

Presbytery Lights: An Advent Luminaria Devotional



Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. While awaiting the blessed arrival of Christ during the Advent Season, the Christian Educators of the Baltimore Presbytery invite every household in the Presbytery to take part in our Advent Luminaria Devotional. Starting on November 29 and then every Sunday before Christmas and on Christmas Day, gather your household, light your battery-powered candle, place it in your decorated luminaria bag and meditate together on the lesson of the week—Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and Christ. Following each devotional time, place your luminaria on your porch or in your front window for the rest of the evening to let your neighbors know you are preparing your heart and mind to celebrate the arrival of our Savior.

We recommend families start decorating their luminaria by writing one word on each side of the bag: Hope (Nov 29), Peace (Dec 6), Joy (Dec 13), Love (Dec 20) and then let the Holy Spirit guide you to personalize the rest. Take photos of your luminaria to share on your church's website or social media pages using #baltimorepresbyterylights.

It is our hope that while social distancing during the pandemic, we can join together as a Presbytery throughout the Advent season.

Graphic Design: Elizabeth Baril, Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church
Editing: Liz Perraud, Christ Memorial Presbyterian Church



Week 1 Hope

Read Psalm 33:20

We put our hope in the Lord. God is our help and our shield. (CEB)

Pray

Eternal God, as we light our Advent candle today, we thank you for the hope you give to us as we await the arrival of baby Jesus. Please help us to keep our focus on Jesus, the reason for the season, and share our hope of a world filled with peace, joy, and love to all, now and always. Amen.

Do

Follow God's lead and put hope into action this week by

Helping at least
One
Person
Each day.

Encourage family and friends to participate in this HOPE challenge from now until Christmas.

Debbie Barbour, Christ Our Anchor Presbyterian Church
Rachel Cunningham, Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church



Week 2 Peace

Read Luke 2:13-14

Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors." (CEB)

Pray

Lord, in this time of year we feel peace missing in our lives. We see racial and political turmoil and even unrest within our own families. Help us find peace. Wrap your arms around us. Calm our spirits as we look around at the lights of wonder. Help us to remember you are the author of peace. Send your blessing and the sense of peace to us this day. Amen.

Do

Place some fresh or artificial greens or green colored paper in a bowl to represent God's everlasting love. Find three Christmas ornaments to represent world peace, political peace, and family peace. Hold each ornament in your hands just as God holds each of us in God's loving hands. Sing or hum: "Let there be peace on earth; let it begin with me. Let there be peace on earth; the peace that was meant to be." This bowl can remain in your home as a visual reminder of your prayer of peace.

Adrienne Knight, Knox Presbyterian Church
Miss Good, First Presbyterian Church of Annapolis



Week 3 Joy

Read Isaiah 55:12

For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. (NRSV)

Pray

Lord, in this season of Advent, we thank you for the Christ child, the one who brings peace and joy. As we sing Christmas carols and choruses, we pray that true joy would come into the world, and that there will be peace for all. Amen.

Do

How do you spell JOY?

Jesus **O**thers **Y**ou

Putting Jesus first, yourself last, and others in between, brings real joy. This week, call someone you know well and tell them how much joy they bring to your life and share a story to illustrate. Then, ask them to call someone and continue this string of joy. Watch the love of Christ dwell in the hearts of your loved ones this Advent.

Dorothy Boulton, Catonsville Presbyterian Church
Elizabeth Baril, Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church



Week 4 Love

Read John 13:34

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. (NRSV)

Pray

Loving God, as we approach the day of Christ's birth, help us to remember that this is a season of love. Your great love came down in the form of a tiny child who, centuries later, still calls us to love one another. We ask that you show us the way to love one another as you love us. In a world that seems filled with hate, give us the courage to live our love out loud. Amen.

Do

Write messages of love in sidewalk chalk outside your home. If you don't have a sidewalk or chalk, write a message of love on a piece of paper and display it in a window in your home. Or, choose one family member or friend and write them a note, send them a text message, draw them a picture, or just tell them what it is you love about them.

Virginia Callegary, First Presbyterian Church of Howard County
Jeness Hall, Towson Presbyterian Church



Christmas Day

Read Isaiah 9:6

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (NRSV)

Pray

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, on this Christmas day we step away from the wrapping paper and fa-la-las to remember the baby in the manger. Keep us focused on the one born to save the world, the Prince of Peace. Remind us, over and over again that we must shout it from the mountain tops that Jesus Christ is born. Amen

Do

The Christmas story doesn't matter if we keep it to ourselves and don't share it with the world. During Christmastide (December 26-January 6) share the Christmas story each day. Find a way to tell someone about Jesus. It can be through a drawing, conversation, or using your social media. It can be by reaching out to the hungry, comforting the sick, or saying a kind word to a neighbor. Keep the Christmas story alive for the next twelve days. Be careful, sharing the story every day for twelve days may change you.

Holly Albrecht, Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church
Brenda Alston, Knox Presbyterian Church
Sara Clauss, Harundale Presbyterian Church

Christmastide Chain

This is a cut, read and glue/tape activity that retells the Christmas story (CEB) for twelve days beginning on Christmas day through January 5, "Christmastide." Print one sheet on one color paper and the other on another color paper to alternate the color of the Christmastide chain.

Directions:

- Cut apart and read day one of the Christmas story. Glue/tape the ends together and attach to the star.
- On days 2-12 you will cut, read each part of the story for that day and attach it to the previous day's link.
- On day 12, when your Christmastide chain is complete, gather your family together and pray for HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE and again shout from the mountain tops that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, is BORN!!

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Cut out the star for the beginning of your chain



Sheet 1

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Day 1

Luke 1:26-27, 30: When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you."

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Day 3

Luke 2:1: In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists.

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Day 5

Luke 2:6-7: While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

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Day 7

Luke 2:10-12: The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger."

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Day 9

Psalms 95:6: Come, let's worship and bow down! Let's kneel before the Lord, our maker!

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Day 11

Matthew 2:11: They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Sheet 2

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Day 2

Luke 1:31-32, 38: Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Then the angel left her.

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Day 4

Luke 2:3-5: Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant.

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Day 6

Luke 2:8-9: Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

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Day 8

Luke 2:13-14, 16: Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors." They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

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Day 10

Matthew 2:1-2: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."

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Day 12

2 Corinthians 9:15: Thank God for his gift that words can't describe!