



The Mission and Service Fund/le fonds mission et service

Advent and Christmas 2015

Pre-Advent Prayer

Lord you are all knowing and all caring about each and every one of us. We pray as the season of Advent approaches give us attentive hearts, willing hearts and spirits anxious to do your will. As the days of the celebration of our Savior's birth draw near to us, may we draw near to him in every way. Amen.

Advent Meditation

By Christine Sine

Child of promise
Revealer of God, come
Bringer of life, come
Come to the beaten and the battered
Come to the despised and rejected
Come to all in whom the divine image is still distorted
We wait in joyful expectation
Come not as a distant emperor but as a helpless babe
Come not as a prince in a gold palace, but as a displaced and frightened refugee
Come not as a man of power, but in love and compassion
Come to those outcast like shepherds in the field
Come to rich and poor, young and old, male and female
We wait in hopeful anticipation
Come to bless all creation with your love
Come to bring salvation to the earth
Come to rule with justice and in peace
Come child of promise, open the windows of our hearts
Come Christ of compassion open the doors of our churches
Come prince of peace, open the pathways to our lives
We wait with all the people of the earth
Child of hope we welcome your coming
Child of life we welcome your coming
King of glory we welcome your coming.

Christmas Prayer

As we beginning our Christmas celebrations let us remember that your son Jesus was born poor in a stable. Mary brought forth her son in a place where no comfort or any human assistance was available, and where there was no other place to lay him but in a manger. All His life Jesus reached out and gave healing, support and comfort to those that need it the most.

Dear God this year at Christmas we pray for the poor in our communities. It is our hope that the food banks will have sufficient food to provide those families with enough to make a Christmas meal. It would mean so much to the children in these families to find at least one toy under the tree just for them.

We pray for the homeless living on our streets. We pray for shelter and food safety and warmth for them. Jesus was born in a stable because His parents had no place to stay, so Lord we ask that homeless would find permanent housing and get out of the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

We pray for those in prison, we pray you would comfort them and their families as they live apart especially during the Christmas season. We pray they would not feel stigmatized because of their past, but will instead find people to help them set goals for themselves. We pray for an easy return to society and that work and accommodation would be available for them.

We pray for the unemployed in Canada. The mothers and fathers whose ability to provide even a small Christmas celebration for their children has been wiped out and now having to rely on our Mission and Service partners to provide a merry Christmas. Be with our Mission and Service partners as they go about providing caring, assistance to their clients this Christmas.

All this we ask in Jesus name who at His birth brought, hope, joy, love and peace for us to share with others. Amen

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**Christmas Quotes**

Christmas, my child, is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas.  
--Dale Evans

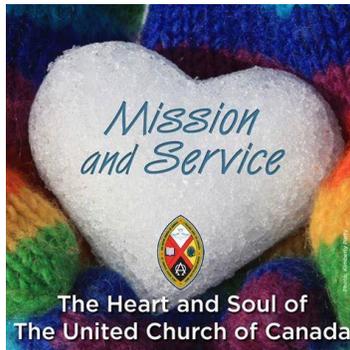
The way you spend Christmas is far more important than how much. --Henry David Thoreau  
It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you...yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer him your hand.  
--Mother Teresa

"I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys."  
- Charles Dickens, "A Christmas Carol"

Let us in this season of Advent, look about to find the signs of light and hope so we can be signs of light and hope for others. Let us then be like Gabriel and bring good news! Let us not only make Advent a season of light and hope for ourselves, but others before ourselves. Sometimes your hands are precisely the hands needed to provide caring touch; your smile the one that is needed to provide encouragement and comfort; and your listening ear the only one they have ever had.

*Jesus is the Light of our Christmas, the Joy of our Hearts and  
the Hope of our World.*

## Mission and Service Advent Calendar



| ~ December 2015 ~                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                 |
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| ◀ November                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                            | January ▶                                                                                                       |
| Sun                                                                                                             | Mon                                                                                                                                     | Tue                                                                                                    | Wed                                                                                                                      | Thu                                                                                                                             | Fri                                                                                                                                        | Sat                                                                                                             |
| <b>November 29</b><br>Put this calendar on your fridge, and prepare a jar to hold your Advent donations to M&S. | <b>November 30</b><br>Have you heard a Christmas carol yet this year? If so, drop in 25 cents for each carol you heard in your M&S jar. | <b>1</b><br>Keep a record of the Christmas cards you send this year. Give a nickel for each one.       | <b>2</b><br>What kind of Christmas tree will you have this year. 10 cents for a real tree or 25 cents for an artificial. | <b>3</b><br>Give 25 cents if you were able to go out and eat in a restaurant in the last month without worrying about the cost. | <b>4</b><br>Give a gift to Mission and Service if you are able to buy gifts for the ones you love.                                         | <b>5</b><br>If you have outdoor Christmas decorations give 25 cents.                                            |
| <b>6</b><br>Pray for our Mission and Service Partners                                                           | <b>7</b><br>Give 10 cents for every crèche or nativity scene that you have on display in your home.                                     | <b>8</b><br>Give 10 cents for each phone you have in the house and 25 cents extra for each cell phone. | <b>9</b><br>Give 25 cents if you own a computer or laptop.                                                               | <b>10</b><br>Give 10 cents if you have clean drinking water in your house.                                                      | <b>11</b><br>Give 50 cents if you have a car.                                                                                              | <b>12</b><br>Give 25 cents if you went Christmas shopping this week.                                            |
| <b>13</b><br>Pray for the refugees. Give to Mission and Service to help those working with refugees.            | <b>14</b><br>Give a gift to celebrate all the children that receive an education because of Mission & Service.                          | <b>15</b><br>Give a gift of thanks if you do not have to spend tonight in a shelter.                   | <b>16</b><br>If you did not have to go to the food bank this month give 25 cents.                                        | <b>17</b><br>Give 5 cents for every angel decoration you have in your house.                                                    | <b>18</b><br>Give 50 cents if you were able to go to see a movie or other entertainment in the last month without worrying about the cost. | <b>19</b><br>Give 25 cents if you baked for Christmas.                                                          |
| <b>20</b><br>Give to your churches outreach programs.                                                           | <b>21</b><br>Give to Mission and Service in thanks for your Minister or your own theological Training.                                  | <b>22</b><br>Give 25 cents if you have gifts under your tree.                                          | <b>23</b><br>Give to Mission and Service if you received Christmas greetings from family or friends.                     | <b>24</b><br>Give a gift of thanks for the Mission and Service partners that are supplying a Christmas meal to the homeless.    | <b>25</b><br>Wishing you peace, love, hope and joy this Christmas.                                                                         | <b>26</b><br>Count up the money in your container and give a cheque to Mission and Service through your church. |
| <b>27</b><br>Pray for the United Church of Christ in the US.                                                    | <b>28</b><br>Pray for our farmers that keep us fed.                                                                                     | <b>29</b><br>Pray for our seniors that are shut-in or in nursing homes.                                | <b>30</b><br>Pray for all the volunteers who devote their time to their church, presbytery or conference.                | <b>31</b><br>Pray for all the Syrian Families sponsored by United Churches.                                                     | <b>1 January</b><br>Happy New Year! Thank You from Mission and Service.                                                                    |                                                                                                                 |



## **MISSION AND SERVICE ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING**

### **CANDLE OF HOPE**

Christians around the world begin this day to await the birth of our Christ child. We join with a joyous and hopeful hearts in lighting the Advent candles, symbols of our faith and signs of God's love.

We are a people of hope. With the frail light of a single candle we dare to pierce the darkness of apathy and despair and bring hope to others. This year more than ever we have seen waves of refugees leave their home lands in search of safety from war and terror. Be with those that have been able to make it to Canada and help keep that hope alive through Mission and Service. We have many partners providing training for refugees to learn work skills to support their family in their new country.

Dear God, so many people need your gift of hope. In this season of giving, and on every day of the year, help us to remember to support the Mission and Service so that ministries of compassion and caring may continue. Amen.

### **CANDLE OF PEACE**

Today we light the candle of peace. We must not settle for less than a peaceful world. We must do our part to stop the endless cycle of violence in some homes. This candle of peace, must also brave great darkness. As we light the candles of hope and peace, let us pray for peace as we remember those families that have to seek shelter in safe houses provided by our Mission and Service partners. There they find comfort and support that will give these battered families peace and hope.

Dear God, so many people need your gift of peace. In this season of giving and on every day of the year, help us to remember to support Mission and Service so that ministries of compassion and caring may continue. Amen

### **CANDLE OF JOY**

Today we remember the joy that God brings us as we light the candle of joy. As children of God Let us be bearers of joy. Christ came as a baby and he found great joy in children as he went about his ministry. Through our Mission and Service partners and their day camps, head start nurseries and youth programs we can bring joy to children that do not know what it is to laugh.

Dear God, so many people need your gift of joy. In this season of giving and on every day of the year, help us to remember to support our Mission and Service so that ministries of compassion and caring may continue. Amen

### **CANDLE OF LOVE**

Today we light the candle of love – no other word so adequately captures the spirit and goal of our faith. No other word so completely describes what we know of our God. We pray for hearts large enough to embrace those that are considered by the world to be different, through our givings to Mission and Service. We pray for hearts large enough that enable us to put down our fear of those who are different from ourselves. and hearts large enough for us to love those whose qualities are buried by ignorance and mistrust. Let us remember in our prayers and with our gifts to our Mission and Service partners who with all encompassing love hold support groups for those considered by are world to be different.

For God so loved the world, that a child was given. A savior was made in the form of love incarnate. As we light the candles of hope, peace, joy and love, let us give thanks for God's enveloping and enduring love once more this Christmas season.

Dear God, so many people need your gift of love. In this season of giving and on every day of the year, help us to remember to support Mission and Service so that ministries of compassion and caring may continue. Amen

### **CHRISTMAS EVE**

As we light the Christ Candle may we remember all those in the called ministry whose training and work is supported by Mission and Service. Those in the daily business of sharing God's hope, peace, joy and love with those that desperately need it. Let us remember in our prayers, hospital, prison and neighbourhood chaplains as they daily providing comfort and compassion to those they council

Teach us to love, O Lord. May we always remember to put you first as we follow Christ's footsteps, that we may know your love and show it in our lives. As we celebrate Jesus' birth, also fill our hearts with love for the world, that all may know your love and the one whom you have sent, your son, our Savior. Amen.

As we spend time over the Advent season remembering the work of Mission and Service let us remember the things that we have to be thankful for:

- You have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead, and a place to sleep. You are richer than 75 percent of the world!
- If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish, you are luckier than many in this world!
- If you woke this morning with more health than illness, you are more fortunate than many who will not even survive the day!
- Remember to count your blessings – recounts are allowed!

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