

# 2023 Advent Resources

This is a list of resources recommended by the staff, clergy, and parishioners of St. Paul's. If you have specific questions or are looking for another type of resource, contact the Rev'd Keli Shipley Cooper at [kshipleycooper@stpaulsrva.org](mailto:kshipleycooper@stpaulsrva.org)

## **[Preparing the Way: Christian Practices for Advent](#) by Scott Gunn, Richelle Thompson, Lindsay Barrett-Adler, Hugo Olaiz, and Miriam McKenney**

For Christians, the season of Advent should be a time of reflection, of waiting and watching for Jesus's miraculous birth. But the secular world likes to elbow in, with Christmas displays appearing in late summer. The secular celebrations of the weeks before Christmas often whips us into a frenzy of shopping, decorating, baking, and scheduling encounters with Santa (and the elves!). But our faith beckons us to a gentler way, one focused on the divine.

These daily meditations invite you into a more faith-filled observation of Advent and Christmas. Some devotions explore traditional Christian ways to make the seasons, from the Advent wreath to Christmas pageants, from favorite hymns to setting up the creche. But on other days, the reflections offer ideas about how to infuse a sense of the holy into popular traditions such as decorating the tree, sending Christmas cards, and exchanging gifts.

In these remarkable seasons of Advent and Christmas, the preparations we make to welcome Jesus should not only be in our homes but also our hearts.

## **[All Creation Waits: The Advent Mystery of New Beginnings](#) by Gayle Boss**

*From the bestselling author of Wild Hope -- a beautiful book for Advent.*

Open a window each day of Advent onto the natural world. Here are twenty-five fresh images of the foundational truth that lies beneath and within the Christ story. In twenty-five portraits depicting how wild animals of the northern hemisphere ingeniously adapt when darkness and cold descend, we see and hear as if for the first time the ancient wisdom of Advent: *The dark is not an end but the way a new beginning comes.*

Short, daily reflections that paint vivid, poetic images of familiar animals, paired with charming original wood-cuts, will engage both children and adults. Anyone who does not want to be caught, again, in the consumer hype of "the holiday season" but rather to be taken up into the eternal truth the natural world reveals will welcome this book.

## **[I Witness: Living Inside the Stories of Advent and Christmas](#) by Kate Moorehead**

Many of us have heard the story of Jesus' birth, but have we lived inside it? Episcopal priest Kate Moorehead invites us to enter the story of salvation with our hearts and minds wide open, experiencing the miracle of Jesus through the eyes of witnesses: Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, and others. And Moorehead encourages us to bear witness ourselves - both then and now - to the marvel and majesty of a babe born in a manger, of Christ our King. These daily devotionals offer a companion through the seasons of Advent and Christmas and urge us to keep reading, keep listening, keep learning. The story of Christ's birth can be both familiar and new in each re-telling. Come and see.

***These resources are from the “Building Faith” article [“Advent Calendars for 2023”](#)***

## **AdventWord**

**AdventWord** is a global Advent Calendar offering images and meditations for reflection every day of Advent. You can download official #AdventWord graphics, find additional resources, and sign up for a daily email at the [AdventWord resources page](#). AdventWord is great for concentrating on specific terms pulled from the lectionary readings.

“Praying in Color” creator Sybil MacBeth offers free printable Advent calendars for “doodling” prayers, as she describes it, each day of Advent. She also provides guidance on how to introduce “Praying in Color” as a practice. You can access her [2023 Advent templates](#) at the Praying in Color website.

## **Way of Love Calendar**

“Journeying the Way of Love” Advent Calendar 2023 is free from The Episcopal Church via download. It is particularly good for older children, teens, and adults. There are prompts for reflection and conversation. Examples include “set a timer for three minutes to sit in silence and hear what God might be saying back to you” and “as you are out and about for the rest of this week, notice the people you pass.” This could pair well with other [Way of Love](#) resources like the [Advent Curriculum](#) (available in English, Spanish, and French). Follow these links to access the Way of Love calendar: [“Advent Calendar 2023” \(English\)](#), [“Calendario de adviento 2023” \(Spanish\)](#), and [“Calendrier de l’aveut 2023” \(French\)](#).

## **Advent Calendar Cards**

The [SALT Advent Calendar](#) features printable cards with illustrations for each day of the season. The cards include activities to do on weekdays and scriptures and meditations to read on Sundays. You can put the cards in numbered envelopes, as SALT suggests, hang them up, or use them in another way. We love the beauty of these. The personal use download is \$10, and they offer very reasonable increased costs for use on a larger scale. They have a handful of other Advent and Christmas resources, including “A Mason Jar Advent” calendar and “A ‘Less Is More’ Christmas Poster and Devotional” on their [Digital/Printable Resources page](#).

## **BIPOC Leaders Advent Calendar**

For Advent 2021, the Episcopal Parish of St. John the Evangelist in Hingham, Massachusetts published a “BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Leaders Advent Calendar.” Each day gives people an opportunity to learn about a different leader. The calendar is ordered from December 1 – 24, so it can be adapted to this year’s Advent season as well. You can check out their [BIPOC Leaders Advent calendar website here](#).

## **“How Does a Weary World Rejoice?” Calendar**

A Sanctified Art has released their 2023 Advent resources, and the collection includes printable [“How Does a Weary World Rejoice? Advent Calendars for Children and Adults.”](#) Their 2023

focus is “practicing joy in a weary world.” The children’s calendar involves coloring a part of the calendar for each day of Advent, and both the children’s and adult calendars suggest daily activities to invite joy into the season. Both calendars are sold together. Copies for personal use can be purchased for \$5 each.

### **Outdoor Advent Calendar**

Although this list of calendars is designed to focus on faith-related resources, one calendar that isn’t explicitly Christian deserves mention. 1000 Hours Outside, a practice launched by Ginny Yurich to promote time outdoors for children and families, created a free “**Outdoor Advent Calendar**.” It includes 29 activities to do outside, and two different versions are available: one tailored to warm climates and another for cool areas. Because the calendar is undated, it can be used in any Advent season. It can be a helpful resource for incorporating creation care into your Advent celebration.

***These resources are from the PCUSA Store’s [2023 Advent Resource Guide](#).***

### **Stay Awhile: *Advent Lessons in Divine Hospitality* by Kara Eidson**

Advent is a season of preparation that—like our holiday gatherings themselves—takes time and care. Think of the anticipation that comes with hosting loved ones for Christmas dinner: We begin by extending an invitation. We make plans and begin our preparations. Ultimately, we open the door and welcome our guests, and that is when, finally, we celebrate. Advent should feel the same way, a time to make ready for the long-awaited event of Christ’s birth. In *Stay Awhile*, Eidson presents a banquet table of inspiration for Advent, including weekly reflections for personal and small group use, brief daily devotions, and ideas to involve the whole congregation. Congregational resources include liturgies, sermon starters, children’s moments, and even a no-rehearsals-needed Christmas pageant.

### **Holy Disruption: *Discovering Advent in the Gospel of Mark* by Tracy S. Daub**

The Gospel of Mark doesn’t have a nativity story—so where’s the Advent message? *Holy Disruption* presents a fresh understanding of the holiness of Christmas grounded, not in a conventional cozy Christmas message, but through Mark’s disquieting gospel, which invites its readers to experience God’s disruptive but transformative love for us and our world.

### **Advent in Plain Sight: *A Devotion through Ten Objects* by Jill J. Duffield**

In this daily devotional for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, Jill J. Duffield draws readers’ attention to ten ordinary objects that appear in the biblical narratives of messianic prophesy and incarnation. Each daily devotion features a Scripture reading, prayer, and reflection, reminding Christians that God still dwells among us, even in the most ordinary places.

## **Youth Advent Resources**

### **Adverbs for Advent by Marilyn McEntyre**

These daily reflections for the season of Advent focus on the question of how we are to live into the promise of the season and the challenges of our historical moment, and how we might, as we focus again on the great theme of waiting in Christian life, practice the presence of God. They include pieces entitled, for instance, "Live Boldly," "Live Patiently," "Live Harmoniously," and "Live Repentantly." Based on the author's own efforts to accept the invitation of Advent each year as a time of interior renewal, these short essays are meant as invitations to reclaim a holy season and enjoy it as it was meant to be enjoyed--as "the crowning of the year."

### **The Advent Coloring Calendar: A Coloring Book to Bless and De-Stress Through the Season from Paraclete Press**

This fall, adults of all ages everywhere who feel stressed and unfocused are quieting their minds and souls by putting away the smart phones and tablets and picking up pencils, markers and crayons to color. At home, in waiting rooms, in churches, on road trips - coloring books for adults are becoming more and more popular. These coloring books for adults from Paraclete are not only a simple path to making something beautiful, it has a spiritual element as well. For anyone looking for some relief from the stress of the season, and for a fun and artistic new activity to count the days until Christmas, this Advent Coloring Calendar will provide a daily dose of peace and focus. Create something beautiful by coloring a pattern for each of the the 24 days before Christmas, and then enjoy the Christmas story from the Bible while creating more lovely and seasonal art.

### **Storymakers NYC Advent Calendar**

Jump into the season of Advent with StoryMakers. This interactive calendar will help you stop, reflect, and connect as a family this Advent. Each day in our Advent calendar includes scripture highlights, activity pages, and fun questions to connect with your StoryMaker throughout the season. Each reflection makes it easy to engage and only requires 10 minutes to complete. Journey together as a family, or get each StoryMaker their own!

<https://www.storymakersnyc.com/shop-fun-extras/p/advent-calendar-2023>

### **Following the Star d365**

d365 is a daily devotion written for youth and adults. The devotion follows a five-step format – Pause, Listen, Think, Pray, Go. You can access the daily devotions via their website, download the app or receive a daily email. Written by a wide variety of youth, young adults and adults this daily devotional ministry is supported by The Episcopal Church, The Presbyterian Church USA and The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The daily devotions also observe some important seasons in the year: Pentecost (Ordinary Time), Following the Star (Advent), Journey to Cross (Lent), Back to School (August and September)<https://d365.org/>

## Family Advent Resources

*The Children and Family resources are available through the websites indicated and are also available for sharing from Linda Willis (lwillis@stpaulsrva.org)*

### Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home

Faithful Families is a thoughtful, practical guide to teaching by doing - to integrating prayer, tradition, Scripture, and ritual into the routines of a normal, busy family. This illuminates the sacred in the everyday. Included is the liturgical season of Advent, focusing quiet reflection and waiting, while the wider culture is focused on buying and consuming. How can parents take the lead in helping their families focus on values of kindness, service and giving during such a busy time of the year? Accompanying book - **Faithful Families for Advent and Christmas**

<https://chalicepress.com/pages/smith-traci>

### Unplug the Christmas Machine

Unplug the Christmas Machine is the undisputed guide to creating a joyful, stress-free holiday season. This book offers a wealth of suggestions for combatting commercialism and filling the holidays with simple, spiritual celebrations that help families draw closer together. In the pages of this book, are answers to the questions heard most often in talking with people about Christmas, such as "How can I reduce the stress of preparing for Christmas?" "How can I make our celebration more spiritual and less materialistic?"

<https://www.amazon.com/Unplug-Christmas-Machine-Complete-Putting/dp/0688109616>

## Children's' Advent Resources

### The Christmas Story

The Bible contains many wonderful stories which can be understood and enjoyed by young children. This story has been specially written, staying close to the original stories, for young children who are just beginning to read. Charming illustrations, full of historically accurate detail and with the help and encouragement of an adult, new readers will be able to achieve the pleasure and satisfaction of reading a whole book for themselves.

[www.edcpub.com](http://www.edcpub.com)

### The Legend of the Three Trees

In this new telling of the classic legend, your child will meet three young trees that have big dreams for their future. The olive tree wants to be a treasure chest, the oak tree hopes to be a mighty ship and the pine tree only wants to stay on the mountain and point others to God. The three trees are in for a surprise - God has a much different, much better plan in store for them.

[www.tommynelson.com](http://www.tommynelson.com)

### **The Miracle of the First Poinsettia, A Mexican Christmas Story**

It is la Noche Buena and soon festivities will be taking place in the mountain village that is Juanita's home. But no one knows, least of all Juanita, that this particular Christmas Eve will be quite unlike any other.

[www.barefootbooks.com](http://www.barefootbooks.com)

### **The Story of the Three Wise Kings**

Tomie dePaola's beautiful retelling of the story of the three wise kings is perfect for sharing with little ones! Three wise men of the East, having seen a new star symbolizing the birth of a great king, follow the star to Bethlehem where they present gifts to the newborn Jesus. This beautiful rendition of the well-known tale is sure to delight young readers.

<https://www.cokesbury.com/9781534466531-The-Story-of-the-Three-Wise-Kings>

### **The Nativity**

The miraculous story of the Nativity lovingly retold with the text from the King James Version of the Bible with Juli Vivas's heartwarming artwork. A remarkable and unexpected view of the traditional tale, here is a volume that will be cherished by children and parents alike.

<https://www.amazon.com/Nativity-Julie-Vivas>

### **Advent Storybook, 24 Stories to Share Before Christmas**

The beloved, bestselling read aloud storybook - a short story for each of the days of December leading up to Christmas. A wonderful opportunity for the whole family to share in the reading of these stories.

<https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Advent-Storybook/Antonie-Schneider/9780735819634>