Five Spiritual Practices for Advent

The Spiritual gift of Advent is the gift of waiting for the incarnation. The incarnation is God, wrapped up in flesh, as a baby boy, come down to earth. What does it mean for God to become one of us? What does it mean for God to give up all of God’s power to be born as a baby? These are the questions we ask ourselves during Advent. I encourage you to find a spiritual practice that will nurture you this Advent Season. Here are a few:

1. The spiritual practice of giving. Perhaps you’ll want to help us fill the stable by bringing in diapers or food to be given to our partner ministries. Maybe you’ll want to give financially to ministries that mean a lot to you and your family.

2. The spiritual practice of hospitality. Invite Mary and Joseph to come to your house! Sign up here: https://bit.ly/EPCMaryAndJoseph — It’s a simple practice, to receive Mary and Joseph and send them on their way. This practice is a reminder of the journey we all take as we seek to follow God. It’s also a reminder of what it means to be a gracious host. Who might come to visit you this year?

3. The practice of prayer — I think the d365 devotionals are a great place to start. Visit www.d365.org for more!

I encourage you to look within the pages of this newsletter and find ways to connect to God at EPC this Advent. We have so many opportunities!

May all the Advent values be with you this year: hope, peace, joy, and love.

With gratitude,

Pastor Traci
Children’s Vegetable Garden

We’re having another amazing year in the vegetable garden! As of September 19, we have delivered 410 pounds of produce to the Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry, including scallions, radishes, lettuces, spinach, tomatoes, tomatillos, beets, sweet peppers, hot peppers, bush beans, pole beans, carrots, cucumbers, zucchini, patty-pan squash, and butternut squash. Harvesting will continue until the first frost ends growth sometime in October. Thank you to the children of the church who helped with planting, watering, and harvesting on Sunday mornings, and to the adults who cared for the garden during the week and made deliveries to the food pantry (Faith Lee, Sarah Lestina, Alan West, Karen Fitzgerald, Mary Mueller, and Mary Ellen Hayes).

Beds, Borders, and other Gardens

This year we planted zinnias around the electronic sign and in the Memorial Garden and were rewarded with many colorful blooms that also provided nectar to pollinators. The Butterfly Garden continued to amaze us with its beautiful native plants that provide food and shelter to bees, butterflies, and birds. Thank you to Alan West and Barry Benecke for amending the soil around the electronic sign before we planted. Also thank you to the many people who helped weed and water throughout the landscape this summer: Connie Nestler, Susan Smentek, Berlirce Chetgna, Mary Ellen Hayes, Mary Mueller, Faith Lee, Karen Fitzgerald, Alan West, Suzanne Springate, Ted and Rita Steiskal, and anyone else that I may have forgotten. You are all faithful stewards of God’s Creation.

Ruth Schroeter, Garden Coordinator
Hello, EPC!

Many of you have heard me talk about my family’s involvement with assisting refugees from the war in Ukraine. My sister’s family is sponsoring and hosting a Ukrainian family of four from a village in the Ternopil region of the country. The family arrived on August 27th through the Uniting for Ukraine Humanitarian Parole program, and will be living temporarily with my family in Eureka, Missouri while awaiting employment authorization permits. The permits can take a few months to arrive, thus extra support is especially needed during this time.

The family consists of Parents ages 43 and 38, and 2 children. The boy is 18 and a high school graduate, the girl is 13 and attending 8th grade. They have a cousin and niece currently living in Schaumburg, IL and have plans to join them once stabilized. Items that are especially helpful to them include gift cards for Aldi, Walmart and Schnucks grocery stores and gas cards for BP, Kwik Trip or Circle K. They would appreciate any assistance you are able to provide, and hope to be living in the Chicago area in the coming months!

In addition to this family, we are hosting and are reunited with our former exchange student children, Polina and Viktor. Plus, Ivan, an accomplished scholar who had been employed as an English teacher in Kyiv. These refugees are staying with my family in Iowa as they await work permits and practice for drivers licenses. Polina is also continuing her studies online with her University in Ukraine. Walmart, Aldi, Target and gas gift cards would be very useful to them.

If you would like to help us welcome, care for and support these refugees, please see me on Sunday morning at EPC or contact me via email: sirensinger@comcast.net

I would like to send any donations to them by November 1st. Thank you!