



an illustrated  
**advent**  
FOR FAMILIES

**PREPARING the WAY**



## CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY Embodying Home

### CHRISTMAS EVE

This Christmas Eve, as you return to your home from last minute shopping, family gatherings, and worship services, take some time as a family to read together the following scripture passage and prayer. Each year, on Christmas Eve, we remember that while we make our final preparations to welcome Jesus into the world and into our homes, Jesus' parents found themselves making preparations without their families and comforts of home. Our scripture reminds us to be mindful that Jesus came into the world in an unexpected way and continues to meet us in unexpected ways. That is why it is important for us to remember and be prepared to see him anew each Christmas.

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

### PRAYER

Jesus, in the midst of the bustling streets  
The chatter of the crowds  
The braying of the animals  
The swirl of activity  
Your time is near.

In the darkness of manger  
The dirt,  
the smell,  
the damp  
Your time is near.

Into the unknown  
The first pangs  
The hard work  
The pain  
Your time is near.

We witness your borning cry  
A gentle touch  
A prayer of thanks  
A swaddling embrace  
Your time has arrived.  
We are prepared to welcome you.  
Amen.

# CHRISTMAS DAY

## SCRIPTURE: John 1:1-5, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

## REFLECTION

It's Christmas Day! Jesus is here! Our Gospel passages from Matthew and Luke share similar stories about Christ's arrival on earth, but this year the announcement of "God With Us" comes from the Gospel of John. What do we notice right away? John announces the arrival of Jesus in a very different way than the writers of Matthew and Luke.

In the Christian Faith, we learn at an early age that the Bible, our Scripture, is also called "The Word." This is a shortened way to say "The Word of God" or the words God has shared with us that we now have today in the Bible. The first people to hear and read the Gospel of John would be familiar with that phrase. But the writer of John is giving God's People a new meaning of "the Word."

John wants us to know that "the Word" can also be a name we give to Jesus. Why? Because John believed that God sent Jesus to be with us on earth so that Jesus could teach us how to live as God's people. Jesus became a person so that God could be one of us and be with us in the world, no matter who we are and where we live. The "Word" of God is something and someone who we can welcome into our home and lives every day. Jesus is someone who can be present in our homes but can also "be home" for us because he has the power to be with us, comfort us, and guide us wherever we may go.<sup>2</sup> What an amazing gift that God has given to us!

## DISCUSSION

As you color the coloring page together, ponder these questions:

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<sup>2</sup> Lewis, Karoline M. She: Five Keys To Unlock The Power of Women In Ministry. Abingdon Press, 2016, 49.

1. What are some words that are used to describe Jesus in the Bible? What are some words that we use to describe Jesus at church? Which word or phrase is your favorite? Why?
2. What do you think about Jesus being someone who is always “home” or always with us?
3. Is this something that is comforting? Confusing? Why do you think God had Jesus become a human baby?
4. What are some things we can do as a family, or in our community, that invites Jesus to be with us?

## FAMILY ACTIVITY

**Items needed:** Paper, crayons or markers, scissors, glue, various craft supplies (cloth squares, feathers, sticks, get creative!)

We invite you to find some time as a family either on Christmas Day or in the days following to create a home for Jesus. Knowing that Jesus was born away from his family’s home and at a different point in his life lived away from his childhood home, how can you as a family welcome Jesus into his home. Have some fun together discussing and creating a miniature version of a home that you think Jesus would like to live in. When you are finished making this “home,” put it under your Christmas tree or in another central place in your home as your gift of welcome to Jesus.

## PRAAYER

Dear Jesus,  
You are here!  
Happy Birthday!

We have been planning  
And preparing and waiting for you.

Thank you for being God’s Word to us  
Thank you for being a home for us  
Thank you for journeying through life with us

Help us to remember and celebrate your love for us  
Today and every day.

Amen.