

- **REFLECT:** How is God leading you as a result of your participation in these activities and prayers throughout Advent?
- **SHARE:** Gather any funds collected this past month and bring them to the church service on Sunday, January 7 or 14, 2018 to give in a offering to Just in Time - a local [nonprofit](http://nonprofit.org) that supports 18 year-olds in their transition out of foster care.
- **SERVE:** Connect with the organizations we've supported this month to see how you can join in their work!

at the end of advent . . .

GO	DO	GIVE	LEARN	PRAY	READ
Start the conversation. Many children stay in the foster care system for five years or more. How can we as a church community be talking about what it means to care for the orphan? Are there things we can do as a community? Think seriously about what it means for yourself or those close to you to adopt a child.	Count the number of children (ages 1-18) in your immediate and extended family. Put a dime in your donation jar on behalf of each child in your family to donate towards all the children still in the system in need of a family.	Adoption fees are very expensive. The average international adoption costs between \$35,000 - 40,000. Seek out friends or people who are in the adoption process. Come along side them, support them, and donate money for this huge endeavor!	It is estimated that there are 18 million children worldwide who are orphans. In the U.S., the average age of a child waiting to be adopted is 7.7 years old and 29% of them will spend at least three years in foster care. The US adopts more children internationally and locally than the rest of the world combined. 81.5 million Americans have thought about adoption. If just 1 in 500 of these adults adopted, every waiting child would have a permanent family.	Pray for children in the adoption systems, that they would feel a deep sense of belonging and love. Pray for people to step out in boldness and adopt. Pray for parents of adopted children. Pray for energy and resources to create a safe home of love and life. Pray for education, that people would learn more about the adoption system and be compelled to take action.	"Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow;" Isaiah 1:17 Add a dime every day this week for each person in your household who recites it correctly.

WEEK 4: PROVIDING LOVE THROUGH ADOPTION

- Sean Sand, First Church Member & Junior High PE Teacher

"I always knew I wanted to connect and be in the lives of others, specifically young people. That's why I chose teaching as a career. But volunteering as a youth staff not only allowed me to serve high school students, but to do it with the blueprints of faith. Reflecting on it now, the biggest gift is that what started as volunteering with students and other youth staff grew into friendships I still cherish today."

Sean's story:

2017 READVENTING christmas

The prayers, information, & activities of this calendar help us "reinvent" the Advent season, by focusing on **mindfulness, gratitude, reflection, & compassion** amidst the noise of commercial Christmas culture. In that spirit, let's "ReAdvent" together.

This year's calendar theme, "It Takes a Village," invites us to learn about, pray for, and honor children and teens in need of help - and the various ways we can step in to be family of all forms.

WEEK 1: CREATING HOPE THROUGH FOSTER CARE

READ	PRAY	LEARN	GIVE	DO	GO
Jesus says in Matthew 22:37-39: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Give a dime every day for each person in your household who recites it correctly.	"May we have a posture that is open to loving the children around us. May we never be closed-minded to the possibility that God could use us for something extraordinary. May we learn to love boldly and in ways that draw us out of our comfort zone. Teach, shape, and show me how I can open my home to love others more intently." Amen	In the U.S., approximately 402,000 children are without permanent families in the foster care system. Approximately 4,500 live in San Diego. Learn more at: fostercoalition.com Blog post about the joys and challenges of fostering: tinyurl.com/y8scskfo	There is a big need to help foster children transition to adulthood. Just in Time is an organization that helps 18-year-old foster youth achieve self-sufficiency and well-being. Donate gently used items like furniture & home décor or new items like cleaning supplies & sheets to children aging out of the system. Visit Just in Time's site: tinyurl.com/yd5bd7h5	Consider becoming a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) and be trained to speak on behalf of the interests of abused and neglected children in court and other settings. For more info, visit: tinyurl.com/4shog5a	Think about who has taken good care of you, especially as a child. Give a quarter for up to 5 of these people. How can you love the people around you boldly? Think of the children in your life who need you to share the hope of Jesus with them.

before you start...

Make this work for you! Pick & choose among the activities or shift monetary amounts. To be ready for activities that suggest amounts to donate, it's helpful to have coins on hand at the start and designate a common jar to collect coins...or create an "IOU" tracking sheet.

WEEK 2: PROMOTING PEACE THROUGH ADVOCACY

READ	PRAY	LEARN	GIVE	DO	GO
<p>James 1:27 says, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God is this: to care for the orphans and widows in distress."</p> <p>Add a dime every day this week for each person in your household who recites it correctly.</p>	<p>Pray for freedom, justice, hope, peace, and healing for the victims of abuse. Pray for their freedom and restoration. Pray for our first responders and trauma counselors who support the victims of child abuse through such tragedies. Pray that the Church may find its role in ending child abuse. May we be on the forefront of eliminating child abuse and raise up leaders who seek to confront it in all arenas.</p>	<p>A CSEC study shows that child sex trafficking is an annual 810 million dollar industry. There are 3000-7000 victims annually and 90% of these victims are U.S. children and teens.</p> <p>Recruitment has been shown at nearly every high school and many junior highs in San Diego. If you see anything suspicious, call the national hotline: 888-373-7888.</p> <p>For more information, visit: www.abolishhumantrafficking.com</p>	<p>Give your time by volunteering at a local shelter that houses victims of abuse and trafficking.</p> <p>Give your money through gift cards (Target & ToysRUs) for the children in shelters with their abused moms.</p> <p>Give your professional skills to these shelters.</p> <p>For info on any of the above, contact the church office or email: Michelle Shoemaker: mshoemak@pointloma.edu</p>	<p>Take out your phone...and add the National Human Trafficking Hotline to your contacts so you can call it if you see anything suspicious or have any questions: 888-373-7888.</p> <p>Add a dime for every person in your household who adds this number to their phone (or for anyone you encourage to do so!)</p>	<p>Go to a Churches Against Trafficking meeting. This is an organization that consists of a network of inter-denominational churches that meet every other month on the third Thursday at Mission Church of the Nazarene. All are welcome. The purpose is to network with Christians around this issue of child abuse and sex trafficking and to be a resource to the various victims' shelters in San Diego.</p> <p>Go to: churchesagainstrafficking.com</p>

annette's story:

"It came to my attention that children in the foster care system experience constant upheaval and inconsistency. The role of the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) is largely to be a consistent influence. This consistency leads to a higher rate of university attendance and completion just by experiencing the care of a CASA. We are the eyes and ears for the child and have their best interest at heart. It has been lovely sitting with my foster child. I know that healing is taking place even in our silence."

- Annette Jones, First Church Member & School Psychologist

WEEK 3: GIVING JOY THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

READ	PRAY	LEARN	GIVE	DO	GO
<p>Galatians 6:10 "So then, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the family of faith."</p> <p>Add a dime every day this week for each person in your household who recites it correctly.</p>	<p>Pray that our family of faith might be enlarged. That we might have the capacity to invite our children and families to the table. That we may have eyes to see all the ways in which the children & teenagers of our community contribute to the body of Christ. Pray for the volunteers that they might form our children and youth in significant and meaningful ways.</p>	<p>Explore The Fuller Youth Institute: fulleryouthinstitute.org</p> <p>Read an article or two from the site on the importance of inter-generational ministries.</p> <p>Learn more about "Sticky Faith." Begin to see the ways that non-parental mentors are integral to faith formation.</p>	<p>Share your experiences, life's lessons, and stories with the children and youth in the church! Give of your time, your talents, and your love. Show God's mercy, grace, and love through your words and deeds. Give freely of your smiles, laughter, and joy. Whatever you give will be given back to you ten-fold!</p> <p>Add 50 cents for an important mentor from your teen years. Send them a thank you note, if you can!</p>	<p>Contact the children & youth leaders of the church.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelle James, Children's Director: shelle@sdfcnaz.com • Niko Garcia, Mid-High Pastor: niko@sdfcnaz.com • Matt Wilson, Senior High Pastor: matt@sdfcnaz.com <p>Ask about the ways that you can be of service, what needs they may have, and the best ways you can help them in reaching the young people within our community.</p>	<p>Volunteer in the nursery, teach a Children's Sunday School, or mentor a mid-high or senior high school student.</p> <p>Help with fundraisers and contribute to them.</p> <p>Share creative ideas you may have for fundraising.</p> <p>Be willing to speak to youth on relevant topics in which you have expertise.</p> <p>See if there are children who don't have extended family close-by. Volunteer to be an adopted grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, sister, or friend.</p>

lexii's story:

"I was adopted when I was 3 years old. It honestly has been the best thing that has ever happened to me. God has used Mary and Stanley (my adoptive parents) to love me in ways that I would not have been loved if I stayed with my biological parents. Stanley was 60 years old and Mary was 53 years old when they chose to take me in. They truly had no idea what was going to happen when they took me in, but standing where we are today, life is so much sweeter because of their faithfulness to God and to the tug they felt on their hearts. I am a lover of and believer in Jesus because of them. I have experienced the love of the Father because I was adopted into a Christian home and I will forever be grateful to be adopted!"

- Lexii Ybarra, First Church Member & PLNU Admissions Counselor