

# “Watching Guide”

*A weekly guide to preparing for the birthday of Christ by preparing for his return.*

A weekly publication during Advent

December 11-December 17, 2011

**Monday Dec 12**



**Read:** Philippians 4: 4-5

**Reflect:** The Scripture for today commands us to rejoice (literally, “be delighted”). What delights you?

**Do:**  
Do something today that makes you happy and then give thanks to God!

**With a child:**  
Do something together that you know will cause you both to laugh and try to imagine Jesus laughing with you.

**Tuesday Dec. 13**



**Read:**  
Hebrews 10:24-26

**Reflect:**  
How does my public conduct reflect my relationship with Jesus?

**Do:**  
Read the history of St. Lucia online.

**With a child:**  
This is St Lucia day and in Scandinavian Lutheranism is an important festival of Advent. Bake some St Lucy saffron buns (recipes are easily found online)

**Wednesday Dec 14**



**Read:** James 5: 7-10

**Reflect:**  
What makes you lose your patience?

**Do:**  
React in a completely different way from your norm when you lose your patience today. Be deliberate and make a plan.

**With a Child:**  
Play a game where you keep quiet and patiently wait for the other to speak first. Award a prize to the one who is silent the longest (silly faces are allowed)

**Thursday Dec. 15**



**Read:** Isaiah 61:1-3

**Reflect:**  
Why is it so hard to move past sorrow or disappointment?

**Do:**  
When you feel personal loss, think of one to whom you could send a thoughtful note or email.

**With a child:**  
Bake some Christmas cookies ( bread) and take it to a relative or neighbor who has been saddened recently.

**Friday Dec. 16**



**Read:**  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

**Reflect:**  
Do you pray more for your own (and family) needs than those of others?

**Do:**  
Make a list of people you do not like and pray for them each day.

**With a child:**  
Pray together for other people (it is fine to include pets).

**Saturday Dec 17**



**Read** Philippians 4: 6-7

**Reflect:**  
What makes you anxious?

**Do:**  
Four times today pray, “Lord, I cannot do this alone. I entrust it to you because your shoulders are broad and your hands gentle. In Christ, Amen.”

**With a child:**  
Work on a song that you can sing together or alone when you feel afraid (like “Jesus loves me this I know”).

## Advent Traditions *The Jesse Tree*

The Jesse Tree is named from Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot will spring forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots." It is a vehicle to tell the Story of God in the Old Testament, and to connect the Advent Season with the faithfulness of God across 4,000 years.

A Banner with a tree pictured on it or a small artificial tree may be used. Each day during Advent a new symbol is hung on the tree

that symbolizes a biblical story of the Old Testament leading up to the coming of the Messiah. For instructions and a pattern go to this link,  
[www.shalfleet.net/advent/makeajessetree.htm](http://www.shalfleet.net/advent/makeajessetree.htm)

## *The Advent Calendar*

A popular Advent custom, from Germany, creates a similar build-up of anticipation. Advent calendars are colorful pieces of cardboard on which is depicted a many-windowed house. Behind each shutter of the house is a picture or symbol that points to the coming of Christmas.

Beginning December 1, children are allowed to open the shutters of one window per day. Each symbol becomes a wonderful conversation starter about the Savior and his birth.

Finally, on December 24, the front door of the house is opened, showing the nativity scene with Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus and of course the expected sheep and an ox or two.

Advent calendars are always available at the welcome desk at Zion during the season of Advent.