

## December Newsletter



**St. Luke's Episcopal Church**

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## *Glory to God in the Highest*

### **The Inescapable God**

By the Rev. Tammy Wooliver

I have so enjoyed the delicious essence of Fall in Ada this year. What beautiful weather we have had. The landscape has danced with each day as it slowly transformed from a rich green to vibrant colors of red, yellow, and orange. The artistry seemed timely, as if God blessed us with a brief distraction from the dichotomy of the surrounding chaos. People filled their cars with the family and took rides to see the artwork. Individuals walked and gazed, briefly able to feel, to smell, to hear the transformation happening in the moment. I don't know about you, but when I see a tree glowing with red, there is a momentary gasp at the beauty...a brief second of pure awe. I take a picture in an attempt to capture the moment. Yet, the picture is but a shadow of that amazing moment of heaven. And then comes that day. You know, that day when you are driving or look out the window for the colorful scenery and all you see are branches... brown... naked...branches. It is then that you know. Something deep within tells you, it is done...the shift is complete, and the time has come to chop wood, harvest the crops, clean out the fireplace, and get the winter clothes out and washed.

I also feel like it's time for something else, but I just can't put my finger on what the something else is. The last several months have just been rough. At some level, the feeling is one of holding so tight onto something - something that started as holding for a few days and has now been months. Holding on so that we and others do not get sick or worse; holding on to the scattered sheep so they will not lose their way; holding on to not touching, not hugging, not singing, not eating out, not socializing; holding on to our black brothers and sisters in so much pain; holding on to our divided country, dividing families, friends, communities. Dear God, how long do we hold on!? When does the letting go happen? What are we holding on to? How long must we wait to get to the other side? Will there be signs that will point the way, like the falling leaves? Will we know deep within when it is done? When the new time has arrived? When the waiting is over?

Waiting. We are not the first ones to live in a state of wait. Pandemics, diseases, natural disasters, wars, poverty, hunger, trauma, etc., have interrupted our lives since the dawn of time. These are the moments that stir up and dismantle our status quo ways of living and evoke a desire within to return to the old, or to look ahead for a new day - a day where crying and wailing and pain are no more. However, there is a verse in Psalm 139, "the darkness is not dark to you, the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you." Now in this world of duality, we certainly feel the darkness in some kind of way. But I love this verse, this reminder that God sees light where we see/feel darkness. What if we say to ourselves, "Ok self, if God sees light here, then surely, I can search for and find some sign of light, some glimmer of God's perspective, God's presence?"

Here's the thing, darkness always comes with this invitation, an invitation to journey into the unknown with the knowledge, the faith, the certainty that God's light of love has gone nowhere and permeates to the corners of the universe. This Light is forever surrounding you, and enters your being with every breath, every thought, and every person you meet on the journey and darkness will not, now or ever, overcome it. This is the Advent invitation - to journey in deep reflection during this time of waiting, watching, searching, wanting, hoping for the Light of God to enter our darkness, the Light of God who will break open our lives in ways we never thought possible. "This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." Luke 2: 12.

### Psalm 139

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.  
<sup>2</sup>You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.  
<sup>3</sup>You search out my path and my lying down,  
and are acquainted with all my ways.  
<sup>4</sup>Even before a word is on my tongue,  
O Lord, you know it completely.  
<sup>5</sup>You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.  
<sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.  
<sup>7</sup>Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
<sup>8</sup>If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
<sup>9</sup>If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
<sup>10</sup>even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
<sup>11</sup>If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light around me become night,"  
<sup>12</sup>even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.





## Advent newsletter from the Deacon

It's funny, the odd and seemingly trivial things that sometimes stick in your mind. Many years ago, before we joined the Episcopal Church, Peggy and I invited my sister and her family to a Sunday event of some sort. Though I no longer recall what the event was, I do remember that my sister, who had married into a Roman Catholic family, declined the invite because that particular Sunday was the first Sunday in Advent, and it was important to her that she and her family observe the beginning of that special season together with their church family.

Being raised in a non-liturgical denomination Advent really had no meaning for me at the time. But now it is one of my favorite seasons in the church calendar: a new church year; purple vestments (not that I don't love the green ones...); the weekly lighting of the Advent candle and the accompanying prayers; Advent collects; readings on expectation and preparedness and watchfulness ("Keep Awake"), the prophets (Isaiah) and John the Baptist ("Prepare the way of the Lord"), and of course Mary ("Here am I, the servant of the Lord"). And all of this leading to the wonderful season of Christmastide, preparing us for the coming celebration of our Lord's nativity, and for the coming of Christ "in power and glory."

Some say that Advent is to Christmas as Lent is to Easter, a time of expectation, introspection and repentance, that ends in a glorious celebration; I like to think of it that way. But regardless of what Advent means for you and how you observe it, for hundreds and thousands of years generations of Christians around the world have celebrated this special season, preparing, waiting, watching. Through disaster, famine, disease, war and all other forms of calamities that have befallen, past and present, on the fourth Sunday before Christmas we always find ourselves us back at Advent, with a fresh start, a new year, new beginning and life in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Maybe that little Advent seed that my sister planted in my mind so many years ago wasn't so trivial or serendipitous after all!

May you all have a blessed, joyous and creative Advent season!

Deacon Bobby



## Advent notes from the Senior Warden

I don't know about you, but I love Advent. The calm quiet of reflection and preparing for Jesus to come really fills my soul and renews my energy during this hectic time. I think about Mary and Joseph and their journey. My frustration has always been that this calming centering time in the Christian church gets lost in the excitement of the commercial race to Christmas. It comes so soon that we don't have time to quietly anticipate it. This year I honestly saw Christmas decorations up before Halloween.

I always had a terrible struggle with my children about not putting the Christmas tree up before the week of Christmas. Their friends had theirs up, why couldn't we? I know this year will be different. There will be fewer Christmas parties, office Christmas parties, school parties etc. that start in early December. My hope and plan are to embrace the quieter run up to Christmas this year and take the time to have a prayerful contemplative Advent season to prepare myself for the coming Christ child.

Love in Christ,  
Phyllis Wallace





## Notes from the Organist

I have a few thoughts/plans on how to use music to enhance the season of advent. First, with regards to the worship service, I am trying to enlist one choir member each Sunday to sing the hymns during the virtual service. That choir member would be in attendance with Mother Tammy, Bobby, the tech person and I, but would be used in a manner in accordance with all recommended safety precautions needed to be taken. Having someone sing the hymns brings the lyrics into the worship space in the manner that might add comfort as well as a deeper connection to the years of worship leading to this point. In that same vein, we will be delivering a pile of hymnals to the office for the congregation to pick up as desired. Worshipping at home does not have to mean never singing hymns. Keep your hymnal close to that spot where your computer is and open it up as you have always done. If singing doesn't interest you.....reflection on the words alone might take you into a deeper worship space.

Something else I would like to offer for the season of advent is a kind of musical advent calendar. Interestingly, advent calendars seem more popular than ever right now. Anyway, my thought was to forward one piece of music each day for you to listen to. I will use primarily recordings found on youtube, given that the pool from which to choose from is deep and varied. My objective is to select recordings no longer than five minutes, and to select pieces of music that resonate with me. They will be advent appropriate.....selections that help draw me/us inward and into a more reflective space. I will send my selection to Nao who will forward it through email as well as upload it to our facebook page. I know many of us feel like the last thing we need is another thing to watch on our computers.....so don't watch, just listen. You will not resonate with everything, but there might be a few selections that speak to you in a way that only beautiful music can. Thanks for reading.....Miriam



## Altar Guild Notes

Please consider donating a poinsettia to help decorate St. Luke's for Christmas. This is a wonderful way of expressing thanksgiving or a memorial. Please email me or give me a call if you would like to help. Poinsettias are \$25. each and you will be billed. Thanks in advance for helping St. Luke's celebrate the wonderful Christmas season.

Kathy Taylor 580-320-8576 or [drtaylor@cableone.net](mailto:drtaylor@cableone.net)





## THE YOUTH HUB

### A DIY ADVENT WREATH!

Advent wreaths are pretty cool because you see them in all different mediums. A quick Google search will show you that they don't have to be a "wreath". There's all kinds out there! But if you'd like to get crafty here's what you'll need for a DIY advent wreath!

#### Supplies:

1 Paper plate

4 toilet paper rolls or 2 paper towel rolls cut in half (just the cardboard)

Pink, purple, light green, red and dark green construction paper

Yellow, orange and red tissue paper

Glue

Scissors

#### Instructions:

First cut the middle out of the center of the plate. Discard the center of the plate.

Then cut the dark and light green construction paper into "leaves" to glue around the paper plate surface.

Glue those on.

Next but the red paper to look like holly berries and glue those on top of the leaves on the paper plate.

After that wrap the pink and purple construction paper around the paper rolls. 3 purple, 1 pink. Secure with glue.

Then stuff the yellow red and orange paper in the roll to look like a candle flame.

Place the candles on the inside of the wreath opening or secure to the surface of the wreath with glue.

Lastly, read your weekly advent stories around your wreath and enjoy the magic of the season!

Happy crafting friends!

Caitly Miller-Dowing

Hi good friends!! Advent is coming and we want to see your Advent devotion stations! Please send us pictures with you and your Advent wreath with candles and anything else you may add to that area, maybe your prayer book, holy water, crosses.

Please send them to:

[caitymiller94@gmail.com](mailto:caitymiller94@gmail.com)

By December 4th so that we can share everyone's Advent prayer space in a sweet video!





## Matthew 25 Report

Advent is a time for us to really focus on the message of Matthew 25: feeding, clothing, visiting, and caring for the least among people. I have learned over the years that we don't even have to look around; all we need to do is open our eyes and we can see people in need. I encourage you to open your eyes and see; open your ears and listen, open your heart and share with someone. Pick up the phone and call somebody who needs to hear a voice; grab a pen, paper, and envelope and give a note of encouragement to a homeless person.

Finally, open your wallet and donate to a food bank. Oklahoma is the 5<sup>th</sup> hungriest state in the nation. We are partnering with Asbury Church's food distribution ministry. About 500 FAMILIES (1500 people) are served each month through this program. The Asbury Food Pantry will be very grateful for donations of **food or money**. They get most of the food they distribute from the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and local donations. If you choose to send a check, make it payable and mail it to either of the following:

Asbury Church Food Pantry  
P.O. Box 2342  
Ada, OK 74821

Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma  
P.O. Box 270968  
Oklahoma City, OK 73137-0968

Count your blessings, then remember the message of Matthew 25.

Love you lots!  
Suzanne



Hello St. Luke's Members,

The Angel Tree gift distribution will still happen this year. However, due to the pandemic, things will be different this year. On December 10 from 6 – 7 p.m., we will host a drive through gift pickup outside in the church parking lot. Music will be provided and a Santa will be on hand for socially distanced photographs.

We have a total of 28 youngsters (10 girls and 18 boys) this year who will need gifts. The girls range in age from 2 to 15. The boys range in age from 2 to 16.

Many of you signed up last year and purchased gifts. This year instead of a sign up list, we will assign a child to members who wish to participate. If you have a preference of gender and/or age range, we will try to accommodate you. Let me know as soon as possible that you want to participate and I will assign your child and provide other details about gift drop off. You may contact me at 580-421-1836 (cell) or at [smixon@cablone.net](mailto:smixon@cablone.net).





## EfM Invite

As Christians we know we are one in the body of Christ, and a part of Christ’s body on Earth—the church. As members of this Body, we are each called to ministry in our lives. Just as scripture tells us that every member of the body has a role to play, so we each are called to a unique ministry.

Discerning our own ministries as lay people can be an exciting, but daunting prospect. As Episcopalians we are uniquely blessed to have resources to help us in that discernment.

“Education for Ministry (**EfM**) invites participants into small, mentored groups that provide the framework for understanding life and shaping actions as Christian faith is deepened. EfM seminar groups meet in local settings and online and provide a four-year curriculum that develops a theologically informed, reflective, and articulate laity.” (efm.sewanee.edu)

If you are interested in learning more about your call to ministry and deepening your knowledge of God—consider EfM. Contact Michael Riden ([doc.riden@gmail.com](mailto:doc.riden@gmail.com)) for more information.



**A heartfelt thanks.....**As my term on Diocesan Council for the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma comes to an end, I want to thank you, my Church family, and also the members of the Southeast Region of our Diocese, for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. This ministry has been a valuable experience personally, professionally and spiritually. It has been such an honor just to be a part of a leadership team that serves as the Board of Directors for the Diocese, and as such has general supervision of all business affairs, properties and finances of the Diocese when the Convention is not in session.

I have been fortunate to have worked closely with Bishop Ed and most recently, Bishop Poulson, as well as such quality board and committee members for four terms. I am so proud of the work that we have done for the Diocese during this time. These accomplishments over the past 13 years have been impressive, and it was truly a team effort. There have been so many noteworthy moments, i.e. the completion of St. Crispin’s Conference Center’s renovations and a balanced budget to become one of the most financially sound dioceses in the country, and some first-time new accomplishments – a virtual Annual Convention, and our first live-streamed church services and conference sessions. I truly believe this is the result of listening to the Diocese input, focusing on their needs first, and continually seeking to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

Again, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve in this important ministry, I walk away with memories and friendships that I will forever cherish.

*As we enter Advent, please remember that we are called to serve....may you never fear that calling.*

*Peggy Grisso Saunkeah*





## Saunkeah Tools for Advent activities (centered around prayer)

1. Advent coloring calendars – 4-week Creativity Project. For me, I read the statement and then discuss it with younger children and end with prayer. Such as the one for November 29 says.... “And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” I would ask, I wonder what a Prince would wear? I wonder what a Prince would ride? I wonder where a Prince would live? We know that Jesus didn’t wear rich, flowing garments, didn’t ride a camel or in a wagon – he walked or rode a donkey, and Jesus surely didn’t live in a castle. I wonder why Jesus did these things? My prayer would be thank you, Jesus, for being like me—not being the kind of Prince everyone was looking for. Just being Jesus.
2. Nativity Set Prayer – Add a piece each night and offer prayers for their contribution and the contribution you see from using them. Ask the child those wondering questions, such as, we are going to add the stable tonight. I wonder why the stable is important? What gift did it provide to the Holy Family? (A place of safety and privacy for Mary and Joseph). For your own home and how it provides safety for you and your family.
3. Prayer Blocks - These are offered so that you may write names/decorate them with people, places or things you want to remember in prayer. These blank wood or polyurethane blocks may be found at Hobby Lobby or other arts/crafts stores. Create one for each day of Advent.
4. Prayer Jar – This particular activity is designed for teenagers. It has nuggets or quotes. Look for ways that you can incorporate the “I wonder question” into each week’s theme such as I wonder would Jesus wear a mask?
5. Advent Wreath - The wreath is circular, representing eternity. Four or five candles are arranged on the wreath, depending on whether a center candle for Christmas is used. Set on the outer wreath are four candles: three are either blue or purple, and one is rose. One candle on the outer ring is lit each Sunday. Whether the wreath uses four or five candles, the idea is that the wreath, and the lighting of the candles successively each Sunday, represents the light of Christ coming into the world. The first blue or purple candle that is lit is called the “Prophecy Candle”, reminding us of the prophets who foretold the coming of the Messiah. This first candle represents **HOPE**. The second purple or blue candle that is lit represents **LOVE**. Some traditions have named this candle the “Bethlehem Candle”, representing Christ’s manger. On the third Sunday, the rose candle is lit. This candle is called the “Shepherd’s Candle” and it represents **JOY**. The fourth candle is often referred to as the “Angel’s Candle”, and it represents **PEACE**. On Christmas Eve, the white center candle is lit. This candle is called the “Christ Candle” and represents Christ coming into the world.

Using an Advent Wreath at home is a wonderful way to mark the season. You can find advent wreaths in many craft shops, in Christian Bookstores, and on-line. The candles are often sold as a four pack, with three blue or purple and one pink or rose in the box. You can set the wreath on a plate or a charger, and then decorate the wreath with Christmas greenery. The candles can be lit in the same way we light them on Sunday. On Sunday evening, perhaps before dinner, light one or more of the candles, depending on which Sunday it is, and share a prayer of either thanksgiving (how has God blessed me this week), or a prayer of hope (what does it mean to you that Christ comes into the world?).

The Advent wreath is a home tradition that we plan to start this year. It is our hope that it will infuse an added level of spirituality and reflection in what would otherwise be a very hectic season in a very chaotic world right now. We highly recommend it!

*Bobby, Peggy and Lili Saunkeah*

The advent calendar and other resources may be found on the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma’s webpage:  
<https://www.epiok.org/newsDetails.aspx?subheadertext=Advent+Resources&n=163de3dd-810e-4628-8938-0f2f5ee36ae9>



## Lenten Devotions/Prayers Booklet: Your Contributions Needed

By Wayne Hanway

Lent is a time for stepping up our spiritual life. To help this, Mother Tammy has proposed that we produce a booklet of Lenten devotions and prayers, all written by the members of St. Luke's. I have volunteered to help put the booklet together. Here's how it will work.

For each of the forty days of Lent, there will be a page in the booklet that lists the day's assigned scriptures. The person who chooses that day—I will keep the list of which days are available—will read those scriptures, meditate about them, and then write either a short devotional meditation or a prayer or both based on that. Because each page of the booklet will be half of an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper, there will be a word limit for each day of 300 words. Below is a sample devotion and prayer I have written for Ash Wednesday. If space and time permit, we may also include some drawings.

Lent starts on February 17<sup>th</sup> and time will be needed to assemble and distribute the booklet, so the deadline for all contributions is January 6<sup>th</sup> (which is the Feast of Epiphany.) Email your request for dates, your contribution(s), and any questions to me at [whanway8@gmail.com](mailto:whanway8@gmail.com)

SAMPLE:

Jonah 4:11 *“And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?”*

The Bible has some wonderful humor in it, and the Book of Jonah is a good example, not least at the end, where God tells Jonah that most of the Ninevites are too dumb to know their right hand from their left hand. But the humor helps reinforce an important lesson about God's love: God loves everyone, without exception. It doesn't matter whether they can't put two and two together or are serving a life sentence for murder. Jonah told God he knew that God is gracious and merciful, but Jonah had judged the Ninevites as undeserving, and he was angry that God had forgiven them when they repented. It makes me ask, how often have I judged other people as unworthy because of what they have done or simply because of who they are? Each time I do means that I need God's grace and mercy at least as much as they do. That's humbling.

Psalms 32, 143 \* 102, 130; Jonah 3:1–4:11; Hebrews 12:1-14; Luke 18:9-14

Most merciful God, you love everyone in your creation and seek to so fill us with your love that we are always ready to love both you and our neighbors, whether they are likeable or not; assist us with your grace so that we are always ready to see others through your eyes and love them as you would have us love them, seeing you in them; through your son our savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



## - Blurbs for the Month -

- ★ All Advent Sunday Services will be virtual on Zoom and Facebook Live. Christmas Eve and Day Services will be assessed for in-person worship as it approaches. Thank you for your prayers, for your patience, and for your understanding.
- ★ **WANTED: PICTURES**  
Please send us pictures with you and your Advent wreath with candles and anything else you may add to that area, maybe your prayer book, holy water, crosses, Nativity scenes, Advent calendars, etc. Please send them to: [caitymiller94@gmail.com](mailto:caitymiller94@gmail.com) by December 4th so that we can share everyone's Advent prayer space in a sweet video!
- ★ Mark your calendar for Dec. 16th at 6:30p for a Blue Christmas Service  
Please consider joining if you are struggling with the holidays due to grief and losses, stress, or in general. Please know that Mother Tammy is available to anyone who would like some time to visit during this sometimes crazy Holiday Season. You can email or call her at 405-708-3229 or [tammywooliver@gmail.com](mailto:tammywooliver@gmail.com).
- ★ **INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT CONFIRMATION AND THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH?**  
**CONTACT Mother Tammy FOR MORE INFORMATION!!!! CLASSES STARTING SOON!**
- ★ **ADVENT RESOURCES**  
ADVENT TOOL KIT...<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/1000daysoflove/2020advent/>  
SACRAPARENTAL  
Advent with Kids...<http://sacraparental.com/2014/10/26/advent-with-kids-76-ideas-for-getting-ready-for-advent/>
- ★ **ADVENT READING GROUP**  
Dec 3rd, 10th, and 17th at 8:00pm  
**Honest Advent: Awakening to the Wonder of God-with-Us Then, Here, and Now**  
By Scott Erickson
- Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89628999131?pwd=SHV5eG9yeDg2a3JLeWpLM3Bmbzk4QT09>  
Meeting ID: 896 2899 9131, Passcode: 208820  
One tap mobile +13462487799,,89628999131#,,,,,0#,,208820# US (Houston)  
+16699006833,,89628999131#,,,,,0#,,208820# US (San Jose)
- LOOKING AHEAD TO JANUARY**  
Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a Time of Pandemic— And Beyond  
By Matt Fox

# ADVENT CALENDAR 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>29 Worship</b></p> <p><b>Advent 1</b></p> <p>What word or words from worship today have found a home in your heart? Share these words with a friend or family member.</p>	<p><b>30 Go</b></p> <p>Take time to listen closely to someone you may not ordinarily take seriously or someone with a different perspective than you. Pray that you hear this person as God does.</p>	<p><b>1 Learn</b></p> <p>Read Luke 1:30. What are you afraid of that keeps you from saying “yes” to God?</p>	<p><b>2 Pray</b></p> <p>Set a timer for three minutes. Silently repeat this prayer – “Here I am, God” – until time is up.</p>	<p><b>3 Bless</b></p> <p>The angel blessed Mary with the gift of presence. To whom can you give the gift of presence this week?</p>	<p><b>4 Turn</b></p> <p>In giving generously, St. Nicholas turned from a sense of scarcity to a posture of abundance. From what do you need to turn in order to be generous of heart?</p>	<p><b>5 Rest</b></p> <p>From what could you rest in order to receive renewed life? Find that rest today, and do it for as long as you are able.</p>
<p><b>6 Worship</b></p> <p><b>Advent 2</b></p> <p>What part of gathering for worship fills your heart with hope?</p>	<p><b>7 Go</b></p> <p>Read or watch your local news. Where is reconciliation needed? Pray for healing.</p>	<p><b>8 Learn</b></p> <p>Read Luke 1:45. Consider how your faith is a blessing. Share your faith story with a friend.</p>	<p><b>9 Pray</b></p> <p>Offer a prayer of thanks for each person you encounter – both stranger and friend – silently or aloud.</p>	<p><b>10 Bless</b></p> <p>Call or write a family member with whom you desire a closer relationship. Share with this person how they are a blessing.</p>	<p><b>11 Turn</b></p> <p>Reflect: Where have I fallen short this week? How can I make amends? Give thanks for the gift of fresh starts that we have through God’s grace.</p>	<p><b>12 Rest</b></p> <p>Set aside 30 minutes to rest, pause, and breathe deeply with a friend or family member. Give thanks for the restorative power of love in relationship.</p>
<p><b>13 Worship</b></p> <p><b>Advent 3</b></p> <p>Pray for each person as they receive Communion. Imagine whom you would like to see at church next week. Invite that person to join you.</p>	<p><b>14 Go</b></p> <p>Today, choose to take a different route to work, to school, or to play. Whom or what did you encounter differently?</p>	<p><b>15 Learn</b></p> <p>Read Luke 1:64. When Zechariah could finally speak, he began by praising God. For what can you praise God? Share on social media or with a friend.</p>	<p><b>16 Pray</b></p> <p>Keep a lookout for anyone who might seem lonely, stressed, or sad. Offer this simple invitation: “May I pray for you?” Then offer prayers – silently or aloud – on the person’s behalf as you move through your day.</p>	<p><b>17 Bless</b></p> <p>Identify a blessing you have that you could give away. Share this blessing with your church, a local ministry, or your community.</p>	<p><b>18 Turn</b></p> <p>Turn away from the busyness of the week and turn toward someone who gives you life or to whom you give life. Give thanks.</p>	<p><b>19 Rest</b></p> <p>In Genesis 1-2, God calls the creation “good” and rests. What can you proclaim to be “good” instead of “not enough” as a witness to God’s love for the world today?</p>
<p><b>20 Worship</b></p> <p><b>Advent 4</b></p> <p>Linger before leaving worship today. Ask God to prepare and send you on a journey into the world to witness to God’s love.</p>	<p><b>21 Go</b></p> <p>Go out into your neighborhood today. Where do you see God at work? What attributes of God’s love are visible? Ask God to show you how you can celebrate and join in that love.</p>	<p><b>22 Learn</b></p> <p>Read Luke 2:8-10. When has God surprised you? Share with a friend.</p>	<p><b>23 Pray</b></p> <p>Set aside a time today to pray for others. Include three minutes of intentional silence, asking God to speak to you.</p>	<p><b>24 Bless</b></p> <p>If you are gathering with others today, take turns naming a way the person on your right or left has blessed you.</p>	<p><b>25 Turn</b></p> <p><b>Christmas Day</b></p> <p>Read Luke 1-2. Give thanks for the birth of the Christ-child. Pray that you may follow Christ Jesus on his Way of Love with your whole heart, mind, body, and spirit.</p>	