PRAYER GUIDE

Advent 2026

"Lord, teach us to pray"
(Luke 11:1)

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NOTE FROM OUR RECTOR

THE DAILY FORM

Each day during the season of Advent, we will be meditating on the Lord's Prayer. Our devotions will follow this daily form:

1) **Light** Advent candle(s).

2) **Say** altogether, *"Lord, teach us to pray"* (*Luke 11:1*).

3) **Read** daily Scripture passage.

4) **Reflect** on a brief meditation.

5) **Learn**/recite The Lord's Prayer.

6) **Sing** the Advent hymn.

7) **Pray** a collect or other liturgical prayer.

8) **Extinguish** candle(s).

9) **Close** devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

10) **Craft:** decorate The Lord's Prayer banner or bake a loaf of bread with the recipe provided.

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

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A NOTE FROM OUR RECTOR

PRAYER AND WHOLE LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

As part of Whole Life Discipleship, this Advent our TFCA family will deepen our prayer lives by learning the Lord's Prayer together.

Some associate the Lord's Prayer with rote tradition. But Jesus intended far more. Taught in his Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), this prayer teaches us to depend on God, reorder our hearts around his kingdom, and seek his glory. As we await Christ's coming in Advent, the Lord's Prayer reminds us that waiting is not passive but purposeful. Prayer shapes how we live today as members of his inbreaking kingdom.

At TFCA, we often say, "We are not ourselves by ourselves." We need each other to grow in faith and love. Even the Lord's Prayer begins, "Our Father," reminding us we pray not only as individuals but as a body. The Liturgy Box, as part of Whole Life Discipleship, invites the **whole church** to share this Advent journey together.

Growth in Christ requires both information and transformation. That's why the Liturgy Box—a tool to make discipleship doable at home—weaves together Scripture, prayer, song, and practice, engaging the **whole person**: head, heart, and hands.

And formation happens not only on Sundays, but in our homes throughout the week. The Liturgy Box helps make praying at home simple, especially for families, so the **whole week** takes on a rhythm of worship.

That's Whole Life Discipleship: the whole church, the whole person, and the whole week, interwoven so we "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).

This Advent, as we celebrate Christ's first coming and anticipate his second, may the Lord teach us to pray, filling our homes and our church with longing for him. "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20)

In Christ,



The Rev. Dr. Samuel D. Ferguson
Rector

ADVENT HYMN

LO HE COMES WITH CLOUDS DESCENDING
Charles Wesley

Scan for the recordings to sing along

Verse 1:
Lo He comes with clouds descending
Once for favored sinners slain
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of His train
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia
Jesus now shall ever reign

Verse 2:
Every eye shall now behold Him
Robed in dreadful majesty
Those who set at naught and sold Him
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing
Shall the great Messiah see

Verse 3:
Now redemption, long-expected
See in solemn pomp appear
All His saints, by man rejected
Now shall meet him in the air
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
See the day of God appear

Verse 4:
Yea Amen! Let all adore Thee
High on Thine eternal throne
Saviour take the power and glory
Claim the kingdom for Thine own
O come quickly, O come quickly, O come quickly
Alleluia! Come Lord, come

Tip: Try introducing one verse of the hymn each of the four weeks of Advent until you've learned the entire hymn.

THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT



God the Father by Giovanni-Battista Cima da Conegliano (circa 1510-1517)

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.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first purple Advent candle (representing hope).

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: John 1:35-39.

4) REFLECT

In today's Bible passage Jesus bids his disciples — and bids us all — to "come and see." In the original context, this is simply an invitation for the disciples to see where Jesus lived on earth. But for us, it is an invitation to "come and see" where the risen Jesus dwells, in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father. We who have been filled with God's Spirit can now intercede to the Father through the Son, using the words that Jesus the Son himself has taught us: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name." This Advent, as we reflect on his first coming and anticipate his second coming, do you wonder at the fact that, through Jesus Christ, you can personally address God the Father? Are you willing to commit to "come and see" new things about Christ and his call on your life during this Advent season? Heaven might seem far away, but in fact it is not far from us. The power of heaven has come down to us in Jesus Christ, so that we might be drawn up to it, marveling at God's holiness and seeking to discern and follow God's will for our lives.

- **Big Thought:** Jesus invites us come with him and see!
  (*Hand motion: "come here" gesture*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 7)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candle.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

10) CRAFT: Assemble and display The Lord's Prayer Banner. (Directions are on page 70.)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first purple Advent candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 9:18-20.

4) REFLECT

Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" After giving an assortment of answers, Jesus asks Peter, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." The word "Christ" is not a last name; it is a royal title. It means "anointed one" and referred to the Messiah of Israel through whom an everlasting kingdom would be ushered in and to whom the nations would run for healing, hope, and salvation. Peter answered correctly, but he hardly knew the full extent of what he was saying. But through Scripture, we can. I wonder: who do you say that Jesus is? A good teacher? A moral exemplar? A wise religious guru? Or is he the Christ, crucified and risen for the life of the world? We pray the Lord's Prayer, not just because Jesus was wise or pious or poetic, but because Jesus was and is God. It's not good spiritual advice; it's divine spiritual direction! Jesus can only call God "Father" because he is the eternal Son, God from God, light from light, true God from true God. And we can only call God "our Father" because through Jesus we have been given the right to become sons and daughters of the living God. So then pray like sons and daughters, like your life depends on it—because it does.

- **Big Thought:** Jesus is the Christ of God. (*Hand motion: set a crown on your head to crown the royal Jesus Christ.*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 7)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candle.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first purple Advent candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 9:46-48.

4) REFLECT

In today's passage from Luke's Gospel, the disciples argue amongst themselves concerning "which of them was the greatest" (v. 46). Jesus responds by putting a child by his side and saying to them, "he who is least among you all is the one who is great" (v. 48). This pattern of lowliness leading to exaltation is a central theme of Jesus' teaching. Later in Luke 14:11, Jesus says likewise, "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." To address God as "in heaven" and "hallowed" (which means "holy") is to exalt God as wholly set apart from all other things and beings. We do not address a generic god amongst a pantheon of other options; we address the one, true, living, holy God. When you pray to God using the Lord's Prayer, does saying "hallowed be your Name" roll off your tongue and then off your spiritual radar? Or does addressing the holy God humble you precisely by exalting him? You will never pray big prayers to a small god. You will never lift up needs and petitions to a god that you don't believe can meet those needs. This Advent, pray big prayers and lift up real needs, petitions and praises to the holy God by saying, "hallowed be thy Name." By hallowing his name and by humbling our hearts, both our prayers and ourselves will be lifted up to the holy God, by the holy God, for his glory and our joy.

- **Big Thought:** We lift our hearts and our prayers to Holy God.
  (*Hand motion: raising our opened hands to heaven.*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 7)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candle.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first purple Advent candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 9:57-62.

4) REFLECT

In today's passage, Jesus invites his would-be disciples, saying "follow me." Enigmatic and engaging as Jesus is, we're prompted to take the invitation without hesitation. But perhaps it's worth asking if we tend to accept the invitation without fully counting the cost. It's relatively easy to follow a charismatic leader; but it's harder when the "follow me" is prefaced by "deny yourself and take up your cross" (Mt. 16:24). Here in Luke, when a would-be disciple asks permission to bury his father before departing on the journey of discipleship, Jesus says, "leave the dead to bury their own dead" and "no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (vv. 60, 62). What at first glance appears harsh, is in hindsight fair warning: the journey of discipleship is not a personal journey of painless, personal spiritual enhancement. To follow Jesus is a journey to the fullness of life that comes through self-denial and cross-bearing for our sake and for the sake of others. This journey prompts us to pray to the hallowed God, the Father in heaven, not as a caveat or as a crutch, but from a feeling of absolute necessity and dependence. The journey of following Jesus is not meant to be a silent journey; it is one meant to be steeped in prayer, to the Father through the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. And so, we follow, and so, we pray.

- **Big Thought:** Following Jesus is hard sometimes. We need God's help to follow him no matter what. (*Hand motion: flex arms to show resoluteness and strength.*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 7)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candle.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

10) CRAFT: Decorate the card that has this week's verse on it:
"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name." (See page 70 for directions.)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first purple Advent candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 10:21-24.

4) REFLECT

Luke 10:21-24 offers a full and clear display of the biblical truth of the Trinity, that God is one being in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The passage begins by saying that Jesus prayed "in/by the Holy Spirit" (v. 21). Jesus concludes by saying, "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (v. 24). People often wonder what difference the doctrine of the Trinity makes to our experience of God. Is it just some esoteric left-over from a time when theology was too philosophical for its own good? Perhaps here, this Advent, the reality of the Trinity is inviting us into something deeper than abstract theology. Perhaps Scripture is calling us this Advent not only to reflect on the Triune God, but to commune with the Triune God in prayer. To have fellowship and life together with God the Father, through the mediation of God the Son, by the Power of God the Holy Spirit. "No one knows the Father except the Son," says Jesus, "and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." By faith and baptism you are that "anyone" to whom Jesus has chosen to reveal the Father. To "know" in the Bible is never merely to "have information about" but to "personally be in relationship with" God. When you pray the words of the Son to the Father, remember that you do so in communion with the eternal God who has brought you into his eternal fellowship.

- **Big Thought:** We pray to our Triune God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (*Hand motion: hold up three fingers, then put hands together in prayer.*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 7)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candle.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first purple Advent candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 10:25-37.

4) REFLECT

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the most recognized and beloved passages in the entirety of the Bible. Often, we will refer to people who are helpful as "Good Samaritans," recalling the Samaritan man in the parable who responded to a fellow traveler in need with grace, compassion, and selfless service. But behind the actions of any human Good Samaritan is God himself who is and has always been the exemplar of love, compassion, and service. We are called to follow the way of the Good Samaritan because God in Christ has become the Good Samaritan to us, rescuing us along the way, bringing us to the inn of his presence, binding our wounds with the grace of the gospel, and offering us a new path of salvation through faith.

When you pray to God the Father, do you recognize in his holiness a sense of his benevolent, loving-kindness to you? Is "hallowing" or revering the name of God something that evokes a sense of awe and wonder in your soul? Does praying "hallowed be thy Name" cause you to fall down in worship, not out of terror but out of wonder that the God who dwells so high above has come very near to us through Jesus Christ? Rejoice in God, dear friends, when you pray, not by rote, but with reverence. For the king from on high is drawing near. He dwells with you; he dwells in you. May the presence of God the Good Samaritan with us and in us cause us to care for our neighbors with the love of God that has been poured into our hearts.

- **Big Thought:** God cares for us and dwells with us. (*Hand motion: place hands over heart.*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 7)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candle.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first purple Advent candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 11:5-13.

4) REFLECT

Jesus invites his disciples to pray boldly in today's passage. Our Lord beckons us, "ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened" (Luke 11:9-10). In verses 11-12, Jesus asks, "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" Then, in verse 13, Jesus says, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Hearing Jesus offer such an open-ended invitation, we often worry: what happens when I don't get what I asked for? Does this negate the truth of Jesus' promise that if we ask, "it will be given?" Notice, however, what is said to be given in verse 13: "how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." The ultimate gift of God is not a particular outcome, or a particular thing; no, the ultimate gift from God is God himself, from whom every other good gift is derived. As we pray "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name," we should pray boldly and with due recognition that God, the ultimate gift (and the only gift that will ultimately last) might not meet our expectations, but he never withholds our greatest ultimate need: eternal life, his holy presence, and fellowship with him. We could spend a lifetime wondering why God did not answer in the way that we thought he should. Or, why God did not give us what 'makes good sense to us.' Instead, let us pray boldly, knowing that God's faithfulness exceeds our every expectation because the gift is the abiding presence of the giver himself.

- **Big Thought:** The best gift is God himself! (*Hand motion: make a gesture of excitement and celebration!*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 7)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candle.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT



The Arrival in Bethlehem by Master of the Brussels Calling of Saint Matthew (circa 1540-1550)

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.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first purple Advent candle (representing hope) and the second purple Advent candle (representing peace).

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: 2 Peter 3:8-18.

4) REFLECT

In today's reading, Peter exhorts us to live holy lives because "the day of the Lord will come like a thief" (v. 10). Though judgment is coming, Christians are to live not only in holy reverence but also in joyful expectation. As Peter says, according to the promise of the Lord, "we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (v. 13). And so we pray, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." God's kingdom has already been inaugurated but is not yet fully here. To pray "thy kingdom come" is to petition God that his purposes, his will, and his ways would be the priority in our lives and in our prayers. When we pray this, do we pray it as a necessary caveat or as a genuine desire? Do we really pray "my will be done," tacking on "thy will" out of due respect for God or out of obligatory religious custom? To pray for God's kingdom to come is to pray that our promised future might come into the midst of our current predicament to transform the partial into the perfect. This Advent may God's kingdom come in Falls Church as it is in heaven, in Arlington as it is in heaven, into our houses, neighborhoods, families, and friendships on earth as it is in heaven. Amen!

- **Big Thought:** God's will be done. (*Hand motion: lift opened hands to the heavens and then bring your hands down, spreading your hands wide as if you are bringing God's goodness down from heaven and spreading it here around you.*)

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 23)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and the comfort of your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple Advent candles.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Isaiah 50:10-11.

4) REFLECT

In Isaiah 50:10-11, the prophet proclaims that "you who equip yourselves with burning torches" and who walk by the light on your own "fire" and "by the torches that you have kindled" will "lie down in torment." What can this possibly mean for us this Advent season? As we consider the Lord's Prayer, we can find a helpful parallel here. To walk by our own light, rather than the Lord's light, is akin to walking by our own will instead of God's will for the purposes of our own kingdoms rather than God's kingdom. Instead, Isaiah calls whoever "walks in darkness and has no light" to "trust in the name of the LORD" and to "rely on his God." Jesus sets this teaching to prayer, bidding us to anchor our prayers in God's will, ways, and kingdom — praying "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Perhaps one way to avoid praying the Lord's Prayer in rote, religious ways, void of feeling or spiritual fervor, is to envision the petition "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" as a means of grace. This is a deeply needed reminder that walking by the light of our own lamps, in our own kingdoms, in accord with our own will, can only ever lead to spiritual isolation, tribulation, and torment. But committing ourselves to God's will, God's ways, and God's kingdom, is more than a necessary caveat but the very means by which heaven's influence is made present on earth.

- **Big Thought:** We walk in God's light. (*Hand motion: walk in place.*)

thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 23)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the *Nunc Dimittis* (The Song of Simeon) [Morning]
or the *Phos Hilaron* (O Gladsome Light) [Evening]

Nunc Dimittis (The Song of Simeon)

Lord, now let your servant depart in peace,
according to your word.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory of your people Israel.

Phos Hilaron (O Gladsome Light)

O gladsome light,
Pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!
Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
And our eyes behold the vesper light,
We sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of Life,
And to be glorified through all the worlds.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple Advent candles.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Isaiah 51:1-6.

4) REFLECT

As we continue to reflect on what it means to pray "thy kingdom come" following the teaching of our Lord, Isaiah 51:6 reminds us of the difference between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God. Every earthly kingdom, even the purest and most just of them, will come to an end, because they exist by the power of flawed human willpower. But God's kingdom, over which the rule and reign of God is exercised, goes on forever. In Isaiah 51:6, the prophet exhorts God's people to "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner." This is the lot of every earthly kingdom. Yet, the prophet continues from the sobering truth about temporary broken things to the hope-filled truth about eternal blessed things. He says of God's kingdom, "but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed." To pray with a kingdom perspective is to intentionally subordinate all other earthly desires and plans to God's perfect will, reign, and rule —God's kingdom. Rather than erasing hope, praying with a kingdom perspective anchors hope. This is because kingdom hope is built not on the tragic, fleeting whims and unpredictable circumstances of everyday life, but on the foundation of God's perfect promises.

- **Big Thought:** God's kingdom is forever. (*Hand motion: stretch out your arms as wide as you can.*)

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 23)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and the comfort of your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple Advent candles.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Isaiah 52:7-10.

4) REFLECT

Today we hear the prophet announce to God's people, "The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion" (v. 8). This theme of God's return to his people is central to the gospel message. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news," says Isaiah, "who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation" (v. 7). In the liturgy we proclaim, "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again," and in the Apostles' Creed we confess "he will come again to judge the living and the dead." In our daily prayers, we petition God to bring his kingdom and his will to exist "on earth as it is in heaven." Do we really mean it, or are we quite alright handling things here on earth with God keeping up his residence in heaven? Or do we long to escape this earth, to leave it behind, and be with God in heaven? The story of the Bible is heaven coming down in the manger, and the new heavens and new earth coming down to renew the face of the earth, in the Book of Revelation. So, publish this good news, this great, abiding peace. Proclaim it. Lift up your voice and sing it. And finally, pray it, so that "eye to eye" all might see "the return of the LORD to Zion," on earth as it is in heaven.

- **Big Thought:** Tell the good news! Christ is coming! (*Hand motion: hands to mouth to proclaim good news.*)

thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 23)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the *Nunc Dimittis* (The Song of Simeon) [Morning]
or the *Phos Hilaron* (O Gladsome Light) [Evening]

Nunc Dimittis (The Song of Simeon)

Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word.
For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of your people Israel.

Phos Hilaron (O Gladsome Light)

O gladsome light,
Pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!
Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
And our eyes behold the vesper light,
We sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of Life,
And to be glorified through all the worlds.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

10) CRAFT: Decorate the card that has this week's verse on it: *"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."* (See directions on page 70.)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple Advent candles.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Isaiah 53:1-6.

4) REFLECT

Every earthly kingdom is an 'earn your keep' kingdom. Do you want to be valued? Do you want to get what you feel you deserve? To these questions the ethos of the earthly kingdom universally responds: "prove yourself to me, earn your place at the table, secure your own position and destiny, and maintain your status by all means possible and necessary." But over seven hundred years before Jesus was born, Isaiah 53:1-6 describes the character of a different kind of king whose kingdom is secured not by human effort or merit, but by the merit and mediation of his own perfect life and atoning sacrifice. Isaiah 53:1-6 says, "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." When we follow the pattern of prayer set by this king for this kingdom—Jesus the Messiah and the kingdom of God—we cease to exist by the rules of the earthly kingdoms. We are transferred from a kingdom of earning into a kingdom of grace. The Lord's Prayer gives us an alternate script for life in which our every earthly endeavor is integrated into a kingdom economy of atonement, acceptance and peace with God by grace alone, through faith alone, through the merits of Jesus Christ alone. Therefore, let your soul be at rest from the economy of human earning and prayerfully invest in the economy of God's grace; and pray that this kingdom would come "on earth as it is in heaven."

- **Big Thought:** God invites us to rest in his kingdom. (*Hand motion: hold out opened hands and breathe deeply, receiving God's provision and peace.*)

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 23)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and the comfort of your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple Advent candles.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Isaiah 54:7-10.

4) REFLECT

In today's passage, Isaiah proclaims a comforting word from the Lord: "'For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,' says the LORD, who has compassion on you" (v. 10). To pray, "thy kingdom come" does not erase the tensions and tribulations of life; they remain and sometimes increase! To cry out with genuine sincerity and surrender, "thy will be done," does not immediately calm the troublesome seasons of this often-turbulent life. But we can pray these things in sure hope that the brokenness of this present world will one day be healed by the blessedness of the kingdom of God. That this will yield new heavens and a new earth where there will be no more crying, no more pain, and where death will never taunt life ever again. This Advent as we pray "thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven," may we do so without our fingers crossed, but with the full and certain assurance of the God who keeps his promises through Jesus Christ, so that "though the mountains may depart and the hills be removed" the steadfast love of God shall not depart from us and his covenant of peace shall not be removed.

- **Big Thought:** God keeps his promises. (*Hand motion: place one hand over heart, and hold the other hand up, like making an oath.*)

thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 23)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the *Nunc Dimittis* (The Song of Simeon) [Morning]
or the *Phos Hilaron* (O Gladsome Light) [Evening]

Nunc Dimittis (The Song of Simeon)

Lord, now let your servant depart in peace,
according to your word.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory of your people Israel.

Phos Hilaron (O Gladsome Light)

O gladsome light,
Pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!
Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
And our eyes behold the vesper light,
We sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of Life,
And to be glorified through all the worlds.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple Advent candles.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Isaiah 55:1-13.

4) REFLECT

In Isaiah 55, we are given a great vision of hope and peace upon which our prayer can be established with confidence and joyful expectation. In verse 13, Isaiah says that when we come into God's blessing, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Thorns, thistles, and briers represent sin and brokenness. Though that may be our present lot, that is not our inheritance. Instead, in the place of the piercing sting of thorns shall be the evergreen trees of cypress and myrtle. Throughout the Bible, these trees appear whenever God's people are experiencing the blessing of salvation and peace. When we pray for God's "kingdom to come," this is a prayer of great hope, because it is, in essence, a prayer that God will transform the thorns of our sinful selves into the trees that are recipients of God's saving grace. Therefore, be not afraid. Call forth God's kingdom that turns piercing thorns into purified trees, just as we have been made clean through Christ, and live forever as trees planted by streams of his living water.

- **Big Thought:** God promises us peace and life. (*Hand motion: stretch your arms over your head, like the round canopy of a myrtle tree or a tall, narrow cypress tree.*)

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 23)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and the comfort of your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

THE THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT



Boy with a Basket of Bread by Evaristo Baschenis (circa 1655-1665)

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.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first purple Advent candle (representing hope) and the second purple Advent candle (representing peace) and the pink Advent candle (representing joy).

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: John 3:22-30.

4) REFLECT

The petition "give us this day our daily bread" highlights our absolute dependence upon God for our creation, preservation, and redemption. In today's passage, John the Baptist highlights the gracious provision of God when he says, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven" (v. 27). Instead of focusing on himself as the focus of his life and ministry, John the Baptist focuses on Jesus, saying "He must increase, but I must decrease" (v. 30). To pray, "give us this day our daily bread," is to recognize the need for daily physical sustenance and divine spiritual sustenance. The nourishment of God who is creator, sustainer, and redeemer of the body and the soul. This petition is an antidote to presumption. It is an instrument by which we remember that we do not exist independently of God, but as the General Thanksgiving in the Book of Common Prayer states, "We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory." Lord, "give us this day our daily bread." Lord, be for us this day the bread of life.

- **Big Thought:** Jesus is our daily bread. (*Hand motion: make a gesture of bringing food to your mouth.*)

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 39)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent

O Lord Jesus Christ, you sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise make ready your way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient toward the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world, we may be found a people acceptable in your sight; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and forever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

10) CRAFT: Bake a loaf of fresh bread. (Recipe on page 72.)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple candles and the pink candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 16:19-31.

4) REFLECT

In the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), the Bible reveals that the rich man "feasted sumptuously every day" (v. 19). At the rich man's gate lay "a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table" (vv. 20-21). When the two men died, the poor man "was carried by the angels to Abraham's side" while the rich man was in a place of torment (vv. 22-23). Abraham is depicted as saying to the rich man, "remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish" (v. 25). This is a striking parable that highlights the desire to consume and be filled without regard for the spiritual and physical hunger of others, especially our neighbors. When we petition the Lord, "give us this day our daily bread," the heart that prays to be fed should seek to cultivate hands that long to feed others. Jesus speaks similarly in Matthew 25, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me . . . Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:35-40). This Advent, as we pray the Lord's Prayer, may we also pray for the Lord's heart so that we may be the Lord's hands to those who cry out "give us this day our daily bread." Let us be the ones whom the Lord not only feeds, but the ones through whom the Lord feeds others with the bodily sustenance of daily bread and the spiritual sustenance of the bread of life.

- **Big Thought:** Let us share the daily bread God gives us. (*Hand motion: with one hand hold an imaginary basket of bread, and with the other hand distribute bread.*)

Give us this day our daily bread.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 39)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY Prayerfully recite The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple candles and the pink candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 17:1-4.

4) REFLECT

In Luke 17:4 Jesus presents his disciples with a difficult teaching: "if your brother sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." The exhortation is challenging because sin wounds us and reconciliation is hard. Vengeance comes more naturally to us than forgiveness. And yet, as we pray "give us this day our daily bread," and as we long to be the ones through whom physical and spiritual bread comes to others, we can recognize something central to the teaching of Jesus, namely, that the person who prays the Lord's Prayer ought to also pursue the Lord's character. It would be odd to pray the words of Jesus without seeking to conform ourselves to the heart of Jesus. The heart of Jesus is concerned with feeding the body and the soul with good food, and with quenching our bodily and spiritual thirst by having us drink from springs of living water welling up to eternal life. The heart that forsakes forgiveness will pray the Lord's Prayer in spite of others, in contradiction to others, and not for the sake of others. Let us pray the words of our Lord, not with a heart of vengeance and unforgiveness, but with a heart of humility and repentance, willing to forgive even as we have been forgiven. In this way, we will develop hearts that long to receive daily bread, and hearts that long to provide, rather than withhold, from others.

- **Big Thought:** Forgive others, as God forgives us. (*Hand motion: ASL for "forgive".*)

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 39)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent

O Lord Jesus Christ, you sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise make ready your way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient toward the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world, we may be found a people acceptable in your sight; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and forever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple candles and the pink candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 17:20-37.

4) REFLECT

In today's passage, Jesus says, "The kingdom of God will not come in ways that can be observed" (v. 20). He then outlines the basic disposition of a Christian in regard to the kingdom of God. Christians are not depicted as people who are obsessed with the 'end times' but as people who are completely committed to self-sacrificial living—"Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it" (v. 33). There is a sense that when we pray "give us this day our daily bread" we are not merely saying, "give us breakfast, lunch and dinner" but much more deeply "feed us with the bread of life, the bread of heaven—feed us with your Word, with yourself, O Lord, by faith through the Holy Spirit." After all, it is after a miraculous feeding, the Feeding of the 5000, that Jesus gives his famous Bread of Life discourse, which places the themes of hunger and thirst within a deeper, eternal context. Jesus says to the crowd, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). When we pray the Lord's Prayer, do we see the ultimate nourishment that we need in worldly meals or in the heavenly feast that occurs by faith? Do we recognize in our earthly hunger, our deeper and abiding spiritual hunger—which can only ever be truly satisfied in God? Therefore, we pray, "give us this day our daily bread" and give us faith, O Lord, that we might hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest your Word, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. Keep us hungry, O Lord. Amen!

- **Big Thought:** Lord, make us hungry for your word. (*Hand motion: open one hand like a book. With the other hand, make a gesture of bringing food to your mouth.*)

Give us this day our daily bread.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 39)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY Prayerfully recite The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

Everyone: Thanks be to God.

10) CRAFT: Decorate the banner card that has this week's verse on it: *"Give us this day our daily bread."* (See directions on page 70.)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple candles and the pink candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 18:9-14.

4) REFLECT

In the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, the Pharisee shows himself to be a self-righteous, arrogant man (vv. 11-12) while the Tax Collector (a group universally despised in the ancient world) shows himself to be penitent and humble, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (v. 13). Jesus sums up the parable by saying, "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted" (v. 14). Part of what keeps us humble as disciples is the lowliness of being in need. The Lord's Prayer highlights this, which is a welcomed daily reminder. We did not create ourselves; we cannot sustain ourselves, and we certainly cannot save ourselves. No, we must instead ask, from a place of deep humility and lack, for the bread that feeds the body (to be sustained) and for the bread that feeds the soul (to be saved). "Give us this day our daily bread," is never a rote concession but a true physical and spiritual necessity. Humility and the recognition of our deep and continuous need saves us from praying the Lord's Prayer like a Pharisee and frees us to pray it like a Tax Collector, a sinner, saved by grace, and fed by the free grace of God offered eternally without measure.

- **Big Thought:** God, be merciful to me, a sinner. (*Hand motion: bow head and clasp hands in humility.*)

Give us this day our daily bread.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 39)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the **Surge Illuminare** (*Arise, shine, for your light has come*)

**This prayer sets Isaiah 60 (Old Testament reading today) to a prayer that the church has been praying for millennia*

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.
For behold, darkness covers the land;
deep gloom enshrouds the peoples.
But over you the Lord will rise,
and his glory will appear upon you.
Nations will stream to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawning.
Your gates will always be open;
by day or night they will never be shut.
They will call you, The City of the Lord,
the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
Violence will no more be heard in your land,
ruin or destruction within your borders.
You will call your walls, Salvation,
and all your portals, Praise.
The sun will no more be your light by day;
by night you will not need the brightness of the moon.
The Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple candles and the pink candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 18:35-43.

4) REFLECT

When Jesus heals a blind man in Luke 18:35-43, the blind man asks "Lord, let me recover my sight," and the Bible tells us that Jesus said to him, "Recover your sight; your faith has made you well." The literal translation is "your faith has saved you." We often pray for healing. Sometimes we see immediate miraculous results. Often times we do not (or at least not in the ways that we were expecting or asking). When Jesus says "your faith has saved you," there is an important lesson for us, that whatever the present manifestation of healing we experience or hope to experience, it is faith in Christ that ultimately saves us. The miracle is not only that a blind man was made to see, but also that faith in Jesus saves. The healing of sight is no small thing, but it is merely a sign of something greater, namely, that the true healing of the resurrection is on offer to all who place their faith in Jesus. As we pray, "give us this day our daily bread," let us remember that the true fruit of faith in Christ is resurrection life. Jesus himself says, "Whoever **feeds** on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day," (John 6:54) and "everyone who looks on the Son and **believes in him** should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:40). How do we feed on Christ the bread of life? We believe. That faith can move mountains. Faith manifests in miraculous healing sometimes, but it always results in resurrection life. Therefore, pray, "give us this day our daily bread," and as the Book of Common Prayer says, "feed on him in your hearts **by faith** with thanksgiving."

- **Big Thought:** Feed on Jesus in our hearts. (*Hand motion: open one hand as if you are holding some food. With the other hand, pick up the food, and bring it to your heart.*)

Give us this day our daily bread.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 39)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY Prayerfully recite The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT the first two purple candles and the pink candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 19:11-28.

4) REFLECT

In The Parable of the Ten Minas, Jesus teaches his disciples to be faithful with what they have, knowing that it comes from the Lord. It is here that Jesus teaches, "I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (v. 26). When we pray for the Lord's kingdom to come, and for his will to be, done; when we pray for our daily bread, we must ask, are we seeking to meet a felt need that will be satisfied by divine delivery in all these requests? Or, do we have a sense that an answered prayer will drive us more deeply into God, make us not less hungry, but more hungry for the food of heaven, for the will of God to be carried out "on earth as it is in heaven." Answered prayer comes with kingdom responsibility. Are we hoarding God's grace, and made to slumber by the peace that grace brings to us? Or does the grace of answered prayer give us at once a rest for our souls and restlessness in our hearts to see righteousness of God bless and renew the face of the earth? Let us pray as we come to the end of this third week of Advent, that we might be "good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Pet. 4:10). Let us not merely consume our daily bread. But let us steward it to a world that hungers and thirsts. Let us bring to others the bread of life and the living water. Feed us, O lord, and then make us to feed others with your life-giving Word working by your new-life-creating Spirit.

- **Big Thought:** Lord, help us steward well the bread you give us. (*Hand motion: open hands that receive, hold, and share.*)

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 39)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent

O Lord Jesus Christ, you sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise make ready your way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient toward the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world, we may be found a people acceptable in your sight; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and forever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

THE FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT



The Return of the Prodigal Son by Guercino (circa 1640)

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.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT all three purple candles (representing hope, peace, and love) and the one pink candle (representing joy).

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 1:26-38.

4) REFLECT

As we move into the fourth and final week of Advent, we encounter an angel addressing Mary. The angel says, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus" (vv. 30-31). Bewildered, Mary responds, "How will this be, since I am a virgin" (v. 34)? The angel answers her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God" (v. 35). Mary responds, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (v. 38).

As we reflect on this awe-inspiring revelation and foretelling of our Lord's miraculous conception and virgin birth, we can find our seasonal focus on the Lord's Prayer to be particularly fitting. In the angel's prophetic command is a clue explaining how it is that we can pray "forgive us our trespasses" to God through Jesus. "And you shall call his name Jesus," says the angel. Behind the name Jesus that is so familiar to us is not only the story of divine conception and birth, but divine salvation. The name Jesus means "Yahweh saves" or "Yahweh is salvation." As a Pharisee says elsewhere in the gospels, "who can forgive sin but God alone?" Exactly. Jesus, "who was in the beginning with God and who was God." Jesus, the one through whom "all things have been made" (John 1:1-3). Jesus, in whom "all things hold together," by whose blood "all things are reconciled," and in whom "the fulness of God dwells bodily" (Col. 1:17-20). Jesus, "Yahweh saves," is the one through whom the petition for the forgiveness of sins is accomplished and mediated. And so, we pray to Jesus and through Jesus, "forgive us our trespasses."

- **Big Thought:** Jesus saves! (*Hand motion: make the sign of the cross.*)

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 55)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and as we are sorely hindered by our sins from running the race that is set before us, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT all three purple candles and the pink candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Isaiah 64.

4) REFLECT

As we anticipate the second coming of our Lord and prepare to enter once again into the mystery of his incarnation in the Christmas season, we are called by today's passage in Isaiah to remember our need for a savior, prompting us to pray "forgive us our trespasses." In Isaiah 64, the prophet cries out to God on behalf of the people, "Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?" (v. 5). Isaiah petitions God for forgiveness and mercy, calling him Father, "O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand . . . remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people" (vv. 8-9). It is easy to get to Christmas and be warmed by the cuteness of the manger but forget the urgency of the incarnation. The forgiveness we require is not ornamental to eternal life; it is our deepest need. As creatures who are made "in the image of God" to have fellowship with God, forgiveness is not merely a judicial pardon but a reconciling reality. As Romans 5 says, "since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation" (Rom. 5:1, 11). The unanswered petition in Isaiah 64, "shall we be saved?" is answered in the justifying and reconciling forgiveness of God available in Jesus Christ. But as we cry out "forgive us our trespasses" let us not forget that those who have been forgiven must boldly pursue the forgiveness of others praying, "as we forgive those who trespass against us."

- **Big Thought:** Jesus forgives our sin. (*Hand motion: make the sign of the cross.*)

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 55)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY The Magnificat

My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
For he has regarded
the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from now on,
all generations will call me blessed;
For he that is mighty has magnified me,
and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on those who fear him,
throughout all generations.
He has shown the strength of his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination
of their hearts.
He has brought down the mighty from their
thrones,
and has exalted the humble and meek.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.
He, remembering his mercy, has helped his
servant Israel,
as he promised to our fathers, Abraham and
his seed forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and
to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT all three purple candles and the pink candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Isaiah 65.

4) REFLECT

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ on Christmas, today's passage helps us to set our minds on the result of redemption in him. "Behold," declares the Lord, "I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind" (v. 17). The prophecy concludes with this powerful proclamation, "they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, says the LORD" (v. 25). Receiving forgiveness creates a new heart that begets forgiveness to others. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." To the Christian, the world is not our enemy; it is the sum total of the people that Christ came to save. Scripture tells us that "God our savior... desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3-4) and that God does not wish "that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Therefore, when we pray with repentant hearts for forgiveness to be applied, we must always find ourselves inclined toward the spiritual good of others. To exist as forgiven people who withhold forgiveness is to live as a walking contradiction. But to exist as forgiven people who pray for the power to forgive others is to walk in the way of Jesus even as we pray the words he gave us. May it be so in us, so that the gospel may go forth through us to the world that Jesus came to save.

- **Big Thought:** God, help us forgive those who hurt us. (*Hand motion: ASL "forgive".*)

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 55)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and as we are sorely hindered by our sins from running the race that is set before us, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT all three purple candles and the pink candle.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Isaiah 66.

4) REFLECT

In today's passage, the prophet Isaiah proclaims that the Lord declares, "this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word" (v. 2). Tomorrow is Christmas Eve. The spirit of the season is all around us. We've lit the final Advent candle and we long to light the Christ candle. We eagerly await the holy presence of Jesus, the Son of God on earth, God with us, Emmanuel. And yet, it is tempting to bask in the majesty of 'peace on earth' without remembering the reason for his appearing among us: there is no peace apart from the forgiveness that comes from Christ's atoning death and victorious resurrection. Christ in the manger can never be separated from Christ on the cross, and Christ who walks out of an empty tomb. Therefore, it is fitting at this most holy and anticipatory Christmas moment, not to find the "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" as an intrusion on the glad tidings of the season, but as the very foundation of our rejoicing. "Merry Christmas" and "forgive us our trespasses" are not two 'moods' or 'flavors' that we should avoid mixing lest we ruin Christmas cheer. The cheerfulness of Christmas finds its genesis in the incarnation. As the great Christmas carol, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" proclaims, "Glory to the newborn King: peace on earth, and mercy mild, **God and sinners reconciled**!"

- **Big Thought:** "God and sinners reconciled!" (*Hand motion: hug.*)

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 55)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY The Magnificat

My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
For he has regarded
the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from now on,
all generations will call me blessed;
For he that is mighty has magnified me,
and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on those who fear him,
throughout all generations.
He has shown the strength of his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination
of their hearts.
He has brought down the mighty from their
thrones,
and has exalted the humble and meek.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.
He, remembering his mercy, has helped his
servant Israel,
as he promised to our fathers, Abraham and
his seed forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and
to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

8) EXTINGUISH candles.

9) CLOSE devotional time together saying these words:
Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

1**0) CRAFT**: Decorate the banner card that has this week's verse on it: *"And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."* (See directions on page 70.)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24 *Christmas Eve*

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT all four Advent candles (representing hope, peace, joy, and love). Then light the white Christ candle (symbolizing holiness and purity of Christ—Christ who is the Light of the World).

2) SAY all together, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: Luke 2:1-20.

4) REFLECT

On this holy night, Luke's Gospel records an angel of the Lord who addresses the shepherds in the field saying,

> "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger" (vv.10-12).

The passage continues,

> "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!'" (vv. 13-14).

It is here, in this moment, that so many of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer come to life for us. We "hallow" the name of God in heaven, and we pray "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Here, in the manger, that prayer is answered in the most profound and surprising sense—Jesus, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem. We pray, "give us this day our daily bread," and here Jesus who will say later in his life, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35), comes down to be for us the bread from heaven. And it is here that Jesus—born in a manger, who is literally "Yahweh saves"—brings us the forgiveness of our sins and the power to forgive others. Let us marvel tonight that instead of abandoning us in our impurity, God brought his purity into union with our nature, so that he could heal us, forgive us, and save us through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

- **Big Thought:** Jesus is the answer to our prayers! (*Hand motion: clasp hands in prayer.*)

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 55)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for Christmas Eve

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

8) LINGER in the Advent candlelight. Before extinguishing all five candles, say aloud together, "*Christ, our Light.*"

CHRISTMAS DAY



Birth in Bethlehem by Gebhard Fugel (circa 1937)

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.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 *Christmas Day*

THE DAILY FORM

1) LIGHT all five candles.

2) SAY altogether, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

3) READ Daily Scripture: John 1:1-18.

4) REFLECT

Christmas has come. Emmanuel, God with us. We celebrate the coming of the Lord, and anticipate his coming again, that his kingdom might fully come, "on earth as it is in heaven." It might seem strange to pray "lead us not into temptation" and "deliver us from evil" on such a happy day of celebration. Can't we pause the sin stuff, just for a day? And yet, is Christmas not one of the most tempting days of all? How easy it is to let the distractions and celebration of Christmas lead us to forget Christ! The warm glow of seasonal lights. The nostalgia of Christmas songs on your Spotify playlist (yes, even that cringy one from Paul McCartney, "simply having a wonderful Christmas-time"). The charm of our favorite Christmas movies watched under the cover of a warm, fleece blanket while the cold winds feel far from us outside. Oh, what a great comfort. It's important to note, as the Anglican Catechism tells us, "God never tempts anyone, nor is he the cause of any sin; but he does allow [us] to be tested so that [we] may grow in faith and obedience." God never tempts us, but it is fitting, in a season so prone to paradoxical forgetfulness, to pray against all earthly temptations and against the evil of forgetting Jesus during a holiday named after him! Perhaps what makes Christmas so 'magical' in the first place, though, really is something worth cherishing and hanging on to, that deeply ingrained sense of indescribable hope and peace that we feel in this season. In a world wracked with temptation, evil, deception, betrayal, war, and uncertainty, it is the one born in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord, Emmanuel, who defeats all evil, exhausts evil of its power, and replaces it with goodness, redemption, and life. For in Jesus, says John, "was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:4-5). Merry Christmas!

- **Big Thought:** God is with us! (*Hand motion: ASL "Emmanuel".*)

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

5) LEARN/recite The Lord's Prayer (see page 67)

6) SING Advent Hymn

Scan for the recordings to sing along.

7) PRAY the Collect for Christmas Day

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born this day of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

8) LINGER in the Advent candlelight. Before extinguishing all five candles, say aloud together, "*Christ, our Light.*"

9) CRAFT: Decorate the banner card that has this week's verse on it: *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."* (See directions on page 70.)

APPENDIX A:
DIRECTIONS FOR THE LORD'S PRAYER BANNER CRAFT

The Lord's Prayer Banner is intended to be on display in your home throughout the season of Advent. Each week, you will decorate a card with the provided symbols. Consider displaying the banner in a prominent place in your home, such as your mantle, Christmas tree, or bookcase.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF ADVENT, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29
'Lord, Teach Us to Pray'

To begin, assemble the banner by attaching the prayer cards to the jute string with the provided clothespins. Each week, you will decorate one card (un-clip it) and then rehang it on your banner.

Order of cards
Title card: *Lord, teach us to pray.*
~
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.
~
Amen.

After the banner is assembled, decorate the **title card.** Glue the **praying hands** onto the card and/or add your own illustrations.

DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name'

- Use a **golden paint pen** or **jewels** to decorate the **WOODEN CROWN** and glue the crown to the second card.

DURING THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'

- Collect some natural materials from outside, such as grass leaves, and twigs.
- Use the **cotton balls** (representing heaven), and natural materials to create a collage on the third card.

DURING THE THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

'Give us this day our daily bread'

- Glue the **wooden loaf of bread** to your card. You might also draw a few items you enjoy eating on your card.
- **Special family activity:** Consider making bread using the provided recipe.

DURING THE FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

'And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us'

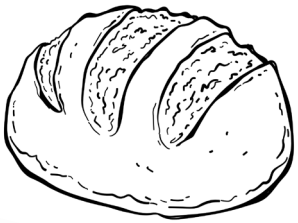
- Use scissors to cut the **red felt square** into a heart. Glue the heart to the card.
- Open the **band-aid** and stick it over the heart onto the card.

ON CHRISTMAS DAY

'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil'

- Use the **nativity craft kit** to create nativity scene.
- Decorate the Amen card as you wish with a picture of your family.

APPENDIX B:
RECIPE FOR RUSTIC BREAD



INGREDIENTS:

(*The ingredients listed yield two small loaves*)

- Up to 3 cups warm water
- 2 ¼ tsp (1 pkg) active dry yeast
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 6-7 cups (750 g) all-purpose flour
- 3 tsp salt

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large mixing bowl, mix 2 cups of water slowly into yeast and sugar. Add water, (1-2 Tbsp at a time) as needed. Let batter sit for about 10 minutes until bubbly.

2. Add salt. Add flour slowly (about ½ cup at a time). Mix by hand with a wooden spoon or mix in a stand mixer with a dough hook until combined into a soft dough. (The dough should be slightly sticky to the touch but not so much that it comes off on your hands. If it's too sticky, add a little bit of flour at a time.)

3. Cover the bowl loosely with plastic wrap. Let rise at least one hour.

4. Fill a baking dish with 2 inches of water and place on the bottom rack in oven, to create steam for an extra crispy crust.

5. Preheat oven to 450°F and place a pizza stone or flipped-over cookie sheet in the oven to heat.

6. Sprinkle flour on the counter, turn out the dough, fold on itself, divide in half and form dough into 2 balls. Don't knead or handle the dough more than you need to. Add a little flour if it's too sticky.

7 With a sharp knife, cut an X shape on top of the balls.

8. Place on a lightly-floured pan, then place on top of the hot pizza stone or cookie sheet.

9. Bake for about 25-30 minutes or until golden brown and cooked through.

10. Wait for at least 60 minutes before cutting the bread, as the crust is still forming. This will keep the loaf from deflating.