

# STAND

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All biblical text—NRSV, unless otherwise noted



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## 2021 Advent Meditation Guide

BIG BETHEL

African Methodist Episcopal Church

220 Auburn AV Atlanta, GA 30303

The Reverend John Foster, PhD

Senior Pastor



*Interviews with the Saints*





Dear Bethel AME Church Family:

*GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN...*

The Joy of Christmas – one of the most revealing Christmas passages is that of the Shepherds: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night – Luke 2:8. They received a message, acted on that message and began a new journey that transformed them. Once they had seen the Christ child, they couldn't help but tell the world what they had seen.

*GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN...*

Christmas is a time that we must STAND on our Joy, the Joy that the world didn't give nor can't take away, the Joy that JESUS CHRIST IS BORN!!!

S – Say the Good News to Any AND Everyone  
 T – Tell Somebody about Jesus  
 A – Allow God to give you the Words to Say  
 N – Never Let the World steal your Joy, and  
 D – Deliver somebody through your Contagious Joy!!!

*GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN ... THAT JESUS CHRIST IS BORN...*

Sincerely,

Rev. John Foster, Ph.D.  
 Senior Pastor

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**Monday-Friday**  
**December 20-24**

**Monday:** “Be upright and faithful to the laws of God; when we do that, we are standing.” Deborah Harrison

**Tuesday-Friday:** “Standing before God is a process of letting go and giving the Lord control. It also means doing a self examination. We do an inventory of ourselves. We look inward to be certain that we are following God’s divine Will.” Ernest Tate

### Stand

(McClurkin)

What do you do when you've done all you can  
 And it seems like it's never enough?  
 And what do you say when your friends turn away  
 And you're all alone, alone?  
 Tell me, what do you give when you've given your all  
 And it seems like you can't make it through?  
 Well you just stand when there's nothing left to do  
 You just stand, watch the Lord see you through  
 Yes, after you done all you can, you just stand!

*(Lyrics not used for sale or monetary purposes)*

**December 25**

Love is the ultimate and greatest gift of all that we can offer one another and Jesus. Love is for-giveness; Love is healing; Love is redemption; Love is “Forgive them Father...”; Love is everlasting life, because Love gave His life; Love is Christmas Day, when we raise our hands and...



*Merry Christmas*



## STAND on Love Psalm 103 (NIV)

Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

<sup>2</sup>Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

<sup>3</sup>who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

<sup>4</sup>who redeems your life from the pit  
and crowns you with love and  
compassion.



### STAND on Love—Scripture for the Week

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but  
may have eternal life. John 3:16*

### From Your Editor

*Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to resist in  
the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

Ephesians 6:13 (MEV)

Beloved Big Bethel Family,

STAND: *Interviews with the Saints*, presents a fresh, new concept of how we might commemorate Advent and the Season of Hope. Each of us has had some kind of test to pass these last 24 months, and there is probably no better time than now to share our inspiration.



### Using the Devotional Guide

The guide will feature the voices of Big Bethel each week, highlighting members' thoughts on what “Stand” means to them. Sunday will be devoted to a meditation and suggested Scripture for the Advent theme of that week. Monday-Friday will feature interviews and inspiration. We ask that you use Saturday as a personal day of reflection; a short message is provided for you. As we journey toward the wonder of Christmas and into yet another year, let us remember the birth of Jesus and what it means to us. Let us remember the great songwriter's words, “After you've done all you can, just STAND!” *Dr. Monica*

### Advent: What It Means



Advent is the Holy Season that precedes Christmas. It commemorates The Christ's birth and should not be confused with Christmastide. It is from the Latin term, *Ad-ventus Redemptoris*, referring to the anticipated arrival of the Messiah. Advent usually begins on the first Sunday of December (or the last

Sunday of November, when Christmas comes before the 4th Sunday of December, as it does this year). We celebrate with candle lighting each Sunday as follows:

1st Hope—Purple Candle; 2nd Peace —Purple Candle; 3rd Joy—Pink Candle; 4th Love--Purple Candle; also the Christmas candle (white), may be lit on this Sunday or during Christmas Eve / Christmas Day worship.

## STAND on Hope

The Reverend Monica C. Jones, Ph.D.



*Yes, after you've done all you can, you just stand* (McClurkin)

Whenever I listen to the lyrics to “Stand,” I am truly inspired. I visualize Donnie McClurkin’s testimony of how God took him from sinner to saint and his transition from hopelessness to hope.



To stand, means that no matter what comes against you, your feet are firmly entrenched. They are entrenched in the faith that God has instilled in you; they are entrenched in the redemption Jesus gave you from the moment you gave the

Lord your life. My word of hope to each of you this season, is to not look at the circumstance; look at the Creator. Keep looking up and keep on standing.

And so it is.

### Stand on Hope — Scripture for the Week:

*And you will have confidence, because there is hope; you will be protected and take your rest in safety. Job 11:18*

ADVENT

## Interviews with the Saints

Monday-Friday  
December 13-17

### Monday

*“To stand with God means to have faith in God. He will provide for you when you face challenges.”*

Christian Lewis Johnson

### Tuesday “STAND—it means to carry out God’s word.”

Zaire Carmichael

### Wednesday

*“When I think of the word stand, I think, ‘Stand up for Jesus; stand up for the Lord!’”* Liz Parks



### Thursday

*“Be still and know that I am GOD—that is the first thought I have when I think of ‘stand’.”* Roz Thomas

### Friday

*“The saying that we should let go and let God. is what ‘stand’ means to me.”* Luel Sutton

### Saturday Reflection: Joy is not the same as happiness.

To be happy is a temporary state that stems from earthly things. A loved one’s smile can make us happy, but that loved one will be gone one day. Food makes some of us happy, but once the flavor is over, it is a fleeting memory. Joy is the permanent, perfect condition of knowing Jesus. It is the knowledge that all is well within our souls. That is joy.



## STAND on Joy

*“This joy I have, the world didn’t give it to me...”*

This quote from the popular church worship song points to what Jesus provides for us through the blessing of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We can move beyond sorrow, depression, disappointment, grief and despair to complete joy in Jesus!

Through constant prayer and meditation in the Holy Word, allow the joy of Jesus to surround you and keep you strong. It will never be a perfect life, but it can always be a joyful life. Remember, this joy you have, the world did not give it to you, and the world CANNOT take it away!

### Stand on Joy – Scripture for the Week:

*My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy. James 1:2*

## *Interviews with the Saints*

Monday-Friday  
November 29-December 3

### Monday

*“The first thing that comes to mind when I hear the word ‘stand,’ is to just fall on your knees and start praying.”*

Sharon Pritchett

### Tuesday

*“For me, to stand means to be trusting, faithful and steadfast in my relationship with Jesus.”* Stan Pritchett

### Wednesday

*“STAND means being committed and consistent to the cause based on solid godly principles.”* Antar Donaldson

### Thursday

*“To stand means we are flexible enough to adjust to present and evolving conditions, cultures and circumstances, as we minister in the name of Jesus.”* The Reverend Bessie Donaldson

### Friday

*“Donnie McClurkin has it right. You just stand. It really means to let go and let God.”* Phyllislorena Smiley

**Saturday Reflection:** Consider this: Are you feeling overwhelmed? Even in the midst of the worst situation, the knowledge that Jesus is on our side gives us hope. It is a matter of leaving it all in the capable hands of the Master. *And so it is.*





## STAND on Peace

The Reverend Andrea Lewis, PhD

For me, standing has many meanings. Standing means being fully present in God and allowing God to guide my steps. Standing means obeying God's word and will for my life. Standing means praising God through the good and bad days. Standing means waiting for God's direction. Standing means sitting in God's peace. Standing means praying for myself and others while waiting for God's voice. Standing is embodied in our everyday walk with God.

Let the Master of the Seas bring you peace today.  
Allow your faith to stand strong over any fear.

### Stand on Peace-Scripture for the Week:

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.* John 14:27

## Interviews with the Saints

Monday-Friday  
December 6-10

### From Big Bethel's Church School

'I focus my personal explanation on standing for the Lord to focus on the need for us to recognize the illustration of STANDING FOR THE LORD that our youth give us daily. Can you imagine being bombarded with constant and instant messages that often go contrary to the teachings of the church? Kindness is a weakness... Love means Sex... Material possessions are more important than spiritual growth... Bragging not humbleness is a great way of self-expression.

One fall Sunday morning in October, fourteen-year-old Zaire Carmichael stood alone in Big Bethel's choir stand. Circumstances of the day dictated that she stand as the lone representative of the Youth Choir. She didn't seem to focus on whether she had a choice. According to her response to the question, she demonstrated an unshakable commitment and dedication. She was the definition of, 'STAND' (See her actual response on Page 9).  
—Everett Jolly

S - He promises His STEADFAST love for us  
T - His TENDER mercies are new each morning  
A - He is ALWAYS on time  
N - He will NEVER forsake us  
D - DEPENDING on the promises of God

So, in the midst of life's challenges just *STAND!*—Cheryl Taylor

**Saturday Reflection:** As Jesus commanded the waves to be still, the Lord can command any storm in your life to cease. If it is not God's will for it to cease, then know that the Holy Spirit will be there to help you to stand through it all. When was the last time God granted you peace in the middle of a storm? He can and will do it again! *And so it is.*