

2017 Advent Devotional Booklet – Succasunna United Methodist Church

ALL SUBMISSIONS ARE DUE OCTOBER 22nd

Our Advent theme this year is: “The Gift of a Living Story.” The devotional will be coordinated by Cathy Bishop, John Dewart, Marge Peletier, Joyce Sciacca, and Sandy Urgo.

Remember that Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning ‘arrival.’ Our goal is to help prepare our congregation for the arrival of Jesus. Prayer, anticipation, and preparation focused on the meaning of Christ in our lives, gives Christmas its spiritual power.

Here's a simple, six-step process to prepare your devotion. Please submit your devotions via email (in Microsoft Word format) to Marge / mmpeletier@gmail.com by OCTOBER 22nd.

PLEASE DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MEET THIS DEADLINE.

1) CHOOSE a scripture, **either** an Old Testament or a New Testament scripture for each day as listed below. Email your selection to Marge / mmpeletier@gmail.com indicating your first, second and third choices.

Date	Old Testament Scripture	New Testament Scripture
12/3/2017	Isaiah 64:1-9	Mark 13:24-37
12/4/2017	Micah 4:1-5	Revelation 15:1-8
12/5/2017	Micah 4:6-13	Revelation 8:1-10
12/6/2017	Micah 5:1-5a	Luke 21:34-38
12/7/2017	Hosea 6:1-6	1 Thessalonians 1:2-10
12/8/2017	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Acts 11:19-26
12/9/2017	Ezekiel 36:24-28	Mark 11:27-33
12/10/2017	Isaiah 40:1-11	Mark 1:1-8
12/11/2017	Isaiah 26:7-15	Acts 2:37-42
12/12/2017	Isaiah 4:2-6	Acts 11:1-18
12/13/2017	Malachi 2:10-3:1	Luke 1:5-17
12/14/2017	Habakkuk 2:1-5	Philippians 3:7-11
12/15/2017	Habakkuk 3:2-6	Philippians 3:12-16
12/16/2017	Habakkuk 3:13-19	Matthew 21:28-32
12/17/2017	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	John 1:6-8, 19-28
12/18/2017	1 Kings 18:1-18	Ephesians 6:10-17
12/19/2017	2 Kings 2:9-22	Acts 3:17-4:4
12/20/2017	Malachi 3:16-4:6	Mark 9:9-13
12/21/2017	2 Samuel 6:1-11	Hebrews 1:1-4
12/22/2017	2 Samuel 6:12-19	Hebrews 1:5-14
12/23/2017	Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	John 7:40-52
12/24/2017	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Luke 1:26-38
12/25/2017	Isaiah 9:2-7	Luke 2:1-14
12/26/2017	Psalm 148	Acts 7:59-8:8
12/27/2017	Proverbs 8:22-31	1 John 5:1-12
12/28/2017	Isaiah 49:13-23	Matthew 18:1-14
12/29/2017	Jeremiah 31:15-22	Luke 19:41-44
12/30/2017	Isaiah 26:1-9	2 Corinthians 4:16-18

- 2) READ the scripture several times, perhaps using multiple translations (www.biblegateway.com is a good resource). Study it carefully. Put it in context by reading the passages before and after it. Look at the notes in your Bible.
- 3) PRAY and ask God, “What are you saying to me through this passage? What might you be saying to others through it?” Spend some time brainstorming.

4) BEGIN TO WRITE your devotion. Get creative. If you feel like writing a poem instead of prose, that's great – don't limit yourself. Here are some hints:

- † Connect with your audience using an anecdote, a story, or an illustration from real life.
- † Try to make just one point. In a short devotion, you can't say everything. Just say one thing well.
- † Remember you have an audience of men, women, younger people, and older people – all at different stages of their Christian journey. Make sure your message can relate to lots of different kinds of people.
- † Avoid controversial subject matter.
- † If you're quoting scripture, it's usually better to use a 'modern' translation like the New International Version (NIV) or New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). But sometimes you can't beat the King James Version (KJV) for its poetry and familiarity.
- † Use vivid language – use words to paint pictures. Don't underestimate the power of small details to evoke powerful ideas and images. Use active verbs.
- † **VERY IMPORTANT:** Aim for a total of 250-300 words total (including all elements described below). The editors reserve the right to edit submissions that don't meet this length limit (but we'd rather have you do the editing than us!)
- † Use 'we' instead of 'you' – 'you' tends to sound too preachy.
- † For more writing hints, look at <http://devotional.upperroom.org/how-to-write>.

5) FORMAT your work for submission using the format below. Font is Times New Roman, size 12 except where noted. Remember, your goal is **250-300 words total**, including titles, etc. (Microsoft Word has a word count feature usually appearing in the lower left corner of a Word document.)

SAMPLE:

December 25, 2017 (Underline, centered)

A Savior is Born (Give your work a title: 14 point, bold, centered)

(blank line)

Read Luke 2:1-7. (Passage reference: italics, centered)

(blank line)

"And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." - Luke 2:7 NIV (Choose a key verse: centered, in quotes, give scripture reference and translation you're using, no indents)

The arrival of a new baby is at once both a terrifying and exciting event. New parents are never fully prepared...(Body text: left-justified, no indents for first line of the paragraph.)

(blank line between each paragraph)

We are never fully prepared for all the changes Jesus will bring to our lives...

(blank line)

(Writer's name: right-justified)

(blank line)

PRAYER (all caps, centered, bold)

(blank line)

Dear God, grant us...Amen. (Prayer: a short prayer tied to your theme, left-justified, no indent)

6) PROOFREAD your work carefully. When you are ready, submit your devotion via email in Microsoft Word format to **Marge / mmpeletier@gmail.com**. Remember, we need to have your work by **OCTOBER 22nd**. The whole congregation thanks you for your help! **If you have questions along the way, contact Marge / mmpeletier@gmail.com or John / jkdewart@aol.com or Cathy / cjbishop@weichertinsurance.com.**