

Tools for Extra-Ordinary Times

Begin by . . .

- Seeking simplicity in all things
- Nurturing inward faith for outward living
- Focusing on making memories that are meaningful

Spiritual practices:

Advent, Christmas, Epiphany

Tis the season for celebrations

At home

Approach the season with joy, letting go of anxiety, by involving everyone in the household in helpful conversations about the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany celebrations you hope to create and to experience.

Ask questions. Brainstorm ideas. Adopt plans for celebrations that embrace simplicity and meaning:

- How will we keep Christ at the center of our celebrations?
- What are some of the family traditions we want to include this year? Pick one or two, not all.
- Who will participate and how we will include them?
- When do we begin?

Through ritual

Let spiritual practices be the focal point for household decorations and rituals.

- * Make an Advent wreath—with a bit of greenery, four candles, and a Christ candle—the centerpiece of weekly spiritual practice.
- * Use an Advent calendar with simple devotions to countdown the days until Christmas.

Make a handmade card or take a plate of cookies (homemade or purchased) for the staff lounge. Give friends the gift of time, inviting them to a family or faith community gathering that is already scheduled as part of your annual tradition.

At school

Keep celebrations simple—lunch at a nearby location or a gathering at a coffee break to sing carols and exchange stories of past memories and present plans.

Adopt a mission project that requires small donations of non-perishable food or items for homeless shelters or senior centers.

In the world

Pray Christ's peace breaks forth in areas of conflict and war.

Collect and donate least coins or loose change toward one issue, such as universal education.



Ritual, remembrance, and renewal

Through giving

Practice simplicity through giving that does not feed the addictions of consumerism and overconsumption.

- * Set a budget to give without credit card debt.
- * Make a difference in the world with alternative gifts to honor those who are happy without more stuff.
- * Give gifts of time, talents, or labor.

At church

Advent festivals	Opportunities for fellowship, crafts, and gifts
Lessons and Carols	Scripture texts and hymns for the season
Christmas Eve and Day	Candlelight and carols, birthday party for Jesus
Feast for the King	Dinner, worship, and celebration of the incarnation

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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(CMP) serves to the glory of God as a ministry of the

Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). To that end, we pledge to produce and provide excellent and faithful educational resources that help people and congregations:

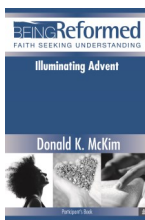
- Make commitments to live as disciples of Jesus Christ;
- Discover an identity in continuity with Reformed expressions of the historic Trinitarian faith;
- Worship and serve God joyfully; and
- Honor Christ by doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with their God.



Inspire, equip and connect the PC(USA) in its many expressions to serve Christ in the world through new and existing communities of faith, hope, love and witness.

Resources for Advent, Christmas, Epiphany

Adults



Being Reformed: Illuminating Advent

Through the blessed themes of Advent—hope, love, joy, and peace—Illuminating Advent invites you to connect with this sacred season. The meaning and mystery of Christmas and Epiphany are also explored.

Youth



Faith Questions: Jesus Christ

This four-session study explores the questions:

- How Is Jesus God?
- Why Do We Pray In Jesus Name?
- What Makes Jesus So Great?
- Who Do You Say I Am?

Order these and other resources by calling (800) 533-4371 or through pcusastore.com.

Families



Presbyterians Today 2014 Advent Calendar: Decluttering for Christmas

In the spirit of spring cleaning, let's do an Advent cleaning and use the four weeks leading up to Christmas as a time of uncluttering—of emptying our schedules, homes, and hearts.

Find activities for children and families on the We Believe [website](http://www.pcusa.org/webelieve).

