

sean's story:

"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 Sand, First Church Member & Junior High PE Teacher

WEEK 4: PROVIDING LOVE THROUGH ADOPTION

READ	PRAY	LEARN	GIVE	DO	GO
<p>"Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphans, plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:17</p> <p>Add a dime every day this week for each person in your household who recites it correctly.</p>	<p>Pray for children in the adoption systems, that they would feel a deep sense of belonging and love.</p> <p>Pray for people to step out in boldness and adopt.</p> <p>Pray for parents of adopted children. Pray for energy and resources to create a safe home of love and life.</p> <p>Pray for education, that people would learn more about the adoption system and be compelled to take action.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The US adopts more children internationally and locally than the rest of the world combined.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Adoption fees are very expensive. The average inter-national 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!</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

at the end of advent. . .

- **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](#) 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!