



We Watch
and
Hope

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM



PARKWAY
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



www.parkwayucc.org

December 3, 2023

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Limitless Love | Courageous Action | Spirited Inquiry

Purpose Statement

Parkway United Church of Christ strives to be an inclusive community embracing: spiritual nourishment, open-minded inquiry, courageous action, and interfaith partnerships to fulfill God's calling to create a just world for all.

Congregational Statement

Parkway United Church of Christ, with God's grace, seeks to be a congregation that includes all persons, regardless of race, ethnic, or socio—economic background while respecting differences of gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, and mental and physical ability. We aspire to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. We invite all to share in the life and leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of participation in our open and affirming congregation.

PARKWAY UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

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John Nourse, *Pastor Emeritus*

Welcome *to* Parkway

Thank you for joining us this morning! If you are with us virtually, please let us know you are here by commenting in the chat or sending an email.

Welcome Children We invite children to full participation in worship. We also have activity bags for young children to use while they are here.

Bell Rung During Lord's Prayer A tradition begun when farmers working in surrounding fields would stop their work and join in prayer.

Scripture Reader today is Atticus Reed

Flowers today are from Charlotte Smith and family in memory of Dwight

Please consider signing up to donate flowers and/or read scripture in 2024

Subscribe to our email lists: Sign up at www.parkwayucc.org

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Photos/Videos Please be aware that our worship services are video recorded, streamed live on Facebook Live, and made available for later viewing through that service.

Photos/videos should generally not be taken of children in church except as part of organized activities and programs, and any requests of children or their parents or guardians should be respected. Please be respectful of privacy and mindful that this is a safe and sacred space for all who enter.

Media uploads: <https://tinyurl.com/PUCCmedia>

Mental Health Support

988 (new nationwide 3-digit number similar to 911... call or text)

24/7 Crisis Hotline 800-273-8255 (TALK) | 800-SUICIDE: 800-784-2433

24/7 Missouri Department of Mental Health 800-811-4760

Text 741741 and someone will text right back...www.crisistextline.org

Behavioral Health Network of Greater St Louis 314-449-6713

Birthdays

12/3 HALE, Lauren

12/3 OWENS, Pam

12/5 RUZICKA, Ryan

12/6 MATTEUCCI, Ava

12/6 WINKELMANN, Polly

12/8 BORGMANN, Kari

1st Sunday of Advent: Hope

Sunday, December 3, 2023 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

Meditation *One response was given by the innkeeper when Mary and Joseph wanted to find a room where the Child could be born. The innkeeper was not hostile; he was not opposed to them, but his inn was crowded; his hands were full; his mind was preoccupied. This is the answer that millions are giving today. Like a Bethlehem innkeeper, they cannot find room for Christ. All the accommodations in their hearts are already taken up by other crowding interests. Their response is not atheism. It is not defiance. It is preoccupation and the feeling of being able to get on reasonably well without Christianity. ~Billy Graham*

Welcome Let us know you are here!

Passing the Hope of Christ

“May the hope of Christ be with you.”

(We are intentional about bringing more hope into the world.)

Prelude *Veni, Emmanuel (O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

piano arrangement by Fred Bock, based on the Plain-song melody, c. 1200

Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

Welcome Song *You Are Welcome Here*

You are wel - come here, no mat ter who you are, no mat ter
where you are on life's jour - ney. You are wel come here,
no mat -ter who you are, come and
join with us, in our U - ni -ted Church of Christ.

Gathering at the Advent Wreath ~ Hope

One:	Advent is a time to watch.
Many:	We watch for hope in the dawning of light.
One:	We watch for hope in the midst of any despair
Many:	We watch with our eyes wide open and our ears attuned to one another.

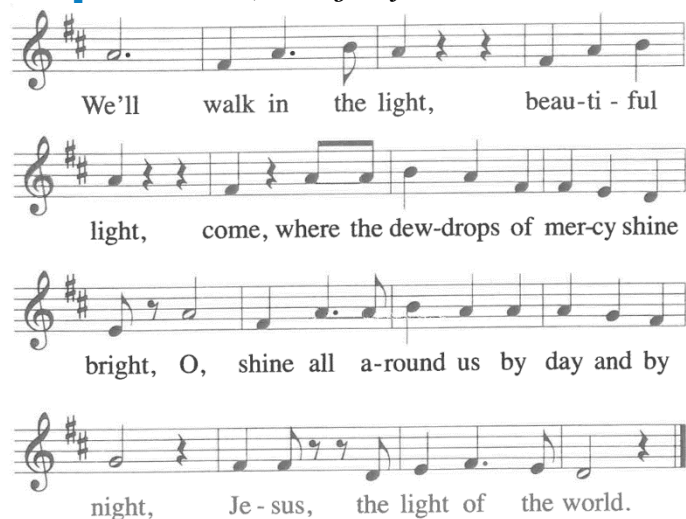
One:	We watch for opportunities to be people of hope as we lean into the Spirit for understanding and wisdom.
Many:	We watch for the Christ Child who breaks into world - already and not yet.
One:	We watch for gifts of grace, gentleness, forgiveness.
Many:	We watch ourselves being more intentional and in sync with God's ways.
One:	Advent is a time to watch.
All:	We watch for Jesus, the Light of the World.

Advent Candle Lighting ~ Hope

Prayer

Holy One, we watch with expectant eyes, trusting that you are present, active and constantly at work. As we light this first Advent candle, we ask for a deeper faith and the ability to watch for you ~ and for where we can put our commitments into action. We become hope rooted in your hope. Amen.

Response *Jesus, the Light of the World*



We'll walk in the light, beau-ti - ful
light, come, where the dew-drops of mer-cy shine
bright, O, shine all a-round us by day and by
night, Je - sus, the light of the world.

Scripture Mark 13, selected verses (New Revised Standard Version)

Jesus said, "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only God. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.

It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

***Response** *Be Near Me, Lord Jesus*

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
And teach us, dear Jesus, to laugh and to share.**

Mission Moment *Second Mile Advent*

Circle of Concern | Emmaus Homes | The Christmas Fund

Offering Our Gifts to God

If you have an offering today, please place it in the plate on the communion table. There are also offering plates in the Gathering Space just outside the sanctuary. Thank you for your generosity.

***Response** *Song of Hope*



May the God of hope go with us ev - ery day, Fill-ing all our



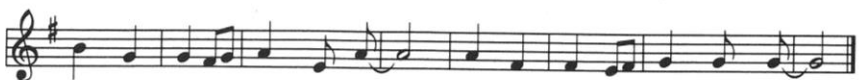
lives with love and joy and peace. May the God of jus-tice speed us



on our way, Bring-ing light and hope to ev-ery land and race.



Pray-ing, let us work for peace, Sing-ing, share our joy with all,



Work-ing for a world that's new, Faith-ful when we hear Christ's call.

Verse 2:

**Keep a prayer within your heart throughout the day
Hope is always there for those who trust the Lord
Give your time and comfort in a simple way
Call for justice, hope will surely be restored.**

**Giving, use our gifts with love, Helping, for the ones in need,
Striving, for equality. Justice, when the need demands.**

***Benediction**

***Journey to Bethlehem** *O Little Town of Bethlehem #44*

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.

O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where mees souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

***God's Light Goes Forth**

***Music for Going Forth**

Quiet improvisations on *O Little Town of Bethlehem* – based on the familiar tune by Lewis H. Redner, 1868



Announcements

TODAY! A Special Worship Experience

Sunday, December 3 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall

We begin with worship on this first Sunday of Advent in the Sanctuary and then... *A Journey to Bethlehem* in Fellowship Hall. Adults will have all of their senses engaged and will ponder some of the mystery and love of the season. Children will be given a Passport to visit Mary and Joseph, Angels, and spend time in the stable. Travel further on to the Bethlehem Market and taste some of the foods of the era, visit some farm animals, and make a final visit with The Wisemen. There are tables in the middle with more activities: God's Eyes, Festive Paper Chains, Ornaments, and Writing Poetry.

TAD ~ Tuesday Afternoon Dialogue... Zoom with us!

TAD will meet December 5 to continue to discuss *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Michelle Richardson.

Related to current issues of book accessibility in libraries, this book is historical fiction but based on true stories about the women librarians in Kentucky back in the 1930's who rode on horseback into the mountains to deliver books and newspapers. The main character has a genetic condition causing her to be shunned by her community. This adds an important component to the story about how isolation impacts the human spirit and how education and acceptance can overcome ignorance to allow understanding and kindness. Come 15 minutes early if you want to chat and build community before we start the book discussion...

Zoom...<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/83670617428?pwd=bUxPZEdDMlU4ay9oNndTWw4yZUYwUT09>

(312) 626-6799; Meeting ID: 836 7061 7428; Passcode: 480007

Questions? Contact Jackie Eiffert, jeiffert2@gmail.com; (661) 378-6781

Hope, Peace, Joy and Love in the Prayer Corner of the Sanctuary: Come for conversation and prayer

Join Kevin in the Prayer Corner of the Sanctuary anytime during these open hours for individual conversation and prayer about hope, peace, joy and love. If none of these dates work for you or you just prefer it, we can settle on a time for a phone call or Zoom during this season of Advent.

If you arrive and the Prayer Corner is occupied, feel free to wait a few minutes in the Gathering Space and text so I know you are waiting (314-330-0629).

~ Kevin

Wednesday, December 6 from 10am-12pm

Monday, December 11 from 7-9pm

Tuesday, December 19 from 3-5pm

Parkway Adventurers ~ open to all!

Thursday, December 7 | 9:15am | *Magic Chef Mansion*

Join us for a tour of the mansion—it will last an hour and fifteen minutes.

Please wear only flat-sole shoes as no small-tipped heels allowed.

Meet at church 9:15am to carpool or meet at the mansion by 10am. There is a \$20 per person fee (15 person minimum) for the tour with the money to be paid the day of the tour.

RSVP to Kent Tallyn (314-303-5606; bsee74-pucc@yahoo.com) or Diane Tallyn (314-910-2032). Lunch to be determined.

The Magic Chef Mansion was built for Charles Stockstrom (1852-1935), the founder of the *Quick Meal Stove Company*, later renamed *Magic Chef*.

The largest stove maker in the world at one time, the St. Louis plant alone sprawled over 600,000 square feet and employed 2,000 people.

After his death, Stockstrom's daughter Adda Ohmeyer resided in the mansion until her death. Shortly thereafter, all of the original furnishings and some of the fixtures were sold at a week-long public auction prior to the house's sale in the fall of 1990 to the current owner. The new family moved in four months later and began restoration.

Over the next twenty years, some of the original items were tracked down, repurchased and returned to the house. The mansion has been painstakingly restored to its turn-of-the-century elegance, including original lighting fixtures and period furnishings. We will see uncovered original murals in the parlor, an original and operating *Magic Chef* oven in the kitchen, and a bowling alley in the basement. Hopefully, it will be decorated for Christmas. <http://magicchefmansion.com/>

* Past *Parkway Adventurers* events have included the Chihuly Exhibit at the amazing Missouri Botanical Garden and the intense and informative Holocaust Museum in Creve Coeur.

For more info on this group, please contact either Jackie Eiffert jeiffert2@gmail.com, 661-378-6781 or Carol Cobb ccjacob@aol.com, (314) 640-8166

This Month Only, AMOE Meets on Friday, December 8

Friday, December 8 | 9:15 – 11:00am | Heritage Room

Adventurous Men Out Early (AMOE), a group of Parkway men, meets monthly for chatter and coffee in the Heritage Room. No topic is off limits (sort of). All are welcome. Bring a friend. (We will go back to first Thursdays.) Contact Richard Scherrer: 90fivetpr@gmail.com | (314) 993-5210

Christmas Caroling: Share the Spirit of the Season

Help us spread the hope, peace, joy and love of the season to our PUC friends who can use an infusion of the Spirit right now.

Come to the Gathering Space for a warm-up and then head out for a festive time.

Attend one or both opportunities: Saturday, December 9 from 1-4pm....

Monday, December 18 from 9:30am-12:30pm

Please RSVP to kevin@parkwayucc.org; 314-872-9330

Parkway Speaker Series: An Inside View of the Business of Movies by Barry Albrecht

Sunday, December 10 | 11:15am | Heritage Room or ZOOM

Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84691476997?pwd=aEM2ZURYWURLNmkwD0EzV0VHV1lyQT09#success>

Meeting ID: 8469147 6997 | **Passcode:** 181565 | **Dial** (312) 626-6799

Lifetime St. Louisan, Barry Albrecht is a film executive, who earned his first executive producer credit on the feature film, *The Ghost Who Walks*, and then the film *All Gone Wrong*. Most recently, he was the Executive Producer on the acclaimed documentary *Miracle in the Mountains*, which tells the remarkable underdog story of how Squaw Valley California became the site of the 1960 Winter Olympics with the help of Walt Disney and changed the Olympics forever.

In 2019, Barry started Propulsion Films, an independent film production company. Barry is active in the non-profit sector and is currently on the Cinema St. Louis Board of Directors and the Washington University Alumni Board of Governors.

More info > Richard Scherrer: 90fivetpr@gmail.com | (314) 993-5210

Inquirers' Gathering - for those who want to know more about PUC and who want to be known

Monday, January 8, 2024 | 6:30-7:45pm | Dessert | Heritage Room

Our goals that evening include:

- getting to know one another a bit more
- describing Parkway's worship, outreach, education, leadership, fellowship
- taking a look at our denomination, the United Church of Christ
- sharing ideas about the exciting future of Parkway UCC
- soliciting your thoughts on how we can be a more welcoming and inviting community of faith
- discussing some key issues of faith
- answering any of your questions

You will find our time together meaningful and informative.

Some churches call this sort of gathering a New Members Class—we do not.

While we do know that there are a number of visitors who have expressed interest in becoming members of the church, we do not assume that Inquirers are seeking membership. We just want to be hospitable, get to know you and have the chance to express gratitude for your presence among us.

Kevin Cameron: kevin@parkwayucc.org | 314-872-9330

Childcare is available that evening if requested ahead of time.

Journey to Bethlehem ~ The Adult Path

As the children and youth make their way to and through Bethlehem, we know that you will enjoy watching them and finding ways to support and appreciate them.

Please visit Kevin in the middle of the room and pick up any/all of the nine story stones you see here – though you will need to color them in as desired. There is a sheet of paper that asks you some thought-provoking questions and encourages you to take your own *mind and spirit journey* to Bethlehem. You may even want to share this adventure with others later today and throughout this season. Thank you for participating!



The ‘W’ in CHRISTMAS

Author unknown

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on nonessential obligations – extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even overspending. Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas.

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a 6-year-old. For weeks, he’d been memorizing songs for his school’s “Winter Pageant.”

I didn’t have the heart to tell him I’d be working the night of the production. Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there would be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation. All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.

So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down. Around the room, I saw several other parents quietly scampering to their seats.

As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song.

Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as “Christmas,” I didn’t expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer. So, when my son’s class rose to sing, “**Christmas Love**” I was slightly taken aback by its bold title.

Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snow-caps upon their heads. Those in the front row – center stage – held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song.

As the class would sing “C is for Christmas,” a child would hold up the letter C. Then, “H is for Happy,” and on and on, until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message, “Christmas Love.”

Prayer List

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

Celebrations

All the acts of kindness, justice and equity near and far.

Seasonal beauty.

Families and individuals celebrating the holidays together.

Lacey Kaye Dankenbring - first great-grandchild of Kent and Diane Tallyn. Mother Breeanna and baby are both doing fine.

Concerns

Don Wandless and Bill Haack - home after recent hospitalizations.

Bill Hilgeman - healing at home after serious injuries on hunting trip.

Marion Pleis - recovering from another round of COVID.

Clare Chapman - diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer (Svenson)

Jimmy Carter and family as they grieve and give thanks for Rosalynn.

Grieving/struggling families or individuals as the holidays unfold.

The continuing war in Ukraine.

War in the Mideast - Israel and Hamas...Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Yemen

Continuing

Becca Palmgren - medical tests and discerning treatment options.

Kathleen Tarr - some success with her mental health program.

Karen Grayheck - healing after recent back surgery.

Gram Ruth Hughes - Lymphoma; receiving hospice care (Schneider).

Cassie Rosenberger's mother Martha - ongoing cancer treatments.

Annette Harrison - recovering from injuries (Stifel).

Trudy - living with cancer; healing after a fall (Scharf).

Seger Ruiz - paralyzed from car accident in September.

Joseph Miller - long road to healing (son of Deb Carter).

Nelson Spencer - medical concerns (Ellie Svenson).

Barb - complications with cancer tx and at odds with insurance co (Tarr)

Cherie & Mike Stolze - her health; her father's kidney disease.

Bill Darland - ongoing health issues.

Gail, Bill and Christopher Haack - chronic health challenges.

Coree Mix - settling into a new home with great roommates.

Chris - hospice care after brain cancer surgery (Doug's sister-in-law).

Renee and family - very aggressive onset of dementia (McKenzie).

Carol - healing after recent vascular surgery (Mary Akers).

Angie - living with Hodgkin's Lymphoma (Rosenberger).

Theresa - surgery/treatment/recovery - aggressive cancer (Schwarz).

Jackie - special needs adult battling Parkinson's, cancer, dementia.

Lizzie - awaiting liver transplant (niece of Barb Kuhlmann).

Home-Centered/Care Facility/Rehab Center

Marv Herpel - *Brookdale West County*; 785 Henry Ave, #217;

Ballwin, MO 63021; 636-227-5838 [birthdate: March 3]

Sue Houser - *NHC Cool Springs*; 211 Cool Springs Blvd #1610; Franklin, TN 37067; 615-577-2049. [birthdate: July 8]

Pat Klein - *Anthology Senior Living of Wildwood*; 251 Plaza Dr, #325; Wildwood, MO 63040 [birthdate: September 21]

Bill Klein - *Anthology Senior Living of Wildwood*; 251 Plaza Dr, #104; Wildwood, MO 63040 [birthdate: March 8]

John Nourse *The Village at Cape Albeon*; 3300 Lake Bend Dr, #166; Valley Park, MO 63088 [birthdate: October 26]

Ruth Peace - 10379-D Forest Brooke Ln; StL MO 63146; 314-983-0253; meadletter222@gmail.com [birthdate: August 8]

Naomi Runtz - 272 N Lindbergh Blvd; StL MO 63141; 34-993-0469 naomiruntz@sbcglobal.net [birthdate: August 30]

Gladys Sims - *Friendship Village - 15200 Village View Dr, #2418*; Chesterfield, MO 63017; 636-898-8873 [birthdate: July 4]

David Smith - *Anthology of Town & Country*; 1020 Woods Mill Rd; #310; St Louis, MO 63017; 636-200-5076 [birthdate: July 24] (Father of Deb Carter).

Pinky Wilcoxon - 10379-D Forest Brooke Ln; StL MO 63146; 314-983-0253; meadletter222@gmail.com [birthdate: April 7]

Other

Pres Biden, VP Harris, Congress, all local, national, world leaders.

The “me too” Movement - shining a light on sexual abuse.

All people who live with mental illness & those dealing with meds.

Caregivers of all shapes and sizes.

PUCC Family struggling with employment; healthcare costs and limits.

Our Missouri Mid-South Conference and St Louis Assn UCC

Gun violence and other violence across the US and other lands.

Conversations about the Death Penalty in the United States.

Victims of Natural and Created Disasters around the world.

Healing of relationships between the public and the police.

Peace and Justice near and far.

US Military around the globe.

** Our Church is a Firearm-free Zone **

Some questions have recently arisen about firearms on church premises.

Under Missouri law, the concealed carry right does NOT extend to church premises. Missouri law provides by default that concealed firearms are not permitted in churches, unless specifically authorized by the church.

No such authorization has been made at Parkway. Missouri law also bars fire-ready firearms in churches (with certain law enforcement exceptions) where people are assembled for worship.

The Church Council has decided to make these rules clear for all

by having No-Firearms-Allowed signs posted on church entry doors. This does not represent a change in policy, since that has been the effect of existing Missouri law, but Council believes the clear notice will best serve everyone.

1st Sunday of Advent: *Hope*

December 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Where Are You, God?

This is the first Sunday of Advent, the season when we set time aside to express the human longing for God to be right here with us. There are many moods in this season. Some of us are too busy and some of us are too lonely. Some of us take joy in all that there is, some of us grieve all that is lost. Some of us find comfort in the same story told a new way each year, some of us just want to hurry along to the turning of the year. Some of us find deep peace in the rituals of this season, and some of us feel very anxious. And many of us feel all these things! On each of our Advent Sundays, we are invited to sink deeply into our spiritual lives with a time of devotion and contemplation, knowing that God meets us exactly where we are - busy and lonely, joyful and grieving, comfortable and hurried, peaceful and anxious.

*Give us life, and we will call on your name. Restore us, O God:
Let your face shine, that we may be saved. ~Psalm 80:18b-19*

First, read the focus scripture for this day.

Read it again, more slowly, perhaps even out loud.

Now read it a third time.

What are the questions or images that come to mind?

Here are some to get you started. You may have others.

-With one voice, the people call for life, meaning that they have felt in some way dead or numb to the world and to God. Have you or your community ever felt far from God or God's purpose for you? What was that like? Remember that people in all times and places have had seasons of feeling far from God, but that did not stop them from seeking God's face.

-The people cry out to be restored, brought back to life. What would it look like to be restored or renewed? What is your most audacious hope for the future of yourself or your faith community? Make it your intention, in these next weeks until the coming of the Christ Child, to imagine without limits all the good that God has in store for you.

-The people ask for God's face to shine upon them. Remember now a time that you felt God's presence very close and near. Where were you? What did it look, sound, smell like? Who were you with? It might be a time and place very far away; it might be the place where you are right now. Allow yourself to bask in the warmth of God's close companionship.

-The people ask to be saved. Some traditions proclaim the idea of being "saved" more than others. Does the notion of being saved resonate with your spirituality? Why or why not? Is there another word you would use in place of this one?

End your time with this prayer: *God, sometimes we are too busy to find you. Sometimes we are lonely, and you feel far away. Wherever we are, come near to us we pray. Amen.*