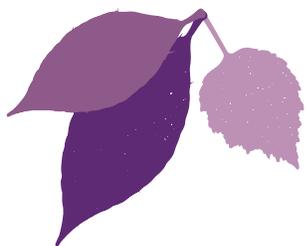




Advent 2019

THE JESSE TREE - THE STORY OF JESUS



The Jesse Tree Tradition

This year, Advent begins on Sunday, Dec. 1st and ends on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24th. To help you and your family keep Advent, we offer to you this Jesse Tree pamphlet. The name of the tradition comes from a prophecy in Isaiah 11 in which God reiterates his promise to send a Messiah, or Savior, who would come from the family of Jesse, King David's father. With the prophecy in mind, the Jesse Tree recounts the story of God's love for the world through the genealogy of Jesus, beginning with Creation in the book of Genesis.

A scripture lesson is assigned for each day of Advent, and each has its own symbol. These symbols are often made into ornaments and placed on the Christmas tree or symbolic Jesse Tree. There are different ways to organize the readings and symbols. For our Jesse Tree:

#1 reminds us of Jesus's presence before creation and involvement in all of creation.

#2-3 remind us of our sin, our need of God's salvation in Jesus Christ, and God's faithfulness to save us because of his love.

#4-9 highlight the ways God established his covenant, or promise, with a chosen people through whom his love and salvation would be extended to all the world.

#10-12 show us the continuing development of Jesus's earthly lineage and faithfulness of God to prepare the way for his Son, the Messiah for all the world.

#13 illustrates God's ongoing faithfulness to those outside his chosen people as well as foreshadow the death and resurrection of Jesus.

#14-17 take us through the prophecies about the coming Messiah.

#18-23 retell the stories of Jesus's earthly family and the narrative of his birth.

What follows in the pamphlet are further descriptions for each passage and symbol, as well as additional passages for reflection. The pamphlet also includes ornament templates for each symbol. If printing from a PDF, we recommend printing on cardstock. Color and decorate the ornaments in whatever creative way you like and use them over the weeks of Advent and Christmas as you prepare and celebrate.

This pamphlet may be used independently, or it may be used in conjunction with the Advent-Christmas Prayer Guide. We hope this pamphlet and the main Guide help you enter the joy of Advent.



Cut ornaments out via gray line.

DAY 1 - 12/1 - CREATION

SYMBOL - THE WORLD

LIGHT THE 1ST CANDLE OF HOPE AND SAY:

“Our hope is Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.”

MAIN READING: Genesis 1:1; 2:5-8

ADDITIONAL READINGS: John 1:1-4, Colossians 1:16

We sometimes forget that Jesus is present in the Bible from the very first page. Jesus is the Light of the World, who scatters darkness and brings order to chaos. With the Father and the Holy Spirit, Jesus created all things, including you and me. The Bible reminds us over and over again that creation was an act of God’s love.

QUESTIONS: What parts of your life seem dark? Where do you need the light of Jesus Christ?

DAY 2 - 12/2- THE 1ST SIN

SYMBOL - THE SERPENT

LIGHT THE 1ST CANDLE OF HOPE AND SAY:

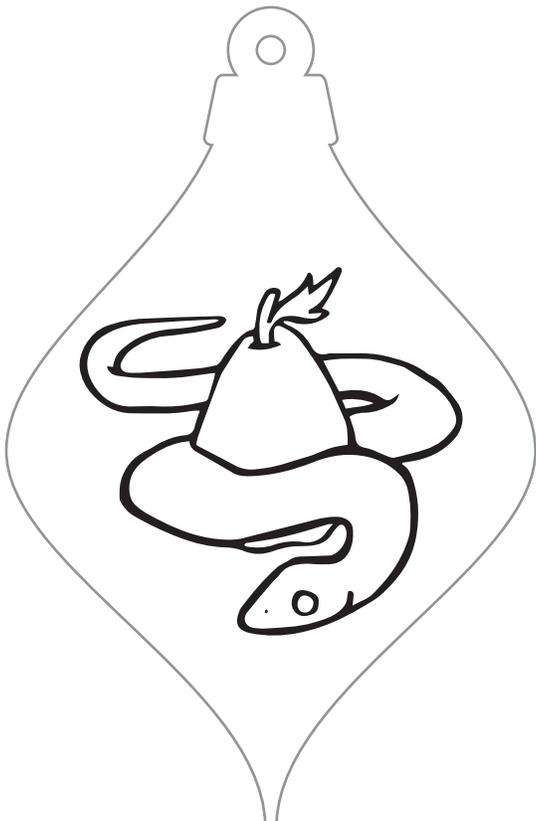
“Our hope is Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.”

MAIN READING: Genesis 3:1-15, 23

God intended everything to reflect his goodness and beauty and he intended us to be in a loving relationship with him and one another. Sadly, we are prone to doubt and distrust God and his love for us. Adam and Eve’s story reminds us of this and the way our sin (or our rejection of God and his love) breaks our relationships with God and one another.

What we see in Adam and Eve’s story is that they were not alone in their disobedience! The symbol of the serpent reminds us how they doubted God because they listened to the lies of Satan. We not only see the beginning of sin, but also God’s promise (v.15) to overcome sin and Satan by sending a Savior who would come from Adam and Eve’s family. This, of course, is Jesus!

QUESTION: As you think about today’s story and symbol, what hope does it give to you?



DAY 3 - 12/3 NOAH & THE ARK

SYMBOL - THE ARK

LIGHT THE 1ST CANDLE OF HOPE AND SAY:

“Our hope is Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.”

MAIN READING: Genesis 6:5-8, 7:1-5, 9:16

ADDITIONAL READINGS: 1 Peter 3:18-22

The end of Genesis 3 tells us that Adam and Eve had to leave their garden home as a consequence of their sin. As their family multiplied and filled the earth, many of them forgot about God and his love, and out of selfishness they did terrible things. In response, God sent a flood. But out of his great love and mercy, God saved Noah and his family. By doing so, God remained faithful to his first promise to Adam and Eve.

The ark reminds us of the destructive power of sin and that God cannot ignore it. At the same time, the ark (and rainbow) reminds us that God is faithful to keep his promises and always makes a way to save us from sin.

QUESTIONS: God always protects his people! When have you felt very safe even though you were scared? Thank God for that time.



DAY 4 - 12/4 ABRAHAM'S CALL

SYMBOL - A CAMEL WITH A TENT

LIGHT THE 1ST CANDLE OF HOPE AND SAY:

“Our hope is Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.”

MAIN READING: Genesis 12:1-7

ADDITIONAL READINGS: Gen. 17:5, Hebrews 11:8

A descendant of Noah, Abraham was chosen by God to establish a people and nation, Israel, through whom all the nations of the world would be blessed. Abraham, in fact, means “father of many nations.” This promise was sealed through a *covenant*. Israel would not only testify to God’s love, but would also be the birthplace of the Messiah. Again, we see God’s faithfulness to fulfill his original promise.

Scripture also tells us that Abraham was a person of great faith. Although he made many mistakes, he returned over and over again to God’s promises and exercised trust in God and his ways.

QUESTIONS: Take a moment to think about all the good things God has given to you. How can you share these things with the people around you to give them hope?



DAY 5 - 12/5- ISAAC

SYMBOL - A RAM AND A BUNDLE OF STICKS

LIGHT THE 1ST CANDLE OF HOPE AND SAY:

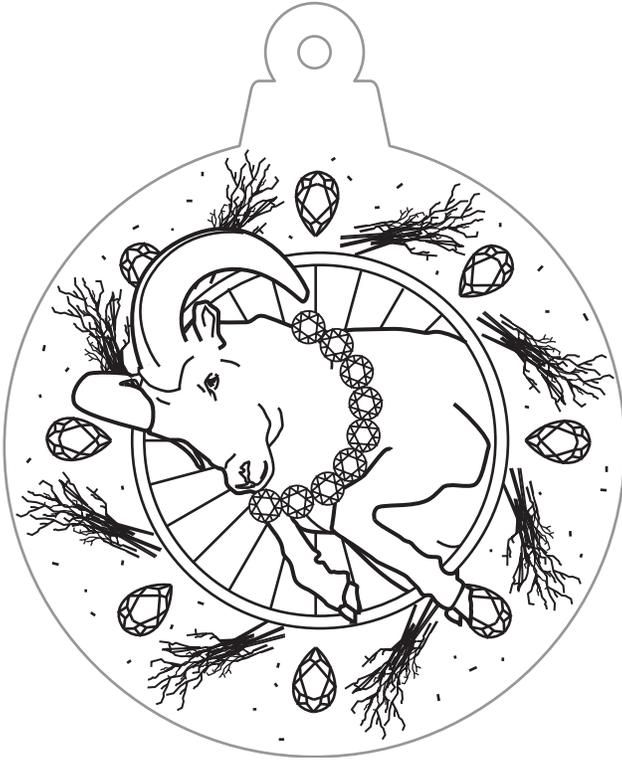
“Our hope is Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.”

MAIN READING: Genesis 22:1-13

God’s promise to Abraham—to make his descendants numerous and into a great nation—seemed like an impossible one: Sarah, Abraham’s wife, was unable to have her own children. As they grew older, they didn’t know how God would keep his promise. Genesis 17 recounts how both Abraham and Sarah laughed when they were told she would finally conceive at the age of 90. Indeed, she did and had a son, whose name was Isaac, which means laughter.

God’s promise again seemed impossible when God asked Abraham to give up his only son as an offering. Ever trusting, Abraham obeyed, but at the right moment, God provided a ram. Centuries later, Jesus would sacrifice himself as the perfect “Lamb of God” to save the world from sin.

QUESTIONS: What promises of God make you laugh? What helps you remember that God keeps his promises?



DAY 6 - 12/6 - JACOB

SYMBOL - JACOB’S LADDER

LIGHT THE 1ST CANDLE OF HOPE AND SAY:

“Our hope is Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.”

MAIN READING: Genesis 28:10-17

Isaac had twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Jacob disgraced himself by cheating his brother out of his inheritance. In shame, Jacob fled his home. Although alone and a failure, God showed Jacob extraordinary kindness. One night, God appeared to Jacob in a dream and showed him a ladder connecting heaven and earth. This meant God was close to him despite his sin, and that God would come to him no matter what. In the dream, God also told Jacob that about his promise to Abraham and that he would fulfill it through Jacob and his family. In Jacob, we see how God embraces broken people and blesses them abundantly.

The ladder also points to Jesus Christ, who gave up his glory and steps down from heaven so that we can know the nearness and friendship of God.

QUESTIONS: What do you feel when you hear the good news that God steps down from heaven to be close to you? How does this story give you hope?



DAY 7 - 12/7 - JOSEPH

SYMBOL: A COLORFUL COAT

LIGHT THE 1ST CANDLE AND SAY:

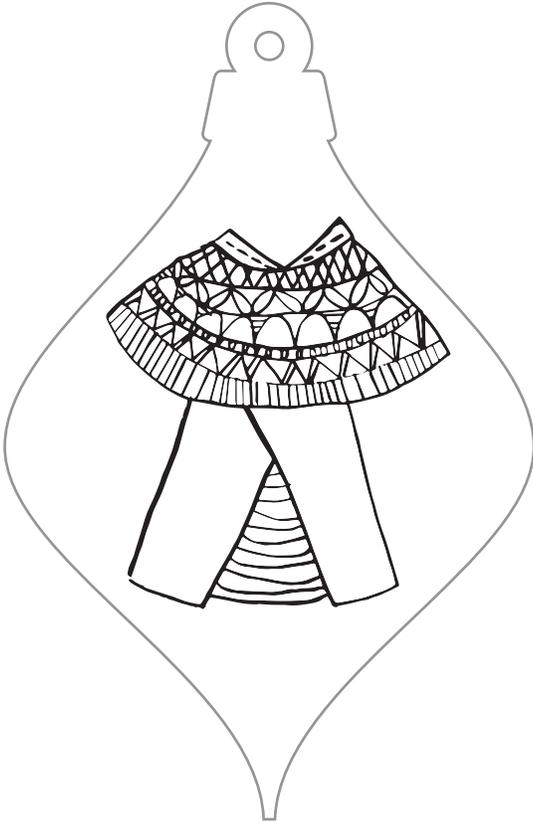
“Our hope is Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.”

READING: Genesis 37:3-36, 50:18-21

Jacob had many sons. Joseph was the 2nd to youngest and also a favorite. His relationship with his older brothers became strained after he received an expensive coat from their father and after Joseph had dreams about ruling over them. One day, his brothers decided to sell Joseph to be a slave in Egypt. Although tragic, God protected Joseph and used him to save many from famine, including Joseph’s family, who left their home of Canaan and resettled in Egypt under Joseph’s protection. What his brothers meant for harm, God meant for good. Once again, we see God preserving his people to keep his promise to send a Messiah.

Joseph’s story also points to Jesus Christ, who was betrayed, beaten and unjustly hung on a cross. What others meant for harm, God meant for good: it is through his suffering Jesus redeems the world.

QUESTION: Can you think of a time that was difficult but also good?



ADVENT 2 - 12/8 - MOSES

SYMBOL: TWO STONE TABLETS

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE & PEACE, SAYING:

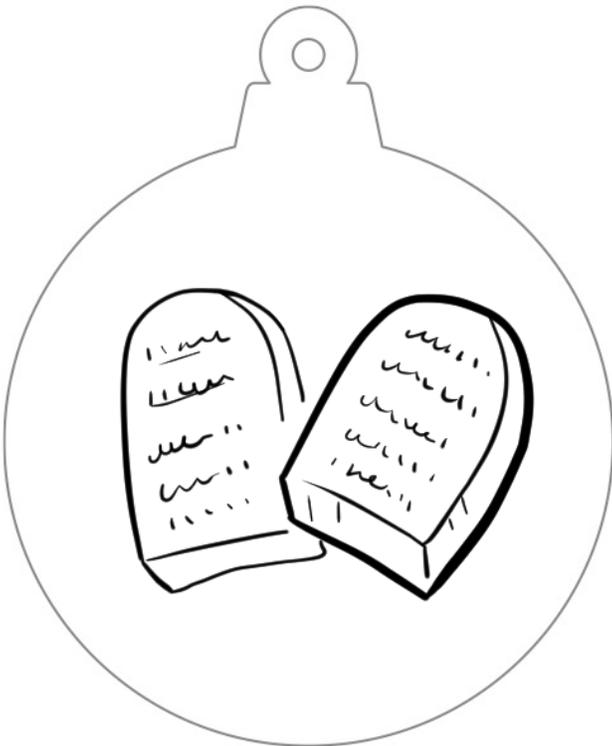
“We wait for our Lord, the Prince of Peace who has come and is coming again.”

MAIN READING: Exodus 20:1-20

Joseph’s family remained in Egypt for many years and they flourished. Unfortunately, they became slaves of Egypt. After centuries of enduring terrible hardship, their prayers for deliverance and freedom were answered: God sent Moses to lead his people out of Egypt to Canaan, the Promised Land.

After leaving Egypt and before entering Canaan, God gave Moses the 10 Commandments, or the Law, to give to his people. The Law not only shows us how to live in God’s freedom, it also shows us our need of Jesus by revealing the depth of our sin. The Law points us to the peace God wants for us in all areas of our lives and world.

QUESTIONS: As you think about the passage and the commandments, is there anyone with whom you need to make peace or seek forgiveness?



DAY 9 - 12/9 - JOSHUA

SYMBOL: A CLUSTER OF GRAPES

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE & PEACE, SAYING:

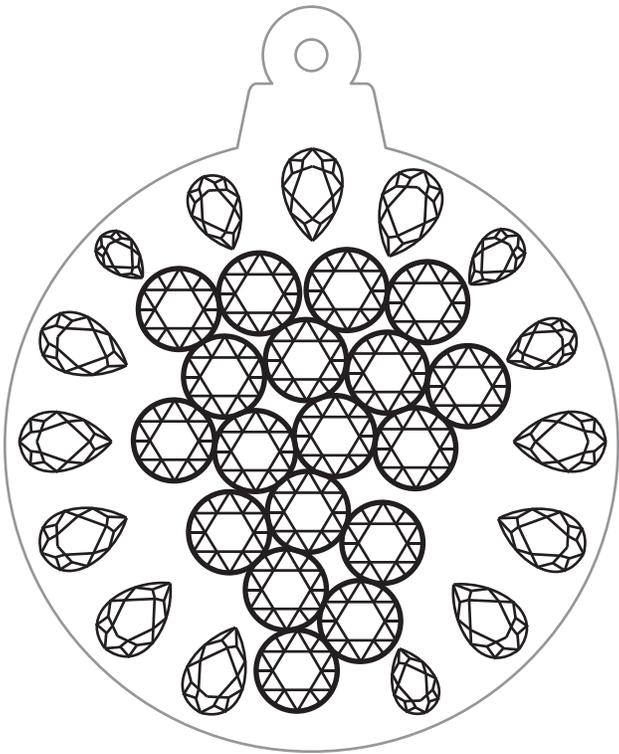
“We wait for our Lord, the Prince of Peace who has come and is coming again.”

MAIN READING: Numbers 13:1-2, 17-23, 27

Before entering Canaan, the Promised Land, Moses sent Joshua and 11 other spies to survey the land and its inhabitants. They saw how wonderful the land was, and as proof, they brought back a harvest of grapes and other fruit. God was fulfilling his promise, but the people of Israel were afraid to enter the land because they feared the inhabitants. And so, they turned away from God. As a result, they wandered in the wilderness outside of Canaan for a total of 40 years. God remained faithful to his people and brought them into the Promised Land.

In Matthew 4:1-11 we see Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days, fasting and being tempted to turn away from his Father. Because of this, Jesus knows fully our frailty, but unlike us, Jesus did not sin. He is the perfect Lamb of God who takes away our sin and brings us to God.

QUESTION: What good things are you waiting for? How are you tempted to believe God doesn't care? How does this passage give you peace in your waiting?



DAY 10 - 12/10 - RUTH

SYMBOL: A SHEAF OF WHEAT

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE & PEACE, SAYING:

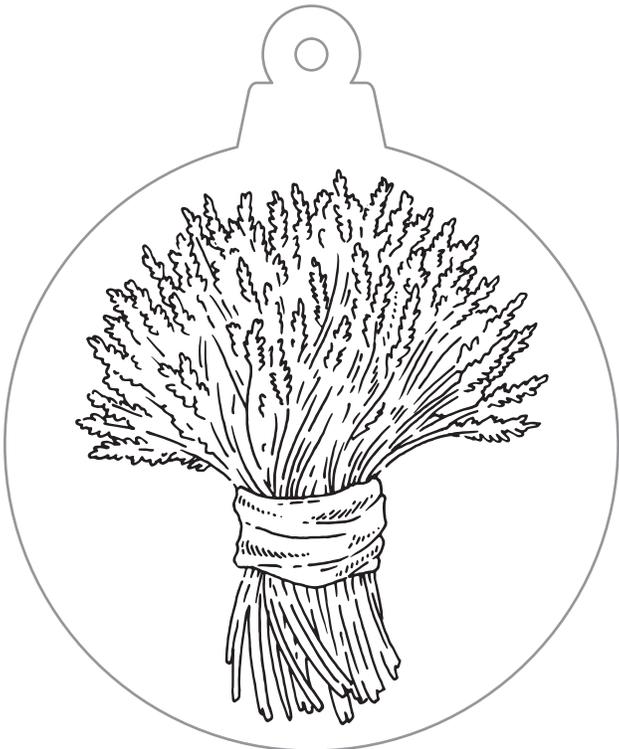
“We wait for our Lord, the Prince of Peace who has come and is coming again.”

MAIN READING: Ruth 1:1-10, 4:13-17

Many years after Joshua led God's people into the Promised Land and they became the nation of Israel, a Jewish man married a foreign woman named Ruth. After he died, she chose to follow her mother-in-law to the town of Bethlehem. There she met Boaz, a descendent of Abraham, and became his wife. Ruth would become the grandmother to Jesse and the great grandmother to King David.

Ruth is one of the few women named in the Jesus's genealogy in Matthew 1. In her story we continue to see God preserving his people and fulfilling his promise to Abraham. We also see the wonderful ways God's desire to include all people in his plan of redemption. Jesus's own life and ministry embodied this radical welcome.

QUESTION: Ruth's story is a beautiful story of God's friendship to Ruth and Ruth's friendship to Naomi. Give thanks to God for your friends and ask: “What are some ways I can bless my friends this week with the love of God?”



DAY 11 - 12/11 - JESSE

SYMBOL: A STUMP WITH A BRANCH EMERGING

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE & PEACE, SAYING:

“We wait for our Lord, the Prince of Peace who has come and is coming again.”

MAIN READING: Isaiah 11:1-10

ADDITIONAL READINGS: 1 Sam. 16:1-3; Ro. 15:7-13

Ruth’s grandson, Jesse, had many sons. God told a prophet named Samuel that one of Jesse’s sons would become king of Israel. To everyone’s surprise, Jesse’s youngest son, David, was chosen. A thousand years later, Jesus would be born into this royal family.

In this symbol, Jesse is the stump and Jesus is the emerging branch. It’s a sign of God’s faithfulness and the new royal kingdom Jesus brings.

QUESTION: As a Christian, you are in Jesus’s family, which means you are part of the Jesse Tree! How does that make you feel? Share some family stories today, stories that help you remember God’s faithfulness. Kids, ask your parents about their baptisms, testimonies, and family histories. Give thanks to God for your family and being part of Jesus’s family.



DAY 12 - 12/12 KING DAVID

SYMBOL: A SLINGSHOT

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE & PEACE, SAYING:

“We wait for our Lord, the Prince of Peace who has come and is coming again.”

READINGS: 1 Chronicles 17:7-15; Psalm 18:1-13

King David was the 2nd king of Israel. Though the Bible records several of his (shocking) sins, he is considered a man and king after God’s own heart because he repented of his sin when was confronted with them.

One of the most well known stories about David is how he, as a child, defeated the giant Goliath with a slingshot. His greatest gift to God’s people is arguably the many Psalms he wrote. The Psalms help us pray to God in all situations, including the joyful and difficult.

God promised David that one of his descendents would become king and rule forever. This promise is about Jesus.

QUESTION: King David knew how to pray to God for help. What has been tough for you lately? Read Psalm 18:1-3 and ask God to give you peace. Make the Psalm your own prayer by re-writing it in your own words.



DAY 13 - 12/13

JONAH & THE FISH

SYMBOL: A GIANT FISH

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE & PEACE, SAYING:

“We wait for our Lord, the Prince of Peace who has come and is coming again.”

READING: Jonah 1:1-6; 11-17

Many years after David, God asked the prophet Jonah to go to Nineveh, a city outside of Israel that had a reputation for great evil. God wanted Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh about God’s love and desire to forgive them. Jonah refused and fled from God on a boat. During a storm, Jonah was thrown overboard and swallowed by a giant fish. He remained in its belly for three days until he asked God to forgive him and agreed to go to Nineveh.

This story points to two important things: First, God’s love is for everyone! The people of God must share it with all those around them, even the most unlikely. Second, the story points to Jesus’s own death, the three days he spent in the tomb, and his resurrection. In fact, Jesus himself used this story in Luke 11:29-32 as an analogy for his death and resurrection.

QUESTION: God loves you! How does that make you feel? Also, think of someone who needs to know the love of God How can you share the Good News of Jesus with them?



DAY 14 - 12/14

THE LION AND THE LAMB

SYMBOL: A LION AND LAMB TOGETHER

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE & PEACE, SAYING:

“We wait for our Lord, the Prince of Peace who has come and is coming again.”

READINGS: Isaiah 11:6-10

ADDITIONAL READINGS: Matthew 5:8-9, James 3:17-18

Recall that in the beginning at Creation, God intended everything to reflect his goodness. He also intended his people to enjoy perfect friendship with him and one another. Sin, unfortunately, brought chaos to everything. God promised that his Messiah, Jesus, would heal all things and bring peace: peace between God and his people, peace between people and peace to all creation. During a very difficult time in Israel’s history when everything was falling apart, Isaiah reminded God’s people of God’s promise to send the Prince of Peace. This symbol points to the peace of God in Jesus.

QUESTION: We “pass the peace” every Sunday during worship. Is there someone you haven’t passed the peace to in while? Remember the name and find them tomorrow! Tonight, practice passing the peace with your family.



ADVENT 3 - 12/15

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SYMBOL: A STAFF AND A LAMB

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE, PEACE & JOY, SAYING:
“We wait for our Lord, our light and giver of all joy.”

MAIN READING: Isaiah 40:9-11, Psalm 23:1

ADDITIONAL READING: John 10:11-18

Sheep are not aggressive animals and against predators they have few defenses. Because of this, sheep need the constant care and attention of a shepherd. Like sheep, we are very needy creatures. It doesn't always seem that way, but we are! We each need a good shepherd to protect us from evil and to lead us to safe places where we can rest, be nourished and flourish.

Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd. With love and grace, he calls us to him, saves and protects us from evil, and leads us to our true home with God.

QUESTION: What do you feel or think when you hear that Jesus knows your name? He's saying your name now!



DAY 16 - 12/16

THE SERVANT OF ALL

SYMBOL: A CROSS

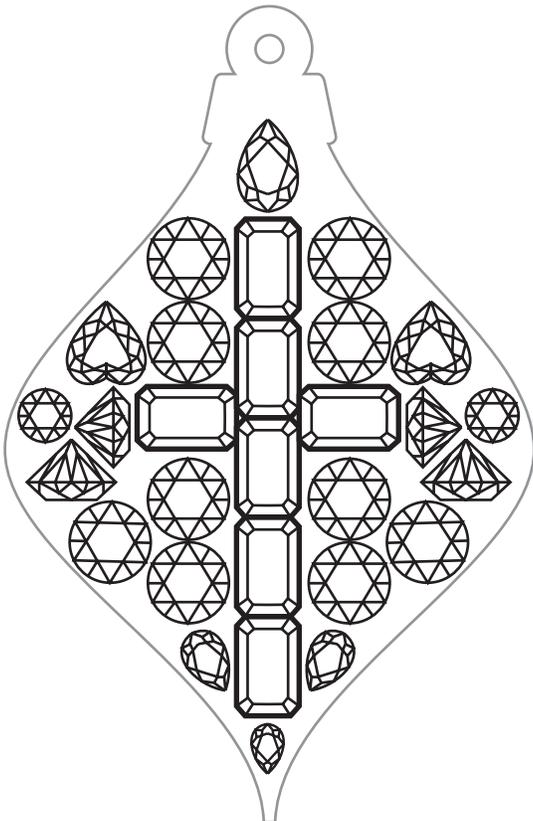
LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE, PEACE & JOY, SAYING:
“We wait for our Lord, our light and giver of all joy.”

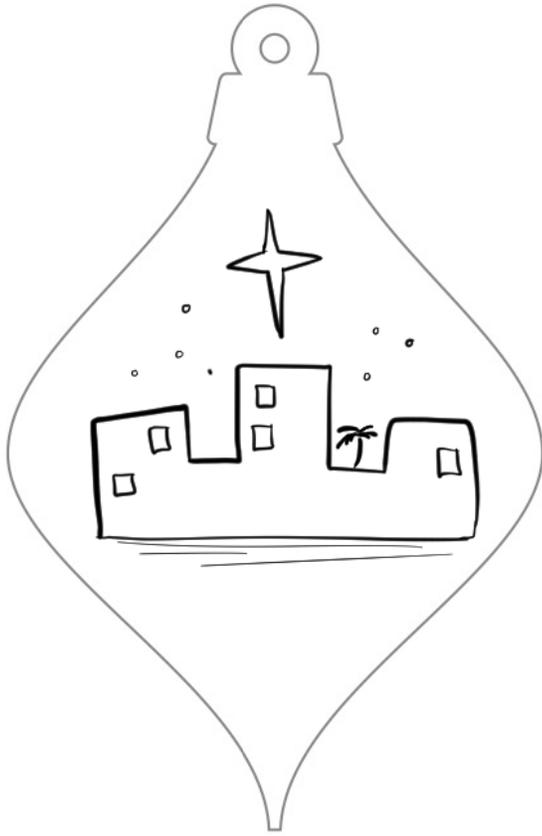
READINGS: Isaiah 53:1-6, Philippians 2:5-9

After Adam and Eve sinned, God promised to send a Messiah to overcome sin and all of its consequences. Even before time began, God's desire was for us to know his love and our sin did not change that! And how would the Messiah overcome sin? Not by power, but through suffering and humility.

These words were given to the people of Israel when their nation was occupied and destroyed. Israel rightfully wanted God to restore them. They wanted a powerful king. Isaiah reminds us that God would fulfill his promise to restore in a different way, through the cross of Jesus. This passage points us to the death of Jesus Christ, the moment Jesus took all our sins to fulfill God's promises. . He loved us so much that he gave up his life on a cross so that we could live.

QUESTION: What do you hear about Jesus and his love? What does it make you think or feel?





DAY 17 - 12/17

THE LITTLE TOWN

SYMBOL: A SILHOUETTE OF BETHLEHEM

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE, PEACE & JOY, SAYING:
“We wait for our Lord, our light and giver of all joy.”

READINGS: Micah 5:2; Luke 2:1-7

It's no accident Jesus is born in Bethlehem. It was his ancestral home, the town of King David. Though it was the town of royalty, it was also a very small and insignificant town: it wasn't at the center of anything. Yet years before Jesus was born, God chose this town to be the birthplace of his Son. It's fitting that the servant King, Jesus, would come from such a humble place. As we read yesterday, Jesus is the King who would rule not with power, but with humility. And in this little town, we continue to see a pattern in God's story: he never despises the small or lowly.

QUESTION: Do you ever feel small or forgotten? How? Re-read the passage and remember that God sees you!



DAY 18 - 12/18

ELIZABETH & ZECHARIAH

SYMBOL: ELIZABETH

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE, PEACE & JOY, SAYING:
“We wait for our Lord, our light and giver of all joy.”

READINGS: Luke 1:5-25; Isaiah 54:1-3

Jesus's mother, Mary, had an older cousin, Elizabeth. Elizabeth and her husband, Zechariah, loved God. They knew God's promises and were waiting for the Messiah. Little did they know that their family would play an important part in the Messiah's story, let alone be related to him! After many years of waiting for their own child and giving up hope, the angel Gabriel visited them and told them that they would have a son, John. This son would help prepare the way for Jesus.

QUESTION: Think about some unexpected and surprising ways you experienced God's love. What happened? How did God surprise you with joy?

DAY 19 - 12/19

GABRIEL & MARY

SYMBOL: MARY

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE, PEACE & JOY, SAYING:
“We wait for our Lord, our light and giver of all joy.”

READINGS: Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 7:14

Mary is the mother of Jesus. She loved God and knew his promises but like her cousin, was completely surprised to learn she would play a role in the Messiah’s story. When she heard the news that she would be the mother of Jesus, the Messiah of the world, she received the amazing news with humility, joy and thanksgiving. She was able to do so because she trusted the love of God so deeply, she was able to surrender control of her own life’s plans.

QUESTION: Put yourself in Mary’s shoes. How would you react if an angel appeared to you and said God had an important job or you?



DAY 20 - 12/20

JOSEPH

SYMBOL: JOSEPH

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE, PEACE & JOY, SAYING:
“We wait for our Lord, our light and giver of all joy.”

READING: Matthew 1:18-25

ADDITIONAL READING: Luke 2:1-5

Joseph was a descendant of King David and so was in the royal family from which the Messiah would come. However, he wasn’t royalty but simply a working class carpenter. He was engaged to Mary but when he found out she was pregnant, he wanted to protect her honor and break their engagement quietly. But when God told him she was pregnant with the Messiah by the power of the Holy Spirit, he changed his mind. Like Mary, he received the amazing news with humility, joy and thanksgiving.

QUESTION: What seems impossible about following God and trusting in his love? Remember Joseph’s story and give thanks for God making it possible.



DAY 21 - 12/21

THE SHEPHERDS

SYMBOL: A SHEPHERD & THE FLOCK

LIGHT THE CANDLES OF HOPE, PEACE & JOY, SAYING:
“We wait for our Lord, our light and giver of all joy.”

MAIN READING: LUKE 2:1-14

All of our waiting and longings are fulfilled with the birth of Jesus, God who comes to us as one of us to dwell with us and to give us new life! In Jesus we see God’s ultimate “no” to sin and its consequences and his ultimate “yes” to us!

The shepherds are the first to hear the good news. Once again, we see God inviting and welcoming unlikely people to receive his Son and the new life he makes possible.

QUESTION: Sometimes when you’re young, following Jesus can seem like something for adults. This story reminds us that Jesus is for everyone! What do you think or feel when you hear this?



ADVENT 4- 12/22

THE SHEPHERDS

SYMBOL: THE MANGER

LIGHT THE CANDLE OF LOVE AND THE OTHERS, SAYING:
“We wait for the Lord, the light of the world and lover of our souls.”

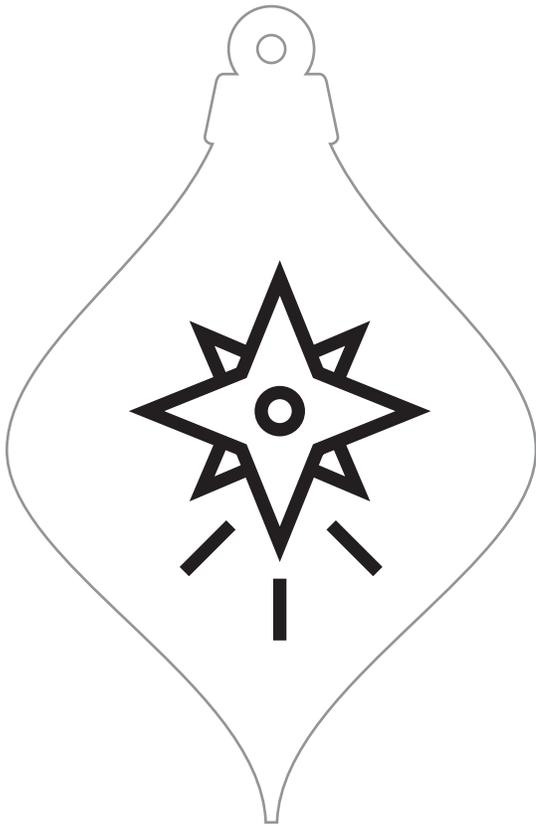
READING: LUKE 2:15-21

Where do you expect a king to be born? We expect a king to be born in a castle surrounded by servants and the most comfortable and luxurious things in the world. But Jesus, the King of Love, is born in a manger. Instead of servants, he’s surrounded by animals.

How fitting! All along we’ve been hearing how Jesus would be a humble king, and a king who would rule and restore all things with humility. The manger is unexpected, but at the same time, not!

QUESTION: Imagine you were looking for a king and you found the king in a dirty stall with animals. What would you think or feel? What do you think the shepherds were thinking when they met their new king?





DAY 23 - 12/23

THE STAR OF DAVID

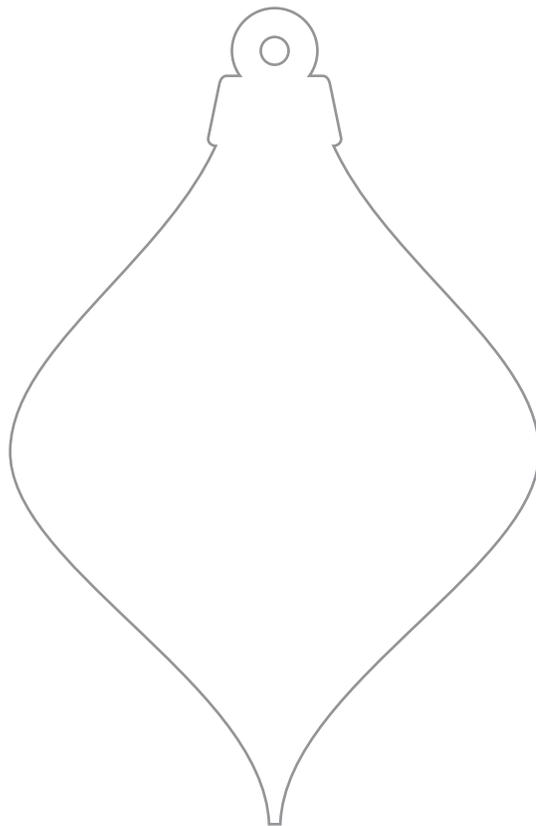
SYMBOL: THE STAR

LIGHT THE CANDLE OF LOVE AND THE OTHERS, SAYING:
“We wait for the Lord, the light of the world and lover of our souls.”

READINGS: Matthew 2:1-2; John 8:12

A bright star appeared to announce the birth of Jesus and to guide all those waiting for him to his presence. The star also symbolizes the fact that Jesus is the light of the world. He shines his light into the darkness to both overcome it and to lead all of God’s people home to him.

QUESTION: Spend time remembering different ways God has led you and your family. Where were you last year? Where are you now? Give thanks for the ways God always lights our paths and leads us to him.



CHRISTMAS EVE - 12/24

SYMBOL: CREATE YOUR OWN

LIGHT THE CANDLE OF LOVE AND THE OTHERS, SAYING:
“We wait for the Lord, the light of the world and lover of our souls.”

ACTIVITY: Advent ends tonight and the Christmas season (all 12 days) starts tomorrow with Christmas Day. Think back on all the stories you’ve read and all the symbols you colored. What sticks out to you? What did you learn about God and yourself?

As you think about these things, make your own ornament that helps you remember the hope, peace, joy and love that God gives to us in Jesus Christ.

And yes, you read it right: Christmas is not just one day, but it’s a 12 day celebration that starts on Christmas Day! How can you keep the celebration of Christmas going?

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: Grace Pasadena’s annual Christmas Eve service is tonight. As always, kids of all ages are invited. Let’s worship the King together and celebrate his coming and coming again.