

Seasons of the Spirit

PREPARATION & JOY
ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, & EPIPHANY
2025



Holy Communion Women strives to be an extension of Christ's Kingdom in the parish, the community, the nation, and the world. Our hope is that the Seasons of the Spirit publication will bring women of the REC together through collaboration and community. This edition invites you to slow down, submit time to Christ, and experience the abundant opportunities for hope, peace, joy, and love throughout the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

The season of Advent marks the beginning of the Church year by focusing our attention on His first coming in Incarnation and looking forward to His second coming in Glory. Advent is a season of penitence in preparation for the coming of the King. Christmas is celebrated over twelve days illuminating the miracle of the birth of Jesus, while Epiphany focuses on Christ's appearing to the world and the growth of His ministry.

We are called to pray and to prepare. Preparing involves more than decorations, gifts, special meals, and celebrations. The Latin origin for preparation means being made ready for a specific purpose. Studying God's word, praying daily, and participating in worship engage us in the preparation for Christ's second coming. What better time to open our eyes, our ears, our hearts, and our minds to His word, His will, and His way.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Romans 13:3



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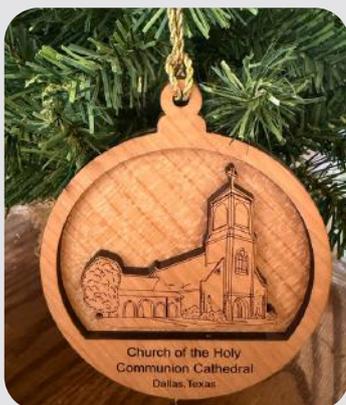
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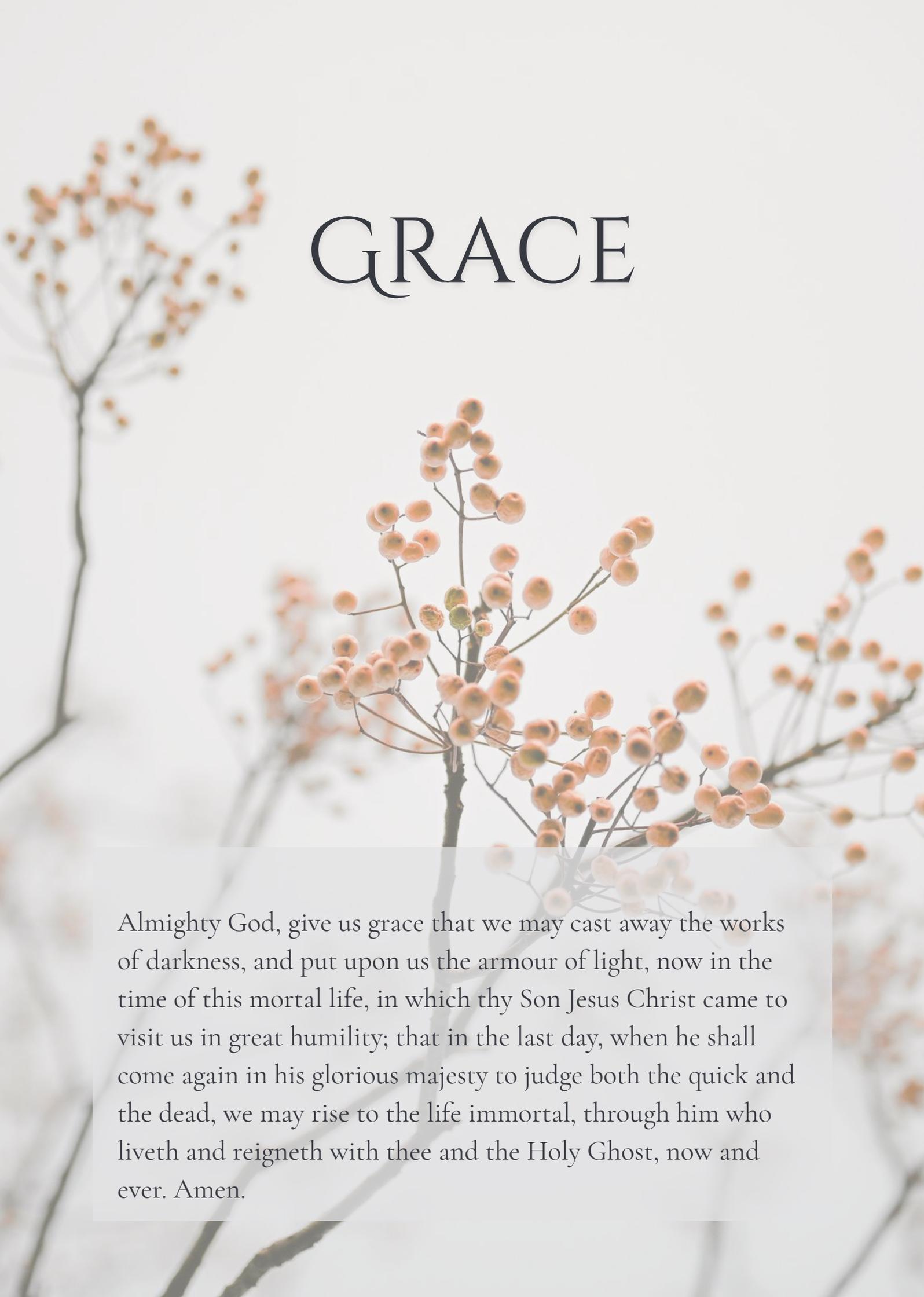
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SILVER CHALICE: GIFTS FOR ALL
SEASONS

SHARE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

GIVING





GRACE

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy 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 quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

A Fruitful Advent

Bishop Charles Camlin



It happens every year around this time. We enter into the department stores, malls, and Walmart to find all things Christmas. I have a sneaking suspicion that they aren't doing this because they are excited about celebrating our Lord's birth!

The Church has always had a different rhythm of life. It is not an accident that our two great feasts—Christmas and Easter, are preceded by a penitential season (Advent and Lent—both of which are marked by the color purple, signifying a season of penitence). The penitence before arriving at the cross is fairly straightforward—but why penitence before celebrating our Lord's arrival?

The readings appointed for the season in our Lectionary are helpful in this regard. Our Old Testament lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer during this season, are drawn from the prophet Isaiah. His writings are filled with prophecies about the coming Messiah. For instance: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa 7:14) And again, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isa 9:6)

It is fairly easy to see from prophecies like this how they would be appropriately appointed in preparation for Christmas. They are reminding us of the prophecies that the people of Israel received and read in the years prior to the coming of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. In this sense, we place ourselves in the place of ancient Israel, longing for the coming of our Messiah and Savior. This comes through in one of our great Advent hymns when we sing: “O come, o come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel...”

But at Evening Prayer during Advent, we have a very different set of readings from the Revelation of St. John. This shows another layer or dimension to Advent. By reading through this book, we are led to anticipate and long for our Lord’s Second Advent—His return in glory. Once again, our hymnody helps us as we also sing: “Lo! He comes with clouds descending, Once for our salvation slain; Thousand thousand saints attending, Swell the triumph of his train: Alleluia, alleluia! Christ the Lord returns to reign.”

So, if you put these two ideas together, you will see that Advent causes us to focus on the coming of the Messiah—first in His lowly birth at Bethlehem; but also in His Second Advent on the Last Day, when He shall come in glorious majesty to reign.



In light of these themes, we return to our opening thought that Advent is a season of penitence. It is a time to repent (note the prominence of John the Baptist in Advent, calling for repentance). It is a season of preparation. Like Lent, we ought to make every effort to read the Scriptures, pray, and attend as many worship services as possible. These are a means of God's grace to us to help us be prepared to celebrate Christ's first coming. But also, more importantly, to be prepared to meet Him at His second coming.

May God help us to have a fruitful Advent this year before we celebrate the season of Christmas. Let us go against the cultural norms and wait to celebrate the festivities at the proper time. In the meantime, let us prepare ourselves to meet our Lord—both at the crèche and at His glorious return.



*Blessed Lord, who hast caused all
holy Scriptures to be written for our
learning; Grant that we may in such
wise hear them, read, mark, learn,
and inwardly digest them, that by
patience and comfort of thy holy
Word, we may embrace, and ever
hold fast, the blessed hope of
everlasting life, which thou hast
given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

Our days are full of many things requiring great preparation. To have good health, we must make time for proper nutrition, exercise, and adequate sleep. To take a trip, we must pack specific clothing for various activities and changes in weather as well as navigate transportation and schedules. Teaching lessons, making meals, raising children, or caring for loved ones all require preparation. Today's busy world constantly pulls us in many different directions that can create moments of uncertainty and rushed responses. The one thing that remains constant amidst the chaos is God's love. Staying close to Him and reading His word enables us to walk the path He has prepared for us.



The Birth of Jesus

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own towns

to be taxed. When the census had been announced, Joseph fled to the town of Bethlehem, with Mary his wife, because they were both of the house and lineage of David. When the time came for her to have her baby, she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

When the shepherds saw this, they said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spoke the word concerning what they had been told concerning what had happened. All who heard it were amazed at what they had heard, but they did not doubt what they had been told.

*Just as I am, of thy great love.
The breadth, length, depth, and
height to prove,
Here for a season, then above,
O Lamb of God, I come.*



Time and Space

Lauren Furniss

To do the work God has given us to do, our life needs to be in order. A cluttered space, physical or mental, may hinder our awareness of God's presence. During this preparation season of Advent, take inventory. What areas of your life need a fresh perspective? Organization is about creating space — not just in your home, but in your mind and with your time.

Set Organizing "Goals" Not Just Resolutions

Instead of broad resolutions like "be more organized," set specific goals such as:

- Empty my email inbox weekly.
- Plan meals on Sundays.
- Do a 10-minute tidy each night.

Research shows that setting specific, relevant, and attainable goals increases the likelihood that you will be successful.



Start with a "Reset Space"

Choose one area — your desk, kitchen counter, or entryway — and completely clear it off.

Only put back what's useful or brings you joy. Sometimes we get stuck in the "but it's always been there" mindset. If it's not serving you and if it is causing visual clutter, then maybe it needs another home or you don't need it at all. Consider donating items.

This small win builds momentum for bigger projects and provides clarity to focus on what matters most.



Declutter Your Digital Life

- Inbox cleanse: Archive or delete old emails and unsubscribe from newsletters you no longer read.
- Desktop detox: Create a simple folder structure and move loose files into their proper places.
- Photo purge: Delete duplicates and blurry shots — and back up your favorites.



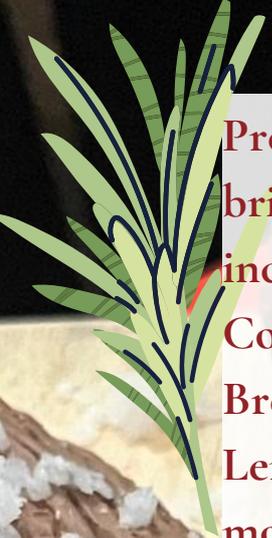
*Whatsoever things were written aforetime
were written for our learning, that we
through patience and comfort of the
scriptures might have hope.*

Romans 15:4





O Lord Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

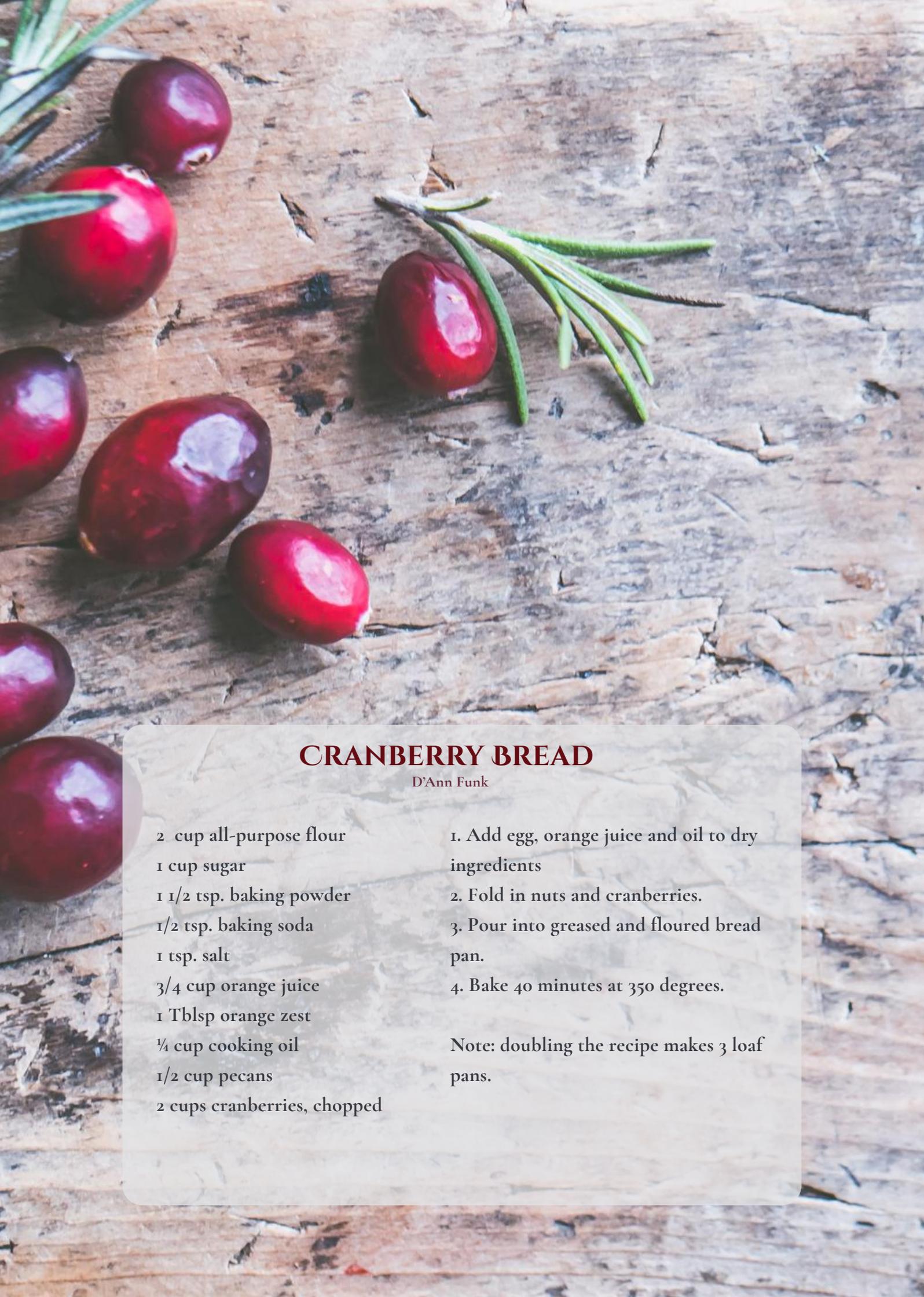


Preparing all things merry and bright, this season's joyful recipes includes Pepper, Apple, & Cottage Cheese Salad, Cranberry Bread, Mimosa Pasta, Holiday Lemon Drop Mocktails, and more! Gather round the kitchen island while sharing stories and enjoying each other's company. Celebrate the season with an Epiphany Dinner. Maybe settle in for a long winter's night while simmering some white chili. Whatever your reason, a cooking adventure awaits!

SEASONAL SAMPLINGS



O Lord, raise up, we pray thee, thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

A photograph of several fresh, bright red cranberries and a sprig of green rosemary with needle-like leaves, scattered on a rustic, weathered wooden surface. The wood has a prominent grain and some dark spots, possibly from knots or staining. The lighting is natural, highlighting the texture of the wood and the glossy surface of the cranberries.

CRANBERRY BREAD

D'Ann Funk

2 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup sugar
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
3/4 cup orange juice
1 Tblsp orange zest
1/4 cup cooking oil
1/2 cup pecans
2 cups cranberries, chopped

1. Add egg, orange juice and oil to dry ingredients
2. Fold in nuts and cranberries.
3. Pour into greased and floured bread pan.
4. Bake 40 minutes at 350 degrees.

Note: doubling the recipe makes 3 loaf pans.

HOLIDAY LEMON DROP MOCKTAIL

Ingredients:

1 oz. Lemon juice, freshly squeezed
¾ oz cranberry juice
½ oz. simple syrup
2-3 oz. sparkling water
Sugar for glass rim
Fresh cranberries and rosemary for garnish



Prepare: Dip the rim of a Martini glass into the simple syrup, then firmly press onto a plate covered with sugar. Place the glass into the freezer to set. Add lemon juice, cranberry juice, and simple syrup into a shaker. Add ice, then shake until chilled. Strain into the prepared glass and top with sparkling water. Garnish with fresh cranberries and a sprig of rosemary. Enjoy!



MIMOSA PASTA

Felicity Lopez

2 - 28 oz cans diced tomatoes
2 - 3 oz can tomato paste
½ cup chopped garlic
1 lb. ground beef
16 oz Ricotta cheese
8 oz white wine
1 cup heavy whipping cream
1 bouquet garni (sweet basil, thyme, oregano, tarragon, rosemary)
1 lb pasta of choice
Salt to taste

- Place diced tomatoes, tomato paste, bouquet garni, pinch of salt, and white wine in a Dutch Oven. Cover and place over low heat. Bring to a simmer and cook covered for 15 minutes.
- Remove the bouquet garni and crumble in the ground beef. Stir. Simmer an additional 10 minutes.
- Add Ricotta and heavy whipping cream, salt, and pepper to taste.
- While the sauce is being prepared, bring four quarts of salted water to a rolling boil and cook pasta to package directions.

Tip: Heavily salt the pasta water and taste sauce as you go to season.

MINI BELL PEPPER, APPLE, COTTAGE CHEESE SALAD

Felicity Lopez

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. bag mini bell peppers
- 1 Fuji apple- cored, quartered, sliced thin
- 1 Granny Smith Apple- cored, quartered, sliced thin
- 8 oz Large curd cottage cheese, rinsed & drained
- 3 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 2 Tbsp neutral oil
- Salt to taste



1. First make the vinaigrette. In a small saucepan, add apple cider vinegar and sugar. Over low heat, stir until sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat, add oil, and salt. Set aside to cool.
2. Next prepare the salad ingredients. In a wire mesh strainer, rinse cottage cheese with water and set aside to drain. Slice bell peppers into coins while removing stems and seeds. Core, quarter, and slice apples.
3. Assemble all ingredients in a bowl, pour the vinaigrette over the ingredients, and mix. Place in the refrigerator until ready to eat.

ORANGE MARMALADE COOKIES

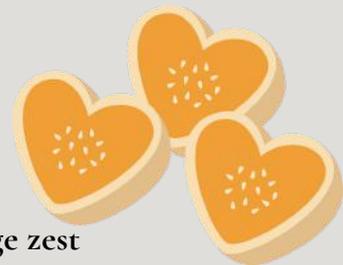
Niemen Marcus

Cookies:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup orange marmalade

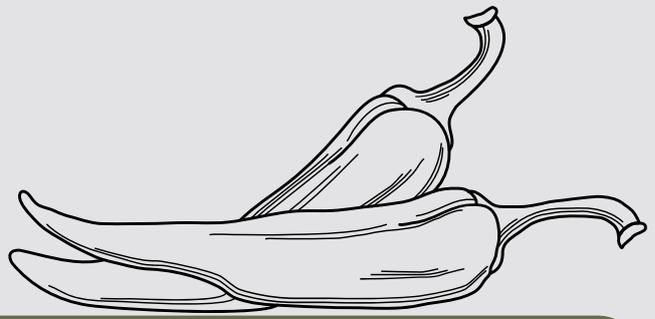
Orange Icing:

- 2 tsp. grated orange zest
- 1 tsp. grated lemon zest
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 tsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 3 Tbsp. butter, softened
- 3 cups confectioner's sugar
- 1/8 tsp. kosher salt



Preheat oven to 300. Butter a cookie sheet. Sift together flour, baking soda, & salt; set aside. Beat butter in a bowl 1-2 minutes, add sugar and beat until fluffy. Add eggs, mix well. Add dry ingredients and marmalade, mix thoroughly. Drop cookie dough onto the cookie sheet with a teaspoon. Bake about 20 minutes or until light brown.

Prepare the icing while cookies are baking – combine zests and juices in a small bowl. In a different bowl, beat the butter adding 1 cup sugar at a time. Add the salt and citrus juice mixture until smooth. Cool cookies on wire rack and then ice with a butter knife.



WHITE CHILI

Julie McGough

1 lb. dry or 5 cans white beans
2 lbs. shredded chicken or turkey breast
1 Tbsp. olive oil
2 medium onions chopped
4 cloves garlic chopped
1-2 poblano pepper(s) chopped
5 mushrooms sliced (optional)
2 tsp. cumin
1 ½ tsp. oregano
¼ tsp. cayenne
6 cups chicken or turkey broth
3 cups Monterey Jack cheese

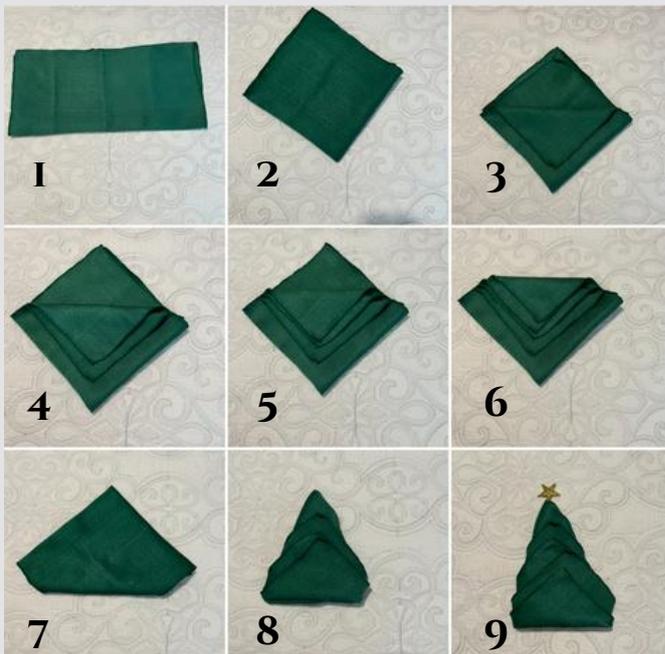
- Soak beans overnight or use canned.
- Cook and shred chicken (or turkey breast)
- Saute onions & garlic in olive oil; stir in poblano peppers, mushrooms, and seasonings
- Pour in chicken or turkey broth
- Cook on low for 1 ½ hours
- Serve with shredded Jack cheese on top

Note: You can use canned chili peppers or other hot peppers of your choice.





Tree Napkin Folding



1. Lay a square napkin flat and fold in half.

2. Fold the rectangle in half again to make a smaller square.

3 - 6 On the diagonal, fold down the top corner one layer at the time to make a series of triangles.

7. Turn the folded napkin over.

8. Tuck the sides under.

9. Add a star on top!

Crafty Creations



Making crafts together offers fellowship and fun! Projects featured on this page use objects from nature like Magnolia seed pods and leftover pumpkins or easy to find yarn and candy canes. Add a little paint, hot glue, ribbon, and a few friends to make, take, and share!

1. Crochet Snowflakes
2. Painted Pumpkin Snowman
3. Magnolia seed Pod Angel
4. Candy Cane Flower Pot

Finding Rest

Shannon Dion



Recently I was out shopping and enjoying the beginning of Christmas decorations. Two different salespeople mentioned they were tired, they looked forward to the Christmas season being over. Oh my! They have a long hard road ahead. I wish I shared Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

It took me many years to learn how to appreciate the quietness of our Advent season. Often, we focus on getting the perfect picture for the family card, writing the best newsletter to enclose, finding the just right gifts, cooking the time honored traditional recipes from our matriarchs, or decorating the house beautifully. I often tell my adult daughters I’m thankful we didn’t have elf on the shelf – I would have failed miserably! I would have felt guilty about not giving them great elf adventures.

A friend shared the following thoughts: “Tear up earthly attempts at perfection. Give up unrealistic family expectations. Remember the manger that doesn’t look perfect but is.”

As we give thanks with family and friends for all our bounty on Thanksgiving Day, tap the brakes and don’t rush headfirst into all the Christmas noise. Take time to reflect on how dark the world was before our Savior’s birth. Find God’s peace in quiet moments. Learn to enjoy the imperfections of your celebration.

May we find healing, restful times in this Advent season so we will be prepared to celebrate our earthly joys and Christ’s birth.

GROWTH

MIND, BODY, & SPIRIT

*Lo! He comes, with clouds descending,
once for our salvation slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of His train.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.*

God's Word Never Fails

Katia S. Crabb



In the first words of the Scripture, we read that out of nothingness, God spoke the world into being. In the opening of St. John's Gospel, he reveals to us even more about God's creative word. He describes God speaking the whole world into being through His Word, Our Lord, and it is through His Word that God fulfills His purposes. St. Ignatius of Antioch describes the scriptures as the eternal word of salvation and Jesus Christ as the Word, who "came forth from silence." We can take these images of God speaking and see the Scriptures as God's creative revealing of Himself and His will within creation. What they require of us is transformation and growth in virtue as we seek to understand God's story of salvation.

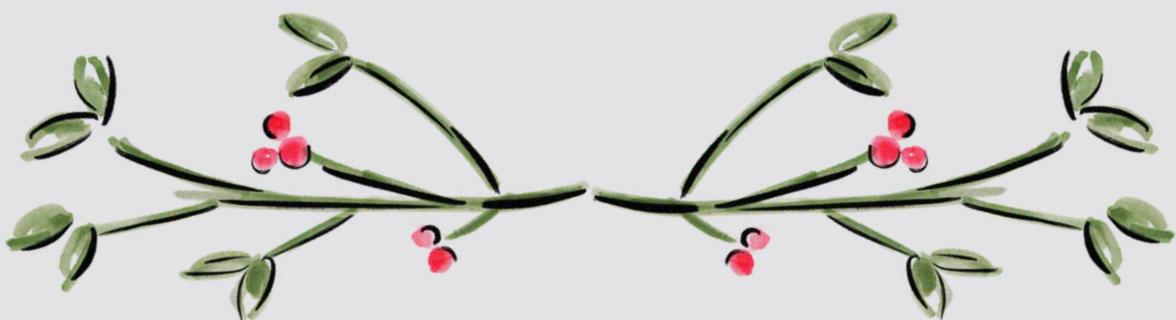
God's word will not fail to accomplish His will. God says in Isaiah, "... My word that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Is. 55:11). These words should shift our focus from imposing our own understanding on the text to realizing that it is God speaking and revealing His will to us. When we read, we are praying and talking with Him. This realization should fill us with a sense of awe and evoke profound wonder.

When Scripture speaks, God is speaking, so we need to be humble listeners. Humility is a prerequisite for approaching God's word. It is the recognition of our limited understanding in the face of God's infinite wisdom. God says, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' (Is 55:8). God is beyond our capability to comprehend, yet he humbles Himself and speaks to us in the ways we can understand. In our worship, during the reading of the Gospel, we cross our foreheads, lips, and hearts. This act is a physical reminder to be silent and attend to the reading. We are blessing our minds and hearts to receive the Gospel words because it is the Lord speaking, and we acknowledge Him, saying, 'Praise be to thee, O Christ.' This part of worship helps us participate in attending to God's word. It also shows the church's view of Scripture and underscores the crucial role of the virtue of humility in our journey to understanding God's word.

Humility is an important part of reading Scripture, and so is obedience. When we hear the word obedience, negative impressions may come to mind. If you were forced to take Latin in school, you would have intentionally forgotten that the root of the word obedience comes from the Latin *obadire*, which means listening. Our obedience to God's commandments and His instructions to us through His prophets and through His Son often precedes our understanding. Obedience in the context of Scripture is not blind submission, but a trusting and attentive listening to God's will. We see many examples of this in the scriptures: Abraham and Isaac going up to the mountain top for sacrifice, the Virgin Mary as she replies to the angel's message, 'Be it to me according to Thy will,' and we see the example of perfect obedience to the Father's will in the life of Christ. Christ's life highlights obedience's significant role in our reading of Scripture and our life in Him. We must be obedient and surrender ourselves to the mind of Christ, even to the parts of God's word we do not like or fully comprehend. When we are confounded, we often need to search more deeply.

In these times of encountering difficulties, our reading may seem like a wrestling match between us and the text or us and the Author of the text. Often, we may walk away with our "joints out of their socket," feeling humbled by God's words or left with more questions. But we must keep returning to the Scriptures and not abandon them in our journey of understanding, for we will find Life in them. When we read, we encounter our Creator speaking to us, His creatures. You may want to 'take off your shoes' and approach this place of reading, asking for God's grace to help you. As a guide with what to ask for, I will leave you with the first portion of a prayer written by St. John Chrysostom,

"Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart that I may hear Your Word, and understand and do Your will. For I am the sojourner upon the Earth."

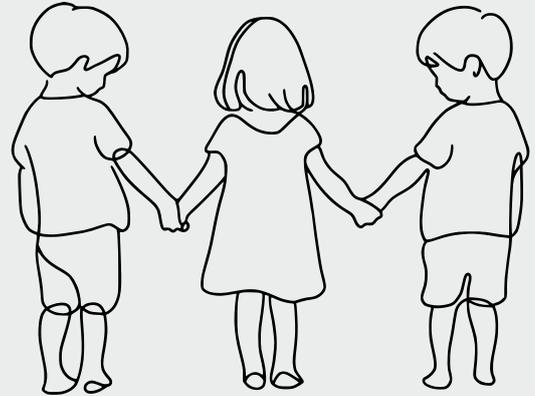


Exemplary Etiquette

Treating others with respect and care requires time and teaching.

Even the youngest children can learn to show consideration, respect, and honesty.

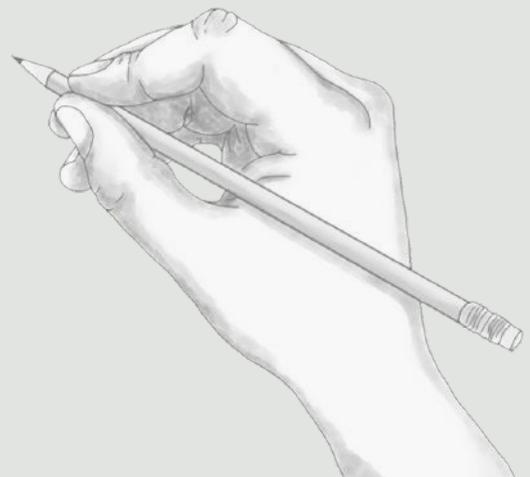
Here are some tips to keep in mind when helping our little ones interact with others:

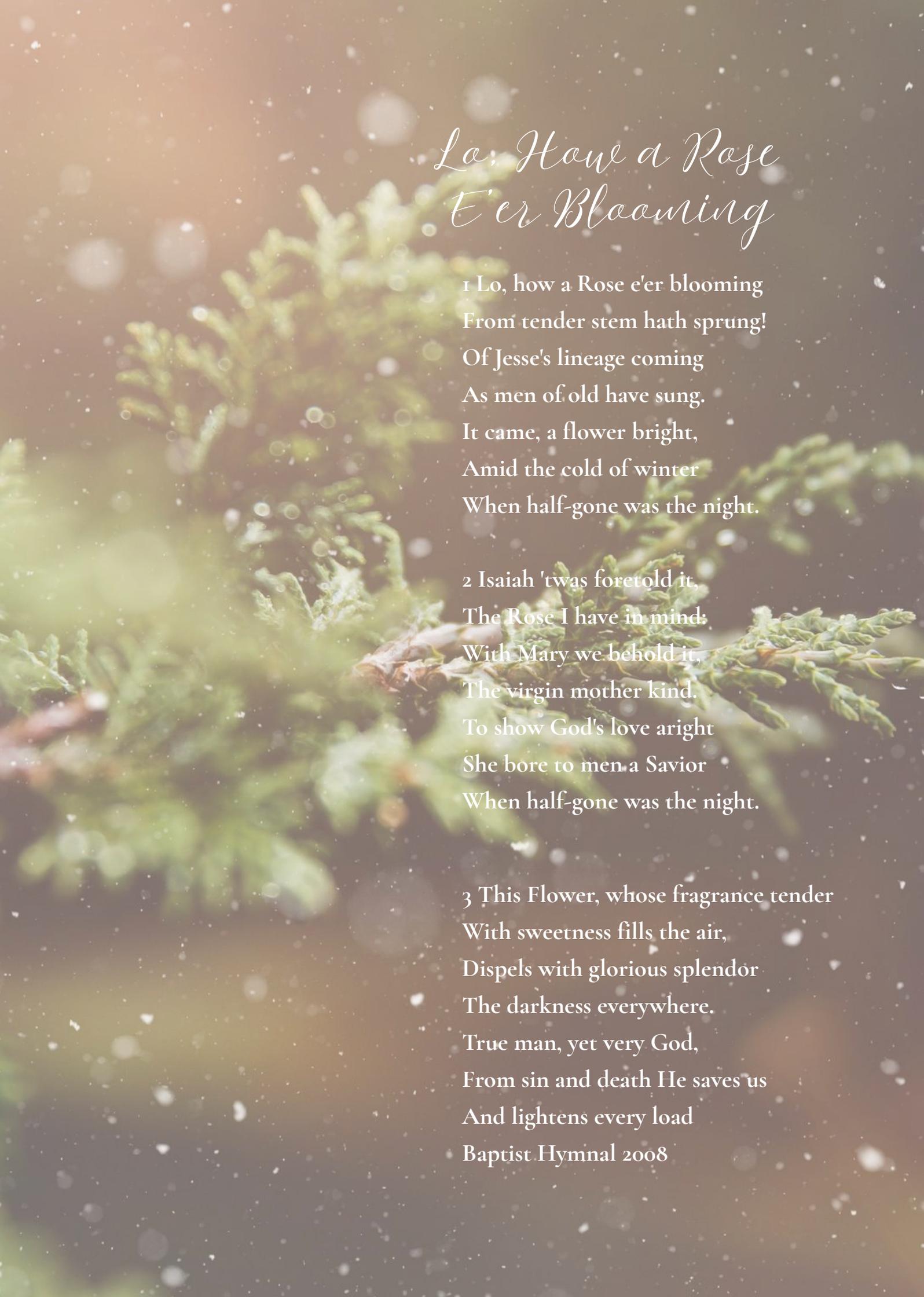


- **Smile:** The simple act of sharing a smile goes a long way in building trust and respect. Face to face interactions are extremely important and help children learn to make eye contact while building relationships.
- **Time to Teach:** Take the time to teach a proper response. Speak gently, embrace the moment, and express genuine emotions. It can be as simple as saying please, thank you, and excuse me or offering an explanation of the appropriate time and place. Learning the “why” behind the gesture helps children construct meaning.

- **Listen:** Children learn to listen by example. When we take the time to make eye contact and listen to their ideas we are actively teaching them how to listen attentively to others.

*I will instruct you and teach you
in the way you should go: I will
counsel you with my eye upon you.
Psalm 32:8*





*Lo, How a Rose
E'er Blooming*

1 Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
As men of old have sung.
It came, a flower bright,
Amid the cold of winter
When half-gone was the night.

2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind:
With Mary we behold it,
The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright
She bore to men a Savior
When half-gone was the night.

3 This Flower, whose fragrance tender
With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor
The darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God,
From sin and death He saves us
And lightens every load
Baptist Hymnal 2008

Heart and Home

Melissa McGough

Let's be honest—winter with young kids can feel brutal.

When it's too cold to go outside and you just need a moment of peace, the house starts to feel smaller, the messes get bigger, and the days seem endless. But instead of dreading the long, chilly months ahead, why not lean in and transform your home into a cozy winter haven?

Here are some practical (and heartwarming) ways to prepare:

- Cozy up your space. Rearrange your furniture to create a new nook or corner that feels fresh. Add soft pillows, blankets, and decor to make it inviting.
- Embrace the comfy clothes. Let go of the pressure to look put together—your kids don't care if you're in pajamas or messy buns. Lean into the comfort.
- Stock up on cozy treats. Think warm drinks, comfort food, and easy snacks that feel special. Having your winter favorites on hand makes cold days more enjoyable.
- Create cozy rituals. Whether it's a blanket fort for nap times, making fuzzy Christmas ornaments, or pajama dance parties in the living room—build traditions that make winter feel magical.
- Find your village. Don't do winter alone. Invite a friend over for coffee or tea while the kids play. We were never meant to do life in isolation—make space for community.
- Make an "Indoor Fun Basket." Fill a basket with simple, engaging activities: string and pasta for necklaces, coloring pages, puzzles, interactive books, or even tweezers and pom-poms. These little things help kids create their own joy when going outside isn't an option.

Winter doesn't have to feel like survival mode. A little preparation now can make a big difference in your mindset later. Set your home—and your heart—up for joy this season.

Romans 15:13

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.

CRIB HYMN

St. Augustine Prayer Book

What lovely Infant can this be,
That in the little crib I see?
So sweetly on the straw it lies,
It must have come from Paradise.

Who is that Lady kneeling by,
And gazing on so tenderly?

O, that is Mary, ever blest,
How full of joy her holy breast.

What may is that who seems to smile,
And looks so blissful all the while?

'Tis holy Joseph, good and true,
The Infant makes him happy too.

What makes the crib so bright and clear?

What voices sing so sweetly here?

Ah! See behind the window-pane,
The little angels looking in.

Who are those people kneeling down,
With crooked sticks and hands so brown?

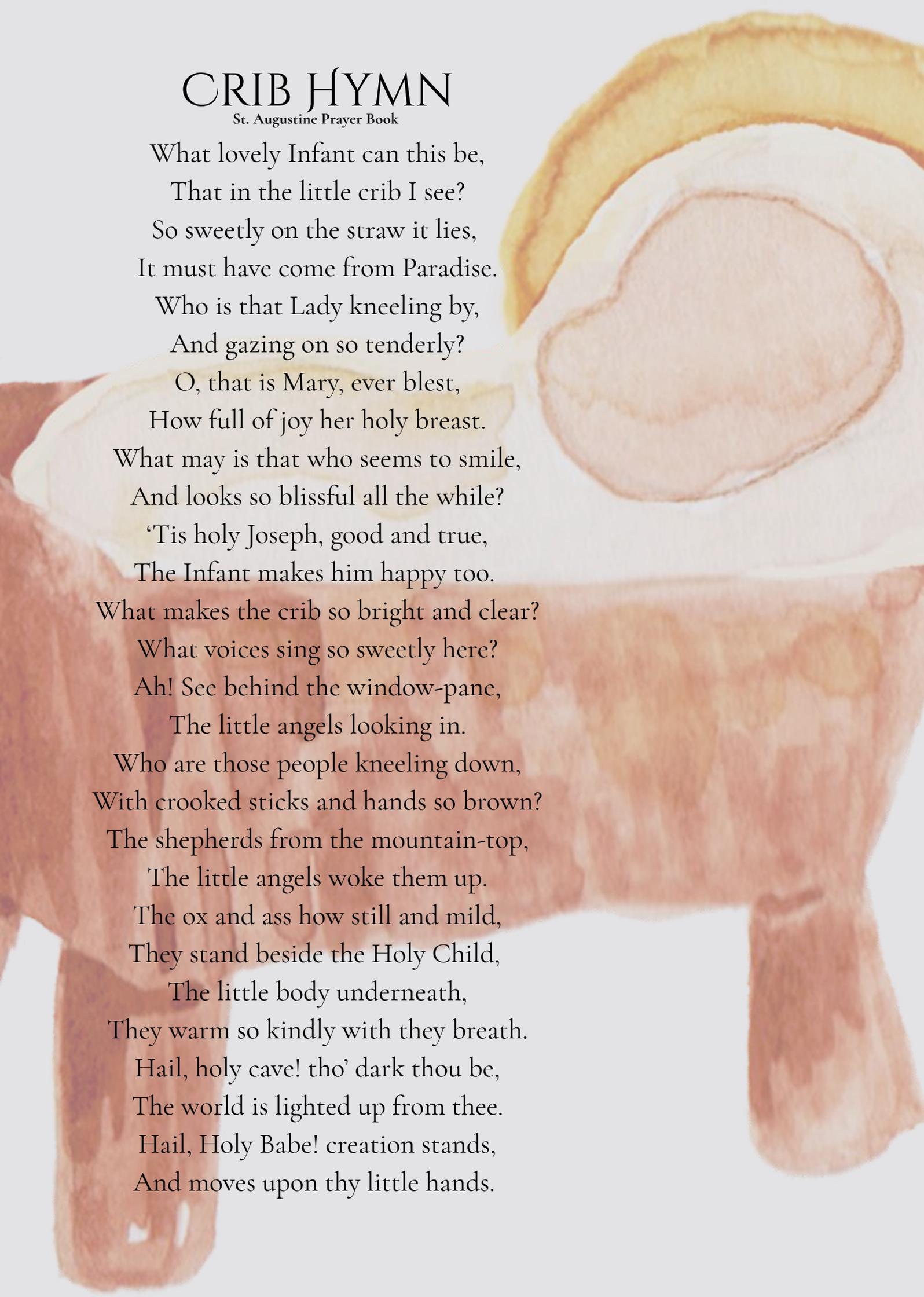
The shepherds from the mountain-top,
The little angels woke them up.

The ox and ass how still and mild,
They stand beside the Holy Child,

The little body underneath,
They warm so kindly with they breath.

Hail, holy cave! tho' dark thou be,
The world is lighted up from thee.

Hail, Holy Babe! creation stands,
And moves upon thy little hands.



Family Fun Night

Ilana Delaney Lemke

During the pandemic my children were 10 and 11 years old. I am by training a musician and by nature a teacher, but the pandemic taught me to channel the creative energies I use in the elementary music classroom to plan “events” for my family at home every Friday.

Full disclosure, I love a theme! An idea that connects seemingly disconnected experiences together gives me great joy. I was determined to have fun while we were isolated.

I think the first theme came to me because of broccoli. Everyone at my house enjoys it roasted. Praise God if your children like a vegetable, you serve it! I searched the freezer and discovered Trader Joe’s Orange Chicken. At that moment I also recalled receiving the board game Chinese Checkers. After that I checked our streaming service for Kung Fu Panda and that was our first “Friday Fun Night.” I finally got to use a chopstick set friends of our gifted us over a decade ago.



The following list is of movies, dinners, desserts and some games we tried out over many months. Some were silly:

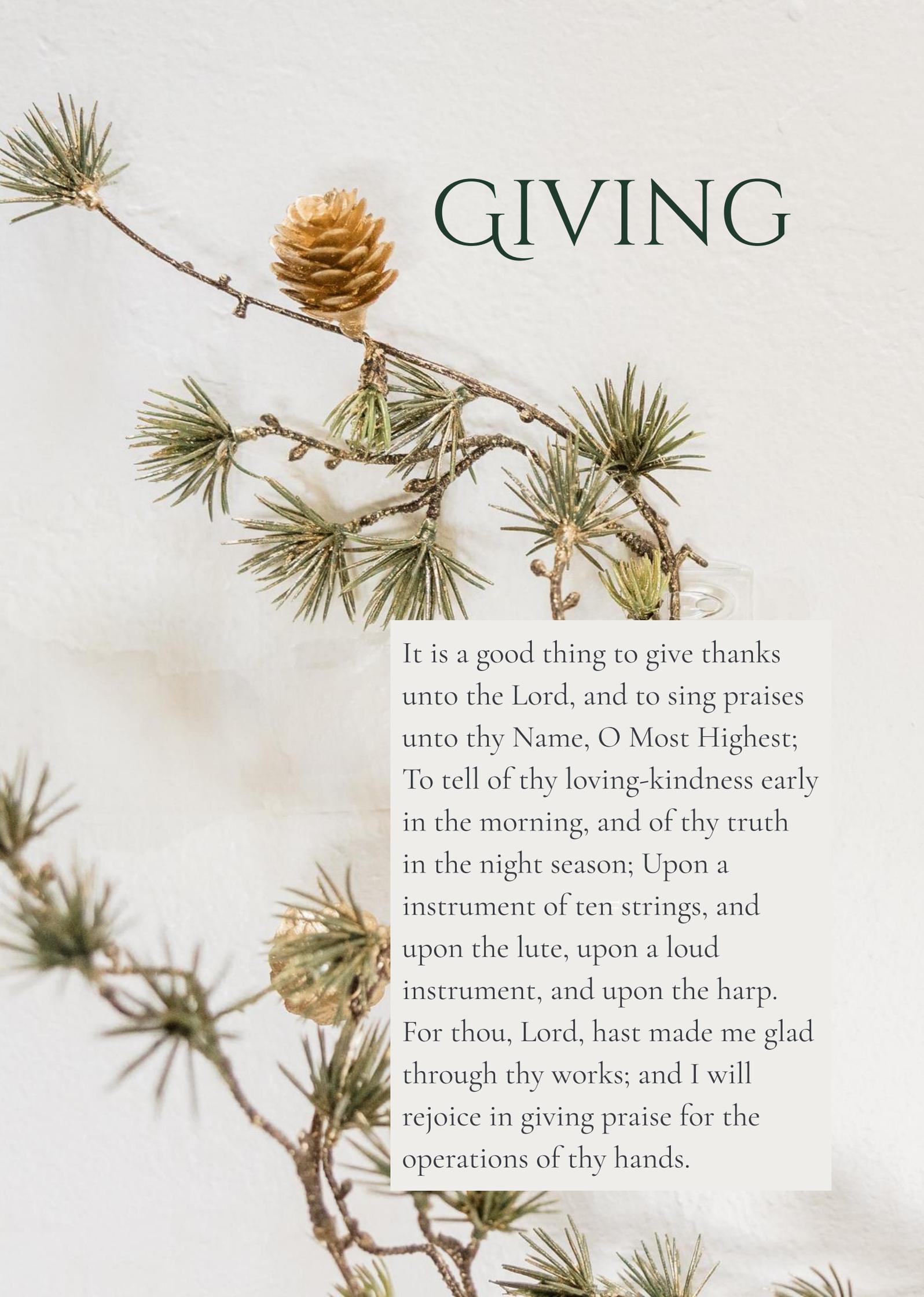
- Watch Aristocats, eat fish sticks, and play Exploding Kittens , the card game.
- Watch Ratatouille, make ratatouille and make a table scape with rats “cooking.”
- Watch Aquaman, eat Shrimp Scampi make blue Jello cups with Swedish Red Fish “floating “ and play Go Fish while they chill.
- Watch Paddington Bear, play Manners - the card game and make orange marmalade cookies. (I have an amazing recipe from a Neiman Marcus cookbook. See recipe pages.)
- Watch Heidi, eat Schnitzel and make Shirley Temples.
- Watch Bug’s Life, eat Farfalle shaped pasta (discuss the word butterfly in other languages) and make Dirt n’ Worms for dessert.
- My husband did a Lord of the Rings theme and he put onion rings around hot dogs. Our son loved it with ketchup!

Other themes took a more serious and personal tone.

- Watch Harry Potter, play that version of Clue, and make Butter Beer from an on-line recipe. We created a restaurant logo for the 3 Broomsticks and discussed that we are descended from Martha Carrier, one of the people killed at the Salem, Massachusetts Witch Trials of 1692.
- Apollo 13- Navy Bean Soup, Astronaut Ice Cream and the activity was making Gingerbread cookies in star shapes. While one of children’s Great Grandfathers was in the Navy the other worked for Nasa on the Apollo projects, for which he received a “Star.”

Making a dinner and watching a movie at home can seem so mundane, but pick a theme, grab a puzzle, prepare the food together and suddenly your family talks and wants to create crafts together, edible or not.



A photograph of a pine branch with a golden pine cone and green needles, set against a white background. The pine cone is the central focus, with several green pine needles extending from the branch. The word "GIVING" is written in a large, green, serif font in the upper right corner of the image.

GIVING

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy Name, O Most Highest; To tell of thy loving-kindness early in the morning, and of thy truth in the night season; Upon a instrument of ten strings, and upon the lute, upon a loud instrument, and upon the harp. For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy works; and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operations of thy hands.



20+C+M+B+25

A God Story

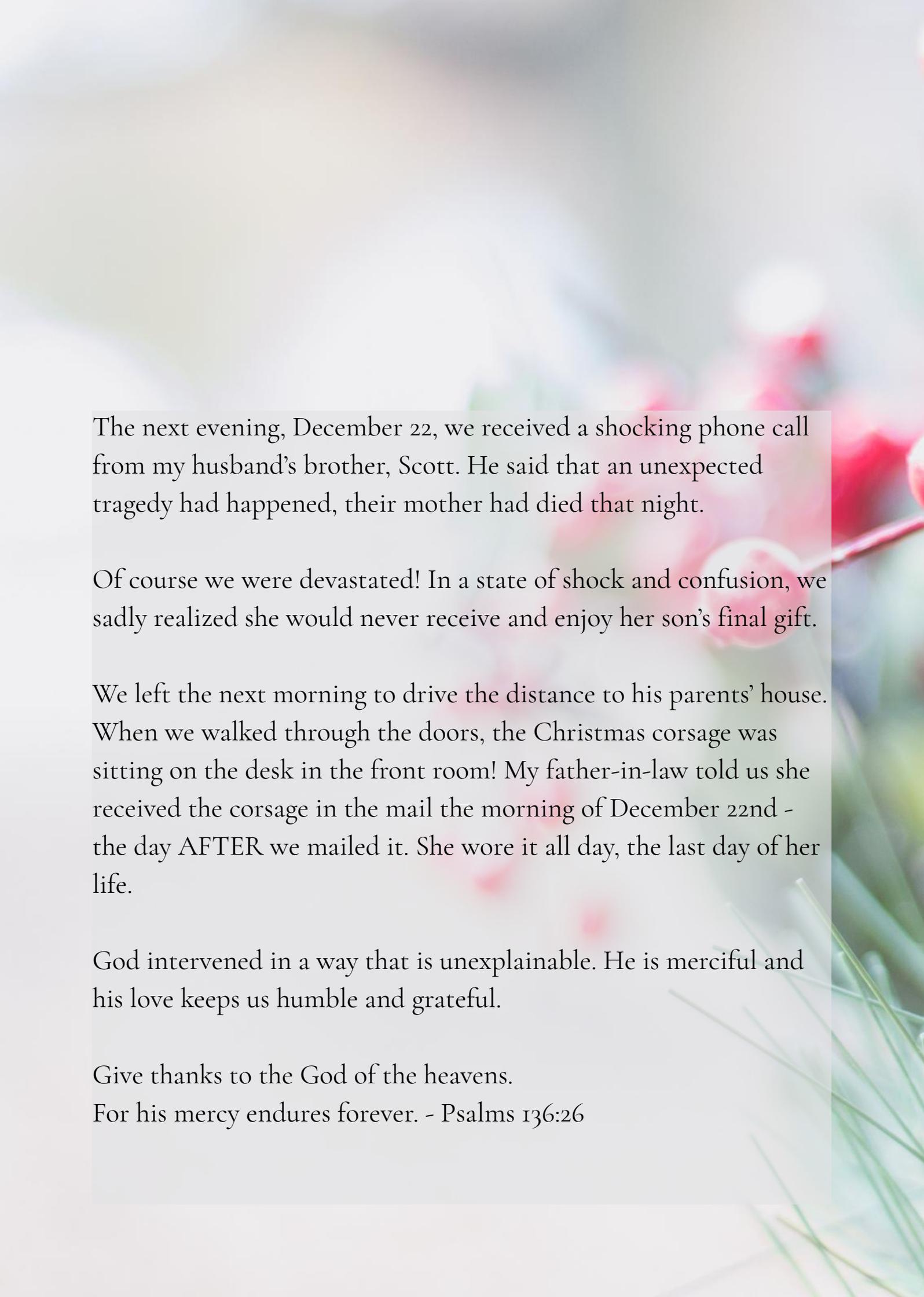
by Susan Holland



My husband loved Christmas. For him it was all holy and all fun, uniting Jesus and family into one happy celebration! I think he inherited that love of Christmas from his mother. Having grown up on a farm with little luxury, “Grandma Holland” would work hard to buy Christmas gifts for her children and grandchildren. I had never experienced so many gifts to unwrap until I joined the family by marrying her oldest son, Kim Holland.

Thursday December 21, 1989 he got this last minute idea to send his mother a Christmas corsage via US mail. He knew she would be so proud to show it off to her church friends, a gift from her son!

This was before the internet so we couldn’t order it online. Since we lived in a very small Texas town, several hundred miles away, we relied on the Post Office to deliver it. We took it to the Post Office on December 21. The Postmistress, Virginia, warned us that because of the last minute mailing, it would not get there before Christmas. She added at that late date packages were taking about a week to arrive. Having no other option, we agreed, saying, “That’s okay, she will love it when she gets it and will proudly show it off after Christmas.” That was my mother-in-law, grateful!



The next evening, December 22, we received a shocking phone call from my husband's brother, Scott. He said that an unexpected tragedy had happened, their mother had died that night.

Of course we were devastated! In a state of shock and confusion, we sadly realized she would never receive and enjoy her son's final gift.

We left the next morning to drive the distance to his parents' house. When we walked through the doors, the Christmas corsage was sitting on the desk in the front room! My father-in-law told us she received the corsage in the mail the morning of December 22nd - the day AFTER we mailed it. She wore it all day, the last day of her life.

God intervened in a way that is unexplainable. He is merciful and his love keeps us humble and grateful.

Give thanks to the God of the heavens.
For his mercy endures forever. - Psalms 136:26

St. Honore Guild

*Saint Honore was a French bishop
and the patron saint of bakers,
pastry chefs and confectioners.*



Barbara Matthews & Felicity Lopez

MINDFUL MISSIONS

I have been wanting to start a bake table at CHC for many years, but the timing was not right. My former church did this and was quite successful raising a lot of money for various charities. Adding to this desire, while going through some of my old recipes, I realized – I missed making desserts.

After gaining Bishop Camlin's approval for this idea, I spoke to one of our parishioners, who was an accomplished chef and baker, Felicity Lopez. She was on board immediately. From there, everything just fell into place. Before long, we had the St. Honore name and logo ready to use. We contacted a list of about 16 bakers to see if they would be willing to help. And to my surprise 75% of those originally contacted said yes! Currently the guild is made up of 24 members and is open to parishioners of all ages.

When vestry approved our new group, they placed the guild under the Mission Advocacy Team. The REC Board of Foreign Missions – Cuba was selected as our first mission. Our first bake table started September 28, 2025.

We now set up a bake table during Sunday School each week for the purpose of raising funds for various missions. Each quarter, Bishop John Boonzaaijer advises the guild as to which mission has the most need for funds. As of 11/16/2025, the guild has raised \$1041.10 for the REC Board of Foreign Missions –CUBA.

I am in awe of seeing God work in our efforts and am humbled that my little idea of a bake table has turned into a valuable ministry of supporting Cuba and the Christian movement there. It truly is a blessing and a lot of fun! Contact either Barbara Mathews or Felicity Lopez if you are interested in helping the St. Honore at CHC or think about starting a baker's guild at your church!



A St. Honore Guild Prayer from Deaconess Marisa Cappuccia

Almighty God, we ask that you bless the endeavors of the St. Honore Guild. Bless the work of human hands who labor as bakers. Instill in each volunteer the joy of serving and the peace that comes from knowing that their work will raise money for Foreign Missions, thus fulfilling a part in the Great Commission. May it be your love that is folded in the batter, and in your love may the sweet offerings be eaten and enjoyed by those who consume them. Let the contributions made by the St. Honore Guild to the Missionaries help the people in need and turn their hearts toward your beloved Son, our Savior. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.



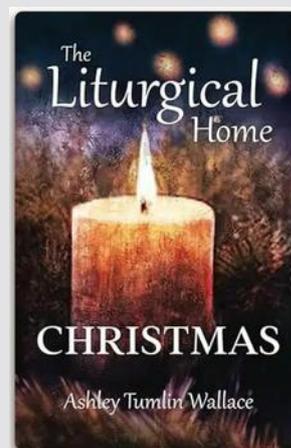
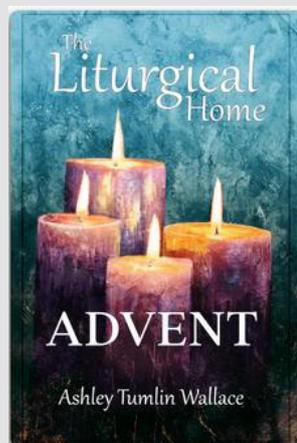
Church of the Holy Communion Cathedral

The REC Mission Work in Cuba is the result of a plea that came in July 2003 to Bishop Charles Dorrington of the REC Diocese of Western Canada for Episcopal oversight for a small group of believers in the city of Moa, Holguin, Cuba. What began as a small congregation of about 15 people has grown to more than 50 parishes, missions, and preaching stations spread throughout the island, through the leadership of Cuban clergy with the guidance of Bishop Dorrington and his wife Claudia. In 2023, REC Board of Foreign Missions President John Boonzaaijer was elected Missionary Suffragan Bishop for Cuba, and he was consecrated on February 15, 2024. In November of 2024, Bishop Boonzaaijer travelled to Cuba and was able to hold the first diocesan synod since 2020. Your prayers are requested for this mission work, as well as donations to assist with such ministries as theological education and church planting."

The needs of the Cuba mission are especially great just now considering the impact of Hurricane Melissa on top of the usual scarcity in that country.



The Next Chapter



The Anglican Bible Study Podcast comes to you from Church of the Holy Communion Cathedral in Dallas, TX. Dr. Charles Camlin is teaching The Book of Isaiah. Available on the website <https://www.holycommuniondallas.org/media> as well as iTunes and Spotify.

The Cradle of Prayer offers recordings for morning and evening prayers directly from the pages of 1928 Book of Common Prayer. Available on iTunes and Spotify

The Liturgical Home is a series of books written by Ashley Tumlin Wallace to help families celebrate the seasons of the church year. Available on Amazon

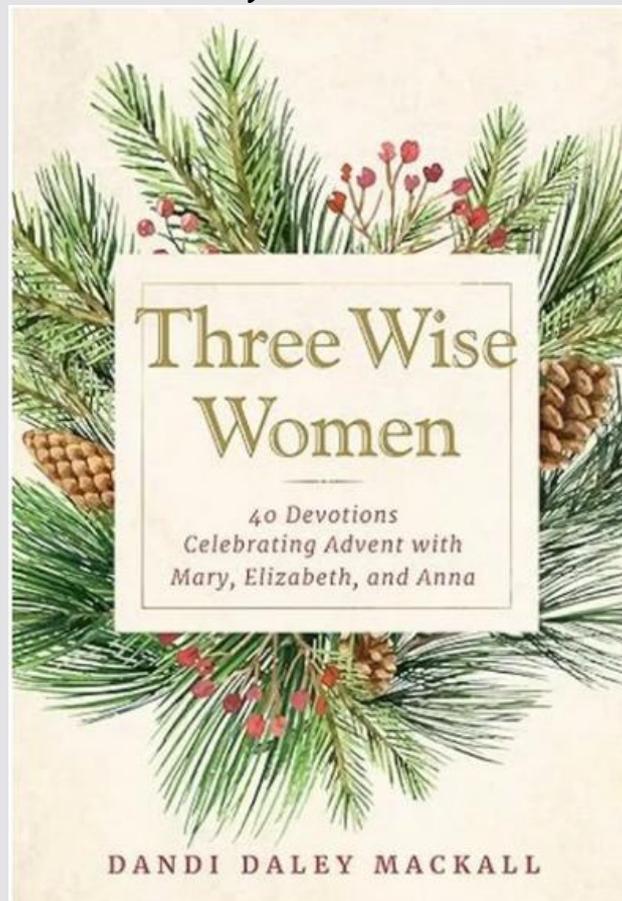
Daughters of the Holy Cross Book Study

Are you longing for a deeper, more fulfilling experience this Christmas? Join us as we anticipate, celebrate and marvel at Jesus' birth from the eyes and hearts of Mary, Elizabeth and Anna.

Three Wise Women is the perfect book to accompany all believers through this holy season of the year. The book can be purchased from Barnes & Noble, Walmart, or Amazon.

Our Advent study will consist of four zoom session on Monday evenings at 7 pm Eastern, 6 pm Central, 5 pm Mountain, and 4 pm Pacific time. To join please register in advance for the meetings [here](#).

Monday, December 1
Monday, December 8
Monday, December 15
Monday, December 22



The Silver Chalice



THE SILVER CHALICE
Gift Shop & Bookstore

The Silver Chalice Gift Shop and Bookstore is a volunteer-run ministry of Holy Communion Women (HCW). Located in Lunt Hall, the store offers a unique selection of gifts for all ages, including a variety of Christian books for children and adults, Bibles, the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, and a growing list of Anglican authors.

Proceeds from sales, along with fundraising events hosted by HCW, support a variety of ministries within the church, the diocese, and the community at large. Since 2007, over \$160,000 in monetary and non-monetary contributions has been given out.

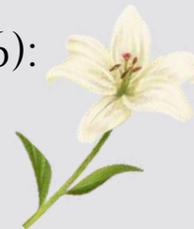




Share Your Spiritual Gifts

Seasons of the Spirit will be a quarterly publication to inspire women in the REC and to build community. Every one of us has gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit. If you would like to contribute an article, recipe, photograph, book recommendation, poem, favorite scripture, etc. I ask you to prayerfully consider submitting your ideas. Below are the upcoming themes:

LENT, EASTER (SPRING 2026):
PATIENCE AND FAITH



PENTECOST, TRINITYTIDE
(SUMMER, 2026):
HOPE AND PRAISE



Email

hcw@holychommuniondallas.org
Attention Julie McGough

