



From Generation to Generation

A Social Justice Advent Guide for Families

Lectionary Year C



North Carolina Council of Churches

Strength in Unity, Peace through Justice

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
First Sunday in Advent: Hope for Our Future	4
Second Sunday in Advent: Peace for Our World	6
Third Sunday in Advent: Joy for Our Blessings	7
Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love for Our Neighbors	8
Christmas Eve: Unity for Our Faiths	9
Conclusion.....	10

Introduction

Stores are covered in Christmas decorations earlier and earlier each year. Halloween pumpkins are barely put away before the first strains of Christmas music come on the radio. Santa Claus competes with turkeys on table top displays. The headlong rush into Christmas can be a source of stress and anxiety. Christmas marks the end of the year according to the secular calendar; however, on the sacred calendar, Christmas is near the beginning of the year's holy seasons.

The Christian calendar begins at the end of November with the season of Advent. The name Advent is derived from the Latin word, *adventus*, which means "coming." Rather than the rush of the secular, commercialized holiday season, the season of Advent allows us to slow down, to reflect on the seasons past and season to come, and to prepare our hearts to receive Christ, not only in the form of the Christ child on Christmas day, but also in the Second Coming. This is a season of anticipation, reflection, and expectation. It is a season of longing – not for the gifts under the Christmas tree, but for the ultimate gift – Christ. Advent is a season of both joyful and solemn anticipation of deliverance.

Because the season of Advent is a time of awaiting the Christ child and the risen Christ, it is a perfect time to think about social justice issues. Christ's ministry, which is explored in other seasons of the Christian year, focuses on lifting up those whom society regarded as worthless or weak, including the poor, the ill, the foreigner, women, and children. Social justice was at the core of Jesus' ministry. Based on the Advent readings for Lectionary Year C, this guide will assist you in slowing down this season by taking 20-30 minutes one night a week to focus on social justice.

The four Sundays before Christmas comprise Advent. The weeks are often marked using an Advent wreath. Traditionally, an Advent wreath is made of evergreens. Both the evergreens and the circular shape of the wreath represent everlasting life or the promise of eternal life in Christ. The wreath includes five candles: one candle for each of the four Sundays plus a Christ candle that is lighted on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

The liturgical color for Advent is purple, the same as the color for Lent, which reflects the penitential nature of preparing ourselves for Christ's coming. Some traditions use blue candles rather than purple. The four candles represent Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. The candle representing the third week, Joy, is sometimes pink or rose-colored. Just as Sundays during Lent are considered mini-Easters, the Joy candle in the Advent wreath reminds us that awaiting the Lord is a joyful time as well as a time of penance. The Christ candle is white, and it's usually the largest candle in the wreath. It is sometimes decorated with gold or jewels to reflect Christ's royalty.

This Advent guide is meant for home use among family and friends. Consider creating your Advent wreath together, gathering the supplies and placing it in a prominent location where you will see it throughout the season of Advent. On the first Sunday, you will read the first lesson and light the candle. As the week progresses, you may make a ritual of lighting the first candle each evening, perhaps before supper, to remind you of hope. As always when using candles, please be sure not to leave a burning candle unsupervised, especially around children, and don't forget to extinguish the candles before bedtime! The second week of Advent, you will read the second lesson and light the candles of Hope and Peace. Again, throughout the week you may light these two candles as reminders. On the third Sunday, you will read the lesson and light the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy. The fourth week, you will light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. On the fifth week of the study, which corresponds with Christmas, light all four candles plus the Christ candle. You may choose to do this either on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. You may also choose to simply share the devotionals as a family. What matters is that you take this time together.

About the NC Council of Churches

Since its inception more than 75 years ago, the North Carolina Council of Churches has used Christian values to promote unity and working toward a better tomorrow. This is reflected through the Council's motto: "Strength through Unity, Peace through Love."

Today, the Council consists of eighteen member denominations, with more than 6,200 congregations and about 1.5 million congregants across North Carolina. The Council enables those denominations, congregations, and people of faith to impact the state on issues of health and wellness, climate change, immigration policy, farmworker rights, legislation, and much more.

Over the past two years, the Council has also focused on a theme connecting each of these issues, food, helping people of faith learn about this most basic necessity for survival, how it relates to our beliefs, and how those two intersect. To learn more about the Council and its work, visit www.ncchurches.org.

We pray that this study enriches the Advent season as we all await the coming of Christ in whom there is peace and justice for all. Amen.

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First Sunday in Advent: Hope for Our Future

Prayer:

Creator God, we await the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ, light of the world. We pray that you open our hearts and minds during this season of Advent so we may learn how to be agents of positive change. Amen.

Scripture: Luke 21:25-36 (NRSV)

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Social Justice Reflection:

This passage from Luke’s Gospel describes a time of turmoil and dramatic change, drawing vivid imagery from nature. For those who see care of creation as a responsibility given by God, humankind has put the earth on a path to a different type of upheaval. The climate is changing. Average temperatures have been climbing since the 1880s, and the rate of warming is increasing. The last two decades of the 20th century were the hottest decades in 400 years. Glaciers and arctic ice are melting, affecting the sea level, animals and indigenous peoples. There has also been an increase in extreme weather events such as tropical storms and heat waves.

North Carolina has kept pace with the global trend of greenhouse gas emissions and will suffer from the resulting climate change. Over the next century, the temperatures in the Southeast are projected to rise four degrees, which will make central North Carolina feel like central Florida. The rising sea level will impact wetlands and low-lying areas, erode beaches, and increase flooding. An intensification of storms will cause significant damage.

Humans contribute significantly to this change. Greenhouse gases are produced through our technological

advances, particularly in the use of fossil fuels and the development of factory farming. Fossil fuels are used to produce electricity and for transportation. When fossil fuels are burned, they emit carbon dioxide. Humans are producing more carbon dioxide than trees and plants can process. The animals on factory farms produce vast amounts of methane, which also contribute to climate change.

At Creation, God charged humans with a specific task. The Hebrew word used in Genesis 1:28 to describe this task is *radah*. This word is often translated as “dominion.” However, the dominion with which humans are charged is not a harsh rule but loving care. A more accurate translation may be “caretaking” or “stewardship” of Creation. We have been entrusted with Creation, to care for it and steward it. We are failing.

As we wait for the coming of Christ, we must practice care of the Creation that has been entrusted to us. Turning off electronics when not in use, replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents, walking or using public transportation rather than driving, and buying locally grown food are all ways in which we can reduce our carbon emissions and steward the earth.

Our actions create hope. This hope is for a future in which all of creation respected, loved, and cared for. We do not wait alone. The whole earth waits for Christ. Let us be the loving stewards God called us to be.

Talking to Children:

Tell the children that cars release bad stuff into the air. Sometimes we have to drive, but there are other times that we can walk, bike, or take the bus. Ask the kids to help remind you to drive less.

Lighting the Candle:

Tonight we light the candle of hope. We hope for a future in which all of Creation is respected and lovingly stewarded. We light this candle as a sign of that hope.

Closing Prayer:

Almighty Creator, you entrusted us with a task, and we have failed. We pray that you strengthen us to try anew. Open our eyes to the needs of Creation – the need for alternative energy, the need for sustainable farming practices, the need for simpler lifestyles that will allow us to be the caretakers you charged us to be. As we await the Christ child and the Second Coming in this season of Advent, nurture within us the desire to be stewards of your good Creation. In the name of Christ, Lord of all creation, we pray. Amen.

Nightly Supper Topic:

How did you try to take care of the earth today?

First Sunday in Advent: Hope for Our Future (continued)

Sources and Resources:

- North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light:
www.ncipl.org
- North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light, “Caring for Creation: A Prayer and Action Guide for a Lenten ‘Fast from Carbon’”: [www.ncipl.org/uploads/file/Lenten%20Carbon%20Fast\(1\).pdf](http://www.ncipl.org/uploads/file/Lenten%20Carbon%20Fast(1).pdf)
- National Geographic: http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/12/1206_041206_global_warming.html
- North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light, “Caring for God’s Creation During Advent and Beyond.”: www.ncipl.org/uploads/file/Advent%20Prayer%20and%20Action%20Guide.pdf

Second Sunday in Advent: Peace for Our World

Prayer:

Loving God, as we await the Prince of Peace, help us to recognize that peace begins with us. Amen.

Scripture: Luke 3:1-6 (NRSV)

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Social Justice Reflection:

Prepare the way of the Lord! This cry reminds us that during Advent, we not only wait for the birth of the Christ child, we also look forward with longing to the time of the Second Coming of Christ. To prepare the way of the Lord, we must start within ourselves. One way in which we can prepare for the coming of the Lord is to practice peace in all that we do and say.

In chaos theory, there is a concept called the Butterfly Effect. According to this concept, a butterfly flapping its wings in one part of the world can be part of a chain of events that results in a hurricane on the other side of the globe. Small actions can lead to dramatic consequences. The same is true with peace. While world peace is a just and noble desire, it is also an overwhelming goal to start with. Instead of trying to create peace in the whole world, we should start by practicing peace in our own lives.

Jesus resisted an entire empire, and he did it peacefully. Jesus' example of nonviolent resistance inspired figures the world over, from Martin Luther King, Jr. to Mahatma Gandhi. We can follow their examples by practicing peace in our everyday lives. St. Francis of Assisi is said to have taught, "Preach the Gospel always; if necessary, use words." As Christians, our lives are our witness. That witness is seen in a thousand small ways, from the way we speak to our friends and family members to the way we drive our cars. We witness every time we interact with another person.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Following his example, let us practice peace in our speech, in our behavior, and in our interactions. This peace may take the form of thinking before we speak, practicing patience, showing gratitude, or being charitable.

For Children:

Tell children that the way they talk to people in class, on the playground, and at home are all ways that we practice peace.

Lighting the Candles:

We light the first candle as a symbol of hope that we will grow into the stewards God has charged us to be. We light the second candle to show our commitment to peace.

Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, we ask that you help us practice peace in all of our interactions. As we go through our week, remind us that peace starts with us. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Nightly Supper Topic:

How did you practice peace today?

Sources and Resources:

- NC Peace Action: www.ncpeaceaction.org
- The Peace Booth at the NC State Fair: www.ncpeacebooth.org
- Witness for Peace: www.witnessforpeace.org

Third Sunday in Advent: Joy for Our Blessings

Prayer:

Loving God, you sent us the Great Physician, Jesus Christ, who charged us with the care of one another. You also blessed us with physical forms, and we are charged with the care of those, as well. Help us to share kindly, to choose wisely, and to pursue spiritual and physical wholeness even as we await being made whole in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Scripture: Luke 3:7-18 (NRSV)

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Social Justice Reflection:

John is filled with prophetic fire, but his message is deceptively simple. He warns that there is a messiah coming in judgment, and in fear the people ask, "What do we do?" John's answer: Be nice to each other. Share what you have, don't be greedy, and treat one another fairly. These are all actions that people of every age can do. Ordinary people in ordinary circumstances can show the extraordinary love of Christ to the world, and in doing so, they will bear good fruits. One of the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) is self-control. By living into it, limiting excess, and taking no more than we need, we help each other and ourselves. God wants us to be strong spiritually, and our kindness toward one another builds that "muscle." God also wants us to be strong physically and to respect the body we are given. Our choices and self-control literally help build that muscle.

Every year, thousands of North Carolinians die of preventable diseases. Nearly two-thirds of adults and one-third of children in North Carolina are overweight or obese. Regular exercise and good nutrition reduce the risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, stroke, some cancers, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, and bone loss. Nearly one-quarter of North Carolinians smoke, even though cigarette smoking causes 87% of all lung cancer deaths and poses a significant risk to nonsmokers in the form of secondhand smoke. There are simple steps that can be taken to lead people of faith towards healthier lives, including smoking cessation, more nutritious diets, and increased exercise. As the Great Physician, Jesus heals the sick, guides the lost, and liberates the oppressed. We can participate with Christ in this healing by making better choices for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

The season of Advent and the days that follow are a time of giving, but they can also be a time of indulgence. Let us share what we have with gratitude for God's blessings and let us commit to our spiritual and physical well-being by living out God's call to us in appreciation of Christ's sacrifice for us.

For Children:

A beloved hymn called "Count Your Blessings" says, "Count your blessings, name them one by one. Count your blessings, see what God hath done!" Ask the children to name some of the blessings they see around them, such as home, family, friends, food, health. If you know the hymn, teach the chorus to the children to remind them to be thankful and joyful for all their blessings.

Lighting the Candles:

We light the first candle as a symbol of hope that we will grow into the stewards God has charged us to be. We light the second candle to show our commitment to peace. We light the third candle with joy in our hearts for the blessings that God has given us.

Closing Prayer:

Great Physician, we pray for the wholeness you bring through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Help us remember to count our blessings, to share with those in need, and to choose wisely for ourselves. Amen.

Nightly Supper Topic:

What blessings did you share today? What good choices did you make that helped you or someone else?

Sources and Resources:

- Partners in Health and Wholeness: www.healthandwholeness.org
- Working Preacher: www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?lect_date=12/13/2009&tab=4
- Cyber Hymnal: www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/c/o/county.htm

Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love for Our Neighbors

Prayer:

God of the Exodus, you lead people from oppression and set the captives free. You raise up the poor and lowly. Open our eyes to our neighbors, so that we truly see all people as our neighbors, and love them as you have commanded us. Amen.

Scripture: Luke 1:39-45, (46-55) (NRSV)

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Social Justice Reflection:

God chose an unwed, teenage mother to bear the Son. This continues the pattern of God choosing the youngest, the lowest, and the weakest over the mighty and the strong. God shows us that all people are valuable. During this season of Advent, how can we open our eyes to the last, the least, and the lost among us? How can we value those whom society has undervalued?

There are approximately 150,000 farmworkers in North Carolina. Agriculture represents 22% of North Carolina's income, contributing over \$69 billion annually to the state economy. However, most farmworkers are exempt from minimum wage laws, and all are exempt from overtime provisions. Farmworkers' wages are so low that nearly five out of ten North Carolina farmworkers cannot afford enough food for themselves and their families. Additionally, farmworkers are plagued with poor housing, overcrowding, pesticide exposure, and high rates of illness which are compounded by limited access to healthcare. Farmworkers are also at high risk for on-the-job injuries from carrying heavy loads, bending and stooping, and

operating dangerous equipment. Farmworkers also endure the highest rate of toxic chemical injuries and skin disorders of any workers in the country from working with pesticides and other chemicals. Twenty-four percent of tobacco workers experience nicotine poisoning at least once a growing season. In just one day, workers can absorb the amount of nicotine found in 35 cigarettes. Farmworkers' health problems are compounded by poor sanitation and substandard housing, both of which increase the risk of contracting infectious diseases such as tuberculosis. Eighty-five percent of the fruits and vegetables we eat are harvested by hand, but farmworkers remain almost completely invisible from the public eye.

God chose Mary, an unknown, unwed young woman, to bear the Son of Man. God saw in Mary the ability to magnify not her own name, but God's. By recognizing farmworkers as our neighbors and loving them as ourselves, we magnify God's name.

For Children:

Talk to the children about where food comes from – farms. Tell them about the farmworkers who pick their food, and how important it is to realize that all people need to be loved and cared for.

Lighting the Candles:

We light the first candle as a symbol of hope that we will grow into the stewards God has charged us to be. We light the second candle to show our commitment to peace. We light the third candle with joy in our hearts for the blessings that God has given us. We light the fourth candle with love in our hearts for all of our neighbors.

Closing Prayer:

Mighty God who brings down the powerful and raises up the lowly, help us look into the faces around us and recognize our neighbors. Teach us to search out those who have been hidden away, those who are mistreated and abused so that we can be advocates for them. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Nightly Supper Topic:

How did you care for your neighbor today?

Sources and Resources:

- NCCC Farmworker Ministry Committee: www.ncfarmworkers.org
- National Farmworker Ministry: www.nfwm.org
- Farmworker Advocacy Network: www.ncfan.org
- Student Action with Farmworkers: www.saf-unite.org

Christmas Eve: Unity for Our Faiths

Prayer:

Lord of all creation, we have been eagerly awaiting the birth of your Son, and we are just as eagerly awaiting the return of your Son. As we continue to work towards social justice, remind us to seek unity. Just as you are Parent, Son, and Holy Spirit, help us to see that our Christian brothers and sisters of all denominations are members of the Body of Christ. Amen.

Scripture: Luke 2:1-14, (15-20) (NRSV)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Social Justice Reflection:

The angels delivered good news of great joy for all people. As Christians work towards social justice, we must remember to work with our brothers and sisters from different denominations. We can acknowledge our differences in theology, organization, forms of worship, and styles of music while still working together for the common good of social justice.

In 1976, Millard and Linda Fuller founded Habitat for Humanity, a Christian housing ministry whose vision is a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Habitat for Humanity builds and rehabilitates homes alongside homeowner partner families. Habitat works with the poor, not for the poor. Houses are built by volunteers and the homeowner family. Habitat homeowners and volunteers are people from diverse racial, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. People of all faiths – or no faith – are welcome as long as they "actively embrace Habitat's goal of eliminating poverty housing from the world." Fuller said that his guiding concept was the "theology of the hammer". The theology of the hammer is about "building bridges of understanding with a wide diversity of people in order to put that faith and love into action to accomplish our lofty, seemingly impossible goal of eliminating poverty housing and homelessness." Fuller explains that it's not enough to simply talk about our faith, we must put our faith into action. Diverse people work together to accomplish this goal. The theology of the hammer overcomes political, theological, and philosophical differences.

God's love and grace abound. As we work for social justice for the earth, for peace, for health, and for farmworkers, let us remember that Christ is Savior, Messiah, and Lord of all.

For Children:

Remind them that all people are God's children. It is important to try to get along with and work together with other people.

Lighting the Candles:

We light the first candle as a symbol of hope that we will grow into the stewards God has charged us to be. We light the second candle to show our commitment to peace. We light the third candle with joy in our hearts for the blessings that God has given us. We light the fourth candle with love in our hearts for all of our neighbors. We light the Christ candle in anticipation of the unity of all of God's children.

Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, as we move from the anticipation of Advent to the joy of Christmas morning, help us remember that justice begins with us. Make us ever mindful of your good creation. Help us to speak peaceably to one another. Remind us of the blessing of our bodies, which are temples of your Holy Spirit. Open our eyes to our brothers and sisters in need. Help us work together to bring about social justice for all of your children. It is with great thanksgiving for the birth of your Son and with hearts still excitedly awaiting His second coming that we pray. Amen.

Christmas Eve: Unity for Our Faiths (continued)

Nightly Supper Topic:

What did you do when you encountered someone that you didn't get along with today?

Sources:

- Habitat for Humanity: www.habitat.org
- Millard Fuller, *A Simple, Decent Place to Live: The Building Realization of Habitat for Humanity* (USA: Word, 1995), 104.

Conclusion

We pray that this Advent guide has been a blessing to you and your family this season. As you continue through the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany, may you continue to see the social justice issues in your community. Perhaps as a New Year's resolution you or your family will pick one of the issues this guide raised and continue to study, learn, and act on it.

For additional faith-based resources on social justice, please visit www.ncchurches.org.