

# Living Faith @



Dear Faith-Shapers,

We find ourselves in the midst of Advent. As Deacon Lisa wrote about last month, we are waiting ... waiting for Christmas plans to be decided, waiting for a vaccine, waiting for the number of infected people to go down, waiting for more people to wear a mask to help lower the spread of the disease. There are many factors to take into consideration when planning for Christmas services - the number of people who can attend and are in-person services possible with reservations and distancing, what does a virtual Christmas program look like and how can it be done ... so many questions and variables. But no matter what gets decided, we need to remember that God is always present. Jesus birth is able to be celebrated — Christmas will happen even if we don't worship inside the church building.

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This is a picture of a pin that I wear during Advent and Christmas. My mom gave it to me many years ago while I was in college. It is a great reminder of why we celebrate Christmas.

~ Sue Cira, Student Pastor, TEEM



## The Twelve Days of Christmas

The actual twelve days of Christmas are the ones following Christmas — Christmas day through the eve of Epiphany on January 5th. Epiphany is celebrated on January 6th. In the calendar of the church year, the 12 days of Christmas are the season of Christmas.

Here are some ways to celebrate the Christmas season:

- \*Use placemats for drawing paper — let the kids decorate them with Christmas pictures.
- \*Continue to light your advent wreath. Light all four candles and the white Christ candle in the center. This is especially meaningful during devotion time.
- \*Write the names of Jesus on ornaments. Here are just a few from Scripture:  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Immanuel, Holy One of God, Christ the Lord, Lamb of God, Messiah, King of Israel, Bread of Life, Good Shepherd, The Way the Truth and the Life, Rod of Jesse, Lord of Lord, King of Kings, and Morning Star

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# Random Acts of Kindness Ideas

Take time as a family to set up 12 Random Acts of Kindness during the Christmas season — Do an activity each day that is kind for someone else.

Here are some examples:

- \*Make a card for someone in your neighborhood and deliver it
- \*Do a chore without being asked or one that is not your normal chore
  - \*Share something with a friend
- \*Give compliments to every member of your family
  - \*Tell or read a story to someone
  - \*Hold the door for someone
- \*Fill a bag full of clothes to donate
- \*Fill a bag full of books to donate to a library
  - \*Help make dinner
- \*Tell your parents (or children) about a happy memory you have with them



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**The Advent Wreath** is the widely recognized symbol of Advent. The wreath is made of a circle of evergreen branches laid flat to symbolize eternal life. Four candles stand in the circle and each one represents one of the four Sundays of Advent. In the center of the circle is a fifth candle (traditionally white), the Christ Candle, which is lit on Christmas Day. The circle of the wreath reminds Christians of God & God's eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning or end. Advent worship is a journey of waiting, anticipation, and preparation.

The four traditional advent themes, takes place as Lighting the Advent Wreath -

- God's people - **Hope**
- Old Testament Prophets - **Love**
- John the Baptist - **Joy**
- Mary the mother of Jesus - **Peace**

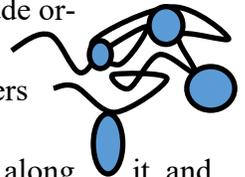
These candles symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of Jesus, God's Son, Our Lord & Savior.



**Christmas time crafts** with the children or grandchildren can be great fun. Each child can use their skills according to their age or help some that are younger. Even adults but have found that coloring is quite relaxing during this pandemic -



which means a there's a whole bunch of coloring going on!! Homemade ornaments or decorations that can be used at home or given to others are a fun craft to make.



Draw a squiggly line with ovals along it, and color them in with multi-colors. (similar to a string of lights)

Put a series of circles in order to make a shape like a cane - color in the circles with alternating red & white - trim around it and hang it up.



This can be used on a tree or in a window.

One other fun project we've done recently with our grands ... and this grandma doesn't do paint. I traced around their foot and drew a hat on top and stick arms. The toes are the base of the snowman and the heel is the head. They colored the hat and used color crayons to make a scarf around neck (arch area). Dark color dots for eyes and mouth with orange triangle for the nose. CUTE!!