

Planning



Sunday, November 26 – Saturday, December 2 • 2023

Reigning Christ

As the Season after Pentecost draws to a close, we take Christ's call to heart and seek to imagine the world of love and justice God hopes for this world.

This Week...

Ecumenical prayer calendar

Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore

As listed in *Pilgrim Prayer: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, edited by Ester Pudjo Widiasih and Karen L. Bloomquist. (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2018). <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle> offers valuable aids for intercessory prayers, prayer on behalf of and in solidarity with others.

Special days ([commentary](#) on p. 172)

November 26 – Day of the Covenant (*Baha'i*)

November 30 – St. Andrew

December 1 – World AIDS Day

Personal reflection

Theologian Karl Barth is known to have said, "As we welcome all that might change when Christ comes to reign, read through your newspaper every day this week, noticing where God's realm already is."

The planning page is provided in text format for copying, adapting, and adding to your bulletin or online worship resources or website or social media (see Text folder, Worship Outline).

November 26, 2023

Reign of Christ/Christ the King

26th Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 29 (34)

34th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Revised Common Lectionary (Year A)

Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24

Psalm 100

Ephesians 1:15–23

Matthew 25:31–46

the focus in age-level materials



Seasons of the Spirit™
is based on **semi-continuous readings** of the
Revised Common Lectionary.

Liturgical colour White

The Season after Pentecost is a time to tell stories about God and who we are as Christ's disciples. Use the Storytelling Starters each week as an opportunity to encourage new stories. "[Story Slam](#)" on page 173 is an opportunity to bring together stories shared this season and celebrate with a night full of storytelling.

Online Resources

Lection Connection

Essays and discussion prompts linking current events with this week's scriptures. Use for sermon preparation, Bible studies, and small groups or share on social media at <https://www.seasonsonline.ca/10/>.

Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home

An easy-to-share, weekly online resource supports the spiritual lives and faith formation of individuals and families at home. It is provided in the [Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home](#) folder.





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Psalms 100

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Seasons of the Spirit™ is based on the semi-continuous readings of the Revised Common Lectionary.

Reigning Christ

A parable of the final judgment draws together key images used throughout the scriptures. Shepherd, ruler, judge, and cosmic culmination, test the perceptions of those who hear. The parable in this week's gospel passage has been used to identify those who are in and those who are ultimately out of the arena of God's effective will. Yet there is no place beyond the arena of God's activity. The one who is celebrated with joy by psalmist, prophet, and in the letter to the Ephesians, judges in completely unexpected ways.

Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24 makes clear that God's concern is not for insiders over and against outsiders but is for all who come under the parameters of God's care. Here, the prophet reminds the people of their identity and of their responsibility for one another. Where self-interest dominates, the wholeness of God's people is jeopardized. Yet when people live in the fullness of their relationship, the whole Earth rejoices. **Psalms 100** is a fearless and joyful response of complete trust in God.

Ephesians 1:15–23 identifies the wisdom and revelation of God's goodness and power in human life. The fullness of God's love and justice resides in Christ, who is "head over all things for the church" (v. 22).

Matthew 25:31–46 At the end of the teachings in the gospel of Matthew is this urgent, apocalyptic passage on the end of the present age. The last week has begun, and it is nearly time for the Passover meal. The image of the Son of Man coming in glory, seated on a throne, conjures the imagery of a powerful ruler. Matthew's community lives in a time that feels like the final tribulation has already begun.

This week's passage follows the parables of the wise and foolish "bridesmaids" (Matthew 25:1–12) and the talents (Matthew 25:13–30) and concludes a cycle of teaching about the realm of God. It echoes Matthew 16:27 and 19:28. Perhaps the earliest hearers were alerted to something extraordinary, indeed odd, about the expectations of those who seriously seek to live in the way of Jesus. These

Reign in our hearts, O God, and shape us as your people. Help us celebrate all the ways you reveal Christ to us – through our giving, our serving, our witness, and our worship. Amen.

passages tip the usual ideas of success, family, leadership, and personal value on their heads. The God whom Jesus is talking about seeks and saves the lost, defends the widow and the fatherless, welcomes strangers, puts right the wrongdoings of others, cares like a "mother hen," lifts people up on "eagles' wings," holds tenderly in the "palm of the hand," and is a shepherd who loves the sheep and knows each one by name.

In this context, Jesus' parables of the reign of God at the beginning of his ministry are brought to completion in the parable of a great judgment. Jesus identified five characteristics of God's saving action: it is all-embracing, inexplicable, real/tangible, encounters hostility as well as welcome, and calls for a response.

The shepherd is involved with both the sheep and the goats. Both remain within the realm of the shepherd/king but are separated for the best possible outcome for everyone. "We need to remind ourselves again that he [Jesus] habitually avoids depicting badness as an obstacle to the Kingdom, just as he carefully steers clear of making goodness one of its entrance requirements" (see Robert Farrar Capon, *Kingdom, Grace, Judgment: Paradox, Outrage, and Vindication in the Parables of Jesus*, pp. 504–7).

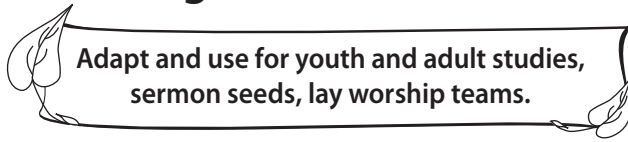
Works matter, but the response of confidence and trust in the one who makes the judgment is crucial! It is about a relationship of those who know each other deeply, intimately, confidently, and trustingly amidst all life's difficult and confusing situations. This is a parable of the amazing grace that brings its own peculiar judgment.

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As this Season after Pentecost draws to a close, we celebrate God's love for the community of creation. We embrace the call of Christ to share the love of God and open ourselves to encounter Christ as we live out God's great compassion. What is God's call to you and your church through the scriptures for this week? How might Christ's reign of justice, peace, and love become more visible through you?



Reflecting on the Word



Connecting with life

Outside of the church, very few people like to be called sheep. Any shepherd will tell you that sheep, although beautiful and kind, are not the most intelligent animals. They are overly trusting, instinctively willing to follow their leader anywhere, even if it means off a cliff.

- **Do you consider yourself a sheep in some situations? What are they?**

Scripture

Matthew 25:31–46 Just as many people do not like to be referred to as “sheep,” very few appreciate being identified as the “least” or the lesser.

- **How can interpretations of this scripture play into a charity model of justice?**
- **How has this text been co-opted to celebrate a charity model based on “haves” and “have-nots”?**
- **How can interpretations of this text account for the multiple identities with which people live?**

Verses 33, 34, and 41 refer to the right and the left hand. In Jewish tradition, the right hand refers to mercy and the left to justice.

- **How does this affect your reading of the passage?**
- **On this Reign of Christ/Christ the King Sunday, what image does this text offer of God’s reign in its fullness?**
- **What does it mean for us individually and as the church to give allegiance to Christ?**

Ephesians 1:15–23 reminds us that the church is Christ’s body.

- **What does it mean to be Christ’s body?**
- **If a body part cannot function in the way others suspect, is it still a welcome part of the body?**

Psalm 100 reminds us that we are, by our very nature, God’s sheep.

- **How do you see your congregation living out its sheepish nature by responding to the needs in your community?**
- **How do you respond to the needs of others without diminishing dignity and independence?**

Connecting scripture and life

- **In what ways can justice and advocacy work be incorporated into the outreach ministries of your community?**
- **What are the assumptions about the needs of people who are served in your community?**
- **How are these assumptions tested to ensure that the right needs are met?**

As this Season after Pentecost draws to a close, we celebrate God’s love for the community of creation. We embrace the call of Christ to share the love of God, opening ourselves to encountering Christ as we live out God’s great compassion.

- **How might Christ’s reign of justice, peace, and love be made more visible through you, individually, and as the church?**

Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving

“We who believe in freedom cannot rest.”

“Ella’s Song,” written by Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon and sung by the a cappella group “Sweet Honey in the Rock,” declares that there is no rest for freedom fighters until there is freedom for all. The same can be said for Christians; there is no rest for the followers of Jesus until Christ’s commonwealth is created here on Earth.

During worship, help people to imagine and explore what Christ’s commonwealth might look like, and what they believe is their part in bringing it about. Another element to examine is what will sustain people while they are working for this kin-dom. Where do they find hope in justice work? What helps them to persevere?



Reigning Christ



Prepare

NOTE: The following suggestions are mere starting points; adapt, delete, and add according to your local needs and context. If a community is gathered in person, they may speak the **bolded** lines. If worshippers are not all physically present, consider having a different individual say the bolded responses. Instructions are *italicized*.

- ❑ Recruit volunteers needed for worship.
- ❑ Choose an option for hearing Matthew 25:31–46. For the Bible story, arrange for a storyteller to present “Imagine” on p. 174. Alternatively, for younger children, arrange for a storyteller to present “The Queen Who Felt the People’s Love” in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials. For praying through the good news, select two readers. If a response centre is desired, set up a designated area with a variety of art materials such as construction paper, newspapers, magazines with many pictures, tissue paper, pipe cleaners, coloured yarn, chalk, pastels, scissors, glue, markers, crayons, and so on.
- ❑ Bring items for setting the worship space.
- ❑ You might choose to print *Desert Dancing* on or in your bulletin (in the Images to Project and Images for Printing folders). See “Connecting with the Art” on p. 8 for background to the art and artist.
- ❑ Bring song such as “As Long as We Follow/*Na Nzela Na Lola*” (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9, #17 on *Seasons Music CD*,

vol. 9. Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/.

- ❑ Set stations as described on pp. 175–176.

Music Suggestions	
	As Long as We Follow/<i>Na Nzela Na Lola</i> Joseph Kabemba; <i>Seasons Songbook</i> , vol. 9
	In God We Live and Move Bruce Harding; <i>Seasons Songbook</i> , vol. 9
	At the Table of the World Brian Wren, Carl Johengen; <i>Seasons Songbook</i> , vol. 8
	God Grant that We May Be Transformed Tom Colvin; <i>Seasons Songbook</i> , vol. 7
	Child of God Tom Walker; <i>Seasons Songbook</i> , vol. 1
	A chart that shows the licence holder(s) for each song in each of the 9 <i>Seasons of the Spirit</i> Music Volumes can be found at www.seasonsonline.ca . Click on Library; Seasons Music Information. Please contact a licence holder for permission to duplicate.

Gather

Call to worship

Invite the people to respond by singing “Come into God’s Presence.”



Come in - to God's pres - ence, sing - ing "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu ia."

Words and music in the public domain

Earth is full of noise.

We push through these doors to find a spirit of wisdom.

We come together singing.

Response: “Come into God’s Presence.”

Open the eyes of our hearts to worship our God with gladness.

We come together singing.

Response: “Come into God’s Presence.”

Hope calls to us here. God’s presence greets us.

We are invited to dream and wonder about the reign to come.

We come together singing.

Response: “Come into God’s Presence.”

Opening prayer

Gather us, O God, and welcome us into your heart.

May we share in the pulse of your creativity and feel the treble of your hope.

Invite us to dream with you, O God, about the world you still believe is possible and the world we want to call our own.

We are sheepish.

We hesitate to see all that is already reigning down.

We fail to notice what has been growing within and among us.

Encourage us with your voice and guide us with your presence in this time of worship and dreaming. Amen.



Worship Outline • November 26, 2023

Prayer of confession

O God, our joy so quickly turns to sorrow.
Our sorrow gets stuck in frustration and anger.
We feel that we've made lots of noise.
We've protested for justice.
We've called out for peace.
We have insisted upon hope until our voices have grown tired.
We have imagined and believed that you share in our story, but we walk past the suffering that surrounds us daily.
We pray for your reign to come without really believing that

our efforts to feed, clothe, and welcome every stranger are work we share with you.
O God, forgive us and invite us again to share in your story and hope.

Words of affirmation

God's hope is in our hearts. God's dream is alive in our imaginations.
God forgives us and encourages us, with our hearts enlightened, to know that hope is calling us.
God is calling us now to live in hope and love. Alleluia! Amen.

Engage

Opening the word

Read **Ezekiel 34:11–16** (omit vv. 20–24) and wonder about God as Shepherd. Shepherds and sheep might not be familiar beyond the echoes of scripture. Allow time for quiet reflection to ponder questions such as:

- **When has God found you, strengthened you, and fed you with justice?**
- **How does experiencing God's love in your own life enable you to express care and compassion to others?**

Conclude this reflection with prayer.

Gentle Shepherd, we give thanks for your constant companionship among us. May your steady hand lead us when we go astray, bring us back when we wander, and bring assurance as we move into the future. We pray for those who travel with us and who need to know your love. We are all your sheep and need your guidance and hope. Amen.

Matthew 25:31–46 *the focus scripture for age-level materials in ENCORE*

Choose from the following.

Bible story Arrange for a storyteller to present “[Imagine](#)” on p. 174. Alternatively, for younger children, tell the story “[The Queen Who Felt People's Love](#)” (in *Exploring Our Faith* at the end of this week's materials).

Praying through the good news Two voices could share this contemplative encounter with the gospel with periods of silence for reflection. Silence might be limited to one minute each or extended to two or three minutes with or without quiet, reflective music playing.

ONE: Read Matthew 25:31–33.

TWO: We pause to pray through every division and separation. O God, there is so much that divides us.
Silent prayer

ONE: Read Matthew 25:34–36.

TWO: We pray for the hungry, the thirsty, the vulnerable, the sick, and those imprisoned or detained.
Silent prayer

ONE: Read Matthew 25:37–39.

TWO: O God, we have felt like strangers to ourselves and you. We remember, too, when we were hungry, vulnerable and sick, and you welcomed it all.
Silent prayer

ONE: Read Matthew 25:40.

TWO: We pause to let these words echo in our hearts.
Silent prayer

ONE: Read Matthew 25:41–46.

TWO: O God, we feel this condemnation and lament. Bring us all into greater compassion and care.
Silent prayer

Optional resource centre A response centre can encourage exploring personal ideas of God's reign, what it might look like, and ways we might bring this love to the world. It provides an opportunity to relive the Bible story within our own experiences and learn from it deeply. Often, what we cannot articulate with words of prayer becomes clear when we encounter paper, cloth, yarn, paper, and scissors. Provide various art materials in a designated area in the worship space for use in times of silent prayer and reflection.

If gathering in person, invite children, young people, and all who wish to move to the stations. Others will remain seated for proclaiming the word. For those participating at home, you might encourage them to use materials that have been sent.



Respond

Sing or listen to a song such as “As Long as We Follow/*Na Nzela Na Lola*” as people gather again (*Seasons Songbook, vol. 9, #17* on *Seasons Music CD, vol. 9*. Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/).

Prayers of the people

O God, there are so many situations in our world that seem to defy the power of the reign of Christ. The Spirit flows within and through all; yet violence, injustice, and environmental destruction profane this sacred reality, and so it feels like all we can do is pray. All we can do to meet the world’s deep needs is share in quiet hope. O God, we believe in the wonder of prayer, but we pray that our hearts and hands will be encouraged to bring the realm of Christ home to Earth.

We pray for a larger vision that unites us in your dream,
O God.
Show us again what it means to dream with you.
Silent prayer

We pray for the kind of peace that flows from justice and love.
Assure us again, O God, that this peace begins with each
of us.
Silent prayer

We pray for tensions and divisions that divide us to dissipate and dissolve.

Work beside us to make way for healing and wholeness,
O God.
Silent prayer

We pray for our home on this Earth.
Remind us again, O God, of this holy planet’s careful balance and care.
Silent prayer

Finally, we pray for ourselves, for all who wait with longing for better things to come, and for all who desire to live stronger and freer.
Silent prayer
Amen.

Prayer of dedication or offering prayer

May our gifts express our deepest faith, O God, and may they meet the greatest longings of your people. May these gifts truly bring good news and blessings. May these offerings help to answer prayers for liberation. In joy and in gratitude, we offer a portion of what you gave us in abundance.

Bless

Let us go into a world that is full of joyful noises.
We go with gladness, and the eyes of our hearts open wide to justice and mercy.

God goes with us, singing to strengthen and guide.
Christ goes with us full of power and might.
Spirit leads us to find our call into hope.
People of God, let us go with love and peace.

Special Days Commentary

November 26 – Day of the Covenant (*Baha’i*)

This celebrates the anniversary of the appointment of Abdul-Baha, the son of Baha’u’llah, as the Centre of the Covenant. The day is usually celebrated with special prayers and feasting.

November 30 – St. Andrew

Andrew, like his brother Simon Peter, was a Galilean fisherman. According to tradition, Andrew undertook several missionary journeys and was crucified on an X-shaped cross. He became the patron saint of Scotland because of a legend that his relics had been brought there in the eighth century.

December 1 – World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day began in 1988 to focus global attention on the HIV/AIDS epidemic. People worldwide wear red ribbons on December 1 (and throughout the month) to remind others of the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS. Check with your denomination for resources to use on this day and information about how your church can respond to HIV/AIDS in your community.



Story Slam

Listeners to The Moth in the United States enjoy hearing true stories told live without notes. Other storytelling experiences have become popular inside and outside of the church. As the Season after Pentecost comes to a close, you might celebrate the end of the church year with your own storytelling night to encourage greater connection within your faith community.

Invite the storytellers

Anyone with a story is welcome to share it in this gathering. Storytellers should be advised that stories must be limited to five minutes and are best told from memory of their own experiences. Your event might work best to frame the evening around a particular theme like “Joyful noises: stories of praise” or “Another world is possible,” etc.

Plan the logistics

Your church has many different spaces where this event could be hosted. Consider the vibe of the evening. A more relaxed evening might not happen in the sanctuary but instead in the fellowship hall with cafe tables arranged around a centre stage. Or you might opt to partner with a local cafe with ample space in their establishment for your event. Plan for amplification of sound for your storytellers with microphones and speakers and decide if food will also be served.

Choose a master of ceremonies

Find someone to introduce each storyteller and their story. Choose another person, if desired, to be the timekeeper and bell ringer. A warning bell is best to chime one minute before the end of the storyteller’s time and then another final ring when full time has been reached. As gracious as churches are, you may also want to plan for what will happen if someone goes over time in order to honour all the storytellers and audience.

Structure the evening

Ask all storytellers to sign up before the event, so there is time and space for every story. You may also want to ask each storyteller to give a little synopsis of their story so that you can have a rough idea of the tone to offer each story the proper introduction. It might also help to know that the sad stories and happy stories are intermixed.

Keep the stories coming

After every story has been shared, you might find that more stories are eager to be shared. You might choose to have a quick open mic limited to one-minute stories or encourage your master of ceremonies to welcome a response between storytellers to be shared at tables in small group conversation or as a larger group. If this event is a success, how will you encourage stories to continue to be shared in your community?

Close the evening well

Decide if you will award winners at the end of the evening and if prizes will be offered. Prizes can be as simple as a book, a journal, or a good pen to encourage more stories. Winners could be the best story and the runner-up awarded by applause, or you might choose superlative awards, including most heartwarming, most inspiring, most hopeful, etc. Audience members could be given a ballot with these superlatives at the beginning of the evening.

For Further Inspiration

Between the Listening and the Telling: How Stories Can Save Us
by Marc Yaconelli

The Power of Worship and Storytelling in Worship and Education
by Jed Griswold



Imagine

Based on Matthew 25:31–46

The disciples were full of questions. They wanted to know when the world would be filled with God’s love and what that world would be like. Jesus wasn’t exactly sure when that would be, but his stories helped the disciples imagine, wonder, and think deeply about how we should live. Sometimes the disciples found it hard to understand.

“What does a world filled with God’s love look like?” the disciples asked again. Jesus asked them to use their imaginations and imagine a ruler.

“Imagine,” Jesus said, “people from all the nations in the world gathering around the ruler. The ruler has been watching the people very closely, and whenever the people lived in God’s loving ways, the ruler smiled and felt the love, too.

Imagine the ruler saying to the people, ‘You gave me food when I was hungry. You gave me a drink when I was thirsty. You welcomed me when I was a stranger and gave me clothes to wear when I didn’t have any. You took care of me when I was sick and visited me when I was in jail.’ Imagine the people saying: ‘When did we do these things that you say we did?’ Imagine the ruler saying, ‘All of the times that you did these things for any person, I felt the love.’”

“Ahhh,” said the disciples, “we are beginning to understand. We are all part of God’s family. When we help one another, when we help the poorest and weakest members of God’s families, when we help and show compassion to those in greatest need, we are caring for God.”

Jesus smiled and nodded.

A recording of this story is available in MP3 format in the Audio Stories folder.



Bible story

Materials

- Recording of “Imagine”
- Alternatively, arrange for a storyteller to present the story
- Paper or drawing pads
- Basic supplies

The practice of storytelling

Directions

1. Listen to the story “Imagine.”
2. Using the materials provided, draw the world you imagine to be.



Living, Learning, Growing as Disciples

The following stations might be set up around your worship space, or in other places around the church, in your home, or outdoors. Choose one or more practices, depending on your space and numbers. Display the directions for all to see onscreen or in person. Adapt stations for use when physically distancing and above all, follow the safe practices of your congregation and local health officials.

For your convenience, directions are formatted for printing and available in the Stations folder.

Health and Safety Practices

Basic supplies pens, pencils, markers, crayons, white glue/glue sticks, scissors, hand sanitizer, wipes placed in a basket or bin, two containers marked “clean” and “used”

Setting the space Utilize large spaces where people can maintain a safe physical distance. Spread out chairs around a large table or use tape to mark off the space around stand alone chairs.

Keep it clean Wipe down and disinfect places used for stations. Provide enough arts and crafts supplies to reduce sharing and mark containers “clean” and “used.” Remind people to use hand sanitizer as they begin and as they end stations.

Joyful noises

Materials

- Assorted noisemakers



The practice of praise

Directions

Psalm 100 celebrates God’s love and encourages us to amplify our praise for God’s love.

1. Notice the assorted noisemakers on the table. You might begin by paying attention to their colour and design before picking up a few and experimenting with their sound. As you do, wonder:

- **What does my praise for God sound like right now?**
- **What is it that I most want to praise God for?**

2. As you focus on your particular praise, find the joyful noise that best matches your joy and make a loud celebration to God. Allow your praise to mingle and play with others.

Crowns of glory

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Assorted coloured paper
- Crown stencils
- Assorted craft supplies
- Magazines



The practice of creativity

Directions

Reign of Christ is also known as Christ the King Sunday, where Christ takes his throne to rule over all creation. This big, complicated idea is even more confused by our shift in language away from kingship.

1. Begin by choosing a colour for your crown, and then consider what shape it might take.

- **Who will wear this crown into the reign of God? What will their role be?**
- **What might give this person power and hope in their leadership?**

2. Cut out your crown and begin embellishing as you ponder this leader that could be like a king, Christ, or just an ordinary person like you.
3. Complete your crown and then display it. Or, if preferred, you might choose to wear your crown into your hope of the reign of God.



Letters of hope

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Stationery



Suitable for
ages 8–adult

The practice of wonder

Directions

Ephesians 1:15–23 begins with praise and thanksgiving for the church before it offers encouragement and hope. Paul writes that hope is calling to the church. Let Hope become real to you as you share in correspondence with its promise.

1. Write a letter imagining your dreams for the world and its people. Address your letter to Hope.
2. Instead, you might choose to have Hope write a letter to you, your family or your church where Hope reminds you of all that could be in the very near future.

Right and left hands

Materials

- Pens or sharpies
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



Suitable for
ages 9–adult

The practice of reflection

Directions

Jesus refers to the right and the left hand in Matthew 25:31–46. It feels like a story of division and separation, but in Jewish tradition, the right hand refers to mercy and the left to justice.

1. Holding your hands in front of you, contemplate the work of your hands.
 - **How do these hands do justice (fairness)?**
 - **When do these hands offer mercy (kindness)?**
2. Into your right hand, pray to God for greater works of mercy. As desired, write on the palm of your hand particular prayers for people, places, or merciful intentions.
3. Turning to your left hand, ask God to work with you for more justice. As desired, write on the palm of your hand particular prayers for people, places, or justice actions.
4. Bring your hands together and ask God to bring all things together for a more just and merciful world. Ask God to use your hands for the hope of the world.

The article "[Connecting with the Art](#)" on page 8 provides background to this season's posters and art engagement ideas for individuals and groups. You might add an Art station and select one of the art engagement ideas.



Story and activities for the very young to use in church or at home.

The Queen Who Felt the People's Love

A story based on Matthew 25:31–46

Once there was a queen who loved all the people. But the one thing that the queen wanted more than anything else was for the people to love each other. Every day, the queen watched the people, and whenever the queen saw any of them showing love, she smiled and felt the love too. The queen watched the people all day long.

Sometimes the queen saw somebody giving food to a hungry person. "Ah," said the queen, **"that is love!"**

The queen rubbed her tummy as if she had just eaten a delicious meal. The queen smiled and felt the love too.

Sometimes the queen saw somebody giving a drink to a thirsty person. "Ah," said the queen, **"that is love!"**

The queen licked her lips as if she had just had a refreshing drink. The queen smiled and felt the love too.

Sometimes the queen saw somebody making a new friend. "Ah," said the queen, **"that is love!"**

The queen patted her heart and thought about how good it is to make new friends. The queen smiled and felt the love too.

And sometimes the queen saw somebody giving warm clothing to a person who was cold. "Ah," said the queen, **"that is love!"**

As the queen watched, she felt warm. The queen smiled and felt the love too.

The queen loved the people so much. When the people showed their love for one another, the queen felt like they loved her, too. The queen was very, very happy.

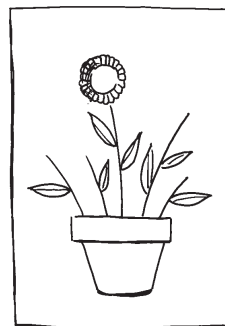
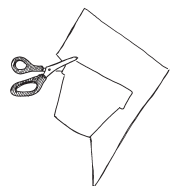
Paper Cup Flowers

We are all part of God's family; when we help and show love and kindness, we are caring for God.

You will need construction paper, scissors, felt markers or crayons, cupcake liners, glue sticks, and old magazines.

Instructions

1. Cut a flowerpot shape and glue it onto a piece of construction paper. (See illustration.)
2. Draw leaves and stems coming out of the pot.
3. To form a flower, glue a cupcake liner at the top of each stem.
4. Cut out faces of people of different nationalities from magazines and glue them to the middle of each cupcake liner.
5. Alternatively, draw a face in each cupcake liner.

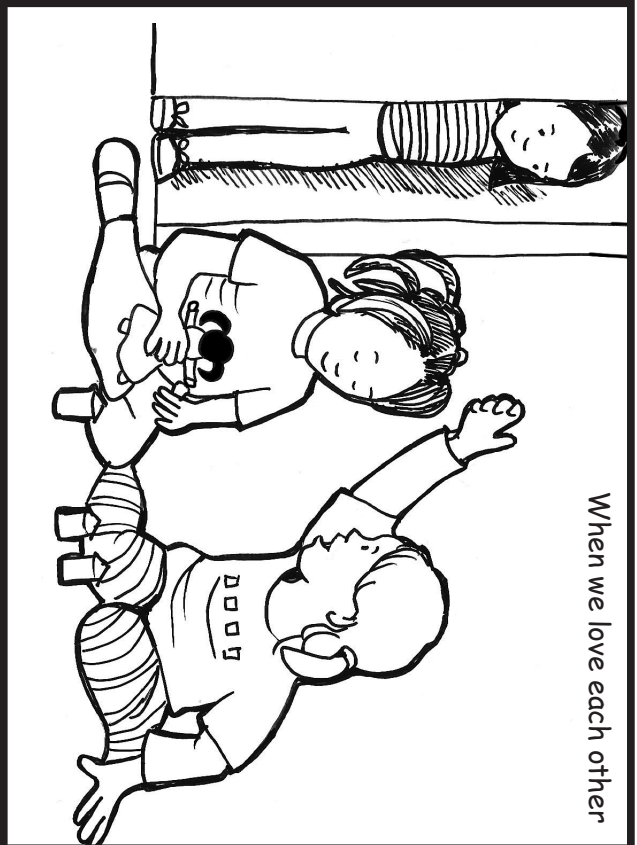


God's Family

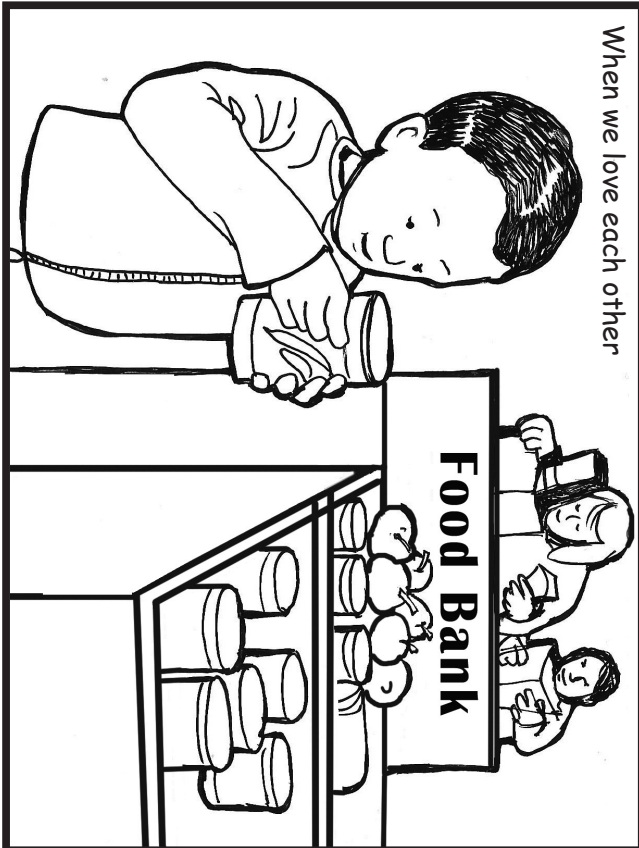




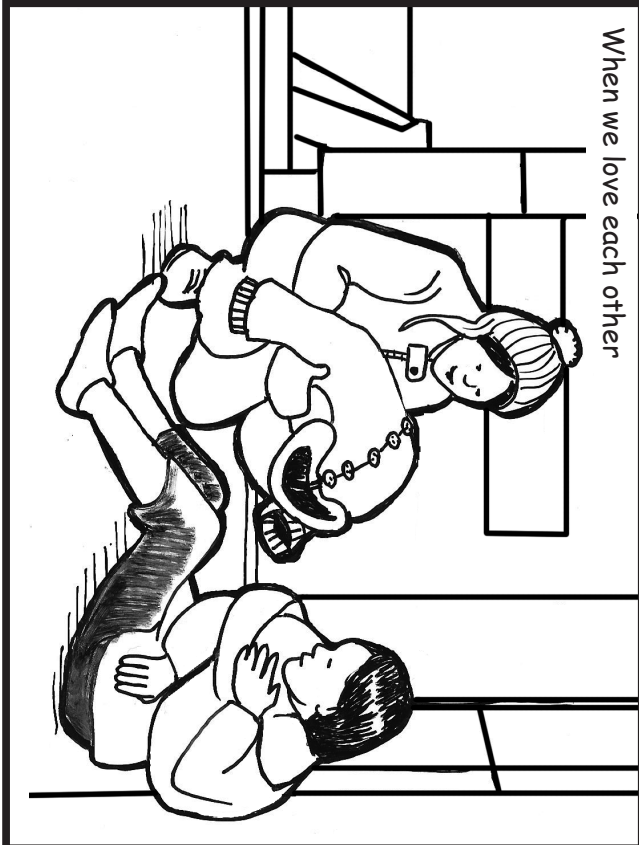
When we love each other



When we love each other



When we love each other



When we love each other

We love God, too - Based on Matthew 25:40