

First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo

Established 1812

Newsletter

Advent 2023

ADVENT

EXPECTANT WAITING

HOPEFUL ANTICIPATION

JOYFUL PREPARATION



The four weeks leading up to Christmas Day are called Advent and is the first season in the church (liturgical) calendar. It comes from the Latin word *adventus* meaning coming or arrival. Advent is a hopeful season of preparation that anticipates both Bethlehem and the consummation of history in the Second Coming. It is a time to prepare our hearts and our homes for the arrival of the Christ Child. This time of waiting invites us to slow down and reflect instead of diving headfirst into all the glitz and glitter.

Find out more by watching the video: *Advent in Two Minutes*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC0FGQLBp7w>

The video was created before blue became the color of Advent. Blue represents Advent as a season of hope and anticipation. Purple is now used only for Lent.

The ACE group has gathered and created opportunities for you to celebrate the season.

Mission:

We will be collecting needed winter items for distribution to men and women through *Friends of the Night People* and our own food pantry. We ask you to help us collect the following items:

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| December 3 | Warm Socks |
| December 10 | Winter Caps for Men and Women |
| December 17 | Gloves and Mittens |
| December 24 | Scarves to keep folks warm |



Study:

Kurt Froese, Family Ministries Director, will be offering a Bible study focusing on the lectionary readings for Advent. The class will meet at First Church on Tuesdays from 6 to 7:30 pm and will live stream on Zoom. He will use the lectionary readings. Links to the readings can be found at:

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/lections.php?year=B&season=Advent>.

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| November 28 | How to interpret and understand descriptions such as the heavens being opened and mountains quaking in the presence of God |
| December 5 | Investigating the concept of finding new ways of living that are fulfilling rather than destructive. This will include studying the concept of repentance as was meant by Christ for us to live lives that are full of joy rather than regret |
| December 12 | A discussion on what exactly it means for our world that Christ came into it. We will investigate why the concept of baptism and the language of light over darkness are key themes of Christian faith |
| December 19 | Exploring the clarity of mind that can come through a life of faith |

Lectio Divina:

Pastor Leslie will offer Lectio and Visio Divina using readings from Luke 1 and the beautiful artwork from our Advent series, *A Weary World Rejoices*. In [Lectio Divina](#) (divine reading) the chosen text is read four times, we listen and reflect in silence to hear what God may say to us. Visio Divina (sacred seeing) allows our hearts and imaginations to enter a sacred image, in silence, to see what God might have to say to us. Both practices give us an opportunity to think deeply about what we heard or saw and respond thoughtfully.

The group will meet on Wednesdays from noon to 1:30 pm. The dates are November 29, December 6, December 13 and December 20.



Worship:

Join as we prepare for the coming of Christ.



December 3	Bell Choir performs
December 10	
December 17	Bell Choir performs
December 21	Blue Christmas Service 7pm For those who struggle during the season or seek peace
December 24	Christmas Eve Service 7:30 pm

The Lectionary readings for each week are:

Advent	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
December 3	Isaiah 64:1-9	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	Luke 1: 1-23
December 10	Isaiah 40:1-11	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Luke 1: 24-45
December 17	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Psalm 126	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	Luke 1: 57-66
December 24	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1: 46-55, 67-80

Reflection:

First Church will have the Advent devotional, *How Does a Weary World Rejoice*, available in the Narthex for all who are interested. If you are homebound, please call the church office for a copy. The *Sanctified Art* creative team has provided art, poetry and reflections for Advent using Luke's gospel.

In the center of this newsletter, you will find an Advent calendar providing daily prompts for practicing joy in our weary world. We will offer a place in church where you can share:

- What brings you joy?
- What are you grateful for?
- What do you hope for?

 <p>DECEMBER 1</p> <p>On a piece of paper, write a list of everything—big and small—that brings you joy. Tape your list to your fridge or display it somewhere you will see it daily.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 2</p> <p>Take a photo inspired by the word, "Joy." Text it to a friend or post it online for others to see.</p> <p>Tag us! @sanctifiedart #howdoesawearyworldrejoice</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 3</p> <p>On a piece of paper, write down everything that makes you weary. Then, rip the paper into small pieces as a way to release it all and offer it to God.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 4</p> <p>Write about a time joy surprised you. What was unexpected about that experience?</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 5</p> <p>Breathe deeply and pray. With every exhale, release something that makes you weary. With every inhale, ask God for something that brings you joy.</p>
 <p>DECEMBER 6</p> <p>After nightfall, spend some time looking up at the stars. How do you feel? Offer a prayer to God.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 7</p> <p>Write, text, or call someone who might be feeling weary. Tell them, "I've been thinking about you."</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 8</p> <p>Look at the list you wrote on December 1st (the things that bring you joy). Do something on that list.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 9</p> <p>Take a photo inspired by the word, "Connection." Text it to a friend or post it online for others to see.</p> <p>Tag us! @sanctifiedart #howdoesawearyworldrejoice</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 10</p> <p>Bake, cook, or eat something that fills you with delight.</p>
 <p>DECEMBER 11</p> <p>Read the poem, [i carry your heart with me (i carry it in)] by e. e. cummings. Dedicate the poem to someone you know.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 12</p> <p>Write a kind note for a stranger to find. Place the note in a public place: a park bench, on a car windshield, in a mailbox, etc. Fill the note with a message you would like to hear such as, "You are loved."</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 13</p> <p>Make a donation to an organization doing needed work in your local community. If you can't give financially, read about what the organization is currently working on and consider how you can participate.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 14</p> <p>Write a letter to a loved one who has passed on. Tell them what you love and miss about them.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 15</p> <p>Write, text, or call someone who brings you joy. Tell them, "I appreciate you."</p>
 <p>DECEMBER 16</p> <p>Read the poem, "Don't Hesitate" by Mary Oliver. Reflect on how you might savor love's "plenty" today.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 17</p> <p>Go on a walk in a familiar place. As often as you can, stop and look up. Pay attention to all the details you usually miss.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 18</p> <p>Read about and reflect on the word, "Attunement." What does it look like for you to practice attunement this season?</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 19</p> <p>Write about the last time you were truly amazed. How did you feel?</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 20</p> <p>Take a few minutes to look at some of the images online of the cosmos captured by NASA and the Hubble telescope. How do you feel? Offer a prayer to God.</p>
 <p>DECEMBER 21</p> <p>Listen to or sing the song, "O Holy Night." What gives you a "thrill of hope"?</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 22</p> <p>Look at the list you wrote on December 1st (the things that bring you joy). Do something on that list.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 23</p> <p>Take a photo inspired by the word, "Amazement." Text it to a friend or post it online for others to see.</p> <p>Tag us! @sanctifiedart #howdoesawearyworldrejoice</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 24</p> <p>Reflect on 3 things you are deeply grateful for. Offer a prayer of gratitude to God.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 25</p> <p>Read the poem, "i thank You God for most this amazing" by e. e. cummings. Offer it as a prayer.</p>
 <p>DECEMBER 26</p> <p>Ask someone who is older than you what gives them hope. Then ask someone who is younger than you what gives them hope. What did you learn?</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 27</p> <p>Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Slowly scan every part of your body, starting with your toes and moving slowly all the way up to the top of your head. Notice how each part of your body feels. Notice where your body holds weariness. Continue to breathe deeply and do a body scan again, this time inviting each part of your body to hold joy.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 28</p> <p>Read the poem, "Touched By An Angel" by Maya Angelou. Consider where in your life love has arrived.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 29</p> <p>Look at the list you wrote on December 1st (the things that bring you joy). Do something on that list.</p>	 <p>DECEMBER 30</p> <p>Take a photo inspired by the word, "Hope." Text it to a friend or post it online for others to see.</p> <p>Tag us! @sanctifiedart #howdoesawearyworldrejoice</p>  <p>DECEMBER 31</p> <p>Reflect on the past year. What are the moments and memories that are filled with joy?</p>

ADVENT CALENDAR

Daily prompts for practicing joy in a weary world



How does a weary world rejoice?



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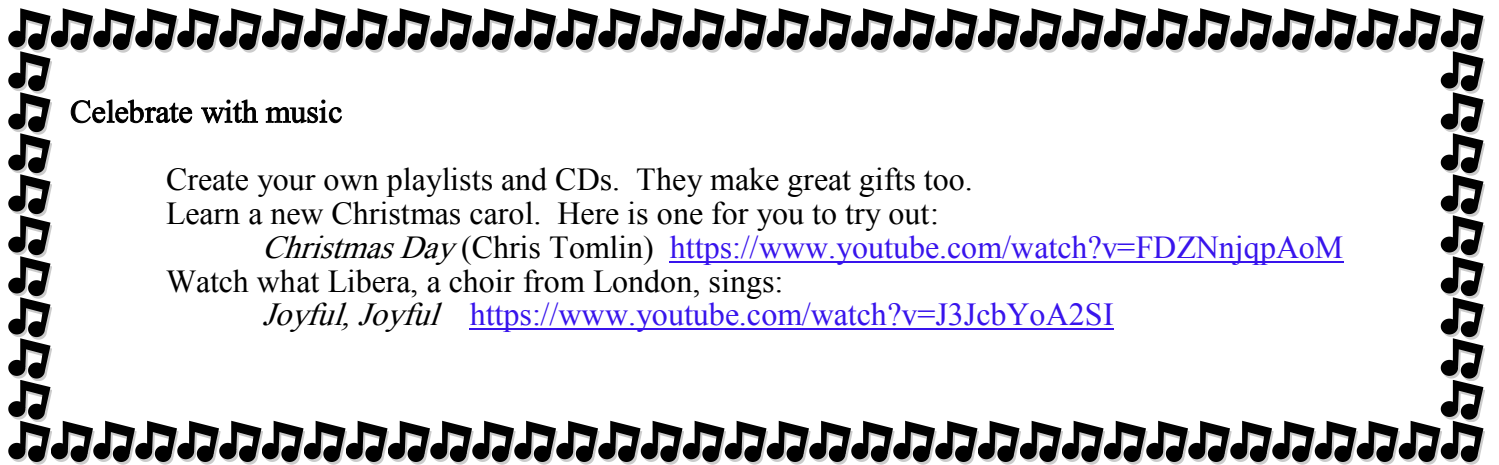
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Celebration



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| December 3 | After church. Decorate the Sanctuary! Helps us get ready for the holidays. Light lunch to follow. |
| December 9 | 10 am to 12:30 pm. Christmas crafts! Bring your family, friends and grandkids to create wreaths, ornaments, decorations and gifts. |
| December 12 | 7:30 pm Friends of Harmony, the barbershop quartet chorus that rehearses in Hindman Chapel, will offer a holiday concert. It raises money for the church. Bring your family and friends for a fun evening with a sing-along! |
| December 16 | 1 to 3 pm. Cookie exchange at Pastor Leslie's home. Bring cookies and recipes to share. Her address: 51 Rockne, 14223. Off Kenmore Ave near St. Joe's. |



Celebrate with music

Create your own playlists and CDs. They make great gifts too.
Learn a new Christmas carol. Here is one for you to try out:

Christmas Day (Chris Tomlin) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDZNjqpAoM>

Watch what Libera, a choir from London, sings:

Joyful, Joyful <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3JcbYoA2SI>

Celebrate with short videos

These are some of Maria's favorites. She admits they are commercials. But so entertaining and with good Christmas messages.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuRn2S7iPNU>

Mog the Cat, a Christmas hero!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq5SGSCZe4E>

What's the Greatest Gift?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWF2JBb1bvM>

Christmas 1914

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvXBbsRU83Q>

Best Christmas play ever!



Once again this Christmas season, we will continue our tradition of decorating the chancel with poinsettias, *beginning on Sunday, December 17*. To purchase one or more poinsettia plant(s) to honor the memory of a loved one or celebrate someone special, please complete the form below.

Cost is \$12.00 per plant.

Order form may be placed in the offering basket or in David Bond’s mail slot in the church office.

Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo, with “poinsettias” clearly indicated on your check.

Reservations also can be made by calling our church office at 884-7250, x204, or by emailing David Bond at the following address: dbond@firstchurchbuffalo.org, and following up with your check via mail or offering basket.

Online payment may be made at <https://tinyurl.com/fpcpoinsettias>. Choose “General Fund” and type “poinsettias” in the Notes section.

Dedications will be printed in the bulletin on December 19 and Christmas Eve. *If you would like your dedication to be anonymous, please indicate on the form.*

Your name: _____

Number of poinsettia plants you wish to order : _____

Name(s) of persons being celebrated or memorialized (PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY):

Special wording: _____

Please make my donation anonymous (check if yes): _____

I will take home my plant(s) on Christmas Eve: (check if yes): _____



