

# WAYS to CELEBRATE ADVENT at HOME



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

In Advent, as the days become shorter and more of our time is spent inside, we are given the opportunity to create traditions that help us experience Christ's light and love. Many of these traditions are easy to implement and add to the warmth and excitement of the season. Here are a few traditions for you to consider starting with your family this year.

**MARK THE SEASON WITH LIGHT:** Candles are a wonderful way to illuminate the darkened nights and to visually build excitement as we prepare to welcome the Christ child. A lit candle reminds us of Jesus' words in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world," and of Simeon's declaration in Luke 2:32 that Jesus was "a light to reveal God to the nations."

## DECORATE WITH MEANING:



**Evergreens** are green throughout the winter and remind us of everlasting life.



**Wreaths** are shaped as a circle without end and remind us of the eternal life found in Christ.



**Stars** shine brightly and remind us of the star the Magi followed to worship the newborn king.



**Gifts** are a joy to give and remind us of the gifts of the Magi and God's great gift to us in Jesus.



**Angels** bring Good News and remind us of the angelic voices that announced Christ's birth.

**CREATE AN ADVENT WREATH:** In many Presbyterian churches, candles representing the hope, peace, joy and love found in Christ are lit each week during Advent. Crafting an Advent wreath for home is a good way to connect what happens in worship to our everyday lives. Arrange evergreen sprigs or other greenery around votive candles. Gather around the wreath each week and read an Advent devotional together.



**“To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord” Luke 2:11**

**TELL THE CHRISTMAS STORY:** Tell the Christmas story and tell it often.

A good way of doing this is to find a new children’s Bible or storybook depicting the Christmas narrative to read to your family. While you read, pause and invite your children into the mystery of the season by asking I wonder questions: I wonder what Mary was thinking when the angel Gabriel told her she would bear the Christ child? I wonder what Mary and Joseph talked about as they travelled to Bethlehem? I wonder what it would have felt like to discover the newborn king in a humble manger?

**BE A BLESSING:** Advent is the perfect time to embrace practices of generosity.

Consider going through your cupboards or purchasing food to be donated to your local food bank. With children, it is especially meaningful if you collect the food together and travel as a family to deliver it. Just as the Magi brought forward their best gifts, we too should make sure we are giving our best gifts.

**SHARE THE WARMTH:** A great way to share the joy of the season is to reach out to people you know may be feeling alone this season. Place hot chocolate mix, cookies, napkins, cups, a book, and a game or DVD in a basket. Take the celebration to the person’s home and spend the evening enjoying it together.

**HOST A CONNECTING EVENT:** Consider hosting a Christmas book exchange with a few families from your neighbourhood or church. Make it a truly celebratory event by offering guests a delicious dessert and inviting families to take turns reading from their new Christmas storybooks.

**INSPIRATION FROM SCRIPTURE:** God uses Scripture to reveal Christ’s presence in our lives. Learning a few Scripture verses during Advent can help us to enter into promises and hope of the season. In the busyness of the season, remembering Mary’s song or the angels’ words keep us grounded in the true meaning of Christmas. Suggested verses: Luke 1:46-48; Luke 2: 10-14; John 1:1.

**MAKE A CREATIVE GIFT:** This Christmas, instead of frantically checking people off your Christmas list, consider making homemade gifts. Homemade gifts created with the receiver in mind communicate love and care. Some ideas to consider: redeemable chore/activity coupons, food items, art, etc.

**DO SOMETHING UNEXPECTED:** A great way to share the love of Jesus is to engage in acts of service in your community. Shovel your neighbour’s sidewalk, surprise someone with Christmas baking, send Christmas cards to all your colleagues, or offer to babysit someone’s children so they have more time to prepare for Christmas.