

Living Faith @

Dear Faith Shapers,

Advent is coming. I don't know about you, but I really need an advent this year. Advent is a season of waiting. With all of the unknowns we have faced in 2020 it is comforting to come back to advent. Advent is a time of anticipation and waiting for the gift of the season which is Jesus. If we pay attention, God will surprise us with God's presence in unexpected places. Just like Jesus being unexpectedly born in a manger in Bethlehem.

Preparing our hearts for Christmas is not just another thing to accomplish on an already overflowing to do list. Advent leads us to pause, to breathe, and to capture those simple moments. Advent invites us to slow down and enjoy the hope and miracle of the season. When we embrace advent, we will find what we are seeking- Emmanuel- God with us.

May your advent be filled with good news of great joy!

Deacon Lisa Kammerer



10 Benefits of Giving Thanks to God

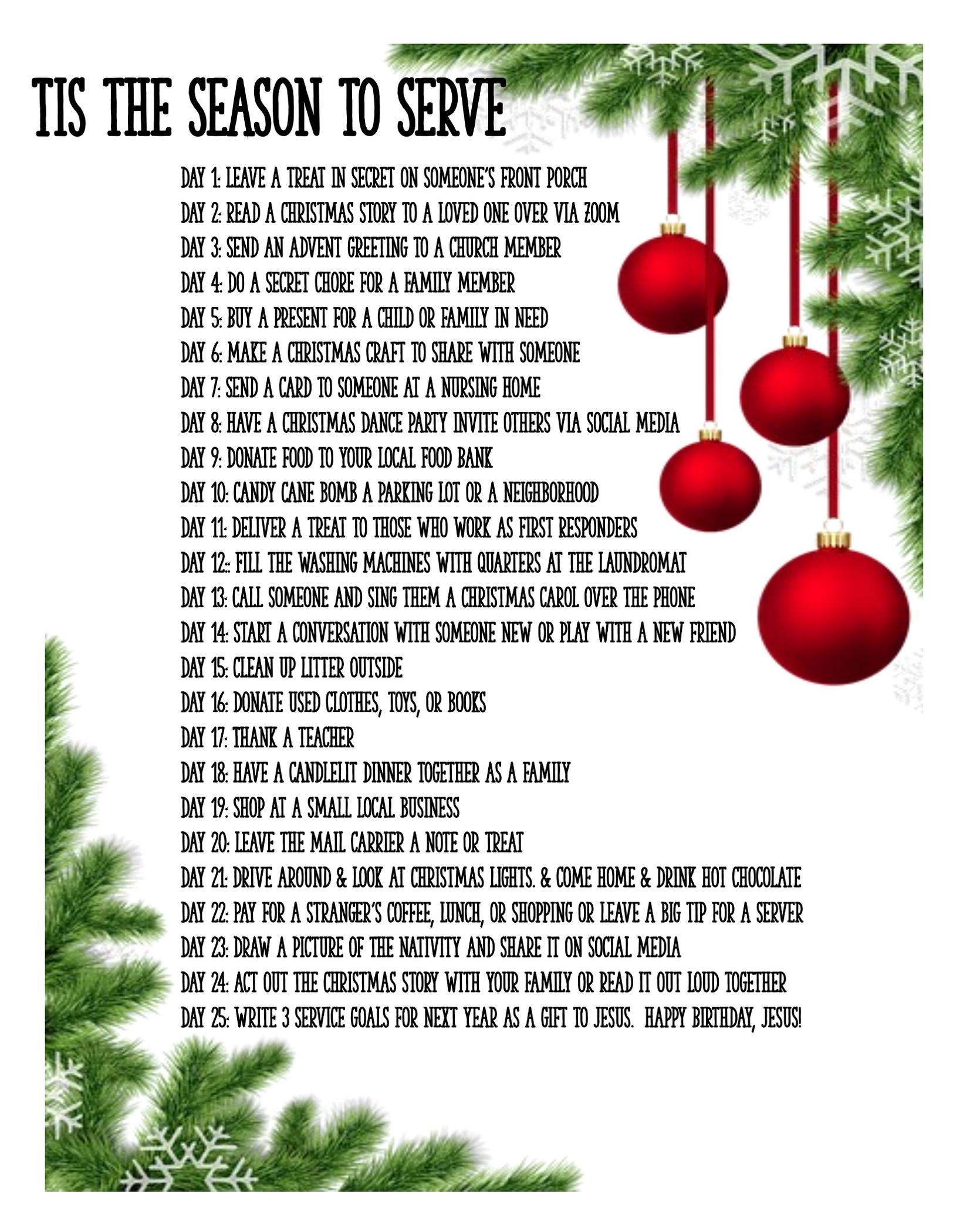
1. **Gratitude Glorifies God.** Our gratitude glorifies God when we exalt not the gifts but the Giver. Gratitude helps us realize all we have comes from God and not from us.
2. **Gratitude Opens Our Eyes.** There's a beautiful cycle in giving thanks. The more we thank God, the more we will see God working in and around us.
3. **Gratitude Brings Peace.** Gratitude helps us see God's hands over all of our circumstances which gives us peace.
4. **Gratitude Draws Us To God.** Gratitude for the magnitude of undeserved kindness draws us to God.
5. **Gratitude Brings Contentment.** It's not happy people who are thankful, it's thankful people are happy! Gratitude turns what we have into enough.
6. **Gratitude Deepens Our Faith.** Keeping record of God's past faithfulness is a faith boost when we face difficulty.
7. **Gratitude Leads To Joy.** Realizing God's abundant goodness, even when times are hard, is a gateway for joy.
8. **Gratitude Guards Against Envy.** Gratitude makes us realize we have far more than we deserve. A grateful heart has no room for envy.
9. **Gratitude Helps Us Live In The Present.** Gratitude opens our eyes to the simple beauty of ordinary days.
10. **Gratitude Is A Testimony to God's Goodness.** When we acknowledge what God's done for us we show God to the world around us.

This information is prepared for you by the Northeastern Iowa Synod-Home Life Network for use by families and local congregations.

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TIS THE SEASON TO SERVE

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- DAY 1: LEAVE A TREAT IN SECRET ON SOMEONE'S FRONT PORCH
- DAY 2: READ A CHRISTMAS STORY TO A LOVED ONE OVER VIA ZOOM
- DAY 3: SEND AN ADVENT GREETING TO A CHURCH MEMBER
- DAY 4: DO A SECRET CHORE FOR A FAMILY MEMBER
- DAY 5: BUY A PRESENT FOR A CHILD OR FAMILY IN NEED
- DAY 6: MAKE A CHRISTMAS CRAFT TO SHARE WITH SOMEONE
- DAY 7: SEND A CARD TO SOMEONE AT A NURSING HOME
- DAY 8: HAVE A CHRISTMAS DANCE PARTY INVITE OTHERS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA
- DAY 9: DONATE FOOD TO YOUR LOCAL FOOD BANK
- DAY 10: CANDY CANE BOMB A PARKING LOT OR A NEIGHBORHOOD
- DAY 11: DELIVER A TREAT TO THOSE WHO WORK AS FIRST RESPONDERS
- DAY 12: FILL THE WASHING MACHINES WITH QUARTERS AT THE LAUNDROMAT
- DAY 13: CALL SOMEONE AND SING THEM A CHRISTMAS CAROL OVER THE PHONE
- DAY 14: START A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE NEW OR PLAY WITH A NEW FRIEND
- DAY 15: CLEAN UP LITTER OUTSIDE
- DAY 16: DONATE USED CLOTHES, TOYS, OR BOOKS
- DAY 17: THANK A TEACHER
- DAY 18: HAVE A CANDLELIT DINNER TOGETHER AS A FAMILY
- DAY 19: SHOP AT A SMALL LOCAL BUSINESS
- DAY 20: LEAVE THE MAIL CARRIER A NOTE OR TREAT
- DAY 21: DRIVE AROUND & LOOK AT CHRISTMAS LIGHTS. & COME HOME & DRINK HOT CHOCOLATE
- DAY 22: PAY FOR A STRANGER'S COFFEE, LUNCH, OR SHOPPING OR LEAVE A BIG TIP FOR A SERVER
- DAY 23: DRAW A PICTURE OF THE NATIVITY AND SHARE IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA
- DAY 24: ACT OUT THE CHRISTMAS STORY WITH YOUR FAMILY OR READ IT OUT LOUD TOGETHER
- DAY 25: WRITE 3 SERVICE GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR AS A GIFT TO JESUS. HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!