

HOPE LIVES ADVENT CALENDAR 2023

 3	 4	 5	 6	 7	 8	 9
 10	 11	 12	 13	 14	 15	 16
 17	 18	 19	 20	 21	 22	 23
 24	 25		<p>Daily prayer: Lord make us an Instrument of your peace this Christmas season.</p>  southridge			

Any donations, including cards, can be brought to the Welcome Centre at your Southridge location.



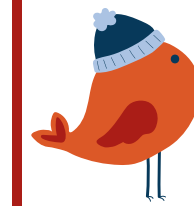
Write a Card: Today, let's write a letter of encouragement to our friends in the Indigenous community who are defending the land at 1492 Land Back Lane. For example: "To the land and water defenders at 1492 Land Back Lane, we hope that you are finding peace and joy even in the challenges. We appreciate you, and want to encourage you. From, (name(s), location)."



Challenge: Do the holidays add any (possibly unnecessary) pressures to your life? For example, "The Christmas lights in our front yard take forever to set up, it's hard to find the time!" Today, try to name one tradition or experience of the holidays that you could actually do without, and release yourself from it. What else could we do with that time?



Spiritual Practice: To begin, make sure you're sitting comfortably. Close your eyes. Pay attention to how you're breathing right now. Our prayer today is going to be: "Peace of Christ". Inhale, and then in your mind or out loud, say the words, "Peace of Christ." Then, exhale. Repeat for as long as you'd like.



Gift-Giving: Is there someone in your life who, for whatever reason, would be surprised to receive a gift from you? Today, try to surprise someone with an unexpected gift. It could be just a chocolate bar, or a coffee, or a candle. Just make it something given with intentionality.



Sabbath: In the business of the Holiday season, do you find yourself running from one thing to the other with an additional to-do list constantly filling your mind? Today, take some time to release yourself from the hectic pace of this season. Play a game, read, enjoy the quiet or take a walk. Allow yourself to rest and be in the presence of the Lord.



Write a Card: Every Spring, as farmworkers return from the Caribbean, our Vineland community greets them with a 'Welcome Kit', filled with some simple gifts. Today, write a simple, yet thoughtful card of welcome to go in each bag.



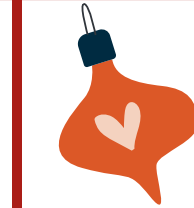
Challenge: Christmas comes but once a year! That means things have to be perfect, right? Sometimes, that just means they have to be done our way! Today, name an 'imperfection', a deviation from your own preference, that you can actually accept. How might that provide some peace for yourself and for those around you?



Spiritual Practice: Take a few moments to meditate on this: Everytime we take a drink of clean water, it's a gift. When we put clean clothes on, it's a gift. When we take a breath of fresh air, it's a gift. When we go to church to worship God, it's a gift. At Christmastime, it's important to remember that the most important gifts aren't those that can be bought at a store.



Southridge Special Delivery: Today, let's purchase items to donate to our anchor causes across our locations! In St. Catharines, fun breakfast cereals for the Shelter. In Welland, cake mix for the Harvest Kitchen community dinners. In Vineland, items for a complete migrant farmworker 'Welcome Kit' (large bath towel; work gloves; bottle of Tylenol; toque).



Sabbath: Today we want to carve out some time for rest, good intentional rest. Rest can be many things, it can be quiet time with some tea, reading or a walk. It could be listening to an album you love start to finish. Whatever way you want to rest today - here is your excuse. Enjoy!



Write a Card: Today, write a card to the child your family supports, expressing appreciation and the love that God has for them. For those of us who do not sponsor a child, we can write to Kylian and Jadiel, who are sponsored through our Southridge Kid's Programs!



Challenge: We've been talking about peacemaking. A step towards peace is acknowledging where peace is lacking. Today, can you name for yourself, or with your household, a place where you lack peace? What would it look like to take a step towards receiving the peace of Christ in this situation, today?



Spiritual Practice: Take some time today to cut out paper snowflakes. Once you have them cut out, write on them everything that you are grateful for right now. Kids, you can draw pictures instead of words if you'd like. Once you have them filled hang them somewhere that you will see them to remind you of all the things you are grateful for!



Gift Giving: Together, we financially support four international churches running Child Survival Programs (in Ecuador, Indonesia, and two in Nicaragua), as they surround local women having babies. This Christmas we are looking to raise close to \$30,000 to cover two of these 'CSPs', so today, where possible, let's each chip in a little to support these churches together!



Sabbath: Today as you go throughout your day, whether you're buying those last minute gifts or sitting around with family and friends, take some time to consider the gift of Jesus. As we gear up for such a busy time of year we sometimes forget to sit in the knowledge that Jesus is the greatest gift and that is why we celebrate!



Christmas Prayer: Lord thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus. Help us to be Peacemakers in our community in big and small ways, and teach us to be more like our Saviour, the Prince of Peace. May we believe and live into the reality that you are working in and through us to create ever more peace in our world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.