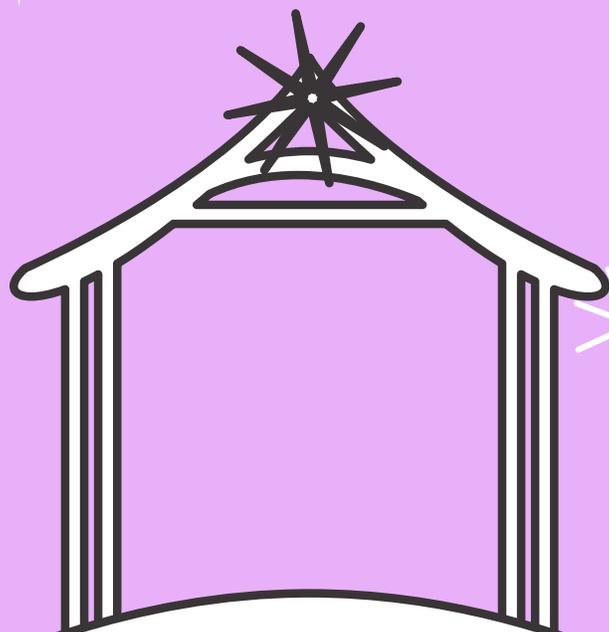


# The Indwelling of God



DEVOTIONAL GUIDE 2020  
First Presbyterian Church of Hastings  
Welcoming All. Living Love. Transforming Lives.

**Dear Advent Pilgrim,**

**Few people know this but once upon a time Advent was much more similar to Lent. It was a season of repentance and restoration during which one would prepare for the coming of the Christ child not by adorning the hallways and wrapping presents but by clearing space within their hearts and reorienting their lives toward God. This year we are encouraging our friends and members to partake in a holy advent through daily prayer and a commitment to serve others. Contained within this packet you'll find a prayer for each day of Advent. The prayers were written by staff and members of First Presbyterian Church and they correlate to the lectionary gospel readings for each Sunday in Advent. You'll also find herein a list of items which are needed by some of our vital ministry partners. Each day during the season we invite you to take a moment, light a candle, recite a prayer, and place one of the items in a box in your home. Think of it as a "reverse Advent calendar." You may bring the items to church during regular office hours and place them in the parlor. This year's items will go to benefit the following agencies: Hastings High School Food Pantry, Catholic Social Services, Crossroads Homeless Shelter, and Spouse Abuse Sexual Assault Crisis Center (SASA). This Advent may we prepare to encounter the God who meets us in our need by preparing to meet others in their need.**

# Indwelling of God 2020

Each day during Advent place an item in a box and say a prayer. Bring the box to church to add to our collection.

- 1. Dish Soap**
- 2. Women's Razors**
- 3. Pillows**
- 4. Feminine Hygiene Products**
- 5. Kitchen Cleaner**
- 6. Baby Wipes**
- 7. Twin Sheets (new)**
- 8. Toothbrush & Toothpaste**
- 9. Bathroom Cleaner**
- 10. Diapers (size 2,5,6)**
- 11. Blankets**
- 12. Body & Hand Soap**
- 13. Dish Cloths**
- 14. Laundry Detergent**
- 15. Cough Drops**
- 16. Deoderant (Men's & Women's)**
- 17. Paper Towels**
- 18. Broom w/Dust Pan**
- 19. Disposable Gloves (size L & XL)**
- 20. Acne facewash**
- 21. Scrubbing Brushes**
- 22. Baby Bottles**
- 23. Bleach**
- 24. Spaghetti & Sauce**
- 25. Disinfectant**
- 26. Mac & Cheese**

## **Week 1: Mark 13:24-37**

"But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

### **Week 1 Devotion by Greg Allen-Pickett**

On the surface, Jesus' words have a sense of foreboding, "The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light ... Beware! Keep Alert! Keep Awake!" But if we read the rest of this passage, there are also images of hope associated with our call to wait; God sending out the angels to gather us together, tender branches putting forth leaves, and the promise of the steadfastness of God's words for us. What do we do with Jesus' frightening and hope-filled vision in the gospel of Mark? In the Season of Advent, we are called to watch and wait. But for what? Christmas, obviously. We wait to celebrate Jesus' birth more than 2,000 years ago. But Advent also has a deeper meaning; we are awaiting the incarnation, when God becomes flesh and dwells among us. During Advent we focus our energies, our minds, and our hearts, on waiting and watching in anticipation of a world made right. That kind of waiting and watching can be both scary and hope-filled. When we see the darkness in the world, we are scared. When we see the glimpses of the light of God's kingdom breaking in, we are hopeful. Our waiting and watching during Advent is not passive but active. As we are waiting for God's kingdom to come, we are called to proclaim and build that kingdom here and now. This week, let's embrace that reality, somewhere between fear and hope, as we begin our journey by watching and waiting.

## **Day 1 Prayer by Greg Allen-Pickett**

Waiting and watching are hard God, really hard. We don't know what is coming next, and as humans we like to have a sense of stability and security. Instead, we look out into an unclear future. But you promise us that you are always with us. As we begin this advent journey of waiting and watching, make your presence known to us. Remind us that you accompany us, even when we don't know what the future may hold. Help us prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of your presence in our world, so that our waiting and watching can be marked by hope. Amen.

**Item: Dish Soap**

## **Day 2 Prayer by Kailen Soncksen**

Lord of movement, God of change, Holy One of great power and glory, we are impatient. When will you come? When will all lights in the sky dim, when will they fall? When will the world's evil cease? When will your love ride in on a cloud and relieve us all? We are impatient, O God, but we must wait. Help us to keep watch eagerly without being overly anxious. For we know your time will come when it comes, that your love will not leave us now, then, nor after. It is through Jesus' promise that we pray. Amen.

**Item: Women's Razors**

## **Day 3 Prayer by Byron Jensen**

Lord, as the old spiritual intones, "Keep your lamps, trimmed and burning," help us to remain watchful and hopeful for Your world—a world filled with greater compassion, evident empathy, and deeper respect for others. In these coming days and those beyond, be a light upon our footsteps as we provide outreach to others and bring peace to all who suffer.

Lord, in a year where astronomical disturbances have seemingly made our earth tremble as we wait for your promised return, give patience to our anxieties, steadiness to our impulses, and forgiveness for our iniquities. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and keep us focused on the bright star that truly is Your beacon of hope, healing, peace, and love.

**Item: Pillows**

### **Day 4 Prayer by Marie Rasmussen**

Heavenly Father, while waiting for your presence this Advent, we long for hearts to be light. However, many struggle with the heaviness of life. Some have severe illness and unending pain. Others have lost loved ones or find themselves unemployed. For all who cry out, we offer prayer. Lord, increase our faith as we wait for the gifts of the season. And may we remember the gift of your Son from Heaven, the greatest gift of all. In the midst of our not-so-merry circumstances, you love and guide us. Grant us peace in our homes, our churches, and in our hearts as our waiting continues. Shine brightly upon each of us, that we may be blessed with your everlasting love. In Jesus name, Amen.

**Item: Feminine Hygiene Products**

### **Day 5 Prayer by Our Junior High Youth**

Amazingly patient God, we come to you with impatient hearts. We want instant results. Help us to remember the old saying, "Good things come to those who wait." Help us to KEEP AWAKE to what you are doing in the world...cleansing our hearts and souls as we watch and wait. Just as the kitchen cleaner does its work on the counters, we know you are working in the world. We will stay alert and awake. Amen.

**Item: Kitchen Cleaner**

### **Day 6 Prayer by Our Senior High Youth**

God of great power and glory, though we know you are present with us now, sometimes it feels as though you are far away. We may get frustrated or anxious as we wait for your presence, but help us remain calm. As we continuously wait to rejoice in your holy spirit, we anticipate the feelings of happiness, joy, hope, and love we will receive when you dwell with us. When we feel as though we are far away from your open embrace, draw us back to you. In your name, we pray, Amen.

**Item: Baby Wipes**

### **Day 7 Prayer by Constance Malloy**

Loving and gracious God, this scripture moves me and reminds me of a song sung at the ecumenical monastery in France called Taizé. The song is "Bleibet hier und wachet mit mir" ("Abide with me and watch with me), and it recalls Jesus' words to the apostles as he prayed in Gethsemane. Like the bridesmaids in Matthew, the apostles had fallen asleep and were not there for Jesus. In daily life, I understand that Jesus calls on me to be ever alert to opportunities to serve others, which is a way to be the hands and feet of Christ Jesus in the world. Help me to be awake and alert to the call to serve others' needs. Amen.

**Item: Twin Sheets**

## **Week 2: Isaiah 40:1-11**

"Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep."

### **Week 2 Devotion by Kili Wenburg**

This passage begins and ends with caring and gentle phrases: "comfort my people"; "speak tenderly"; "gently lead the mother sheep." These words feel particularly life-giving in our current tumultuous and uncertain context. Though we may wish for God to swoop in and deliver us out of the difficulties we face, God instead chooses to join us in our struggle. Indeed, the "highway" in verse 3 is being made "in the desert" (a symbol of difficult times) for our God. In other words, the highway is not created for us to get out of the desert in which we find ourselves, but for God to come to us. Unfortunately, because of the many obstacles that block our spiritual vision, we regularly fail to recognize God with us and thus deprive ourselves of the comfort and guidance that could be ours...but it doesn't have to be that way! Verse 4 describes how "every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low." What "valleys and mountains" keep us from seeing God? Fear? Trying to fix the situation on our own? Resistance to reality? Demanding to know what the future holds? In our "preparing for the indwelling," the most important thing we can do is work to remove those obstacles that block our connection to God, who is already dwelling within us, constantly offering comfort, tender words, and gentle guidance to get us through anything that we face.

## **Day 8 Prayer by Kili Wenburg**

God of comfort, remind us again that when we look for you, we will find you. Though we may ask for and seek other blessings, the blessing of your presence is the greatest of all, and you offer it abundantly in all times and places. Forgive us and have patience with us when we flail around blindly, trying to handle everything on our own. This Advent, may we slow down, be still, and find you dwelling within us and the world around us. Amen.

**Item: Toothbrush and Toothpaste**

## **Day 9 Prayer by Damen Jensen-Heitmann**

Grant me, O God, the courage to remove all the "extra" of the season. Let me step back from the running, the worrying, the lists, and the attempts to have a perfect holiday. All it does is distract me, really. It pulls my heart away from where I am and those with whom I've gathered. It buries your presence beneath stacks of bills, tinsel, and twinkling lights. Help me, O God, to level these mountains and valleys. Or at least guide me so that I may keep them in perspective. Let me prepare for your presence by letting my distractions drop to the side. Amen.

**Item: Bathroom Cleaner**

## **Day 10 Prayer by Sara Babcock**

Creator God, for some, this can be a season of more -- more "asks," more to-do, more to plan. Give us time and space to breathe and remember that you made us exactly as we are to be; nothing more required. As we search for you in our daily lives, remind us to look within ourselves as well; you are with us and beside us as we walk through this world. Grant us peace of mind that we are, always, enough. Amen.

**Item: Diapers (size 2, 5, & 6)**

## **Day 11 Prayer by Jane Marsh**

Our life's journey has many hills and valleys. On the hilltop of personal joy and accomplishment we remember your reminder that to whom much is given, much is required. May your words temper our celebration. May they move us to offer humble thanks and to show compassion for those who find themselves in the valleys of loss and anxiety. Whatever our circumstance, teach us to rely on your grace and continuing protection. Like a shepherd, lead us, dry our tears, and carry us when we cannot walk alone. Amen.

**Item: Blankets**

## **Day 12 Prayer by Anonymous**

Comfort, O God, those who mourn; those who find themselves cut off from the places they cherish and the people who give them meaning. Speak tenderly to the lost and the adrift. Bind up the broken hearted. Deal graciously, we pray, with those marked and scarred by violence. Grant guidance to those whose lives have been turned upside down. May your grace dwell with those wandering through the wilderness. If that is us, then dwell with us. If it is others, then dwell with them. Amen.

**Item: Body & Hand Soap**

## **Day 13 Prayer by Our Senior High Youth**

Dear God, these days, we find ourselves walking into the unknown. We face the uncertainties of health, political divide, branching career paths, and so much more. When we walk through the wilderness, we hope that you are there to help guide us when problems come across our way. Help us to know how to prepare for life's journey. Help us to know how to prepare for the gift of your son. We seek your guidance in the hope of understanding and in the hope of seeking out the goals we wish to fulfill. Help us prepare for the road of infinite outcomes that we are to face in life. Amen.

**Item: Dish Cloths**

## **Day 14 Prayer by Anne Bohlke**

Dear God, during this season of Advent, as we prepare for our spiritual journey to Your indwelling in each of us, help us to recognize and cherish Your presence and comfort along our way. During Advent, at this most daunting time, we face unique obstacles in political and election stress and in the relentless pandemic. Whether the continuing divisive political diatribe looks like a mountain that exhausts us as we scale it or the pandemic seems to be a valley that we will never climb out of, help us always to find comfort in knowing that You are with us, as You always have been and always will be.

**Item: Laundry Detergent**

## **Week 3: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations."

## **Week 3 Devotion by Kailen Soncksen**

"Life's a garden; dig it!" Maybe this phrase cannot eloquently sum up Isaiah's inspiring message of hope, but it sure comes close. In our world today, it is very easy to focus on the weeds and pests that plague our life garden. The diseases of oppression, broken heartedness, and grief are overwhelming. Sometimes they overtake the seedlings God has planted for us. Isaiah acknowledges this, saying that although we mourn the decay of our garden, God's seeds of justice, glory, and salvation will shoot up in generations to come. God is the planter, giving life to our garden, and we help cultivate it. Our ancestors pruned and watered plants of liberation and equity so that we, the generation that follows, can reap their harvests. But there is still so much work to be done. How do we join in God's indwelling? How do we acknowledge, appreciate, and live into God's presence here? How do we till and cultivate our garden now so that the seeds God plants can flourish? Service to others enriches the soil around us. Hope for better days and prayerful action protects God's seedlings from harsh conditions. Love for all of God's creation anchors the plants' roots into the ground. We cannot let the weeds of this world overtake the vision of God's garden. Although these weeds are dense and stubborn, through them we see snippets of what life can be - beautiful, colorful, and bountiful. These peeks might be fleeting. But they still bring joy, and because of this, we greatly rejoice and sing God's praises!

## **Day 15 Prayer by Kailen Soncksen**

O God, our garden is struggling. Your seeds of justice, mercy, and righteousness are trying so hard to push through suffocating weeds of selfishness, greed, and bigotry. Give us the skill and strength to cultivate our lives with service and hope. Shelter us from storms of hatred so we can later bask in your love as it shines through the clouds. Let us be a generation that inspires our offspring to join in and embrace your indwelling. May they sing your praises as your flowers bloom around them. All of this, we pray in your son's holy name. Amen.

**Item: Cough Drops**

## **Day 16 Prayer by Kili Wenburg**

Indwelling God, Jesus dedicated himself to Isaiah's vision, and you have called us to join in this work as well! Jesus did not "finish" the work described in the Isaiah passage, and neither will we finish it, and yet you call us to join in anyway....and not only to join in but to rejoice in the assurance that your vision for a just and peaceful world--despite all evidence to the contrary--eventually will come to pass! This Advent, we recommit to doing our part: joining those who work to bring your vision to fruition, humbly accepting that we will not see the end results in our lifetime, and rejoicing that the hope and salvation of humanity do not rest upon our success but upon your faithfulness. Amen.

**Item: Deoderant (Men's & Women's)**

## **Day 17 Prayer by Kim Day**

Heavenly Father, In this season of Advent, we wait in anticipation for the fulfillment of your promises. We rejoice in your sovereignty, but we also groan as we face the difficulties of this world. You have given us, in your word, a view of your beautiful kingdom, and you have equipped us through the Holy Spirit to do your work--to cultivate your kingdom on Earth. When we look at this world and see brokenness, give us love and mercy to sow the seeds of grace. When we see fear, give us courage and faith to sow the seeds of hope. We thank you, Lord, for the gift of your son Jesus, through whom we are reconciled to you and can share in your eternal covenant. Amen.

**Item: Paper Towels**

## **Day 18 Prayer by New Members Class Fall 2020**

God of kindness, forgiveness, grace, and love, we are delighted to be able to join this community. Thank you for bringing us together on this journey to join our hearts and minds together with this family of faith. Thank you for your acceptance and love, which you have also taught to this community. Thank you for bringing us together in all of our diversity and reminding us that we belong to each other and to you. We ask you for your continued grace, strength, and patience. Enlighten us in your way of unconditional love and give us understanding of that love so that we may be able to share it with the world. Make us vessels of love to others both in this season of Advent and throughout the year. Amen.

**Item: Broom with Dust Pan**

### **Day 19 Prayer by Neil Riley**

Gracious God, I am able to rejoice with you today, as scripture tells us of the good news of the Lord. I thank you for the comfort that you bring to the brokenhearted, those in mourning, and to all of us. Allow me to focus on your good news, not only when things are good, but also when challenges are present. Help me to do more of your good work in the world today than I did yesterday. I rejoice in having you ever present with me not just this day but all days. Amen.

**Item: Disposable Gloves (Size L & XL)**

### **Day 20 Prayer by Our Junior High Youth**

Dear loving and gracious God, we ask you to build us up as we are broken and tired. Give us the strength to make it through the hard and difficult times that our earthly lives throw at us. We thank you for reminding us to look to you when we feel our bodies and souls can no longer tolerate what we are given. We pray that those who are downtrodden become filled with the Holy Spirit and that we will make it through the tough times with your guidance. With your strength, our hearts will continue to be filled with your love and kindness. Amen.

**Item: Acne Facewash**

### **Day 21 Prayer by Stephanie Brader**

Righteous Lord God, it often feels as if the world is covering your light in darkness. Oppression, anger, selfishness, grief, and hate seem to cover us in shadows. We know this is only a temporary shadow. We know that you are our bright, guiding light that never dims and that you will help us overcome the darkness. Help us to live more fully into your bright presence. Guide us to reflect your light of justice, love, forgiveness, joy, faithfulness, and kindness more fully in the world until ALL of your children rejoice and sing your praises. Amen.

**Item: Scrubbing Brushes**

## **Week 4: Psalm 89: 1-4, 19-26**

"I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth, I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: 'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said: "I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people. I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him; my hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; and in my name his horn shall be exalted. I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!'"

### **Week 4 Devotion by Damen Jensen-Heitmann**

If you don't know, "The Work of Christmas" by Howard Thurman, you should. Actually, pause right now and look it up. I'll wait. Seriously. I make three recommendations all year, and this is one. The poem envisions what takes place after the manger scene. Once God has shown up. What then? I'll quote just a little. "The work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among others, to make music in the heart." I am enamored of the idea that the birth of the Christ-child is a beginning; it is not an ending. We've waited. We've prepared. We've joined. And now the work begins. You thought this was the end, didn't you? You thought we were wrapping things up and coming to a nice little conclusion. Nope. We're just getting started because now we are called to proclaim the very indwelling of God. This is the part that moves us beyond simply enjoying it for ourselves and basking in that warm glow. The indwelling of God is about everyone. And we proclaim its reality through our very lives. We announce it through our loving acts. We declare it by offering forgiveness. We make known the lived reality of God's love by living peaceably with all. Christmas is yet to come. It is just getting started. It is up to us to make its work known. Amen.

## **Day 22 Prayer by Damen Jensen-Heitmann**

As we prepare ourselves once more for the inbreaking of your light and life, we ask that your spirit might enliven our hearts so that we may proclaim your loving work in the world. Let us not hoard Christmas to ourselves when it arrives. Let us share it with all whom we encounter. Move us toward the suffering. Align us with the oppressed. Incline our ears towards the sorrowing and the broken. As you came to dwell among us and continue to do so today, let us be so inclined to dwell among others. May our lives proclaim your presence and your love. Amen.

**Item: Baby Bottles**

## **Day 23 Prayer by Greg Allen-Pickett**

The waiting and watching is almost over, O God. Now we prepare to celebrate the incarnation, when God became flesh and dwelt among us. As we conclude this season of Advent, remind us that your spirit still dwells among us, and is evident when we take on the mantle of being your hands and feet in the world. As we approach Christmas with hopeful expectation and anticipation, we know the real work of Christmas is just beginning as each of us seek to embody the Christmas spirit in our daily lives. May you fill us with hope, peace, joy, and love, and inspire us to fill the world with those values as your faithful servants. Amen.

**Item: Bleach**

## **Day 24 Prayer by Sara Babcock**

Lord, the nights are long and cold. And the roads are maybe snowy or maybe that gross slush that will probably be here until March. In Advent, we mark the gift of your child with light, a warm glow that grows within us. Sustainer, help us to keep that glow within us after this season of celebration ends, for the nights will still be long and cold and the roads will still be gross. And Lord, help us to open our hearts and share that glow with those around us, to add our lights together to cover all of us in the season to come. Amen.

**Item: Spaghetti & Sauce**

## **Day 25 Prayer by Scott Shardelow**

To paraphrase Dr. Seuss, "Christmas doesn't come from a store. Christmas means a little bit more." This year, may we find you dwelling in the hearts and lives of one another. May we walk out of the desert and recognize your presence in the light of the steeple. May we gaze at each others' souls and discover your call to feed those who thirst and hunger for peace. May we safely rejoice with the congregation in music, laughter, and love. And may the love and faithfulness we share with each other, the community, and the world become a testimony to your manifestation for our descendants. May we remain faithful servants to our brothers and sisters of this world. Blessed be the Lord forever. Amen and Amen.

**Item: Disinfectant Spray**

## **Day 26 Prayer by Jo Seiler**

\*Editor's Note: Jo Seiler recommended this well-known blessing for inclusion in this year's devotional. Though it is not original to First Pres, versions of it have been well used by many of this congregation's pastors throughout the years. It seemed appropriate to include it as a closing blessing for you at the end of this year's Advent journey.

Sisters and Brothers, go forth into the world with peace. Be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good. Strengthen the weary, support the weak. Repay no one evil for evil. Love and serve the Lord with gladness rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be upon you, and dwell in you forever. Amen.

**Item: Macaroni and Cheese**

May you be blessed to know the indwelling  
of God this day and all days.

First Presbyterian Church of Hastings