

Pray together and interact with scripture  
in a mindful, thoughtful, playful way

- PAUSE -

*to*

- PRAY -

*and*

- PLAY -

# Advent Activities

a collaborative Advent devotional  
created by and for the people of

Faith Lutheran Church

Glen Ellyn, Illinois

2023

# An extraordinary devotional for Advent

## How to use this book:

Each page offers a new way to reflect on scripture while interacting with the world and community around you.

Here there is no wrong answer, no pressure for perfection, no stress. This is a place to pause, to play, and to pray.

Grab your pencils and markers and a bible (or web search) and have fun. Don't miss the QR codes! Aim your phone's camera at the square symbol you'll find in this position on each page. Not sure about QR codes? View all links and get a printable copy of this book here: [faithonline.org/pauseprayplay](http://faithonline.org/pauseprayplay)

You, Lord, are our Father.

We are the clay, you are the potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
(Isaiah 64:8)

Our Creator and creating God made each of us in the divine image. That means we are made to be creators too. Taking time to be creative and playful is a spiritual practice.

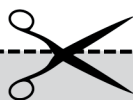
In a world that moves at the pace of frantic and more frantic, God invites us to slow down to create, to play, and to pray.

This Advent book, created by members of our Faith family, offers a way to pause while engaging with the scripture passages of the Advent lectionary.

May this book bless you with prayerful, playful pauses this Advent season.

Yours in playful prayer,

*Pastor Shelly  
& Pastor Julie*



The pages in this book have a bonus at the bottom! Each day you'll find a mini activity under a cut-line at the bottom of the page. Color or complete the strips, then cut them off and tape or staple them into links to form your very own advent chain. Build your chains at home throughout Advent, then bring them to church before or on Christmas Eve to decorate our space with the playful prayers of our congregation!

December 3, 2023

# - WEEK ONE - How Long?

First Sunday of Advent

Do not hold against us the sins of past generations;  
may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need. (Psalm 79: 8 NIV)

Fill in the blanks to make  
this prayer your own.

How long, Lord?

Pray part or all of it every  
day this week.

Will \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_ forever?

Will you keep the words  
the same, or will your  
conversation with God  
change from day to day?

Pour out your \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

May your \_\_\_\_\_ come quickly.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Amen.



Follow the QR code  
to sing along with Dr. Zach!

**How long, Lord?**

# - BLACKOUT POETRY - The Lord has Spoken

All the nations may walk in the name of their gods,  
but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever. (Micah 4:5 NIV)

Have you ever heard of blackout poetry? You study a passage of existing text (say, from a book, magazine, or newspaper) and eliminate words, revealing a new message.

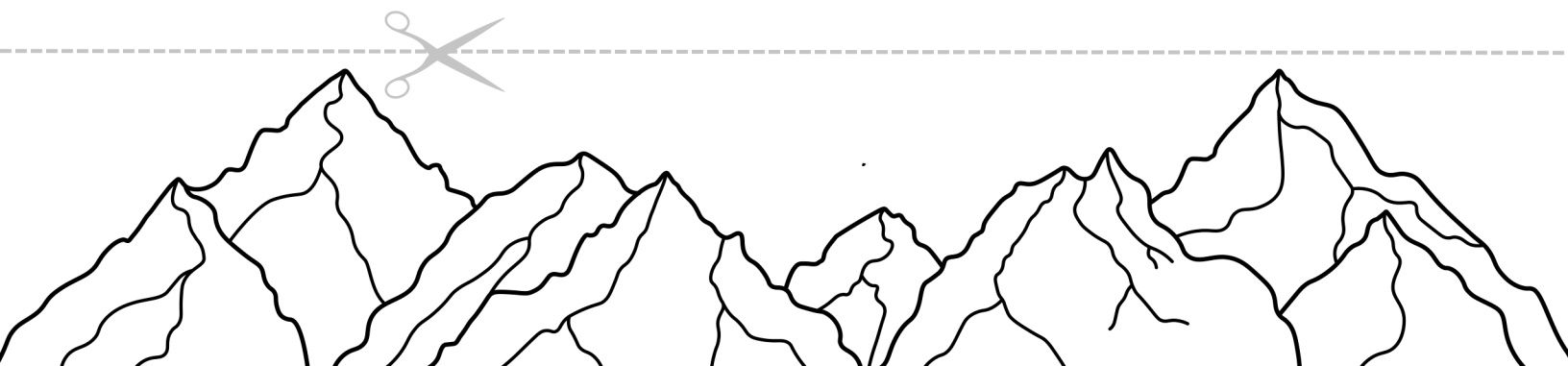


Try it with this passage from Micah 4. Search for a few words that create a meaningful message for you, and cross out the rest.

1 In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. 2 Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. 4 Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken. 5 All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.



Did this activity stretch your mind? Follow the QR code to stretch your body, too!

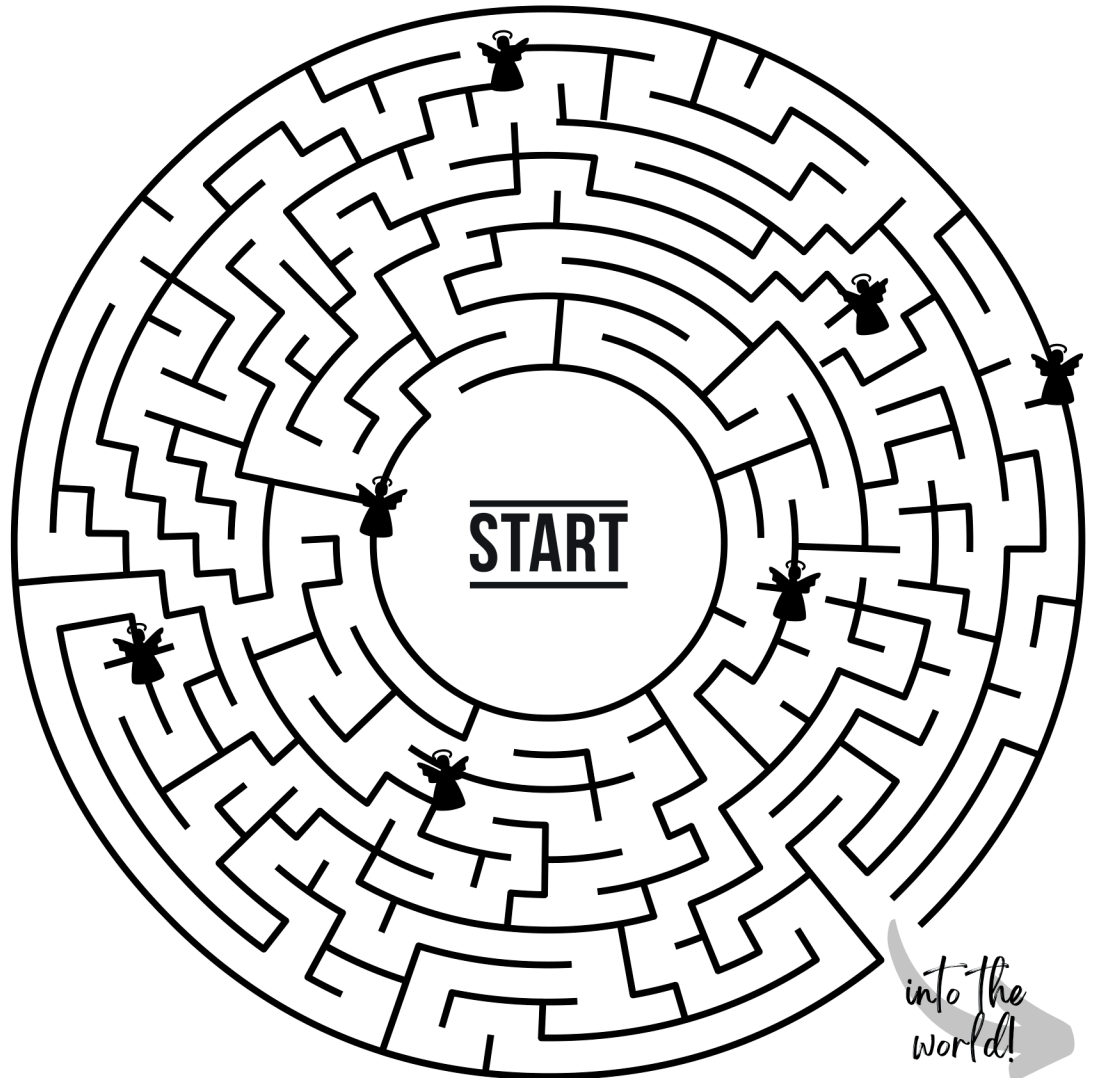


# I Saw Another Angel

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven.  
He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. (Revelation 18:1 NIV)

God saw that we were sinners and sent messengers to guide the way. Following angels helps us avoid the obstacles and pitfalls of life and sin.

Start this maze in the center. Follow the angels' path out to the world where you can share God's Word.



*into the world!*



Angels are all around us. Use this QR code to meet some everyday angels in our midst. (And see a solution to the maze, too.)

Think about all the angels in your life. Are they there when you least expect them? What pitfalls have they helped you avoid? How can you be an Angel in your world?



Who has been an angel for you?  
Draw them in between the wings.



# - MATCH PHRASES - Vivid Vision

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” (Micah 5:2 NIV)

Today’s passage from Micah is a vivid vision, describing what will happen when the promised ruler emerges from Bethlehem.

At right you’ll find fragments of this passage (New International Version). Match the start of each fragment in Column A with its ending in Column B.

### COLUMN A

- a seige is laid \_\_\_\_\_
- they will strike Israel’s \_\_\_\_\_
- out of you will come \_\_\_\_\_
- Therefore Israel will be \_\_\_\_\_
- when she who is in labor \_\_\_\_\_
- He will stand and \_\_\_\_\_
- in the strength of \_\_\_\_\_
- in the majesty of the \_\_\_\_\_
- And they will live \_\_\_\_\_
- for then his greatness \_\_\_\_\_
- And he will be our \_\_\_\_\_

### COLUMN B

- securely
- bears a son
- the Lord
- peace
- shepherd his flock
- ruler on the cheek with a rod
- against us
- will reach the ends of the earth
- for me one who will be ruler
- name of the Lord his God
- abandoned



Follow the QR code to check your answers.



# PEACE



# on earth

# -FINISH IT- The Lord Will Appear

Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth. (Hosea 6:3 NIV)

Advent is about waiting for the Son of God to appear. It's also about acknowledging our sins, which are the very reason God sacrificed Jesus. To save us.

Finish the picture of Jesus and color it in. While you draw and color, remember God's promises to us, and consider what it means to be saved from sin.



Follow the QR code to another fun activity!



**we wait for the LORD**

December 8, 2023

# - COLOR THE SCENE -

## God To The Rescue

Jeremiah 1:4-10

“You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you.

Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 1:7b-8 NIV)

God has plans for all of us. No matter how old or young we may be, God is sending us into the world to speak and share and serve.

Being sent to do God’s work may seem scary. But the Lord says, “I am with you and I will rescue you.”

While you color this rescue scene, pray about situations when you appreciate the Lord’s help and presence.



Follow the QR code to receive a special challenge today!





# - LOGIC PUZZLE -

## Giving Companions

The Lord will indeed give what is good (Psalm 85:12a NIV)

Advent is a season of hope and expectation. Five Biblical characters are coming together in and around Bethlehem to share the good news of Jesus' birth. Your task is to match each character with a gift, location, and animal companion.

Use the clues and the grid to solve the puzzle using Os and Xs. Each group only has one match. One gift has been completed for you as an example.

Good luck!

		GIFT					ANIMAL					LOCATION				
		PEACE	GRACE	FORGIVENESS	HOLY SPIRIT	GOOD NEWS	DONKEY	SHEEP	CAMEL	COW	DOVE	STABLE	OASIS	HILLS	SKY	INN
CHARACTER	JESUS	X	X	O	X	X										
	MARY			X												
	SHEPHERD			X												
	ANGEL			X												
	WISE MAN			X												
LOCATION	STABLE															
	OASIS															
	HILLS															
	SKY															
	INN															
LOCATION	DONKEY															
	SHEEP															
	CAMEL															
	COW															
	DOVE															

The character with the SHEEP wasn't at the OASIS, but was very happy to receive the gift of PEACE from the WISE MAN. MARY's DONKEY was kind and gentle as it carried her to the INN of Bethlehem.

Baby JESUS was cuddled by a happy COW as he brought the gift of FORGIVENESS to the world.

The SHEPHERD did not bring the gift of GRACE and didn't have a DOVE as his animal companion.

The ANGEL presented the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT but wasn't in the HILLS. The character with the CAMEL can be found at the OASIS. The gift of GOOD NEWS was heard in the HILLS. As you might have guessed, the DOVE was in the SKY. The WISE MAN was not with the SHEEP or DOVE. The gift of PEACE was not given at the STABLE or the INN. The gift of the HOLY SPIRIT rained down from the SKY.



Follow the QR code to find the answer key!



December 10, 2023

Second Sunday of Advent

- WEEK TWO -  
*Prepare the Way*

The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.  
Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps. (Psalm 85:12-13 NIV)

Fill in the blanks to make  
this prayer your own.

Prepare the way, O God.

Pray part or all of it every  
day this week.

Show us your unfailing \_\_\_\_\_.

Will you keep the words  
the same, or will your  
conversation with God  
change from day to day?

I will listen to what you say about \_\_\_\_\_.

Surely your \_\_\_\_\_ is near.

Look down from heaven and give us \_\_\_\_\_.

Amen.



Follow the QR code  
to sing along with Dr. Zach!



**PREPARE THE WAY**

# - REFLECTION - *Light & Salvation*

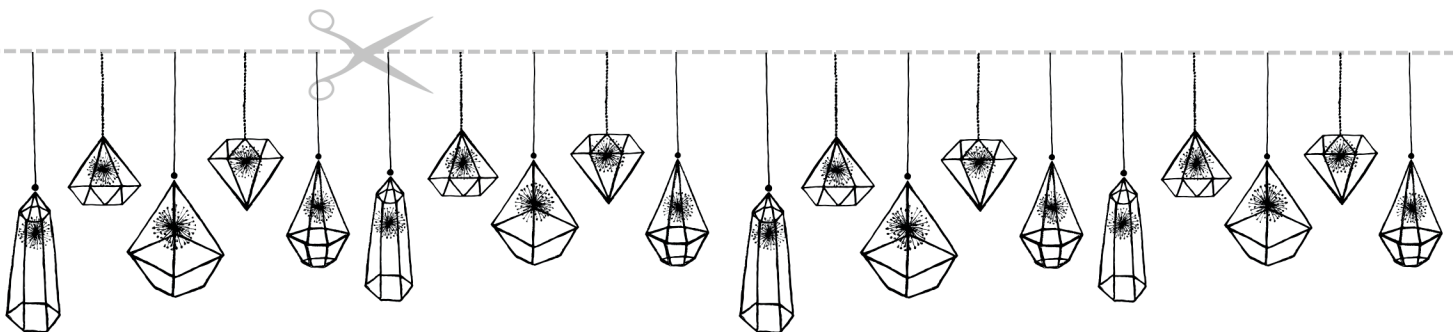
The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1 NIV)

What are the dark areas of your life where you need the Lord's light to shine?

Write some of your fears and challenges in the grey border area. Then color the sun while you reflect on the ways the Lord shines a light into the darkness.



Use this QR code to discover a different source of peace and calm.



# - FORTUNE TELLER - Waiting

Wait for the Lord! (Psalm 27:14a NIV)

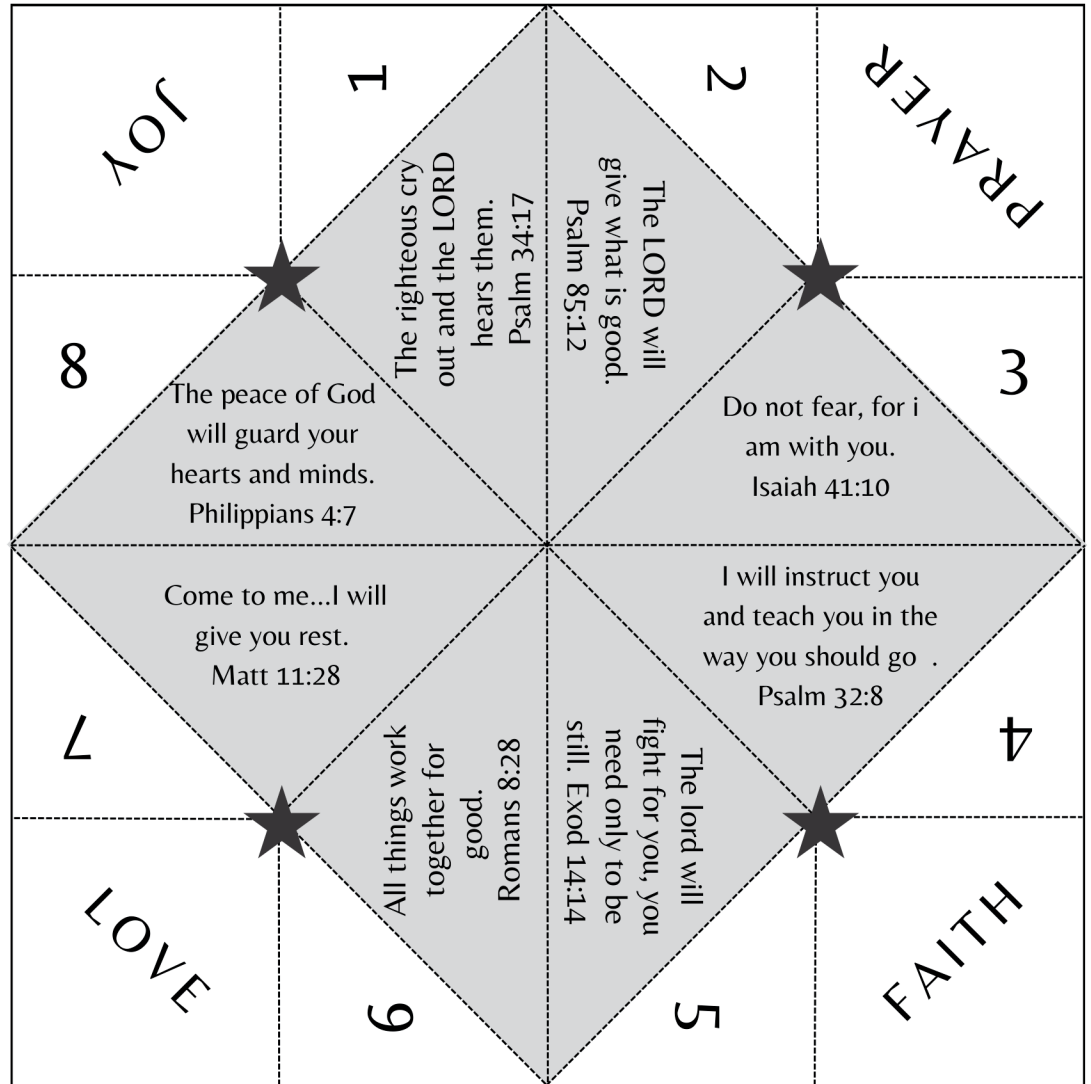
Color and cut out the square to the right. Follow the QR code for a video. Find a partner and play using the instructions below.

Insert your index fingers and thumbs under the flaps. Ask a partner to choose one word.

Use your fingers to pull open the fortune teller in alternating directions, spelling out the word as you go.

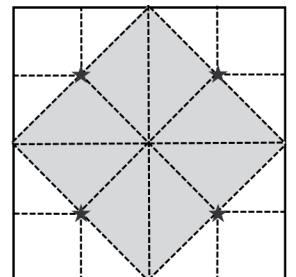
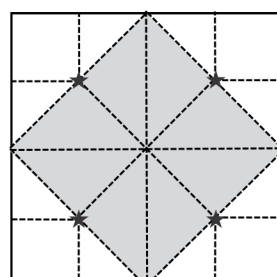
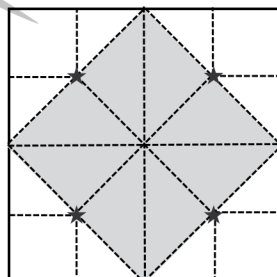
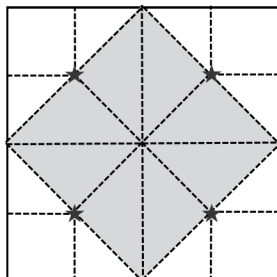
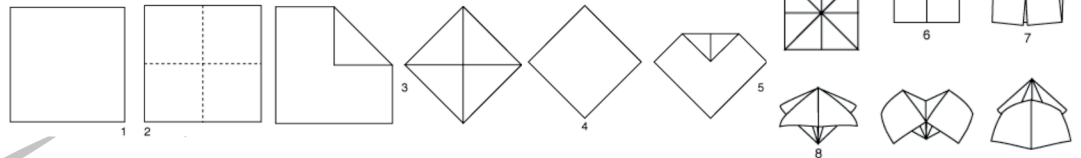
Look inside and choose a number. Repeat the open-close motion for that number of turns. Choose another number.

Below the flap is a promise that the Lord has made.



Follow the QR code to see a video on making and using your Fortune Teller.

TO FOLD:  
(printed side down)



# - FILL THE BLANKS - Do Not Be Afraid

When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.

But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. (Luke 1:12-13a NIV)

Read Luke 1:5-17. Based on the passage, fill in the blanks in the first block to complete the angel's message.

In the second block, put yourself in the story. Fill the blanks with words that personalize the angel's message for YOU.

Choose your own words, or be inspired by the word bank.

"Do not be afraid, \_\_\_\_\_; your prayer has been heard. Your \_\_\_\_\_ will bear you a \_\_\_\_\_, and you are to call him \_\_\_\_\_. He will be a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to you."

"Do not be afraid, \_\_\_\_\_; your prayer has been heard. God will \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_. You will have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_."



Follow the QR code to play a fun game! Make sure to read Acts 11:1-18.

### WORD BANK

belonging | rest | hope | quiet | resilience | delight | clarity | assurance | energy  
answers | refreshment | joy | peace | closure | strength | relief | comfort



# -CROSSWORD- Sorrow & Joy

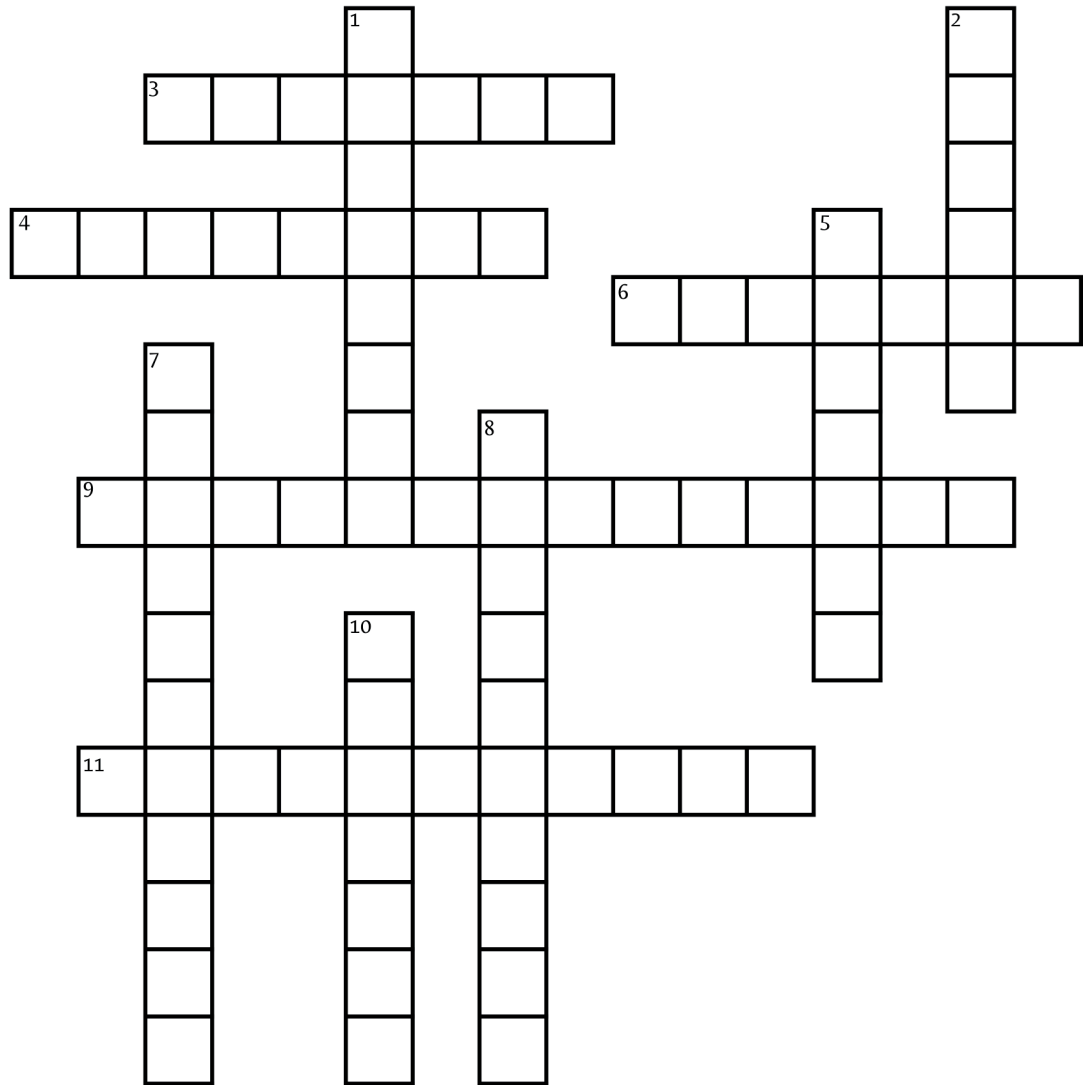
Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy. (Psalm 126:5 ESV)

### ACROSS

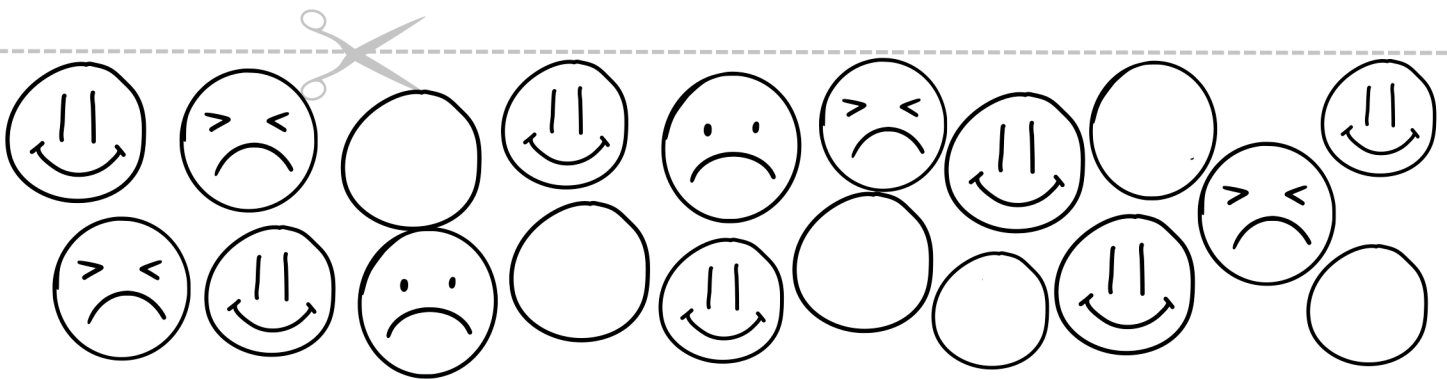
- 3 Exult, be joyful
- 4 Sounds of happy people
- 6 They prayed 1 DOWN would flow like this
- 9 What he bears
- 11 Alleluia! Wahoo! and Hooray!

### DOWN

- 1 Riches, blessings.
- 2 Visions in slumber
- 5 What he's doing while carrying 9 ACROSS
- 7 What they said the Lord has done
- 8 Return to a place of belonging
- 10 locations of all the talk about 7 DOWN



Follow the QR code to see the answer key.



# - FAULT LINES - He Shook The Earth

He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed—but he marches on forever. (Habakkuk 3:6 NIV)

Flow through the bubbles on this page to explore today's passage from Habakkuk.

As you follow the arrows, you'll find opportunities to learn, think, talk, write, draw, and even give.

In some parts of the world, earthquakes shake the ground. Buildings fall down and people get hurt. Earthquakes start along cracks—called "fault lines"—that are deep underground, where we can't see them.

A Bible prophet named Habakkuk (huh-BACK-uck) said earthquakes could be a sign that God was not happy with how people were thinking and acting. They were forgetting what God wanted to happen.

We all have fault lines inside of ourselves, too—ways we don't always think or do the right thing. When we forget what God wants to happen. It's good for us to be honest about our faults, so OUR lives don't get all shaky and quaky.

**DRAW ...**  
On the back of this page, draw what you think might happen because of an earthquake. The Rule: You can't take your pencil or marker off the paper until you're done! (Hint: Start with a "fault line"—a crack in the ground—and then keep going.)

**THINK/TALK ...**

- What do you think this prophet was trying to tell people about God? About themselves?
- What might those people have thought about Habakkuk's message?
- When it's your fault that something not-so-good happens, what's the best thing to do or say?
- When it's your fault, how does it feel for someone else to forgive you?

**WRITE ...**  
On the strip below, use a pencil or marker to name one or more of your faults—ways you don't always think or do what's right. Examples: "selfish," "angry," "disobedient," or "untruthful." The Rule: Don't take your pencil or marker off the page until you're finished. (You can dot I's and J's and cross T's when you're done.)



### LEARN & GIVE!

See how Lutheran World Relief (LWR) is helping people whose homes and cities have experienced an earthquake. You can send money to help them, too.



# - COLORING PAGE - *Filled with Joy*

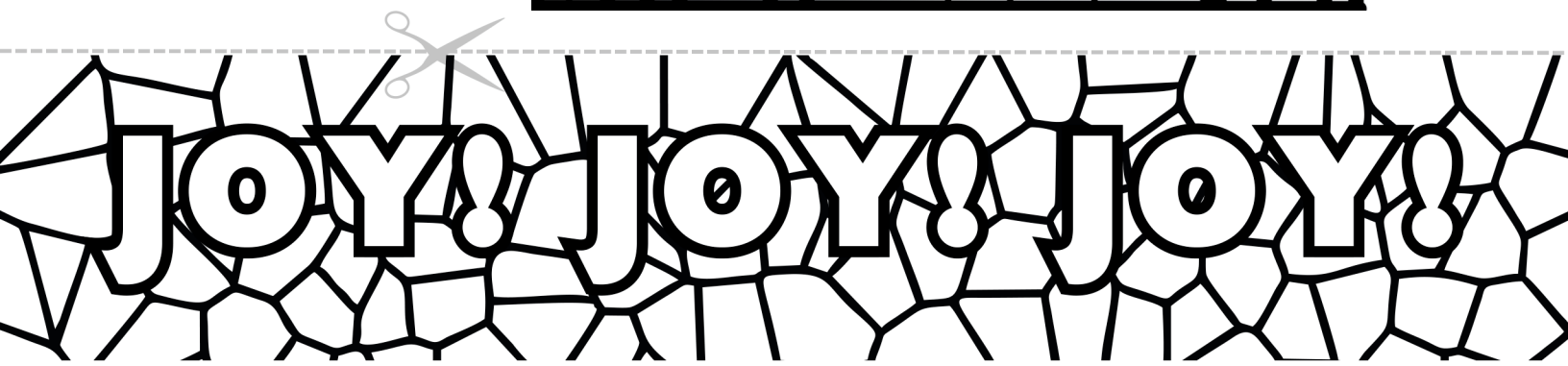
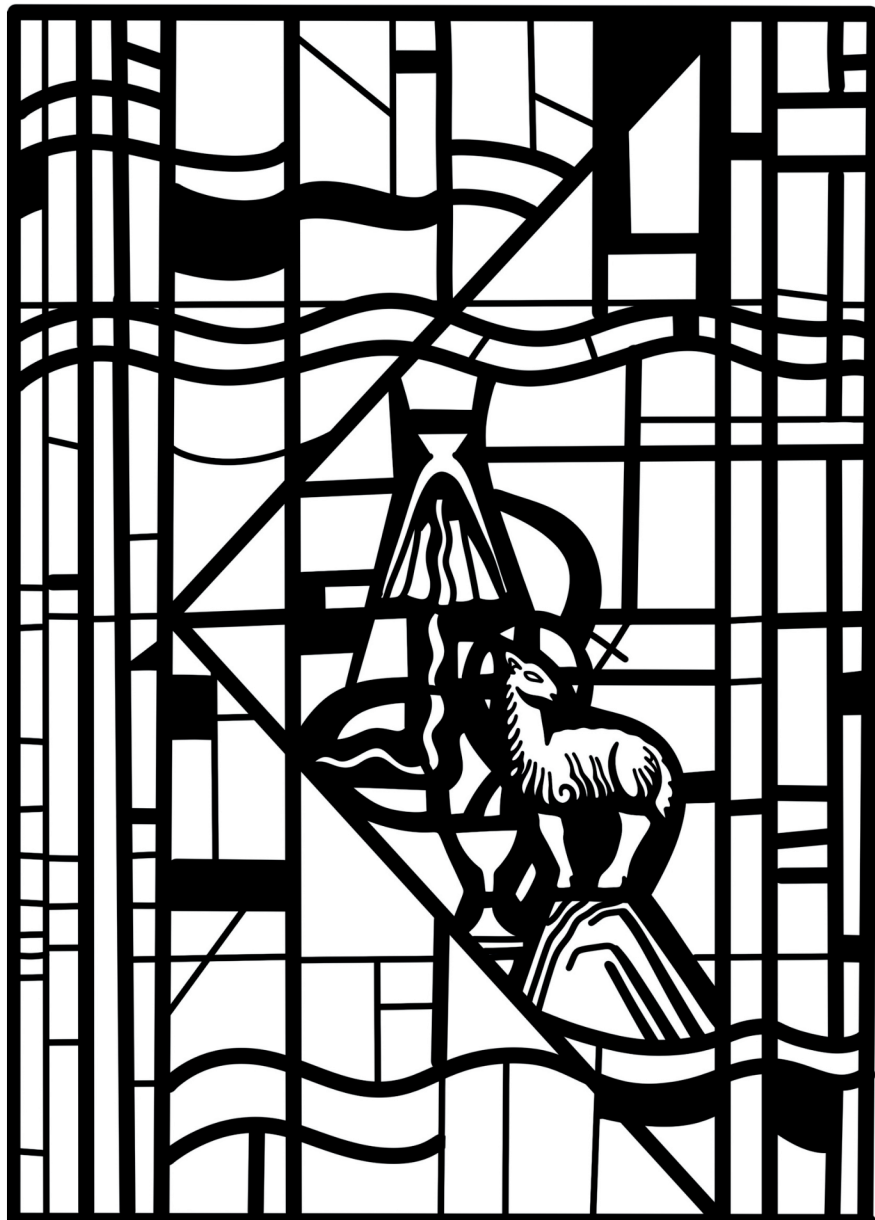
The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. (Psalm 126:3 NIV)

Do you recognize the image on this page? It's a black and white outline of one of Faith's spectacular stained-glass windows.

Tap into a sense of joy as you color the open spaces in this artwork. Of course you can choose colors to match the real window (see link below or visit the sanctuary to find this design) ... or feel free to go your own way!



Follow the QR code to see a photo of the real window.





# - WEEK THREE - Great Things

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. (Psalm 126:3 NIV)

Fill in the blanks to make this prayer your own.

You have done such great things! Our \_\_\_\_\_

Pray part or all of it every day this week.

are filled with \_\_\_\_\_. Our \_\_\_\_\_

Will you keep the words the same, or will your conversation with God change from day to day?

are filled with \_\_\_\_\_. Be with those who are \_\_\_\_\_.  
Restore them with \_\_\_\_\_.

Amen.



Follow the QR code to sing along with Dr. Zach!



**GREAT THINGS**

The text "GREAT THINGS" is written in large, bold, white, block letters with a black outline. It is positioned at the bottom of the page, above a decorative background of wavy, stylized lines. A pair of scissors icon is located above the text, indicating a cut line.

# -REBUS STORY- The Armor of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.  
Put on the full armor of God. (Ephesians 6:10-11a NIV)

See the gaps in the story at right? They are all objects you can probably draw.

Look in the Bible for Ephesians 6:13-17, and see if you can fill the blanks with hand-drawn pictures for the missing words.

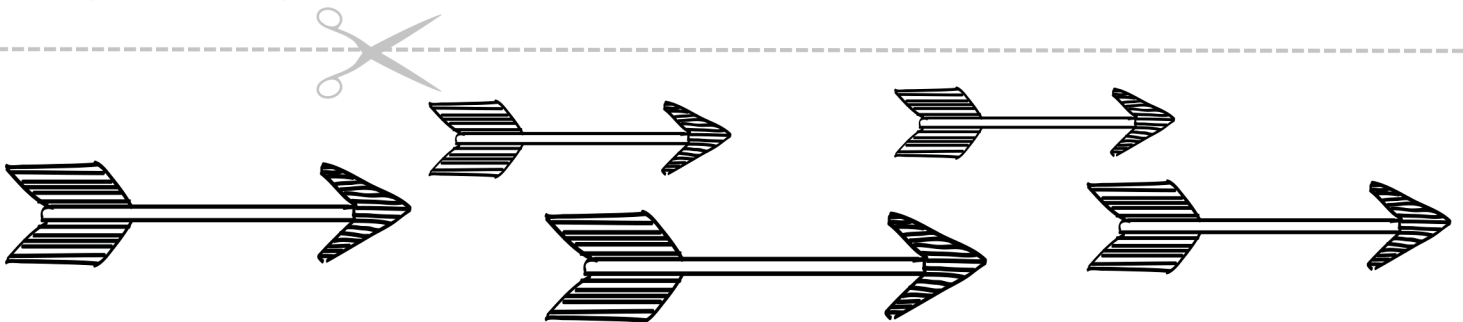
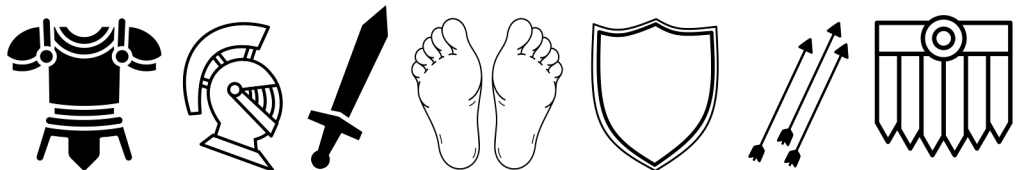
Need help? Check out the image bank below the passage.

Therefore put on the full \_\_\_\_\_ of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the \_\_\_\_\_ of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your \_\_\_\_\_ fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the \_\_\_\_\_ of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming \_\_\_\_\_ of the evil one. Take the \_\_\_\_\_ of salvation and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit, which is the word of God.



Follow the QR code to view a recording of our children's Christmas program (and the completed rebus story!)

IMAGE BANK



# - CONNECTIONS -

## Treasured

“On the day when I act,” says the Lord Almighty, “they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him.” (Malachi 3:17 NIV)

Advent finds us waiting for the miraculous arrival of Jesus. The story of His birth is a tale we treasure!

The words you see here are all elements we associate with that story. Can you find 4 sets of words that belong together? Look for items that share something in common. Choose 4 different crayons or colored pencils and fill each grouping with a different hue.

LOVE	SHEEP	JOY	SHEPHERD
PEACE	CAMEL	MAGI	INN
COW	HOPE	SWADDLING CLOTHES	ANGEL
MANGER	INNKEEPER	DONKEY	STABLE



Follow the QR code to see the solution.



# - FINGER LABYRINTH -

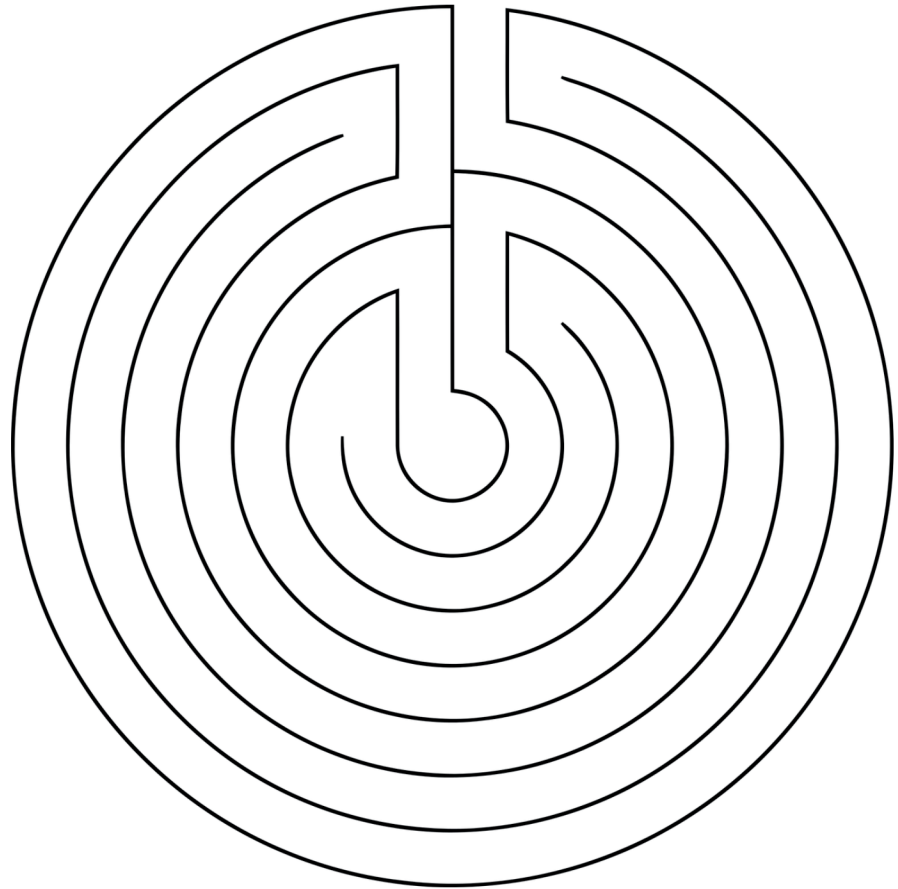
## The Lord Surrounds

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore. (Psalm 125:2 NIV)

Read Psalm 125. Pause, then read it again, out loud, slowly. What words stand out? Write them outside the labyrinth.

Now start tracing your way through the labyrinth with your finger.

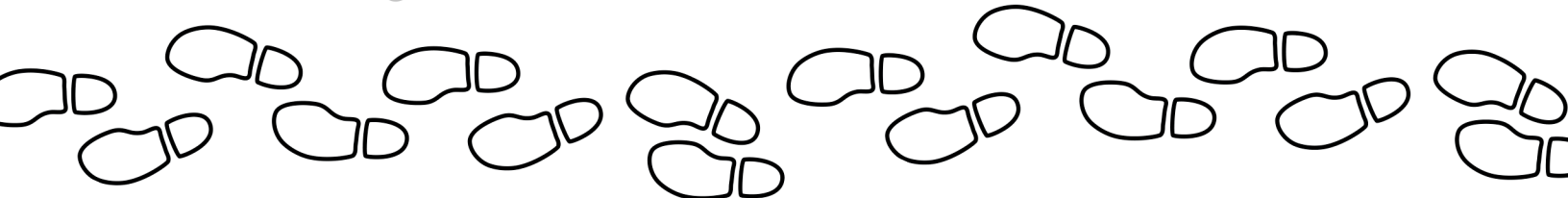
As you go, remember times when you felt called to do something, or felt God's powerful presence. Maybe something big, like moving away or choosing a vocation. Or something small, like calling a friend you sensed could use some company.



Follow the QR code for a short exercise to help you flow through your body!

Write these moments down on the path as you go. Don't worry if you don't have many. Just leave space between thoughts and keep making your way to the center.

Once you reach the center, take a moment to reflect on your journey. Then, trace your way back out of the labyrinth. As you do, offer a short prayer of thanks for the ways you have experienced the presence and guidance of God in your life.



# - HAIKU - God Spoke

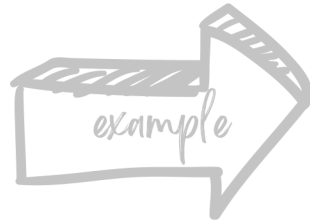
In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets  
at many times and in various ways, (Hebrews 1:1 NIV)

A Haiku is a Japanese poem of just 17 syllables, written in 3 lines:

- 5 syllables in line 1
- 7 syllables in line 2
- 5 syllables in line 3

We've given you one example. Now it's your turn. Compose a haiku or two, inspired by today's scripture.

Read Hebrews 1:1-4. Pause, pray, and play with words. Create your own reflection on God's Word!



HIS SON  
 God appointed Heir  
 Reflection of God's glory  
 Majesty on high

\_\_\_\_\_

title (optional)

\_\_\_\_\_

5 syllables

\_\_\_\_\_

7 syllables

\_\_\_\_\_

5 syllables

\_\_\_\_\_

title (optional)

\_\_\_\_\_

5 syllables

\_\_\_\_\_

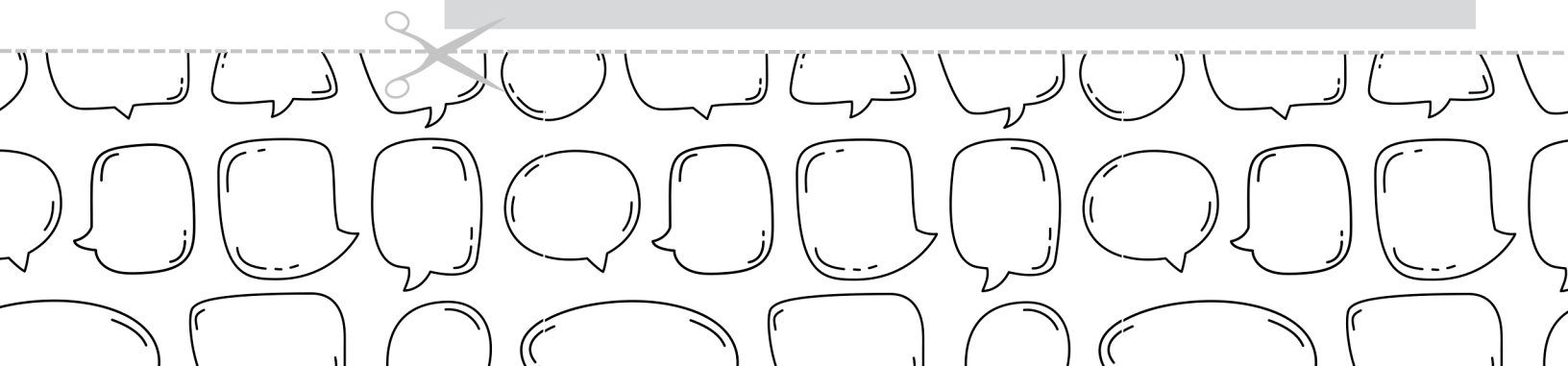
7 syllables

\_\_\_\_\_

5 syllables



Follow the QR code to see how Faith is active and sharing online.



December 22, 2023

# -COLOR & PRAY- Ministering Spirits

Hebrews 1:5-14

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14 NIV)

Are YOU an angel? How do you serve as a ministering spirit to others?

Pray about those questions while you color the picture. Add your own face (either a photo or a self-portrait) to complete the image.



Follow the QR code to find something festive!



# - WORD SEARCH -

## Great Love

I will sing of the Lord's great love forever;  
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. (Psalm 89:1 NIV)

This puzzle contains words from the first two verses in Psalm 89 (see list below).

Find the words. They may go in any direction. Words may share letters as they cross over one another.

- all
- as
- declare
- ever
- firm
- for
- generations
- heavens
- is
- LORD
- love
- mouth
- my
- of
- proclaim
- sing
- steadfast
- that
- the
- to
- will
- with
- your

U	W	A	D	L	L	Y	J	F	P	H	Y	O	T	P
S	S	D	O	O	O	Y	O	U	R	M	S	R	O	M
M	T	R	V	U	G	N	G	F	O	S	N	H	J	Z
S	D	E	R	T	H	A	T	I	C	T	O	K	E	F
L	N	S	A	R	A	R	H	R	L	E	I	R	O	F
G	L	E	I	D	U	I	T	M	A	A	T	Z	Y	N
R	U	A	V	O	F	C	I	A	I	D	A	Y	Y	E
M	E	H	Y	A	S	A	W	M	M	F	R	E	H	T
G	L	V	P	H	E	E	S	Z	M	A	E	C	E	H
N	O	B	E	R	R	H	L	T	I	S	N	E	N	Z
I	E	U	L	A	O	F	O	W	U	T	E	N	W	W
S	B	Y	L	L	A	F	V	A	W	W	G	D	H	R
W	X	C	O	B	L	S	E	Y	S	D	I	V	D	E
L	E	L	M	U	T	I	M	O	U	T	H	L	F	V
D	H	X	Y	A	R	G	W	S	I	R	D	W	L	E



Follow the QR code to see the completed puzzle.



# I will sing!



December 24, 2023

# - WEEK FOUR - Mercy Extends

Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Christmas Eve

My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. (Luke 1:46-47,50 NIV)

Fill in the blanks to make  
this prayer your own.

I rejoice in you, God my Savior!

Pray part or all of it every  
day this week.

Your \_\_\_\_\_ reaches \_\_\_\_\_.

Will you keep the words  
the same, or will your  
conversation with God  
change from day to day?

You've brought \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

You've helped \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.

You have performed mighty deeds!

Amen.



Follow the QR code  
to try some gentle yoga.



# mercy extends



Pray together and interact with scripture  
in a mindful, thoughtful, playful way

- PAUSE -

*to*

- PLAY -

*and*

- PRAY -

## Contributors

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We have referenced the following scripture versions:

ESV - English Standard Version

NIV - New International Version

Use this to make a Bible bookmark to remember your favorite passage!

