



Advent
unwrapped

Spiritual Practices
for the Whole Family



Body Prayer: Peace

Repeat the following prayer, using the actions to inspire movement as you are able:



Holy One
(reach up and out)



Work through me
(use some force to push arms to sides with fingers up)



May your peace
(clasp hands over heart)



May your peace
(clasp hands over heart)



Surround me
(circle arms in front of body)



Extend to the world
(unfold arms in front with open hands)



May your peace
(clasp hands over heart)

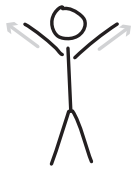


AMEN
(head down, hands at prayer with palms together)



Body Prayer: Hope

Repeat the following prayer, using the actions to inspire movement as you are able:



Holy One
(reach up and look out)



Grow within me
(hands on heart)



May your hope
(widen arms)



May your hope
(widen arms)



Encircle me
(circle both arms from one side, over head, to the other side)



Reach beyond me
(stretch arms in from of body)



May your hope
(widen arms)



AMEN
(head down, hands at prayer with palms together)



Body Prayer: Joy

Repeat the following prayer, using the actions to inspire movement as you are able:



Holy One

(reach up and out)



Bubble up in me

(wiggle fingers, bringing over head)



May your joy

(put hands toward centre, wiggle fingers)



May your joy

(put hands toward centre, wiggle fingers)



Sustain me

(reach arms to sides, flexing fingers)



Grow in all of creation

(circle wiggling hands around head)



May your joy

(put hands toward centre, wiggle fingers)



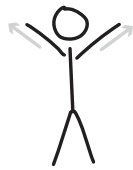
AMEN

(head down, hands at prayer with palms together)



Body Prayer: Love

Repeat the following prayer, using the actions to inspire movement as you are able:



Holy One
(reach up and out)



Be in my actions
(touch eyes and mouth)



May your love
(cross hands and lower arms over heart)



May your love
(cross hands over heart)



Be in my head...
(touch head)



Be in all I say...
(touch mouth)



...and heart
(touch heart)



...and do
(extend hands, or in a group, hold hands)



May your love
(keep touching heart)

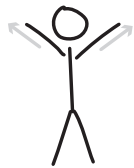


AMEN
(head down, hands at prayer with palms together)



Body Prayer: Christmas

Repeat the following prayer, using the actions to inspire movement as you are able:



Holy One
(reach up and out)



God's hope
(widen arms)



May the gift of Jesus
(cradle arms)



God's peace
(clasp hands over heart)



Be born in me
(circle arms over chest)



God's joy
(put hands toward centre, wiggle fingers)



So that all might know
(one arm at a time, circle out from body)



And God's love
(open fingers over heart)

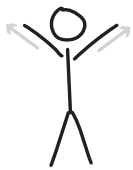


AMEN
(head down, hands at prayer with palms together)



Body Prayer: Epiphany

Repeat the following prayer, using the actions to inspire movement as you are able:



Holy One

(reach up and out)



Shine through me

(reach hands over head, bring them down with hands open)



May your light

(flick fingers open and shut 3 times)



May your light

(flick fingers open and shut 3 times)



Dwell within me

(keep fingers open, place hands on chest)



Shine into the world

(circle hands over head, bring them down to sides)



May your light

(flick fingers open and shut 3 times)



AMEN

(head down, hands at prayer with palms together)



Creative Blessings

Here are some enjoyable ways to build your joy and gratitude this Advent season.

Hot Cocoa Prayer

1. Measure two tablespoons of cocoa powder. Taste it (it's bitter). Pray for some of the things that are bitter in your life and a little hard to take on their own.
2. Measure and add 1–2 tablespoons of sugar or sweetener. Taste it (it's sweet). Offer a prayer of thanks for all the things that are sweet in your life and are perhaps best in small doses.
3. Add a pinch of salt. Taste it (it's salty). Offer a prayer for moments of grace and clarity, experiences that bring out the flavour of life.
4. Warm some milk (or milk beverage) while reflecting on when you have experienced the Holy in the past day or week. What has warmed your heart?
5. Mix warmed milk beverage with hot chocolate mixture. Taste it (it's yummy). Give thanks to God and enjoy.



Blessings Cube

Before every meal, roll a die to pick your blessing. You could paste a different prayer or blessing on each side of a cube or large die, or number six blessings and read the blessing of the number rolled.

Here are six blessings to start with:

1. We love our bread, we love our butter; but most of all we love each other. (*Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmans)
2. For each new morning with its light; For rest and shelter of the night; For health and food; For love and friends; For everything Thy goodness sends. Amen. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
3. (sing to the tune of “Frère Jacques”) We are thankful, we are thankful. We are glad, we are glad, for the many blessings, for the many blessings, that we have, that we have. Amen. (Unknown)
4. God is great, God is good. Let us thank God for our food.
5. For food that stays our hunger; for rest that brings us ease; for homes where memories linger; we give our thanks for these.
6. Be present at our table, Lord. Be here and everywhere adored. Thy people bless, and grant that we may feast in paradise with thee. (John Wesley)

Be creative and create your own family favourites!



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Creative Blessings

Jesus Jar

For people looking for new ways to pray...

Jesus Jar: Have a jar with 25 different names for Jesus. Every day, take out a different name and use that name for Jesus in your prayer. Use the list below, or add your own names for Jesus.

Counsellor	Prince of Peace	Anchor
Friend	Christ	Guide
Brother/ Sibling	The Chosen One	Gardener
Wise One	Emmanuel	Companion
Lord	Ruler	Cosmic Christ
Leader	King	Mary's Son
Dayspring/ Morning Star	Teacher	Beloved
Rod of Jesse	Healer	
Desire of Nations	Prophet	



Joy Jar

Each day, write or share 15 things that bring you joy on separate sheets of paper (you could do five per meal). Add each to your Joy Jar. Keep your Joy Jars somewhere prominent (like on your kitchen table or under your Christmas tree) and make sure to give thanks for all of the little things that bring you and your loved ones joy each day. On days when you are having a hard time giving thanks, dip into your Joy Jar for a reminder.



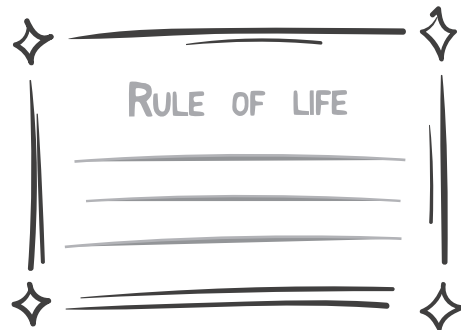
Rule of Life

How do you hope to improve or enhance your spiritual health this Advent and New Year? What steps can you take to deepen your relationship with Jesus? How do you grow closer to people in your life whom you love?

One way to strengthen your spiritual health is to develop a rule of life, which is sort of like a guideline or goal for your daily behaviour. Many have attributed a *Rule of Life* from the writings and teachings of Martin Luther King Jr. (particularly from his instructions to demonstrators). This rule includes things like:

- meditate daily on the teaching and life of Jesus
- walk and talk in the manner of love
- seek to perform regular service for others and the world

What would be included in your Rule of Life? Create your own rule for the season of Advent and place it somewhere prominent so that you are reminded of it every day.





Guided Meditation

Practice guided meditation. Here is a sample by Bethe Cameron to try in a group. The leader uses the following words:



Relax your entire body, starting at the top of your head and travelling down through your head, shoulders, arms, spine, abdomen, pelvis, legs, and feet. Sit quietly for 10 to 20 seconds, letting go of any thoughts as they arise and float through your mind. Now, imagine a healing light* entering the top of your head. Imagine it flowing through your body, to and through every part of your body. Be present to your Spirit...breathe deeply.... Think back to a time when you can remember your first image of an angel. What was it like? Was it comforting or scary? Did you ever have an encounter with an angel? Has your image of angels changed over time or not? Are you open to encountering an angel? Ponder how angels reflect the light* of Christ. Again, imagine a light* entering your body through the top of your head. Imagine this light* filling your entire body with soothing, healing, and comforting energy. See your body filled with light*, which gives you power, strength, comfort, and confidence. See and feel this light* as it flows through your body and out of the bottom of your feet. Imagine it connecting you to the earth, to creation, to your place of beginnings. Imagine it keeping you firmly tied to God's love. Bask in this warmth. Carry this with you into your day. Whenever you feel ready, return to the room, open your eyes, and like a cat, stretch your body slowly, or simply make gentle movements with your hands and feet, whichever feels most comfortable to you until your awareness of the room you are in returns.



**Alternatively, use "warmth" or "spirit."*

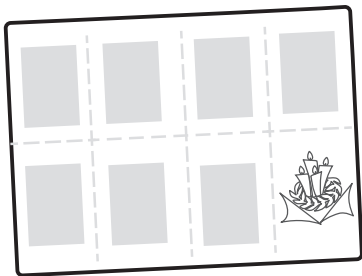
—Bethe Cameron, O'Leary West Cape Pastoral Charge, PEI



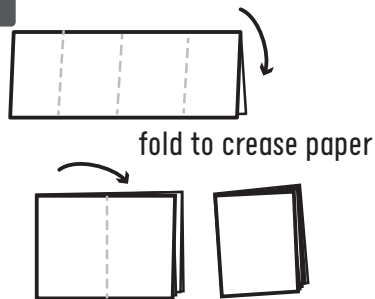
Pocket Prayer Zines: A How-to Guide

No matter where you are on your faith journey or what you are doing this advent, take us with you with our handy-dandy pocket prayer zines!

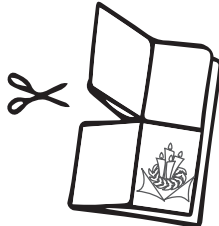
1 print the page at 100% on 8½ x 11 paper



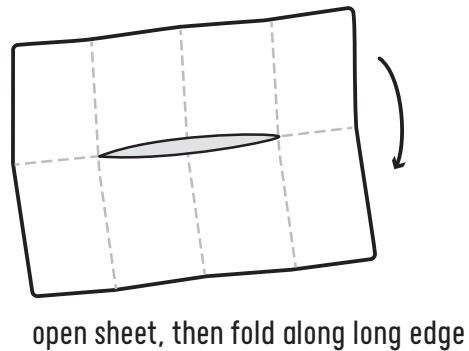
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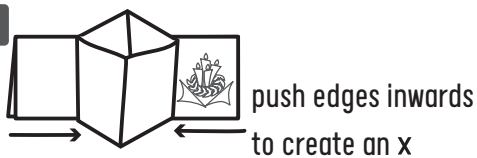
3 unfold and cut on marked line



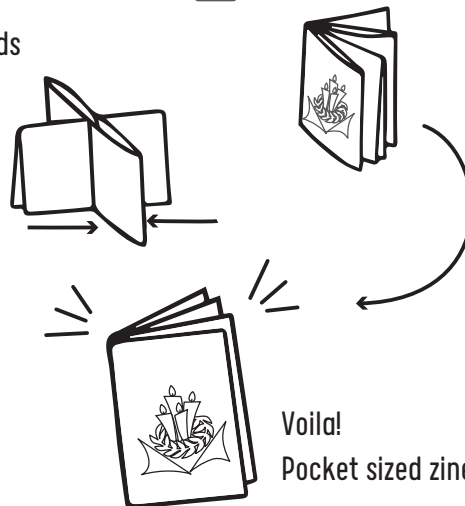
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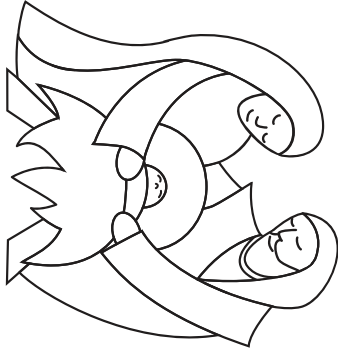


Advent unwrapped



Prayers for the Whole Family

"May grace and peace be yours in abundance."
(1 Peter 1:2)



The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

Advent Wreath Blessing

Week 1

What will become of the dream of hope and healing?

In... (name places where you are praying for hope and healing)

With... (name people in need of help)

Week 2

What will become of the dream of peace and justice?

In... (name places where you are praying for peace and justice)

With... (name people in need of wisdom)

Week 3

What will become of the dream of love and kindness?

In... (name places where you are praying for love and kindness)

With... (name people who demonstrate love incarnate)

Week 4

What will become of the dream of joy and laughter?

In... (name places where you are praying for joy and laughter)

With... (name people in need of courage)



ACTS OF PRAYER

Use this simple and old prayer formula to create your own daily prayer.

A Adoration: What do you love (or adore) about God?

C Confession: What are you sorry for? What are you sad about?

T Thanksgiving: What are you thankful for?

S Supplication: What do you need help with?

Prayers for Your Day

Morning Prayers

For each new morning with its light;

For rest and shelter of the night;

For health and food;

For love and friends;

For everything Thy goodness sends.

(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Day by day,

may my hope grow deep.

Likkle by likkle,

may my peace grow strong.

Petit à petit,

may my joy grow free.

Poco a poco,

may my love grow wide.

Until we are one.

Each Week

Candle is lit (moment of silence)

We wonder and wait for Christ's hope* on this journey.

Although there are no simple answers or easy paths.

May we find the courage

to keep on advancing towards God's

dream of justice, peace, and

A love that lasts.

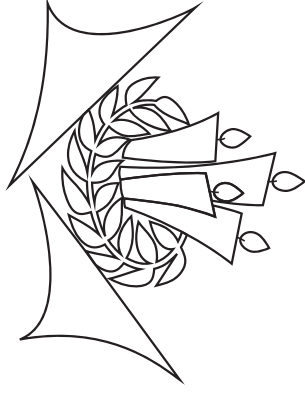
**hope/peace/joy/love*

(John Oldham and Alydia Smith)



Pocket Advent Prayers

by
Catherine Faith MacLean



The United Church of Canada
l'Église Unie du Canada
united-church.ca/worship-theme/advent-unwrapped

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Praying Through Advent

Deliver me to myself
that I, intact,
may know the wonder of waiting
not the preaching of it
not the praying of it
not the formation of it
but the waiting.
Deliver me to myself
that I, intact,
may know the wonder of waiting.

Week 1 Hope

The season writes itself, they say
Hope, Peace, Joy, Love
Hope though?
Really?
Hope requires a hard hat. I go into
the caves of a person's sorrow
the mines of grief
the construction of a life
That is where Hope is called.
That is where I go.
May there be an advent hymn to sustain me.

Week 2 Peace

Recalling to myself a season past:
the heat of the moment
the fear in the populace
the devastation of these glorious places:
the fires. The fires:
the pounding of hearts
the floods that followed
the lament, oh the lament
what have we done.
Dear earth our home what have we
allowed
on our watch we have tilted the
natural world
beyond crisis into peril.

Week 3 Joy

For my friends and for the non-friends
for the neighbours in vocation
who toil in this Season
who get me
this prayer:
enough energy and abundant
enough grace and abundant
enough rest and abundant
as yet again we serve in the Season
for people of faith—and non-faith
for neighbours in location
who toil in the Season
to hold the commerce and the practice
of christmas, small-C christmas
the hardship to bring a Season
somehow of Joy.

Praying Through Christmas Eve

Tomorrow is Christmas.

Then a whole week of Christmas-tide
waiting like Prophet Anna
to speak about the Child

But for now
for now
the labours
of Christmas Eve
pruning the Story
trusting the Spirit to show up
in my weary soul
intending that I
praise with the angels
be afraid with the shepherds
register with Joseph
ponder the Word in my heart.

Week 4 The Final Week

This last week of labour in the Advent
vineyard
so much left to do.
Carry me upward, Spirit.
Carry me with resolve, infuse me with
tenacity
For I fret
I fret
that the message of love is inadequate
to a people enduring their ragged lives
or is it just I who am ragged of energy
and craving love.
Come, Holy Spirit, come upon me too
That it may be also with me according to
your word.

be with me.

*Fill in the prayers using
your own words and
drawings. Let us pray.*

*Make space for God's Grace
through prayer this Advent.*

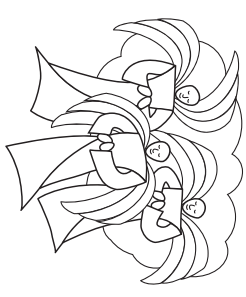
God, you are...

Thank you.

I am...

[Name for God].

We are...



*Do not be afraid,
for I am bringing you
good news of great joy
for all the people*

(Luke 2:10)

**Make
Space for
Grace**



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Amen.

be with us.