

YUMC Family Advent Challenge





## **What Is Advent?**

Advent is a four-week season in the Church calendar dedicated to anticipating the arrival, or "advent," of Jesus of Nazareth, the long-awaited Messiah and King. Christians from many backgrounds celebrate this time with reflections on Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. And while their practices may look different, all focus on the hope-filled arrival of Jesus.

## **What Does Advent Mean?**

Advent means "arrival" and signifies the start of an event or the arrival of a person. In Christian communities around the world, Advent refers to a four-week season of remembering and celebrating the arrival of Jesus on Earth. It's a time to reflect on the unexpected nature of Jesus' humble birth and join in the anticipation of when he will come again to reunite Heaven and Earth once and for all.

## **How to use this book:**

This book contains a weekly reflection based on the focus for the week. Each reflection includes a video to watch and a list of 3 challenges for you to choose from. Through out the week, you are invited to participate in the challenge and reflect on the word.

You can work through this book as an individual, as a family or with a group of friends.

No matter how you decide to use this book, we suggest you schedule intentional time each week to go through each reflection. Making a plan will help you make this a priority during this busy season.

It is our hope that this process gives you a meaningful Advent which leads to a deeper relationship with God and a better connection with the world around you.

Have a wonderful advent! I will be praying for you! If you have any questions or issues, please reach out!

Blessings,

Denise

Denise@yardleyumc.org

Please Note: If the QR codes don't work or you, please go to [yardleyumcyouth.org/advent](http://yardleyumcyouth.org/advent) to find each video.



"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with Hope by the power of the Holy Spirit"  
Romans 15:13

**Reflect/Discuss**

What's something you are looking forward to right now?

If you could give your future self one word of encouragement, what would it be?



**WATCH HOPE VIDEO**

**Reflect/Discuss**

What stood out to you in the video?

Where do you find HOPE in your world?

## HOPE Challenges



Read the challenges below or have them read to you in this video!

### 1. "Send a Message of Hope" Challenge

Objective: Write or record a short message of encouragement and hope to share with someone who might need it.

How to Do It: Send the message to someone personally, post it on social media, or leave notes in public places for strangers to find. These messages could include uplifting quotes, positive affirmations, or personal words of encouragement.

### 2. "Acts of Kindness" Challenge

Objective: Perform three random acts of kindness in a week.

How to Do It: The acts can be anything, like paying for someone's coffee, volunteering for a local organization, writing a thank-you letter, or leaving a small gift or treat for someone.

Family Option: As a family, each person draws the name of another family member for a week of "secret" acts of kindness. At the end of the week, reveal who was helping whom! This can spread hope within the family, inspiring others to be kind.

### 3. "Thank You, Neighbor" Challenge

Write and decorate thank-you cards or bake small treats for neighbors, local workers, or teachers to show gratitude.

Deliver them with a friendly note or a small gift, letting them know they're appreciated. This can help build community and remind others that they are valued and not alone.

### Our/My Hope Challenge:

**Prayer for Hope** (pray as you end this reflection and each day this week)

LORD,

Guide me through this day. Open my eyes to see the HOPE you bring to this world.

Give me opportunities to see you at work around me. Show me ways you are calling me to show others Hope. Guide me, LORD. AMEN

## **Notes, Journaling, Reflections**



"May the Lord bless you and protect you.

May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace." Numbers 6:24-26

### **Reflect/Discuss**

When you hear the word "Peace" what's the first image or thought that comes to your mind?

Describe a place you feel most at peace. Why do you think that place helps you feel that way?



Watch the video

### **Reflect/Discuss**

What stood out to you in the video?

Where do you experience God's peace?

## PEACE Challenges



Read the challenges below or have them read to you in this video!

### 1. "Peaceful Reflection" Challenge

Set aside 10 minutes each day for quiet time. Sit in silence, meditate, or pray. Before you begin this practice, chose a word or phrase to help you refocus when your mind wanders. (Be Still and Know that I am God, Be Present, Lord, Breathe in God, breathe out )  
At the end of the week, reflect on the impact this time had on the rest of your day.

### 2. "No Conflict Day" Challenge

Choose 2 days this week to focus on being extra patient, understanding, and forgiving with one another. Make it a goal to avoid conflicts, speak with kindness, and be quick to resolve misunderstandings. At the end of the day, discuss how it felt to live peacefully together and brainstorm ways to continue this mindset in daily life. This practice can help strengthen bonds and set an example of peaceful coexistence.

### 3. "Support Peace" Challenge

Do some research on organizations working to bring peace in your community. Find one that you like the most and figure out how you can best help. You can donate items they are looking for, attend an event they have planned or give a financial donation. Make a plan to support their efforts for peace this week.

**Our/My PEACE Challenge:**



## **Prayer for PEACE**

(pray as you end this reflection and each day this week)

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (Prayer for Peace)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I 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

**Notes, Journaling, Reflections**



“A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. “ Proverbs 17:22

### **Reflect/Discuss**

What is something small that made you smile this past week?

When is the last time you laughed so hard you couldn't stop? What made you laugh?



**Watch the video**

### **Reflect/Discuss**

What stood out to you in the video?

Where do you experience God's Joy?

## JOY Challenges



Read the challenges below or have them read to you in this video!

### 1. "Surprise Smile" Challenge

Create small surprise packages with simple, cheerful items like handwritten notes, candies, or tiny toys, and leave them anonymously on neighbors' doorsteps or friends' mailboxes. This can brighten someone's day with an unexpected surprise, spreading joy and goodwill in the community.

### 2. "A Compliment A Day" Challenge

Every day this week, find ways to compliment 2 people. These can be your family members, people you know or someone you interact with for 5 seconds. This simple practice of gratitude and kindness helps spread joy and makes everyone feel appreciated. Keep note of who you complimented each day. Look back at your list at the end of the week and reflect on how God used you to spread joy!

### 3. "Game Night Extravaganza" Challenge

Plan a game night with your family or friends. Have each person bring a game they love and make time to play everyone's game. Enjoy the night! Reflect later about the joy playing games brings and think of ways to bring this joy into your life on a regular basis.

**Our/My JOY Challenge:**

**Prayer for JOY** (pray as you end this reflection and each day this week)

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of today and for all the small and big ways you bring joy into my life.

Open my heart to see the blessings around me and help me find joy even in the little moments.

Fill me with a joy that is unshaken by circumstances, a joy that reflects your presence within me. Help me to spread that joy to others, lifting their spirits and bringing light into their day.

May I be a reminder of your love and grace to everyone I meet. Amen.

**Notes, Journaling, Reflections**



**“Love God and Love your neighbor  
as yourself” Mark 12:31**

### **Reflect/Discuss**

What is a nice thing someone has done for you?

What is something you think everyone should know about LOVE?



**Watch the video**

### **Reflect/Discuss**

What stood out to you in the video?

Where do you experience God’s Love?

## LOVE Challenges



Read the challenges below or have them read to you in this video!

### **1. "Love Your Neighbor" Challenge**

This week, to show love to your 1-2 neighbors or community members. This could be by helping an elderly neighbor with yard work, cooking a meal for a family in need, or simply delivering kind notes or small gifts. After each act of kindness, reflect on how it felt to put love into action and how you might continue showing love to others.

### **2. "\$5 a day" Challenge (extra planning needed)**

Pick a day this week to live off of \$5pp. Plan your meals for the day to total \$5. Calculate how much you would normally spend on your meals in one day and use that money to donate to a food pantry.

Or, take the money you would've spent, go to the store and buy non perishable food to place in the food pantry at YUMC!

### **3. "Give it away" Challenge**

Each day this week, choose 1 item to donate. At the end of the week, take your donations to a thrift store or donation location in your area.

**Our/My LOVE Challenge:**

## **Prayer for LOVE**

(pray as you end this reflection and each day this week)

Dear God,

Thank you for your endless love for me. Help me to love others the way you love me—with kindness, patience, and understanding. Open my heart to see the needs of those around me and to respond with compassion. Teach me to put others before myself and to forgive freely.

Fill me with your love so that I can be a light in the world. Let my words and actions reflect your love in everything I do today. Amen.

## **Notes, Journaling, Reflections**



## **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

No matter how you used this Advent Book, I pray that you experienced God in a new way and learned something about yourself and your world.

If you want to talk about this journey, I would love to hear how it went!

I pray this Christmas is full of God's Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

May you never forget you are loved.

Blessings,  
Denise



