



**Celebrate the Season of Christmas  
at Portland Avenue**

Sunday, Nov. 29th—5:30 p.m.

*Hanging of the Green*

Saturday, Dec. 5th—10 a.m.

*Girls in Action Christmas Tea Fiesta*

Sunday, Dec. 6th—5:30 p.m.

*International Christmas—American Style*

Friday, Dec. 11th—6:30 p.m.

*Kid's Night Out—Christmas Fellowship*

Sunday, Dec. 13th—10:45 a.m.

*Sing Glad Tidings—Christmas Musical*

Sunday, Dec. 13th—5:30 p.m.

*Family Christmas Celebration  
Music and All-Church Fellowship*

Sunday, Dec. 20th—5:30 p.m.

*Carols, Cocoa and Cookies*

Thursday, Dec. 24th—6 p.m.

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service*

Portland Avenue Baptist Church ~ 1301 N. Portland Avenue ~ portlandavenue.org

# Christmas

PEACE LOVE

# Joy

HOPE GRACE



**Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.  
Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory!  
Revelation 19:6, 7**

**Portland Avenue Baptist Church**

*Christmas 2009*



*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down  
from the Father of the heavenly lights.*

*James 1:17*

God gives us spiritual blessings like peace, hope and joy.  
But He also gives us practical blessings like houses to live in,  
jobs and warm cups of tea.

There are blessings we receive from Him through  
others like friendship and family. And some blessings He  
seems to have thrown in just for fun – like chocolate.

The verse says everything good in our lives can ultimately be  
traced back to God. Sometimes the smallest blessings are  
where we find the biggest expressions of His love.



### *Joy to the World*

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven, and heaven  
and nature sing.  
He rules the world with  
truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders of his love.

### *The First Noel*

The first Noel,  
the angel did say,  
Was to certain poor shepherds  
in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay  
keeping their sheep,  
On a cold winter's night  
that was so deep,

#### **Chorus:**

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,  
Born is the King of Israel.

### *O Holy Night*

O holy night,  
the stars are brightly shining,  
it is the night of the  
dear Savior's birth;  
Long lay the world in sin  
and error pining,  
till He appeared and the  
soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary  
world rejoices,  
for yonder breaks a new  
and glorious morn;  
Fall on your knees,  
oh, hear the angel voices!  
O night divine  
O night when Christ was born!  
O night  
O holy night  
O night divine!  
Truly He taught us to love  
one another,  
His law is love,  
and His gospel is peace;  
Chains shall He break for  
the slave is our brother,  
and in His name all  
oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in  
grateful chorus raise we,  
let all within us praise  
His holy name;  
Christ is the Lord,  
oh, praise His name forever!  
His pow'r and glory  
ever more proclaim!  
His pow'r and glory  
ever more proclaim!



*Away in a Manger*

Away in a manger,  
no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus  
laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky  
looked down where He lay,

The little Lord Jesus,  
asleep on the hay.  
The cattle are lowing,  
the Baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus,  
no crying He makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus,  
look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle  
till morning is nigh.

*Hark! The herald angels sing*

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled."

Joyful all ye nations rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With angelic host proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"

*Silent Night*

Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon Virgin Mother  
and Child.  
Holy Infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.  
Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven a far,  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Silent night, holy night!  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
Son of God love's pure light.  
With the dawn of  
redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye  
to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him,  
born the King of angels;  
**Chorus**  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ, the Lord.



It is our prayer that families will utilize this devotion guide to discover true Christmas JOY that only comes from a personal relationship and faith in Christ Jesus as your LORD and Savior.

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*Merry Christmas!*



## Week of November 29th

*Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you . . .  
Do not let your hearts be troubled and  
do not be afraid. John 14:27*

We often hear the phrase “peace on earth” this time of year. While it’s a noble goal and one we would certainly pursue, most of us know that complete peace is not likely to happen this side of heaven. We are fallen beings who seem capable of finding new ways to create conflict every day.

But even if there is not peace in our world, Christ says He will bring peace to our hearts. Take a moment to sit in His presence and receive that gift this Christmas. Ask the Lord to fill your heart and home with His perfect peace.

**What does the word PEACE mean to you and your family?**

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**When was a time you really felt God’s peace?**

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*Lord, You bring us peace even in the midst of a world  
that’s often in turmoil. Today I invite You to bring peace  
to my heart and the hearts of my family.*

## Celebration Activities . . .

Consider spending time weekly writing down one thing each person is grateful for in a “Family Journal.” Continue to meet together on a regular basis throughout the year to list and discuss the blessings that God has bestowed upon you and your family.

**The most important gift you can give your family during this holiday season is the gift of time.**

*Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old,  
he will not turn from it. Proverbs 22:6*



Time spent together in meaningful ways will help ensure that your children grow up with valuable lessons on love, happiness, kindness and generosity.

### **Start a Family Game Night!**

Family Game Night is a fun way for families to spend time together. Games allow you to compete, show off skills and learn sportsmanship. They encourage family communication -- and make memories that will last forever.

**Here’s how to make your game night something you look forward to all week:**

Clear the books. Make this an important date. This sends a good message about family priorities, and it gives everyone something to anticipate.

Keep it to the family. You may want to make other game evenings when you invite guests, but for this night, make sure it’s all about your immediate family. This fosters communication, comfort and helps everyone build a strong sense of family identity.

No interruptions. Let the machine get phone calls, turn off your cell and make sure all homework is done beforehand.

Choose the right game. Make sure that everyone can enjoy playing the game, and let different family members choose the game. In fact, you might share the duties of being “in charge” of the night so that everyone gets a turn to create the event. (Of course mom and dad can assist the youngest players.) Balance games of skill with games of luck so that every one gets a chance to do something they’re good at -- and improve the odds of having a winning night.

Use this as a teaching time. Family game night is a great time to reinforce things like manners, being a good sport, taking turns and other social skills that children will need as they grow up and go out in the world. Family Game Night gives kids a chance to practice these positive behaviors.





## Week of December 27th

*This is how we know what love is:  
Jesus Christ laid down His life for us.  
1 John 3:16*

Imagine you love someone deeply who does not respond. You send flowers, but they are thrown away. You write a poem but it is tossed away. You proclaim your love over and over but are only given the cold shoulder.

Then you realize this person is dying. The only way to save them is to give your life in exchange for theirs. Would we do it? Jesus did! He created a beautiful world full of flowers and beauty but we ignored it. He sent us a love poem through His Word but we tossed it aside. He spoke to us in a thousand different ways but we never listened.

In spite of all that, Jesus died on our behalf. He stopped at nothing to make us His. That kind of extravagant love is hard for us to comprehend. In more ways than we can ever imagine, Jesus is truly the Greatest Gift our hearts will ever receive.

**Why do you think Jesus died for us even when we did not return His love?**

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**As you plan the new year, set aside time to be with Jesus.**

**Utilize your Christmas cards as prayer reminders. Place the cards in a basket, and select a card or two each day and pray specifically for the individual or family who sent the card.**



*Jesus, thank you for your amazing love.*

## Celebration Activities . . .

Take time to pray for our soldiers today who are away from their families this Christmas as they try to bring peace to our world in difficult places. Ask God to protect them and bring His peace to their hearts no matter what they may face.

Consider participating in "Operation Stars & Stripes." Ideas are listed below on how you and your family can help brighten the Christmas season for our Military families. Complete information is available on-line at [operationstarsandstripes.com](http://operationstarsandstripes.com).

### Care Packages for Military Family

It is often difficult to purchase cards and small gifts to send home for holidays and special occasions. A deployed servicemember does not have access to the resources and stores like we do back in the States. Below is a list of items we are currently collecting to send to the troops, so they may send them home to their loved ones for special occasions. We also have requests to directly distribute these items stateside.



### Items for Spouses:

Handmade Cards, Handmade Albums, Handmade Jewelry, and Unused Paper Crafting/Scrapbooking Supplies.



### Items for Children (age 1-15):

New Stuffed Animals, Beanie Babies, and Unused Toys



### Care Package Needs for our Military Men & Women:

Postage Stamps & Donations, Black Ink Pens, Zip-lock Bags, Travel Games, Playing Cards, Sudokus & Word Searches, Drink Mix On the Go, Single-serving Coffee, Single-serving Cocoa, Soft Prepackaged Cookies, Snack-sized Nuts, Snack-sized Dried Fruit, Slim Jims, Gum (No Mint), Pocket Hand & Foot Warmers, Long, Thick Black Socks, Travel-sized Baby Wipes, Blistex Lip Balm, Travel-sized Hand Sanitizer, African-American Hair Products, and Men's Razors



**A Million Thanks** is a year-round campaign to show our appreciation to our U.S. Military Men and Women, past and present for their sacrifices, dedication, and service to our country through our letters, emails, cards, and prayers.

**Do You Want to Send our Troops a Thank You Email Note?**

**Visit America Supports You at [amillionthanks.org](http://amillionthanks.org).**





## Week of December 6th

*Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4*

We've all made a Christmas list at some point in our lives. We think of what we want most and we write it down on a piece of paper.

Whether or not we realize it, we also have a list like that written in our hearts. We all have hopes and dreams we want to be fulfilled. Sometimes the list in our hearts matches God's list for our lives and other times it doesn't. But the closer we get to Him, the more our list and God's list line up.

When pleasing God comes first in our lives then we want what He wants. We can always trust that God's list for our lives is the best because He loves us so much.

### What is on the list in your heart right now?

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### What are your biggest hopes and desires for this coming year?

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*Lord, thank you for your goodness.*

## Celebration Activities . . .

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus this week, take time to read the complete story found in the second chapter of Luke and thank God for the gift of His Son.

### Just baked a giant batch of Christmas cookies or "Sparkle Cakes" and want to share?

This craft is a great way to give the gift of baking and share your crafty talents as well!



#### What you'll need:

Paper lunch sack, Acrylic paint (white, green and red), Foam stamps (star and circle), Paint brush, White craft glue, Silver Glitter, Green Glitter glue, 6-8" ribbon and HOMEMADE COOKIES or SPARKLE CAKES!

#### How to make it:

Open the lunch bag to make sure that none of the sides or ends are stuck together before you start. Close it back up. Fold bottom of bag against itself so that it lies flat and is not folded upwards. Use a hole punch or wooden skewer to make a small hole in the top center of the bag. (Later you will tie the bag shut with a ribbon.) Paint the circle foam stamp with red paint. Stamp onto the bag. Fill in any gaps with the paint brush. Allow to dry. Paint the star stamp with white paint and stamp onto bag, overlapping the circle and running off the right edge of the bag. Fill in gaps with paint brush. Let dry.

Paint the star stamp with green paint and stamp onto bag, overlapping the circle and running off the left end of the bag. Decorate the "cookies" with sprinkles by dipping the handle end of a paint brush into paint and dotting onto the circle and stars. Use white craft glue to write the word "cookies" at the top of the bag. Sprinkle completely with silver glitter and let dry. Tap off excess glitter. Water down a little bit of craft glue and use a paint brush to paint the glue mixture onto the undecorated spaces on the bag. Lightly sprinkle glitter onto the areas you painted with glue and tap off excess. Use green glitter glue to write the words "For: \_\_\_\_\_" at the bottom of the bag. Let dry completely.

When bag is completely dry, fill with cookies or Sparkle Cakes (wrapped in cellophane) and thread a piece of ribbon through the top hole and tie in a bow.

***Deliver completed project as a family to . . .  
a neighbor . . . homebound friend . . . someone in the hospital  
or anyone one you choose!***



## Week of December 20th

*Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! Revelation 19:6, 7*

The proclamation of praise above is given to God by all who are in heaven. Imagine you are among them and you have received in full all of the gifts God has promised. What would be the response of your heart? It's no surprise that his verse sounds so enthusiastic!

While we have more time to go before we join the eternal praises in heaven, we can start expressing our joy and thanks to God while we're still on earth. We have already received so many good things from Him like love, peace, and the gift of His Son.

We also have so many more to look forward to that we will only fully receive on the day we enter heaven.

**Imagine you are in the presence of God in heaven. What do you think that will be like?**

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**Think of your favorite *praise* song. Take a few minutes to sing it out loud.**



*Jesus, I celebrate Your birth.*

## Celebration Activities . . .

Write down three desires of your heart as simple prayers on pieces of paper. Wrap them up like a gift. Create a label that includes the date and says, "Do not open for one year." Next Christmas open the gift and reflect on what God has done with the desires of your heart. Remember that unanswered prayers can sometimes be blessings that still show us God's goodness.

**Make homemade ornaments for your Christmas Tree or use as package "toppers" for others to use on their Christmas Tree.**



**The Star:** A heavenly sign of prophecy fulfilled long, long ago- The shining hope of mankind.

**The Fir Tree:** Evergreen- shows everlasting light and life. The needles point up to heaven.

**The Bell:** Rings out to guide lost sheep back to the fold, signifying that all are precious in His eyes.

**The Candle:** A mirror of starlight, reflecting our thanks for the star of Bethlehem.

**The Gift Bow:** Tied as we should all be tied together in bonds of goodwill forever.

**The Candy Cane:** Represents the shape of the shepherd's crook, used to bring lost lambs back to the fold.

**The Wreath:** A symbol of the never ending eternal value of love... having no end.

Ornaments can be made using felt, embellished with ribbon, sequins, buttons, rick-rack, and jingle bells. Gluing 2 of the same ornaments together helps to stiffen them up a little bit. They could also easily be made using craft foam and embellished with just about anything you want. Cookie cutters work great as patterns.



## Week of December 13th

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8*

Imagine admiring a beautiful item in an upscale store. When you ask how much it is, you are shocked to find it costs more than you will earn in a lifetime.

A few days later, there is a knock on the door. A delivery man tells you he has the item and someone has purchased it as a Christmas gift for you. All you have to do is sign a form saying you'll receive the gift and it will be paid for in full.

Even though we would really like to have the gift, we might say, "I can't accept this! It's too much!"

Salvation is a lot like that gift. To receive it we must recognize that we could never purchase it for ourselves and humbly accept it from God. The good news is that when we do, the gift is ours and the bill is forever paid in full.

**Think about when you received God's gift of salvation. How did God's gift of salvation change your life?**

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*Lord, thank you for your grace.  
Thank you for saving me and changing my life.*

## Celebration Activities . . .

Take time this week to pray for someone in your life who has not yet received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Consider making the recipe below and delivering a "Sparkle Cake" to someone on your prayer list.



**Sparkle Cakes**

### What you Need!

- 1 pkg. (2-layer size) Yellow cake mix
- 1/4 tsp. Green food coloring
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) PHILADELPHIA Cream Cheese, softened
- 1 cup Powdered sugar
- 1-1/2 cups Thawed COOL WHIP Whipped Topping
- 16 Peppermint sticks (3 inch)
- 1/2 cup BAKER'S ANGEL FLAKE Coconut
- 2 squares BAKER'S Semi-Sweet Chocolate, chopped
- 1/4 cup Assorted Christmas candies
- Colored sugar

### Make It!

**PREHEAT** oven to 350°F. Grease and flour two 9-inch round cake pans; set aside. Prepare cake batter as directed on package; tint with food coloring. Pour evenly into prepared pans.

**BAKE** as directed on package. Cool in pans 10 min.; remove to wire racks. Cool completely.

**BEAT** cream cheese and powdered sugar with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Stir in whipped topping with wire whisk. Spread onto tops and sides of cakes.

**CUT** each cake into eight wedges to resemble Christmas trees. Insert peppermint stick into curved side of each cake for the tree trunk. Decorate with remaining ingredients. Store in refrigerator.

Prep Time: 20 min    Total Time: 1 hr 20 min    Makes: 16 trees