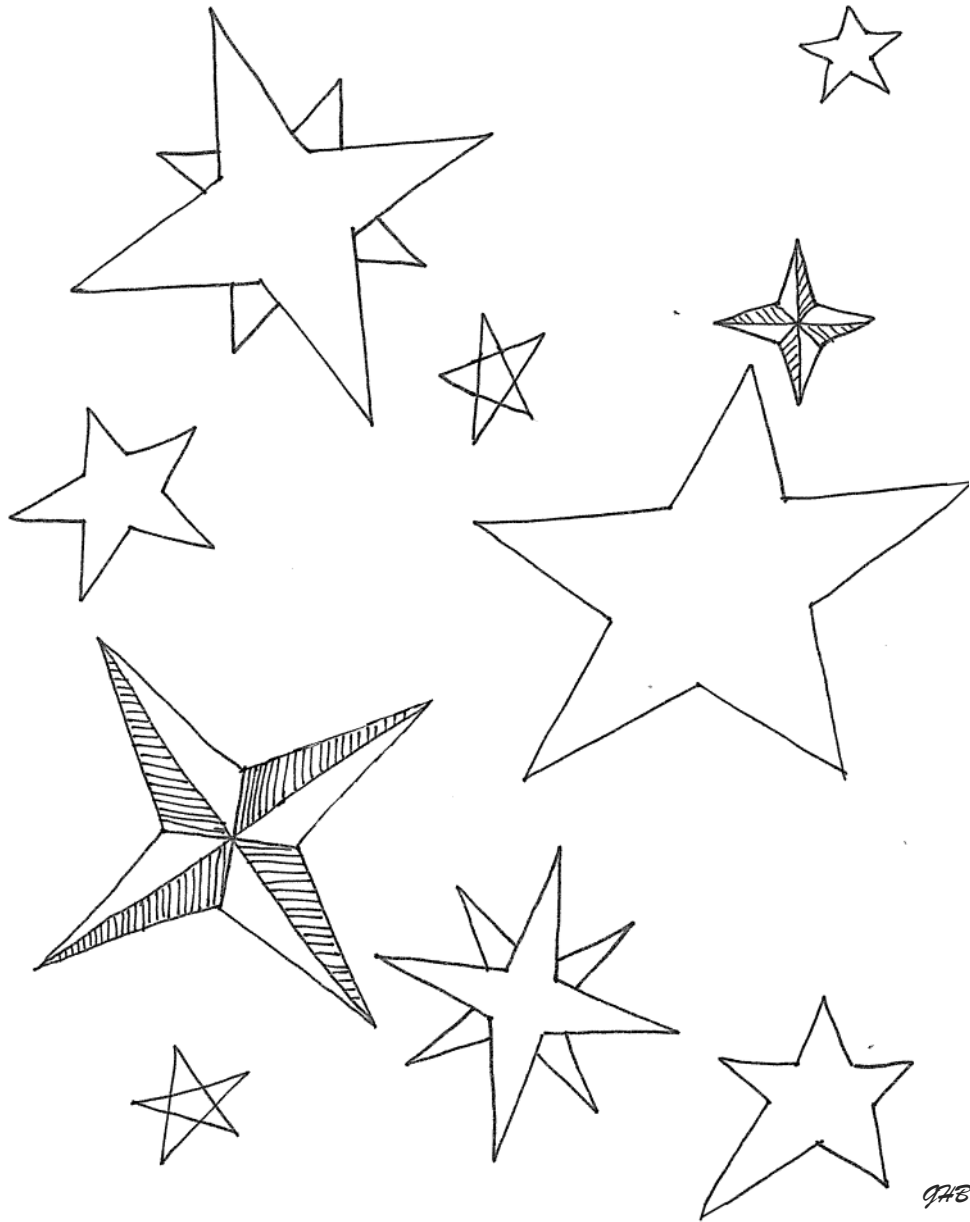


# COLOR YOUR ADVENT 2024



A Seasonal Reflection  
Guide and Coloring Book



Community Missions of Niagara Frontier, Inc.,  
1570 Buffalo Ave., Niagara Falls, NY 14303  
716-285-3403 — [www.communitymissions.org](http://www.communitymissions.org)

# Welcome to *Color Your Advent - 2024*

The winter season invites us to pause and reflect as days grow shorter until the solstice, when light begins its gradual return. Many cultures and spiritual traditions recognize this as a meaningful time of contemplation and renewal. In the Christian tradition, Advent marks a season of hopeful waiting and preparation, leading us through the weeks leading up to Christmas. This guide offers daily opportunities for reflection and creative expression through both coloring and meditation. Each day provides a simple image to color along with two reflections:

**FOR TODAY** reflections focus on wellness, recovery, and finding hope in daily life.

These entries support mental health, addiction recovery, and general wellbeing through practical wisdom and gentle encouragement.

**SACRED MOMENTS** reflections explore Christian themes and scripture, offering spiritual insights while remaining accessible to all seekers.

You're invited to use this book in whatever way serves you best - color the images, read one or both reflections, try the suggested practices, or simply sit quietly with the themes. There is no "right way" to engage with these materials.

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## **IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTICE**

**For CMI Residential Program Participants: Open flames and candles are NOT PERMITTED in rooms or apartments!! Please use only the battery-operated tea lights provided. Contact CMI Staff with any questions.**

**For Others: *If you use candles with this guide, you do so at your own risk!*** If using real candles, always do so safely. Never leave them unattended and supervise children. Safety first! *To use without candles, simply substitute the coloring of the candles for the lighting of candles.*

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## ***Acknowledgements***

Special thanks to those who helped by providing artwork including, Eileen Kineke of 'Brave Spirit Arts' (Facebook@EJWrobelart) & Gemma Hicks-Breese.

This Color Your Advent - 2024 resource grew from my years of creating devotional materials specifically for Community Missions' unique communities, especially those in recovery, dealing with mental health challenges, or experiencing homelessness. The project was inspired by the advent calendars created by Rev. Thomas N. Mousin, Rev. Merry Watters, and illustrator Susan Shepherd Kochinkas over their remarkable 35-year journey. While adapting themes and texts to better serve our community's needs, I drew from themes and texts found in their work and many other advent resources.

This version became a coloring book to serve our mental health program clients who find peace in adult coloring activities. I am deeply grateful to Revs. Mousin and Watters for their pioneering work. Their current calendar and daily email reflections are available at [thomasmousin.com](http://thomasmousin.com).

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If you have any questions or comments about *Color Your Advent –2024*, please contact Rev. Mark Breese at Community Missions. You can contact us through our website [www.communitymissions.org](http://www.communitymissions.org) or by calling 716-285-3403. Our mailing address is:

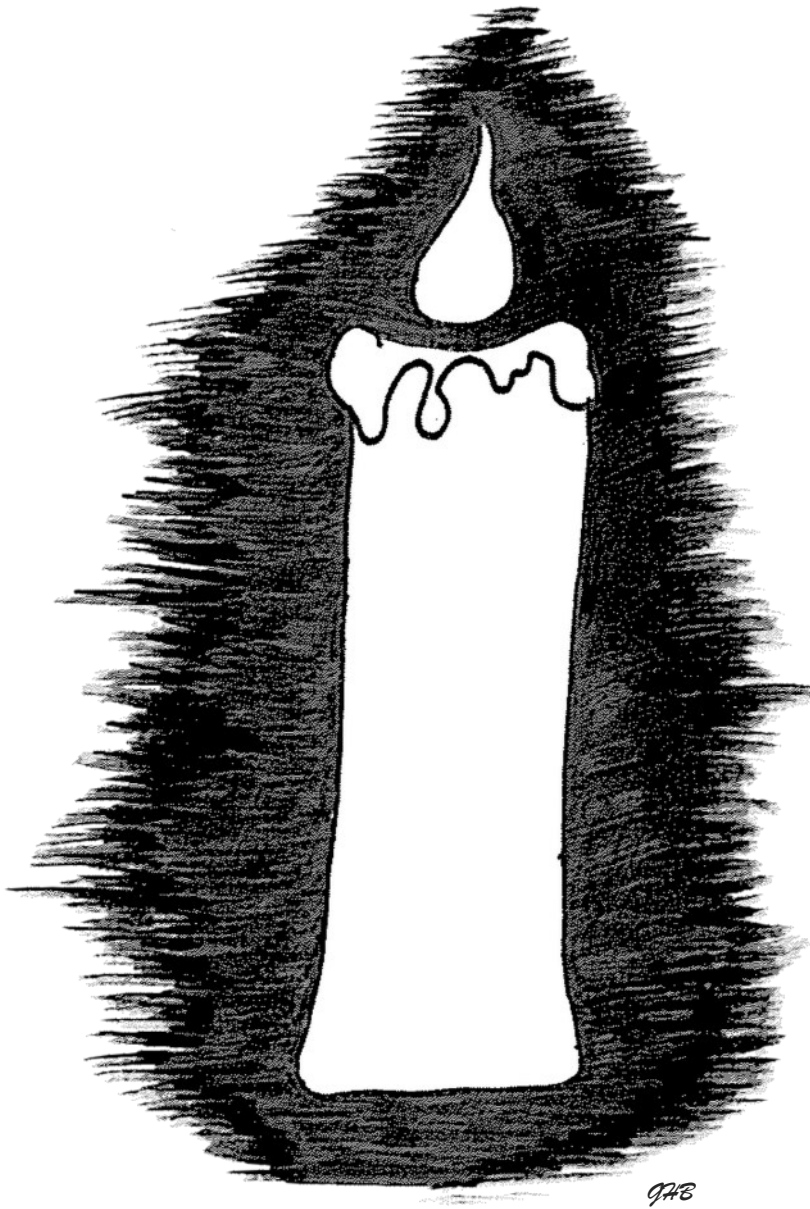
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Free downloads of *Color Your Advent-2024* can be found at: [www.HopeForNiagara.org](http://www.HopeForNiagara.org).

SUNDAY

1

# Light One Candle



**FOR TODAY:** Today we begin Advent by lighting just one candle. It might seem small against December's early darkness, but that's exactly the point. Hope often starts small - a tiny light, a single step, one moment of believing things might get better. You don't need to light up the whole room today. Just one candle, one small flame of hope, is enough to begin. Let its gentle light remind you that even the smallest hope matters, and there is always at least one—the blessing of another new day.

**Question to ponder:** What one small hope can you hold onto today?

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light"

(Isaiah 9:2)

**SACRED MOMENTS:** The prophet Isaiah spoke of people walking in darkness seeing a great light. But that light didn't appear all at once — it dawned gradually, like a sunrise. As we light this first Advent candle, we remember that hope often begins with just a spark, the tiniest flicker in inside us. Even when shadows feel deep, Sacred Light is beginning to dawn. This single flame reminds us that we're not alone in the darkness — the Divine Spirit is with us, lighting the way one step at a time.

**Practice:** When you see any light today - a lamp, the sun, a candle — pause and remember: hope is dawning.

# Find Quiet Space



*"Be still, and know that I am God!" (Psalm 46:10)*

**FOR TODAY:** Today we begin Advent with one candle. It may seem small against December's darkness, but that's the point. Hope often starts small - a tiny light, one step, a moment of believing in better things. You don't need to light up the whole room. One small flame of hope is enough to begin. Let it remind you that even the smallest hope matters.

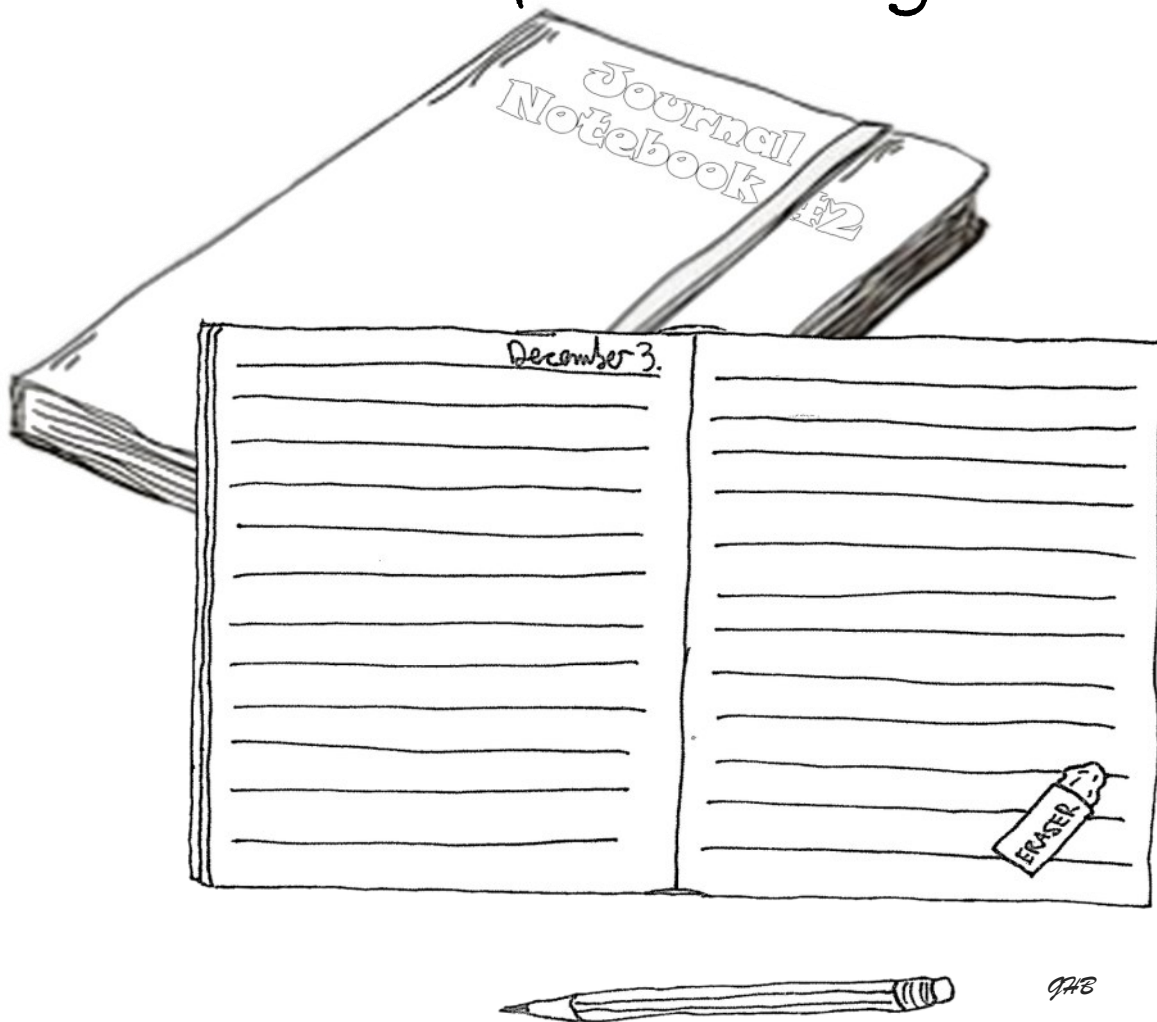
→ **Question to ponder:** What one small hope can you hold onto today?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** Isaiah spoke of people in darkness seeing a great light. That light dawned gradually, like a sunrise. As we light this first Advent candle, we remember hope often begins with just a spark. Even in deep shadows, Sacred Light is dawning. This flame reminds us we're not alone — the Divine Spirit lights our way forward.

→ **Practice:** When you see any light today — a lamp, the sun, a candle - pause and remember: hope is dawning.

TUESDAY

# Notice Good Things



"I give thanks to my God always for you" (1 Corinthians 1:4)

**FOR TODAY:** When life feels heavy, finding good things can seem impossible. This isn't about forced cheerfulness - it's about tiny noticers - warm socks, a bird on a windowsill, someone holding a door. These small moments acknowledge that even in hard times, bits of goodness can exist alongside struggles. Try catching just one or two good things today. Write them down, tell someone, or hold them quietly in your heart.

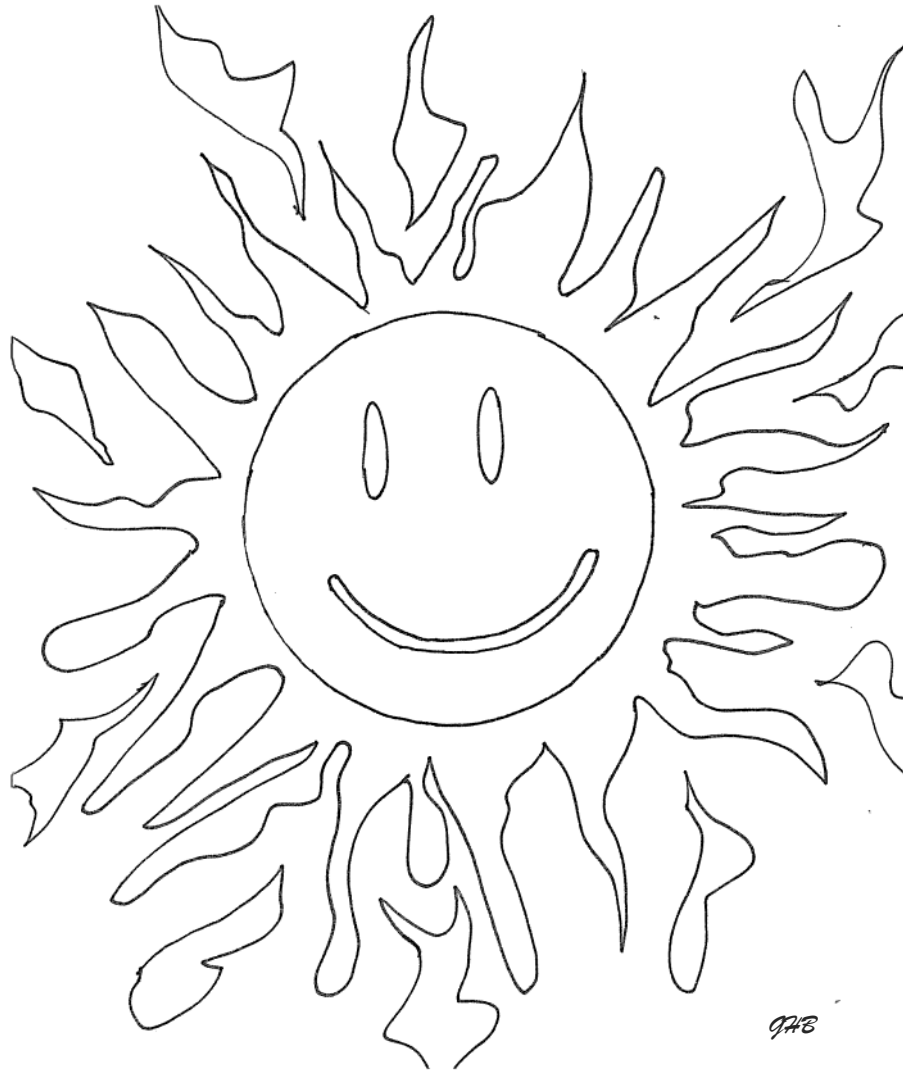
→ **Question to consider:** What's one small, good thing you've noticed in the last hour or day?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** When Paul wrote "I give thanks to my God always for you," he was writing to struggling people. Yet he found gratitude in their very existence — not in achievements, but in who they were. God sees us this same way. Today, notice good things the way God notices you — with gentle eyes and an open heart. Each notice is a tiny prayer, connecting with the Spirit who delights in both giving and receiving gratitude.

→ **Gentle practice:** As you notice good things today, try whispering "thank you" — to yourself, to others, to God. Let gratitude be as simple as breathing.

WEDNESDAY

## Share a Smile



**FOR TODAY:** Sometimes the smallest gesture can create a moment of connection. A smile shared with a neighbor, a store clerk, or even yourself in the mirror costs nothing but can change the tone of a moment. Don't worry if you're not feeling particularly cheerful - even a gentle acknowledgment of another person counts. And on days when smiling feels too hard, simply receiving someone else's smile can remind us we're not alone.

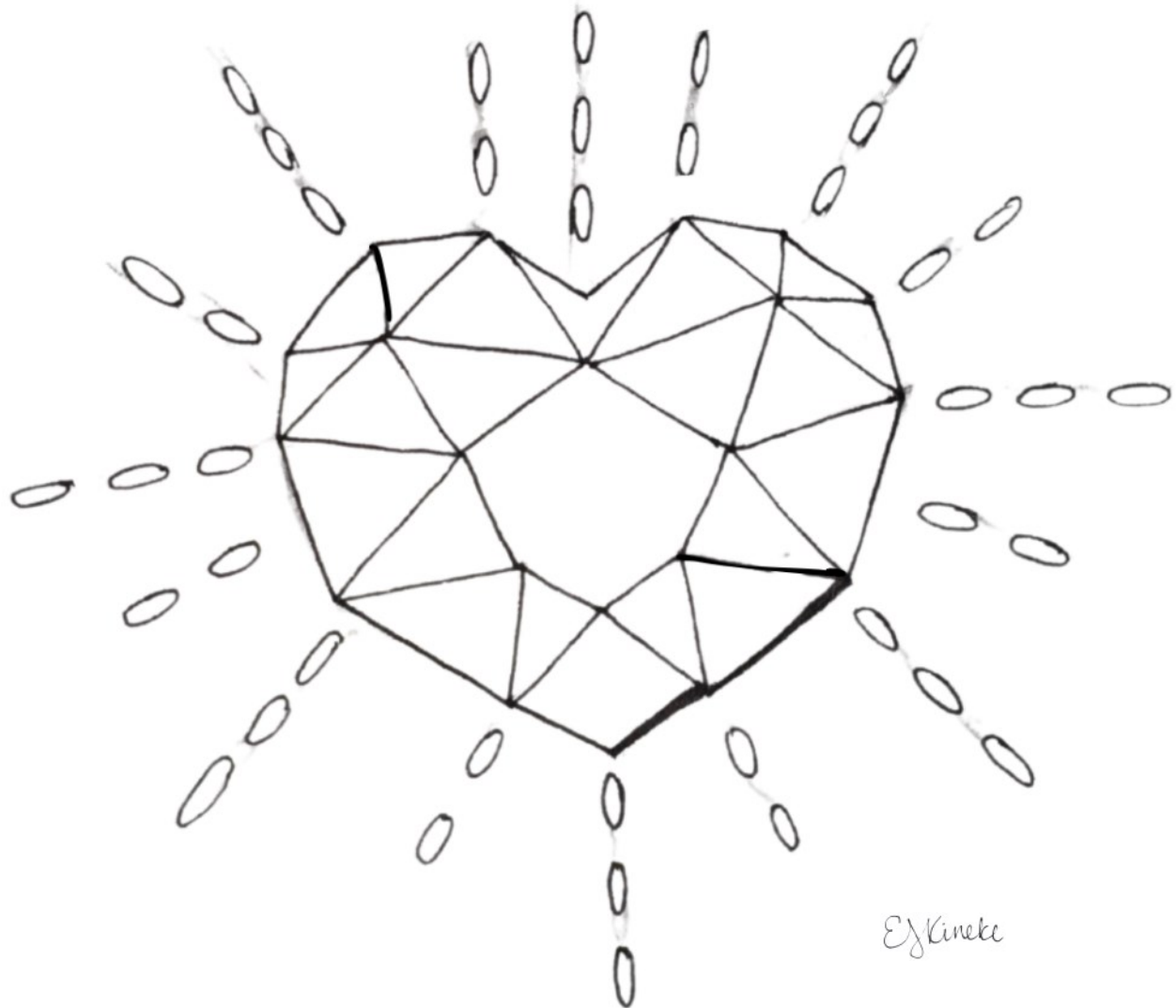
➔ **Gentle reminder:** Your smile doesn't have to be perfect or big — even the smallest smile counts.

**SACRED MOMENTS:** Ancient wisdom tells us that faces light up faces — one person's smile can awaken joy in another. Today's theme is beautifully simple: share what light you can. It might be a full smile or just a gentle lifting of your eyes to acknowledge another person. The God often works through these tiny moments of human connection. Each smile shared or received becomes a small light passed from person to person, heart to heart.

➔ **An Invitation:** Notice the smiles that cross your path today, given or received. Each one is a tiny gift of connection—both with each other and the Divine.



# Be Kind to Yourself



"For you created my inmost being" (Psalm 139:13)

**FOR TODAY:** Being kind to ourselves can feel harder than being kind to others. Today, try treating yourself like you'd treat a friend who's having a rough time. Maybe that means taking a few deep breaths when you make a mistake, speaking to yourself with gentler words, or just acknowledging that you're doing your best with what you have right now.

→ **Question:** What's one small way you could show kindness to yourself today?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** The psalmist reminds us that God knows us intimately and values every part of our being. Each of us is carefully crafted, worthy of gentleness and care. When we're kind to ourselves, we honor the sacred presence within. Today, let's treat ourselves with the same tenderness that the Divine shows to all creation.

→ **Practice:** Place your hand on your heart and whisper, "I am sacred ground."

# Give What You Can



"God, who sees in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:4)

**FOR TODAY:** Giving doesn't always mean presents or money. Sometimes it's holding a door, sharing a kind word, or simply saying "thank you." Today, notice the small ways you can give - maybe it's a smile, a moment of patience, or letting someone go ahead of you in line. Every gesture counts, no matter how small.

➔ **Notice:** What simple gifts have you already given today without realizing it?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** God sees every act of kindness, even the ones nobody else notices. Today's scripture reminds us that giving happens in many quiet ways. Each small gesture of generosity ripples outward, creating more light in the world. God delights in these secret gifts we share with each other.

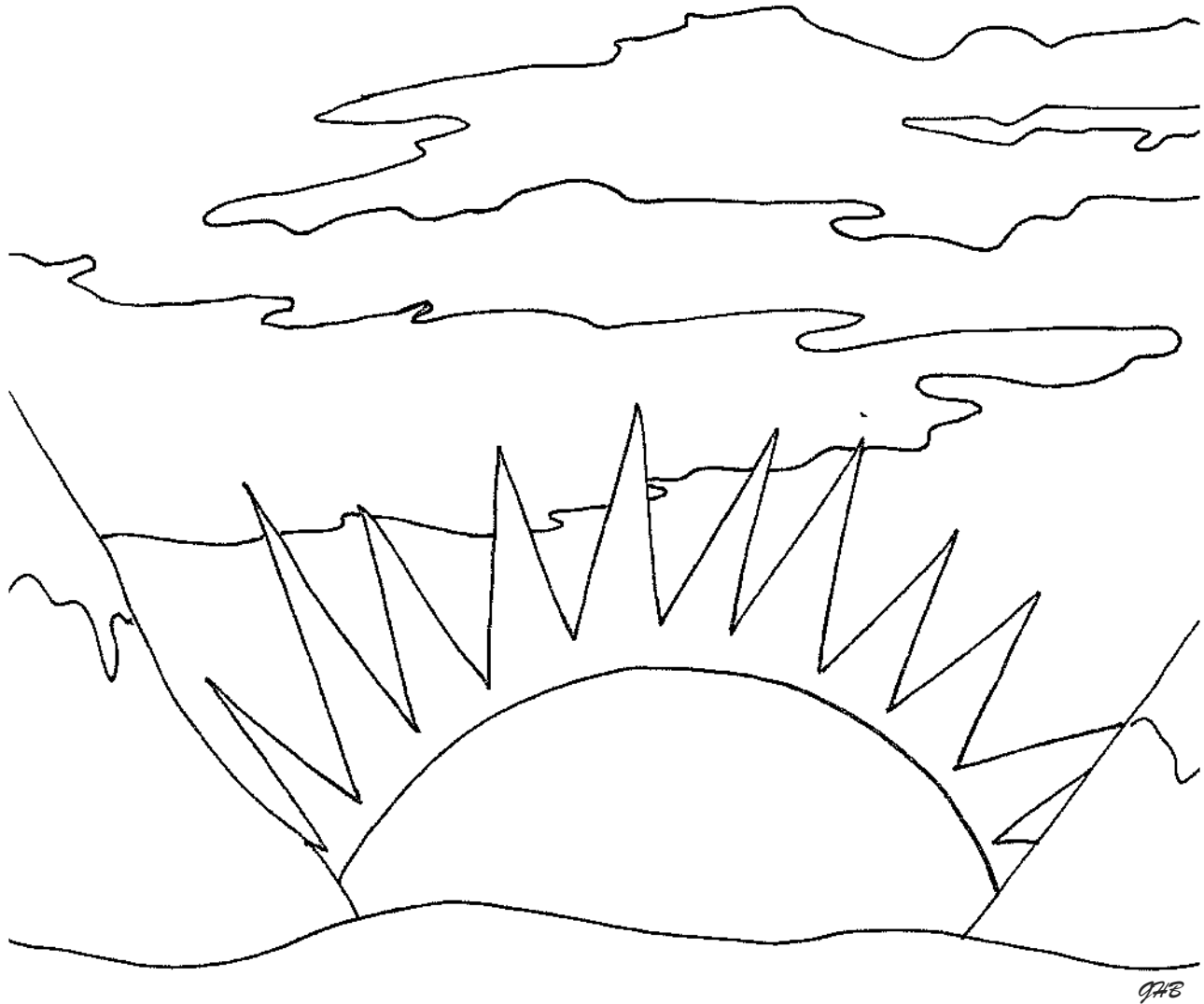
➔ **Today's invitation:** Look for tiny ways to give - each one is a sacred moment.



7

SATURDAY

# Welcome the Morning



JTB

"God's mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23)

**FOR TODAY:** Each morning offers a fresh start, no matter what yesterday held. You don't have to leap out of bed or feel instantly energized - simply acknowledging the new day is enough. Each morning brings its own gifts of renewal.

→ **Gentle suggestion:** When you first wake up, take three slow breaths before starting your day. Whether you are up earlier or later, watch the sky as it lightens and darkens.

**SACRED MOMENTS:** The writer of Lamentations, even in deep grief, recognized that Divine mercy renews itself with each dawn. God offers us fresh beginnings with every morning light. Today, let's welcome whatever this new day brings, trusting that God's Love meets us in each moment of new beginning.

→ **Simple practice:** When you first see morning light, whisper "Thank you for new mercies."

# Light Two Candles



"Peace be within your walls" (Psalm 122:7)

**FOR TODAY:** As we light this second candle, we think about peace — not the kind that demands perfect calm or silence, but the kind that can exist even in life's chaos. Like the steady glow of these two flames, peace can grow gradually. Sometimes it's just a quiet moment between breaths, or the gentle recognition that right now, in this moment, you're okay. Two candles now light our way, reminding us that peace can grow slowly, one small light at a time.

→ **A Gentle Reminder:** There are always moments of peace around us—even if it's just in taking one deep breath. Breathe deep and notice the peace.

**SACRED MOMENTS:** "Peace be within your walls," the psalmist wrote, speaking of both home and heart. As our second Advent candle joins the first, its light reminds us God offers peace that can dwell anywhere - in grand temples or simple rooms, in stable homes or temporary shelters. The peace of God isn't dependent on our circumstances but on God's certain presence with us, wherever we are.

→ **Practice:** When you see any two lights today (lamps, windows, stars), pause and whisper "Peace be here."

# Rest Without Guilt



"Come to me, all you who are weary" (Matthew 11:28)

**FOR TODAY:** Sometimes rest feels like giving up, like we're not trying hard enough. But our bodies and minds need rest just like they need air and water. Today, give yourself permission to rest without judging yourself for needing it. Maybe it's closing your eyes for five minutes, sitting quietly during a break, or just slowing down for a moment. Rest isn't lazy - it's essential.

→ **Gentle reminder:** You don't have to earn the right to rest. It's okay to pause when you need to.

**SACRED MOMENTS:** In today's scripture, Jesus extends a tender invitation to all who are weary. Notice the words are NOT "come when you've finished everything" or "come when you deserve it"; the word is simply "come." God offers rest as a gift, not a reward. When we accept this gift of rest, we honor both our human limits and God's care for us.

→ **Today's practice:** When you rest today, try whispering "Thank you" instead of "I should be doing something."

TUESDAY (HUMAN RIGHTS DAY)

## See Each Person



"God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34)

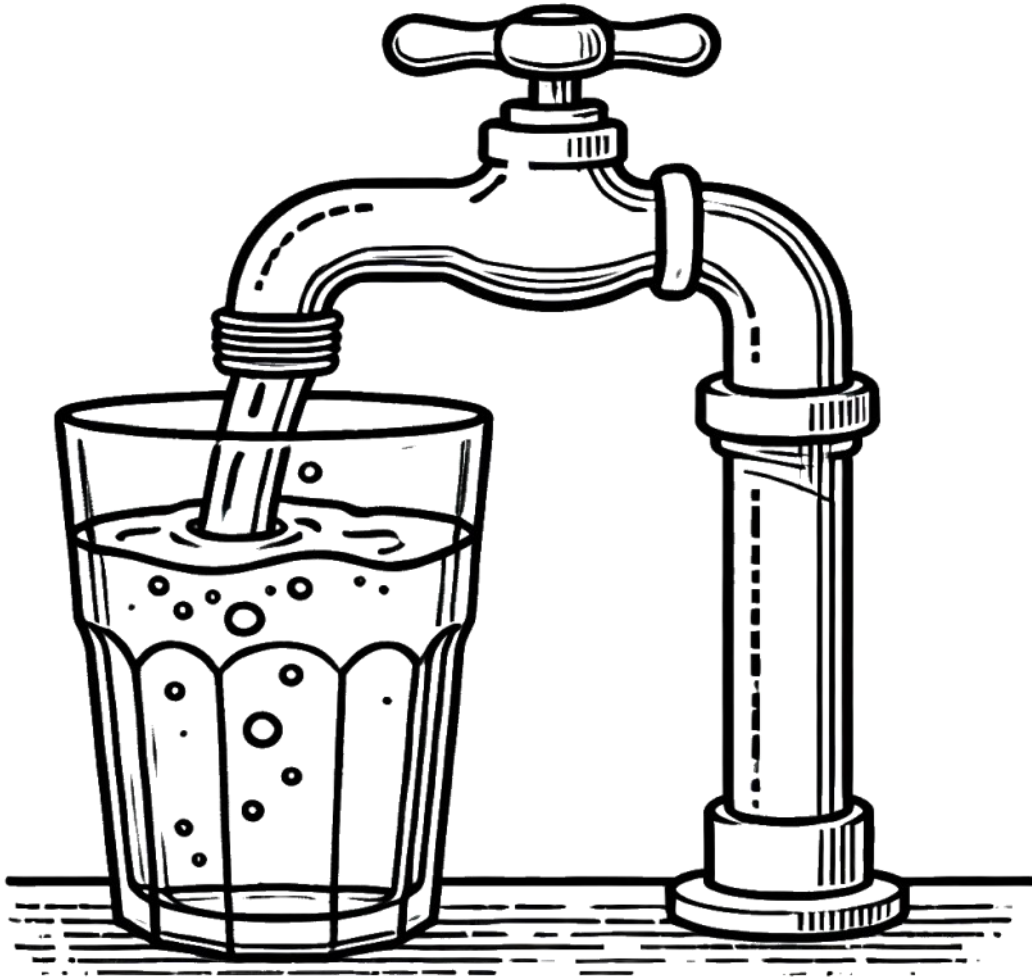
**FOR TODAY:** Every person we meet carries their own story, struggles, and strengths. In our busy moments, we often forget this. Today, try to really see one person — maybe someone serving coffee, passing in the hall, or sitting nearby. Not to fix anything - just to acknowledge their full humanity, as you hope others will see yours.

→ **Question:** Who have you truly "seen" today?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** When Peter spoke of God showing no partiality, he was learning to see beyond prejudices. Jesus taught that God sees each person's full worth — regardless of circumstances or struggles. This divine way of seeing invites us to look at others with new eyes, recognizing that each bears God's holy imprint— the *Imago Dei*, or Image of God. Today, Human Rights Day, reminds us that every person carries inherent dignity simply because they exist.

→ **Practice:** When you encounter others today, try silently greeting the sacred presence within them.

WEDNESDAY  
Celebrate Water



*"I will give you living water" (John 4:10)*

**FOR TODAY:** It's easy to forget something as basic as drinking water, especially when life feels overwhelming. Yet the simple act of drinking some water is an act self-care that helps both body and mind. Each sip is a small way of saying "I matter." Today, notice the simple gift of water - how it refreshes, sustains, and helps us keep going. Be as healthy as you can be—drink enough water every day.

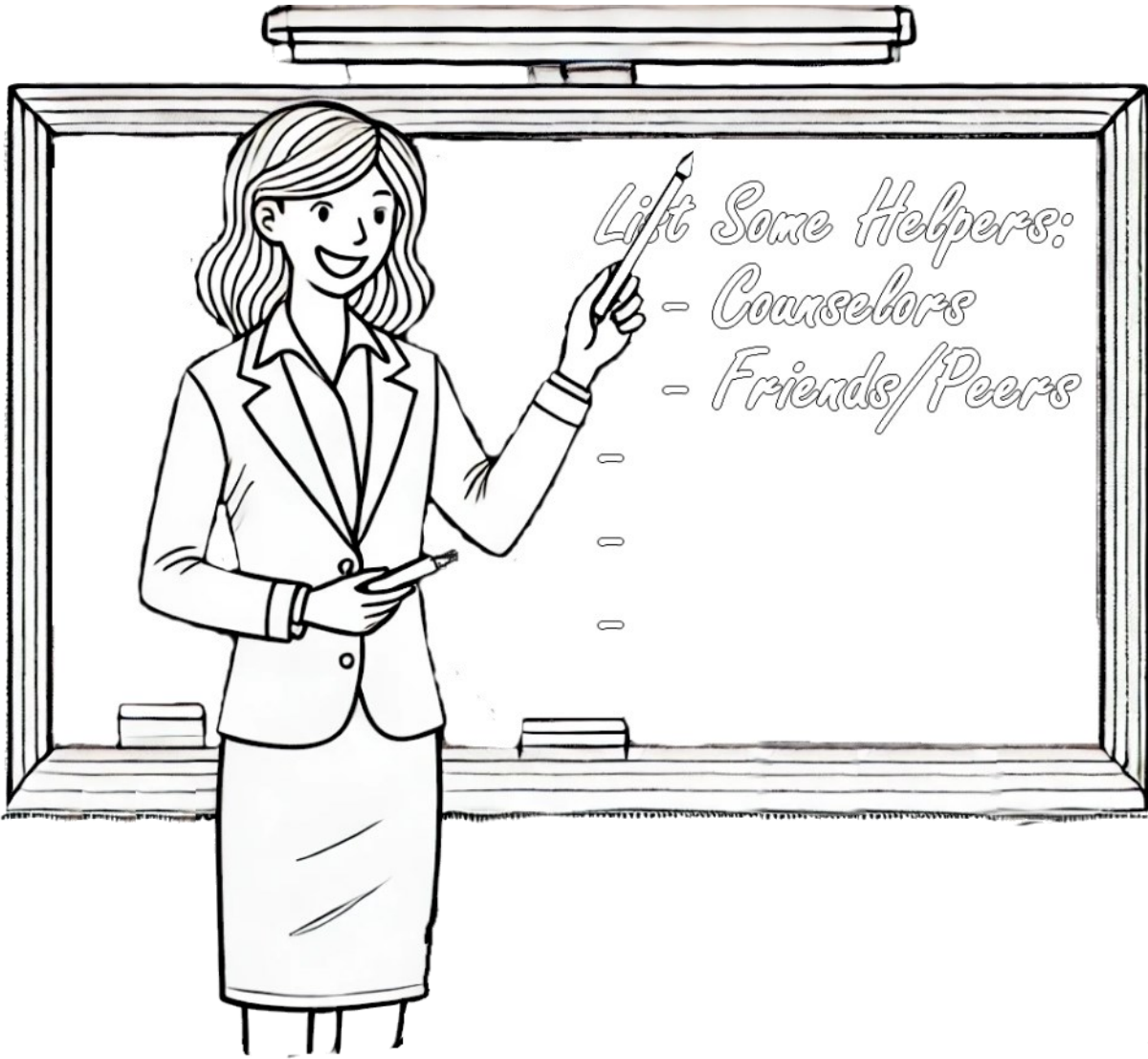
➔ **Gentle suggestion:** Try keeping water within reach today, taking small sips as a mindful practice.

**SACRED MOMENTS:** When Jesus met the woman at the well, he spoke of living water: water that would truly satisfy. He saw past social barriers to recognize her deep thirst for acceptance and renewal. Today, as we drink physical water, we can remember that God's Spirit still offers this deeper refreshment to all who thirst. Each cup of water can become a reminder of sacred care, each drink a small connection to the Source of all life. Like the woman at the well, we're all invited to come, drink, and find refreshment for body and soul.

➔ **Simple practice:** With your next drink of water, pause and remember: God offers refreshment for all our thirsts - physical, emotional, and spiritual.



# Appreciate Helpers



*"I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20)*

**FOR TODAY:** Helpers appear in many forms - the maintenance person fixing a heater, the receptionist's smile, the nurse who listens, the stranger holding a door. Sometimes help is obvious, sometimes subtle. Today, let's notice these helpers. Their presence reminds us we're not alone. Even on hard days, someone is working to make things better. When we acknowledge helpers, we strengthen our connection to the web of care around us.

→ **Reflection:** Who are the quiet helpers in your daily life?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** Jesus's promise to be "with us always" comes to life through people who help us. God works through many hands - caregivers, kind strangers, and everyday heroes. When the disciples faced uncertainty, Jesus assured them they wouldn't be alone. That promise shows through those who choose to help others. Each helper becomes a channel of God's presence.

→ **Practice:** When you encounter someone helping today, pause to whisper "Thank you" and remember that God's Holy Presence often wears human faces.



FRIDAY

# Breathe Deeply



*"The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4)*

**FOR TODAY:** Our breath is always with us, yet we rarely notice it unless something's wrong. Today, let's pay attention to this constant companion. Deep breathing helps us reconnect with our aliveness. When we're anxious or overwhelmed, our breath becomes shallow. Taking deeper breaths reminds our bodies and minds that we're okay right now. Just notice your breath occasionally, letting it ground you in this moment.

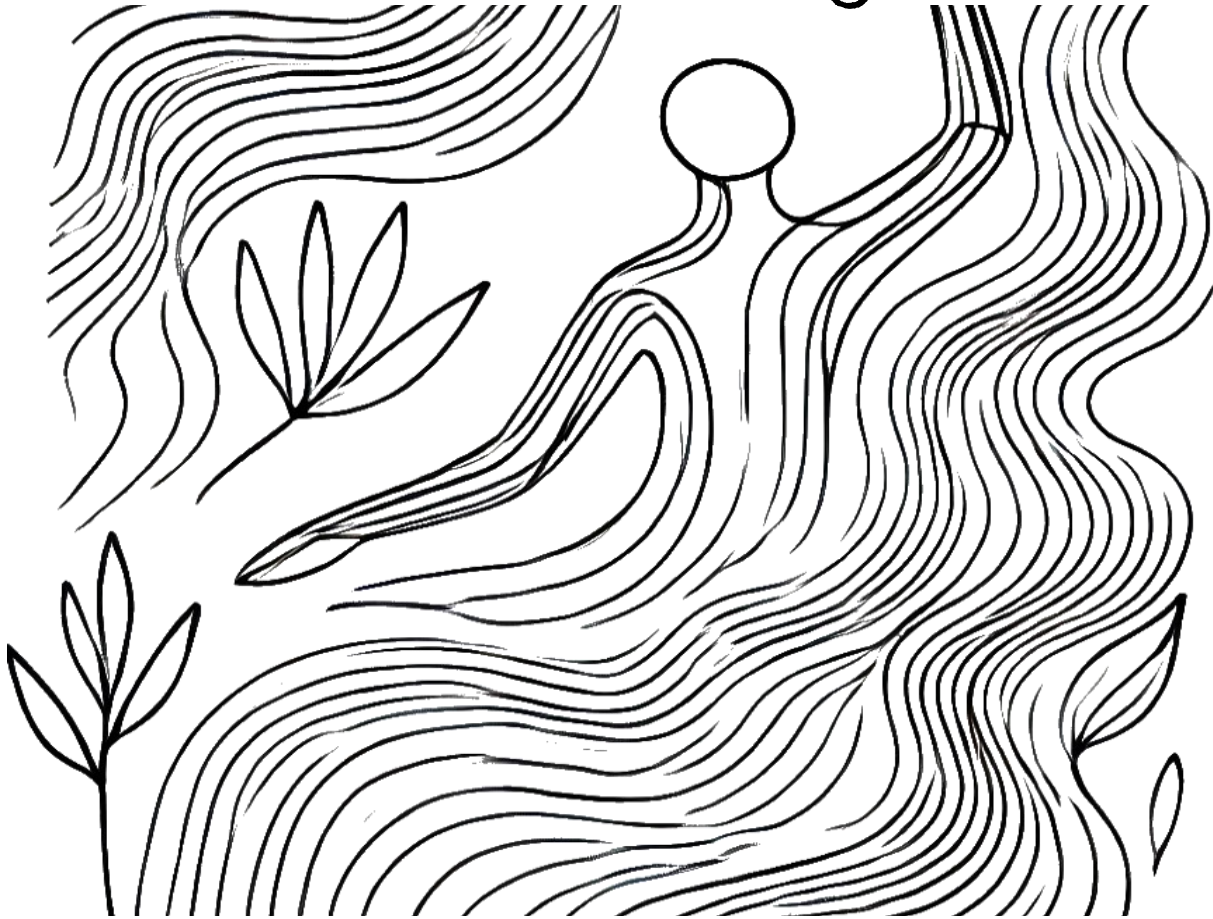
➔ **Suggestion:** Try taking three slightly deeper breaths whenever you think of it today.

**SACRED MOMENTS:** The writer of Job understood that every breath connects us to God, who breathes life into all creation. Our breath is holy, a constant reminder of divine presence. Even in suffering, Job recognized this connection between breath and God. Each breath becomes a prayer, reminding us we're sustained by something larger than ourselves.

➔ **Practice:** As you breathe today, try this gentle prayer: "Breathing in, I receive life. Breathing out, I share life with all creation."

SATURDAY

## Move Gently



"In quietness and trust shall be your strength"  
(Isaiah 30:15)

**FOR TODAY:** Movement doesn't always mean exercise or workout plans. Sometimes it's just stretching your arms above your head, walking to the window, or shifting position in your chair. Each gentle movement is a way of caring for yourself. Today, notice opportunities for small movements. Maybe it's rotating your shoulders while waiting for the microwave, or taking a few extra steps in the hallway. These aren't about fitness goals or changing your body. They're about staying connected to yourself and honoring your body's need to move, even in small ways.

➔ **Reflection:** What gentle movements could you add to your regular daily activities without changing your routine?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** The prophet Isaiah speaks of finding strength not in forceful action, but in quietness and trust. This wisdom applies to how we move through our days. God doesn't demand dramatic gestures or intense activity - instead, we're invited to move with gentle awareness, trusting that small actions matter. Like the quiet turning of the earth or the gentle swaying of trees, our simple movements can become acts of holy trust. We don't need to push or strain; we can find strength in gentle motion.

➔ **Practice:** With each intentional movement today, try whispering "In quietness and trust" as a reminder to move gently.

# Light Three Candles by Moonlight



"The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world" (John 1:9)

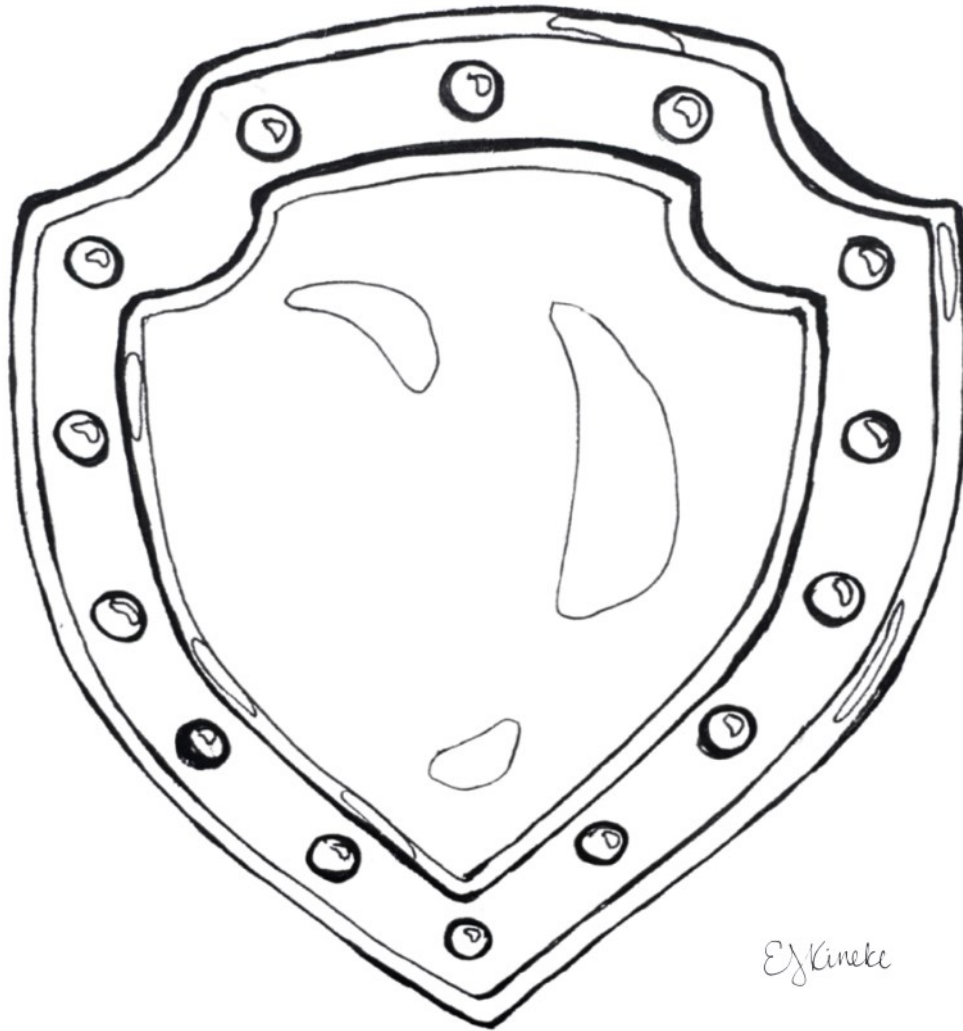
**FOR TODAY:** Tonight we light our third Advent candle while the full moon adds its light. These different lights remind us that hope comes in many forms. Some light is warm and close, like candles. Other light, like the moon's, is distant but faithful. Together, they show we're held in many circles of light — from nearby support to distant reliable sources of hope.

➔ **Invitation:** Take a moment to notice both the close and distant lights in your life. Which help you feel less alone?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** John speaks of the true light that enlightens everyone. As we light our candle beneath tonight's moon, we see how God uses both natural and human-made light to show divine presence. The moon above and candles before us work together, just as Jesus came to illuminate our path.

➔ **Practice:** If you can see the moon tonight, light a candle and notice how different lights work together. Remember, you too carry light that helps illuminate the world.

# Remember Your Strength



"The Lord is my strength and my shield" (Psalm 28:7)

**FOR TODAY:** Strength isn't just about physical power or toughness. Sometimes it's getting out of bed on a hard morning, asking for help, or taking a deep breath during a challenging moment. You've shown strength by making it to this point. Today, notice your different kinds of strength - patience in frustration, resilience facing another day, or courage in being honest about struggles. These all deserve recognition.

➔ **Reflection:** What quiet forms of strength have you shown recently?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** The psalmist spoke of God as "my strength and my shield" — not abstract power, but intimate support. God's strength works through our own capacities, helping us discover resources we didn't know we had. Like a shield, divine strength doesn't prevent all pain, but protects our essential self. We don't have to generate strength alone; we can draw on the One who sustains us.

➔ **Practice:** Place a hand over your heart and whisper, "Sacred Strength, help me remember the power we share."



WEDNESDAY

## Share Your Joy



*"Rejoice with those who rejoice" (Romans 12:15)*

**FOR TODAY:** Joy doesn't just mean big celebrations or constant happiness. Sometimes it's humming to a song, sharing good news, or noticing a moment that brings a small smile. When we share tiny joys, we create connections reminding us we're not alone. Even on hard days, joy appears unexpectedly — in a bird's song, warm drink, or sunshine. Sharing these small joys helps create a sustaining web of connection.

→ **Consider:** What small moment of joy could you share with someone today?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** Paul's "rejoice with those who rejoice" shows that joy grows when it's shared! This isn't about forced happiness, but letting ourselves join moments of gladness. God delights in shared joy, whether celebration or simple pleasure. Like the shepherds who shared their joy at finding the infant Jesus, our shared moments of gladness become sacred celebrations.

→ **Practice:** Today, notice other people's moments of joy — a child's laugh, good news, a stranger's smile. Let yourself share their gladness, knowing God rejoices with us.

## WEDNESDAY

# Accept Help



*"Bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2)*

**FOR TODAY:** Accepting help is a sign of wisdom and strength, not weakness. While we may worry about being a burden or losing independence, accepting assistance acknowledges our shared humanity and need for connection. Help comes in many forms - from held doors to listening ears to practical support. When we receive these offerings, we strengthen our communities and show we value others.

➔ **Reflection:** What small offer of help could you accept today, knowing that receiving help is as important as giving it?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** Paul teaches that we're meant to live in mutual support. Jesus himself accepted help - from the woman at the well, Simon carrying his cross, and ministering angels. This web of mutual aid reflects divine love in action, with God's Spirit honoring both givers and receivers. Accepting help is part of the sacred dance of human interdependence.

➔ **Practice:** The next time someone offers help today — even in a small way — try responding with "Thank you" instead of "I'm fine" or "I can do it myself."



THURSDAY

## Notice the Light



"The light shines in the darkness" (John 1:5)

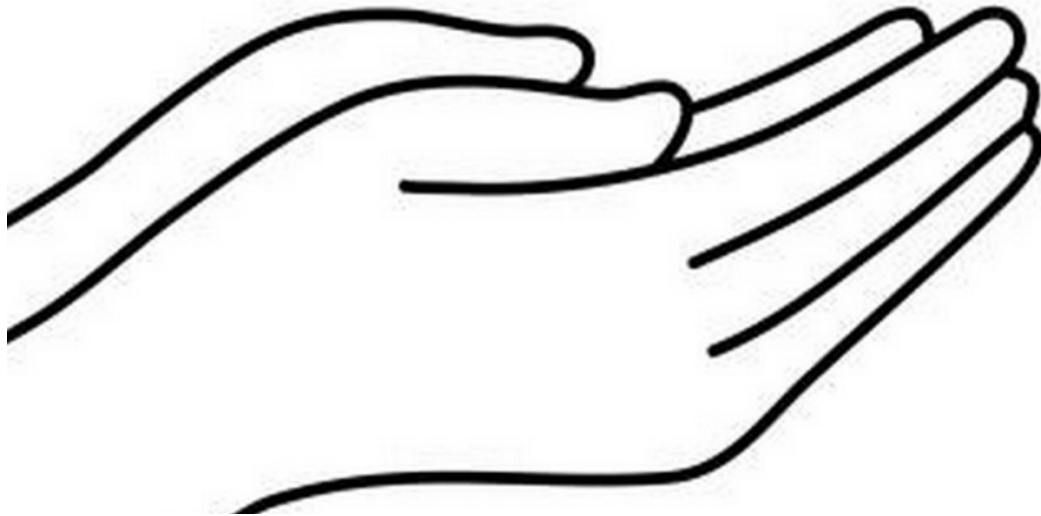
**FOR TODAY:** As we near the winter solstice, light becomes precious in all forms — sunbeams through windows, lamp glows, surface reflections, even phone screens connecting us. Each glimpse reminds us that darkness, physical or emotional, is temporary. Light always finds ways to shine, even in unexpected places.

→ **Consider:** What sources of light have you noticed today that you usually take for granted?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** John's gospel declares that light shines in darkness, and darkness cannot overcome it. Like God's Spirit, light persists, finding ways through the smallest openings. Jesus, the light of the world, taught us to see divine light in unexpected places - in struggles, humble moments, and what others overlook.

→ **Practice:** Each time you notice light today, whisper "Thank you for shining" — a prayer of gratitude for both the physical and spiritual light that helps us find our way.

# Be Gentle with Yourself



"His compassions never fail" (Lamentations 3:22)

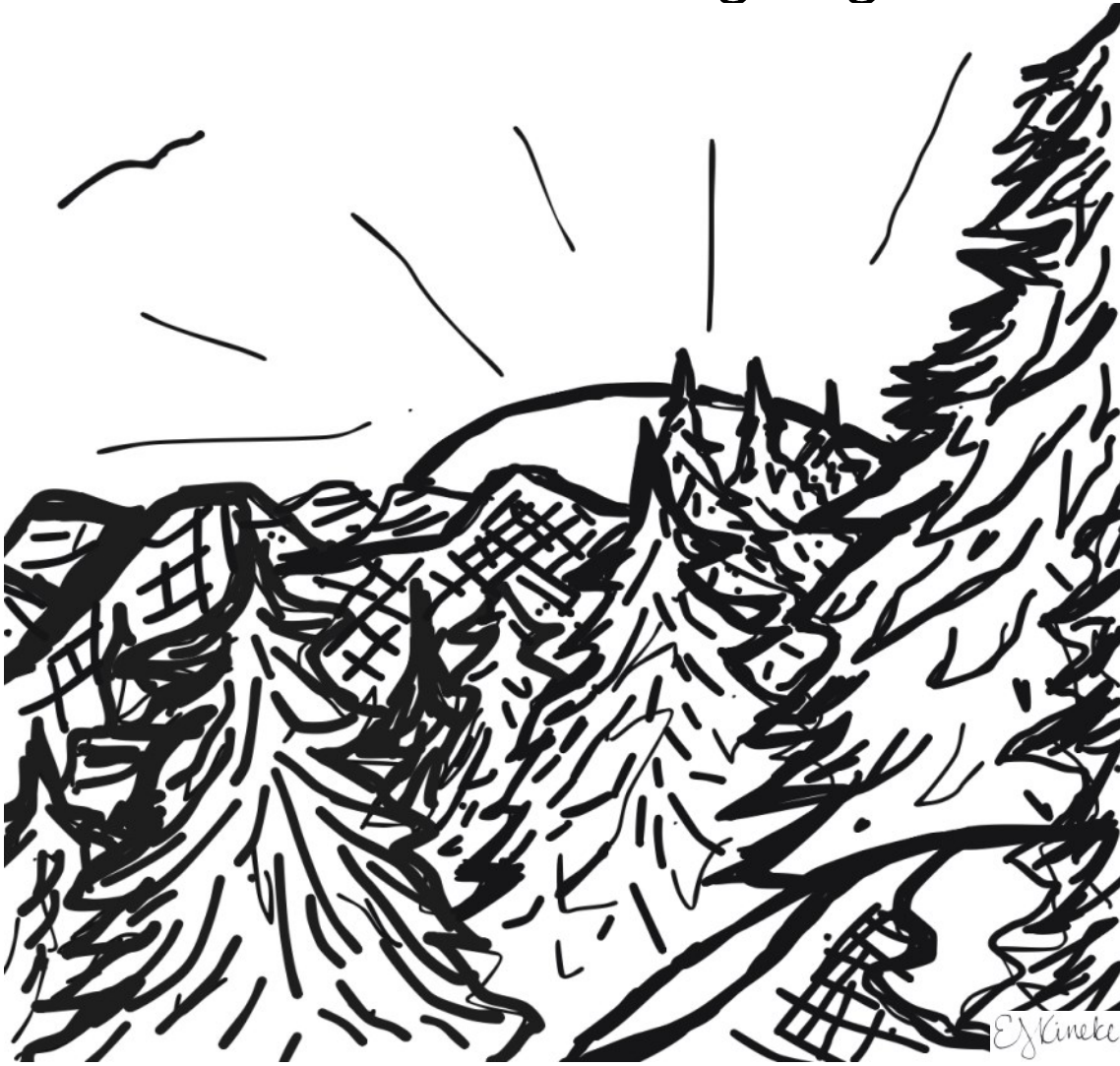
**FOR TODAY:** Holiday preparations can intensify emotions and self-criticism. Practice treating yourself with the gentleness you'd offer others who are struggling. If you make mistakes or fall short of expectations - pause, breathe, and acknowledge your humanity. Gentleness might mean taking breaks, adjusting expectations, or simply saying, "This is hard, and I'm doing my best."

→ **Reflection:** If a friend were feeling exactly as you are right now, what gentle words would you offer them? Can you offer those same words to yourself?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** Even in deep sorrow, Lamentations reveals that divine compassion never runs out. God's gentle love renews daily, not because we earn it, but because gentleness is God's nature. Jesus showed this by his kindness to the weary and struggling. When we're gentle with ourselves, we embody this divine compassion.

→ **Practice:** Each time you notice self-criticism today, try whispering, "Divine compassion never fails — I can be gentle with myself."

SATURDAY (WINTER SOLSTICE)  
 Welcome Growing Light



"The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day" (Proverbs 4:18)

**FOR TODAY:** Today marks the winter solstice - the shortest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. From here, each day is longer with more light. Like the gradual lengthening of days beginning tonight, change comes slowly but steadily. We don't force light to grow; we trust the turning seasons. Whatever darkness you face, remember light naturally returns.

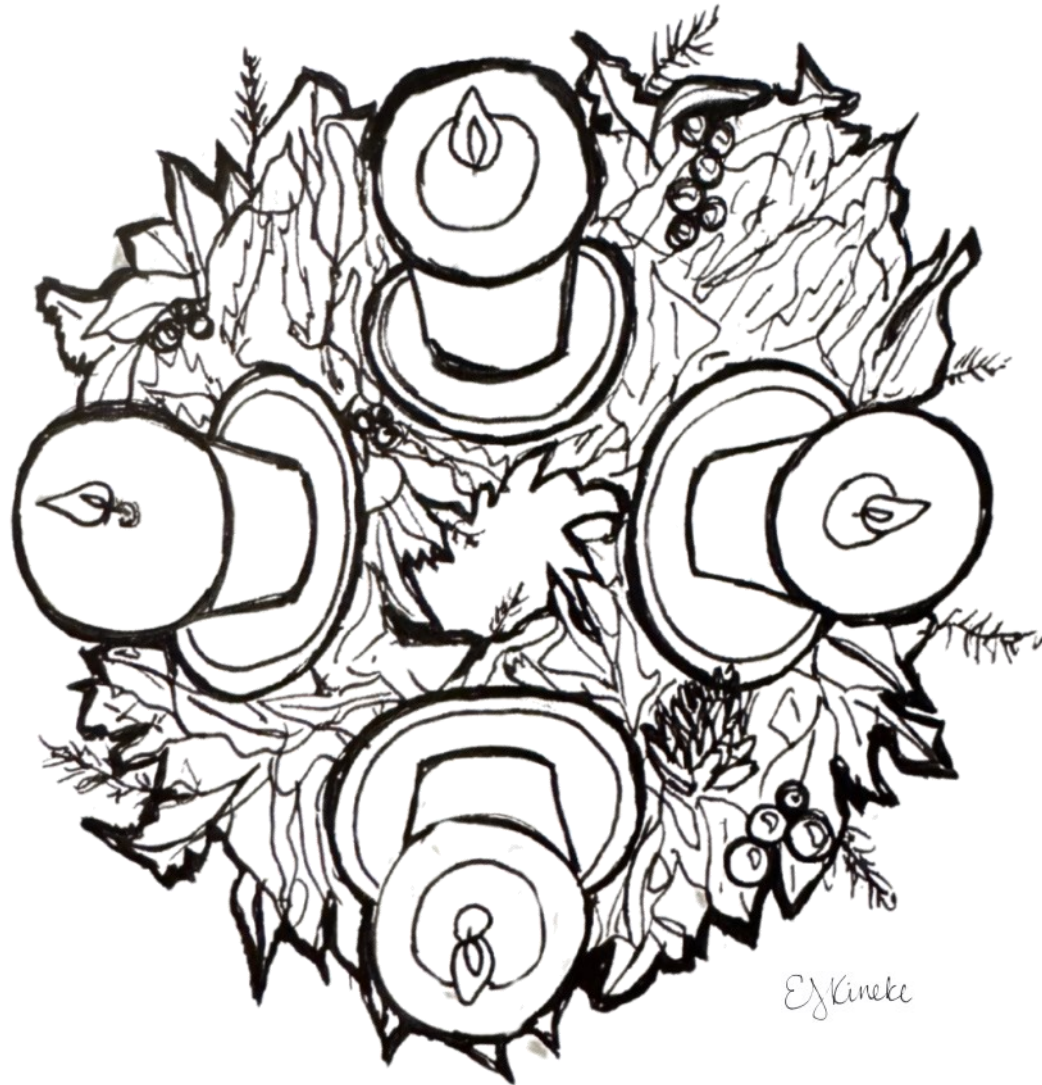
➔ **Invitation:** Take a moment today to notice where light appears in your space. Remember that just as the days will slowly brighten, hope can grow gradually too.

**SACRED MOMENTS:** Proverbs compares spiritual growth to dawn's gradual brightening — perfect for solstice! God's Spirit works like the turning earth: steadily bringing light in divine time. Jesus came in winter's dark, bringing light that would gradually transform everything. God guides us like the dawning day - slowly, steadily toward greater light.

➔ **Practice:** Each time you step into sunlight or turn on a light today, whisper, "Sacred Light, grow in me as surely as the dawning day."



# Light Four Candles



"Perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18)

**FOR TODAY:** With all four candles lit, our Advent wreath glows at full strength. This brightness may highlight both hope and holiday anxieties. Like these four flames working together, we can hold multiple feelings at once. The light reminds us we don't need perfection - just presence in this moment, taking one illuminated step at a time.

→ **Reflection:** As you look at these four lights (or imagine them), what fears and anxieties might you gently release into their warm glow?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** Love casts out fear through gentle presence, like light naturally dispelling darkness. Our fourth candle recalls how God's love entered as a baby — unthreatening and simple. Perfect love doesn't demand our perfection; it meets our uncertainty and helps fears dissolve. Jesus entered a fearful world showing divine love outweighs anxiety.

→ **Practice:** Gazing at these four lights, breathe in saying "Perfect love," and then out saying "casts out fear." Let your breath and the steady flames remind you of God's constant divine presence.

## Find Your Safe Place



"You are my hiding place" (Psalm 32:7)

**FOR TODAY:** The final days before Christmas can intensify emotions and memories. Find what helps you feel safe and grounded today. This might be something physical: a favorite chair, quiet corner, a favorite blanket. It might be something internal: a cherished memory, calming thought, or familiar prayer. Seeking safety isn't weakness; it's wise self-care during intense times.

→ **Consider:** What simple safe place — external or internal — can you access when you need a moment of peace?

**SACRED MOMENTS:** The psalmist called God "my hiding place," not suggesting escape but finding sacred shelter amid life's storms. Jesus sometimes withdrew for renewal. Seeking sanctuary shows spiritual wisdom. God's Spirit creates safe spaces within and around us, offering the divine presence as constant refuge.

→ **Practice:** Close your eyes briefly and whisper, "Holy One, you are my hiding place," remembering that sacred shelter is always available, even in the midst of busyness or stress.

## Welcome What Comes



"And she laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7)

**FOR TODAY:** Christmas Eve carries hopes for perfect moments, yet the first Christmas was far from ideal — a displaced couple, no proper lodging, & makeshift arrangements! Their story shows how meaning emerges in *imperfect settings*. Whether you're with others or alone, in familiar places or temporary ones, your Christmas Eve is valid. Profound moments often come when we are open to "what is", rather than struggling with what "should be."

➔ **Reflection:** Can you welcome this evening exactly as it is, knowing that sacred moments can come in unexpected ways?

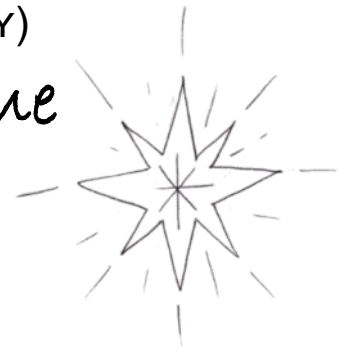
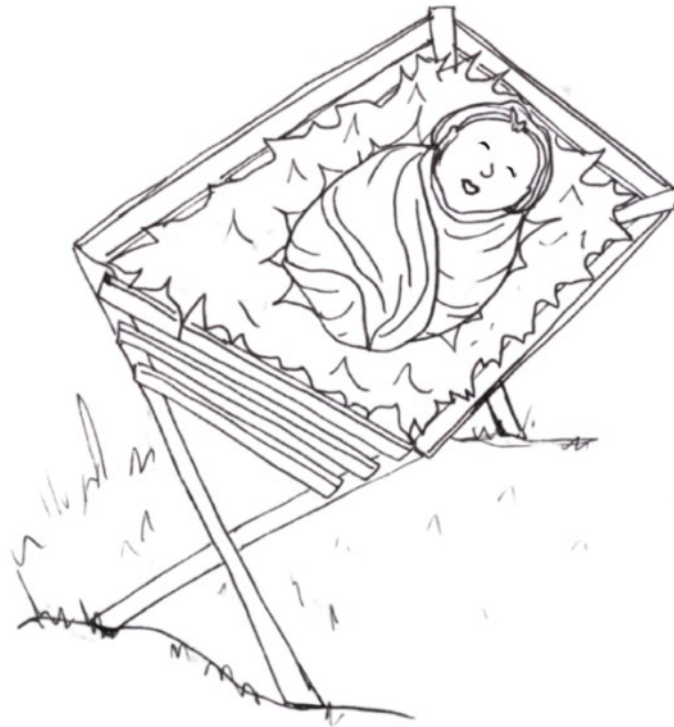
**SACRED MOMENTS:** Jesus's birth shows God working through the unexpected. "No room in the Inn" became the perfect space for divine love to enter our world. God doesn't need perfect conditions — God's divine presence transforms humble moments into holy ones. Mary's acceptance teaches that welcoming what comes opens us to God's presence in surprising ways.

➔ **Practice:** Whatever your circumstances tonight, whisper "Welcome" to each moment, remembering that divine love can be born in unexpected places.



WEDNESDAY (CHRISTMAS DAY)

## The Light Has Come



EJ Kinete

"The word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory" (John 1:14)

**FOR TODAY:** Christmas Day arrives carrying many emotions - joy, sadness, excitement, loneliness, gratitude, grief - sometimes all at once. Whatever you're feeling today is okay. The first Christmas brought light into a dark world not with dramatic fanfare, but through the ordinary miracle of birth in humble surroundings. Today, light still comes to us in both ordinary and extraordinary ways. It might arrive through a kind message, a warm meal, a moment of peace, or simply the gift of another sunrise. You don't have to manufacture joy or hide your struggles - just notice where light finds its way to you.

➔ **Invitation:** Take a moment today to notice one place where light - literal or metaphorical - touches your life.

**SACRED MOMENTS:** John's gospel tells us that divine light and love became tangible in Jesus - something that could be seen, heard, even touched. Christmas celebrates this miracle: that God chooses to meet us where we are, entering fully into human experience. The light we've waited for through Advent isn't distant or abstract — it lives among us, transforms us, and illuminates our ordinary days with holy presence. Jesus's birth reminds us that divine glory often comes wrapped in simplicity, accessible to all who open their hearts to receive it.

➔ **Practice:** Touch something physical today - a cup, a piece of clothing, your own hand - and remember that divine love has chosen to enter our tangible world, making every physical thing potentially sacred.