



DAY 23

Monday, December 24
(Candle of Peace)

2 COR 9:15

*“Thanks be to God for his
incredible gift!”*

Receiving

by Elaine Russo

Elaine is the Executive Director of Daybreak Pregnancy Resource Center and has been a member of Park Street Church since 2002. She serves on the Women’s Ministry team and together with her husband, Christopher, is very thankful to be a part of the Park Street family.

It was the night before Christmas, a night in which the preceding weeks of eager yuletide anticipation swelled into one joyous crescendo. Or so it should have. After all, was this not the night feted in so many of our treasured carols, the final night in which all of creation held its breath as it awaited THE Fulfillment of God’s promises to humankind? Yet, I was feeling anything but joy on this Christmas Eve. Stress and Anxiety, my two constant companions, were chaperoning in full force, hovering over my every move. “Everything MUST be perfect; are you sure you’ve gotten all your gifts?” whispered Anxiety in one ear, while Stress yelled in the other, “So much left to do, but so little time!” As if to ensure that they successfully kept Joy out the door, Loneliness, their good friend, was enlisted to throw in his two cents—“Who even cares about all you’re doing?”

Thus was I accompanied by the trio to Park Street’s Carols and Candles service that Christmas Eve as I grudgingly sat through the service, desperately trying to reclaim Joy before the last carol was sung. Amidst this struggle, I glimpsed another fellow member of Park Street a few pews away. She had been battling cancer, and the last time I saw her, she had appeared gaunt, weary and bald from the chemotherapy. That night, however, she looked transformed! True, she still bore the marks of the cancer. Yet, a beautiful radiance emanated from her inner being. A radiance which, in no uncertain words, communicated this: cancer may afflict her, but this affliction was only temporary. In Christ, God has

given her His unspeakable gift, and in Him, she placed her hope. As I looked on, transfixed by the radiance of God in her, the choirs of angels sang God’s words of love into my very soul. “I am He who redeems all things, I have come that they may have life, and life to the full!” In that moment, I received anew God’s Gift of Jesus. Against Him, no assault of Anxiety, Stress and Loneliness can stand!

Andrew Murray writes, “The one great work of God’s love for us is, He gives us His Son. In Him we have all. Therefore, the one great work of our heart must be to receive this Jesus who has been given to us, and to consider and use Him as ours.” This Advent, consider what it means to receive the greatest gift ever bestowed, and make Jesus your all in all. Receiving is nothing more than a manifestation of faith. So take Him, use Him, make Jesus yours.

RESPOND:

DO: Attend a Christmas Eve service of Carols and Candles at either 4 or 6 pm tonight, and praise God for his incredible Gift—his very Son!

PRAY: That we and others would receive anew God’s Gift of Jesus, and make him our all in all.