

For Advent Wreath lighting

Family Liturgy around the Advent Wreath

Open your time together by reading scripture from the week:

Week 1: Mark 13:24-37

Week 2: Mark 1:1-8

Week 3: John 1:6-8, 19-28

Week 4: Luke 1:26-38

Light the advent candle(s). (1 for week 1, 2 for week 2, etc.)

- 1) Go around the table and say what caught your attention from the scripture. (All answers are acceptable.)
- 2) How does the scripture relate to your week?
- 3) Talk together about the things you have given away this week. What gave you joy? What joy did you hope to give other people?
- 4) Where are you seeing God breaking through in your own life? Where do you feel like you are having to wait for God right now?
- 5) Share concerns, thanksgivings and other prayers together.

End together with the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Holy Household ToolKit

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to **do justice**, and to love
kindness, and to walk humbly with your
God?” Micah 6:8

Economic Justice

November and December

Prayer Partner Advent Wreath Making - Nov. 29th, 11AM

Come by the church any Sunday in November to pick up a metal advent wreath and candles. Gather local branches, pine cones and foliage. Log into our zoom page to meet with your prayer partner. Mo. Shivaun will be placing partners in break out rooms so they can build their wreaths together and catch up. Can't make it to our official zoom? Feel free to coordinate virtual meetings or letter writing to prayer partners.

Zoom Live Advent and Christmas Lessons and Carols - Dec. 20th and 27th, (times TBD)

Join us for the scriptures for Advent and Christmas, with appropriate carol singing over zoom. We know that we would rather be all together, singing and celebrating the season together, but hopefully this will give us an opportunity to worship together, with music, without Covid. Watch the BellTower for more details.

Special Liturgies

For Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to God our Father for all his gifts so freely bestowed upon us. For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea.

We thank you, Lord.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women, revealing the image of Christ,

We thank you, Lord.

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends,

We thank you, Lord.

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,

We thank you, Lord.

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,

We thank you, Lord.

For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering and faithful in adversity,

We thank you, Lord.

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice,

We thank you, Lord.

For the communion of saints, in all times and places,

We thank you, Lord.

Above all, we give you thanks for the great mercies and promises given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord;

To him be praise and glory, with you, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

Saint Days

St. Lucy Inspired

St. Lucy is celebrated in Europe, particularly Scandinavia and Italy. She lived in the 3rd century and was killed when they discovered her Christianity when she refused to marry the man her mom had arranged to be her husband. Her saint day used to correspond with the longest night of the year. Her day is celebrated with light the sharing of warm breads and coffees, which are shared throughout the community.

Invitation:

St. Lucy is traditionally celebrated on Dec. 13th, one of the the darkest days of the year. Celebrate in the darkness of the morning or evening with hot beverages, warm breads and candle or fire light. Remember the story of St. Lucy, firm in her faith even when faced with dire consequences. Think about light in darkness, hope in the midst of winter, and possibilities at the end of pandemic.

St. Nicholas Inspired

Often St. Nick is remembered for his love and generosity towards children, but St. Nick's sainthood goes well beyond toys for children. When St. Nicholas was the Bishop of Myra, Christianity was illegal and the Bishop's job more closely mirrored that of a shepherd. St. Nicholas had to protect his people, sometimes even in the midst of famines (when there was no food,) when soldiers came to arrest Christians, and even guard them from poverty and starvation forcing them to make bad or dangerous choices to survive.

Invitation:

Celebrate St. Nicholas Day on Dec. 6th. Leave shoes by the fireplace, (or an appropriate location in your home) to place in traditional St. Nick treats: citrus fruit, chocolate coins, or a candy cane. Retell the story of St. Nicholas together, remembering that he gave without seeking recognition, he blessed without judgement, and he took care of the people who were unable to take care of themselves.

Theme Setter - All Saints

Family Tree

Why: Systemic injustice stems from the same reality that creates healthy and thriving households - our families. Who are families are, what opportunities they have been afforded, and the priorities and stories that carry through our family line all travel through our family trees and are a part of who we are. Not everyone uses the same circumstances to the same ends - some family lines include hardships and addictions that inspire future generations towards change, and some family tragedies lead to devastating pain and a limiting of directions going forward. Without prayerfully examining our family tree, a practice of both gratitude for all the blessings and open reflection for choices that were less optimal or even deeply problematic, we cannot truly see our own place in God's world and our responsibilities to do justice moving forward.

Instructions:

Build a family tree from pictures and stories. Your family Tree could take up a wall or a spreadsheet. Work your way back from you and your siblings (if any) to your parents, to their parents, and beyond. Please share them to the St. John's Facebook page or email pictures or reflections to Mo. Shivaun.

Reflection:

Consider: What do you know about them? What did you not know? How far can you go back? What patterns do you notice? How does your family witness to the Gospel? How can you witness going forward?

Household Challenge #1 - Thanksgiving Inspired

Last Toolkit, we started exploring our needs and our wants, since sometimes we get the two confused and start deciding things we want are more important than the needs of others. One of the best ways to help keep the two straight is to practice gratitude. We say practice, because it isn't always easy to remember to say thank you. By practicing being thankful, we can appreciate all that we have and all the opportunities we have to bless other people.

Challenge:

For the month of November, each day, find one thing to be thankful for. Try not to repeat things for 30 days. You can write them in a journal, you can share them as a family over dinner, write them on a special table cloth or table runner, create leaves to fill a wall, or even post them on social media.

Reflection:

When you start looking for things to be thankful for is it easier to be thankful?
When was it hard to feel thankful? What helped to re-frame your perspective?
What is the opposite of gratitude? How are gratitude and generosity related?

St. John's Connection:- Thanksgiving Inspired

It's been a strange year, one where we've had to pray at home and felt deeply how much we miss our church in community. While we are at distance and working hard to stay connected through virtual means, discuss as a household what you miss about church and what church can be when we all can return. Please consider your stewardship commitment this year in gratitude for what St. John's has meant to you and all that it is capable of meaning in the year to come.

Household Challenge #2 - Advent Inspired

Advent is one of the two penitential seasons of the church year. This means these are times we focus on ways we can improve. One of the seasons is Lent, the build-up to Easter, where we look at our choices and we try harder to make better choices. Advent is a season about waiting. We remember that when the world was full of bad choices and when people weren't focused on loving God, God still loved the world. Instead of using Advent as Christmas, we can sit in the waiting period, in the hope of God, and focus on God's dream and how we can better live into it.

Challenge:

Spend the days of advent focused on generosity. Each day of advent, get rid of something. You can keep a box that goes at the end of the month or distribute things as appropriate. You can make themes - a week of food, a week of toys, a week of books, or you can just task each member of the household to pick a thing a day from their stuff.

Reflection:

In a season so often focused on the build up to Christmas and what gifts you will receive or need to buy, what was it like to instead keep your mind focused on what you could share, didn't need, or could be better used by someone else? Did it change the way you thought about Christmas? How does having less make it more likely for all people to have access to what they need?

St. John's Connection:- Advent Inspired

We are offering blessing your creche (your nativity scene) and blessing your advent wreath on YouTube. Each week, light your wreath as a household and say prayer to remind you of the hope promised in Christmas. Each week, add new figures to your creche to tell the story of Advent and Christmas.