groups - Thursdays @ 7:00PM

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

<http://www.lbac.org/women>

Woman To Woman Mentoring

Contact: sherylynnlbac@gmail.com

Lydia House Meals Ministry

Contact: robbi@apabrandu.com

Women Connecting with Missions

3rd Tuesday of each month @ 7:00PM

Crafty Women

2nd Saturday of each month @ 10:00AM

MEN'S MINISTRIES

<http://www.lbac.org/men>

Contact: mensministry@lbac.org

Weekly Schedule

Regular Ministry Schedule & Contacts



THE
ALLIANCE

long beach alliance church offices

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church staff team

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tina rand, receptionist & treasurer
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kelly douglas, missions coordinator
kelly@lbac.org

chris lankford, lead pastor
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matt swaney, family ministry pastor
ext. 1003 · matt@lbac.org

scott trickett, associate pastor
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Advent Hope

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 27, 2016 • Pastor Chris Lankford

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

~Isaiah 2:3-4

The word “Advent” comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means “the approach” or “the arrival.” The Latin verb is *advenia*.
“I arrive. I come. I am coming.”

For centuries, Christ-followers have celebrated the four Sundays before Christmas with a passionate anticipation of joy at the birth of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh.

One popular writer and pastor summarizes the importance of why we celebrate... Christmas as a holiday was not observed until well after the biblical era. The early church of the New Testament celebrated Jesus’ resurrection, but not His birth. In fact, Christmas was not given any kind of official recognition by the church until the mid-4th century!

Partly because so many Christmas customs have their roots in paganism, Christians are often resistant to some of the rituals of the holiday. The Puritans of early America wholly rejected Christmas celebrations. They deliberately worked on December 25th to show their disdain. A law passed in England in 1644 reflected a similar Puritan influence; the law made Christmas day an official working day. For a time in England it was literally illegal to cook plum pudding or bake any mince pie for the holidays.

Christians today are generally not opposed to celebrating Christmas. Observing the holiday itself is not a question of right or wrong. As Paul wrote, “One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes

it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.” (Romans 14:5-6).

Every day - including Christmas - is a celebration, especially for everyone who knows and loves Him.

How we observe Christmas is the central issue. Do we observe it for the Lord's sake or for ourselves? Do we give and receive gifts as a reflection of God's love for us, or because we love shiny new stuff?

Do we think about how and why we celebrate?

This is truly at the heart of the matter.

Christmas is an opportunity for us to exalt Jesus Christ.

We ought to take advantage of it.

Our world has largely captured this season and disguised it with Lord's-a-Leaping, Sleigh Bells Ringing, and a Jolly Old Elf.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with our culture's special traditions. Unless they cause us to miss Jesus Christ amidst the tinsel and the trappings. Can you imagine it? Missing the Messiah?

If we miss Jesus we have missed Christmas.

If we miss Christmas we have miss His Gospel message.

“Peace on Earth, and goodwill toward men...”

If Jesus came to seek and save lost people, what should Christmas celebrate more than anything else?

I don't know about you, but Christmas can't possibly be complete without giving myself away to others for the sake of the Gospel.

The true gift of Christmas is Jesus the Christ.

God's gift of His Son is the greatness in our celebration.

We imitate God when we give gifts to those we love.

We imitate God when we give Jesus to those He loves.

Emmanuel, God with us.

He was given as a gift to be given away again and again.

The wonder of Christmas anticipates giving and receiving gifts. Have you given to others what you have received from Emmanuel?

I welcome you to this season of Advent anticipation.

You are invited to engage these weeks ahead with great curiosity.

Join together in eager anticipation of generously giving what has already been provided to you. Anticipate Jesus.

1) **God Loves Sharing Himself & His Good Gifts**

- A) One of the essential qualities of God is that He exists in perfect and satisfying community with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-20 & 17:15-23). Through all of eternity, God has lived in a flawless relationship of God/Christ/Holy Spirit!
- B) Why did God create mankind? Was He lonely? Was He bored? Does God need mankind? Does God need someone to worship Him? Was He looking for workers, a good slave labor force? Even King David wrote, "what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" (Psalm 8:4).
- C) The answers to these questions are not found in God's relationship to mankind. Rather, **we find the answers to these questions in God's relationship within Himself**, the relationship between God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit; within the Trinity.
- D) What we find out about God is that He created mankind to reflect His great goodness, love, creativity, beauty, etc. Mankind was created (**you were created**) to reflect God's image and spread it around the world. **You are His "image-bearer!"**
- E) What we also find out about God is that He gives freely. God does not freely give because He needs to give, but rather, God gives because it is His identity. He is a Father, and a father gives good gifts freely because He loves, and because He can.
- F) When Jesus taught the people how to approach God in prayer, He began with "Our Father..." God has always been Father, **it is the single most important characteristic by which we know God**. You know God if He is your Father. If He is not your Father, you do not know God.
- G) **There are a great many things you can know about God. But if you do not know Him as Father, the rest becomes insignificant.**

2) **A Good Father Takes Intentional Action**

- A) All of this (God our Father) is important because Adam & Eve (the original image bearers), were also created with the ability to reject God's image, and instead reflect a bent or broken image of rebellion, fear, shame, exploitation, and even hatred.

- B) God created all of us as bearers of His image, but sadly, almost all of us (all but Jesus Christ) choose to reflect a broken image, rather than bear the image of God.
- C) But God does not seek vengeance, despite mankind's rejection of God's image. Why? Because God is a good Father. A good father disciplines his children, but also provides them with hope for a restored future (Genesis 3:15, cf. Hebrews 12:5-11).
- D) Jesus prayed that mankind would experience the fullness of love which God shared with Jesus Christ **"before the foundation of the world"** (John 17:24). God intentionally and actively loves, and was doing so **long before anything was created**.
- E) God's love is never passive. He has been at work since before the beginning, intentionally choosing relationship with mankind **"before the foundation of the world"** (Ephesians 1:4, Revelation 20:11-12 & cf. 13:8). Before mankind had ever sinned, God knew.
- F) But why? Because a good father is never passive. A good father is intentional in sacrificially loving his children. A good father does not wait for the love of his child, he loves his own before they can even form the concept of love in their soul.

3) God Is On Mission

- A) **Christianity is radical good news!** God seeks you! God is on a mission to reach you! Religion is mankind working to reach for God. But God rejects religion for something better!
- B) Christianity is God's great eternal plan to reach mankind with the sacrificial love of the One person we **must know** to understand Him as "our Father;" His own Son, Jesus the Christ.
- C) Significantly, God seeks His children through the Son, Jesus, the creator and exact image of God (Colossians 1:15-17), the great redeemer (1:18), God's great mission in the flesh (1:19-20).
- D) Our culture easily makes religious nonsense of Jesus' birth. Let's not miss the point! God's image spreads when His image-bearers sacrificially and intentionally live & love to spread His image! **LIVE OUR HOPE (!)** for those as close as our neighbors and as far away as His love might take us (Colossians 1:28-29)!