

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

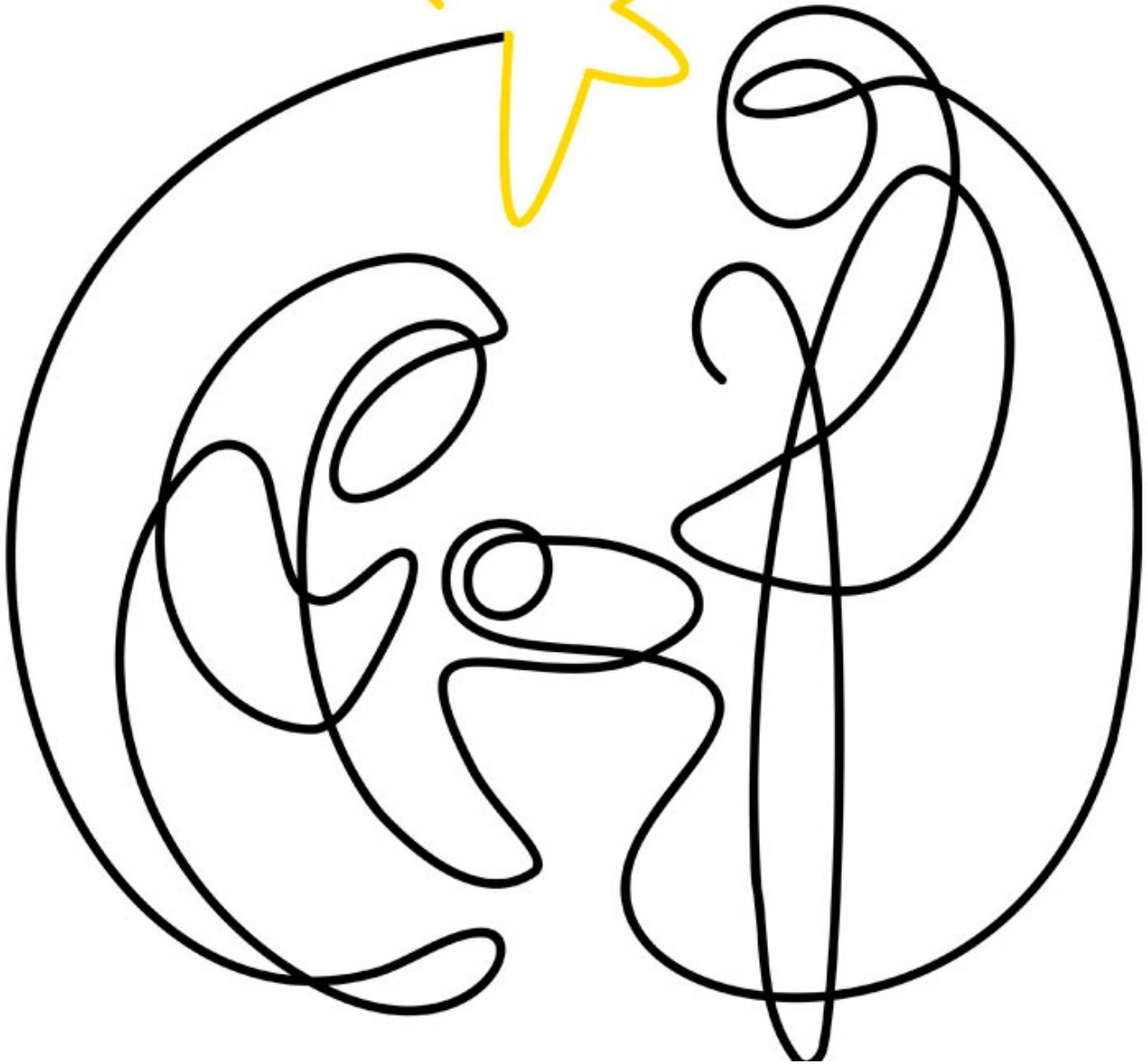


ADVENT PROGRAM

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ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 24, 2024

Weekly theme: Love

SCRIPTURE

ISAIAH 35:1-10

1 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus 2 it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. 3 Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. 4 Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; 6 then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; 7 the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

8 A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. 9 No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. 10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

DEVOTION

The Rev. Rebecca L. Dix '15/'17

I struggle when wilderness is used as a metaphor to describe being lost, hopeless, or in despair. Living amid an arid climate, I witness the abundance of life within the wilderness. The dry and desert places hold the beauty of such a complex and diverse ecosystem. However, I had to learn to see it. I had to let go of what I thought thriving and life was supposed to look like. I had to let go of the preconceptions carried from where I had been before in order to see things anew in the place I am now.

This is the same invitation, the call, the beckoning we receive on Christmas Eve. To see the world anew. To see Love in abundance when it may appear there is none. To see anew when at first all we may see is dry and empty land. For Love is there, is here, is coming. For Love is born to us this day. A Love whose name is Emmanuel.

PRAYER

Lord, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, give us eyes that see you in this season. Open our blind hearts so we may be a faithful people who rejoice and hope in Love. Amen.

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