



Congregational Links

Advent Call to Worship^v

By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace. Luke 1:78–79

Let us pray:

**God of great gifts
we give you thanks for the gift of your son
who was in every way like us.**

**We who are chained to the cycle of life and death
found freedom in this child
who is our Savior, Immanuel, God with us.**

**Be with us today,
as we listen, as we sing, as we pray.**

**Fill us with your Spirit
giving light in our dark places**

Amen.

Ideas to include children:

- Advent candle lighters and readers.
 - Consider asking a family who is newer to your church family to light the candles.
 - Ask a young family, a family of teens, an empty-nester couple, and a senior family (possibly with grandchildren) to each take a turn lighting the Advent candles.
- Ask children to help create a minute for mission or a children's sermon to promote the Christmas Joy Offering.

Advent 1

Start Advent candle lighting, with explanation.

Consider hanging Crismon Tree ornaments, creating a Jesse Tree, or holding a Hanging of the Greens.





Congregational Links

Congregational Links *(continued)*

Advent 2

Hang paper ornaments with gold ribbon. On each ornament you can include information about each of the three Presbyterian related racial ethnic schools and colleges that the Christmas Joy Offering has supported for more than 140 years! (see Children’s Sermon for details)

Menaul School, Albuquerque, New Mexico (Hispanic, Latino and Native American—grades 6-12, 98% of grads go on to college)

Pan American School, Kingsville, Texas (Hispanic and Latino student who mostly live south of the U.S. border, students from 26 countries enrolled last year. Many of the students have missionary parents and 85% of grads go on to college)

Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, Alabama (African American students)

Ask church members to take a paper ornament home to pray for the students and staff at the school.

Advent 3

Noisy Offering—children collect loose change in cans (cans could be decorated the week before)

Advent 4

Hold a baby shower in honor of the Christ Child. Give all baby gifts to a local parent center or women’s shelter. Collect baby bottles, blankets, bibs, diapers, and other useful items.

Giving Challenge

Instead of purchasing another gift for the person who “has everything” or doesn’t “need anything”, prayerfully consider one of the following options available through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog (presbyteriangifts.org):

Women’s Empowerment Project <i>Give in honor of your mother</i>	\$100/participant
Young Adult Volunteer Groceries <i>Give in honor of your college student</i>	\$100
Income and Housing Assistance for Retired Pastors <i>Give in honor of your grandma or grandpa</i>	\$100–\$2,500



Congregational Links

Congregational Links *(continued)*

Bicycle for a Pastor <i>Give in honor of your pastor</i>	\$75
Refugee Food Basket <i>Give in honor of Jesus and his family, who were refugees, too.</i>	\$50
One Presbyterian Youth Triennium Registration <i>Give in honor of your high school student or grandchild</i>	\$505
Bunk Beds for Children <i>Give in honor of your children and give thanks that they have a safe place to rest their heads.</i>	\$200/bed
Family of Chickens <i>Great stocking stuffer or, give in honor of the co-worker whose name you drew in the office gift pool.</i>	\$25

¹www.leadinginworship.com, Nov. 27, 2014

Written by Jennifer Whitford, Director for Children's Ministry, Worthington Presbyterian, Worthington, Ohio