

December 21 | "An Ordinary Faith"



Ordinary  
*Wonders*





WHO IS GOD CALLING YOU TO BRING WITH YOU TO CHRISTMAS EVE?



Take a picture of this invite and text it to a friend, neighbor, or family member. Don't just invite them—offer to go to the service and sit with them.

A white, multi-pointed star with a soft glow, centered above the title.

# Christmas Eve

1:00 | 2:30 | 4:00 | 5:30



THE JOURNEY.org /CHRISTMAS



# Luke 2:22-28

<sup>22</sup> And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

<sup>29</sup> “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,  
according to your word;  
<sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation  
<sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup> And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup> (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

<sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup> and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.



# DON'T ISOLATE. *LIGHT IT UP!*



In seasons of waiting, we can often isolate ourselves to avoid other sorrows. Spend time this Christmas season leaning into vulnerable relationships. Start a tradition of going to see Christmas lights with a group of friends.

For added fun, rent a 15-passenger van so you can all ride together!

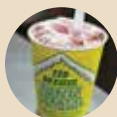


## HERE ARE SOME FAVORITE LIGHT DISPLAYS IN ST. LOUIS:



### Garden Glow

Missouri Botanical Garden  
Adult \$24 | Child \$12



### Candy Cane Lane

6500 block of Murdoch Avenue  
*Don't forget to grab Ted Drewes on your way!*



### Winter Wonderland

Tilles Park, Ladue  
Prebook to reserve a horse drawn carriage.



### Holiday Lights at Grant's Farm

7385 Grant Rd.  
Walking tours are on Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday.  
Driving tours are on Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday.





# THE *Advent Candle*

Each week of Advent, we open our hearts to the God who meets us in the ordinary. We remember that His glory is often revealed in quiet moments and simple places, and we trust that this same God still brings hope, peace, joy, and love into our everyday lives in surprising and unseen ways.

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## **READER 1:**

On the night Jesus was born, heaven met earth not with spectacle but with grace—God made flesh, lying in a manger.

## **READER 2:**

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth.”

— John 1:14

## **READER 3:**

As we light the candle of Love, we are reminded that God’s love transforms ordinary moments into sacred encounters.

## **ALL:**

God of ordinary wonders, let Your love dwell in us, and open our eyes to see Your grace in every humble moment.





# Faith Formed by the Spirit

**W**hen we talk about faith, certain qualities often come to mind. We might think of endurance—faith as simply holding on through hardship, gritting our teeth and surviving. Or we may think of faith negatively, as something blind: ignoring reality and slapping the word “faith” on a situation just to get through it.

In the story of Simeon and Anna in Luke 2, we’re given a different vision of faith. Their faith was not fueled by sheer human will, nor was it rooted in denying reality. Instead, their faith was formed by the Holy Spirit, sustained through prayer and fasting, and expressed in worship.

In verses 26–27, the Holy Spirit is mentioned three times. The Spirit was upon Simeon, the Spirit spoke to him and gave him a promise, and the Spirit even directed him where to be and when. This leading ultimately resulted in Simeon receiving what had been promised: he would see the Messiah. Simeon’s faith was rooted in a lived experience of the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly, he experienced doubt and frustration along the way, yet he continued to show up at the temple—a

regular practice of faithfulness. And one ordinary day, his long waiting came to an end. His faith was rewarded when he saw Jesus.

Then there is Anna. She was married for seven years before losing her husband, and she never remarried. Her response was to remain in the temple—the place of God’s presence—devoting herself to prayer, worship, and fasting. Over the course of her long life, she likely felt forgotten and alone. But God saw her. Luke identifies her as “the daughter of Penuel,” a name that echoes Genesis 32, when Jacob names the place “Peniel” because he had seen God face to face. Luke’s audience would have caught the connection: Anna, in her quiet faithfulness, would now see God face to face in Jesus. What appeared to be an ordinary life of devotion was, in fact, a faith that God honored.

- **Where might you be relying on endurance or denial instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to shape and sustain your faith?**
- **What ordinary practices (prayer, worship, showing up) might God be inviting you to remain faithful in as you wait for Him to act?**





Practices are rhythms we put in our life that over time, form all of who we are. Learn more about Practices at [thejourney.org/ApprenticeshipPathway](http://thejourney.org/ApprenticeshipPathway)

**During this season, there are four practices we want to encourage you to consider: Sabbath, Community, Generosity, and Service.**

These are not checklists to add to an already overly busy season. These are simply ways that might invite you to experience more of what God wants for us.

## Service

- Volunteer locally — spend a morning helping at a shelter, food pantry, or church ministry.
- Random act of service — hold the door, carry groceries, shovel a neighbor's walkway — small gestures that make ordinary life easier for someone else.



## Simple Practices to Build Service



God is at work—quietly, faithfully, powerfully—awakening hearts and changing lives through ordinary people who say yes. Every week we hear stories of individuals stirred by the love of Jesus: lives renewed, communities formed, faith awakened. And we believe this is only the beginning. God has more for our church, more for our city, and more for every person willing to step in with faith and generosity. When you give, you're not funding a moment—you're joining God's vision to see our city awakened to and transformed by the love of Jesus.

As you consider end-of-year giving, you can learn more and give online at [thejourney.org/give](https://thejourney.org/give), through The Church Center App, or by contributing non-cash gifts such as stocks, trusts, wills, and other assets.



# GOD HAS MORE.