 **December 13 Lamp**

In Psalm 119:105, we read: “Thy Word is a lamp into my feet, and a light unto my path.” In a world before electricity, oil lamps were one of the only ways to light the darkness, at home or traveling. The Bible guides us to knowing God and God’s will – ultimately pointing us to Jesus, the living Word of God. In John 8:12, we hear Jesus declare: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

**Scripture Reading**: John 12:44-50

**Question of the Day**: Do we seek God’s light and direction only for the things we’re concerned about, or do we ask for God’s light to show us the things that God cares about in the world and in our lives?

**December 14 Chi Rho**

In Greek, the word “Christ” is written: Χριστος. The letters Chi (X) and Rho (ρ) were combined to form one of the earliest Christian Symbols, found inscribed on the walls of Roman catacombs as early as the 2nd century. Christ is translated as ‘Messiah’ in Hebrew, which means ‘the anointed one’.

This reminds us that ‘Christ’ is not Jesus’ last name, but a description of Jesus’ role, anointed by God the Father to fulfill the promises and purposes of God to redeem and heal humanity and all of creation.

**Scripture Reading**: Romans 6:1-11

**Question of the Day**: In the language of baptism, Paul describes being united with Christ Jesus in his death, so that we may be united with him in resurrection into new life. What part of our current lives is God calling us to let go of, to ‘die to’ that we might more fully experience new life in Christ?

**Advent Devotional: Week Two**

“Chrismon” symbols remind us of the meaning of the season.

Can you find this week’s Chrismons on the tree in the entryway?

**December 8 The Fish**

The early church adopted the fish as a Christian symbol for multiple reasons. Jesus used the image of fish in parables to talk about the work of the Kingdom of God, and fish were part of God’s miraculous feeding of the 5000. The Greek word for ‘fish’ is ΙΧΘΥΣ (Ichthus), which early Christians used as an acrostic to describe Jesus: “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior” This symbol was especially helpful to early Christians in times of persecution, helping identify followers of Jesus to each other without drawing the wrong kind of attention. By drawing the Sign of the Fish, Christians revealed both their identity and the basis of their faith.

**Scripture Reading**: Matthew 14:15-21

**Question of the Day**: When times are difficult, what helps you stay grounded in faith?

**Bonus**: Do a little online research about religious persecution. Where are Christians and people of other faiths experiencing persecution? How has God worked through the church in times of persecution?

**December 9 Descending Dove**

The image of the Descending Dove to represent the Holy Spirit comes from the account of Jesus’ baptism in the Gospels. John the Baptist’s ministry was calling people to prepare for the coming Kingdom of God with a baptism of repentance. Jesus, the fulfillment of the promises of God, still chooses to be baptized, as a sign of humility. The Lord of All has come to serve, not to be served.

**Scripture Reading**: Matthew 3:13-17

**Question of the Day**: Where may God be calling us to set aside some of our own plans to seek God’s direction?

**December 10 Star of David and the Cross**

The Star of David has a relatively recent history in association as a symbol of the Jewish faith, with the Jewish community of Prague being the first to use it as its official symbol, and becoming more widespread among Jewish communities in the 17th century. The star references God as the shield and protector of David. The Star of David with the cross at the center reminds us that our Christian faith is inseparably linked with God’s story which unfolded among the Jewish people, and that Jew and Gentile together are being brought into one family through Christ Jesus (Colossians 3:11, Ephesians 2:13-22). Sadly, Christian history has not always reflected this, resulting in waves of persecution and anti-Semitism.

**Scripture Reading**: Revelation 22:16-17

**Question of the Day**: The stories we tell of Jesus in Advent link back to promises made throughout the Hebrew scriptures. Look around this week for ways that Jesus connects with promises made in the prophets.

**December 11 Triquetra**

This form of the triquetra (literally ‘three cornered’) has its origins in Celtic art, and came to be used as a symbol of the Trinity; God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Identical in shape, the three arcs represent the equality of the Trinity, while the continuous form of the symbol describes the unity of each person of the Trinity as God exists in eternal community. This unity in community means that each person in the Trinity moves with the same purpose and character; there are no different agendas or competition or variations in God’s goodness and love among the persons of the Trinity.

**Scripture Reading**: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

**Question of the Day**: Consider the implications of God who exists in community and calls us into community – how does this call us to value and work for genuine community in faith?

**December 12 Harp**

In the Bible, stringed instruments like the harp and lyre are used as instruments to praise God and celebrate God’s work in the world. 1 Chronicles 13:8 describes the people’s joy as the Ark of the Covenant begins its journey back to Jerusalem after a time of obscurity: “David and all Israel were dancing before God with all their might, with song and lyres and harps and tambourines and cymbals and trumpets”

In the book of Revelation, John describes scenes in heaven where people worship God with song and harp. The symbol of the harp encourages us to worship God with joy with song, dance, and every kind of musical instrument.

**Scripture Reading**: Revelation 15:2-4

**Question of the Day**: What do you praise God for today? How do you express that praise and gratitude?