



FROM
GENERATION
TO GENERATION...

At-Home Advent Devotions
Week 2



FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION...

We can choose a better way

Dearly Beloved,

Here we are in the second week of Advent already! This is the time in our year as followers of Christ when we prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve. This is a busy time of year for many of us, which makes this time out that we take each week extra special. During this season of Advent, we will light candles on the Advent wreath and reflect on the story of one of the people who was part of the birth of Jesus in an important way. We will also think about our own stories and the ways that God is at work in our lives. This Advent devotional is created with all ages in mind. You can do the devotional as a family or as an individual. This guide has options for lighting the candles and reading the scripture, reflecting on the questions, praying, cooking, and making art. You can choose to do all of them or to do only a few things that are meaningful to you. However you choose to use this guide, I pray that it brings you closer to God and one another in this special time of Advent.

Blessings,

Pastor Sarah

PS - If you'd like instructions on how to make an Advent wreath, check out last week's devotional guide [here](#).

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING DEVOTIONAL

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Find a comfortable position and take a deep breath. Tighten your fists...and release the tension you hold there. Tighten your shoulders...and release the tension you hold there. Roll your head slowly to loosen up your neck. Notice anywhere in your body that might feel tired or worried. Take another deep breath in and relax your body as best you can.

Light two Advent candles as someone says:

Today we light the candle of peace to remind ourselves that, even when we are unsure of the way forward, God's peace is with us. God was with generations before, God is with us today, and God will be with us tomorrow. Even now, God is on the way!

Pray:

Dear God,

scripture tells us you came to Joseph through an angel - loud and clear, impossible to miss. Scripture also tells us that Joseph listened and followed your way. We long to hear your voice - loud and clear, impossible to miss. We long for invitations to something more, something deeper. We long to be like Joseph and find the courage to follow. Be with us in this time. Speak to us and we will listen. Amen.

Read Matthew 1:18-25 (if you don't have a Bible handy, you can find the scripture [here](#).)

Read

Joseph has a decision to make. As far as he can tell, his new wife has broken trust in their relationship. And yet, instead of punishment, he chooses not to hurt her or humiliate her in public. That alone shows what a kind and generous person Joseph was. But then God sends an angel to Joseph in a dream, telling him not to be afraid, and inviting him to an even bigger and better way of being than Joseph's best, most gracious impulse. When Joseph wakes up, he has the courage to choose this better way. He chooses to stay with Mary, to become an adoptive parent to Jesus. He chooses peace, he chooses grace. Like Mary, he chooses to say "yes!" to what God is doing with his life.

Reflection Questions

**Note from Pastor Sarah - if you are lighting the candles by yourself, take a moment to reflect on those questions and write about your answers in a journal or just on a piece of paper. If you are lighting the candles with others, take turns sharing your answers with one another.*

When have you had to make a big decisions? How did you know what was the right thing to do?

When have you done something brave, even when it might have been scary? Tell the story.

Have you ever changed your mind about something or someone? What happened that helped you choose to see or think about it in a different way?

Closing Prayer:

God of love,
as we leave this place
help us to remember
that we are claimed and loved by you.
Help us to remember
that you are by our side
and we are not alone.
Help us to go into the week ahead
to love and serve you and your people.
Amen.

ADVENT ART PROJECT - BLOOMING SCULPTURES

Joseph had already chosen not to make a scene about Mary's pregnancy, but God wanted Joseph to choose an even better way, a way that leans into the unfamiliar and uncomfortable. Just as Joseph was invited to be flexible in the future he had imagined for himself, God invites us to reimagine what can be. As we create these sculptures, we remember that our stories don't always follow the straight and narrow path we imagine but will bloom with new possibilities.

What you need:

- Thin wire garland, about 0.75-1 meter per person (the amount is very flexible)
- Wire cutters or scissors; one pair per group is sufficient.
- Optional: thin ribbon, small silk flowers, beads and/or bells with large holes

Instructions:

- Shape the wire garland into any shape you choose. You might work it into a image from the scripture, a symbol, or even a word.
- If you'd like, embellish your wire sculpture by tying on ribbons, stringing on beads or bells, or attaching small silk flowers.
- Add a loop of ribbon for hanging, if desired.
- Modification for children: you could make a paper template of a symbol or shape for kids to follow with their wire. Kids can lay the wire flat on top of a printed symbol or word and trace the template with wire.

GENERATION TO GENERATION HOLIDAY TREAT

This is a recipe that comes from Johanna Kelly. She writes "this recipe was passed down through my dad's family for generations untold; our genealogical audit so far ends back with our great-great-great-great grandparents born in the 1700's, so we know the recipe is at least 320 years old!"

TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH SHORTBREAD

Ingredients:

- 1/2 pound butter (two sticks/one cup)
- 1/4 pound caster sugar (half cup white cane sugar crystals)
- 1/2 pound/256 grams flour (2 cups unbleached)

Instructions:

- Cream butter and sugar together with wooden spoon
- Blend flour in by hand until the mixture breaks into little bits
- Press into a pan (modern: ungreased cookie sheet) about as deep as your little fingernail.
- Bake moderately slow; do not brown except for edges (modern: 325 degrees for 25-30 minutes)

Modern Variations: Dust with powdered sugar; add 1 tsp of pure vanilla for extra flavor; or mix with a combination of ingredients to suit your taste.

Do you have a favorite family recipe for the holidays that you'd like to share? Email your recipe and a short explanation of where it came from to office@evergreenumc.org and we will share it with the congregation!

ADVENT AT UMCE

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bedtime Stories with Santa

Friday, December 9 at 6:30 pm

Join us for an evening with Santa and Mrs. Claus! Mrs. Claus herself will read a few Christmas stories and Santa will take pictures with all of the kids. There will be milk and cookies to enjoy, carols to sing, and kids are invited to come in their pjs! The event and pictures with Santa are free - so make sure to invite the special kids you know!

Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 11 at 1:30 pm

The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear! Join us as we carol to some of our church's homebound members. We will meet in the parking lot at UMCE at 1:30 pm and carpool to the homes of several of our members.

Drive-Up Live Nativity

Sunday, December 18 from 3-5 pm

The UMCE youth will be putting on a live nativity play that you can watch from the comfort (and warmth) of your car. Listen to the narrator on your car radio (just like a drive-in movie!) and see the youth recreate the journey to the manger. The narration begins every 15 minutes, so drop by any time between 3 and 5 to support our youth!

CHRISTMAS EVE

Spontaneous Christmas Pageant

December 24 at 3:00 pm

The story of Christmas will come alive through storytelling, music, prayer, and lots of great fun in this interactive worship service planned with the whole family in mind. Every kiddo has a part in the pageant as we make our way to the manger with Jesus! We will end the service with our cherished tradition of singing "Silent Night" by candlelight. (No rehearsal is necessary, just come at 2:45 to pick out a costume!)

Candlelight and Communion

December 24 at 5:00 pm

On this evening when the world seems to stand still to celebrate the arrival of God With Us, we will come together for a service of candlelight, prayer, word, and song to tell the story of Jesus' birth. We will celebrate Holy Communion, a special time of gathering at Christ's table that is open to everyone.