



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

December 2022

Christmas Cookie Sale

The Outreach Team feels like this year, we'll be able to return to the way we've done the cookie sale in the past – welcoming people into the building to select their own cookies and fill their own boxes. So we're asking people to bake at least **18 dozen** cookies this year.

As always, we make sure everyone knows that our cookies are all baked in private homes, so we cannot guarantee no cross-contamination for nut allergies.

We have all the helpers we need on December 9 for setting up. We still need at least **6 people** to help during the sale itself on December 10 – a few for the money table and the rest to help refill trays of cookies when they're empty. There's a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board at church with space to let us know if you're bringing cookies AND if you're willing to help.

As far as PR goes, we've got full-sized fliers as well as ¼-sheet mini-fliers that need to be distributed around the area. We've also got a Facebook event (search for "Christmas Cookie Sale" or find it at <https://fb.me/e/2QMb44lxj>) that you can share on your own Facebook pages. Help us get the word out!



Date: **Saturday, December 10**
Time: **9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Church Staff
Secretary: Brianna Clement

Pianist: Raquel "Rocky" Nisbit

Church Leadership

Mike Rand, Clerk of Session
Ellen Warner, Ruling Elder
Brenda Longman, Ruling Elder
Ron Peterson-Rucker, Ruling Elder
Geoff Warner, Ruling Elder
Todd Wickre, Ruling Elder

Kim Stanton, Treasurer
Gail Rucker, Deacon
Ellen Simon, Deacon
Joanne Schenck, Deacon
Cindy Luhman, Deacon
Karen Peterson-Rucker, Deacon



From the Pastor ...

I don't think it will surprise anyone that, when it came to inspiration for my December newsletter article, I turned to the poetry of Jan Richardson – a poet that we've read plenty of times in worship before. The following poem comes from her book *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons*.

“Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light”
based on John 1:17: “He came as a witness to testify to the light.”

Blessed are you
 who bear the light
 in unbearable times,
 who testify
 to its endurance
 amid the unendurable,
 who bear witness
 to its persistence
 when everything seems
 in shadow
 and grief.

Blessed are you
 in whom
 the light lives,
 in whom
 the brightness blazes –
 your heart
 a chapel,
 an altar where
 in the deepest night
 can be seen
 the fire that
 shines forth in you
 in unaccountable faith,
 in stubborn hope,
 in love that illumines
 every broken thing
 it finds.

Friends, I know it's “that time of year” – a time full of preparations and traditions and expectations, both our own and those places on us by others and by society itself. And I know that some of us are taking solace and finding joy and peace in the midst of some of those traditions. They are our anchor in the midst of these “unbearable times,” as Richardson so aptly called them.

But I also know that many of us are shouldering heavy burdens right now – burdens of grief, burdens of uncertainty, burdens of worry for ourselves and the ones we love and our world at large. Truly, for many of us, this is an unprecedented time “when everything seems in shadow and grief.”

I want you all to notice something about Richardson's poem. She begins the first stanza with "Blessed are you / who bear the light ..." and the second stanza "Blessed are you / in whom / the light lives ..." There is nothing in either of those sentences about contingencies. She doesn't say, "Blessed are you who bear the light *with joy*" or "*with holiday festiveness*." She doesn't say, "Blessed are you who feel like the light lives in you." Richardson makes the simple statements about the presence of the light in us and through us because she knows exactly what the writer of John's gospel knew:

*What came into being through the Word was life,
and the life was the light for all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.
- John 1:3b-5.*

Even in the face of the most uncertain and oppressive darkness, friends, the Light is in you and with you – the Light of Christ, Love Incarnate, God-With-Us. Sometimes we have trouble remembering that. But the Light still remains with us. Sometimes we have trouble feeling that. But the Light still remains with us. Sometimes all we can see are the shadows and the deepest night. But the Light still remains with us. So as we journey through this season of Advent – a season of waiting through the growing darkness for the birth of the Light – know that the Light *is with you and in you*. *God's presence remains with you always ... even when you can't see it, can't feel it ... even when you don't know it, don't understand it ...*

God remains.
God shines.
God loves.
ALWAYS.

Pastor Gina



“Beloveds” Tree

I’m sure you’ve noticed that we’ve had to take down a few of the big, beautiful trees in our front lawn over the last couple of years. We’ve done this for the safety of the building and the community because these trees were definitely not in the greatest shape. But it also left our front yard looking a little bit bare. Thankfully, we’ve still got a number of lovely trees out there, but the Session has decided that we’d like to plant a new tree as well. We’ve also decided that this tree will be a tree in honor of loved ones that we’ve lost – sort of like a permanent, natural version of our All Saint’s Day banners.

There is now an envelope next to the offering plates in the sanctuary labeled “Beloveds Tree.” If you’d like to contribute to the fund for this tree, we invite you to put your donations in that envelope. There will also be notecards next to the envelope. Please write down the name(s) of the loved ones you’re remembering on those cards and place them in the envelope as well.



December Scripture Readings

Sunday, December 4– Esther 4:1-17

2nd Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 11– Luke 1:46-55

3rd Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 18– Isaiah 35:1-10

4th Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 24– Christmas Eve Service @ 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 25– NO SERVICE

Next Session meeting.:

**Wednesday, December 7, 2022
6:30 p.m.**

Next Presbytery Meeting:

**Saturday,
February 25, 2023
9:00 a.m. via Zoom**

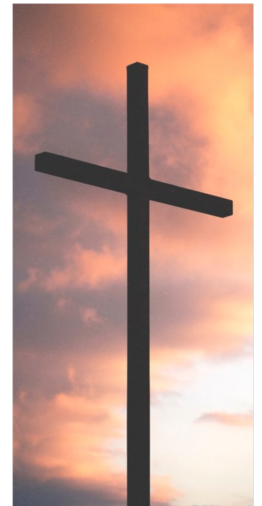
Christmas Day

Christmas Day is a Sunday this year, and the Session voted to cancel church that day so we can all spend some quality time with those we love. So have a blessed Christmas, safe travels if you're going to spend it with friends or family, and we'll see you on Christmas Eve and then again in the new year!



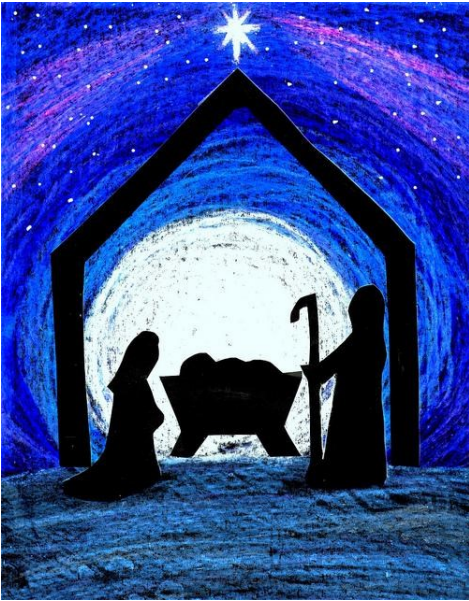
Worship Changes

Back in September, we talked about how it's clear that things within the realm of the Church (universal – all denominations all over the world) are changing. They have changed. They are changing. And they will continue to change. To be sure, the complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic certainly accelerated (or at least shined an undeniable, revealing light on) those changes. In an attempt to embrace what those changes can bring and explore where God may be leading us as the Church, we're going to continue to make some changes to worship over the next few months.



Since September, we've been engaging in some discussion time after the sermon based on the Scripture and the topic for the day – our "Exploring the Word Together" time. In December, we're going to include another new element: "Claiming our Faith Identity." This will be a call-and-response type of reading at the end of the service and will take the place of the charge. Instead of me reminding you of what to think or hope for or hold to in the week to come, we're going to remind one another of both who we are and whose we are before we head back out into the world. This call-and-response will be the same every Sunday. The hope is that, as we grow more and more familiar with the words and the claim and call that they place on our hearts, we'll be able to recall them throughout the week in those moments when we need to tap into our faith. These words and phrases are also aimed at helping us connect with our congregation's own mission statement on a deeper and more active level: *"We are a community of believers whose mission is to share God's Word, show God's Love, serve God's World, and strive for God's Peace."*

The book of Hebrews says, "Therefore, let's draw near with a genuine heart with the certainty that our faith gives us ... Let's hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, because the one who made the promises is reliable" (Hebrews 10:22, 23). It is my hope that as we claim our faith identity together at the end of each service, we will indeed be drawn nearer to each other and nearer to God with the certainty that our faith gives, and that, as we go out into the world, we will go out with a familiar confession on our lips and the promise of God in our hearts.



Quiet Christmas Service

At Christmastime, the constant refrain we hear about joy and togetherness and celebrating doesn't resonate with everyone. Some people are hurting and lonely, worried and fearful, sad and grieving during this time of year as well. We need space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern. We need to know that we are not alone. We need to know God's presence is with us during this season. So we invite you to experience a meditative worship service that takes time for remembering, sharing our hurting places with God, and preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ. Join with us to hear scripture, offer prayers for healing and wholeness, and to hear songs that acknowledges that God's

presence is for those who mourn, those who grieve, and those who struggle as much as it is for those who rejoice and lift their voices in praise. God's Word is a light in our broken places. Always.

Wednesday, December 21
5:45 p.m.

If you know of anyone – church member/friend or not – who could benefit from this service of remembrance, prayer, healing, and quietness, please extend the invitation. If you don't feel comfortable attending this service in person, we will be broadcasting it virtually as well just like we do with all of our regular services – on Facebook and our website. If you plan on coming to this service in person or know anyone that is, please remember that masks are required in the building.



Prayer Requests

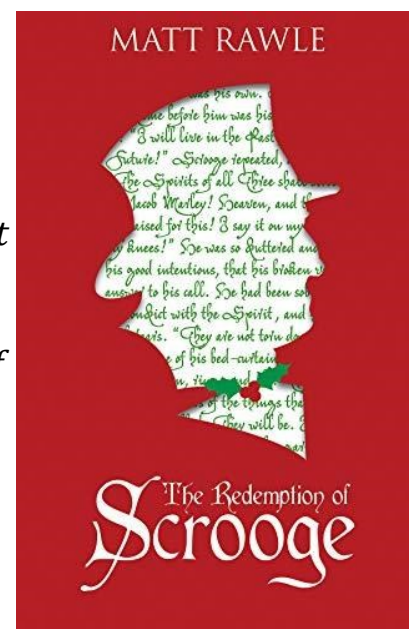
"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

~ Philippians 4:6-7

And so we lift up **Helen Craft, Katha and Carlyle Johnson**, and in prayer.

Advent 2022: The Redemption of Scrooge

For a story that was originally published in the mid-19th century, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* has stood the test of time quite well. In fact, it's a story that's been adapted to film no less than 135 times – everything from the silent film version starring Tom Ricketts (1908) to the classic *Mickey's Christmas Carol* done by Disney (1983) to the classic *Scrooge* starring Albert Finney (1970) and *The Muppet's Christmas Carol* (1992). For many, the Christmas season hasn't truly begun until they've watched their favorite version, either on their own with a plate of gingerbread cookies and a cozy mug of hot chocolate or with family and friends. There's just something about the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, his moonlit wanderings through past and present and future, the lessons he gleans along the way, and his ultimate redemption that draws us back again and again.



And so, as we journey through Advent together this year, we're going to do so winding together the story of the birth of salvation and the story of Scrooge's redemption. Our guide for this journey will be *The Redemption of Scrooge* by Matt Rawle. This will be the theme of the sermons throughout Advent as well as our Advent candle-lighting readings.

- ~~November 27 – Matthew 20:1-16: “Bah! Humbug!”~~
- December 4 – Luke 16:19-31: “The Remembrance of Christmas Past”
- December 11 – Luke 15:1-10: “The Life of Christmas Present”
- December 18 – Acts 3:1-10: “The Hope of Christmas Future”

Advent Readers

Believe it or not, Advent is just around the corner! The first Sunday of Advent is Sunday, December 27. If you're interested in being one of our Advent readers/candle lighters, please add your name to the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Readings are already ready and will be in a labeled envelope hanging below the sign-up sheet, so you can take them with you for practice that day. In advance, thank you!

Advent readers needed:

- ~~Sunday, November 27~~
- ~~Sunday, December 4~~
- Sunday, December 11
- Sunday, December 18
- Saturday, December 24

Winter Weather Procedure



As the winter months are once again upon us, just a reminder that occasionally, we do have to close church due to weather and road conditions. The following are our procedures when this happens:

- Pastor Lisa and the session member assigned to open and close the church for the month will make the decision
- Pastor Lisa will send out an all-church email alerting people of the closing. It will also be posted to our Facebook page (Presbyterian Church of Oronoco) and our website.
- Session members will call people to let them know of the closing using set calling lists that we have established
- Pastor Lisa will contact KAAL, KTTC, KIMT, and Fox 47 to put the cancellation on to local “Closings and Delays” lists as well

Please be sure we have your accurate contact information in case of a weather-related closing. We want to be sure everyone remains safe during this frigid season.

Weekly Prayer Services



Throughout the fall, we’ve been holding weekly prayer services. Due to many scheduling challenges, these services will now be held on **THURSDAY evenings from 5:45-6:15 p.m.** These services will run through December, then we’ll re-evaluate from there and see if we want to continue.

The idea is for these services is to be mostly a time for quiet prayer. We’ll begin with a short opening together. The lights in the sanctuary will be lower and there will be soft music playing in the background. If you’d like to use this time to sit silently in your own prayer, you’re welcome to do that. If you’d like to use this time to try the highlighted prayer practices for the month, you’re welcome to do that, too. If you’d like to use this time to pray with someone – either someone in the congregation or Pastor Lisa – you’re also welcome to do that. This is really meant to help you make some scheduled time for God in the midst of your week.

Unconventional Ways to Give

- Designate “Presbyterian Church of ORONOCO” as your Amazon Smile organization, and 0.5% of all your eligible Amazon purchases will come back to the church on a quarterly basis.
- Give online through our Presbyterian Foundation account using either the link on our website (www.oronocochurch.org) at the bottom of the homepage) or this QR code.



Oronoco Food Shelf Monthly Item

We've got a new monthly piece that will be showing up in the newsletter! The OFS volunteer responsible for ordering has given us a list of monthly needs – a specific item that the Food Shelf could use that month. This monthly item will also be posted on our church Facebook page, so feel free to find it every month and share the image!



Prayer Requests

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

~ Philippians 4:6-7

And so we lift up **Helen Craft, Katha, Curt Burt, and Katha and Carlyle Johnson**, and in prayer.



December Star Word

Reflect on your star word journey this year,- where it's taken you, what you've learned, etc.

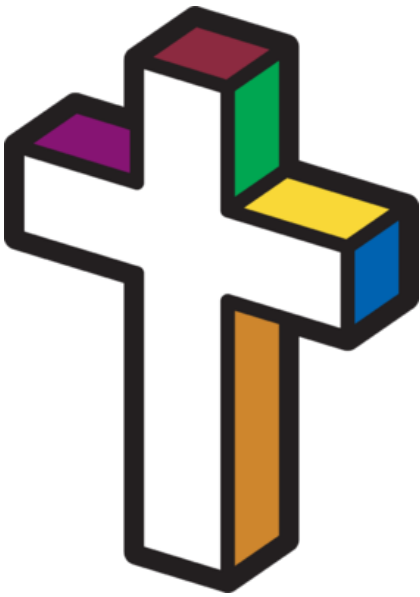


Busy Bags for Ronald McDonald House



We will be putting together busy bags for Ronald McDonald House again this year. We'll assemble the bags sometime in January (date TBD), but now is a great time to be on the lookout for anything that we could put in the bags: small toys, coloring things, books, games, etc. I'll put the box out at church. Feel free to drop donations off anytime.

Prayer Practice Extras



If you try this month's CREATIVE prayer practices and find them really appealing to you, consider trying these other creative prayer practices, too:

- Creating a Home Altar: Gather some items that you love, items that bring to mind a particular prayer request or anything that brings you closer to God. Include a candle (either a traditional candle or an electric one), both to help bring you into an attitude of prayer and as a reminder that the light of Christ is present with you. Find a place in your home that can be your dedicated space for prayer, reflection, and contemplation, both for your benefit and for the benefit of anyone else in your household. Being in this space can be a signal that you are spending some time with God.*
- Prayer Wall: Find a wall space where you can easily and comfortably hang things up – a bulletin board, the back of a door, etc. Keep a variety of papers, writing utensils, and crafty items nearby (stickers, pictures, ribbons, magazines, etc.) Use the papers to write down or doodle your prayers and/or prayer requests and hang them up, then use the other craft items to decorate them. (This is sort of a vision board for prayers.) Change the prayers out or add to them whenever you feel like it. Every time you walk past them, read through some of the prayers, lifting them up to God.*
- Prayer stones: Get and wash a bunch of river stones. Write various prayer items on the stones – names of people, places, situations, spiritual character traits (hope, repentance, etc.), and so on – either with a permanent marker or a paint marker. Each time you sit down to pray, choose a number of rocks and pray through whatever's on those rocks.*
- Praying in Color: Basically, this is prayer doodling. Basic necessities for this prayer type include some sort of paper or sketchbook and whatever writing utensils you prefer – gel pens, markers, colored pencils, pastels, etc. There are a lot of different ways to engage in this form of prayer. You can either check them out on the official Praying in Color website (www.prayingincolor.com) or borrow one of the books from Pastor Lisa.*

Christ the Servant Sunday

Traditionally, the Sunday before Advent begins has been known as “Christ the King” or “Reign of Christ” Sunday. It was initially intended to be a day in which Christians could honor the sovereignty of Christ as well as be reminded of the loyalty and fidelity owed to Christ. However, in recent years, it’s been pointed out that much of the theology and language surrounding the marking of Christ the King Sunday is problematic. Both are saturated with the language of conquest, subjugation, and colonization. And while theologies lifting up Christ as King certainly developed after his death, Jesus himself refused any kind of royal title in his life, to the point where, after feeding the five thousand, John’s gospel tells us that Jesus “understood that they were about to come and force him to be their king, so he took refuge again, alone on a mountain” (6:15). So what did Jesus say about himself? “If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do. I assure you, servants aren’t greater than their master, nor are those who are sent greater than the one who sent them” (John 13:14-16).

With this as our inspiration, we’re going to try something new this year. Instead of celebrating Christ the King Sunday, we’re going to celebrate Christ the Servant Sunday. On **Sunday, December 20**, we’re going to hold a short commissioning service, then we’re going to go out to do the good work of Christ’s care and compassion in the world. We’re going to have a few different mission opportunities that everyone can participate in that day.

1. For those who want to be out and about, you’re invited to make your way around Oronoco to collect food for the Oronoco Food Shelf. A week prior to December 20, we’ll be distributing plastic bags around town with bright fliers attached to them. The fliers will ask people to put their donations in the bag and set the bag out somewhere visible – porch, front step, etc. That way, we can go around on Sunday morning collecting them easily.
2. For anyone who doesn’t feel comfortable venturing out, we’ll have an in-house mission opportunity for you (still TBD) – something that can be put together and sent out as a donation to a local organization. ***If you have a suggestions for what this could be, please talk to Pastor Lisa. Thanks.*
3. We also invite anyone who feels called to stay back in the sanctuary and pray for those who are working on any of our mission projects.

Following this mission work, we’ll come back together again at the church for a potluck-style lunch that will give us a chance to regather and reconnect and share our mission experiences with one another. We hope you’ll join us for this event!



December Birthdays & Anniversaries

- ♥ 12/13 Alyssa Luhman
- ♥ 12/18 Kim & Rachel Stanton
- ♥ 12/19 Don Ottman

Staying in Touch

Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

Office: 507-367-4711

Email: oronocopc@bevcomm.net

Website: <http://www.oronocochurch.org>

Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

Office: 651-357-1150

Fax: 651-357-1141

Email: office@ptcaweb.org

Website: <http://www.presbyterytwincities.org>

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Office: 800-728-7228

Email: info@pcusa.org

Website: <http://www.pcusa.org>



December 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Prayer Service 5:45 p.m.	2	3 
4 Worship 10:00 am	5 	6	7 Session Meeting 6:30	8 Prayer Service 5:45 p.m.	9	10 Christmas Cookie Sale 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
11 Worship 10:00 am	12	13	14	15 Prayer Service 5:45 p.m.	16 	17
18 Worship 10:00 am	19	20 	21 Quiet Christmas Service 5:45 p.m.	22 Prayer Service 5:45 p.m.	23	24
25 No Worship 	26	27	28	29 Prayer Service 5:45 p.m.	30	31 

Creative Prayer

Basic idea: types of prayer that feed your creative soul → God has given us the gift of creativity, so if God has given us these gifts – gifts that can give such a blessed expression to our souls – using those gifts to connect to God in prayer can be a meaningful and joyful experience.

Scripture references:

- Colossians 3:23: Whatever you do, do it from the heart for the Lord and not for people.
 - Good reminder that whatever you're creating doesn't have to be perfect → You don't have to be an amazing artist ever. You don't have to be the most eloquent writer ever. You don't have to be the most tech-savvy digital creator ever. You don't even have to show anyone else anything that you create during your prayer time. The important part is you're creating as a way to connect with God, the Creator of All.
- Psalm 139:13-14: You are the one who created my innermost parts; you knit me together while I was still in my mother's womb. I give thanks to you that I was marvelously set apart. Your works are wonderful – I know that very well.
 - Reassurance that you are "fearfully and wonderfully made" → And if we're creating in God's image, we are, in fact, **created to create**, right?

Prayer practices:

- Prayers in Pictures
 - This one will be fairly familiar because it's something we've been doing as a congregation for years. This is basically our Lenten Photo Challenge. It's something that can be done seasonally (Lent, Advent, etc.) or can be done on a regular basis.
- Steps – adult
 1. Pray.
 2. Select a word or a Scripture reading to be your focus and inspiration for the day. If you're having trouble choosing something, you can follow the daily lectionary or find various spiritual word lists online.
 3. Hold the word or Scripture reading in your mind during the day. As you go throughout your day, keep your eyes, your heart, and your spirit open for some sort of image that may express that word or Scripture for you. Keep yourself open to how God may be speaking to you through that word or Scripture and whatever image you choose. It could be a picture you take or a picture you find online.

4. There are a lot of ways to compile those images and words/Scriptures. You could start an album on social media or a folder in your phone. You could turn them into printed photobooks. You could compile your own photobook – printed images with journaling.

- Steps – kid adaptation

1. Pray together, “God, help me listen. God, help me understand. God, help me follow you. I love you, God. Amen.”
2. Pick a word or short Scripture reading for the day. You could use the daily lectionary or find various spiritual word lists online.
3. Talk with your little one about what kind of picture they might take or draw for that word and how it reminds them of God. Ask about specifics: colors, backgrounds/settings, other details. Depending on your little one’s age and your own screen time policies, you could also look for pictures online that they think might fit or help them use your phone to take their own photos.
4. You could turn any pictures that you and your little one find online into a printed photobook, combining your little one’s pictures with their own reflections/musings (typed either by them or by you). Or you could invite your little one to draw their picture while you write about it together.
5. Pray, “God, help me to remember. God, help me to love. God, help me to follow you. I love you, God. Amen.”

**** Biggest difference between kid and adult practice:**

- Adult version: better to pick the word/phrase in the morning → keep it in your mind throughout the day (a la “pray without ceasing”)
- Kid version: better to do it at night (especially with younger kids) → more of a “day in review” type of prayer

- Prayer Journaling

- There are SO MANY ways to practice this form of prayer! Even the few suggestions below are just the tip of the iceberg.
- “Writing in a journal is a gift we give to ourselves as well as to those we care for. Writing about life challenges, past and present, helps us gain clarity in our relationships with God, ourselves, and others. Over time, our patterns of acting, relating, and thinking all emerge. ... As we read and reread what we’ve written, we begin to see the choices we have made and how we have changed. We can see evidence of God’s work in our lives, as well as times where we chose not to let God act. The pages can both remind us of our inner beauty and humble us as we confront our frailties.” – Patricia D. Brown, *Paths to Prayer*, p. 65 (© 2003, Jossey-Bass)

- Steps - adults

- A good way to start (for all types of prayer journaling):
 - Make sure the space around you is conducive to a prayerful experience for you. That might mean lighting a candle. That might mean playing some soft music. That might mean sitting outside or in a particular place.
 - Begin by spending some quite time sitting with God. Open your heart and mind to God's presence – to the moving of the Holy Spirit in and around and through you.
- List Prayer (*from Becca York*):
 - Set a short timer – 1-2 mins. Start the timer and make a bullet list of people and/or situations you want to pray for. Leave 1-2 lines between each prayer item.
 - Once the time is up, write a short description of each prayer item – the “why” behind the “who/what.”
 - Take a prayerful pause for a few minutes, holding all those prayer items in your heart with the Holy Spirit.
 - Write a closing prayer in your journal. It can be a general prayer that lifts up your prayer list as a whole or it can be a more in-depth prayer that encompasses each of your individual prayer requests.
- Rewriting Psalms:
 - Choose a psalm or a shorter portion of a psalm. The length is entirely up to you. It may be helpful to start smaller (no more than 10 verses) and increase as you get more comfortable with this practice.
 - Take a prayerful pause – to focus, to quiet your heart and your mind, to be fully present with God.
 - Going verse by verse, write your own version of the psalm – for the world today, for your life and your family, with language that's meaningful and relevant to you but also authentic to the original psalm.
 - When you're finished, offer your psalm to God in prayer.
- Acrostic Prayers:
 - Choose a word that will be your focus word for the day. It could be something out of Scripture – a word that you pick from a passage. (*Lectio divina* – or a shortened version of it – could be a great way to discern your word for the day.) It could also be a “faith word” – *grace, faith, praise, mercy, pray, repent, hopeful, spirit, etc.*
 - Write the letters of the word vertically down the edge of the page, leaving 1-3 lines of space between each letter (or more, depending on how much you like to write).
 - Prayerfully reflect on each letter and write a prayer for each letter. You can either offer your prayers to God as you finish each individual letter or offer them as a whole when you've finished.

- Poetry Prayers:
 - Choose a short verse or a portion of a verse that will be your focus passage. (Again, *lectio divina* could be a great way to discern your verse.)
 - Spend some time reflecting on your verse. Read through it a few times, then hold it in your mind and your heart, and see where God takes you with that verse.
 - Write a prayer poem based on that verse. It can follow the language. It can expand on the idea. It can be your own prayer inspired by how you feel God calling you in that verse.
- Florilegia:
 - Choose a Scripture passage for the day. If you're looking for suggestions, you could follow the daily lectionary or read your way through a book of the Bible section by section. (Full chapters will be too large.)
 - Read through the Scripture passage once, holding yourself open for the moving of the Holy Spirit.
 - Take a prayerful pause – to focus, to quiet your heart and your mind, to be fully present with God.
 - Read through the Scripture passage again. Once you've finished, choose a verse or sentence (no more than 2 verses) that really speak to you and copy that verse down in your journal. As you continue through this prayer practice, you will end up creating your own prayer text of verses that spoke God's word to you in a particular way.
- A good way to close your prayer time (for all types of prayer journaling):
 - Spend a few quiet moments with God.
 - Thank God for being with you and leading you in prayer.
- Steps – kid adaptation
 - A good way to start (for all types of prayer journaling):
 - Make sure the space around you is conducive to a prayerful experience for you and your little one. Remove as many distractions as possible – for you and for them.
 - Begin by spending some quite time sitting with God. Encourage your little one to take some deep breaths. Remind them about how we listen. Then pray, "God, help me listen. God, help me understand. God, help me follow you. I love you, God. Amen."
 - List Prayer (*adapted from Becca York*):
 1. Set a short timer – 1-2 mins. (Start with a shorter time. If you feel your little one can handle it, work your way up gradually.) Start the timer and encourage your little one to write down all the things they want to pray about/for: people, things that make them worry, things that

make them happy, etc. Make sure they understand that it doesn't matter how many things they come up with. If your little one is too young to write their list on their own, you can make one together.

2. Once the time is up, pray together: "Thank you, God, for the things on our lists that make us happy. We pray for the things on our lists that make us worried or sad. We pray for the people on our lists. And we pray in the way that Jesus taught us, saying: Our Father, who art in heaven ..." (or whatever version of the Lord's Prayer is most comfortable for you).

- *Note: This is a great way to encourage your little one to start getting comfortable praying out loud. After a month or so, invite them to say your closing prayer. They can repeat each line after you. They can extemporize. They can maybe try praying aloud once a month or once a week – whatever your little one is comfortable with.*

- **Rewriting Psalms:**

1. Choose a psalm or a shorter portion of a psalm. The length is entirely up to you. It may be helpful to start smaller – no more than 10 verses.
2. Take 5 deep breaths together.
3. Going verse by verse, write your own version of the psalm together. Talk to your little one about what the words mean. Ask them how they understand them or what each verse makes them think of or feel. If your little one is old enough to write this out themselves, they can do that. If they're not old enough, you can write it together.
4. When you're finished, offer your psalm to God in prayer together. If your little one can read, invite them to read your new creation out loud. They can read the whole thing themselves or you can take turns reading one line/verse each.

- **Acrostic Prayers:**

1. Choose a word that will be your focus word for the day. It could be something out of Scripture – a word that you pick from a passage. (*Lectio divina* – or a shortened version of it – could be a great way to discern your word for the day.) It could also be a "faith word" – *grace, faith, praise, mercy, pray, repent, hopeful, spirit, etc.*
 - *A fun and interactive way you could do this with your little one: write a bunch of words on slips of paper or popsicle sticks and let them pull a word out of the jar each day.*
2. Write the letters of the word vertically down the edge of the page, leaving 1-3 lines of space between each letter.
3. Spend time talking with your little one about what they think of with each letter – a person, something that makes them happy or makes them worried, etc. Write a 1-2 sentence prayer together for each letter. You can either read each prayer individually as you finish them (taking

turns, if your little one can read) or you can wait until you've finished them all and read them as a whole prayer together.

- A good way to close your prayer time (for all types of prayer journaling):
 - Take 5 deep breaths together.
 - Pray: "God, help me to remember. God, help me to love. God, help me to follow you. I love you, God. Amen."