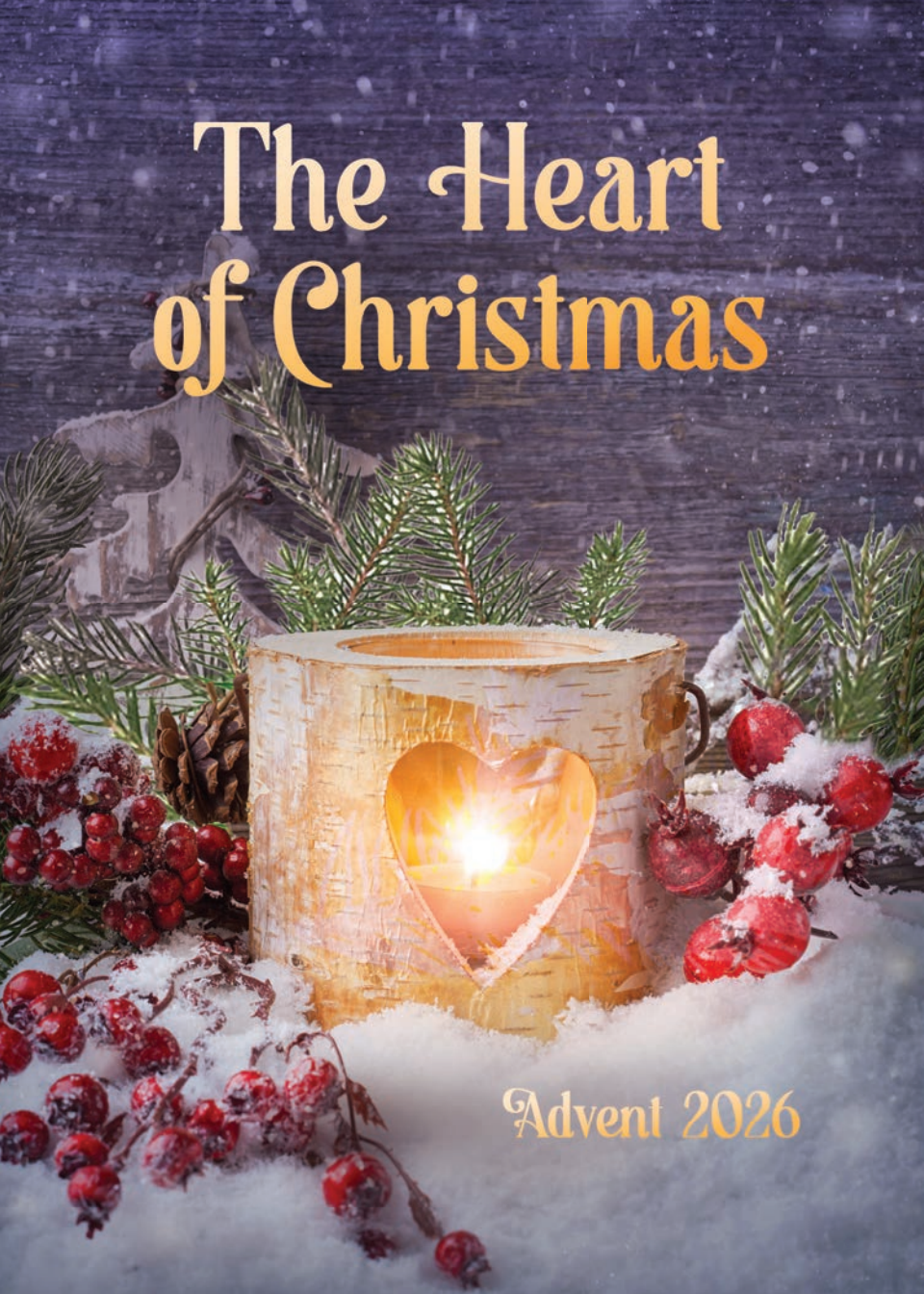
The Heart of Christmas



Advent 2026



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Finding the Heart of Christmas

What is the heart of Christmas for you? What traditions, memories, or celebrations are most resonant? Giving gifts? Being with family? Home-cooked food? Beautiful decorations? Stirring music? Moments of reverence?

Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas, and our writers' stories and spiritual experiences reveal many ways to find the heart of the holiday season. We hope they will spark your own reflections about what makes this time of year significant for you.

The four weeks of Advent represent hope and faith, peace, love, and joy. You will find daily messages on these themes for each weekday of Advent, with a Bible verse and affirmation to take into your day. The Sunday messages were written by Rev. Darlene Strickland, who leads a Unity church in North Carolina. Special essays and poems appear on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, then the booklet continues through the 12 Days of Christmas until Epiphany on January 6.

May this booklet be a blessing for you in this holy season.

Your Friends in Unity

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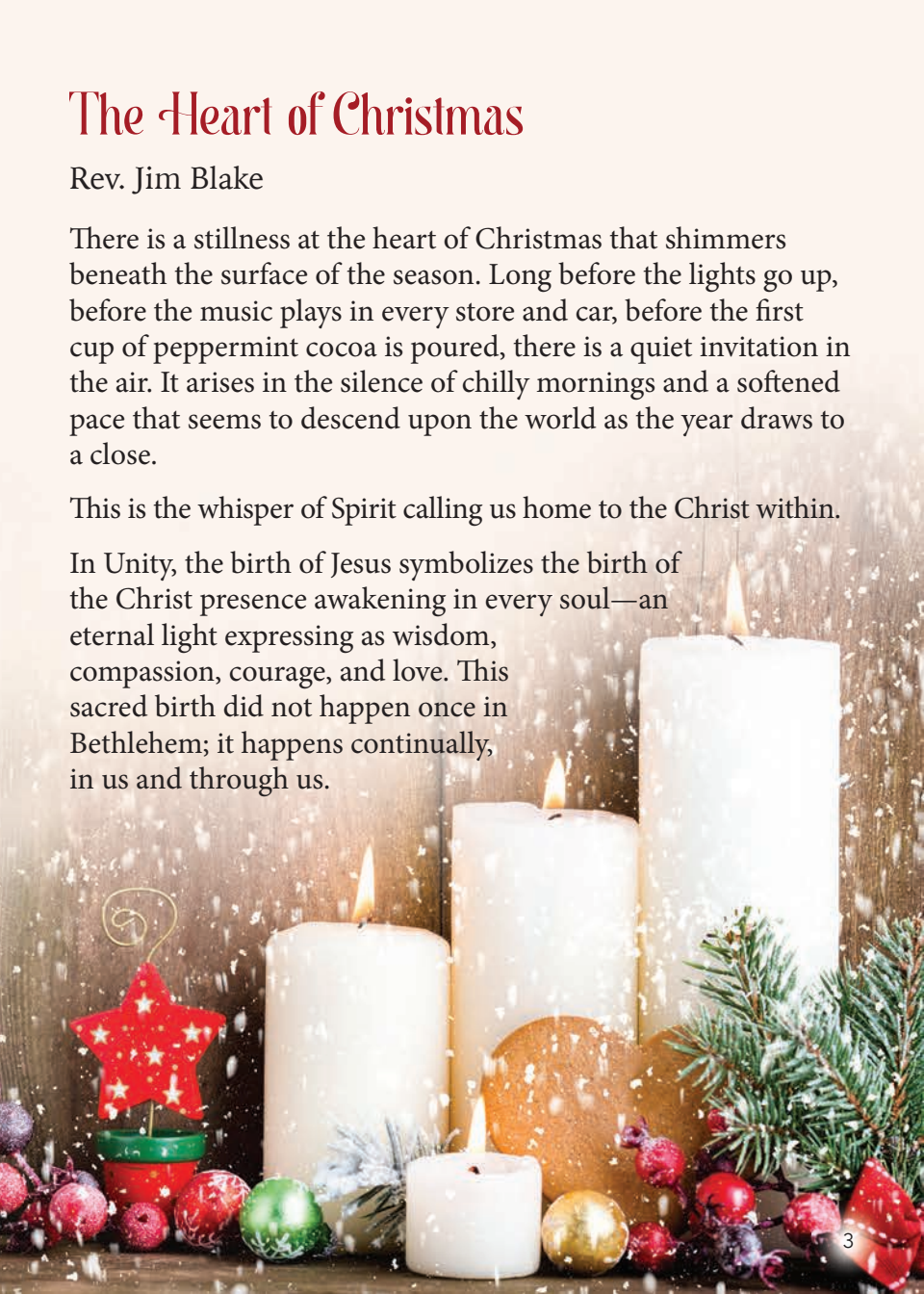
The Heart of Christmas

Rev. Jim Blake

There is a stillness at the heart of Christmas that shimmers beneath the surface of the season. Long before the lights go up, before the music plays in every store and car, before the first cup of peppermint cocoa is poured, there is a quiet invitation in the air. It arises in the silence of chilly mornings and a softened pace that seems to descend upon the world as the year draws to a close.

This is the whisper of Spirit calling us home to the Christ within.

In Unity, the birth of Jesus symbolizes the birth of the Christ presence awakening in every soul—an eternal light expressing as wisdom, compassion, courage, and love. This sacred birth did not happen once in Bethlehem; it happens continually, in us and through us.



The heart of Christmas is this inner birth. It reveals itself throughout the season in those moments we choose love over fear, generosity over withholding, forgiveness over resentment, peace over turmoil. Something holy planted in each of us is waiting to be recognized and expressed. Something luminous, tender, and wise.

If Advent is a season of preparation, then we are preparing our inner posture for what is ahead. Just as the Nativity story tells of no room at the inn, our spiritual journey asks: What in us can be cleared away so the Christ light may be born anew? What old patterns, limiting beliefs, or long-held fears need to be released so that Spirit may find a manger—an opening, a receptive place—within our hearts?

Every Advent, we are invited to sweep the inner stable clean to make room for the awe that expands our hearts and rekindles in us the qualities of love, kindness, patience, and generosity. The heart of Christmas can show up in our seasonal patterns of quiet contemplation, acts of kindness, and a sense of wonder at this time of year.

There is something profoundly sacred in the way people soften during this season. For a few weeks each year, the world becomes a little more like the world we all wish it could be—gentler, kinder, more connected. We smile more easily. We give more freely. We look for ways to bless and uplift. It is as if the collective heart of humanity opens just a little wider, allowing the Christ light to shine through.

Perhaps this is why Christmas feels so magical. It is not only the lights or the music or the sense of wonder, although those play their part. The spiritual heart of Christmas is awakened awareness. It is the recognition that God is here, now, expressing in every act of love, every gesture of compassion, every moment of joy.

This divine presence is the true gift of Christmas.

And like all spiritual gifts, it is meant to be shared—not only in December, but every day of our lives. The heart of Christmas calls us to carry its spirit into the ordinary moments of the year: into our conversations, our workplaces, our communities, our choices. It invites us to be living expressions of hope, peace, love, and joy. Like the transformed Ebenezer Scrooge, we are invited to keep Christmas all year long.

As we enter this Advent season, may we each make room within ourselves for the birth of a new awareness. May we remember that the Christ light is the radiant, indwelling presence that guides us, grounds us, and transforms us from the inside out every day of the year.

May the heart of Christmas beat within us—steadily, gently, eternally—reminding us who we truly are: expressions of divine love and presence made visible in the world.

Rev. Jim Blake is chief executive officer for Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village.



Our Gifts from the Wise Men

Rev. Ellen Debenport

All through December, we celebrate our spiritual nature and remember we share the same Christ spirit that was born in Jesus. Then on January 6, the 12th day of Christmas known as Epiphany, we have a second, quieter opportunity to honor the birth of Jesus and the Divine in ourselves.

The modern definition of *epiphany* is a moment when we suddenly see or understand something in a new way. Often the dawning awareness of our spiritual identity is an epiphany for us, an *aha*, a realization that we are so much more than our bodies and personalities.

This awakening begins as a point of light—like a star, like a newborn—and is brought forth and nurtured through our intuition and willingness to be guided, like the wise men.

Epiphany as a holiday embraces an ancient tradition that predates Christmas as we know it.

In the early Christian church, Epiphany on January 6 commemorated not only the birth of Jesus, but the visit of the wise men, Jesus' baptism, and the wedding at Cana. Not until the fourth century was the celebration of Jesus' birth moved to December 25, probably to offset the ongoing pagan festivals of the sun god.



Epiphany then came to represent the wise men's recognition of Jesus as divine. As centuries passed, Epiphany became a riotous celebration, much like Mardi Gras today. Shakespeare's play, *Twelfth Night*, was written as entertainment for the close of the Christmas season.

The Christmas story might seem complete even if it had never included the wise men. They never saw the child in the manger; their journey is set about two years after Jesus' birth. But the wise men add an additional layer of mysticism to the story, and they teach us about ourselves.

As told in Matthew 2:1-12, astrologers saw a new star rising and believed it signified the king of the Jews had been born. They went in search of the child at the behest of King Herod, who pretended he also wanted to pay homage when in fact he planned to destroy this new "king." The star led the wise men to a house in Bethlehem where they found the baby with Mary. They offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh—elements frequently used in burial, foreshadowing the crucifixion.

Note what the story doesn't say: It never says how many wise men traveled. It doesn't say they were kings. There's nothing about riding camels. And we are not given the wise men's

names. Names were assigned to them much later: Casper, Melchior, and Balthazar. In our Nativity scenes, we sometimes like to imagine they were racially diverse—white, Black, Asian. The story has been embellished through the years.

But still, we recognize the wise men as spiritual seekers like us. They were willing to follow a star, just a glimmer of understanding that there was more to life than they had known.

Herod represents us too—the ego, the frightened parts of us that are threatened by anything new or powerful. The ego often tries to stamp out the birth of our divine awareness. It warns, *Who do you think you are? You're going to look foolish. You don't have time for this spiritual stuff.* Spiritual awakening requires letting go of limiting beliefs.

Unity cofounder Charles Fillmore said the wise men represent the wisdom that is carried within our souls from previous incarnations. This inner wisdom recognizes the star as our guiding light. We leave behind fear and doubt, and we follow our guidance to divine awareness.

We protect this new understanding, just as Joseph protected the baby from Herod by fleeing to Egypt. We give our spiritual nature a chance to thrive within us. We offer ourselves as gifts to honor the Divine.

Only our own misgivings can keep us from knowing our spiritual identity. The star is always shining. We only have to follow the light.

Rev. Ellen Debenport is vice president of publishing for Unity.

Opening to God in a New Land

Rev. Elizabeth Longo

Christmas in Havana, Cuba, during my early childhood was a vibrant tapestry of joy, devotion, and togetherness—a celebration that engaged every sense and filled every heart. My earliest memories are wrapped in the sacred story of the Christ child, the Nativity scene lovingly displayed, and the warmth of family gatherings overflowing with laughter, music, and light.

In our home, Christmas Eve—not Christmas Day—was the true centerpiece of the celebration. The evening unfolded like a grand symphony of tradition. The table was adorned with a lavish feast centered around *lechón asado*, pork slow roasted to perfection and infused with garlic, sour orange, and spices. It was accompanied by black beans and rice, tender yuca topped with garlicky *mojo* sauce, sweet fried plantains, and an abundance of desserts. Churros dusted in sugar and rich *turrones* made of honey, almonds, and eggs were treasured holiday delights.



After dinner, we would dress up and head to midnight mass, honoring the birth of baby Jesus. The streets were alive—glowing with lights, adorned with decorations, and filled with the quiet anticipation of something sacred. Every home seemed to cradle a Nativity scene, a reminder that the holy story was not just remembered but lived.

Our celebrations extended beyond Christmas Eve, building toward Three Kings Day on January 6, the day we received gifts and honored the journey of the wise men. On that day, our hearts were open, expectant, and receptive to the deeper meaning of the season: the birth of the Divine within.

Then life began to shift.

As a small child, I could not fully understand the changes happening around me. The familiar rhythms of Christmas began to unravel. The joy remained, but it was threaded with uncertainty. Stores were closing, families were separating, and whispers of departure filled the air. Some of our loved ones had already left for the United States, and a quiet tension lingered in the background of our celebrations.

Through it all, my mother became my anchor. With steady faith, she reassured me that this disruption was temporary—that Christmas, in all its beauty, would return.

Soon, it was our turn to leave. At 6 years old, I arrived in Miami, stepping into a new world with new customs and unfamiliar traditions. I quickly learned English and began adapting to my new home. That first Christmas brought a surprising discovery: Santa Claus. I learned about a man from the North Pole who delivered gifts through chimneys—a

concept quite different from the Three Kings of my childhood. Yet I was delighted to learn that gifts arrived earlier here, without waiting until January 6.

Those early years in Miami were not easy. My mother worked tirelessly, often holding two or three jobs while attending college to reestablish her teaching career. She was navigating a new language, a new culture, and a new life. Yet somehow, when Christmas came, there were always gifts under the tree. Looking back, I see the true gift was not what appeared under the tree but the love, resilience, and devotion she embodied.

In our new home, the heart of Christmas revealed itself in a deeper way. It lived in the connections we formed—not only with family members who had also arrived, but with others who, like us, had left everything behind. During the holidays, we gathered together, sharing meals, stories, and music that carried echoes of the life we once knew. These moments became sacred spaces of belonging and remembrance.

It was then that the Christmas story took on a profound new meaning. Like Joseph and Mary, we, too, had journeyed into the unknown. We were strangers in a foreign land, guided by faith, seeking safety, hope, and a new beginning. Their story was no longer distant—it was alive within us. In that recognition, our hearts opened even more deeply to the presence of God's love.

And that is a gift that no circumstance can ever take away.

Rev. Elizabeth Longo is senior minister at Unity of Sarasota, Florida.



FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Hope and Faith

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2026

Faith, Hope, and a Gingerbread House

Rev. Darlene Strickland

One Christmas Eve, my niece and two nephews and I gathered around the kitchen table to build what we imagined would be a gingerbread house masterpiece. The pieces were neatly arranged, the icing was set out, and their excitement was already getting ahead of the instructions.

Before we began, my 4-year-old nephew, Asher, asked, "Can we eat just one piece?"

"Sure," I said. It was Christmas Eve, after all.

My niece Mallory carefully chose a gumdrop. But Asher reached for the largest piece and happily began chomping it.

From across the counter, my 8-year-old nephew, Gavin, clearly too cool to participate, had taken on a supervisory role. He quickly chimed in, "Aunt Darlene, he's eating the foundation. That is not a good idea."

I smiled. "Don't worry. I'll fix it."

With graham crackers, peanut butter, and a generous dose of optimism, I created what I believed would work as a substitute. But as we began building, the makeshift foundation would not hold. The structure leaned, shifted, slipped, and refused to stand. We playfully created something, but no one would call it a gingerbread house.

Then came the wisdom of an 8-year-old I've never forgotten: "Pretending you have a foundation is not the same as actually having one."

It's true. We often try to hold life together by pretending rather than returning to our foundation. Foundations are essential. The quality of a foundation determines the strength and integrity of everything built upon it. A strong foundation doesn't just support; it allows something greater to rise.

That is not only true of gingerbread houses; it is true of our lives.

Advent begins with hope and faith because they establish the foundation of our lives. Both arise from what we believe. Belief is the doorway, revealing whether we are building on the fragile pieces of the temporal or the steady ground of the eternal.

As Jesus taught, a house built on sand cannot stand, but one built on solid rock endures. Without faith, we never go beyond what we can see. With faith, we return to our spiritual foundation and remember we are not separate from God but rooted within God—an inseparable part of divine reality and wholeness.

Within us lives the capacity for love, peace, creativity, wholeness, wisdom, and joy. Faith and hope awaken it, nurture it, and bring it forth.

This Advent, try a simple practice: Pause, place your hand on your heart, and affirm: *I am rooted in Spirit. I am divine life. I nurture and bring forth the love and wholeness of God within me.*

Faith and hope aren't about holding life together with peanut butter and wishes. They're about living from a foundation of being that is already whole—never fragile, never broken.

Rev. Darlene Strickland is senior minister at Unity of the Blue Ridge in Asheville, North Carolina.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2026

Oh, the excitement and anticipation of Christmas! I so vividly recall my younger years as Christmas approached, wondering whether I would receive the gifts I most hoped for. Would I receive the new doll I wanted, a Hula-Hoop for the coming summer months, or the pretty new dress I had spotted in the mail order catalog? Had I behaved well enough? I hoped with all my heart that I had.

As I became an adult, I moved from hope to faith to carry me through my grown-up challenges. Wherever I placed my faith—that is, where I focused my thoughts—was precisely what showed up in my life. If I placed my faith in worry, I tended to live what I feared. If I placed my faith in confidence that all would be well, it was.

I grew an impressive stockpile of evidence to bolster my faith that life was unfolding for my highest good. I now have faith, rather than uncertainty, that the entire universe is supporting me.

—Rev. Karen Romestan

For we walk by faith, not by sight.
—2 Corinthians 5:7

On this day of Advent ...

I stand strong in my faith as life unfolds perfectly in divine order.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2026

As we reflect on the meaning of faith and hope, it is important to remember that faith invites us to turn within—to connect with the very presence of the Divine within us. Hope then becomes the willingness to live in alignment with this holy presence of God.

In that quiet turning within, a deeper wisdom stirs—a gentle knowing that God is always with us. When we gather with others who also know the divine presence lives within us, we begin to sense that the space between us is sacred ground, a holy meeting place where truth can be spoken in love and received with love.

During this magnificent Advent season, I invite you to follow your highest guidance as you turn within. From that place of deep connection, may you find the faith to speak your truth and the hope to live it.

—Rev. Suzanne Carter

The kingdom of God is among you.
—Luke 17:21

On this day of Advent ...

With faith and hope, I meet the Divine within.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2026

Hope is my expectation of good, of God's presence. It is the unique spark that ignites my belief that my current situation is not a permanent one. It is the flame that assures me my present environment contains within it the needed solution. The solution then presents itself as a lesson that came to enlighten, elevate, and bring into my experience something new, something inspired by my faith.

My faith, in turn, becomes the catalyst for understanding. I can release any concern, fear, frustration, and apprehension and relax in the knowledge that faith has already connected me with the needed solution. It now reveals itself as a bright light of understanding and a new blessing, and I am grateful.

—Rev. Alberta Ware

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
—Romans 15:13

On this day of Advent ...

I am led to the light of understanding.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2026

When I was a child, my parents and I walked the rows of a local tree farm in late November, bundled against the chilly, pine-scented southern Appalachian air. With resolute hope we evaluated each tree, ready to claim the one that would fit perfectly into our living room's picture window. This was the first step in our annual tradition of transforming a Virginia pine into our family Christmas tree.

Once home, my father meticulously wrapped each branch with lights. Decorating progressed with bulbs, then bows, followed by tinsel, garland, and finally a tiny golden ball that had been my mother's prized ornament from her youth. To complete our tree, I was lifted to place a silver star on the treetop, signifying the beginning of our family's holiday season.

Now this memory and the warm, gentle glow of Christmas tree lights fill the room, igniting my faith that goodwill can shine brightly and flourish in every heart throughout the world.

—Rev. Todd Humphrey

He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.—Psalm 147:4

On this day of Advent ...

I am filled with goodwill.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2026

As Christmas approaches, we often recall the scene of Jesus newly born in a manger in Bethlehem, on a dark night illuminated by a great star. This image, which symbolizes the birth of the light of love in the midst of darkness, invites us to remember that in any difficult situation, God is always present.

When Mary was told she would give birth to the Son of God, she trusted beyond the doubts and fears she may have felt in that moment. Even in the midst of uncertainty, she said *yes*, knowing that God was with her.

So, too, we can walk in faith beyond uncertainty, trusting that our path is guided, that we are protected, and that we will receive what we need to face any challenge.

—Rev. Claudia Olmos

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and will not be afraid.—Isaiah 12:2

On this day of Advent ...

I choose to walk in faith, trusting that the presence of God is always with me.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2026

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast," Alexander Pope wrote nearly 300 years ago.

Recently, this notion was illustrated in a conversation I had with a dear relative. She shared the story of how her son turned his life around after years of addiction and homelessness. He found and maintained employment, married, started a family, and no longer abuses alcohol or other substances. Hearing her story renewed my hope for someone very close to me, reminding me once again of hope's vital place in our lives.

I sometimes call hope our "baby faith." Hope is the initial step in the journey that leads us to establish a strong faith. When Unity cofounder Charles Fillmore taught that every one of us is born with 12 innate spiritual powers, he listed faith first. It is the foundation of all that we can become, our divine potential.

Hope expects God to be good. Faith knows that God is good.

—Rev. Karen Shepherd

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.—Hebrews 11:1

On this day of Advent ...

My faith assures me that God is good.



SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Peace

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2026

Peace Is Participatory

Rev. Darlene Strickland

Every Sunday, we close our Unity church service by singing, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me." And then, somewhere between the parking lot and the rest of the week, we encounter some irritation—and the peace song is not the first thing that comes to mind.

The season of Advent invites us to look at peace with fresh eyes. And there is nothing better than the eyes of a child.

Robbie had always been the center of attention. His artwork covered the refrigerator at home, his name was part of every password, and life revolved around him—until his baby sister, Sarah, arrived. Suddenly the spotlight shifted.

One afternoon while decorating for Christmas, his mom shared some exciting news:

"Robbie, we bought a new house! It's bigger and you'll even have your own room. We're moving after Christmas."

She expected excitement. Instead, Robbie shook his head and said, "It's no use, Mom. Sarah's crawling really good now. She'll just follow us wherever we go."

Even as a child, Robbie understood that changing houses doesn't mean leaving your troubles behind.

And isn't that how we often approach peace? We tell ourselves: *I'll feel peaceful when things calm down … when this gets easier … when everything finally falls into place.*

We try to rearrange the pieces of our lives hoping peace will emerge when everything fits just right. But peace isn't about having all the right pieces.

Peace is a fruit of the Spirit, a natural expression of our spiritual wholeness. It is not dependent on circumstances, nor is it delivered once everything is "right." Peace arises from within, rooted in the deeper truth of who we are, part of our spiritual DNA.

As Unity cofounder Charles Fillmore wrote, "… if we would have peace and harmony in our environment, we must establish it within ourselves."

And Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. echoed that same truth: "We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means."

Advent asks us to reconsider what we're waiting for. Are we waiting for circumstances to change so peace can appear? Or are we willing to recognize that peace is already present, woven into the very fabric of our being?

Peace doesn't mean life is free from noise or challenge. It doesn't mean everything is perfect. It means we have found our deeper center, a place that remembers, "It is well with my soul," even when circumstances fall short.

Peace is our spiritual birthright, part of our divine potential. We don't wait for peace; we enter it. We don't wish for peace; we embody and practice it.

So from Sunday throughout the week, may we remember: *Peace is born in me, expressed through me, and here right now. I walk in peace.*

Rev. Darlene Strickland is senior minister at Unity of the Blue Ridge in Asheville, North Carolina.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2026

It can be so easy to get caught up in the bustle of Christmas—hunting down that perfect gift for someone special, gatherings with family and good friends, attending concerts and recitals, and all the other trimmings that make the holiday season brim with life and energy.

Yet for some, this time does not feel like something to celebrate. The loss of a family member, pet, or friend can leave an empty space that was once full of life and love. But no matter the circumstances, peace is always present.

Peace is present in the glow of firelight when the world becomes still. Peace is present in stolen moments of solace amidst the bustle. Peace is present in the memory of those no longer in physical sight. Most important, peace resides within you. Peace is present wherever you are. You are peace.

—Rev. David B. Adams

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways.—2 Thessalonians 3:16

On this day of Advent ...

I claim the peace within me.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2026

When I consider the heart of Christmas, I think of the quiet anticipation before the first light twinkles on the tree; the stillness that settles over our home before family arrives; and the breath I take before answering the phone on Christmas morning. Peace finds me there, in that sacred pause, just before a simple moment becomes everything.

As I prepare to celebrate all the ways peace is shared, I find myself standing at the edge of the season. What amazes me is how peace does the work. It connects the dots, strings the lights, wraps the gifts, and prepares the meals. Peace is the spark that makes everything bright. Because I have touched it in the moments before, I carry it into all that follows. It shapes my words, my welcome, my patience, and my generosity.

—Rev. Kathy Beasley

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.
—Colossians 3:15

On this day of Advent ...

I receive peace in the sacred pause and carry it into every moment that follows.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2026

In Luke's telling of the Christmas story, an angel appeared to shepherds living in the fields and watching their flock. The light of God surrounded them, and they were terrified. When the angel saw their fear, she said, "Do not be afraid."

How many times is our first response one of fear when we encounter something unknown or unexpected? It is easy to forget to stop, breathe, and turn within. Yet when we do, we connect to divine wisdom that guides us toward a decision about our next steps.

When we recognize our fear is simply a response to something we don't understand, we can choose to claim the peace that is an inherent part of who we are. As that peace washes over us, we move ahead with equanimity. We are centered and serene.

—Rev. Carolyn Warnemuende

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you … Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.—John 14:27

On this day of Advent …

I breathe, turn within, and rest in the peace of God.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2026

When families and friends get together, there can be an atmosphere of harmony and peace if even one person in the group knows and understands the power of prayer.

You can be that one. Wherever you find yourself, you can radiate a spirit of peace and unity. In any gathering, you can silently bless all who are present; you can know that God's spirit is in each one. You can be a center of harmony and understanding as you keep your mind stayed on God and as you keep your attention on the good and true and perfect in all persons.

You will find that as you consciously bless the place where you are and the people who are with you with a prayer of love and peace, the atmosphere around you will be filled with peace, and the people around you will be harmonious, congenial, and happy.

—Martha Smock

Martha Smock (1913–1984) served as editor of Daily Word *magazine for 35 years.*

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.—Matthew 5:9

On this day of Advent ...

I bless those around me with love and peace.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2026

When Christmas preparations ramp up, I find myself thinking of how Christmastime has changed for me. Each passing year brings memories of sharing the holidays with loved ones—both pleasant and not so pleasant.

This year will bring new members into the group with whom I want to share my holiday traditions. I no longer want to carry the burden of past Christmases that went wrong. I want to enjoy a happy celebration.

I choose to be at peace so I can create experiences that leave me with peace-filled memories. When I find myself irritated by something, I pause to enter a space of divine connection. I return to outer events with a renewed sense of serenity and of what really is important.

—Rev. Peggy Konkel

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.—Matthew 6:33

On this day of Advent ...

I remember that I am the peace I want to share.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2026

One of the pleasures of Christmas is giving and receiving gifts. I remember a special gift given to me years ago by my granddaughter. She chose a small, blue and white porcelain Nativity statue with Mary and Joseph gazing down at the babe in the manger. Her gift was wrapped as only a child could—the wrinkled paper secured with plenty of Scotch tape. Her gift touched my heart in ways impossible to describe. My granddaughter is grown now, and she may never know the enduring power of her childhood gift.

That little statue sits in a place of prominence in my home where I see it every day. When the Christmas decorations are put away after the holidays are over, my Nativity statue remains on display year-round. Occasionally, when I face a challenge, that little statue becomes a focus for my meditation, and through the grace of God, I experience the eternal, transcendent gift of peace amid my challenge.

—Rev. Ric Schumacher

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.—Philippians 4:7

On this day of Advent ...

Peace fills my mind and heart to overflowing.


THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT
Love

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2026

The Signature of Love

Rev. Darlene Strickland

"Let love lead us; love is Christmas," sings Sara Bareilles. It's a beautiful sentiment and a radical invitation.

Love reorients us. It shifts us from seeing life as divided into us-and-them to recognizing a deeper oneness. In that awareness, loving God, another, or ourselves becomes the same experience of love.

If God is love, then love permeates and sustains all. It is the deepest, most powerful force in human life. When we allow it to move through us, love won't leave us unchanged. It reshapes how we see, relate, and show up. I encountered that reorientation unexpectedly.

When I served as minister at Unity of Maui in Hawaii, I wanted to immerse myself in local culture. So I enrolled in a Hawaiian language class at the community college.

On the first night, our teacher, the *kumu*, entered in silence, blessed the space, and wrote two words on the board: *kamaʻāina* and *malihini*. Then he asked us to come forward and write our name under the title that applied.

I had no idea what either word meant. So when it was my turn, I wrote my name on the line between them. There were a few giggles behind me, and I was fairly sure I had just failed my first assignment. But by the end, more names were in the middle space than in either column.

The middle can feel safe, familiar, even popular. But it keeps us hesitant. It's where we stand when we don't know where we belong.

Then the kumu explained kamaʻāina means child of the land. Malihini means visitor or stranger. And then he said, "In Hawaiian tradition, everyone is considered kamaʻāina. But only you can decide who you know yourself to be."

Who you know yourself to be determines how you show up in life.

In the Christmas story, Mary receives the angel Gabriel's proclamation and responds, "Let it be with me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). She does not stand in the middle of indecision. Her *yes* is soul alignment, reorienting her life and awakening her indwelling Christ potential.

That is the invitation before us.

Love does not grow simply because we believe in it. It grows because we live it. We open to it, align with it, carry it, nurture it, and choose it again and again.

It is practiced in the pause before we react, in the willingness to listen, and in the quiet decision to ask for guidance or choose curiosity over judgment.

Love asks us, "Who will you choose to be in this moment?" Perhaps this is your moment to align your name with love and let love lead.

Rev. Darlene Strickland is senior minister at Unity of the Blue Ridge in Asheville, North Carolina.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2026

In the Christmas season, a gentle light seems to shine through ordinary days, illuminating life with wonder, tenderness, and renewed appreciation for one another. Familiar traditions draw us into sacred rhythms. Gifts offered with thoughtfulness awaken generosity and kindness too often overlooked in other seasons. Cards and messages reconnect us with dear ones, renewing cherished bonds and deepening affection. Even the foods of the season—especially the sweets—invite us to pause, delight, and savor the richness of life's blessings.

Around every table, within every embrace, and through each thoughtful gift, love is present—joyful, generous, and quietly powerful. Today I behold love in its many forms. With mindful awareness, I look for the living presence of love in every encounter and moment. I embrace every opportunity to give and receive in, through, and as the love that knows no bounds.

—Rev. Kurt Condra

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds … encouraging one another.
—Hebrews 10:24-25

On this day of Advent …

I give and receive love in many forms.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2026

I love everything about Christmas! The carols that invite mysticism to dance inside my heart while making me feel lighter. The sacred energy that permeates the world and asks me to remember love and kindness are all that matter. The smells and tastes of special holiday foods that bring to mind memories of past revelry with family and friends. Even the love of those who are no longer with me is felt and remembered in sweetness and gratitude.

It is this wonderful time of year that makes me feel like the Grinch when his heart grows several sizes as he is transformed by the real meaning of Christmas. He realizes that Christmas is about love, and love transmutes; it evolves to a higher form.

The best gift I can bring to those around me is the gift of love, acceptance, and kindness. I am being the Christ in the world.

—Rev. Sheree Taylor-Jones

**The Lord does not see as mortals see;
they look on the outward appearance,
but the Lord looks on the heart.
—1 Samuel 16:7**

On this day of Advent ...

*I choose to offer love to strangers,
recognizing only oneness.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2026

At moments in the holiday season, the veil between the ordinary and the sacred becomes so thin it practically disappears. The smell of cookies baking. A song drifting in from another room. Suddenly your chest opens and warmth moves through you.

But not every moment feels like that. The holidays can also bring grief, tension, loneliness, and the ache of what is missing or broken. Yet love is present there too. Quiet. Underneath.

Love is so much more than a fleeting emotion. Love is presence itself. Love transcends what time, distance, and our differences seem to separate. Love renews our compassion and allows us to see anew.

This is the spiritual heart of Christmas. Not perfection, but love—holding us together no matter what. This Advent, look for love. It is being born in you, in us, in every moment we choose it.

—Rev. DeeAnn Weir Morency

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.—1 John 4:16

On this day of Advent ...

I trust that love is present in moments both beautiful and difficult.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2026

Love seems easy when our relationships are easy. Add a dose of disagreement, however, or any conflict, and love can become challenging. Love becomes even more difficult under the expectation of holiday harmony.

When we feel we have tried everything to repair a relationship, there is still something we can do spiritually. We can practice divine love. Rather than viewing love as an emotion—feeling good about the other person—we can harness the unifying power of divine love in meditation.

Hold an image of the person in mind and affirm: *You and I are one*. Even if your human brain disputes it, deliberately set aside mental arguments in favor of the absolute Truth that there is no "other." With no "other," there is only the unity of divine love.

Meditating might not resolve relationship issues immediately. But embodying the unifying power of love offers us the gift of holiday harmony.

—Rev. Linda Martella-Whitsett

I ask … that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us.
—John 17:20-21

On this day of Advent …

I embody the unifying power of divine love.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2026

The heart of Christmas beats with the rhythm of love—a living pulse that moves us to give, serve, and care. It is love that wraps the gifts, lights the tree, prepares the table, and gets to work. It is love that drives across town to sit with someone who is lonely, that stands in line to fill a child's Christmas box, and that quietly pays it forward without needing applause.

Loving others awakens my own heart. In serving, I am blessed. In giving, I am filled. The heart that reaches outward finds itself opened from within.

Love does not wait for the perfect moment or the right conditions. Love shows up with warm hands and a generous spirit. In every act of service, the Divine is both the giver and the gift.

We make a choice to become love expressed and experienced, especially at Christmas.

—Rev. Kathy Beasley

**Beloved, let us love one another,
for love is from God.—1 John 4:7**

On this day of Advent ...

I discover that in serving others, I am awakened to my own wholeness.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2026

One of my fondest Christmas memories is getting my first bicycle. It wasn't there on Christmas Eve, but the next morning, a shiny red Western Flyer magically appeared under the tree.

I later learned it was my grown brother who sneaked into our house to assemble my bike after putting together his own children's toys. He didn't stop there. He patiently taught me to ride—first with, then without, training wheels. My big brother, now in his 80s, brought out the heart of Christmas for his baby sister.

It is said that 100 years from now, it won't matter what kind of car you drove, the house you lived in, or how much money was in your bank account. What will matter is that you made a difference in the life of a child.

—Rev. Sandra Campbell

Love is patient; love is kind.—1 Corinthians 13:4

On this day of Advent ...

I celebrate precious memories of Christmases past.

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

Joy



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2026

Joy Is Born in Us

Rev. Darlene Strickland

Advent brings weeks of hope, peace, and love. Then joy arrives like a faithful friend who somehow knows exactly what our heart needs.

It's easy to confuse joy with happiness. We say we want our children to be happy. We seek happiness for ourselves. But if we're honest, we're longing for something deeper: to know joy.

Happiness depends on circumstances. When life goes well, it rises. When things fall apart, it fades. Joy is different. Joy isn't rooted in circumstances; it's rooted in our spirit. The Bible calls it a "fruit of the spirit"—something that naturally emerges when our inner life is aligned with something larger than ourselves.

Sometimes joy is obvious: a smile that beams, laughter that bubbles up, a moment that feels complete. But often it's quieter. It's steady. Subtle. Like a current beneath the surface, carrying us forward. It's the inner voice that whispers, *Begin again*. Joy isn't always something you feel intensely; it's something that upholds you.

I learned something about joy from my niece Mallory when she was 3. That year, she created an impressively detailed Christmas list, especially for someone still learning to tie her shoes. My sister had everything covered. Then on Christmas Eve, they stopped at the mall to see Santa.

When Santa asked what she wanted, Mallory paused and then asked for a red fire truck, wooden ABC blocks, and a doll with

a red ribbon. My sister was stunned! None of those were on the carefully planned list. But then she noticed a small shelf above Santa's head holding those exact toys.

Laughing, she asked Mallory, "Why did you tell Santa you wanted those things?"

Mallory joyfully replied, "Santa didn't have very much left to choose from, so I asked for what he had. I'm sure I will like what he brings!"

That's it. That's joy.

Joy widens our reality. Left to ourselves, we tend to narrow our world, focusing on what's missing, what's wrong, what didn't happen. Everything begins to feel smaller, more limiting, more disappointing. Joy gently reorients our attention, not by denying difficulty but by opening us to a larger reality, where what's missing may be real but not the whole picture.

Joy anchors us in the flow of life. It loosens our grip on how things "should" be and helps us open to All That Is. It allows us to sense possibility where we once saw limitation, to trust that there is still goodness unfolding, and to feel the ever-abiding presence of God—within us and throughout everything.

Joy can coexist right alongside grief and uncertainty, reminding us that even now, we are still whole, and joy remains.

Maybe that's the invitation of Advent: not to wait for overflowing joy to arrive, but to notice that it is right here, like a faithful friend, reminding us that life is wider, deeper, and more generous than we often believe.

Rev. Darlene Strickland is senior minister at Unity of the Blue Ridge in Asheville, North Carolina.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2026

I still recall the first Christmas when my sister and I had our children. My son was barely 1 and my niece just a few months old. Watching our families experience joy through the babies' laughter and smiles was heartwarming. Every face seemed to light up with joyful anticipation of sharing Christmas together.

Not every moment since has been filled with joy. But joy is not something we create; it is something we recognize and embody. Even when it feels out of reach, it can be revealed through the joy of others. When we witness others' joy, we are witnessing Spirit in action. Their joy becomes a doorway into our own. The Christ presence reveals itself through connection.

This Christmas, allow yourself to notice joy in others. Listen for their laughter, celebrate their happiness, bless it silently, and let it bless you. In your shared light, let joy rise and multiply.

—Rev. Juan del Hierro

Rejoice with those who rejoice.—Romans 12:15

On this day of Advent ...

I find joy in the joy of others.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2026

One Christmas bell graces a special shelf in my home all year long. Its carved brass is lovely, its tone resonant even after more than 60 years of ringing and memories. It was a Christmas gift from young me to my mother, then returned to me after her passing. She and the bell remind me that we cultivate joy by our attention to it.

She loved bells. My siblings and I loved giving them to her. Every bell we gave her was a Christmas treasure to unwrap and a joy to ring as she slowly admired the resonance, the tone, the design, the clapper. She sat in focused, delighted appreciation.

Joy is a practice, a gift to ourselves. Focusing on joy opens us to recognize and embrace it more often.

I love ringing this bell. The tone resonates with faith, peace, love, and most of all, joy.

—Rev. Bronte Colbert

For you shall go out in joy and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.—Isaiah 55:12

On this day of Advent ...

I cultivate joy.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2026

The Magi came bearing gifts yet received far more. Imagine their joy in finding God's love expressed in the world as the living Christ presence.

Joy is the gift we receive when we realize we are the presence of God in the world—God's living enterprise—or when we see the Christ light in one another. The divine light that shone in Bethlehem shines as each of us, spiritually innocent and holy. This is our natural state as God's beloved children, blessed always and unconditionally, no matter what. It is our neighbor's natural state as well.

In this holy season, let's welcome the truth that we are spiritual beings, one with God and one another, whole, complete, and abundant. What could offer greater happiness? Be joyful knowing that the light you seek is the light you are.

—Rev. Lesley Miller

In your presence there is fullness of joy.
—Psalm 16:11

On this day of Advent ...

I am filled with joy remembering who walks with me.

Christmas Eve

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2026

The Christ Is Born Right Where You Are

Rev. Teresa Burton

Throughout this Christmas season, anticipation has been building. The days leading to Christmas have grown shorter. And now it's here, the heart of Christmas—the imminent commemoration of the birth of Jesus and the celebration of the birth of the Christ within us, our divine nature.

The joy of anticipation touched the first Christmas story too. Even though the journey was arduous and the circumstances humble, there was positive expectation that something precious was about to arrive.

We can relate this journey to our own periods of struggle and uncertainty. Like Mary and Joseph, we can trust that even though we don't know how a difficult situation will resolve, we can have faith that it will. We can understand that our circumstances don't need to be ideal for us to welcome the birth of the Christ within us, our spiritual identity. Indeed, our spiritual awareness and growth often accelerate in our most chaotic moments, our more dire circumstances, those times when the way forward is anything but clear.

According to the revered Unity teacher Rev. Ed Rable, "The entire Christmas story has a metaphysical meaning. Jesus is born in a stable and laid in a manger, and metaphysical symbols of stable and manger refer to basic human nature, or human consciousness. So, the metaphysical meaning … is that

spiritual awareness is born right within our own individual human nature. Not born outside of ourselves, not born on the spiritual level, it comes from the spiritual level, but it is born into the area of strictly human awareness and faculties."

At the heart of the Nativity is this spiritual truth: Your growth need never wait for circumstances to be optimal. When you await a birth, the immediacy of your surroundings and the moments leading up to the arrival will lose their importance as your awareness grows that something wonderful is coming into the world. It's a culmination, but it's not an ending. On the contrary, it is a beginning. Celebrating the birth of the Christ within you means acknowledging the truth of your divinity. It's accepting the ongoing invitation to embrace your spiritual nature and bring it into the world.

Let the journey you've had through Advent be your reminder. If you're confused or scared, you can lean upon your faith. If your nerves are jangled and your mind unsettled, you can call upon the peace of God. If your heart feels closed or cold, you can open yourself to divine love. And when circumstances feel bleak, you can turn to joy, the eternal sunrise in your soul.

And remember, just as the manger was central to Jesus' birth so long ago, the Christ within is born where you are, as you are. As you live into the fullness of the divine being you are, you will feel the heart of Christmas beating within you.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.—John 1:9

It Must Have Been

Ernest C. Wilson

It must have been a silent night
On which the Wise Men trod
The steadfast hills to worship
The infant Son of God.

It must have been a radiant night
On which one star outshone
The brightest stars of all the years
And paused to crown His throne.

It must have been a lovely night
On which the shepherds came
To kneel before a manger bed
And breathe the holy name.

It must have been a holy night
When heaven's legions sang
Their alleluiahs to the Child
Newborn in Bethlehem.

Tonight the sky is hushed and clear,
Bright stars the heavens adorn;
It must have been a night like this
When our Lord Christ was born.



Rev. Ernest C. Wilson (1896–1982) shared Unity teachings for 60 years through his writing and broadcasting. He also served as editor in chief for all Unity publications and led several Unity churches.

Christmas Day
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2026

Sacred Presence in an Aching World

Rev. Christina Garza

Christmas Day. Some wake in joy. Some in grief. Many in a quiet mixture of both.

My grandmother, Marina, died on Christmas Day 24 years ago, and Christmas changed for me. She was my protector, confidant, teacher, role model—she was my heart. When she died, it felt as though the heart of Christmas had gone with her.

Now, this Christmas, I find myself caring for my aging mother, whose health and memory are fading. There is a quiet ache in wondering if she will remember my name. It is a tender place—where sadness, gratitude, and hope live side by side.

I know I am not alone. For many, the world itself feels heavy this Christmas. There is personal grief. Division in our communities. Violence and unrest. Loneliness, displacement, uncertainty. A quiet exhaustion that so many carry. And sometimes, the expectation of joy only deepens the ache.

Yet the Christmas story itself holds this kind of fullness and tension.

The Nativity is a divine paradox: a baby born under political oppression, a mother saying *yes* without certainty, a light that appears in the night. The first Christmas was not peaceful; it was profound. It did not deny the realities of the world; it revealed something sacred emerging within them.

So perhaps the invitation of this day is not to feel a certain way, but to become a certain kind of presence—a heart that can hold more than one truth at once.

Where in your life do sorrow and gratitude live side by side? What might it mean to release the need to "fix" your feelings in order to experience this day? What if your heart is not breaking but widening?

I have come to see that my grandmother's passing did not extinguish love. My mother's fading memory does not erase presence. The pain of our world does not cancel the beauty or the miracle. Through it all, there is still a light—sometimes quiet, sometimes flickering, but unmistakably and persistently present.

Christmas asks not that we resolve the tension, but that we remain open within it. Christmas invites us to become the manger—the space within us that can hold the sacred even in uncertain times. Love persisting through challenge. Presence emerging in real life. The holy taking shape in imperfect conditions.

Not in the absence of sorrow, but in the midst of it.

The heart of Christmas calls us into a deeper way of living. We are invited to become bearers of divine presence, to carry love into an aching world, to build enduring hope from ashes, and to trust that even now, something holy is unfolding.

Aquí, en este momento, lo sagrado nace. Here, in this very moment, the sacred is being born.

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger.
—Luke 2:7

Your Christmas Guest

James Dillet Freeman



Take time this Christmas Day to go
A little way apart
And with the hands of prayer prepare
The house that is your heart.

Brush out the dusty fears, brush out
The cobwebs of your care
Till in the house that is your heart
It's Christmas everywhere.

Light every window up with love,
And let your love shine through,
That they who walk outside may share
The blessed light with you.

Then will the rooms with joy be bright,
With peace the hearth be blessed,
And Christ Himself will enter in
To be your Christmas guest.

James Dillet Freeman (1912–2003) was an internationally acclaimed poet, author, lecturer, and Unity minister. His poems "I Am There" and "Prayer for Protection" were taken to the moon by Apollo astronauts in 1969 and 1971.

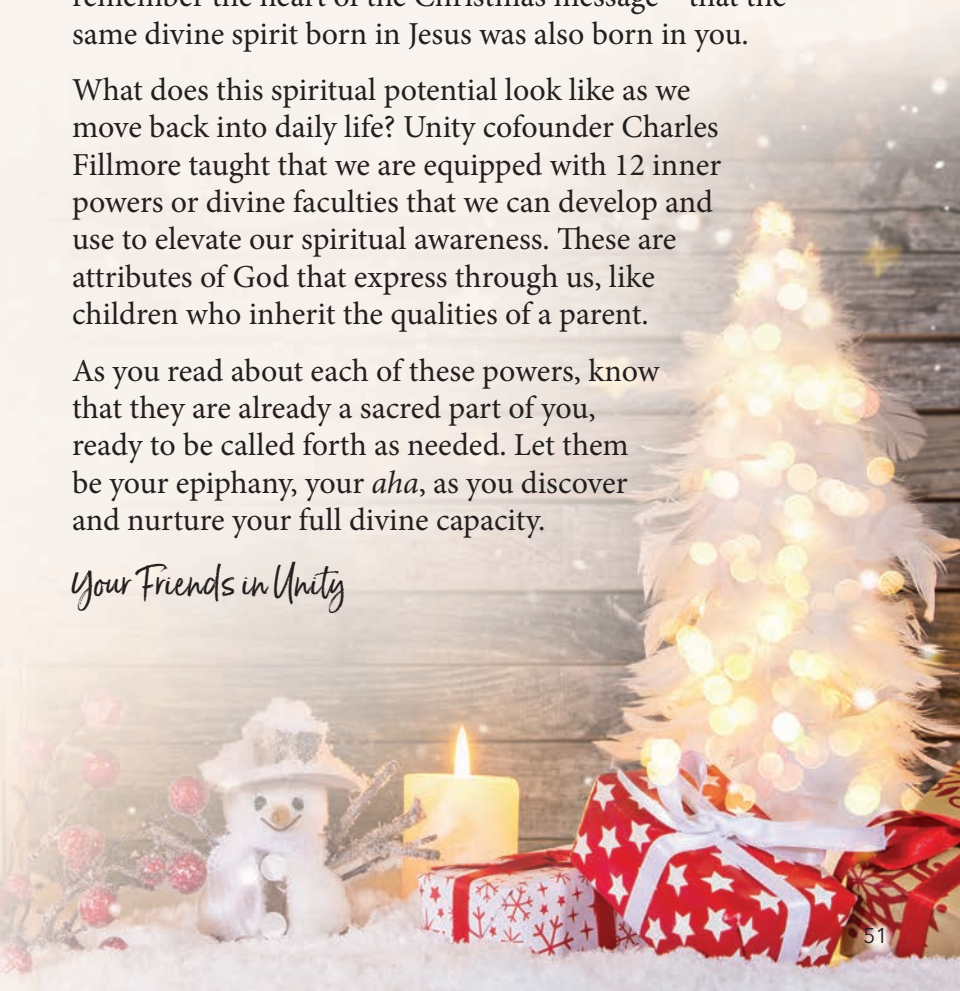
The 12 Days of Christmas

The holiday season does not have to end abruptly after Christmas Day. In this booklet, we will continue with the ancient commemoration of the 12 Days of Christmas. Even as Christmas visitors depart and decorations come down, we hope you will continue to take a moment each day to remember the heart of the Christmas message—that the same divine spirit born in Jesus was also born in you.

What does this spiritual potential look like as we move back into daily life? Unity cofounder Charles Fillmore taught that we are equipped with 12 inner powers or divine faculties that we can develop and use to elevate our spiritual awareness. These are attributes of God that express through us, like children who inherit the qualities of a parent.

As you read about each of these powers, know that they are already a sacred part of you, ready to be called forth as needed. Let them be your epiphany, your *aha*, as you discover and nurture your full divine capacity.

Your Friends in Unity



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2026

The Power of Faith

The faith of Christmas always shows up on December 26.

Waking up the day after Christmas felt almost *more* magical in our Midwest home. The excitement and celebration of the day before still lingered in the air, but now there was a calm—a sense that we had all the time in the world. The snow was falling, the house was warm, and laughter filled our home.

Looking back, I see how much that warmth came from being together. Faith wasn't just in the holiday itself but in the love we shared: sitting and playing with family and friends, savoring Nona's leftovers from our Christmas meal, and simply enjoying each other's presence. It was in those happy, unhurried moments that the true meaning of our family's faith and the Christmas spirit stayed with us.

—Rev. Karol Scotta

You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy.—Psalm 16:11

Today ... *I relax into the calm, unhurried 12 Days of Christmas.*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2026

The Power of Strength

Ninety-three years ago, at the age of 5, I was looking forward to Santa Claus bringing those sought-after gifts that my parents had promised he would deliver down our chimney. My mother prepared welcoming treats for him, and my dad later made big boot tracks for authenticity. They remembered how excited I was to see what was under the tree, how in glee I ran upstairs to their bedroom, shaking each gift, saying, "Santa has been here and brought me everything!"

Studying Jesus' teachings as an adult, my mind was spiritually illumined. I learned that everything is indeed available to me, that the gifts of God are unlimited. I realized the birth of Jesus that we celebrate at Christmas represents the divine qualities born in me too. Jesus promised we could do anything he could do, and our inborn power of strength equips us to persevere.

With my power of strength, I have lived a happy, blessed, and prosperous life.

—Marilyn King-Compton

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.—Philippians 4:13

Today ... *I call upon my divine power of strength to keep me moving forward.*

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2026

The Power of Wisdom

Wisdom is my intuitive knowing, a discriminating intuition, and the "still, small voice" of God within—my source of understanding in any circumstance. I prayerfully open my heart-mind to the idea of divine wisdom, the spiritual power in me, to make choices on behalf of all life.

Wisdom guides my desire to contribute to the Christ consciousness being born in our earthly reality. I transcend intellectual knowledge, wisely yielding my human-centric thinking and realizing my capacity to live for the collective well-being of all creatures and the planet. Although I may not witness the effects of my decisions today, I see the choice for all life as evidence of divine wisdom realized.

Wisdom reveals a rightness within me, an alignment with the Truth of my being. I know what is mine to be and do. Today I become the gift I long for: a greater good for all.

—Rev. Kathy Harwood Long

The beginning of wisdom is this: get wisdom, and whatever else you get, get insight.—Proverbs 4:7

Today ... *I am one with the power of divine wisdom, discerning wise thoughts, words, and actions.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2026

The Power of Love

By nurturing my oneness with the eternal source of love, I can live from pure, clear joy and appreciation, then share that harmony and grace with others.

Shining forth with love, I uphold cherished rituals to honor family, culture, and heritage. I appreciate learning from parents and grandparents and maintaining connections with people who have loved, laughed, and lived fully.

Shining forth with love, I create opportunities for others to make special memories. I preserve and pass along heartfelt traditions to subsequent generations.

Shining forth with love, I celebrate friendships and nurture valued relationships with respect, understanding, playfulness, and gratitude.

To live from the love that I am, I make time for silence and ease. In quiet moments, I see pathways for sharing the joy and wonder of light and love.

—Rev. Shirley Knight

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?—Micah 6:8

Today ... *I cherish the love I give and receive.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2026

The Power of Power

As the year draws to a close and a new one begins to take shape, I find myself listening more deeply within and without. In this sacred pause, I remember the power I carry within me—the power of my word. This "power of power" lives in my voice, quietly shaping my life. It is not loud or forceful, but sacred and creative.

Each word I speak is like a gift placed gently into the world. A kind phrase, a blessing, a moment of truth—this is how my inner power expresses itself. When I pause, breathe, and speak from Spirit, my voice carries more than sound; it carries life.

I notice how a single word can lift a weary heart, my own included. I choose words that heal, encourage, and awaken. Through my voice, divine power is made known, shaping a world of meaning, one word at a time.

—Rev. Robin Volker

The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.—John 6:63

Today ... *Divine power flows through my voice, shaping my world with each word I speak.*

New Year's Eve

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2026

The Power of Imagination

As this year ends, I take a moment to reflect on the experiences that have shaped my path. Many of my experiences were direct consequences of my own desires, but others were attracted by my fears.

This helps me understand the inner power that God has given me, which includes my power to imagine and transform my reality. By recognizing that my thoughts and feelings influence the events in my life, I open my mind to possibilities that once seemed distant. I use the power of my imagination to envision a year of profound and meaningful renewal.

I visualize myself immersed in God's light, receiving a constant flow of divine ideas that strengthen, heal, and prosper me. My imagination shapes and brings to life the desires of my heart. I bid farewell to this year filled with joy, gratitude, and peace, and I prepare myself with faith to open the door to the blessings that await me.

—Rev. Beatriz Gallerano Bell

Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."—Mark 10:27

Today ... *I envision a new year of growth and spiritual fulfillment.*

New Year's Day

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2027

The Power of Understanding

The new year is the perfect time to rely on our spiritual power of understanding. Whatever happens in the coming days, understanding allows us to interpret life's events through a spiritual lens so we can operate from a place of awareness rather than reaction.

Imagine being able to move through unforeseen events grounded in love and gratitude instead of overwhelm or stress. If tension or family challenges arise, spiritual understanding helps us see beyond surface appearances into a deeper truth so we can respond with calm, grace, and ease.

We can turn inward and trust spiritual understanding to lead our thoughts and hearts. Through this deeper awareness of divine truth, we are more able to release judgment. We are guided to interact with more compassion and meaningful connection. Spiritual understanding grounds us so we can experience life from our highest self.

—Angie Olson

Mak[e] your ear attentive to wisdom and inclin[e] your heart to understanding.—Proverbs 2:2

Today ... *Understanding guides my thoughts and actions, bringing clarity and peace.*

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2, 2027

The Power of Will

When the holidays are over, how many of us regret how much we ate? For me, the holidays always seemed to come at a time when I wanted to lose weight—and didn't. Having finally gotten fed up with tight pants, I decided last year would be different. How could I accomplish this feat? I needed to apply the power of will. I logged everything I ate in a journal. This practice alone helped me stay on track. I saw immediate results, which supercharged my will!

We expand our power of will in every aspect of our lives when we determine to do something we think we cannot do. I needed to regulate my diet. This may not seem like a revelation, but up to this point in my life, I could control my weight with exercise alone. Applying the power of will, I was able to win the battle of the bulge.

—Rev. Bill Englehart

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you … therefore glorify God in your body.
—1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Today … *All things are possible when I apply my inborn power of will.*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 2027

The Power of Order

Do you believe the divine power of order will ensure your world is organized and runs smoothly without disruption? When order is established, the people and circumstances in your life are orchestrated to bring about desired outcomes. Thus a peaceful process unfolds, leading to a natural sequence of harmonious experiences.

As we begin this new year, let us commit to allowing ease to flow in our daily encounters and experiences. Seek alignment with God and move forward to cocreate through the clarity of your thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Life is always working on your behalf as the divine unfolding of your highest good in the best possible way. The daily work is to clear our minds, cleanse our hearts, and release resistance. We are always being guided and must allow seeming confusion to be replaced with clarity and trust in the perfect outworking of spiritual law.

—Veronica Walker-Douglas, D.A.

For God is a God not of disorder but of peace.
—1 Corinthians 14:33

Today ... *I move with the stream of life and let my path be directed and guided by Spirit.*

MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2027

The Power of Zeal

I have a tradition of giving 12 days of gifts to my children. It's not about extravagance; it's about intention. Each day becomes an opportunity to express love, creativity, and presence. I find myself leaning in, listening more deeply, delighting in their joy. In those moments, I'm not just giving gifts—I'm participating in the divine flow of giving itself. When I am fully present in this ritual, I experience zeal and enthusiasm in its truest form.

The root of the word *enthusiasm* means *God within*. To be enthusiastic is to be filled with the Divine, alive with presence, energized by something sacred moving through us.

As we enter a new year, we are not waiting for light; we are called to ignite it. Let your enthusiasm be your gift. Let your presence be sacred.

—Rev. Ken Daigle

Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord.—Romans 12:11

Today ... *I awaken the zeal within me and bring sacred joy to every moment.*

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2027

The Power of Release

Power is alive in release and renunciation, which simply means to surrender to what is.

Whatever is happening, I become aware of this very moment, sharply attuned to each experience. Only through releasing the activity of the mind can I truly be present.

The holidays may leave some of us with an emotional hangover from all the days of family, friends, and activities. Other times, we may enter a new year with trepidation about what is to come. Through the power of release, I can wipe the slate clean of any negative thoughts or beliefs. All that is required is a willingness to let go of trying to control my life. I invite Spirit to move through me and guide my thoughts.

When I truly release, I am made new in the image of God. I am free in Spirit by releasing what stands in my way.

—Rev. John Beerman

Be transformed by the renewing of the mind.
—Romans 12:2

Today ... *I release any thoughts and beliefs that are not sourced in the spirit of God.*

Epiphany

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2027

The Power of Life

There is a power and presence being birthed in you at this moment. It is the power of divine life—living, moving, and operating as you. Today is the celebration of Epiphany, which is from the Greek word *epiphaneia* and translates to *manifestation*.

We celebrate the power of life activated in you. This is the most amazing time for you to shine your light. Not tomorrow, not next week, but now. You are divinely designed to be the manifestation of magnificence in the world. To celebrate this day with yourself is the most exquisite way you can give.

Accept these words: *I am the full expression of the Divine. Everything in me is activated and poised to create more love, more joy, more peace, and more harmony. I cleanse myself with the sacred water of divine consciousness, as it has been done for centuries on this day.*

—Rev. Edith Washington-Woods, D.Min.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.—1 Corinthians 12:7

Today ... *I am the manifestation of power, life, and love activated as me on this day.*

Wrap yourself in prayer with the Unity “Prayer for Protection” blanket.



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