

Advent Prayer Walks

Distance: Your Choice — Time: Your Choice

This month during the weeks of Advent we invite you to make up your own routes around Haxby and Wigginton and, as you are walking, to reflect on the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Week 1 — Hope

This December HWMC has invited our community to display stars in their windows. The star can be seen as a sign of hope. A star led the Magi to the place of Jesus' birth. And so, it pointed the way to the place where Christ would be born, which marked the beginning of a new and more hopeful era.

As you are walking, look out for the stars displayed in the windows of homes, businesses, churches and schools.

Give thanks for the hope that we have in Jesus. The assurance that we are loved, accepted and forgiven.

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

Give thanks and pray for all those who have been 'stars' this year and have reflected God's love.

Pray that people might have hope this Advent.

Week 2 — Peace

This week as we walk, we pray for peace.

Why not walk slowly today, and intentionally hold before God those situations and people known to you in need of peace.

- Perhaps take a moment to sit by the duck pond,
- to walk along the river,
- or around the woods.

*For a child has been born for us, a Son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace. — Isaiah 9:6*

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

*Loving God, we all need peace in our lives, our homes,
our families, our church, and our whole world. Help us to
slow down and seek out the peace you provide, so we
may become peacemakers for ourselves and others.
Amen*

Week 3 — Joy

This week we reflect on joy. 2020 has been a difficult year and sometimes we may wonder what there is to be joyful about.

Yet there are glimpses of joy all around us and signs of God's presence.

As you walk this week, be open to the simple signs of joy all around us:

- Wonder at the beauty of creation
- Pause to look up at the sky
- Smile
- Enjoy a good conversation with a friend

Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people" — Luke 2:9-10

Loving God, this week in our Advent journey, open our eyes to the joy that surrounds us. Help us to not overlook the simple joys that speak into our lives daily.

*And so, we thank you for those times when we are quite literally 'Surprised by Joy.' Help us to know the joy that the good news of Jesus Christ brings to all.
Amen.*

Week 4 — Love

The gospel is a gospel of love.

Of God's love for the world.

And of our love for God, love for our neighbours, love for ourselves.

As you walk this week, reflect on times when you have experienced God's love.

Think about how you can share God's love with others.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” — John 3:16

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” — Matthew 22:36-40

Loving God, we thank you for your great love for us. We thank you that by sending us your son Jesus Christ, you showed us how to love. Let us experience and live out that love, and share it with those we meet. Amen

All Bible quotes taken from The Holy Bible, NRSV.