

Celebrating Advent by Helping Children



- Nurture healthy children by Improving Food & Nutrition, Protecting Health and Preventing Disease, Empowering Parents, and Protecting Families
- Help children achieve their full potential by providing access to Clean Water, Hygiene and Sanitation and Reducing the Impact of Disasters to build resilience
- Bring positive change to the lives of children by Creating Economic Stability

This 2020 Advent season allows us the opportunity in the Diocese of Florida to Set aside a time each day to light the candle, pray, and learn about the ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE campaign. How can you, as an individual, a family, or a congregation, make a significant change in the lives of children this Advent? Reflect on the four-week themes of HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE and consider a donation each week to the One Thousand Days of Love Campaign that will allow children to reach their full potential in the first 1000 days of their lives.

Donation Link: <https://support.episcopalrelief.org/1000DaysOfLove>

ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE AND THE ADVENT WREATH

The First Week in Advent (Nov 29-Dec 5) – HOPE

Read: *Our soul waits for the Lord;
He is our help and shield.
Our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.
Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you. (Psalm 33:20-22)*

Reflect: Psalm 33 is all about celebrating God. It invites us to make music with the lyre, with the harp, and with a new song. It also reminds us that the world is God's; created and loved with steadfast faith. This Advent, as the music of the season begins to fill our spaces and our hearts, how will we turn our thoughts and actions to help those whom God loves in other parts of the world?

Learn: Think about the children in your life and consider, what do young children need, in the first thousand days of life, to grow and thrive? What happens when basic resources like food, clean water, health care, and basic safety are not accessible? How do not only children, but families and whole communities, suffer when children's needs aren't met. How can we help?

Here is Presiding Bishop Michael Curry on what it means to save a child.

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/press-resources/video-gallery/presiding-bishop-currys-invitation-to-one-thousand-days-of-love/>



Share: This first week in Advent, think of your friends and family who care about children and tell them about Episcopal Relief & Development's ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE Campaign. Invite them to join you in becoming a prayer partner by [signing up here](https://www.episcopalrelief.org/let-us-pray/).

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/let-us-pray/>

Give: Begin to wonder how you, as an individual, a family, or a congregation, might contribute to the ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE campaign. What if we all gave up one Christmas gift this year, and used that money to support children and families around the world?

Pray: Almighty God, you sent your son to teach us to love. Inspire and strengthen us, as we await the coming of the Christ child, to look with love on your children around the world. Guide us to do your will by shining that love on them from our own bounty, in the light of our Savior, born a child, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

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The Second Week in Advent (Dec 6-12) - PEACE

Read: *Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
The effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness quietness and trust forever.
My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. (Isaiah 32:16-18)*

Reflect: What is 'righteousness'? Is it always being the best, being right – which would imply that someone else must be wrong? This passage from Isaiah, which comes shortly after the prophet tells us of the coming of the Christ child, who shall be called the Prince of Peace, points us to something much bigger and better than being right to someone else's wrong. Isaiah points us to a righteousness that will bring security, stability, trust, and peace. Forever. What a glorious vision, and one that each of us has the power to bring about in our own small way.

Learn: What does Isaiah's vision mean to a child, a family, and an entire community, in Angola, Burundi, Guatemala, Myanmar or Zambia? Spend some time finding out [here](https://www.episcopalrelief.org/1000daysoflove/how-our-programs-bene).
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Share: How often do we sign onto our social media feeds, only to find them filled with anxiety and division? On Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, Episcopal Relief & Development shares photos and words of inspiration as well as direct actions that improve lives around the world. Like, follow and share these posts to brighten this season of anticipation for your followers.

Give: Now that your spreading the message of hope and peace, consider starting a social media Advent/Christmas fundraiser asking your family and friends to help you support children around the world through ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE Campaign.

Pray: Almighty God, as we await the coming of the Christ child and prepare to sing of "peace on earth, goodwill to all," help us to remember that our own peace must be bound in the peace of all your children on earth. Open our eyes and our hearts during this season of joy and giving, that we would treat every child as lovingly as we welcome the Savior, born a child, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

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The Third Week in Advent (Dec 13-19) – JOY (REJOICE)

- Read:** *And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel of the Lord said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*
(Luke 2:9-11, KJV)
- Reflect:** As we move through Advent, most years the season becomes increasingly busy and for many people laced with stress and anxiety. Why is that? How have we come from “Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people” to frantic lists of things to do and gifts to buy and events to attend along with a constant barrage of nearly aggressive cheer coming at us from all directions. We may not be able to turn off the muzak in the stores, but we can make time and space in these shortening days to pray and reflect on what it would truly mean to bring great joy to ALL people.
- Learn:** Nothing brings a more genuine and holy sense of joy than working in the right relationship with our siblings to improve the lives of children and their families. Rejoice that God gives us an opportunity, every day, to heal divides, repair broken systems, and lift up whole communities.
- Share:** As your own spirit is lifted by one or more of these stories, share them wherever you can. Children can share them with their classmates and friends, youth groups might watch them together, we can email them or share them on our social media feeds.
- Give:** As you share the videos and stories of how this campaign is making real and lasting change for children and families, add to your fundraising efforts by asking friends, colleagues, or family members to partner with you in donating to ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE in one another’s names rather than exchanging gifts this year.
- Pray:** Almighty God, as we approach the birth of the Christ child, turn us from thoughts of frantic busyness to the message of hope and good tidings of great joy, which shall be for all people. Help us to share the joy-filled love of your Son, our Savior, born a small and helpless child, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

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The Fourth Week in Advent (Dec 20-24) – LOVE

- Read: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.
You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:30-31)*
- Reflect: It seems so simple when we read Jesus' words in the Gospel, but how do we act upon these commandments? Many of us love to give gifts at Christmas not just because it's the custom, but because we are gifted in return by seeing joy in the face of a loved one when they see what we've chosen to show them our love. What if we loved every child as we love our own children; loved communities across the globe the way we love our own community?
- Learn: The ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE Campaign supports work in direct and loving relationships with the children and families around the world. Our model uses an integrated approach to sustainably lift people from poverty and disease into healthy and empowered communities. *Gifts for Life* is a program that transforms lives by providing vital resources and an opportunity to grow those resources and build independence. Go to: https://support.episcopalrelief.org/gifts?ID=180000GX0000400&utm_medium=Undefined&utm_campaign=Undefined&utm_source=180000GX0000400
- Share: Do you have a friend who loves goats? A family member who believes access to clean water is a human right and responsibility? A colleague who is passionate about early childhood development? Tell them about ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE and the *Gifts for Life* program, which allows them to choose a gift that fits their financial position as well as supporting their dreams for building beloved community.
- Give: We can continue this journey beyond the Christmas season. The ONE THOUSAND DAY OF LOVE campaign began on September 4, 2019 and will continue to May 31, 2022. Stay involved by becoming a prayer partner, setting up a recurring donation, or using your fundraising efforts to purchase a *Gift for Life*. Drop a coin in the Hope Chest every time you hear your least favorite Christmas song, or donate in your friends' or office's name in place of giving each other a trinket this year.
- Pray: Almighty God we thank you for the gift of your son, for the sacred time and space to anticipate His coming, and for the opportunity to truly love our neighbors as ourselves, as he implored us. Grant that we may share

the hope, peace, joy, and love of this season with all your creation as we celebrate the birth of your Son, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now.

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